A PASSION FOR BETTER MEDICINE.

Lehigh Valley Health Network

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Back Pain? Gone
He’s building his cabin again

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On the cover:
Jonathan Siedt of Easton is back at work on his dream house after finally having the back surgery he kept delaying. Read his story on page 5. Photo by Mary Frederick, Amico Studios
In November 2007, Robert Budd took advantage of his international shipping job and stepped on the only scale big enough to measure his weight. When he saw 462 pounds, he knew he had to make a change. "I was bored and ate all the time," says the 37-year-old Allentown man. "I was out of control, and vowed right then to never let myself reach 463."

After exploring his options, Budd decided on adjustable gastric band surgery, a small-incision procedure that cinches off part of the stomach. After a three-week recovery, it was time to adjust to his new—and changed—life.

"The key to successful and healthy weight loss after this surgery is to have self-discipline and a positive attitude," says bariatric (weight-loss) nurse practitioner Lu Andrescavage, C.R.N.P., of Lehigh Valley Health Network’s Weight Management Center. Here's what is involved:

Changes in diet—"Patients who follow the recommended diet lose about 1-2 pounds a week," says health network surgeon Daniel Harrison, D.O. In the first few weeks after surgery they're on liquids, then gradually progress to soft foods and solids.

They can enjoy most of the foods they are before, but at one-third the quantity. They need to eat slowly, chew well and avoid hard-to-digest items like steak, peanut butter and fried foods. Finally, because they're eating less they must be careful to get enough protein, vitamins and other essential nutrients.

Regular daily activity—"It's just as important as eating right. "Overweight people often become inactive because exercise may be difficult or painful," Andrescavage says. "After surgery, gentle activities like walking and swimming are the easiest to handle." Working with a weight-management team helps patients discover which physical activities are most enjoyable for them.

Psychological support if needed—Many weight-loss surgery patients feel overwhelmed by the changes they face. They also may realize how much they relied on food for comfort in the past. "The most successful are those who figure out why they were overeating and try to change their ways," Andrescavage says. Family, friends and support group meetings can make a big difference, as Budd discovered. "During these meetings, we share our experiences and issues. The help is invaluable," he says.

Medical monitoring—Harrison advises his patients to schedule regular checkups with their family physician (and specialists as needed) to track pre-existing health conditions. "As they lose weight, their doctors may change the type and amount of medicines they need," he says. "Eventually, they may eliminate some entirely."

The most important benefit of gastric band surgery, he says, isn't about looking better. Weight loss can improve or prevent type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, joint problems, sleep apnea, acid reflux and heart disease.

Since Budd's surgery in June 2008, he's lost nearly 120 pounds, inching closer to his goal of 300. "It wasn't easy, but once I made up my mind there was no turning back," he says. "I would do it again in a heartbeat."

Want to Know More about weight-loss surgery and other programs to help you lose? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
‘Get Those Elbows Off the Table’

You want your children to have good table manners, but where do you begin? “Start young—but set reasonable expectations for your child’s age,” says Shelley Dougherty, parent educator with Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Begin with basics such as using the magic words “please” and “thank you.” Teach young children how to use utensils and not talk while eating. As they get older, include more sophisticated skills such as correct place settings, how to pass food and the basics of being a good host. Here are some teaching strategies:

- **Make mealt ime a pleasant experience** you and your children look forward to.
- **Dine together regularly, and dress up sometimes.**
- **Create good dinner-table conversation** by using games like “What was your favorite part of today?”
- **Introduce and master a “table manner of the week”** (such as napkin-on-the-lap or how to hold your spoon).
- **Practice, practice, practice** to help ensure that good manners become automatic.
- **Role-play.** Pretend you’re having a meal together and ask your children if you are using good manners.
- **Avoid power struggles.** Be patient, relax and have fun.

“The best strategy is to be a positive role model yourself,” Dougherty says. “Don’t just tell your children how to act. Show them.”

**Do You Need a Multivitamin?**

To survive and thrive, your body needs vitamins and minerals. The question is, can you get enough from diet alone? For most people the answer is yes, says registered dietitian Shelley Book of Lehigh Valley Health Network: “The micronutrients in what we eat usually are sufficient to prevent deficiencies.”

“But this assumes you have a good appetite and eat a healthy range of foods including plenty of vegetables and fruit,” she says. And there are particular circumstances when you may need added nutrients, says John Pettine, M.D., an internist with the health network.

- **Women of child-bearing age** should take folic acid (to prevent birth defects), calcium and vitamin D.
- **Many people over age 65** don’t get enough calcium, vitamin B12 and vitamin D from diet alone.
- **Vegetarians** may need vitamin B12, folic acid and iron.
- **Postmenopausal women** and others at risk for osteoporosis need extra calcium.
- **Many northerners** get insufficient sun exposure and need supplemental vitamin D.
- **People with digestive disorders or weight-loss surgery** often need supplementation.

Is it better to buy vitamins and minerals individually, or will a multivitamin fill the bill? If you need several vitamins or minerals, you can consider bundling them in a multi—but pay attention to the amount of each ingredient to make sure you’re getting what you need. “Unless your doctor recommends it, don’t buy megadoses. At best your body excretes the extra, and too much of some vitamins can be harmful,” Pettine says.

Stick with reputable manufacturers, since dietary supplements aren’t regulated by the FDA. “Look for the USP symbol on the vitamin packaging,” Book says. This means it has been approved by the U.S. Pharmacopeia organization, which certifies products for quality and safety. And consider whether you’d prefer powdered, liquid or gel vitamins rather than pills. While most experts recommend the pill form, “gummy” products can work well for little ones who are picky eaters.

**Want to Know More about vitamins? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.**
Turkey isn't just for Thanksgiving anymore. With groceries offering a choice of ground turkey, breasts, cutlets, tenderloins and strips, you can serve this economical bird any day of the week—and get the health benefits. "Turkey is one of the healthiest meats out there," says Jennifer Erie, a registered dietitian with Lehigh Valley Health Network. "It's even lower in fat than chicken."

Baking, broiling, roasting and grilling are the best ways to prepare any meat, turkey included. "We discourage frying because it adds fat and calories to your meal," Erie says.

White meat is slightly lower in fat and calories than dark, but either form of turkey is a better choice than red meat or pork, she says. "The skin is the unhealthiest part of any bird. You can cook with it on to retain moisture and flavor, but don't eat it."

Healthy as they are, turkey calories still add up if you don't watch your portion size. "A 'serving' of cooked turkey is comparable to a small deck of cards in size and weight," Erie says.

Want to Know More? For some tasty turkey recipes, call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyou.

Don’t Run Short of Vitamin B12

For something we need in such tiny amounts, vitamin B12 is a powerful protector of our health. "Most of us consume enough," says geriatrician Tatyana Kemarskaya, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Health Network. "B12 occurs naturally in meat, poultry and fish, and is added to fortified cereals. But as we get older, it's less well-absorbed in the intestinal tract," she says.

Watch for these symptoms of deficiency:

Anemia and fatigue—B12 helps make red blood cells. A blood test may show you have larger red blood cells, symptomatic of B12 deficiency.

Balance problems—B12 is important for the nerves in the spinal column that give you a sense of balance. A higher rate of falls in the elderly can be due in part to low B12.

Memory loss—It has been shown that lack of vitamin B12 may contribute to memory decline.

Ask your physician about red blood cell and B12 tests if you’re having any of these symptoms. You may need oral supplements or injections. Vegetarians, too, should probably take a B complex supplement, Kemarskaya says.

Want to Know More? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyou.

WHAT’S NEW on lvhn.org

Find a doctor...on your cell phone

On the run and need to find a doctor fast? You can do it from Lehigh Valley Health Network’s new mobile site. Access your cell phone’s Web browser (standard data charges apply) and type in lvhn.org. There you'll find a cell-phone-friendly version of the health network's Web site, where you can search for a doctor by specialty, name or zip code. On many cell phones, you'll even be able to call 610-402-CARE with the push of a button and get more detailed physician information. You'll also find maps and directions on the mobile site, plus a list of frequently called numbers.

Keep up to date

Want a physician’s take on that health topic everyone’s talking about? Want to learn more about an upcoming event? Need help with your medical bills? Visit the health network’s home page (lvhn.org). Click on any of the photos or headlines, and they’ll lead you straight to the timeliest information.

Learn more about a medical condition

Visit lvhn.org and click on “health care services.” Inside each service you’ll find detailed information about health conditions, diagnoses and treatments, along with links to doctors in each care area.

Want to Know More? For some tasty turkey recipes, call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyou.
Breast cancer has plagued Gail Fantasia’s life for several years. The 51-year-old Bethlehem woman and her mother are survivors, and she recently lost her sister to the disease. Her family has made fighting breast cancer a priority.

But following Fantasia’s treatment, it was difficult for her to prioritize her life. Her body, which had once defined her, had changed as a result of mastectomy and chemotherapy. At the same time, she felt liberated to live life more fully. That’s when she found The Legacy Project at Lehigh Valley Health Network, in which breast cancer survivors support each other as they document their feelings, experiences and history.

“It was an awesome way for me to put on paper exactly what is important to me,” Fantasia says. “Faced with a life-threatening disease, you think about how you want to be remembered when you’re gone. This project helped me do that.”

Fantasia’s feelings are common among cancer survivors, says Kathy Sevedge, R.N., director of cancer support services at the health network. “Survivors are thankful to be rid of the disease, but unsure of how to meet the new challenges that often result from cancer, including pain, sexual problems, loss of identity, financial struggles and divorce,” she says.

Thanks to better cancer treatments, more people than ever survive. (Some 12 million Americans are cancer survivors.) “Many can live 20-25 years after treatment now,” Sevedge says. Patients see their cancer specialists for surveillance to make sure the cancer hasn’t returned—but they also need professionals who can help them get on with their lives.

“The primary care physician is a crucial ongoing resource, having been with a patient before cancer, through treatment and into survivorship,” Sevedge says. Fantasia also was helped by members of the cancer support team, including a dietitian and social worker Ulla Martz.

The health network has a new program called Survivor PLACE (Programs for Living After the Cancer Experience) specifically designed to help patients deal with survivorship issues. The team includes a nurse practitioner, dietitian, rehabilitation specialist, social worker and registered nurse. “One of the first things our patients do is complete a quality-of-life survey that asks them what concerns—from diet to depression to family relationships—are most important to them,” Sevedge says. The team then helps them address those issues. Patients also receive a detailed summary of their cancer treatment, which is helpful to them and their primary care doctor if any complications develop in the future.

The support Fantasia received made an enormous difference in her recovery, she says. “You can either curl up in a corner or make something good out of the experience,” she says. “Cancer in many ways helped me discover who I am.”

Want to Know More about resources for cancer survivors? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
Spinal Surgery—If You Need It, Don’t Delay
Waiting can lead to more serious conditions

You’ve done the right thing about that severe or persistent back pain—you went to see the doctor. “If pain is bothering you every day and you can’t do things you used to, get checked,” says neurosurgeon and spine specialist Chris Lycette, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Health Network. “This can be a sign of a more serious injury, and disc injuries or neurological problems should be evaluated by a spine specialist early on.”

So you got your diagnosis, and the pain didn’t respond to conservative treatment. Your doctor recommends surgery. The “s” word makes you nervous, and that’s a common reaction, Lycette says. But with today’s new technologies and small-incision procedures, there’s no reason to be fearful—and every reason to go ahead promptly.

“Most spinal problems can be fixed if caught early,” Lycette says. “If you wait, the injury could become permanent or create a domino effect that damages other parts of the spine.” In short, the surgical options available today can make a huge difference in your quality of life.

Want to Know More about these and other back pain patients, or how to tell if you need back surgery? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvn.org/healthyyou.

Teresa Harvilla is Jonathan Siedt’s mother-in-law, and they had something else in common—debilitating back pain. Harvilla, a widow in her 70s, lives alone and cherishes her independence. She had lived with the pain for a few years, but it was getting worse to the point of restricting her activities.

After trying spinal decompression therapy with no improvement, she consulted Siedt’s neurosurgeon, Chris Lycette, M.D. “All I want is for you to get me back to swimming and dancing,” she told him. Tests showed Harvilla had the same back problems as Siedt, and she had the same surgery. Now she’s swimming, dancing, cycling, mowing her grass and enjoying her grandchildren and great-grandchildren again. “If you give in to pain, that’s where you’ll stay,” she says.

Jonathan Siedt is building his dream house, a log cabin. One day as the 53-year-old Easton man was coming down a ladder wearing a heavy tool belt, he missed the last step and felt a sudden, jarring pain in his back. He tried to ignore it and keep working, but within months the pain grew so bad he consulted neurosurgeon Chris Lycette, M.D. Tests showed a herniated disc, but it took another accident before he agreed to surgery to correct his multiple spinal problems.

Siedt was walking the next day and back to full activity in three months. The pain and numbness gone, he’s lifting 80-pound bags of concrete and stacks of shingles. Had he let it go longer, he could have lost bowel and bladder control. “I was just postponing the inevitable,” he says. “The longer you wait, the more damage is done.”
How Fit Are You?
Take these home tests to find out

Patti Nappi, 37, of Allentown took the chair stand test as part of her initial evaluation at the Healthy You Fitness Center. Her result then was below average, but thanks to regular workouts, she can expect a higher score at her six-month retest.

If you’re out of shape and want to change, determining your fitness level may be just the motivation you need to get off the couch. But even if you already exercise regularly, you can still benefit from a regular home fitness “checkup.”

It should include the four essential components of fitness: aerobic endurance, strength, flexibility and balance, says John Graham, director of Healthy You Fitness Centers. “Fitness tests measure strengths and weaknesses in those key areas and help people set and reach new goals,” he says.

Graham recommends the following fitness tests to get you started. Track your progress by retesting yourself every six weeks. For a more advanced assessment, consult with an exercise physiologist. And always get your doctor’s OK before trying new exercises if you’ve been inactive or have a health problem.

Chair Stand Test
What it tests: Lower-body muscle strength
How to do it: Sit on a sturdy chair 18 inches high, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Cross your arms at your wrists and hold them in front of you so your palms are facing your chest. With your back straight and feet flat on the floor, stand up and then sit back down, lightly touching your buttocks to the chair. Your score is the number of repetitions you can perform in 30 seconds.

Erectile Dysfunction and Heart Disease
Sexual trouble can reveal cardiovascular risks

It's natural to think of erectile dysfunction (ED) as a sex and relationship issue. But ED—the inability to achieve or maintain an erection adequate for intercourse—can affect affairs of the heart in a different way. "Erectile dysfunction is sometimes an early warning sign of cardiovascular disease," says cardiologist Andrew Sumner, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Health Network.

The ED-heart connection is easy to understand given that blood flow to the penis is what makes an erection possible. "It is basically a plumbing system, and a blockage in your blood vessels that reduces blood flow can make erectile dysfunction more likely," says health network internist Jeffery Debuque, D.O. Blood vessels in the penis are smaller and narrower than those near the heart, so reduced flow is likely to show up earlier there.

Men under age 50 who have ED should look at their heart disease risk factors, Debuque says. "Diabetes triples the risk for ED, and smoking doubles erectile risks. If you have three or more cardiovascular risk factors, get your heart checked before..."
Arm Curl Test
What it tests: Upper-body muscle strength
How to do it: Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Hold a dumbbell (5-pound for women, 8-pound for men) in one hand with your arm hanging beside the chair, your palm facing in.
Curl the weight up to chest level, gradually rotating your palm to face up, then lower it to the starting position (making sure to fully bend your elbow and straighten your arm while keeping your upper body stable). Your score is the number of arm curls you can do in 30 seconds.

3-Minute Step Test
What it tests: Aerobic fitness
How to do it: Stand facing a 12-inch step (or platform). Following the pattern of up, up, down, down, step with your right foot, then your left; step down with your right foot, then your left. Keep a pace of 24 steps per minute for 3 minutes. Immediately after stopping, check your heart rate per minute. (Count the number of beats in 10 seconds and multiply by six.)

Martin Maurer, 46, of Nesquehoning lifts heavy things regularly at work. He passed the 3-minute step test with flying colors, but was surprised at his poor arm curl test results. “I’m going to work on improving my upper-body strength,” he says.

Want to Know More about scoring these and two other home fitness measures (flexibility and core strength)? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.

Want to Know More about the various causes of ED, or do you need to see a doctor about ED or heart disease? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.

Double Dangers
These risk factors for cardiovascular disease also increase risks for erectile dysfunction:
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity

beginning any treatment for ED.”
That’s important because ED medications and heart drugs don’t always mix. For example, nitrates for angina combined with ED drugs can lower blood pressure to dangerous levels. “Sometimes ED drugs are appropriate if your heart is stable and your blood pressure is well-controlled, so it’s important to get your doctor’s advice,” Debuque says.
Your doctor also can help determine if ED is a side effect of other treatment. Blood pressure medications such as clonidine, as well as certain beta blockers and diuretics, can trigger erectile problems. Alternative treatments are available if you can’t use ED medication. “But the best alternative is to control your diabetes, stop smoking and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure,” Debuque says. “These steps can improve both your heart health and sex life.”
Can You Bully-Proof Your Child?

Not totally, but you can help build resistance

Boys and girls who are bullied often experience loneliness, anxiety, illness, depression and even suicidal thoughts. While you can't immunize your children against bullies, there are some ways to make them more bully-resistant.

Set a good example. “Children learn from their parents, so always be aware of the behaviors you are modeling and how they impact your kids’ behavior,” says Ken Mead, director of the Adolescent Transitions program at Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Encourage friendships. “Bullies tend to find the person who is alone,” says Matthew Saltz, M.D., a pediatrician with the health network. “Help your children make friends by teaching them social skills, how to share, and give and take.”

Promote self-confidence. Cultivating your child’s skills in music, athletics or other areas will help boost self-esteem.

Encourage assertiveness and problem solving. Training children to be assertive and to deal with smaller problems as they come up will give them the skills to deal with bigger issues.

Keep the lines of communication open. If you suspect your child is being bullied, ask him about it. If he won’t talk to you, ask his doctor to help. Many offices have a questionnaire that can help detect bullying.

If your child is being bullied...

Ask the school to intervene. “Talking to the other parent directly usually doesn’t work,” Saltz says. Tell your child not to fight back physically. Often the bully will try to get even. Instead, teach your child to use a strategy called “HA HA SO”:

HELP—Ask friends, teachers, parents or other adults for help.

ASSERT YOURSELF—Use statements like “I feel ___ when you ___. Please stop.”

HUMOR—Make a joke or do something funny.

AVOID—Stay away from places you know the bully might be.

SELF-TALK—Give yourself a pep talk: “I’m OK. He’s the one with the problem.”

OWN IT—If you’re getting teased about your clothes, you can say, “I don’t like them either, but my mom made me wear them,” or “I’m sorry you think that. I like them.”

If your child is the bully...

Take action. Middle-school bullies are four times more likely than their peers to have multiple criminal convictions by age 24. Make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and set limits for your child’s behavior. Know his friends and how they spend their time. Finally, consult a school counselor or mental health professional. “Kids may need counseling to understand why they need to exert power over others,” Mead says.

Want to Know More about the signs of bullying? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
When a Parent Is Injured or Ill

Children need extra support

When Tim Kleinhagen of Summit Hill, Pa., was burned in a propane fire last year, he wasn't the only victim. His wife, Lisa, and their 5-year-old son, Zachary, had their lives turned upside down. Lisa spent every day with Tim in the Lehigh Valley Health Network Regional Burn Center. Zach's routine was disrupted, and he missed his parents.

"Families with a burn injury or any trauma have a high incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder," says health network burn surgeon Daniel Lozano, M.D. "It's important to involve families early on, and talk about what to expect immediately and down the road."

Children of any age can have trouble handling a parent's injury or illness. How they cope depends on age, maturity and family dynamics. "A small child may not understand why his parents are suddenly gone," says Lozano's colleague, social worker Liz Dideon Hess. "He worries Daddy might not come home, and may feel he caused the injury somehow."

It's normal for children and teens to focus on themselves and wonder how they'll be affected by the trauma. "A young child's mind processes events in a very concrete way, so you need to reassure her in a concrete way," says Bruce Curry, a social worker with the health network. "An older child may turn to his peers for support. When he wants to go to the mall, it doesn't mean he doesn't care—he's just trying to make sense of things." Invite him to talk when he's ready, and give him the space to work it out.

Here are other ways to support children with an ill or injured parent:

**Talk on a level they understand.** Tell them what happened in a calm, reassuring manner. Be honest, but gear explanations to their maturity level.

**Maintain a routine.** Keep them in school or day care and stick to a normal schedule as much as possible.

**Spend time with them every day.** Give them your undivided attention and ask about what they're feeling.

**Prepare them for physical changes.** Use a doll to explain a parent's injuries to a young child. When the child sees the parent for the first time, give them something concrete to do together, like reading a book. Help your child talk with friends by suggesting ways to explain what happened to Daddy.

**Give them jobs to help their parent get better.** Little ones can write letters or draw pictures to post in Mommy's hospital room. Older children can provide extra help around the house. When the parent comes home, find ways to let them help with caregiving.

**Keep them in touch.** If visiting isn't advised, arrange for children to talk with the injured parent by phone. Staying connected reduces anxiety and lets them know Daddy is getting better.

**Get support.** Let the school guidance counselor know what happened, and enlist other family members. The more supportive people a child has in her life, the better.

**Watch for signs the child needs help.** If you see changes in behavior, seek a counselor specializing in children and adolescents.

**Want to Know More** about Tim Kleinhagen's story? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyou.

A lighthearted moment—Zachary, age 5, had a tough time adjusting when his father, Tim Kleinhagen, suffered an injury. But thanks to loving care from Tim and his wife, Lisa, the smiles have returned—especially when they're all enjoying a football story.
Surviving Without Health Insurance
Tips to keep you and your family well

If you've lost your job-related health insurance or can't afford coverage, you're not alone. Many of the 46 million uninsured Americans put off medical care, hoping to avoid a serious illness or injury. But failing to get needed treatment or tests can backfire badly. "The worst mistake you could make is to ignore your health," says family medicine physician Jack Lenhart, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Health Network. How do you pay for care without insurance? Kristy Mazzitelli helps people answer that question every day. As a financial counselor with the health network, she works with uninsured and underinsured people facing medical expenses. "Get the care you need first," she tells them. "Then we'll help find ways to pay for it." Here's how to keep your health a top priority now:

Help from an expert—
 Kristy Mazzitelli and other financial counselors offer strategies and resources to uninsured people.

Explore your options. Many health network, government and insurance company programs can help you afford care, including:

- Medical Assistance, a state program for people with high medical expenses.
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), providing coverage to uninsured children.

Your Preconception Doctor Visit
It’s a wise way to help ensure a healthier pregnancy

You wouldn't buy a car without doing your homework—and it's even more vital for something as important as pregnancy. A perfect first step is for you and your partner to schedule an exam and heart-to-heart with your primary care doctor (family physician or obstetrician) before you start trying.

"Anyone can benefit from preconception counseling—healthy people and those with pre-existing conditions," says Michael Sheinberg, M.D., an obstetrician/gynecologist with Lehigh Valley Health Network. "We make sure things are tuned up, and if problems do arise, that we can deal with them effectively."

The visit begins with a questionnaire about your current physical and emotional health. Besides exercise, diet and weight, your doctor will explore subjects you might not have thought about, including:

Medical preparedness—Ensure you're up-to-date on screenings like Pap tests and on your immunizations—especially for rubella (German measles), which can cause birth defects.

Family history—If your background or your partner's indicates a greater risk for passing along inherited disorders, you may be referred for genetic counseling and testing.

Risk factors—Women over age 35 and those with health problems are at higher risk for pregnancy complications. Devising a plan ahead of time may help to avert them.

Medications—If you're on a medication like antidepressants or asthma drugs, you might assume you need to stop taking it before you conceive. But that can actually cause more harm than good. You and your doctor can develop a medication plan to protect your health and your baby's.

Relationship issues—Are you and your partner emotionally ready for parenthood? Will you work after the baby comes? "I talk with my patients about these issues," Sheinberg says, "not to discourage them but to help them better prepare."

During preconception counseling, your doctor also will recommend ways to get you in prime baby-making shape, including:

- A prenatal multivitamin with 400 micrograms of folic acid (to prevent neural tube defects).
- A balanced diet.
- Weight control if you're overweight.
- Smoking cessation—Smokers have more trouble conceiving, and their babies suffer more health problems.
- No alcohol or drugs—Both can affect your ability to conceive and lead to birth complications.
- Exercise—You'll shed pounds, reduce harmful stress and strengthen your body for pregnancy and delivery.

Want to Know More about healthy living before and during pregnancy? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
who aren’t eligible for Medical Assistance.

COBRA, which picks up where employer-paid insurance leaves off when people lose their job. It’s expensive but may be worth it if you have a chronic illness.

Reduced cost-of-care program, Lehigh Valley Health Network’s program for uninsured patients. You get a 67 percent reduction in medical expenses and larger discounts or free care if you qualify.

VA care, the wide range of benefits available to veterans, service members and their families.

Catastrophic insurance—High-deductible, less-expensive policies to cover you in case of serious illness or injury.

Have a family physician. A doctor who knows you and your medical history can help you save money without compromising your health. For example, you may be able to eliminate some medications you take for symptom relief or substitute a less-expensive generic for a brand-name drug. And you can weigh the costs and benefits of expensive screenings. They can be vital if you have a family history of a disease; if you don’t, you may be able to postpone them until you’re insured.

Make lifestyle changes. If you’re unemployed, use your extra time to start healthy habits. If you exercise regularly, improve your diet and get enough sleep, you’ll increase your energy and resistance to disease.

Want to Know More? To find a family doctor or learn about affordable health insurance or the reduced cost-of-care program, call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.

Should I Take Fosamax?
For most women, the benefits outweigh the risks

Your bone density test shows you have osteoporosis, and your doctor has recommended alendronate (Fosamax). But you’ve heard about side effects from this family of drugs, known as bisphosphonates. Should you get the treatment?

Without it, you’re at far higher risk for a hip or spine fracture, says gynecologist Joseph DeFulvio, D.O., of Lehigh Valley Health Network. “Bones continuously break down and rebuild,” he says, “but after menopause, breakdown outpaces rebuilding. Bisphosphonates stop the process and preserve bone density, decreasing fracture risk.” That’s important, because a fracture can impair your ability to walk, cause deformity or lead to chronic back pain.

Bisphosphonates come in several types. Alendronate and risendronate (Actonel) are taken orally once a week, zoledronic acid (Reclast) intravenously (IV) once a year. Ibandonate (Boniva) comes in oral (monthly) and IV (every three months) forms.

Your doctor probably will start you with an oral bisphosphonate, says Kristin Ingraham, D.O., a rheumatologist with the health network. “I prescribe the IV drugs for patients with severe heartburn or swallowing problems.”

What about those side effects? The most serious is jaw necrosis, in which a section of the jawbone deteriorates and dies, especially after a tooth extraction. It’s extremely rare, and usually happens only to patients undergoing chemotherapy or with other medical conditions or serious dental problems. It also is more of an issue with the intravenous bisphosphonates, Ingraham says. Before starting her patients on Reclast, she advises them to complete any major dental procedures.

The bottom line, both doctors agree: If you have osteoporosis, you’re much more likely to fracture a hip if you don’t take a bisphosphonate than to develop jaw necrosis if you do.

Want to Know More about osteoporosis risk and prevention? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.

Lead a Bone-healthy Life

- Exercise regularly (walking, strength training)
- Quit smoking
- Limit alcohol, caffeine and soda
- Take calcium and vitamin D
- Spread the word about bone density testing
What Does Wellness Mean to Me?
It's more than just physical health

“When people think of wellness, they usually think it's the opposite of being sick,” says Mark Wendling, M.D., a family medicine physician with Lehigh Valley Health Network. But he and many others believe wellness is much more comprehensive than that. Besides physical health, it also includes:

**Emotional balance**—This means keeping stress in check and maintaining a well-rounded life. “When people are overly focused on work or anything else, they can let it overtake their balance,” Wendling says.

**Social connections**—People who nurture existing relationships and seek out new ones are physically and emotionally healthier. Studies show this is especially vital for the elderly.

**Intellectual challenge**—Actively pursuing your interests and passions keeps your brain nimble and enriches your life.

**Spirituality**—“Whether or not you’re formally religious, life has more meaning if you believe you have a positive purpose and something to contribute,” Wendling says. That might mean anything from volunteering in the community to sharing your love of nature or music with your grandchildren.

Want to Know More about living a fuller, less stressful life? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.

For Joseph Mustacchio, it means leading an active life despite diabetes.

Daily bike rides and a healthful diet help the 77-year-old Lehighton man control his diabetes. He takes part in church activities and socializes with family and friends, and he and his wife, Barbara, won gold medals in jitterbug and polka at the Carbon County Senior Games last summer. “Wellness is a state of mind,” he says. “The most important thing is having a good feeling about life.”

A Heart Risk for Athletes
Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy can kill

Minutes after a game, San Francisco 49ers offensive lineman Thomas Herrion collapsed and died. It wasn’t dehydration or exhaustion that killed the 23-year-old—it was a common heart condition called hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM).

HCM is a genetic disease that causes heart muscle to become abnormally thick. This can impair blood flow or lead to a potentially deadly irregular heart rhythm. “It affects one in 500 people, and many of them have a normal quality and length of life,” says Matthew Martinez, M.D. The cardiologist specializes in HCM at Lehigh Valley Health Network. “HCM can be dangerous in young people, especially during exercise or athletic competition,” he says. “It causes nearly half of all sudden cardiac deaths at this age.”

HCM often goes unrecognized because there may be few, if any, symptoms. Typical warning signs include shortness of breath, chest pain, fainting, dizziness and heart palpitations, especially during exertion.

To determine whether you’re at risk, check your family history. “If a parent or sibling has HCM, there’s a 50 percent chance you have it,” Martinez says. Adults with a family history should be screened every five years, athletes and young people yearly.

To diagnose HCM, your doctor will perform a physical, watching for signs such as heart murmur (an indication that a thickened heart muscle is causing abnormal blood flow). For a definitive diagnosis, you may need an electrocardiogram, echocar-
For Michael Watson, it means staying strong by running and playing rugby.

The 43-year-old from Kutztown runs five miles a day and has played rugby competitively since 1984. "That's my idea of wellness—exercising to reduce stress and keep my mind and body healthy," he says. "If something is bothering me, I can work it out in my head without distractions while I'm running. Rugby is another great stress reliever."

For Ellyn Yackanicz, it means keeping life organized.

The busy Emmaus High School student runs nearly every day, lifts weights and plays soccer on her school's varsity team and a club team. To fuel all that activity, she's careful to choose nutritious lunches—"salad instead of pizza"—at school. Organization is her key to a balanced life, she says: "It helps me keep the stress down so I can enjoy my senior year."

diagram and/or cardiac MRI.

If you have HCM, competitive sports are not recommended. "The normal physiologic changes that occur during exercise may increase your risk for sudden death," Martinez says. "Mild to moderate exercise is safe."

The best treatment option for most people is medication to relax the heart muscle and slow heart rate. Those at high risk for sudden cardiac death receive an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). Like a pacemaker, an ICD monitors heart rhythms and delivers an electrical shock if a life-threatening rhythm occurs. If blood flow obstruction persists, open-heart surgery to remove part of the thickened heart muscle (myectomy) is effective. "When the excess muscle is removed, blood flow can return to normal, allowing the heart valves to work properly," Martinez says.

Want to Know More about dangerous abnormal heart rhythms? To view a 3D animation about ventricular tachycardia, visit vhn.org/healthyyou.

Did you know...

The only area hospital providing specialized care for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy (HCM) is Lehigh Valley Health Network. The health network's Regional Heart Center has Pennsylvania's highest heart attack survival rate. Other distinctions: the Center for Advanced Heart Failure, digital cardiac catheterization, specially educated tele-intensivists, Arctic Sun body-cooling technology and special expertise in women's heart care.
Caregiving From Afar
How to ensure a loved one gets needed support

Of course you visit as often as you can. But when you live far from an elderly loved one, "it's very hard," says Catherine Glew, M.D. The Lehigh Valley Health Network geriatrician isn't just speaking professionally—her own mother, 89, lives independently in Glew's native England.

"I know she's a grown-up and still making her own decisions," Glew says. "But the thought of her falling and not being able to get up tugs at my heart." The key, she says, is to know you're doing the very best you can for Mom or Grandpa.

"Elderly relatives tend to minimize problems because they don't want you to worry," says John Boos, R.N., a home health psychiatric nurse specialist with the health network. Here's how to help ensure they get the support they need:

Stay in close contact. "Set a regular pattern of phoning so they can look forward to it," Boos says. "Listen to what they say even if it's repetitive, and acknowledge what they're going through. It's one of the things older people need most."

Set up support systems. Glew does her mother's banking and bill-paying electronically, and even orders her groceries online. (Another good option is Meals on Wheels.) E-mail and Skype (which allows webcam viewing) are beyond some older adults, Glew says, but will be valuable resources as the next generation ages.

Enlist professional help. Private geriatric case managers assess an older person's medical and household needs and arrange assistance of all kinds. For families who can't afford that, Boos says, there are county resources. Contact your loved one's Area Agency on Aging.

Share the burden with siblings. "It can be hard for a sister to ask a brother for help, since women are seen as the caregivers in our culture," Boos says. "Get together and discuss how you can all contribute—for example, one visits more often and another provides financial support. I know from my own family that a parental health crisis can bring siblings closer."

Make the most of visits. Besides sharing all-important face time, this is your opportunity to stock the freezer with healthy, home-cooked meals, check the house for safety hazards and look for symptoms of depression or dementia. (These include fatigue, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, or loss of interest in activities the person once enjoyed.)

Know their doctors and medications. "Keep current with your loved one's medical issues, including any new pills," Glew says. "If she needs to go to the hospital, you may be the only person with a good overview."

Tackle the tough issues. How does your loved one feel about going to a nursing home or being resuscitated? If you've had the conversation, you can make decisions based on what she wants, not what you think she does.

Want to Know More about symptoms to watch for or about having an elderly loved one move in with you? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
A Good Ending
Helping a loved one die peacefully

She held your hand as you walked to kindergarten. Now, you hold hers as she embarks on her final journey. "Just being there is more important than anything," says family medicine physician Bruce Ellsweig, M.D., who directs the hospice program at Lehigh Valley Health Network. "The presence of loving friends and family can help people through the physical, emotional and spiritual process of dying."

Most of us are so isolated from death, we're unsure what to do when a loved one is dying. Some guidelines:

**Take advantage of hospice care.** Hospice is dedicated to helping dying patients live life to the fullest in the time they have left. Don't delay calling the hospice team. They provide medical management and comfort to the patient and support to the family.

**Recognize the stages of dying.** "Dying people experience denial, anger, grief and acceptance, but it's not an orderly progression," says Rev. Tim Hasenecz of the health network's pastoral care team. They may seem accepting one day, in denial the next. "Don't try talking someone out of being angry with God; accept that that's where they are now," Hasenecz says. Giving your loved one permission to die often helps him or her move from anger toward acceptance.

**Be a compassionate listener.** In this way, you can help your loved one deal with the emotions that come with dying. If your father voices regrets about his life, listen to them and honor his feelings. You could point out the good things in his life, but don't dismiss his regrets lightly. Perhaps your mother is upset that she hasn't spoken with her sister for years. You may be able to bring about a reconciliation. Both Ellsweig and Hasenecz have seen physical and emotional pain decrease in patients after they forgive or are forgiven by someone important to them.

**Be prepared for physical changes as the body shuts down.** Dying people often refuse food, and family members get upset thinking they are starving. But ceasing to eat is natural at the end of life, Ellsweig says: "The body loses its ability to absorb nutrients, and the person is not in pain. Using a feeding tube at this point actually prolongs suffering."

**Arrange for alternative therapies.** Hospice offers gentle massage, music and art therapy. Working with the family, caregivers can help patients with whatever activities are meaningful—for example, writing life stories, dictating letters to loved ones, or watching favorite old movies.

**Respect the dying person's religious belief or non-belief.** "Pray with him in his own tradition," Hasenecz says. "Arrange with his religious leader to perform a ritual or recite prayers that will comfort him." Hasenecz cautions against trying to convert a dying person to your personal faith—or any faith at all. "Remember, this is his journey, not yours."

Want to Know More about hospice care? Call 610-402-CARE or visit lvhn.org/healthyyou.
What Is an Electronic Medical Record?

We live in a high-tech world, and your doctor's office is no exception. If you've been there recently, you may have noticed your doctor using a computer instead of paper files to study your medical records. Or maybe you checked in at a touch-screen kiosk rather than waiting for a receptionist.

This is all part of a shift to electronic medical records. "They help clinicians and their staffs collaborate so we can provide the highest-quality care for you," says family medicine physician Maryanne Peifer, M.D., of Lehigh Valley Health Network.

As part of your care, doctors collect information about your condition, medical history, diagnostic studies, medications and family illnesses. Traditionally it was all kept in a paper folder, but now it can be stored in a computer in a way that protects your privacy. The electronic medical (or health) record:

- Ensures that your primary and specialty doctors all have access to your most recent health information
- Means you may need fewer tests, because doctors can access and share your lab results and diagnostic images
- Assists in emergencies because on-call doctors can access your medical history
- Keeps a record of who accesses your information, ensuring your privacy

"The technology can be a win-win for clinicians and patients alike," Peifer says.

Want to Know More about how electronic medical records are transforming health care? Watch a video at lvhn.org/healthyyou.

“I thought I was over the stress. I thought I was healthy.”

April Baylock wasn’t over the stress of her father’s stroke, her husband’s job loss and her own search for work—in fact, it was harming her heart. The 56-year-old Hellertown woman felt a dull pain in her chest during a job interview. “I thought it was nerves or indigestion,” she says. When the pain grew sharper, she went to Lehigh Valley Hospital-Muhlenberg’s emergency room.

Doctors diagnosed her with a heart condition called Tako-Tsubo (or “broken heart”) syndrome. Caused by intense and prolonged stress, the condition can lead to heart failure and death if not treated.

Cardiologist Deborah Sundlof, D.O., recommended cardiac rehabilitation, which Baylock completed. She now monitors her blood pressure, walks regularly and has a new job. “I’m more aware of my stress,” she says, and that helps her manage it.

Lehigh Valley Health Network has:

- The third-largest heart program in Pennsylvania
- Heart Help for Women, a program that addresses women's specific heart care needs
- A mindfulness program to help you manage stress, pain and chronic illness more effectively
Ready to take charge of your health?
We offer programs for all ages and needs. Some have a fee; others (marked as FREE) are no-cost. Call to register at 610-402-CARE or get details at lvhn.org. Registration is required. You’ll get a refund if a class is canceled due to low enrollment.

WHAT’S NEW
For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

Breast Cancer: A Man’s Perspective
• April 22; 6-8 p.m., dinner and speaker
• April 23; 8 a.m.-2 p.m., workshop
At LVH-Muhlenberg

Building Strong Family Financial Foundations
Three-session series with Penn State Cooperative Extension of Lehigh County.
Developing a Budget
• March 29
Credit and Debt
• April 5
File, Don’t File
• April 12
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Can I Play?
Evaluation and treatment of sports-related concussions and seizures, and when it’s safe to return to play. FREE
• March 23; 7 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Get Ready for Summer
Learn the differences between liposuction and smart lipo for body contouring. FREE
• May 16; 5:30-7 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Healthy Bones Series
Three-week series discusses keys to keeping your bones healthy.
Osteoporosis and You
• April 13; 6-7:30 p.m.
Osteoporosis Nutrition, Exercise and Well-Being
• April 20; 6-7:30 p.m.
Osteoporosis Treatment—Meet the Doctor
• April 27; 6-7:30 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Healthy Living With MS
Symposium discusses fatigue, cognition, mood, diet, exercise and safety issues. FREE, lunch provided
• April 10; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Is Breast Enhancement Surgery for You?
Learn about the options and techniques. FREE
• April 20; 5:30-7:30 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Safe Strength Training
It’s vital as you age, to increase muscle quality and endurance and reduce body fat. FREE
• March 16; 2-3 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Mini Medical School
Trauma: Behind the Scenes
Four-week series provides an insider’s view of how emergency medical services and the health network work together to respond to trauma, including disasters. Weekly course topics are: Continuum of Care, Trauma Patients With Special Needs, Surgeons and Teams With Special Skills, When Disaster Strikes. Designed for adults, high school juniors and seniors with a strong interest in science. FREE
• Starting April 6; 6:30-9 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

10th Annual Literacy Center Storybook Breakfast
For children 4-8 and their families. Enjoy costumed characters, interactive storytelling, crafts, bookswap, breakfast.
• March 27; 8-11:30 a.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

Visual Deficits
Learn about conditions related to vision loss, compensation strategies and the latest in low-vision tools. FREE
• April 20; 2-3 p.m.
At LVH-Cedar Crest

AROUND OUR COMMUNITY
For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

First Strides®
This 12-week workshop helps women start fitness walking or running, with the goal of participating in a women’s 5K.
• Starting March 22; 6:15 p.m.
At Stroudsburg
• Starting March 23; 6 p.m.
At Hanover Twp. Community Center
• Starting March 25; 6 p.m.
At Sand Island, Bethlehem
• Starting March 30; 5:30 p.m.
• Starting March 31; 9:15 a.m.
At Bethlehem Twp. Community Center

Walk for a Cause
Join these walks to benefit...
March of Dimes Annual Walk
• May 2
At Dorney Park
MS Walk
• May 2; registration at 9 a.m.
walk at 10 a.m.
At Coca-Cola Park
Relay for Life
• May 7-8; 4 p.m.-4 p.m., Macungie
• May 14-15; 2 p.m.-2 p.m., Slate Belt

Ongoing Programs
Be Safe in a Car
Mark J. Young Medical Challenge
Learn how to be a good driver. FREE with Center admission
• Mon.-Sat., 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
At LVH-Muhlenberg

Community Exchange—Create a healthier community. Volunteer time and earn time by exchanging services with friends and neighbors. FREE
• Third Mondays; 2-4 p.m.
At LVH-17
• First Wednesdays; 6-8 p.m.
At LVH-Muhlenberg

Guardianship Support Agency—Work for a local nonprofit with guardianship services.

Health Insurance for Small Businesses (2-50)—Learn about options through Valley Preferred-contract insurers, including information on consumer-driven health plans. FREE
• April 28

Would a Support Group Help?—Dozens of different groups provide comfort and support. FREE

lvhn.org/healthyyou 610-402-CARE
STAYING FIT
For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

Age-Proof Workout—Cardio and resistance toning combined with mind/body exercise.
  • Starting March 30
Aqua-New—Water exercise for posture, balance, strength and confidence.
  • Starting March 23, March 25
Ballroom Dancing—Learn classic dances such as fox trot, waltz and swing.
  • Starting April 1, April 2
Belly Dancing for Fun and Body Wedge
  • Starting April 23
Body Wedge 21™—Toning/strengthening exercises on a foam wedge.
  • Starting April 29
Boot Camp—Be prepared to sweat with challenging strength training and cardio workout.
  • Starting March 15
Cardio Cross-Training—High-intensity mix of cardio and strength training.
  • Starting March 15
Cardio Kickbox—High-powered routine strengthens mind/body.
  • Starting May 10
Exercise for Life—Low-impact/low-intensity class utilizes chair for muscle conditioning.
  • Every Mon., Wed., Fri.
FlashFit—Circuit training to boost energy and burn fat.
  • Starting March 22
Gym Class for Kids—Exercise in a safe, fun environment. Ages 8-12.
  • Starting April 9
Interval Express—Alternate short bursts of intense cardio with active recovery.
  • Starting April 22, April 29
Kickbox Training Camp—Combines basic muscle strengthening with fine-tuning of punch-and-kick skills.
  • Starting May 12
Mother-Daughter Zumba—Get fit together dancing to Latin-influenced music.
  • Starting March 17
Pilates Express—Deep muscle conditioning to build core strength.
  • Starting March 23
PUMP—Muscle strength/endurance workout using progressive resistance.
  • Starting March 31, April 17
Sampler Class—Try out eight different workouts in eight weeks.
  • Starting March 27
Staying Strong—Strength class combines low-impact cardio with resistance; improves endurance.
  • Starting April 1, May 3
Strength Class—Use dumbbells, resistance bands and body weight to increase strength.
  • Starting April 6, April 7
Yodates—Combines yoga, dance and Pilates all in one class.
  • Starting April 5, April 8
Zumba—Join this Latin dance-influenced aerobics class.
  • Starting April 5, April 6, April 7, April 8

SCREENINGS
For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

HIV FREE
Anonymous and confidential.
• Tue., 1:30-3 p.m. and Thu., 10-11:30 a.m. At LVH-17, AIDS Activities Office

Keep Fit and Stay Healthy—Body Composition—Measures lean body mass plus fat weight. Results interpreted by a registered dietitian.
  • March 15; 5-7 p.m. at Healthy You Fitness Center—Muhlenberg

CANCER FREE

Lung Cancer
Osteoporosis FREE

Bone density—Heel scan to learn about osteoporosis prevention and treatment.
  • April 19; 5-7 p.m. at Healthy You Fitness Center—Cedar Crest
  • May 17; 5-7 p.m. at Human Performance Center

Skin Cancer—By appointment
  • May 4: 6-7:30 p.m. at LVH-Muhlenberg
  • May 5: 6-8 p.m. at LVH-Cedar Crest

Vascular Disease
Stroke
Abdominal Aneurysm
Peripheral Arterial Disease

MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION—Internationally recognized program uses meditation and group support. Most insurances accepted.
  • Introductory session March 23
  • Sessions starting April 6, April 14
  • Retreat for participants and graduates May 15

Natural Mineral Makeup Application—Learn benefits and techniques from professionals in a hands-on workshop. By appointment.
  • May 8

Reiki I—Learn benefits of channeling physical healing energy.
  • March 20, April 17

Reiki II—Advanced techniques to channel emotional healing energy.
  • April 3

Yoga—Build flexibility, strength, reduce stress and rebalance.
  • Starting March 15

Reiki Retreat for participants and graduates May 15

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction FREE

FREE
RAISING A FAMILY

For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

After-Delivery Parent Gathering—For support and discussion on adjusting to a new baby.

Parenting Series—Five-week course to be a more effective, calmer parent

Parenting Workshops—Focus on hot parenting topics.

What to Do When Your Kids Drive You Crazy—March

Power Struggles—April

Safe Ride—Car Seat Safety—Certified technicians show how to correctly install car seats and secure children. FREE

Raising a Family—Our flyer gives details for all programs listed below. Get your copy at 610-402-CARE or lvhn.org/healthyyou.

Pregnancy and Childbirth
  • Becoming Parents
  • Expectant Parent Tour
  • Fit to Be a Mom—Prenatal Exercise
  • My Baby and Me Sibling Tour
  • Pregnancy 101
  • Pregnancy Massage
  • Prepared Childbirth
    One-Day Series
    Weekend
    On the Internet

Caring for Baby
  • Baby Care
  • Babysitting
  • Safe Sitter
  • CPR for Safe Sitter Student
  • Breastfeeding
  • Breastfeeding Baby
  • Monday Morning Moms
  • Depression After Delivery—Postpartum Support

COPTING WITH ILLNESS

For details and to register, call 610-402-CARE.

Get Up and Go—Group exercise for those with Parkinson’s disease or other movement disorders.

Joint Replacement Prep—What to expect for total knee or hip replacement. FREE
  • March 24, April 13, April 21, May 11
    At LVH-Cedar Crest
  • March 25, April 8, April 22, May 13
    At LVH-Muhlenberg

For Cancer Patients

Adolescent Support Group FREE

Bereavement Support Group FREE

Lehigh Valley Chapter of the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition FREE

Look Good, Feel Better—Boost self-esteem during and after cancer treatment. FREE
  • April 19
    With the American Cancer Society

Lymphedema Support Group FREE

Men Facing Cancer FREE

Preparing for Breast Cancer Surgery FREE

For Stroke Patients

Lunch ‘n’ Learn for Stroke Survivors and Family FREE

Stroke Exercise/Educational Program

Stroke Support Group FREE

For MS Patients

Dinner and Discussion FREE

Lunch ‘n’ Learn FREE

MS School FREE

“I wanted to continue caring for my patients as they aged.”

Lehigh Valley Health Network has:

• High-risk pregnancy specialists always on-site
• The region’s highest-level neonatal intensive care unit
• Two fellowship-trained gynecologic oncologists (women’s reproductive cancer specialists)
• A state-of-the-art robotic surgical system to treat gynecologic cancers

That’s why obstetrician/gynecologist Kailash Makhija, M.D., began studying urogynecology. The subspecialty treats women with urinary incontinence or prolapse of the vagina, bladder or uterus—common conditions in older women. Makhija’s new partnership with Lehigh Valley Health Network ensures his patients have access to a full range of specialized services, including complete management for female uterine incontinence.

Makhija traces his patient-centered philosophy to his youth in Bombay (now Mumbai), India. “I noticed women had to travel long distances for good care,” he says. These memories drove him to provide the most complete care he could for his women patients in the Lehighton area, where he has practiced for more than 30 years. “I want them to know they can turn to me for the best care at any stage of life, from pregnancy to menopause,” he says.
Does the number on your thermometer make you nervous? Relax. Lehigh Valley Health Network’s 610-402-CARE (2273) line is the easiest and most reliable way to find the right doctor.

Staffed by nurses and other professionals, we can help you:

- Find a doctor to meet your needs
- Make an appointment
- Arrange for a second opinion
- Register for programs you see in Healthy You
- Learn the latest about Lehigh Valley Health Network services

Get Your FREE magnet and forehead thermometer strip when you call 610-402-CARE for a doctor referral.