



### Earn \$10K for Referring a Nurse to LVHN!

Help us find great colleagues like you and get rewarded with a huge bonus.

[Read more →](#)

### Face Masks Now Required at All LVHN Locations

Colleagues working in administrative buildings must wear a mask.

[Read more →](#)



### Delta Medix Joins LVHN

Current Delta Medix patients will still see the same great doctors and medical staff at the same locations.

[Read more →](#)



### Help Us Attract New Colleagues

Learn how you can spread the word that LVHN is hiring now.

[Read more →](#)



## Virtual Visit, Injury Center, ExpressCARE or Emergency Room?

It's important to know where you should go for your urgent medical concern.

[Read more →](#)



## Update: Fast COVID-19 Testing for Colleagues to Return to Work

Learn what to do if you need a test to return to work.

[Read more →](#)



## 2022 Friends of Nursing Award Nominations Now Open

Submit a nomination by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9.

[Read more →](#)



## January Calendar of Events

See what's happening at LVHN all month long.

[Read more →](#)



## Tips to Prepare Your Child for a COVID-19 Vaccine

There are ways to help make it easier.

[Read more →](#)



## Pediatric Cases of COVID-19 are Rising

Masks work. Both science and logic back that up.

[Read more →](#)



## Top Baby Names at LVHN for 2021

The popularity of names does vary by region.

[Read more →](#)



## Avoid These Inflammatory Foods to Ease Joint Pain

Many foods can trigger systemic inflammation, but there are

nine that are particularly concerning.

[Read more →](#)



---

## Songwriter Uses Her Battle With Leukemia to Inspire Others

The 62-year-old East Stroudsburg resident is grateful for her team at LVHN.

[Read more →](#)





## Earn \$10K for Referring a Nurse to LVHN!

Help us find great colleagues like you and get rewarded with a huge bonus.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, December 30, 2021

Make some calls, send some texts and write some emails, because there are nursing roles available across LVHN.

LVHN is expanding its referral bonuses to include registered nurses AND graduate nurses. That means when you refer a qualified nursing candidate who gets hired to work in an inpatient department, you will BOTH receive a \$10,000 bonus!

It could be anyone – your best friend, your college roommate, even a sibling – as long as they're a qualified nurse focused on delivering high-quality care, you'll both be rewarded!

### Here's how it works for you:

- When you refer a qualified registered nurse or graduate nurse, you will get a \$10,000 bonus!
- To qualify for the referral bonus, the nursing candidate must be hired to work in an inpatient department.
- There is no limit to how many referrals you can make.

### Here's how it works for the nurse you refer:

- The nurse will get a \$10,000 referral bonus when he or she is hired and up to a \$20,000 sign-on bonus, depending on the nurse's specialty, and
- Graduate nurses who accepted loan forgiveness remain eligible for the referral bonus.

Both you and your referral will receive the bonus in the first paycheck following the referral's start date with LVHN.

When you refer a candidate to LVHN, the candidate should include your name on their application. Candidates can explore job opportunities at [LVHN.org/careers](https://www.lvhn.org/careers).

You know LVHN is a certified Great Place to Work. So, invite your friends and relatives to join our team of exceptional colleagues and they'll get rewarded on day one... and so will you!

---



## Face Masks Now Required at All LVHN Locations

Colleagues working in administrative buildings must wear a mask.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

LVHN continues to monitor the ongoing surge in COVID-19 cases throughout our region. To protect our colleagues, patients and visitors during this surge, LVHN has updated its safety guidelines to include the following, effective immediately:

- **All LVHN colleagues are now required to wear a mask at all locations.** This includes all health care settings, as well as administrative buildings and offices.
- **Colleagues are highly encouraged to work remotely.** Colleagues are not required to work remotely, but should if they are able to do so.
- **On-site work is still permitted for meetings and interactions where face-to-face contact is deemed essential.** Masking is required.

These updated guidelines will help keep colleagues and our communities safe, given the rapid spread of the omicron variant and the increase of positive COVID-19 cases throughout our region.

Thank you for protecting those who may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 by wearing a face mask in our facilities and following LVHN guidelines.

---

## Delta Medix Joins Lehigh Valley Health Network

New era for health care in northeast Pennsylvania begins Dec. 28

By **Joe Nixon**  
December 28, 2021



Our Scranton community is getting a health care present for the holidays.

[Delta Medix](#) will become part of [Lehigh Valley Physician Group \(LVPG\)](#) today (Dec.28), ushering in a new era of exceptional health care. LVPG is part of Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN).

### [A health care partner that's second to none](#)

"Bringing Delta Medix into LVPG gives residents of this region greater access to the leading-edge, comprehensive care they've come to expect and deserve from both groups, and the best part is it's all here in the Scranton area," says James Demopoulos, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, LVPG. "With the opening of [Lehigh Valley Hospital-Dickson City](#) scheduled for spring 2022, there's a lot to look forward to in health care."

[Delta Medix is the Scranton area's leading specialty practice with a long track record of success.](#)

Delta Medix is the Scranton area's leading specialty practice with a long track record of success. Each year, it cares for over 42,000 patients and performs over 17,000 surgical procedures. Margo Opsasnick, Chief Executive Officer for Delta Medix, says joining LVPG sets current and future patients up for long-term success. "The medical depth and breadth of LVHN on so many fronts is a game changer," she says.

### [What's in store](#)

Current Delta Medix patients won't see any substantial changes. They'll still see the same great doctors and medical staff at the same locations at the Steamtown Mall and at the Center for Comprehensive Cancer Care on Morgan Highway.

The Delta Medix move to LVPG means easier access to:

[Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute](#): With more than 50 years of heart surgery experience and the most experienced cardiologists and cardiac surgeons in the region, we offer specialized programs in women's heart health, sports cardiology, advanced heart failure technologies, peripheral vascular and venous care, and rhythm disturbance care.

[Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute](#): There are clinical trials, innovative treatment and technology with access to an extensive team of cancer care professionals, including more than

40 board-certified and board-eligible surgical, medical and radiation oncologists. This leading-edge cancer care is enhanced by our exclusive membership in the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Alliance.

**Lehigh Valley Institute for Surgical Excellence:** People with serious illnesses that require surgery can be assured that our surgeons have the most experience in the region. Our emphasis on minimally invasive, leading-edge technologies, such as robotic surgery, allows our patients to return to their work and lives more quickly.

**Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital:** With over 30 pediatric specialties, Breidegam Family Children's ER, child-focused cancer care and more, we're better prepared than anyone in the region to take care of kids and meet the rigorous criteria of the Children's Hospital Association.

---



## Help Us Attract New Colleagues

Learn how you can spread the word that LVHN is hiring now.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, December 23, 2021

An effort to attract new colleagues is underway amid a national shortage of health care professionals. We're leveraging everything that makes LVHN a certified Great Place to Work to recruit and retain colleagues. That includes YOU.

### Spread the word

As a community advocate for LVHN, you play an important role in attracting new colleagues to join the LVHN family. Here is what you can do:

- Tell your family, friends and neighbors that LVHN is hiring now.
- Update your professional network if you've recently joined the LVHN family or started in a new role. Be sure to update your LinkedIn profile to reflect your current job.
- Follow LVHN on social media and share messages LVHN posts about career opportunities on your social media channels.
- Encourage people to explore career opportunities at [LVHN.org/careers](https://www.lvhn.org/careers).

### Tips for sharing on social media

Not sure where to start? [Use these talking points and social media graphics to get you started.](#)  
Note: This link takes you to a page on LVHN's intranet that you must access from an LVHN computer.

### 1. Provide background (pick one)

- Grow your career with LVHN – from hire to retire.
- LVHN is the region's largest employer and health care provider of choice.
- Our nearly 20,000 health care professionals take pride in what they do and are driven by our mission to heal, comfort and care for the people of our community.
- If you are someone who aligns with LVHN's core values – Compassion, Integrity, Collaboration and Excellence – you will have a rewarding and successful career here.

### 2. Mention a national recognition (pick one)

- LVHN is named a [2021 Best Workplace in Health Care & Biopharma™ by Great Place to Work® and Fortune.](#)
- Be yourself and be #LVHNProud. LVHN is a [Leader on the Healthcare Equality Index \(HEI\), a national LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Ranking.](#)
- LVHN nurses in the Lehigh Valley [achieved Magnet® designation five consecutive times,](#) making Lehigh Valley Hospital one of the top hospitals for a nursing career.
- For newly licensed nurses, [LVHN's Nurse Residency Program is the first in Pennsylvania to receive accreditation with Distinction from "Accreditation with Distinction" from the American Nurses Credentialing Center \(ANCC\).](#)

### 3. Highlight your favorite perk (pick one)

- **Generous tuition reimbursement.** Colleagues receive 100% tuition reimbursement up to an annual undergraduate or graduate program maximum. The cost of textbooks and fees charged to all students, including graduation fees, also are eligible for reimbursement.
- **Professional and leadership development.** Internal consulting resources encourage and support all colleagues to pursue their professional goals. Given the size and breadth of our network, there are numerous opportunities to grow a career over a professional lifetime at LVHN.
- **Discounts and perks.** A wide selection of discounts and perks are available to LVHN colleagues provided by the LVHN Recreation Committee. Perks include group trips, discounted tickets to amusement parks and sporting events, presale concert tickets and more.
- **Pet adoption program.** LVHN offers Pet Adoption Assistance. This unique benefit contributes up to \$250 toward a recent qualifying rescue pet adoption.

### 4. Direct your network to apply (pick one)

- Explore opportunities and apply at [LVHN.org/careers.](#)
- Explore nursing opportunities at [LVHN.org/careers/nursing-careers.](#)
- Explore opportunities for graduate nurses at [LVHN.org/graduaturnurse.](#)

- Explore physician and advanced practice clinician opportunities at [LVHN.org/jobs](https://www.lvhn.org/jobs).

## 5. Add #LVHNProud

---

# Virtual Visit, Injury Center, ExpressCARE or Emergency Room: Which Is Right for You?

With patient volumes increasing at health care centers across the country, it's important to know where you should go for your urgent medical concern.

By Maggie Wurst



As COVID-19 cases rise across the country, we are seeing a large increase in volume at all Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) locations, especially at our emergency rooms (ERs) and ExpressCARE locations.

This is causing longer wait times and other difficulties with accessing care in a timely manner.

It's more important than ever to know the difference between emergency and less urgent medical concerns, and which facility and care option is right for you.

To help you determine what kind of medical care you need, we've put together the tips below:

### Virtual visit options

In most cases, the best first step for receiving care is a virtual visit through your MyLVHN app or on [MyLVHN.org](https://www.lvhn.org). Virtual options include LVHN ExpressCARE Video Visit, E-visits or our 24/7 nurse line (888-402-LVHN). These virtual options keep you safe at home and help our providers evaluate your needs and determine if you should be seen in person.

Virtual visits are available if you are experiencing any of the following:

- COVID-19 symptoms
- Cough, cold or flu
- Ear pain
- Muscle or bone pain

- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Pinkeye
- Seasonal allergies
- Sore throat
- Urinary problems
- Animal bites
- Cold sores
- Insect bites
- Rashes
- Lower back pain
- Neck pain

To learn more about our virtual visit options, visit [LVHN.org/virtualcare](https://www.lvhncare.org/virtualcare).

### Where to get care for orthopedic injuries

Due to high volumes at our LVHN ExpressCARE walk-in locations, we highly recommend going to one of our [Orthopedic Injury Centers](#) for the fastest possible care for the following:

- Fractures or breaks
- Slip-and-fall injuries
- Sports injuries
- Strains
- Sprains

### When to visit LVHN ExpressCARE locations

When you need to see a doctor in person and a video visit isn't an option, LVHN ExpressCARE locations offer walk-in care. Due to high volumes, we encourage you to check wait times on our location pages before coming in for the following:

- Allergies
- Animal bites
- Back pain
  - Care also available for back pain through our Advanced Spine Center. For same-day/next-day appointments, call 610-402-3300.
- Broken bones without an open wound
- Bronchitis
- Cough or sore throat
- COVID-19 tests
  - You will need to get a script before coming in. Learn how to get a script by visiting our [Testing Services webpage](#).
- Ear pain
- Eye swelling or irritation
- Flu or cold
- Flu shots
- Minor fever
- Minor headache

- Minor wounds
- Nausea
- Poison ivy
- Rashes
- Sinusitis
- Sprains or strains

### When to go to the ER

When you're faced with a serious health concern that requires immediate care, an LVHN ER is the best place to go.

If you or someone you love is experiencing any of the following, you should seek emergency room care right away:

- Broken bone accompanied by an open wound
- Chest pain
- Deep cuts or wounds that won't stop bleeding
- Coughing up blood
- Any type of head injury
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe abdominal pain
- Severe shortness of breath
- Signs of stroke, including numbness, impaired balance, drooped face, speech slurring or blurred/double vision
- Suicidal thoughts

### Seeking appropriate care

Determining the right option for medical care is incredibly important, not only for yourself but others in our community as well. Selecting the right care option will help reduce wait times across our health system and allow you to get the most appropriate care as soon as possible.

---



## Update: Fast COVID-19 Testing for Colleagues to Return to Work

Learn what to do if you need a test to return to work.

LVHN Insider

Monday, December 27, 2021

**The information below is a correction to the announcement about COVID-19 testing for colleagues that was distributed Dec. 23, 2021.**

HNL Lab Medicine has established a process to expedite COVID-19 test results for colleagues who need results to return to work. Test results will be available 4-6 hours from the time the test reaches the lab.

### **Symptomatic colleagues**

Colleagues who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 require testing to return to work. Colleagues **MUST** have a lab order designating that they are an LVHN or HNL Lab Medicine colleague to receive a quicker turnaround time for testing.

To get your required lab order:

- Talk with your primary care provider.
- Call the LVHN Nurse line at 888-402-LVHN (5846).
- If you have COVID-19 symptoms, have an [ExpressCARE video visit](#) or visit an [ExpressCARE location](#).

Colleagues must show proof of employment when they arrive for testing. **Colleagues with COVID-19 symptoms** can visit an LVHN [ExpressCARE location](#) or LVHN Diagnostic Care Center location for testing. Test results will appear in your electronic health record in MyLVHN.

### **Asymptomatic colleagues**

**Fast testing availability for asymptomatic colleagues** following documented exposure is meant to facilitate more rapid return to work. Testing for personal reasons, such as travel, should be performed through the normal process to allow for prioritization of results that impact staffing.

Colleagues **MUST** have a lab order designating that they are an LVHN or HNL Lab Medicine colleague to receive a quicker turnaround time for testing.

To get your required lab order:

- Talk with your primary care provider.
- Call the LVHN Nurse line at 888-402-LVHN (5846).

**Asymptomatic colleagues** can visit one of these HNL Lab Medicine locations for fast testing:

- [Allentown Medical Center](#)
- [Allentown Towne Center](#)
- [Hanover Avenue](#)
- [Brodheadsville](#)

- [Carbon Plaza Mall](#)
- [Health Center at Mountain Top](#)
- [Palmerton](#)
- [Pottsville](#)
- [Health Center at Richland Township](#)
- [West Hazleton](#)
- [Health Center at Easton](#)
- [East Stroudsburg - Eaglesmere Circle](#)
- [Health Center at Bangor](#)
- [Health Center at Hellertown](#)

**Contact your local employee health services office when you receive your results for further guidance.**

- If your results are negative, your symptoms have improved and you do not have a fever for 24 hours, call employee health services and leave a voicemail stating your full name, SUI, negative test results and that you are returning to work.
- If your results are positive, contact your local employee health services office to discuss when you can return to work.

If you have questions, please contact HNL Lab Medicine at 877-402-4221.

---



## **2022 Friends of Nursing Award Nominations Now Open**

Submit a nomination by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, December 23, 2021

Friends of Nursing recognizes and promotes excellence in nursing practice, nursing education and nursing research. Consider nominating a deserving colleague for a prestigious Friends of Nursing Award by Sunday, Jan. 9.

The nomination form and the nomination book can be viewed electronically on the LVHN Intranet home page, under Announcements.

- [2022 FON nomination form](#)

- [2022 Friends of Nursing nomination book](#)

## RESOURCES

<b>Colleague Resources</b> <a href="#">API Support Site</a> <a href="#">Benefits</a> <a href="#">Calendar - Education</a> <a href="#">Calendar - Network</a> <a href="#">CH Downtime Forms</a> <a href="#">CH Requests</a>	<b>Announcements</b> <a href="#">* COVID-19 (Coronavirus)</a> <a href="#">** 21st Century Cures Act</a> <a href="#">2019 June Cardiology Grand Rounds</a> <a href="#">2021-2022 Resident Poster</a> <a href="#">2022 FON nomination form</a> <a href="#">2022 Friends of Nursing Booklet</a>
--	--

All nomination materials must be submitted together. Attachments to the Nomination Form include:

- Nomination letter by nominator
- One letter of support

A personal exemplar is no longer required for any FON nominations.

Please include a photo of the nominee. Complete all the requested information on the [Nomination Form](#), attach all required materials and press submit.

Incomplete nomination packets will not be accepted. All nominations must be submitted through the nomination form on the Intranet.

---



## January Calendar of Events

See what's happening at LVHN all month long.

LVHN Insider

Thursday, December 30, 2021

From fun events, to month-long celebrations, to sales in our gift shops, there is so much going on at LVHN! You'll find it all on January's calendar of events. Print the calendar below, post it in your department, get involved and take advantage of everything LVHN has to offer our colleagues.

## Cool Colleague Calendar



### Daily events

**Jan. 1**

**New Year's Day**

**Jan. 3**

**Festival of Sleep Day**

**Lights at the Lake**

(Sponsored by LVHN)

6-10 p.m.

Mauch Chunk Lake, Jim Thorpe

**Jan. 5**

**LVHN Gift Shops**

**Wacky Wednesday**

**Clothing Sale**

One item, 20% off

Two items, 25% off

Three items, 30% off

**Miller Keystone Blood Drive**

10 a.m.-4 p.m.

LVH-Cedar Crest,

Cancer Center conference rooms

2 and 3

**LVHN Gift Cart**

12-3 p.m.

LVH-Cedar Crest,

1230 and 1240 buildings

**Jan. 10**

**2022 My Total Health**

**Incentive Program launches**

**Jan. 12**

**LVHN Gift Shops**

**Wacky Wednesday**

Scarves and hats 20% off

**LVHN Gift Cart**

12-3 p.m.

LVH-Cedar Crest,

Kasych Family Pavilion

**Jan. 13**

**LVHN Gift Cart**

10-11:30 a.m.

LVH-17th Street

**Jan. 17**

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**Jan. 19**

**LVHN Gift Shops**

**Wacky Wednesday**

\$10 jewelry

(select brands and pieces)

**LVHN Gift Shop**

**Nurses' Clogs Sale**

11 a.m.-1 p.m.

LVH-Muhlenberg, Grace Gift Shop

LVH-Cedar Crest,

Jaindl Pavilion, first floor

**LVHN Gift Cart**

12-3 p.m.

ACP, Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's

Hospital, Jaindl Family Pavilion

**Jan. 20**

**National Cheese Lover's Day**

**Jan. 22**

**Wonderland on Main**

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Promenade Shoppes

at Saucon Valley

**Volunteers needed,**

**please contact**

**Courtney.Penrose@lvhn.org**

**Jan. 25**

**Growing Resilience with**

**Mindfulness online program**

**begins**

Through Mar. 1

**Jan. 26**

**LVHN Gift Shops**

**Wacky Wednesday**

Scents, lotions and fragrances

20% off

**LVHN Gift Cart**

12-3 p.m.

LVH-Cedar Crest,

1250 building

**Jan. 27**

**LVHN Gift Cart**

10-11:30 a.m.

LVH-17th Street

**Jan. 28**

**Have Fun at Work Day**

**Jan. 31**

**Enroll in four My Total Health**

**Challenges**



Scan the code  
or visit [mth.lvhn.com](http://mth.lvhn.com) for  
information about My Total Health



## Tips to Prepare Your Child for a COVID-19 Vaccine

There are ways to help make it easier

By **Hannah Ropp**



News that the COVID-19 vaccine was available to children ages five to 11 had many parents breathing a sigh of relief. However, some parents faced a new challenge. Convincing their

fearful child to get the vaccine. Our team at Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital has some tips on how you can help your child prepare for their COVID-19 vaccine.

After dealing with the [COVID-19](#) pandemic for nearly two years, many parents celebrated when the [COVID-19 vaccine](#) was approved for kids age five to 11. However, many kids weren't so excited. Parents now face a different challenge – trying to calm the nerves of their anxious child.

The child-life team with [Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital](#) has some tips for parents on how to prepare children for their COVID-19 vaccine.

### Tell the truth

Honest, accurate, age-appropriate explanations are best. It's OK to acknowledge that the injection might hurt but put that feeling in context by comparing it to a pinch or poke. If we don't define what "hurt" means, kids may use their imagination to come up with something much worse than the reality.

### No surprises

Talk to the physician or nurse administering the vaccine and share a plan that works best for your child and stick to that plan. Sometimes providers will "surprise" kids and give the injection earlier than planned and that break the child's trust. You can avoid this situation by requesting to stick to a plan.

### Ask about pain management

Before going to your child's vaccine appointment, ask about what comfort measures are available. There are a number of topical numbing creams and sprays that can be used to minimize needle pain but some need time to take effect. It's best to know the plan before leaving home.

### Advocate for comfort positioning

Depending on the age of your child and their comfort level with needles, the medical professional giving the vaccine may want you to hold your child to minimize movement. Ask if you can hold your child in a chest-to-chest hug position on your lap. This position is less threatening than being held down by strangers and allows you to talk to, distract, and comfort your child while the doctor or nurse administers the vaccine.

---

## **Pediatric Cases of COVID-19 are Rising—Now is NOT the Time to Say Goodbye to Masks**

By **Debra L. Carter, MD**

December 23, 2021



Dr. Carter is Executive Vice Chair, Department of Pediatrics and Clinical Affairs for Lehigh Valley Health Network.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been wearing all of us down thanks to the Delta variant. And now we have Omicron on the heels of a summer surge that hit children more than any other surge.

That surge isn't going away like predicted or hoped. In fact, we're seeing cases in children going up. Last week at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) we saw the highest number of 6 to 12-year-olds test positive for COVID-19 ever—more than 350. We also saw more children hospitalized for COVID-19 than ever before.

But the good news at the near two-year mark is we've learned what works best against the virus. The tried and trues, if you will. Masks and vaccines. Are they perfect? No. Are they safe? Yes. Are they being used? Not exactly.

Roughly 20 percent of 5-9-year-olds in Lehigh County have gotten a COVID-19 shot. It's even lower in Northampton County. We can do better—and we *have* to do better if we want to put the pandemic behind us and keep our kids in school.

As a mom and a pediatrician—I understand the importance of informed consent and a parent's obligation to make the right choice for their child. But it's vital that parents are presented with the facts—not fear and fiction so easily accessible on social media—when making decisions like this.

Here are the facts. Vaccines are safe. Side effects are rare. And the risk of COVID-19 far outweighs any small risk associated with vaccination. Early reports also suggest that booster shots will offer better protection against Omicron which has already been detected in our state.

If vaccines are our best line of defense, and they are, masks are number two. It is unfortunate and troublesome that at a time when viruses and other illnesses are most likely to spread—we're seeing fewer people mask up. It is especially concerning in schools—as pediatric cases rise, and vaccination rates remain low.

Masks work. Both science and logic back that up. Fewer droplets in the air mean less opportunity for COVID-19 and other viruses to jump from person to person. We've been

covering our coughs and sneezes for years. Why? Because blocking a cough or sneeze limits a virus's ability to travel and it's the polite thing to do. A mask offers even better protection than your hand or elbow. Masks limit spread. That fact does not depend on whether masks are required in school and so your decision whether to wear one shouldn't either. The reality is that schools are a place of spread, even more so now with the new variants and less masking.

No one likes wearing a mask—and you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who enjoys getting a shot. But these choices shouldn't be made based on whether we like doing it. These are common sense, evidence-based approaches.

And let's remember another thing we learned about combatting COVID-19. Lockdowns work too—and none of us want that again. We know what the short- and long-term impacts of that are. We know what that did to children—and we must protect them from *that* too. And we can.

Wear your mask. Have your child wear a mask. When it's time for your child to get his or her shot, and you to get your booster—let the facts guide your decision. That fact-based decision will guide us out of this pandemic.

---

## Top Baby Names at Lehigh Valley Health Network for 2021 Match Most Popular Baby Names Nationwide

By **Brian Downs**  
December 27, 2021



Parents delivering their newborns at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) in 2021 through early December are generally keeping with the national trends when it comes to what to name their latest addition to the family. At LVHN, Olivia is the most popular name for girls this year. It is also the most popular name around the country for 2021 according to [Opens in new tabbabycenter.com](https://www.tabbabycenter.com).

Of nearly 6,000 births at LVHN so far in 2021, 35 girls were named Olivia, and it was the most popular name among girls born at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Pocono. Coming in a close second among girls' names were Emma and Charlotte. Emma also is the second most popular name for girls nationally this year and has been among the leading names given to girls at LVHN the past several years.

On the boys' side of the ledger, Liam edged out Noah as the most popular name at LVHN, the same result nationally. Forty-eight Liams and 47 Noahs were born this year at LVHN. The third most popular boy's name was Lucas, which ranks fifth nationally per [Opens in new tabbabycenter.com](http://tabbabycenter.com).

In scanning this year's list, other interesting findings show other names that remain popular include Charlotte, Isabella, Sophia and Chloe. Two girls born at LVH-Hazleton were named Hazel, as was one girl born at LVH-Pocono. LVH-Pocono also had a Heart on the list. There's a Diva and a Dior among the girls, too.

For boys Elija, Jacob and Logan are popular as are some traditional top runners including Matthew, John and Joseph, but you'll also find more unique monikers like King, Mordechai and despite living among a mostly Philadelphia Eagles fanbase in eastern Pa., there also is one Dallas on this year's list.

And as it is the Christmas season, you'll also find one Saint and more than a handful of Nicholas's with various spellings.

The popularity of names does vary by region. For instance, while Emma, Olivia and Charlotte led the way among girls' names in the Lehigh Valley, Alaia and Gianna were the most popular in the Hazleton area, Olivia and Luna in the Poconos, and Ava, Charlotte and Kinsley in Schuylkill County. Among boys, Noah and Liam were the front-runners at LVHN's Lehigh Valley and Hazleton hospitals, Lucas, Liam and Elias topped the list at LVH-Pocono and Michael, Lincoln and Noah were picked the most at LVH-Schuylkill.

---

## Avoid These Inflammatory Foods to Ease Joint Pain

By Ted Williams



Inflammation is the body's natural reaction to tissues being injured by trauma, toxins, heat and many other causes. This short-term response is actually healthy. But when inflammation is long term, such as a reaction to arthritis, diabetes and autoimmune disease among other chronic conditions, it can become problematic.

Avoiding foods that can trigger inflammation is especially important for people with these conditions.

“Many people aren’t aware that eating certain foods can cause painful arthritic or diabetic flareups,” says rheumatologist [Rebecca Sharim, MD](#), with [LVPG Rheumatology–Hecktown Oaks](#). “Nutrition can be crucial when battling what is known as systemic inflammation.”

This problem impacts more people than you might think.

“Some estimates indicate more than half of all adults in the U.S. develop at least one chronic condition,” says rheumatologist [Alexis Zavitsanos, MD](#), with [Coordinated Health Allentown–1503 N. Cedar Crest Blvd](#). “And many Americans have more than one condition. These are people who should be aware of what they’re consuming.”

Many foods can trigger systemic inflammation, but there are nine that are particularly concerning. Here is a list from the Arthritis Foundation:



- **Sugar** – Studies have shown that sugar, particularly processed sugars, may trigger inflammation in the joints. Sugar can take many forms, and it’s advisable to check food labels closely.



- **Saturated fats** – Traditional American diet staples such as pizza, red meat and pasta dishes can contain saturated fats, which can lead to arthritis inflammation. Saturated fats also can cause heart disease.



- **Trans fats** – These are common among fast food favorites as well as processed snacks, doughnuts and several other popular food items. They all can trigger inflammation.



- **Omega-6 fatty acids** – Mayonnaise, peanut oil and salad dressing are culprits when it comes to fatty acids, which can stimulate inflammation. However, there are studies that have disputed this.



- **Refined carbohydrates** – Be wary of french fries. Breads, crackers and a variety of cereals that contain refined carbohydrates also can cause inflammation.



- **MSG** – Asian foods, particularly those using soy sauce, often contain monosodium glutamate (MSG), which can trigger inflammation. It's also common in some fast foods, canned soups and salad dressings.



- **Gluten and casein** – Many people develop gluten sensitivity, which is commonly found in wheat, barley and rye products. Casein is found in cow's milk and other dairy products. Most people who struggle with these sensitivities avoid problems with inflammation by staying away from these products.



- **Aspartame** – This artificial sweetener, which is common in a wide variety of products, has been known to trigger inflammation. Those who are sensitive to aspartame should check labels and avoid it.



- **Alcohol** – Excessive use of alcohol can lead to many problems, including inflammation.

“In general, a healthy diet offers a host of good benefits in the long term,” Sharim says. “But for people with arthritis, diabetes and other conditions, being aware of what you’re eating and avoiding foods that can trigger inflammation can make a world of difference.”

---

## **Songwriter Uses Her Battle With Leukemia to Inspire Others**

By Hannah Ropp



Angel Carlos considered herself in pretty good health. The 62-year-old East Stroudsburg resident was fairly active and had no underlying health conditions, so when she began to experience fatigue and shortness of breath in November 2020, she knew something was wrong.

“I couldn’t even walk up the stairs without getting short of breath and needing to lie down,” says Carlos.

After several tests, doctors discovered her hemoglobin levels were dangerously low and sent her to the [Lehigh Valley Hospital \(LVH\)–Pocono](#) emergency room. She was admitted to the hospital, and two days later she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia, a cancer of the blood and bone marrow.

"I was shocked. Doctors told me that this type of cancer isn't hereditary, that it was just luck of the draw," she says.

### Learning to cope with leukemia

Carlos and her husband met with [Bradley Lash, MD](#), and [Zachary Wolfe, MD](#), oncologists from Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute. They decided it was best to treat her cancer aggressively with a round of intensive induction chemotherapy, which generally requires a 30-day hospital stay.

"It's a difficult course of treatment, but we knew it would give her the best chance at remission and ultimately a cure," says Wolfe.

During her monthlong hospitalization at [LVH-Cedar Crest's inpatient cancer unit](#), Carlos says she was fortunate to have her son and daughter-in-law nearby at the [Hackerman-Patz House](#). Hackerman-Patz House is located on the campus of LVH-Cedar Crest and offers families of those who are hospitalized affordable accommodations.

"I am so grateful for my team at LVHN. They really helped me through the most difficult time, and I couldn't be more thankful," Carlos says.

Carlos admits that her stay wasn't always easy. She says she relied heavily on her family and her faith to get her through those difficult times. However, she also found comfort from a familiar source – songwriting.

### "Living Gritty"

Carlos, a gospel singer and songwriter, was enrolled in a songwriting class prior to her diagnosis and had just finished a song she titled "Living Gritty." Her song was due by midnight on Dec. 30, 2020, and she says she finished it with minutes to spare. By that time, she says she was tired all the time and didn't have the energy to devote to songwriting, so she felt her song wasn't up to her standards.

"I was frustrated because I thought the song was full of clichés that most people couldn't really relate to," she says.

Carlos describes the song as a "fight song" about dealing with life's challenges, but says the song took on new meaning during her battle with leukemia. In fact, Carlos says that "Living Gritty" became her personal mantra during her hospital stay.

"I would close my eyes and just sing that song in my head whenever everything became too much," she says.

The line that resonates with her the most is *no matter how long it takes, I'll look life in the face...just got to believe*. "I know that my battle is a marathon and not a sprint. Parts of my song remind me of this," she says.

Carlos became well known in her inpatient unit because of her song and her positive attitude. "Having a positive attitude will not necessarily help the cancer, but it will make the long days of treatment easier. Her attitude has always been positive, as has her family, which I think is part of the reason she has done so well," Lash says.

Carlos is now is in complete remission and still working toward a complete cure. "I am so grateful for my team at LVHN. They really helped me through the most difficult time, and I couldn't be more thankful," she says.