



LVHN WEEKLY

YOUR WRAP-UP OF THE WEEK'S NEWS FROM LVHN

# COVID-19 REALITY CHECK

LIVE

WITH LVHN HEALTH EXPERTS



## Watch the COVID-19 Reality Check Recording

Hear LVHN experts discuss the current COVID surge.

[Read more →](#)

## Get the Latest Staffing News at Town Hall Meetings

Submit your questions and register to attend a meeting on Jan. 26 or 27.

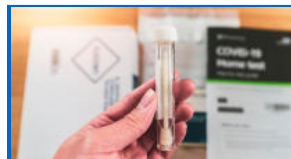
[Read more →](#)



## Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests Now Available From Government

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[Read more →](#)



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[Read more →](#)



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[Read more →](#)



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[Read more →](#)



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[Read more →](#)



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Registration for the Jan. 22 event is free. Attendees are eligible for 3.75 continuing education credits.

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LVHN Recreation Committee has group tickets available for 2022.

[Read more →](#)



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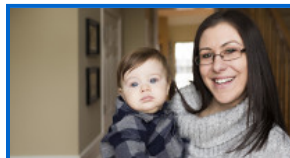
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## The Greatest Gift: Motherhood in the Face of Rare Heart Rhythm Disorder

Alyssa Machain has three beautiful children thanks to LVHN Heart and Pregnancy Program.

[Read more →](#)

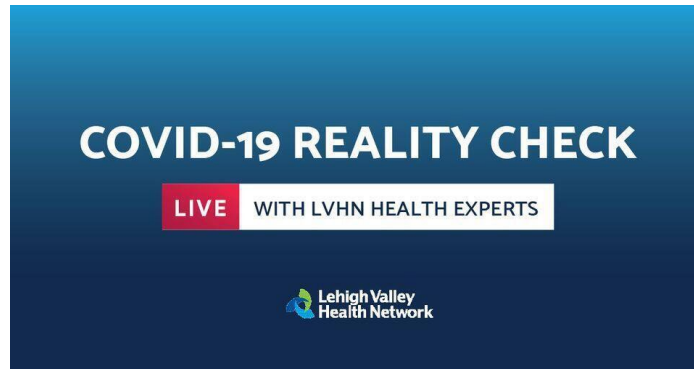


## Complicated Cancer Surgery With Minimal Blood Loss

LVHN's bloodless surgery program honors Sarah Guman's beliefs and helps her beat cancer.

[Read more →](#)





## Watch the COVID-19 Reality Check Recording

Hear LVHN experts discuss the current COVID surge.

LVHN Insider

Friday, January 14, 2022

COVID-19 hospitalizations are reaching near record-breaking numbers. Positive test results have doubled from this time last year. It's time for a reality check. Watch the recording to hear LVHN experts discuss the current COVID surge and its effect on hospital and health care systems worldwide as well as the health of our colleagues and community, right here in Pennsylvania.

Our experts debunk myths, cut through the clutter of the media and provide guidance on the best way to get through this pandemic, together.

Moderator: Brian Downs, Public Information Officer, LVHN

LVHN Expert Panelists:

- Timothy Friel, MD, Chair, Department of Medicine, Infectious Diseases
- Kate Kane, MD, Director, Emergency Department, LVH–Muhlenberg
- Jodi Lenko, MD, Vice Chair, Department of Medicine, LVH–Hazleton
- Debra Carter, MD, Executive Vice Chair, Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital
- Nichole Persing, RN, Director of Clinical Services and front line nurse at LVH–Cedar Crest

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1269130256912699>

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## Get the Latest Staffing News at Town Hall Meetings

Submit your questions and register to attend a meeting on Jan. 26 or 27.

LVHN Insider

Friday, January 14, 2022

LVHN is doing everything possible to bring new colleagues to LVHN and retain trusted and loyal colleagues on our team. We also are committed to keeping you informed about our recruitment and retention efforts every step of the way. That is why LVHN senior leaders will be hosting Town Hall Meetings about staffing beginning this month.

### Town Hall Meeting dates

- Jan. 26, 7 a.m.
- Jan. 27, 7 p.m.

### Two ways to participate

1. **Attend the meeting live** at the LVH–Cedar Crest auditorium.
2. **Attend the meeting via Webex. Registration is required** to ensure we do not exceed the maximum number of participants a Webex meeting can support. Here is how to register.
  - [Click here to register](#) for the Jan. 26 meeting at 7 a.m.
  - [Click here to register](#) for the Jan. 27 meeting at 7 p.m.
  - On the Event Information page, click “Register.”
  - Enter your name and email address, and click “Submit.”
  - You will receive an email with a link to the meeting.
  - Click on the attachment in the email to add the meeting to your Outlook calendar.

If the meeting is filled before you had a chance to register, don’t worry. A recording of the meeting will be posted on LVHN Insider on Jan. 28.

## What to expect

You will get the latest information from:

- Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer
- John Pierro, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer
- Michael Rossi, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer

During the Town Halls, leaders will share the latest innovative strategies being developed by LVHN's Emergency Staffing Operations Council, a team that is aggressively prioritizing our staffing and recruitment challenges. Meetings will be short – only 20-30 minutes – so you can get the information you need and get back to your day.

## Submit questions now

We're taking your questions now so that leaders can provide answers during their presentations. [Click here](#) to submit your questions via email. In the email subject line, please put "Town Hall Question." Questions will not be taken during the meeting.

## Watch for more Town Halls

Senior leaders will be hosting more Town Halls in the months ahead. Check [LVHN Insider](#) for future dates and times.

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## Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests Now Available From Government

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home COVID-19 tests.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Act now! Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home COVID-19 tests. The tests are completely free. Visit this website to order your tests.

[covidtests.gov](https://covidtests.gov)

Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. Order your tests now so you have them when you need them.

Plus, ordering your test from this website – instead of purchasing a test – will eliminate the need for LVHN Health Plan members to submit a reimbursement form. Even though free tests are available, plan members who do purchase COVID-19 tests will continue to be eligible for reimbursement. [Get the details here.](#)

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## Enjoy Enhanced Features of 2022 My Total Health Incentive Program

The program has been enhanced based on the feedback and participation of thousands of colleagues.

LVHN Insider

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

With the new year comes new hope and aspirations. LVHN is here to support your physical, emotional, financial and social wellness this year with the **2022 My Total Health Incentive Program**. The program has been enhanced based on the feedback and participation of thousands of colleagues. This program makes feeling good fun with rewards and prizes for engaging in wellness activities.

### Follow these steps to get started:

- Visit the My Total Health Portal at [mth.lvh.com](http://mth.lvh.com).
- If you are a returning user, enter your LVHN SUI (user ID) and password to log in.
- If you are a new user, click "Register" to get started.

### Here's how to track your points and earn rewards:

- Complete eligible wellness activities that support physical, emotional, financial and social wellness, and record your participation in the My Total Health Portal at [mth.lvh.com](http://mth.lvh.com).
- Read about eligible wellness activities in the flyer below or in the My Total Health Portal.

- **When you earn 50 points, you can redeem your points for a LVHN T-shirt and are automatically entered to win one of five raffles valued at \$200 each.**
- **When you earn 125 points, you can redeem your points for a \$125 electronic gift card and are automatically entered to win one of four AAA Travel vouchers valued at \$2,000 each.**

All rewards and prizes are subject to income tax as per IRS rules.

We hope you will enjoy the 2022 program. Download the flyer below for more details. We continue to make changes to the My Total Health program to further promote a culture of health and wellness at LVHN, and to give you the exceptional colleague experience you deserve.

### **Who is eligible to participate?**

- Actively employed LVHN colleagues who work at LVHN facilities in the Lehigh Valley, including Coordinated Health and HNL Lab Medicine (full-time, part-time and per diem)
- Actively employed LVHN colleagues who work at LVH–Schuylkill (non-union and OPEIU Faculty union) and non-union colleagues at LVH–Hazleton and LVH–Pocono (full-time, part-time and per diem)
- **Newly eligible colleagues:** Actively employed LVHN colleagues in the Hazleton AFSCME, Schuylkill OPEIU, Schuylkill SEIU and Pocono JNESO unions (full-time, part-time and per diem)

The My Total Health Incentive Program is one way we're making LVHN a great place to work from hire to retire.

### **Your feedback is important**

My Total Health would love to hear your feedback on the 2021 Incentive Program. Please take a few moments to [complete this survey](#) by Jan. 28. Didn't get a chance to participate last year? We are interested in your feedback too.

If you have questions, please send a message to your health coach through the My Total Health Portal or email [mytotalhealth@lvhn.org](mailto:mytotalhealth@lvhn.org).

Thank you for all you do for our health network and community.

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## **Coordinated Health Phase 1 Integration Kicks Off Jan. 17**

Coordinated Health orthopedic practices and LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine join forces.

LVHN Insider

Monday, January 17, 2022

Coordinated Health orthopedic practices and Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) Orthopedics and Sports Medicine formally join forces today to further improve access and produce an unparalleled level of orthopedic expertise in the region.

LVHN acquired Coordinated Health in late 2019, bringing together two of the region's premier health care providers. Integrating Coordinated Health personnel, practices, and facilities into the LVHN system was a large and complex undertaking. It is nearly finished and here's where things stand.

The integration will occur in three phases.

The first phase, to take effect today (Jan. 17, 2022), transitions Coordinated Health musculoskeletal practices, including orthopedics, physiatry, podiatry, pain specialists, rheumatology, and chiropractic medicine, to LVPG practices. Not included in the first phase are Coordinated Health orthopedic and musculoskeletal practices in New Jersey, Lehigh, and Scranton. The orthopedic and musculoskeletal practices in Hazleton combined in April 2021.

The first phase includes the following locations:

- 1621 N. Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown
- 2775 Schoenersville Road, Bethlehem
- 505 Independence Road, East Stroudsburg
- 1120 Oak St., Pittston
- 111 Switzgable Drive, Brodheadsville
- 1411 Jacobsburg Road, Wind Gap
- 3100 Emrick Blvd., Bethlehem (partial relocation to Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Hecktown Oaks)

**There will be no facility fee at physician offices after they convert to LVPG. Patients will receive one bill for services and will not receive a second bill for the facility fee.**

Included in the first phase are renovations to certain musculoskeletal practice locations in Pennsylvania, necessary changes in the Epic patient medical records system and the movement of Coordinated Health orthopedic operations, including the walk-in injury center, from Emrick Boulevard in Bethlehem Township to the nearby LVH–Hecktown Oaks campus.

LVHN’s orthopedic and musculoskeletal group now includes more than 150 providers in every specialty and subspecialty, providing more choice for you in the same network. When it comes to any kind of orthopedic care, you’ll find no better partner to help you live life to the fullest. Treatment with LVHN comes with a track record of great outcomes and compassionate, award-winning care.

The second phase, to be completed by April 2022, calls for the completion of facility renovations and the full integration of Coordinated Health hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, physical and occupational therapy, imaging services and non-musculoskeletal practices in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The third phase includes the integration of Coordinated Health services in Lehighton with Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Carbon and in Dickson City with Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)–Dickson City as those new hospitals open in May. In both regions, the integration expands access to unparalleled orthopedic care and increases patient choice.

The integration of Coordinated Health into LVHN has created an even better, world-class health partner for everyone. Over the next several months, you’ll see some practice name changes as well as signage changes at Coordinated Health facilities.

We’re grateful for the collaborative efforts of nearly two dozen cross-functional teams who have worked diligently to complete this integration.

This is only the beginning. In the coming months, we’ll share plans that will showcase our commitment to being a regional and national leader in providing the highest value orthopedic care anywhere.

Below are new locations names for the first phase. Referring providers, please note the new ambulatory referrals for these departments will replace the former CH-labeled referrals in EPIC and the display names now will be LVPG.

**1621 N. Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown**

- LVPG Chiropractic Medicine–South Whitehall
- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–South Whitehall

- LVPG Physiatry–South Whitehall
- LVPG Podiatry–South Whitehall
- LVPG Pain Specialists–South Whitehall

#### **2775 Schoenersville Road, Bethlehem**

- LVPG Chiropractic Medicine–2775 Muhlenberg
- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–2775 Muhlenberg
- LVPG Physiatry–2775 Muhlenberg
- LVPG Podiatry–2775 Muhlenberg
- LVPG Rheumatology–2775 Muhlenberg

#### **505 Independence Road, East Stroudsburg**

- LVPG Chiropractic Medicine–Independence Road
- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–Independence Road
- LVPG Physiatry–Independence Road
- LVPG Pain Specialists–Independence Road
- LVPG Podiatry–Independence Road

#### **1120 Oak St., Pittston**

- LVPG Chiropractic Medicine–Pittston
- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–Pittston
- LVPG Podiatry–Pittston

#### **111 Switzgable Dr., Brodheadsville**

- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–Brodheadsville
- LVPG Physiatry–Brodheadsville

#### **1411 Jacobsburg Road, Wind Gap**

- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–Wind Gap
- LVPG Physiatry–Wind Gap
- LVPG Podiatry–Wind Gap
- LVPG Rheumatology–Wind Gap

#### **3100 Emrick Blvd., Bethlehem (relocated to LVH–Hecktown Oaks)**

- LVPG Orthopedics and Sports Medicine–Hecktown Oaks
- LVPG Podiatry–Hecktown Oaks
- LVPG Chiropractic Medicine–Hecktown Oaks
- LVPG Physiatry–Hecktown Oaks

- LVPG Pain Specialists–Hecktown Oaks
  - LVPG Rheumatology–Hecktown Oaks
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### NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

## Lehigh Valley Health Network Bringing Health Center to Pennsburg

New facility set to open in 2022

By **Brian Downs**

January 17, 2022



Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) will open a new health center in Pennsburg in 2022, filling a need of Montgomery County residents who asked for better access to LVHN doctors and providers.

The new center is on West Seventh Street, just off Route 29.

“Bringing this health center to Pennsburg is part of our mission to heal, comfort and care for the community,” said Michael Rossi, MD, Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, LVHN. “We look forward to bringing exceptional LVHN care to northern Montgomery County.”

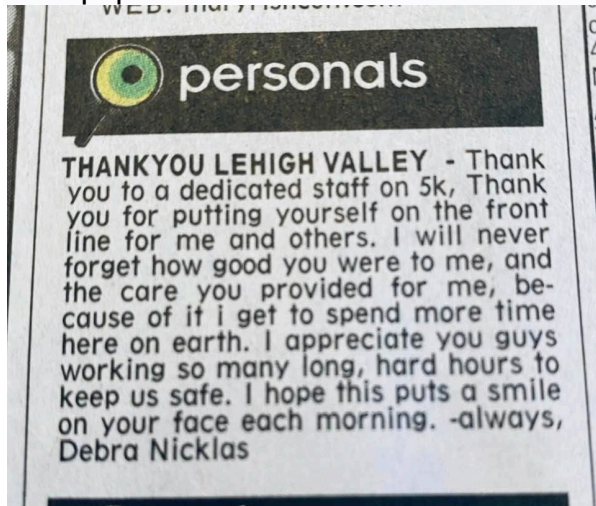
Services will include:

- **Family medicine** – Comprehensive medical care for the entire family, from infants to seniors.
- **Obstetrics and gynecology** – We’ll offer a secure, comfortable environment where patients can seek advice and treatment for every gynecologic and obstetric need.
- **Pediatric specialty care** – Specialty care just for kids from Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital, including pediatric pulmonology, endocrinology and gastroenterology.

- **Adult and pediatric rehabilitation\*** – Offering physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy to promote functional recovery from illness and injury.
  - **ExpressCARE** – Walk-in care for urgent, minor illness or injury.
  - **Imaging\*** – Ultrasound and X-ray imaging technologies will be available in one convenient location.
  - **Mobile breast health services\*** – Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute will bring its mobile mammography coach to Pennsburg for greater, easier access to this essential screening.
  - **HNL Lab Medicine** – Full-service medical laboratory providing testing and related services.
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## Thank you, LVHN colleagues!

Your dedication and kindness do not go unnoticed by our community. A patient who received care on 5K at LVH–Cedar Crest shared this special "thank you" note in the newspaper.



## Changes to Text Option When Signing In With Imprivata

Learn to install the Imprivata ID app to confirm second authentication push notifications.

LVHN Insider

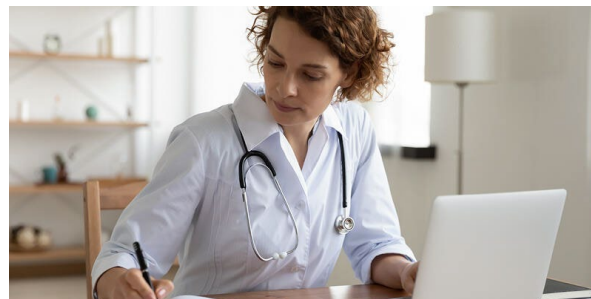
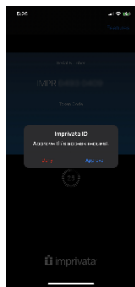
Friday, January 14, 2022

Cybercrime continues to become more sophisticated, and the stakes – particularly in the health care industry – get higher and higher. In 2017, LVHN adopted a two-factor authentication process for colleagues signing into the network remotely from a computer or mobile device. This extra layer of security is necessary to protect data for colleagues, patients and the network as a whole.

Although two-factor authentication continues to be a good way to thwart cybercrime, there are some connectivity challenges that make it necessary to update the process. Many colleagues are accustomed to responding to an SMS text in order to securely access the network. However, when cellular carriers like AT&T and Verizon experience outages or downtimes, a text confirmation is not possible.

To ensure optimal performance with its two-factor authentication process, LVHN will replace the SMS text confirmation path starting Feb. 1, 2022. **Colleagues will need to install the Imprivata ID app on personal or LVHN-issued mobile devices in order to access the information necessary to confirm the second authentication push notification.** The Imprivata ID app is LVHN's secure authentication application used for remote access to the network.

The new prompt – which is a notification pop-up that asks “*Approve*” or “*Deny*” – offers a secure path to the network without a cellular downtime risk. To install the Imprivata ID app on a mobile device or to get ahead of the Feb. 1 deadline and reconfigure an existing Imprivata connection to eliminate SMS text authentication and use “*Approve*” or “*Deny*” authentication, please [follow these instructions](#).



## **Register by Jan. 20: Virtual Cardiology for the Primary Care Physician Symposium**

Registration for the Jan. 22 event is free. Attendees are eligible for 3.75 continuing education credits.

LVHN Insider

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

The Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute is hosting its annual Cardiology for the Primary Care Physician Symposium virtually this year on Saturday, Jan. 22, 8 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

[Registration](#) is free and attendees will be eligible for 3.75 continuing education credits.

Agenda:

- Opening remarks and learning objective review
- Stress testing: Indications and modalities – Hiwot Ayele, MD
- High sensitivity troponin assay in patients with chest pain – Bruce Feldman, DO
- Syncope: When to refer to cardiology? – Jeffrey Gordon, MD and Allyson Buckshaw, CRNP
- Pre-op cardiac risk assessment – Ronak Patel, MD
- Asymptomatic carotid disease: Who to treat and how? – David Meir-Levi, DO
- SGLT2i and GLP-1 agonist therapy for CV risk reduction in patients with DM2 – Marc Vengrove, DO
- COVID and myocarditis – Deborah Sundlof, DO
- LDL at goal: Now what? – Nidhi Mehta, MD
- Closing remarks and key takeaways

### **Accreditation/Designation Statement(s)**

It is Lehigh Valley Health Network's policy to ensure balance, independence, objectivity and scientific rigor in all our sponsored educational programs. Planners, faculty and all others who have the ability to control the content of continuing education activities sponsored by Lehigh Valley Health Network are expected to disclose all financial relationships with ineligible companies. Ineligible companies are those whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, reselling, or distributing health care products used by or on patients.

### **Physicians:**

Lehigh Valley Health Network is accredited by the Pennsylvania Medical Society to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

Lehigh Valley Health Network designates this live educational activity for a maximum 1.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for each session bundle or a maximum of 3.75 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should only claim credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the educational activity.

### **Osteopathic Physicians:**

The Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine is accredited by the American Osteopathic Association of medical education for physicians. The Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine designates this program for a maximum of 3.75 hours of AOA Category 1-A credits and will report CME and specialty credits commensurate with the extent of the physician's participation in this activity.

### **Nurses:**

Lehigh Valley Health Network is approved as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

Completion Criteria: Registered nurses will receive 1.25 contact hours for each session bundle or a maximum of 3.75 contact hours.

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## **Purchase Tickets for Lehigh Valley IronPigs Season**

LVHN Recreation Committee has group tickets available for 2022.

Donna Stout

Friday, January 14, 2022

Join the LVHN Recreation Committee at the IronPigs. The committee has made group tickets available for the following games:

- Friday, May 27, 7:05 PM – IronPigs vs. Worcester Woo Sox
- Sunday, June 19, 1:35 PM – IronPigs vs. Buffalo Bisons (Father's Day)
- Monday, July 4, 6:35 PM – IronPigs vs. Rochester Red Wings (4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks)
- Saturday, August 27, 6:35 PM – IronPigs vs. Gwinnett Braves

You have two options for tickets:



- Regular Field Level Seating - \$11.00 per person with a \$2.00 food concession credit loaded on the ticket
- Penteledata Party Porch - \$37.00 per person includes a 2.5 hour all-you-can-eat buffet and unlimited soft drinks

Tickets are non-refundable and must be ordered online. These group tickets are not available at the gate. If the game is canceled due to weather, your ticket may be used for another game of your choice.

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### HEALTH TIP

## Preparing Your Skin for Winter

Drink plenty of water and bundle up with creams, lotions, SPFs and vitamin A

By **Nancy Campbell Albritton**



Before you venture out into winter's cold and winds, medical esthetician Emily Doster, RN, [LVPG Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery](#), has tips to help you keep your skin hydrated and healthy throughout the season.

"You want to be hydrated from within. Skin is a very inside-out story, so make sure to drink water," she says. "I get a lot of people who say they have tried every lip product out there and their lips are still chapped. It really means they are dehydrated."

Doster says there are several preventive strategies for you to shield your skin from the ravages of winter and the magnified sun-exposure from snow cover.

Along with hydration, Doster recommends drinking hydrolyzed collagen. Collagen provides amino acids that not only help to maintain hydrated skin, they also provide proteins to hair, skin, nails, joints and the digestive system. Hydrolyzed collagen can be stirred into herbal teas, coffee or soup.

Doster also recommends that other beneficial supplements, such as biotin or multivitamins, be taken in liquid form or dissolved in liquid for better absorption.

To supplement your regimen, Doster offers [in-office corrective treatments](#) such as chemical peels, microneedling and laser skin rejuvenation and hair reduction.

### Good skin care: the basics

Regardless of season, Doster says, good skin care starts with the cleansing basics: removing makeup and sunscreen with close attention to moisturizing and hydration.

[“My favorites include a micellar water and/or an oil cleanser – a gentle, nonfoaming cleanser for fall and winter; a mild, gel-based cleanser for spring and summer – a toner \(enzyme or gentle acid base – no alcohol\) and a season-appropriate moisturizer,” Emily Doster, RN, says.](#)

### Best skin-care routine should include:

- A thin, protective layer of moisturizer – gel-based in the summer or heavier cream or balm in winter should be applied first to moisturize and hydrate the skin then followed by a sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher, applied last to offer the best protection from the sun's harmful UVA/UVB rays.
- A high-quality antioxidant serum such as vitamins C and E.
- A gentle daily exfoliant, preferably a form of vitamin A, (retinol or retinoic acid) that your skin can tolerate. Retinol, which speeds the process of cell turnover, visibly improves tone (even color), texture (smooth fine lines) and overall skin clarity (fewer visible pores and breakouts). Vitamin A can be used with a moisturizer to prevent possible side effects such as dryness or flaking.
- If vitamin A is not for you, try gentle alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) and beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs). Doster recommends blends of lactic and glycolic acids or lactic acid and salicylic acids. Glycolic acid body wash and lotions also will exfoliate dry skin all over, including feet, arms, legs and elbows.

[“Lactic acid gently sweeps away dead surface skin, attracts water to the surface of the skin and allows hyaluronic acid molecules more water to hold on to. Hydrated and exfoliated skin doesn’t wrinkle as easily and also looks dewy and healthy, even during the most brutal winters.”](#)

- Add a sunless tanner to face and body moisturizers to give skin a healthy glow in winter.

Doster also says winter is a great time for in-office procedures such as medium-depth chemical peels, laser hair reduction or laser skin rejuvenation and microneedling treatments.

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## PATIENT STORY

### The Greatest Gift: Motherhood in the Face of Rare Heart Rhythm Disorder

Alyssa Machain has three beautiful children thanks to LVHN Heart and Pregnancy Program

By Joe Nixon



Alyssa Machain and her husband, Brandon, knew from the start they wanted three or four children. For most young couples, having a big family is well within reach. But for Machain, now 35, even one pregnancy could put her and the baby at risk.

That's because she has a rare heart-rhythm disorder called catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia (CPVT). It often runs in families (Machain's mother, sister and brother also have it), and causes the heart to beat abnormally fast during physical activity and emotional stress. Not everyone develops symptoms, but people who do often experience dizziness, loss of consciousness and even death.

"I was diagnosed at age 12 after passing out and was put on beta-blockers to keep my heart rate under control," says Machain of Bethlehem. "I never had another issue after that and have lived well with my condition."

#### [Deciding to start a family](#)

But she also knew pregnancy could pose special risks, because both pregnancy and pain during labor naturally raise a woman's heart rate. Either could cause Machain's rhythm disorder to flare up, endangering her and the baby. Also, Machain's baby had a 50/50 chance of inheriting CPVT. Yet she remained determined to start a family – as long as she could be closely monitored by a team of doctors and nurses throughout her high-risk pregnancy.

Machain contacted the [Heart and Pregnancy Program](#) at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), which offers specialty care for pregnant women with heart disease. Cardiologist [Amy Ahnert, MD](#), and maternal fetal medicine specialist [Joanne Quinones, MD](#), helped Machain map out her care over the next few months. “They took my CPVT very seriously and really understood the impact it would have on my pregnancy,” she says.

### First pregnancy journey

Ahnert and Quinones regularly monitored Machain and the baby to ensure her beta-blocker kept her heart rate under control and that it didn’t produce side effects (such as a slower heart rate) in the baby. “Working as a team – cardiology, maternal fetal medicine, anesthesia and nursing – we also developed a very detailed plan to prepare us for any possible problems,” says Ahnert, who practices with [LVPG Cardiology–1250 Cedar Crest](#). “We even ran through scenarios in a hands-on simulation lab so we were prepared if she had a heart arrhythmia during labor.”

While the team needed to increase the dose of her beta-blocker during the third trimester when her heart rate began to climb, Machain’s pregnancy otherwise proceeded without incident.

At Machain’s final checkup, the day before she was due, Quinones noticed fluid on the baby’s heart. She decided to induce labor.

“Unfortunately, with every contraction, the baby’s heart rate dropped dangerously,” says Quinones, who practices with [LVPG Maternal Fetal Medicine](#). “The baby was smaller than average and wasn’t tolerating labor, so we did a C-section the next morning. They both did well and went home a few days later.”

### The family grows

Today, that baby – Afton Machain (named after Brandon’s great-grandfather) – is 7 years old. He was born with CPVT, identified through genetic testing. He’s on a beta-blocker and will be until he’s older, when doctors can determine if he is likely to develop symptoms.

In May 2016, Alyssa and Brandon Machain welcomed a second baby to the family – Oliver Machain. “Doctors Ahnert and Quinones saw me again for my second pregnancy and were just wonderful,” Alyssa says. “I couldn’t be happier with the care I received. My pregnancy and labor went very smoothly. And we’re happy to say that Oliver was born without the heart condition.”

For Alyssa and Brandon, the decision to have a third child was easier to make because of the care Alyssa received with her first two children and the relationship she had with Ahnert and Quinones. “There wasn’t a second thought,” Alyssa says. “They’ve given me

the greatest gift. Even besides giving me the gift of my children, they've given me the gift of peace of mind."

Their third child, Sophia, was born on May 27, 2021 and she has CPVT. If Sophia wants to have children someday, Alyssa says she hopes Ahnert and Quinones are still practicing. "I would just say, 'Go to them. You'll be fine.'"

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## PATIENT STORY

### Complicated Cancer Surgery With Minimal Blood Loss

LVHN's bloodless surgery program honors Sarah Guman's beliefs as a Jehovah's Witness and helps her beat ovarian and appendiceal cancer

By **Sidney Stevens**



When Sarah Guman of Olyphant, Pa., was diagnosed with a large ovarian tumor in late April 2021, she learned she would need a complete hysterectomy. Doctors wouldn't know until they operated if it was malignant, but after months of constipation and urinary leakage, Guman, then 69, was grateful to finally have a plan of action.

She had one condition, though: As one of Jehovah's Witnesses, she would not accept a blood transfusion and required bloodless surgery. "My doctor didn't offer it," Guman says, "but she referred me to [Lehigh Valley Health Network's Patient Blood Management Program](#). I immediately called them and was told they could accommodate me. It took such a weight off my mind."

"To find a local medical team that's both skilled and who respects my beliefs is priceless," Guman says.

[Mobilizing the team](#)

Shortly afterward, Guman received a call from Kelly Frinzi, patient liaison for the blood management program, who quickly contacted gynecologic oncologist [Christine Kim, MD](#), with Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute, to schedule an appointment. Kim rearranged her schedule to see Guman the same day at [LVPG Gynecologic Oncology–Pocono](#) in East Stroudsburg, close to Guman’s home.

“The ovarian mass was the size of a watermelon and was pressing on her colon and bladder,” Kim says. “We needed to perform surgery quickly to obtain a diagnosis and ensure it didn’t spread if it was malignant. Bloodless surgery was definitely doable.”

Kim was able to operate on Guman May 11 at nearby Lehigh Valley Hospital–Pocono.

### [Complex surgery without blood loss](#)

To avoid a blood transfusion, Kim’s team brought in a cell salvage machine to collect drops of Guman’s own blood lost during surgery and return red blood cells to her if necessary.

“LVHN offers many blood conservation techniques for a variety of procedures,” says Cancer Institute hematologist-medical oncologist [Bradley Lash, MD](#), who helped develop the blood management program. “We partner with patients and their medical team to create a personalized care plan for their specific blood needs, whether due to religious beliefs or health concerns. Bloodless surgery is just good medicine for everyone and improves outcomes.”

Next, the anesthesia team, led by Benoy Paul, MD, placed an epidural catheter in Guman’s spine to minimize use of opioid medication during and after surgery, which can cause constipation, vomiting and other complications.

Kim then made a large vertical incision extending above Guman’s navel and removed her ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, cervix and omentum (a fatty tissue that hangs over the abdominal organs). The ovarian mass turned out to be a slow-growing type of cancer called a mucinous borderline tumor. Kim also discovered a second mass in Guman’s appendix – a different type of cancer – that required additional removal of her appendix, small bowel and part of her colon.

Despite undergoing complex surgery, Guman went home four days later without pain or opioid side effects. Best of all, because blood loss was minimal (about 6 ounces), the cell salvage machine was never needed.

“Our expert team is specially trained to perform complicated gynecologic surgeries with minimal blood loss so we can accommodate Jehovah’s Witness patients and others seeking bloodless surgery close to home,” Kim says.

### [‘Phenomenal’ success](#)

Guman is now feeling great and hopes to soon resume riding her motor scooter with her husband. She attributes her successful surgery to quick action by the blood management team and her surgical team's expertise.

"To find a local medical team that's both skilled and who respects my beliefs is priceless," Guman says. "Kelly was my advocate every step of the way, and Dr. Kim carefully explained everything beforehand – I trusted her completely. When I think of my experience at LVHN, phenomenal is the word that comes to mind."

[Seeking more information about bloodless surgery?](#)

LVHN's [Patient Blood Management and Bloodless Surgery Program](#) can answer your questions about how blood is conserved during surgery.

You also can call 888-402-LVHN (5846) for more information.

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