What's Their Secret?
This group is celebrating the New Year with renewed lives

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Thriving After ‘Widowmaker’ Heart Attack
Three-Way Paired Kidney Donor Triumph
We Have Options to Help Your Aching Back

Lehigh Valley Health Network
LVHN’s Baby Bundle App

A pregnancy guide just for expectant women

When a baby is on the way, you want accurate information and insights about pregnancy right at your fingertips. With LVHN’s Baby Bundle app, you’ve got it.

- Week-by-week 3D model of your baby from ovulation through week 42
- "The Doc Says" – Weekly content about your pregnancy and developing baby
- "My Timeline" – Customized information based on your due date, including when you can expect to hear the heartbeat
- "My Journal" – Prompts help you write out your thoughts, feelings and concerns as your pregnancy progresses
- An organizer with checklists for your hospital bag, questions to ask your provider at your next appointment, and to-dos
- Helpful tools including a kick counter, weight tracker and contraction timer

Download Today!
The app is customized with content specifically for LVHN patients and is available for Apple and Android devices. For more information, visit LVHN.org/BabyBundle.

After weight-loss, Sue Lesser sought help from plastic surgeon Randolph Wojcik, MD, to remove excess skin.
Does it seem as if you and your kids spend more time facing handheld screens than interacting with each other? The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that kids between ages 8 and 18 spend an average of seven hours a day using a screen or mobile device. Pediatrician Kimberly Brown, MD, with the Children’s Clinic at Lehigh Valley Hospital – 17th Street, sees this trend too. “In the last five to 10 years, screen time has gone way up - particularly in the form of phone and tablet usage,” Brown says.

What’s the risk?
Sedentary use of screen devices can contribute to overweight or obesity among kids. Devices also may interfere with sleep and increase social isolation. There are other concerns. “Reading books is on the decline, and witnessing violence or inappropriately mature content in online media - especially without a parent providing context or limiting that exposure - is increasing among kids,” Brown says.

Set limits
Parents can do a number of things including setting and enforcing limits to screen time:

- **Children under 2 years:** little to no TV time
- **Preschoolers:** no more than one hour a day
- **School-agers:** no more than two hours a day (not including time for school work)
- **Teens:** “I suggest for teens that sports/outdoor play time should be encouraged after school and that school work should be completed prior to allowing screen time,” Brown says.

Fun is the screen ‘antidote’

**Young children**
- Outdoor play
- Indoor play
- Reading
- Playing games
- Create artwork
- Imaginative play

**Older children**
- Outdoor play
- Organized sports
- Reading
- Hobbies - art, music, cooking, building

We want the best for your kids.

- Find a health care provider for your child at LVHN.org/findadoc or schedule now at LVHN.org.
Itching for Answers

Mom-to-be knew extreme itchiness during her pregnancy needed medical attention

Jennifer Sicinski, 31, a mother of two from Harleysville, Pa., knew something was wrong. She was 22 weeks pregnant with her third child and had begun to experience terrible itching. It started on her legs and was becoming so severe that she had trouble sleeping.

“I started waking up with my feet burning. I would put them in an ice water bath before bed,” Sicinski says. “I had no answers and was starting to feel I was crazy.”

Sicinski searched the internet and read about intrahepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP), a condition that lists extreme itchiness as a symptom.

Classic ICP
Sicinski was referred to LVPG Maternal Fetal Medicine by her OB-GYN. There Sicinski met nurse practitioner Karen Tiedeken, CRNP, who immediately recognized the cause of Sicinski’s symptoms.

“Jennifer’s bioassays were not high (for ICP), but the diagnosis can be based on symptoms alone,” Tiedeken says. “Jennifer was taking a hairbrush to the bottoms of her feet. That’s classic ICP.”

ICP is a liver disorder affecting about 1 percent of expectant mothers. Most women recover completely, but the risk for sudden fetal death is as high as 11 percent, particularly after 36 weeks’ gestation. Treatment can include prescription medication and soaking affected areas in lukewarm water. In addition, the fetus is carefully monitored until delivery.

Pregnancy care with ICP
Sicinski transferred to LVPG Maternal Fetal Medicine for care for the duration of her pregnancy.

“We started monitoring Jennifer two times per week using ultrasound to check on fetal well-being,” says fellowship-trained maternal fetal medicine specialist Joanne Quinones, MD, also with LVPG Maternal Fetal Medicine. Plans were made to induce delivery at 36 to 37 weeks.

Nora Grace was born July 14, about three weeks early, but perfectly healthy.

“We take a lot of pride in providing excellent care to women with high-risk pregnancies,” says Quinones. “Every person on our team, including maternal fetal medicine specialists, nurse practitioners and our certified nurse midwife, is focused on the well-being of you and your baby or babies. We will do all we can to help you to a successful delivery.”

It’s a pride point Sicinski echoes. “We are just so thankful that we met the team at LVHN who helped me through ICP and ensured the safe delivery of our daughter,” she says.

— LAURIE HARRINGTON

Are you expecting?
→ Visit LVHN.org/welcomebaby to find out more about our OB-GYN specialties and providers.
Stepping Up Prostate Cancer Treatment

Murry Frink makes a speedy recovery with new system that allows stronger, safer and fewer radiation treatments

After learning he had early-stage prostate cancer in January 2018, Murry Frink of Wyomissing had a big decision to make – where to go for radiation treatments. He wanted the most advanced care, but at 89, he didn’t want to drive far.

“I researched facilities in this region, including two in Philadelphia, and concluded I’d get the best results at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN),” he says. “It’s close to home, and the website’s prostate cancer information impressed me.”

Protecting the rectum from radiation
Frink met with radiation oncologist Steven Perch, MD, with Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute and with Allentown Radiation Oncology Associates. Frink’s timing was perfect. Perch explained he was eligible for a new approach using SpaceOAR® (Spacing Organs at Risk) hydrogel system, which helps reduce radiation treatment time and side effects by protecting sensitive organs, particularly the rectum.

Conventional treatment delivers 44 small radiation doses over nine weeks to prevent damaging nearby organs. Newer hypofractionated approaches allow 28 larger doses over five weeks, but with slightly elevated risk for organ damage. Precision-targeted stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT) technology shortens treatment to five high-intensity doses over two weeks. SpaceOAR hydrogel further reduces risk by forming a protective barrier to shield the rectum. “It’s injected into the space between the rectum and prostate, pushing the rectum outside the treatment zone,” says Perch. “The gel later dissolves naturally.”

Learn more about SpaceOAR.
Visit LVHN.org/spaceoar or call 888-402-LVHN (5846).

Receiving Medicare approval
Frink loved the idea of faster treatment and less driving, but there was one obstacle: Because this was a newer technology, Medicare policies excluded it as a covered service. Reluctantly, he opted for the five-week, 28-dose treatment.

Behind the scenes, SpaceOAR manufacturer Augmenix Inc. and health care providers worked to educate Medicare on the benefits of this new approach. The policy was changed in time for Frink to proceed with his preferred choice of treatment.

In May 2018, Frink became the first patient at John and Dorothy Morgan Cancer Center at Lehigh Valley Hospital-Cedar Crest to receive a minimally invasive SpaceOAR gel injection. He then had five radiation treatments between May 30 and June 8.

Frink is now in remission and marvels at how painless treatment was. “I only had some fatigue after radiation and burning during urination,” he says. “Dr. Perch and the staff were so caring and helped in every possible way. You couldn’t ask for a better experience.”

- SIDNEY STEVENS
Carol Barry knew something was wrong when her husband, Patrick, hadn't returned to their Emmaus home after going out for a run. She had a sense that he was on the ground and that he'd had a heart attack. She was right - her husband of 28 years had suffered a massive "widowmaker" heart attack while out running. But the problem was, she didn't know precisely where he was, and he wasn't carrying a mobile phone or identification.

After unsuccessfully trying to find him on her own, Carol urgently began calling local hospitals. It was only when she called Emmaus Police and they asked, "Is it possible he was out running around 11 a.m.?" that her worst fears were realized. The police dispatcher told her a "John Doe" was found in a yard by a woman playing with her children.

**Lifesaving from the start**

When Patrick Barry was discovered, he was purple-blue from lack of oxygen. Emmaus Police Department officer Craig Blose and paramedic Craig Deppe, with Emmaus EMS, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Patrick was immediately defibrillated by EMS and taken to Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Cedar Crest, unconscious but with a pulse. "It was hour to hour, and there was a lot of prayer," Carol recalls. "I didn't know it at the time, but he was taken to a really great hospital for lifesaving heart care."

At LVH-Cedar Crest, the cardiac team immediately went into action. They opened his blocked artery and placed a stent to keep it open. However, Patrick was in cardiogenic shock, meaning his heart's main pumping chamber, the left ventricle, was too weak to pump oxygenated blood as it normally does. To temporarily support his heart, an Impella® device was used.

**The right technologies**

"The tiny Impella device is implanted using a catheter that's threaded through an artery in the leg," says cardiologist Benjamin Sanchez, MD, with LVPG Cardiology. Impella is placed in the bottom left chamber of the heart (left ventricle), where it pumps up to 4 liters of blood per minute to ensure the body's organs and limbs.
receive adequate blood supply.

"Impella gives the heart a chance to rest and recover," Sanchez says. Doctors also used a technology called Arctic Sun® Temperature Management System to lower his body temperature to 91 degrees. Therapeutic hypothermia helps reduce risk for brain damage that may occur after the brain has been without oxygen.

Lehigh Valley Heart Institute has implanted the Impella device in more than 200 patients at LVH-Cedar Crest and LVH-Pocono, more than any hospital in northeastern Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia region.

"There are very few things that amaze me after all the years that I've been in medicine, but Impella is an amazing tool," says interventional cardiologist Bryan Kluck, DO, with LVPG Cardiology. "Without the Impella, there's a good chance that Mr. Barry would not have survived. If he did, he would have had a very prolonged hospitalization and only a partial recovery. Instead, he's living a very normal life."

**Thriving and thankful**

Patrick left the hospital after 10 days with full brain function and a dedication to getting back to full strength. He spent six weeks completing cardiac rehabilitation and was back to work as a pharmaceutical executive a month later. He credits the cardiac rehab team for its role in helping him on the journey. "Through their monitoring and encouragement, they not only helped me regain physical strength, but also confidence that my heart was healthy and I could return to a normal life," Patrick says.

Today, the father of three eats "cleaner," takes his medications faithfully and exercises four to five times a week at the gym. He also runs farther (4 miles vs. 2.5 miles) than before his heart attack, always making sure to wear a runner's identification band whenever he's out on a run.

"I have to remind myself that I went through that experience because I really feel like myself again," Patrick says. "I'm very blessed."

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**Learn more**

Learn more about the care that saved Patrick's life at Lehigh Valley Heart Institute. Visit LVHN.org/impella.
Phyllis Rothkopf’s heart—and social life—remain strong years after cardiac surgery with help from rehab and fitness classes.

In 2010, Phyllis Rothkopf of Allentown underwent lifesaving cardiac surgery at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) to treat atrial fibrillation (irregular heartbeat). But that was only the beginning of her care.

Since then, Rothkopf, now 93, has remained healthy and active, thanks to Lehigh Valley Heart Institute’s cardiac rehabilitation program and continuing biweekly fitness workouts.

“Between the caring staff and my social group there, it really adds something to my life,” she says.

Heart of the class

Rothkopf was 85 when cardiologist Bruce Silverberg, MD, with LVPG Cardiology, recommended surgery. During a single procedure, cardiothoracic surgeon Raymond Singer, MD, with LVPG Cardiac and Thoracic Surgery, replaced her aortic valve, performed two bypasses and implanted a pacemaker to regulate her heartbeat.

But treatment didn’t end there. Silverberg attributes Rothkopf’s continued good health to her steadfast participation in LVHN’s cardiac rehab and fitness programs, which offer patients ongoing support after treatment.

After surgery, Rothkopf began seeing Bari DiUbaldo, an exercise physiologist with the cardiac rehab program at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Cedar Crest.

During the first 12 weeks, DiUbaldo monitored Rothkopf’s heart continuously during cardiovascular and strength-training workouts on the fitness equipment. Rothkopf also attended nutrition and health classes.

Next she entered a “maintenance” phase, continuing her workouts with DiUbaldo but without the heart monitor.

“Rehab increases patients’ energy, endurance and heart strength, and helps them make lifestyle changes to prevent another heart event,” DiUbaldo says.

Fitness friends

In 2015, Rothkopf entered a post-rehab fitness program at LVHN Fitness-Cedar Crest. Since then she’s arrived every Tuesday and Thursday for a blood pressure and heart-rate check with exercise physiologist Jennifer Cole, followed by a customized fitness regimen.

“It’s important that patients continue exercising after rehab,” Cole says. “Our fitness program has staff to help, but it’s more independent than rehab.”

Just as important is the camaraderie that develops among participants.

“Spending time with people my age who’ve also had heart problems is a big part of my life,” says Rothkopf. “Exercise makes me feel better, but socializing is also important. Sometimes we even get together outside class. I’d be lost without this group.”

-SIDNEY STEVENS
City Care in a Caring Community

With a history of cancer treatment, Jeff Desind knows quality care when he sees it.

Stroudsburg resident Jeff Desind says he’s lived on borrowed time for almost a quarter century. In 1994, he was diagnosed with rare hairy cell leukemia. “It destroys your immune system – so you die of something else,” Desind says. “In 1994, I was going to die of pneumonia.”

Then living in New York City, Desind was ready to fly to Florida for business. Thinking he had a touch of flu, he visited a company nurse. His pallor looked so bad she ordered him to an emergency room. A doctor there previously worked with a researcher investigating hairy cell leukemia and recognized the condition. “This was Tuesday,” Desind recalls. “If I’d have gone to Florida, they’d have shipped my body back by Sunday.”

Big-city bias

The episode helped shape Desind’s attitude that big cities offer the best medical care. For two decades he’s shuttled between institutions like Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK) Cancer Center in New York, Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the Washington, D.C., area, where he received experimental treatments for hairy cell leukemia – some now are approved medications.

But recurrent prostate cancer changed Desind’s mind about big-city care. Although his prostate was removed after a cancer diagnosis in 2009, cancer returned in 2017. “That’s not as uncommon as people may think,” says radiation oncologist Charles Andrews, MD, with Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute at the Dale and Frances Hughes Cancer Center, with Allentown Radiation Oncology Associates. “Often it recurs right where the prostate used to sit.”

Personalized Pocono care

On his NIH doctors’ advice, Desind got 40 radiation treatments over an eight-week period plus hormone therapy at a location closer to home – Lehigh Valley Hospital–Pocono. “Our goal is to render him totally disease-free,” Andrews says, “That’s a reasonable expectation, and he’s doing very well.”

“The doctors here have broken my myth that I’d get better care in New York or Philadelphia,” Desind says. “One doctor in New York saw me for 30 seconds and referred questions to an assistant. That doesn’t happen at Pocono. Here the quality of doctors is the same – but they care about you.”

-RICHARD LALIBERTE

LVHN.org | WINTER 2019
Winter Words to the Wise

Winter wellness tips from LVHN family medicine physicians

1. Get vaccinated.
   "This is priority one," says family physician Victor Catania, MD, with LVPG Family Medicine–Tobyhanna. "Flu season peaks in January and February, but you can get flu throughout the season, so it's never too late to get a vaccine."

2. Wash your hands.
   Actively rub hands with soap and rinse thoroughly under running water. "The amount of time you wash matters," says family medicine physician David Wood, DO, with LVPG Family Medicine–Mountain Top. Wash vigorously for 30 seconds - about the time it takes to recite the ABCs or sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
   Watch video: LVHN.org/Wood

3. Zap germs.
   Use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't handy. "Keep rubbing until all the sanitizer evaporates to get the full benefit," Catania says.

   If power goes out, don't run gas-powered generators in the basement or garage. Have fireplace or stove chimneys cleaned. And install a battery-operated or battery backup carbon monoxide (CO) detector outside your bedroom.

5. Soothe your skin.
   Apply moisturizer a few times a day to keep hands from drying out and creating cracks that make you more susceptible to infection.

6. Get enough sleep.
   "A well-rested person is less prone to illness and recovers faster if sickness does strike," Wood says.

7. Send a beacon.
   "Activate a finder app on your smartphone so family or friends can locate you if you become lost or stranded," says family medicine physician Neil Lesitsky, MD, with LVPG Family Medicine–Albrightsville.

8. Travel like a survivor.
   Keep a winter kit in your car. Include a blanket, flashlight, spare batteries, phone charger, a change of clothing, hand warmers and nonperishable food like beef jerky and cereal bars. "And if you are stranded, be mindful of snow blocking your vehicle's tailpipe, which could expose you to CO gas," Lesitsky says.

   Start with light shovel loads until muscles warm and become less likely to tighten and spasm.

10. Stay hydrated.
    You lose moisture faster in dry winter air, especially when sweating. Drinking water replaces lost fluid.

11. Tread ice like a penguin.
    A waddling, side-to-side gait spreads weight across slippery surfaces and provides surer footing.
Blazing New Trails in Breast Cancer Treatment

Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute care team is always here for you and those you love.

Visit LVHN.org/cancerinstitute to learn more about the ways we can care for you.

SAVI SCOUT®
For breast cancer surgery, surgeons need to clearly locate the tissue that needs to be removed. In the past, that meant “wire localization.” Patients would come in early the morning of surgery for a mammogram. Then, breast imaging doctors would insert a wire into the tumor site to guide the surgeon. A patient would then wait, sometimes for hours, with a wire sticking out of the chest until surgery.

Now, Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute offers a better option: SAVI SCOUT® Wire-Free Radar Breast Localization System.

With SAVI, doctors place a small “reflector” at the tumor site, about the size of a grain of rice. During surgery, the surgeon uses a handheld guide to detect the reflector and accurately remove the tumor.

“Breast cancer surgery can be distressing for women,” says surgical oncologist Lori Alfonse, DO, with Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute and LVPG Surgical Oncology. “Now, we can resolve one of the most difficult aspects of surgery by eliminating the need to place a wire inside breast tissue to locate a tumor.”

Olivia Shannon is a Saucon Valley resident and breast cancer survivor who used SAVI. “I went in, and within five minutes it was done,” she says. “There was no downtime, no pain.”

“We’re proud to be the first hospital in the Lehigh Valley to adopt wire-free localization as standard of care,” Alfonse says.

Better breast cancer staging
If you are facing a breast cancer diagnosis, the most important early step is “staging” the disease.

“Accurate staging is very important,” says Dan Popescu, MD, with Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute, and LVPG Hematology Oncology. “It affects the treatment plan, types of treatment and the chances of curing the disease. It’s critical to be as certain as possible before you start treating a patient.”

That’s particularly true for patients with stage 0 breast cancer, also known as ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS). The newest mammogram technology, as used at Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute, is very good at detecting DCIS by looking for tiny amounts of calcium in the breast.

“For stage 0 breast cancer, we take chemotherapy off the table completely,” Popescu says. “These cancers are highly curable with local treatment, lumpectomy, often followed by radiation.”

State-of-the-art technology, plus great radiologists, provide a much more precise weapon in cancer staging. “You avoid unneeded biopsies, unneeded chemotherapy and unneeded stress for the patient,” Popescu says.

-JASON KOHN

LVHN.org | WINTER 2019 11
Win Win Win
Life-changing three-way paired kidney transplants performed at LVHN

When Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) patients Ryan Genery, 28, John Gallo, 70, and Alfonso Severino, 62, each needed a lifesaving kidney transplant, they had a loved one willing to be a living donor. The bad news: None was a medical match.

But all was not lost. What if each of the three kidney donors could indirectly help their loved one by donating a healthy kidney to a medically compatible stranger? That’s exactly what happened with the first-ever three-way kidney paired exchange at LVHN, the only organ transplant center in the region.


Kidney swaps
Three-way kidney transplants have been done at LVHN among three hospitals, with donor kidneys transported among them. This was the first time the surgery was performed entirely within the health network with patients who were mutually compatible.

“Operating on six people in one day was a huge logistical undertaking,” says Michael Moritz, MD, with LVPG Transplant Surgery. Moritz was in the operating room 13 hours that day, starting with donors James Gallo and Steven Genery, and ending with recipients Alfonso Severino and John Gallo. Meanwhile, Patty Liu, MD, also with LVPG Transplant Surgery, performed the kidney

Watch video: LVHN.org/Moritz
**New App ‘EASEs’ Surgery Communication**

If you have ever anxiously waited to hear how a loved one’s surgery is going, a new app, exclusively in this area at Lehigh Valley Health Network, can help ease your mind.

**App:** EASE (Electronic Access to Surgical Events)

**Who it’s for:** Family and friends identified by surgery patient

**What happens:** Medical staff can securely send text message updates and sometimes photos or videos to the patient’s EASE list.

EASE is a free service offered only at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Cedar Crest, LVH-Muhlenberg, LVH-Pocono, LVH-Hazleton and LVH-Schuylkill for surgical cases that are at least one hour, and for robotic surgery cases at LVH-17th Street.

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transplant of donor Ysabel Severino to Ryan Genery in a different room, with a third surgeon, Pradip Chakrabarti, MD, and a team of anesthesiologists and operating room nursing staff.

"Being a living donor is a big commitment," says LVHN’s Living Donor Coordinator Sonja Handwerk, RN. But it comes with a big payoff. Compared with a kidney from a deceased donor, "recipients who receive a living donor kidney have better outcomes," Moritz says.

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**The ultimate gift**

All three kidney transplant recipients are doing well, which means no more dialysis for Ryan Genery, John Gallo and Alfonso Severino. “I’m feeling 100 percent,” says Severino, a retired truck driver from Allentown. And although it takes two to four weeks for kidney donors to bounce back, James Gallo, Ysabel Severino and Steven Genery are feeling well again. "They say living organ donation is the gift of life, but I didn’t really understand that fully until I saw my brother healthy again," James Gallo says.

-SANDRA GORDON
The shoulder is one of the most mobile joints in the body – and potentially, the most unstable. Injuries such as shoulder instability, tendonitis and rotator cuff tears involve damage to soft tissues caused by repetitive, intensive training.

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) orthopedic sports medicine specialists offer nonsurgical and surgical treatments, as well as rehabilitation, for acute and chronic shoulder issues.

Conservative care
Richard Canlas, MD, primary care sports medicine physician with LVPG Family and Sports Medicine–Health & Wellness Center, provides nonsurgical treatments for shoulder injuries, including medications that reduce inflammation and pain and help restore function.

“As a sports medicine physician, I’m focused on a wellness model,” he says. “My goal is to address the injury with conservative techniques and also suggest measures to prevent a future injury.”

Surgical solutions
Orthopedic surgeon Rupam Das, MD, with LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine, says rotator cuff surgery, which repairs tendons that connect the upper arm bone to the shoulder blade, often can be done arthroscopically through small incisions. “We have many options to reattach the tendon to the bone, including specially designed suture anchors that allow bone marrow and stem cells to grow into the surgical site and promote healing,” he says.

In general, outcomes for shoulder surgery in athletes are very good. “After proper rehabilitation, almost any athlete can expect to get back to full activity,” Das says.

Rehabilitation resources
At Rehabilitation Services–One City Center, physical therapist Kevin Trexler, a rehabilitation clinical specialist, sees athletes who need a range of shoulder care, from postsurgical care to those who need treatment for an acute injury or a chronic issue.

“Our initial focus may be to reduce pain and inflammation by teaching the patient to apply ice, modify activity, or through treatment like electrical stimulation,” Trexler says. “Next, we work on improving range of motion and strengthen the muscles of the rotator cuff, scapula and midback. We also can work on posture and modifying actions that may contribute to chronic pain.”

Collaboration with clinical staff, as well as coaching and training staff, is essential. “We work closely with LVHN physicians and other clinicians to create a treatment plan, as well as with athletic trainers and coaches. This collaboration helps ensure athletes can resume their sport safely,” Trexler says.

Get back in the game.
→ Learn more about LVHN sports medicine offerings. Visit LVHN.org/sportsmedicine.
More Than a Bruise

Hematomas might seem similar to a bruise but can require surgery

A slip and fall injury in your home or driveway may result in a hematoma. Though similar to a bruise, a hematoma is a pool of clotted or partially clotted blood that forms when blood vessels leak or burst. A hematoma can occur deep in the abdominal wall, within internal organs, or in large muscle groups like the thigh. It creates a painful mass and causes surrounding tissues to deteriorate.

When this happens, see your primary care provider for advice, says surgeon Jonathan Perry, MD, with LVPG Surgery-Health & Wellness Center, Hazle Township. Perry specializes in limb and abdominal hematoma treatment.

Who is at risk for hematomas?

“Hematomas often occur in older people with fragile skin and tissues,” Perry says. Also, people who take blood thinners, such as aspirin or warfarin (Coumadin), are at increased risk. Hematomas can result if you fall or sustain any injury that causes blood vessels to break.

How is a hematoma treated?

Most hematomas resolve with conservative methods, including RICE - rest, ice, compression and elevation. Perry approaches surgical treatment with caution, performing blood tests at specific intervals to determine if internal bleeding is ongoing. “We only intervene when the body's natural repair system isn't working,” he says.

What is involved in surgical hematoma care?

Surgical treatment starts by locating the hematoma with a computed tomography (CT) scan. “Once we know exactly where it is, we make an incision in the skin, place a few sutures in tissues around the hematoma to provide internal compression and pack the area with surgical gauze,” he says. Gauze may be left in place for a few days until bleeding stops and the body starts to reabsorb excess blood. At that point, Perry performs a second surgery to remove the gauze and close the wound.

When should you get help?

“If you have pain, swelling or skin discoloration that isn’t getting better, it’s important to get checked for a possible hematoma,” he says. “Elderly people and those with balance problems should do everything they can to reduce their risk for falls, including strength-training exercises or rehabilitation. And finally, it’s important to take blood-thinning medications exactly as directed and to review the need for these medications with your doctor on a regular basis.”

Get stronger and reduce your risk for balance-related falls.

→ Visit LVHN.org/rehab for information about locations near you.
Expressly for You

ExpressCARE can help during cough and cold season (and beyond)

Hacking cough. Sneezing. Runny nose. Congestion. When cold or flu symptoms come on strong and it’s after hours or on the weekend, ExpressCARE is here for you and the whole family—without an appointment, 365 days a year. To make it even more convenient, most sites offer onsite X-ray services and an online estimated wait time (find wait times at LVHN.org/expresscare), so you can select a location with a shorter wait.

When to call 911
For serious issues, such as a broken bone, chest pain, deep cut, head injury, coughing up blood, loss of consciousness, severe stomach pain, suicidal feelings, severe shortness of breath or signs of stroke (numbness, slurred speech and vision changes), call 911.

Treatment
WHEN YOU NEED IT
ExpressCARE is staffed by certified registered nurse practitioners and certified physician assistants. These advanced practice clinicians specialize in common illnesses and injuries, such as:
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Flu symptoms
- Colds or bronchitis
- Eye swelling and irritation
- Fever
- Headache
- Allergies
- Back pain
- Minor cuts
- Nausea
- Rashes
- Sinus congestion
- Sprains
- Strains

You also can visit an ExpressCARE location to get a flu shot—it’s still peak flu season.

Staying in the know
ExpressCARE is part of Lehigh Valley Health Network. So when your ExpressCARE visit is complete, your LVHN electronic medical record is updated. You can see your ExpressCARE visit summary on your own MyLVHN account, and your LVPG primary care physician will see a record of your ExpressCARE visit and know about any treatment you received or if you need follow-up care.

Care
WHERE YOU NEED IT
You don’t need an appointment or a referral to receive care at ExpressCARE, and we’re open every day of the week:

ExpressCARE
8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily
- Bartonsville
- Fogelsville
- MacArthur Road
- Palmer Township
- Pocono
- Tobyhanna
- West End

ExpressCARE
8 a.m.-8 p.m. weekdays
9 a.m.-3 p.m. weekends
- Bangor
- Bethlehem Township
- Blakeslee
- Hazleton
- Macungie
- Moselem Springs
- Muhlenberg
- Nazareth
- Richland Township

Children’s ExpressCARE
Noon-8 p.m. weekdays
9 a.m.-3 p.m. weekends
- Palmer Township

Save this link!
- When you are on the go and need to find us, visit LVHN.org/expresscare.
Virtual House Call

It’s 2 a.m., and your 3-year-old has a fever. Or you’re not feeling well, but you just can’t leave the office. Or you’re feeling ill, and it’s too icy to venture out.

There are many reasons why getting to the doctor’s office or an Express-CARE location can be challenging. Why not let the doctor come to you? Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) Video Visits make it possible.

“Video visits allow you to see a health care practitioner using your mobile device from the comfort of your own home or anywhere in the state of Pennsylvania,” says Eric Bean, DO, with LVPG-Emergency Medicine. “It’s patient-focused, patient-driven care. You can receive care when you want to.”

Pediatric Video Visits

- Ages 3-17 years
- Parent needs proxy access to child’s MyLVHN account
- Visit LVHN.org/videovisits for more information.

How does a video visit work?

Download the MyLVHN app to your iPhone, iPad or Android device. The free, secure and easy-to-use patient app is what you’ll use to schedule a video visit at a selected time that works for you. Appointments are available the same day, typically within 30 minutes of contacting the service.

At your appointment time, you’ll use the MyLVHN app to virtually connect with an LVHN provider – a physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

A video visit is appropriate for minor illnesses such as:
- Redeye (pinkeye)
- Cough/cold symptoms
- Lower back pain
- Urinary problems, such as urinary tract infections
- Ear pain
- Rash/skin problems
- Seasonal allergies
- Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea
- Neck pain
- Insect bite/tick bite
- Cold sore
- Emergent refill request for some prescriptions
- Flu symptoms
- Animal bite

Connected care

Video visits are visual and connect with your MyLVHN electronic medical record. “Continuity of care is what sets us apart from other telemedicine providers,” Bean says. If you have a rash, for example, you can put your phone up to the rash so the video visit provider can see it. “We can take a picture of it and upload it directly to your electronic medical record,” Bean says.

When following up with your regular LVPG provider, your doctor can see what the rash looked like initially and how it may have improved from the recommended treatment. “We do this service better,” Bean says.

LVHN Video Visits are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for patients age 3 and older.

→ Visit LVHN.org/videovisits for more information.

SANDRA GORDON

LVHN.org | WINTER 2019 17
When it comes to the back, there are many intricacies that need to be addressed to ensure you receive the best and most appropriate care. At Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), specialists in a variety of disciplines are part of our Advanced Spine Center. They offer an array of options for relieving back pain or correcting abnormalities in the spine. "We have an integrated model that provides comprehensive care from the simplest strain to the most complex back surgery," says fellowship-trained orthopedic surgeon Jeffrey McConnell, MD, with LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.

Scoliosis – Ahead of the curve
Among the conditions spine specialists treat is scoliosis, or abnormal curvature of the spine. "Scoliosis can be a symptom of something else," McConnell says. "You need to know the underlying cause."

Causes include at-birth abnormalities in vertebrae or growth plates, neuromuscular conditions like cerebral palsy or muscular dystrophy, and scoliosis due to age-related degeneration of joints and discs in the spine. "But most cases occur during adolescence in a form known as late-onset scoliosis," McConnell says.

Late-onset cases often require no treatment. "We follow scoliosis during growth to make sure it doesn't get worse," McConnell says. But 20 to 30 percent of cases progress and need correction, typically with bracing that straightens the spine and guides growth—"like tying a sapling tree to a stake guides its growth," McConnell says.

If curvature has significantly progressed, the condition can be treated surgically with rods, screws and cables, which pull or push the spine into a straight position that a bone graft fuses into place. Such orthopedic procedures are available at numerous locations including the Center for Orthopedic Medicine-Tilghman, Cedar Crest and Muhlenberg.

Physical therapy plays a key role in treatment as well. "Often with back conditions like scoliosis, the trunk is weak, so strengthening exercises are important," says physical therapist Chris Johns, a rehab clinical specialist.

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Herniated disc – All options

If you are coping with back pain, care coordination can be important because underlying causes of back pain vary. “We follow protocols and assure that we appropriately triage patients to the right doctor as quickly as possible,” Lycette says. “Depending on the condition and what caused it, a patient may be referred immediately to a surgeon, however, we exhaust conservative measures before progressing to surgery.” Those measures may include physiatry, pain management and/or chiropractic care.

Advanced Spine Center surgeons specialize in procedures such as microdiscectomy, in which portions of a disc that impinge on a nerve are removed with the help of a powerful microscope. “This minimally invasive approach allows patients to bounce back quickly, often going home the same day,” Lycette says. Microdiscectomy was a godsend to Melissa Thibault of New Tripoli. She’d developed a herniated disc that limited walking and activity. “It sent pain like razor blades down my legs,” she says. A preschool assistant and longtime dancer, she’d recently taken up belly dancing and performed at local restaurants. “I wanted my life back so I could dance,” Thibault says. She received a microdiscectomy in July. “When I woke after surgery, I had no more pain in my leg,” she says. “I felt like a new person.”

People with back pain often wonder if they should see a doctor specializing in orthopedics or neurosurgery, but Advanced Spine Center covers patients either way. “When people contact the Advanced Spine Center, our comprehensive care team works with patients to secure an appointment with the appropriate subspecialist as quickly as possible,” Lycette says. 

Learn more about Advanced Spine Center.

→ Visit LVHN.org/spine or call 888-402-LVHN (5846).
Extending the Boundaries of Robotic Surgery

LVHN robot-assisted surgery helps cancer survivor Joan Hess of Tamaqua heal after cancer returns

After being diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2006, Joan Hess of Tamaqua had a total hysterectomy (removal of her uterus, ovaries and cervix) and thought she was in the clear.

But in 2015, Hess noticed spotting. As a cancer survivor and retired nurse, she knew not to ignore it. "I called my gynecologist right away," she says. "And then the saga continued."

Robot-assisted option
Despite a course of radiation and chemotherapy, cancer infiltrated nearly all organs in her pelvis. In early 2018, when she saw gynecologic oncologist Martin Martino, MD, with LVPG Gynecologic Oncology, she was in excruciating pain and relied on opioid medications to get through each day.

"Joan’s best option was pelvic exenteration, which removes all organs from the pelvis, including the bladder, vagina and rectum," Martino says. "After conferring with my colleague, M. Bijoy Thomas, MD, also a gynecologic oncologist, we were confident in our ability to not only perform the procedure, but do it in a minimally invasive fashion using the da Vinci® surgical robot. That would limit pain, scarring and promote a faster recovery."

Hess didn’t hesitate, even when she realized how extensive the surgery would be. She trusted both doctors and was desperate for relief from her pain.

Martino and Thomas assembled a multidisciplinary team, including urologic and plastic surgeons from Lehigh Valley Special Surgery Institute and specialists from Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute, and planned for the first robot-assisted pelvic exenteration procedure in the region.

Back to her life
Hess’ March 2018 surgery "went as well as we could have hoped," Martino says. "It was a true testament to the teamwork and collaborative care we provide at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN)."

During a month-long inpatient recovery, Hess found that she required less and less pain medication. She returned home in early April, where she slowly reclaimed her life. She continues treatment with immunotherapy to target any remaining cancer cells, but today the 69-year-old is finally able to enjoy simple pleasures again.

"I’m back to gardening, going to church, visiting my grandchildren and going to their football games," she says. "People call me a miracle. I’m grateful for and awed by the care I received at LVHN."

-YASMINE IQBAL

LVHN Robotic Surgery Program
- One of the largest in the nation
- Launched: 2008
- Surgeons: 40+
- Procedures: 10,000+ and counting

Locations
- Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Cedar Crest
- LVH–17th Street
- LVH–Muhlenberg
- LVH–Schuylkill
- LVH–Pocono
- LVH–Hazleton

Learn more
- Robot-assisted surgery is available throughout Lehigh Valley Health Network. Visit LVHN.org/robot.
Facing a Hernia Head-On

A screening session leads Randy Bernhard to hernia repair

When Macungie resident Randy Bernhard, was first diagnosed with a hernia, he was concerned. Looking back, he admits that his initial fear and anxiety came largely from not knowing anything about hernias.

What he did know was that he had mild pain in the right side of his groin. After first seeing his family doctor, Bernhard met with Paul Cesanek, MD, general and bariatric surgeon with LVPG General, Bariatric and Trauma Surgery. Cesanek diagnosed Bernhard with an inguinal hernia, a condition resulting from soft tissue pushing through a weak area in the lower abdominal wall, or groin.

"Randy was becoming slightly symptomatic from his hernia, but he could delay his repair for a period of time," Cesanek says. "I believe in educating patients so that they understand what is going on and what to look for while making their decision regarding surgery."

Prior to understanding his options, Randy, like many patients, was anxious about undergoing surgical repair for his hernia.

Hernia education
To learn more, Bernhard attended a hernia screening session offered at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)-Cedar Crest. The sessions, offered multiple times a year, include an informational presentation, Q&A with surgeons, private hernia screenings, and an opportunity to demo the robotic technology often used for hernia repairs.

"I was amazed at how many people were there, and how many people are dealing with hernias," Bernhard says. "The clinic was hands-on, and all my questions were answered."

Making the repair
Armed with information, Bernhard made another appointment with Cesanek and had a robotic repair of his hernia in January 2018, all within two months of the screening session.

"Dr. Cesanek put me right at ease and explained all of my surgical options," Bernhard says. "I chose to have robotic surgery because it allowed me to heal quickly with minimal time off from work."

Cesanek admits that while Bernhard’s repair was not critical, he would have limited his repair options if he had waited until it was urgent.

Bernhard credits the screening session for nudging him in the right direction. "I was nervous until I understood what a hernia is and how to take care of it," Bernhard says. "If I hadn’t gone to that screening, I may have put my hernia surgery off even longer."

-KRISTEN CHANLEY

Free hernia info and screening events
→ To find a list of upcoming events and locations, visit LVHN.org/herniascreening.
Lehigh Valley Health Network's Transformation Celebration showcased the achievements of more than a dozen LVHN weight-loss patients, age 26-71, who were reunited with bariatric surgeons Richard Boorse, MD, Paul Cesanek, MD, Guillermo Garcia, MD, and Nicolas Teleo, MD. The network recently celebrated its 5,000th bariatric surgery procedure.

While their weight loss varied from 85 pounds to more than 300 pounds, the stories they shared followed similar themes - recovery from type 2 diabetes, less money spent on medications, freedom from knee, back and foot pain, and the biggest change, increased confidence.

Inspired to start your weight-loss journey?
Watch videos from the event at LVHN.org/transformation and sign up for a free info event.

⇒ Hazleton and Schuylkill region
LVHN.org/nepabariatrics
⇒ Lehigh Valley region
LVHN.org/weightloss
⇒ Pocono region
LVHN.org/poconobariatrics

My wife pushed me into weight-loss surgery. And I thank her every day.
David Rodriguez, lost 125 pounds

My motivation? I wanted to be able to see my son graduate from college and be able to walk up to where the ceremony was being held.
Latisha Miller, lost more than 155 pounds

Jennell Morcombe, lost more than 90 pounds
The hardest thing was learning to eat more often during the day.
Veronica Hayes, lost 85 pounds in nine months

The man that stands before you is the guy my 500-pound self always dreamed of being.
Carlos Torres, lost more than 240 pounds

I have more options for clothes, and they’re less expensive.
Stella Barr, lost more than 85 pounds

My diabetes got so bad, I lost part of my toe. That’s when I learned this surgery can reverse type 2 diabetes.
Randy Zimmerman lost 320 pounds

I was a binge eater. I looked in the mirror one day and decided, “That’s enough.”
Jillian Wexler, lost more than 110 pounds
He’s growing fast. So are we.

The region’s leader in pediatric care has a new name: Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital

Thanks to the Reilly family, the only children’s hospital in the area will be able to provide even more quality care – all under one roof.

We already have the most pediatric doctors in the region – plus a surgery center and ER designed just for kids. And now, with the Reillys’ gift, we will further enhance our neonatal and pediatric intensive care units, as well as expand our pediatric surgical programs.

Like you, we want only the best for our kids. Which is why we’re committed to providing the highest level of care possible, right here, close to home.

LVHN.org/children  I  888-402-LVHN