To help provide the best care for you and your family close to home, Lehigh Valley Physician Group is proud to welcome hematologist oncologist Michael Evans, MD, to northeast Pennsylvania.

Evans received his doctor of medicine degree from St. George’s University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies. He completed his residency in internal medicine at University of Connecticut School of Medicine, and fellowship in hematology and oncology at University of Maryland Greenebaum Cancer Center. He most recently served as assistant professor of medicine at Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute, division of hematology and oncology.

Evans is practicing at 1000 Alliance Drive, Hazleton. To learn more, call 570-501-4LVHN (4854).
7 Tips for Winter Wellness

KEEP YOUR FAMILY HEALTHY WHEN THE MERCURY DROPS

Baby, it's cold outside. During winter staying healthy takes on added importance. To help you and your family, nurse practitioner Robin Bohanan, CRNP, with Lehigh Valley Physician Group Family Medicine–Drums, offers these tips:

Drink water.
“Drinking eight glasses of water or fluid a day is good advice to follow and easy to remember,” Bohanan says.

Get a flu shot.
“It’s best to get it early, but it’s never too late in the season,” Bohanan says. By getting the flu shot, you are protecting yourself and your loved ones. The flu shot is especially important if you are older or if you have respiratory conditions or immune disorders.

Remember older people and infants.
They both are at risk for hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature, which occurs any time your body loses more heat than it generates. On extremely cold days, keep infants indoors and encourage older people to stay in as well.

Be skin smart.
Harsh winter weather conditions and low humidity may create dry skin and eczema, which causes the skin to become inflamed. To combat, use a humidifier and a petroleum-based moisturizer. You can still get sunburn in the winter, so don’t forget the sunscreen.

Shovel with care.
Every winter people hurt themselves shoveling snow, with injuries ranging from minor aches and pulled muscles to fatal heart attacks. “Shoveling puts a lot of stress on the body in a short period of time,” Bohanan says. So warm up before you shovel, and stop and seek medical care if you experience shortness of breath, pain or anything out of the ordinary. If you’ve had a cardiac stent or a history of cardiovascular disease, talk to your health care provider before shoveling snow.

Lighten up.
Many Americans suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a condition of mood swings that occurs when light decreases in winter. To counter SAD, Bohanan recommends vitamin D, exercise and light therapy. To keep children upbeat, encourage outside play. “Fifteen minutes of play in the sun is a good mood-lifter and source of vitamin D,” she says.

Wash your hands.
To keep bacteria and viruses off your hands, wash frequently and keep a bottle of hand sanitizer nearby when you can’t get to soap and water. Remind children to keep their hands out of their eyes and mouths.

Next Step
LEARN MORE about family medicine and Robin Bohanan, CRNP. Visit LVHN.org/hazleton/Bohanan or call 570-788-5000.

Robin Bohanan, CRNP
Family medicine
Watch her video at LVHN.org/Bohanan.
If you recently suffered a stroke, concussion or traumatic brain injury – or if you have an ongoing condition such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s or Huntington’s disease – neuro rehabilitation services may be for you.

“We combine speech, occupational and physical therapy to help you gain more independence and a better quality of life,” says occupational therapist Catherine Gallagher, rehabilitation services manager.

**NEURO REHABILITATION**

A Step Toward Independence

Physical therapy assistant Becky Hunsinger works with Leonard Martonick of Zion Grove, who uses new specialized support equipment at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton to walk safely with proper posture.

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**HOW NEURO REHAB HELPS**

Many neurologic conditions affect the whole body. “Tasks that once seemed simple – like walking or standing – may now require increased effort,” Gallagher says. Neuro rehabilitation can help by providing:

- **Physical therapy** to help you regain your walking stride, rebuild your balance and coordination, and maintain strength and endurance
- **Occupational therapy** to help you improve upper-body strength and return to tasks of daily living, such as eating and bathing
- **Speech therapy** to help you with language skills, memory and problem-solving, swallowing and voice quality.

Neuro rehabilitation is a service of Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton.

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Tami Ambosie

Physical therapy assistant Becky Hunsinger works with Leonard Martonick of Zion Grove, who uses new specialized support equipment at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton to walk safely with proper posture.

**Experience the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton**

In addition to rehabilitation services, the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton also offers:

- Imaging
- Cardiac/pulmonary services
- Laboratory testing
- Travel health
- Occupational health
- A fitness center

**Next Step**

[LEARN MORE](https://LVHN.org/hazleton/HWC) about the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton, 50 Moisey Drive, Hazleton. Visit [LVHN.org/hazleton/HWC](https://LVHN.org/hazleton/HWC) or call [570-501-6600](tel:570-501-6600).
If you’ve had a heart attack, heart surgery or heart transplant – or if you battle congestive heart failure, have a history of angina (chronic chest pain) or other cardiac issues – cardiac rehabilitation is vital. “Our program guides heart patients through a step-by-step recovery focused on getting you back on your feet to live a heart-healthy life,” says Mary Alimecco, RN, director, cardiac services.

During cardiac rehabilitation, you’ll meet with a team of specialists including cardiologists, a dietitian, exercise physiologists and nurses. “Our team will design an effective program focused on your lifestyle and health care needs,” Alimecco says.

HOW CARDIAC REHAB HELPS
During the program (which runs three times a week for 12 weeks, or 36 sessions), you’ll learn how to exercise safely. You’ll use state-of-the-art cardiac equipment and will be monitored throughout. As your strength and tolerance improve, your level of exercise will increase. You’ll also learn how to eat heart-healthy and will benefit from the support of others.

“One of the best things about our program is the emotional support people get by meeting local people who are facing the same challenges and overcoming the same obstacles,” Alimecco says.

The program, which is certified by the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, brings many potential benefits, including:

- Reduction in symptoms
- Weight loss
- Lower blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar
- Lower risk for future heart problems

Cardiac rehabilitation is a service of Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton.

Next Steps
Free! ATHLETES AND HEART DISEASE EVENT
Wednesday, Feb. 25, 6–7:30 p.m., at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton. Learn about preventing tragedy from cardiovascular conditions in athletes through awareness and proper screening.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR if you are a candidate for cardiac rehabilitation, which is covered by most insurance plans.
Like many women, Terri Pollock of West Hazleton never saw heart disease coming. “I had risk factors, but I didn’t take them seriously,” she says. “I loved to cook and eat fattening foods, and I didn’t change my lifestyle.”

Pollock isn’t alone. Nationwide, heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women. A woman’s heart attack symptoms often are different than a man’s (see sidebar), and many women think those symptoms are stress, acid reflux or the flu – anything other than a heart attack.

Those symptoms – and a woman’s risk factors – are two key indicators of heart disease, says Pollock’s cardiologist, Thomas Ciotola, MD, with Lehigh Valley Physician Group Cardiology–Vine Street. “High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, being overweight, smoking, physical inactivity, heredity and age are all key risk factors,” Ciotola says. So are stress and excessive alcohol consumption, “which for women means more than one drink a day,” Ciotola says.
**TERRI’S STORY**

For Pollock – a slender elementary school teacher – high cholesterol and a family history (both her parents experienced heart disease late in life) were the key risk factors. Then, in December 2012, the then-50-year-old Pollock began to experience odd symptoms – bad indigestion with restless sleep and an uncomfortable feeling in her chest. “I thought it was heartburn and holiday stress,” she says. One weekend, she had sweating, dizziness and nausea and thought she had a virus.

Finally, on New Year’s Eve, with her chest discomfort becoming more painful, Pollock made an appointment with her family medicine physician, Mark Lobitz, DO. An EKG in his office showed a heart abnormality. Then further testing at Lehigh Valley Hospital–Hazleton’s emergency department confirmed she was having a heart attack. The main artery to her heart was blocked at 98 percent.

A MedEvac helicopter rushed her to Lehigh Valley Hospital–Cedar Crest in Allentown. There, cardiologist David Cox, MD, with Lehigh Valley Heart Specialists, performed an emergency angioplasty, opening her blocked artery with a stent.

**THE ROAD BACK**

After a short recovery, Ciotola referred Pollock to cardiac rehabilitation at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton.

“I knew there was no room for denial anymore,” Pollock says. So she began working out on a treadmill, stationary bike, rowing machine and an upper body ergometer (known as an “arm crank”). While she worked out, her exercise physiologists, Corinne Stone and Amanda Sperduto, carefully monitored her heart rhythm, heart rate and blood pressure.

“I have been where my patients are now,” says Stone, who needed cardiac surgery in her 20s and followed up with cardiac rehab. That level of support meant the world to Pollock. “Talking to Corinne and others who had been through the same type of thing was positive, supporting and encouraging,” she says.

Now, Pollock saves 30 minutes each day for exercise. She still loves to cook and does so with fresh ingredients, including fruits and vegetables. “I’m even experimenting with new healthy dishes for my husband, Frank, and children, Jillian and Michael,” she says. She left her mark on cardiac rehab staff members too – they named her 2013 Cardiac Rehabilitation Patient of the Year for her enthusiasm and total lifestyle change.

“I learned a huge lesson – take time to care for yourself,” says Pollock, who will turn 53 this Valentine’s Day. “I appreciate my family even more, and I truly don’t stress about little things. I realize how blessed I am to be healthy and back doing all the things I love – teaching, gardening and even cooking.”

—Tami Ambosie
A cancer diagnosis can be devastating. Yet you still can take steps to ensure you have the highest quality of life possible. To help, follow these six tips from Lehigh Valley Health Network hematologist oncologist Michael Evans, MD, with Lehigh Valley Physician Group Hematology Oncology–Alliance Drive in Hazleton:

1. **Prepare for side effects.** If your treatment includes chemotherapy, talk with your doctor. “He can add medications to your chemo regimen that can control side effects like nausea, vomiting or diarrhea,” Evans says.

2. **Watch for tingling.** With some cancers (lymphoma or multiple myeloma among them), peripheral neuropathy (tingling, numbness or muscle weakness in your hands and feet) is a potential side effect. Tell your doctor right away if you experience any of these symptoms. “If found early it can be reversed,” Evans says.

3. **Express your feelings.** In addition to physical concerns, it’s common for people with cancer to experience emotional turmoil, such as depression or anxiety. Your oncologist can help you through this. “It’s important because depression can impact your sleep and energy levels,” Evans says.

4. **Rely on your medical team.** During your cancer journey, your hematologist oncologist will be your key point person. He can connect you with a nutritionist who can help tailor your diet during treatment, a physical therapist who can help with symptoms like lymphedema (swelling common in breast cancer patients during treatment), a social worker or other medical professionals.

5. **Get your family involved.** Rely on family members for support. “For example, if you experience lymphedema, your physical therapist can teach your spouse massage techniques that can help you,” Evans says. Yet remember your family members are coping with your cancer diagnosis too, so don’t be afraid to ask your doctor about support services that can help your family cope both emotionally and spiritually.

6. **Exercise daily.** If you have a current exercise program, review that with your oncologist to be sure you’re not overdoing it. If you’re new to exercise, start with a five-minute walk once or twice a day and increase your activity slowly. “Exercise will help boost your activity level, ward off low appetite or constipation issues, curb depression and improve your health,” Evans says.

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**WELCOMING CANCER SERVICES TO HAZLETON**

Fellowship-trained hematologist oncologist Michael Evans, MD, recently opened his practice at 1000 Alliance Drive, Hazleton. He provides care for people with cancer and blood diseases. “I help patients fight cancer with innovative breakthrough treatments such as targeted therapies,” he says.

**LEARN MORE.** Call 570-501-4LVH.

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It always feels good to return home after a hospital visit. The goal of a hospitalist (an internal medicine physician who coordinates hospital-based care) is to get you well and keep you from returning. Here are five things you can do in the hospital and at home to stay well and prevent readmission:

1. **Learn.** Educating yourself is the key to staying healthy. Starting right at admission, ask questions so you know what may have caused your condition and what you can do to help prevent a recurrence.

2. **Know your meds.** Become familiar with your medications, including any new ones prescribed in the hospital. Know why you are taking them, the potential side effects and any possible interactions with other medications, foods or beverages. Take your medication exactly as directed and don’t skip doses, even if you feel well. Your care team includes a dietitian and pharmacist, so help is available if you have concerns or questions.

3. **Accept responsibility.** Your care team will give you detailed instructions at discharge. The rest is up to you. Understand your capabilities and limitations, and follow all instructions. If you’re not supposed to lift anything over 15 pounds for one month, don’t try to move your couch. Ask for help instead. If salt and fat are contributing to your high blood pressure, skip the chips.

4. **Keep your appointments.** Scheduled follow-up tests and office visits will monitor your symptoms and help catch issues before they escalate and send you back to the hospital.

5. **Stay in touch.** Know the signs and symptoms that should alert you to call your primary care provider once you return home, and the symptoms that should send you straight to the emergency room. Schedule well visits and don’t be shy about calling in between visits if you notice any changes in how you feel. No question or concern is too small, and there’s no need to guess. Let your doctor help you determine the best next steps.
This is the year. You’ve promised yourself you will get in shape – and stay there. To help you keep your promise, Joe Stanavage, exercise physiologist at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton’s fitness center, offers these excuse-busters:

1. **I’m overwhelmed and don’t know where to start.**
   
   All that gym equipment may be intimidating. So if you’re overwhelmed, ask a professional. Most gyms have someone at the front desk who can help. At the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton’s fitness center, exercise physiologists and trainers will demonstrate specific movements, help you adjust exercise machines and develop a fitness program tailored to your individual abilities and goals. Another idea: Take an instructor-led exercise class (yoga or Zumba) to get started.

2. **I don’t have enough time.**

   “Make an appointment with yourself to exercise,” Stanavage says. Almost everyone can find 30 to 60 minutes somewhere in the day to work out. You may find it helps to work out in the morning. Some people may be able to work out during their lunch hour. The important thing is to do what works for you.

3. **I don’t have the energy.**

   It’s natural to feel exhausted after a long day at work. Yet exercise can help. “Working out actually re-energizes you and gets your circulation moving,” Stanavage says. So get up off the couch and get moving. Start with just 10 minutes of activity each day. Soon you will have the energy to do more.

4. **My body is “allergic” to exercise.**

   If you’ve exercised in the past and experienced pain, it probably means you were overdoing it. One way to know you aren’t overdoing it is to make sure you can carry on a conversation while doing cardio activities, such as running or cycling. “The stronger your muscles get, the more they can support your joints, and the less pain you will have during and after a workout,” Stanavage says. A trainer will help you find exercises that are safe and comfortable. If your physical limitations are more serious, talk to your health care provider, who may be able to recommend low-impact or alternative activities.

5. **I can’t afford it.**

   Some employers offer health insurance benefits that cover – in part or full – wellness items such as gym memberships or personal trainers. Others may give you a discount on your premium for staying healthy.

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Avoid These Common Exercise Excuses

DON’T LET THEM STOP YOU FROM STAYING FIT

Next Step

CALL JOE STANAVAGE at 570-501-6750 or visit LVHN.org/hazleton/fitness for the latest class schedule and offerings at the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton.

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Denise Earley works out at the fitness center inside the Health & Wellness Center at Hazleton.
Victoria’s Little Secret

BODY-CONTOURING SURGERY COMPLETES HER WEIGHT-LOSS TRANSFORMATION

After Victoria Moll became a first-time mom in 2012, she took a hard look at her weight. “I was blessed with the birth of my daughter, Elizabeth – but my weight hit 365 pounds,” she says. “Then I lost my mom to pancreatic cancer.” That motivated her to take charge of her health.

Weight slipped off of the now 31-year-old Fleetwood woman after gastric sleeve surgery from Richard Boorse, MD, with General Surgical Associates of LVPG. Moll dropped 170 pounds within the first year. She also followed doctor’s orders by exercising. “I got thinner and loved it, but not all of my skin shrunk to fit the new me,” she says. “The excess skin on my abdomen caused back pain and made exercising difficult because it pulled down.”

Loose, chafing skin is common among people who lose a massive amount of weight in a short period of time, says LVHN plastic surgeon Randolph Wojcik Jr., MD, with Plastic Surgery Associates. “Not only is loose skin uncomfortable, but in areas where it creases or overlaps, a rash called intertrigo may develop. This irritation can be painful and also may harbor fungal or bacterial infections.”

Body contouring, a type of plastic surgery, can resolve excess skin and its associated problems. “This surgery addresses issues wherever the patient has loose, draping skin, most typically the abdomen, arms, breasts and thighs,” Wojcik says.

While someone may request a consultation for body-contouring surgery at any time, the surgery is most beneficial once you reach a stable weight. For most people who have had bariatric surgery, that means one year post-surgery and six months after achieving your goal weight.

“During the consultation, we explain what we can deliver and discuss the pros and cons of the surgery,” Wojcik says. “We want you to fully understand what you can expect through surgery and postoperatively.”

In August 2014, Moll took the next step in her own transformation. “When I met my surgical team, I felt special – like a piece of art they were going restore to a best version of itself,” Moll says. During the surgery she had excess skin removed from her stomach and upper arms. In all, body-contouring surgery removed almost 12 pounds of tissue.

Now, Moll enjoys exercising without pain or chafing, and especially likes shopping. “I sometimes go to stores just to try things on and see if they will fit – and they do,” she says. “I am ecstatic with the results of body-contouring surgery and would do it again.”

-Jennifer Fisher
A passion for better medicine is here.

At Lehigh Valley Health Network, we are committed to bringing the highest level of care to our region. Which is why our network of highly trained and well-respected providers – Lehigh Valley Physician Group – is now in your neighborhood. This means you have access to nationally recognized care in a variety of specialties, as well as the expertise, resources and leading-edge technology of one of the region’s largest health networks. Because we are passionate about delivering the very best care, closer to home.

To find a provider near you, call 570-501-4LVH or visit LVHN.org/hazleton.