

WOMEN'S healthsource

A NEW LIFE AFTER A DANGEROUS STROKE



read inside

HELLO SUMMER!

4 ways to keep your family healthy during the warm-weather months. Plus a tasty recipe for the grill!
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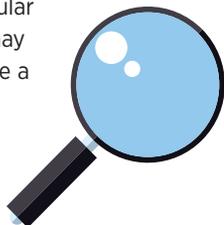
4 ways to keep your family healthy this summer

Summer's almost here, bringing warmer, longer and sunnier days. **Christie Mousaw, DO**, a family physician at Main Line Health Primary Care in Media, shares these four tips to help you and your family stay healthy this season:



1 Practice safe sun care. Dr. Mousaw still sees a lot of patients with sunburn. "Use a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30. Reapply every two hours, especially when sweating or swimming, to reduce your risk of skin cancer and skin damage such as wrinkles and skin discoloration," she advises.

2 Check for ticks. "Lyme disease is a huge problem where we live," says Dr. Mousaw. "To protect against tick bites, wear long-sleeved, light-colored clothing when you're doing yard work. In my family, we do full-body checks for ticks on our kids before they bathe at night. We also look for the circular bulls-eye rash that may be visible and may be a warning sign of Lyme disease."



3 Wear sports helmets to prevent head injuries. "Helmets aren't just for bikes. Every person, big or small, should wear them when riding anything mobile. That includes hoverboards, RipStiks and electric scooters," Dr. Mousaw says. "If you have an accident while wearing your helmet, make sure to replace it with a new one."



4 Plant a container garden. "Veggies grown in containers are absolutely delicious!" says Dr. Mousaw. "Try cherry tomatoes, red peppers, herbs or climbing beans. Your kids might start eating more veggies if they help you plant and care for them."



LOOKING FOR A FAMILY DOCTOR?

Main Line HealthCare Primary Care practices have been recognized by Independence Blue Cross as the #1 Physician Network in the Region for Quality. Start your search today at mainlinehealth.org/doctors.

LIME SHRIMP KEBOBS

INGREDIENTS

- 16 large shrimp, uncooked, deveined
- 3 large limes
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and peeled
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, cleaned and chopped
- 10 medium cherry tomatoes, rinsed and dried
- 10 small white-button mushrooms, wiped clean and stems removed

DIRECTIONS

1. In a glass measuring cup, squeeze limes, yielding ¼ cup of juice. Add the garlic, pepper, olive oil and cilantro and stir. Place the shrimp in a medium bowl and pour the cilantro-lime marinade over the shrimp. Let the shrimp marinate for 10 to 15 minutes in the refrigerator (do not marinate for more than 30 minutes as the acid of the juice will alter the texture of the shrimp).
2. Alternate cherry tomatoes, mushrooms and shrimp on four skewers. Grill the skewers over a medium heat for three to four minutes on each side until the shrimp are just cooked through.

NUTRITION INFO

Serves 2. Per serving: Calories 160, total fat 6g, saturated fat 1g, cholesterol 85mg, sodium 95mg, total carbohydrate 17g, dietary fiber 4g

Find a variety of healthy, tasty dishes, along with how-to videos, at mainlinehealth.org/recipes.



Skin cancer: Know the risks and symptoms

Ever wonder how those years of sunbathing affected your skin? Do you worry that a certain mole might look odd? Paying attention to your skin—and getting a skin check by a dermatologist when appropriate—is vital for early detection of skin cancer.

“There are two main types of skin cancer: melanoma and nonmelanoma,” explains Molly Stumacher, MD, medical oncologist with Bryn Mawr Hospital, part of Main Line Health. “Melanoma has a much greater risk of spreading to other areas of the body. It can be life-threatening if not caught and treated early. Nonmelanoma is a slower growing cancer but can spread locally on the skin, leading to more invasive treatment in later stages.”

Identifying and treating both types of skin cancer as early as possible is important. Look for fast-growing moles or those with an irregular shape, color or feel. Pay special attention to “ugly duckling” moles that look different from others. Watch for patchy, crusted or bleeding areas of skin that do not heal. And keep in mind that skin cancers can develop in areas not typically exposed to the sun.

“You should perform self-exams of your skin regularly. There are no official guidelines for how often you should have a skin check by a physician, so talk with your doctor about your situation,” advises Dr. Stumacher. “Those at high risk may need to be checked every six months to a year.”

People at higher risk for skin cancer include those with a family history of the disease, a suppressed immune system, or a history of chronic or severe exposure to UV rays—from either the sun or tanning beds. People with fair skin, lots of moles, or light-colored hair and eyes are also at increased risk.

“The key is to know your skin and get checked as necessary,” says Dr. Stumacher. “There is much we can do to cure skin cancer, but finding it early is key.” ●

LOOK YOUNGER WITH SUN SMARTS

Want to keep that youthful glow? Plenty of sleep and a good skin care routine help. But nothing is as powerful as using sunscreen.

“You’ve likely heard it before, but it’s so important: Apply sunscreen every single day, regardless of the weather,” advises Jamie Altman, MD, a dermatologist affiliated with Riddle Hospital and Paoli Hospital, part of Main Line Health.

According to Dr. Altman, a good rule of thumb is to choose a broad-spectrum sunscreen that is water resistant with an SPF of 30 or higher. Makeup or lotion that contains sunscreen can make daily application easy. But if you expect prolonged sun exposure (think a day at the shore), apply sunscreen more liberally. Be sure to reapply every two hours. For further skin protection, avoid hours when the sun is strongest—between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.

“Nothing can actually slow down the aging process,” says Dr. Altman. “But these steps can prevent or even reverse the effects of sun damage—keeping you looking younger, longer.”



BE SKIN SAVVY

Visit mainlinehealth.org/skincancerscreening to learn how to check your skin. For an appointment with a dermatologist, call 1.866.CALL.MLH or visit mainlinehealth.org/doctors. And see page 6 in this issue for information about our free screenings.

‘Amazing’ care for hemorrhagic stroke

THANKS TO HER MAIN LINE HEALTH TEAM, A COATESVILLE WOMAN RECOVERS FROM A POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING BRAIN BLEED

In the spring of 2018, Adrienne Pechy experienced a headache unlike any she had ever had. “It felt like my head was going to explode,” recalls the Coatesville resident, who was 51 at the time.

Puzzled as she was by the intensity of her headache, Pechy was also vomiting. She had just eaten dinner, so she supposed she might have food poisoning or even a stomach bug. She decided to ride things out at home.

Twenty-four hours later, Pechy asked her mother to drive her to urgent care at the Main Line Health Center at Exton Square. There, after a flu test came back negative, Pechy was advised to go to the emergency room. At Paoli Hospital, part of Main Line Health, a CT scan of her brain showed that she had suffered a hemorrhagic stroke.

No time to lose

Pechy’s stroke was caused by an aneurysm, a bulging weak spot in the wall of an artery, which had burst and bled into the space surrounding her brain. This type of stroke is known as a subarachnoid hemorrhage. The blood pooling around the brain increases pressure on the brain and damages brain cells. Without prompt treatment, a subarachnoid hemorrhage can cause permanent disability or death.

“Fifty percent of patients having a subarachnoid hemorrhage do not make it to the hospital,” says Michelle J. Smith, MD, FAANS, system chief of neurosurgery and medical co-director of the neuroscience service line. “Of those who do, one-third will survive with a good outcome, one-third will have a disability and one-third will die.”

Expert treatments

Pechy needed treatment to relieve the pressure on her brain and prevent the aneurysm from bleeding again. She was

rushed by ambulance to Bryn Mawr Hospital, part of Main Line Health, where Dr. Smith placed a temporary device inside her head to alleviate the pressure. Neuro-interventionalist Nabeel Heriel, MD, MPH, then performed a minimally invasive procedure called endovascular coiling to block blood flow to the aneurysm.

But Pechy was not out of danger yet. She soon developed additional brain bleeding causing significant brain swelling and needed more invasive surgery.

Dr. Smith performed a hemicraniectomy, removing part of Pechy’s skull so she could remove the blood and enable Pechy’s brain to safely expand. A few weeks later, she performed a second surgery to secure the bone back into position. Dr. Smith also removed the device, draining the excess fluid around Pechy’s brain and implanting a shunt, which moves the fluid to another part of the body where it can be absorbed.

Rehabilitation for memory, balance

Pechy spent three weeks in Bryn Mawr Hospital’s Intensive Care Unit. She was then transferred to Bryn Mawr Rehabilitation

Hospital, where she received inpatient physical, occupational and speech therapy.

“Adrienne came in functioning at a fairly high level,” says speech therapist Jessica Wardell, MS, CCC-SLP. “She had mild cognitive deficits in the areas of memory, problem-solving and speed of information processing. She needed help walking and also received therapy to improve her balance and coordination and regain daily living skills. She was definitely motivated, and she made quick progress.”

Getting her life back

Pechy continued to improve during eight more weeks of outpatient rehabilitation. Four months after her stroke, she began transitioning back to her job as a project manager for a cancer research biotech company. Now 53, she’s doing great and staying active with her 13-year-old daughter, Hannah.

“I’m very fortunate—I’m alive,” Pechy says. “This could have gone a completely different way. I’m here and doing well because of the great care, support and positive reinforcement I received from my doctors, nurses and therapists. Everyone who helped me along the way has been amazing.” ●

STROKE: KNOW THE RISKS AND SYMPTOMS

Some risk factors for stroke can’t be changed. But up to 80 percent of strokes could be prevented with healthy lifestyle changes—eating well, exercising regularly and quitting smoking. Another key is working with your doctor to control health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and hypertension.

It’s important to know the signs of a stroke and get help immediately. Treatment is most effective when started

right away. Symptoms may include:

- Weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, usually on one side of the body
- Having trouble speaking or understanding
- Problems with vision
- Dizziness
- Problems with movement or walking
- Fainting or seizure
- Severe headaches
- Sudden nausea or vomiting



Adrienne Pechy works on balancing exercises with Megan Cullen, her physical therapist at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital.



Bryn Mawr Hospital was recently certified by the Joint Commission as a thrombectomy-capable facility. The Joint Commission, in collaboration with the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, now provides an advanced stroke certification for Thrombectomy-Capable Stroke Centers in response to the need to identify hospitals that meet rigorous standards for performing endovascular thrombectomy.



calendar

Registration is required for most programs unless otherwise noted. To register for an upcoming event in this calendar, call toll-free **1.888.876.8764** or visit mainlinehealth.org/events, where you'll find a complete list of classes with their dates, times and locations.

WELLNESS & PREVENTION

UNDERSTANDING PREDIABETES

This diagnosis is a wake-up call that you are on a path to diabetes. But it's not too late to turn things around. Learn what you can do if you've been diagnosed. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/prediabetes.

PRESCRIBE-A-TRAIL FREE COMMUNITY WALKS

Join our health practitioners to learn how to achieve maximum health during a brisk walk. In inclement weather, the walk may be cancelled. For discussion topics, locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/prescribeatrail.

SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS

Take part in a free, 10-minute skin cancer screening that could save your life. Screenings by appointment only. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/skinscreenings.

SMOKEFREE

Main Line Health's FREE six-week behavior modification program is designed to help smokers quit. Participants may be eligible for free nicotine replacement therapy. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/smokefree or call **484.227.FREE** to register.

HIP AND KNEE PAIN SEMINARS

Keep the spring in your step! Learn about hip and knee anatomy, common causes of joint pain, the latest treatments, and how to prevent a hip or knee injury. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/hipandknee.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS

Main Line Health provides free screenings at locations across the region. Visit mainlinehealth.org/bloodpressurescreenings for the current list.

AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVES

Be part of a lifesaving team. Donate at our upcoming blood drives. Someone in need will be thankful you did. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/blooddrives.

HEALTHYWOMAN PROGRAM

Free health screenings for uninsured or underinsured women whose income qualifies. Screenings include mammography, pelvic exams and Pap tests. Call **484.476.8554** (Lankenau) or **484.337.1881** (Bryn Mawr), or visit mainlinehealth.org/healthywoman.

HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATIONS

The Women's Heart Initiative at Lankenau Heart Institute hosts this cardiac support group for women with heart disease or those at risk. The group is open to all women no matter where they received treatment. To register, call **484.476.3WHI** or email mlhwomensheart@mlhs.org.

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

DIABETES AND YOU

This program held at all Main Line Health hospitals will help you manage your diabetes. Cost is covered by most insurance companies. To register, call **484.565.8031**.

FREE WIG PROGRAM

This program is for female cancer patients preparing to undergo or currently undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment. Call **484.337.5215** (Bryn Mawr), **484.227.4480** (Riddle) or **484.565.1600** (Paoli) to schedule an appointment.

CHILDBIRTH AND CHILD CARE CLASSES

We're here to help you and your family prepare for your newest addition with a variety of classes. For locations and dates, visit mainlinehealth.org/childbirthclasses.

FOR OLDER ADULTS

A MATTER OF BALANCE

This eight-week, evidence-based program provides strategies to reduce the risk of falling and remain active and independent. Registration required.

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, May 7 through May 30, 10:00 am, Main Line Health Center in Newtown Square
- Tuesdays, July 2 through August 20, 2:00 pm, Lankenau Medical Center
- Thursdays, August 8 through September 26, 1:30 pm, Main Line Health Center in Newtown Square

SAFER STEPS

Learn how to stay independent by preventing falls. This class points out common safety hazards in the home and teaches the importance of exercise.

- June 6, 9:30 am, Main Line Health Center in Newtown Square
- June 18, 10:00 am, Paoli Hospital

STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

This exercise program for adults older than 55 includes strength training with elastic tubing and dumbbells and balance training and stretching with modified yoga and chair tai chi. Fee: \$5/class; pay as you go. Class is held year-round at Bryn Mawr Hospital. For details, call **484.337.5206**.

MATURE DRIVING AARP

This driver safety program addresses the challenges of drivers older than 55. We offer both full and renewal courses. For the renewal course, you must bring proof that you have attended the full course. Fee: \$15/person AARP members; \$20/person nonmembers. View upcoming dates and locations at mainlinehealth.org/aarp.

SENIOR ENTERTAINMENT

Fun and informative evenings for the over-60 crowd. Led by Ross Kershey, local historian and educator. Held 5:00 pm at Paoli Hospital. Fee: \$5/person.

- **May 23: Jim Thorpe, greatest U.S. athlete**

SENIOR SUPPERS

An evening of dinner, conversation and a healthy living seminar for the over-60 crowd. Fee: \$7/person.

At Paoli Hospital, 5:00 pm:

- **May 7: Arthritis and all the aches**
- **June 5: Diabetes**
- **July 9: COPD and respiratory ailments**

At Riddle Hospital, 4:30 pm:

- **May 22: Stroke prevention**
- **June 26: EMT, ambulance information**
- **July 24: Lower back pain**
- **August 28: Identity theft**

CPR & FIRST AID

CPR HEARTSAVER AED

This two-session American Heart Association course teaches CPR and AED use in adults and children, relief of choking in adults and children, and CPR and choking in infants. Participants receive a two-year American Heart Association certification. Held at Riddle Hospital. Fee: \$65.

SAFE SITTER BABYSITTING

An intensive one-day training program for boys and girls ages 11 through 14. Learn to care for younger children and prevent avoidable injuries while babysitting. Held at Riddle Hospital. Fee: \$60.

STOP THE BLEED

Do you know what to do if you or someone you love has a life-threatening injury with uncontrolled bleeding? That knowledge can make the difference between life and death. Get trained to stop the bleed and save a life. To register for this free training, call **484.476.8207** (Lankenau) or **484.565.8328** (Paoli).

- **May 20, 6:00 pm, Paoli Hospital**
- **June 18, 1:00 pm, Paoli Hospital (for 14- to 17-year-olds only)**
- **June 19, 5:00 pm, Lankenau Medical Center**
- **August 6, 9:30 am, Paoli Hospital**

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BASIC BOATING SAFETY

This two-session class led by USCG-AUX teachers covers boat nomenclature, safety equipment, radio, weather for the boater, rules of the road and basic boat handling. To register, call **610.948.8610** or email malafferty@verizon.net.

- **May 11 and 18, 8:00 am, Riddle Hospital**

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP DISORDERS

Hear the latest research on sleep disorders—causes, treatments and more. Led by Sleep Technician Michael Montanye.

- **May 15, 6:30 pm, Main Line Health Center at Exton Square**

OPENING SPRING 2020!

WOMEN'S SPECIALTY CENTER IN KING OF PRUSSIA

Our Women's Specialty Center, opening in spring 2020, will focus on the distinct preventive, diagnostic and treatment needs of women. The center will address women's physical, emotional and wellness needs in a coordinated manner within a warm, healing environment. Services will include primary care, breast health, heart care, gynecology, integrative medicine, skin care and emotional wellness, among others. Stay tuned to learn more!

CHILD BIKE SAFETY RODEO

Learn how to ride your bicycle safely and earn your bike license. Bring your helmet and bike so it can be checked to ensure everything works and fits properly. Replacement helmets will be available while supply lasts. For children ages 3 through 13.

- **May 18, 10:00 am, Wilson Farm Park in Chesterbrook**

DIABETES 101

Learn all about diabetes—medications, nutrition tips and more. Led by Diabetes Program Manager Janet Wendle.

- **May 21, 6:30 pm, Main Line Health Center at Exton Square**

LOW VISION PRESENTATION

Learn about low vision, what can be done about it, where to get more information and simple home adaptations. Led by Occupational Therapy Advanced Clinician Lindy Fischer.

- **May 29, 10:00 am, 933 Haverford Road in Bryn Mawr**

DEPRESSION PRESENTATION

Learn the signs, symptoms and management of depression.

- **June 5, 10:00 am, Main Line Health Center in Newtown Square**

SOLVING THE GENDER GAP IN DEPRESSION

The numbers are startling: Women are two to three times more likely than men to suffer from depression. Understanding why is key to successful treatment.

“It’s easy to assume that depression in women is all about biology,” says Kim Morrison, MSS, LCSW, clinical supervisor at the Women’s Emotional Wellness Center (WEWC), part of Main Line Health. “It’s true that women are more vulnerable during times of hormonal changes in our lives. But there are also societal pressures unique to women that can contribute to depression.”

For example, trauma and abuse occur far more often among women than men. And at work, women still typically earn less and have fewer opportunities. Such biases can translate to lower self-esteem and more financial stress. Other causes of depression among women may include trying to meet unrealistic expectations, taking on too much and dealing with relationship problems.

Common symptoms of depression in both men and women may include:

- Feeling sad, hopeless or “empty”
- Not being able to sleep or sleeping too much
- No longer taking pleasure in enjoyable activities

But just as the causes of depression can differ between genders, the signs may also vary. For example, women may feel guilty and blame themselves for their depression. In contrast, men may blame circumstances or other people and express their feelings through anger. Successful treatment can depend on recognizing variables like these.

The WEWC is skilled at treating depression in women, offering individual therapy, marriage counseling,

and mindfulness and meditation groups. For more serious depression, an intensive, three-times-a-week outpatient program provides treatment in a group setting to foster learning, sharing and growth.

“We’re here to surround women with services based on their symptoms and needs,” says Morrison. “We want women to understand that they’re not alone in what they’re feeling, and they don’t have to figure it out by themselves.” ●

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

If you or a woman you know is dealing with depression, take the first step and ask for help. Depression can be treated.

Contact the Women’s Emotional Wellness Center at **1.888.CARE.898** or **mainlinehealth.org/wewc**.



Should you monitor your heart with a smartwatch?

The Apple Watch Series 4 has an app that lets wearers check their own ECG, or electrocardiogram—a recording of electrical activity in the heart. (You may know it as an EKG.) Doctors use ECGs to detect and monitor heart problems, including irregular heart rhythm and heart attacks.

The Apple Watch app is the first FDA-approved, over-the-counter ECG test. Having a heart monitor on your wrist may sound like a good idea. But what should you know before you invest in it?

Be a smart watch user

“If you want to get more involved in your heart health, the ECG app can be a great tool,” says Jason Bradley, MD, a sports cardiologist at Lankenau Heart Institute, part of Main Line Health. Younger, active people who are fans of the latest technology are often drawn to the app. It may also hold appeal for people who have, or are at risk for, cardiovascular disease.

Yet the app has its limitations. A standard ECG at a doctor’s office gathers information from 12 views of the heart. In contrast, the ECG app gets information from only one view. “This increases the chance of a false positive—indicating you have something wrong when you really don’t,” says Dr. Bradley.

Still, if you receive a notification from the app about irregular heartbeats, take it seriously. “If you get an alert but have no symptoms, call your doctor and discuss it,” says Dr. Bradley. “If you get an alert and are having severe palpitations, chest pain or shortness of breath, go to the emergency room. You could be having a heart problem.”

Assess, but don’t obsess

While the ECG app may offer extra peace of mind, “Some patients tell me they’re checking it 20 times a day,” Dr. Bradley says. “That’s too often.”

If you use the app, Dr. Bradley suggests checking your ECG randomly once or twice per week. In addition, he says, check it any time you’re experiencing symptoms or having unusual difficulty during exercise.

The Apple Watch is a pricey gadget. As Dr. Bradley says, “If you buy it, knowing when to use the ECG app and what to do with the results can help you get the most value.” ●

TOP CARE FOR YOUR HEART

The Lankenau Heart Institute is one of the top-performing cardiovascular programs in the country. Find a cardiologist, learn more about our services and view patient stories at mainlinehealth.org/heart.



WATCHING OUT FOR AFIB

Atrial fibrillation (AFib) is a type of irregular heartbeat that can lead to stroke and heart failure if not treated. Unfortunately, many people with AFib don’t realize they have it because it often doesn’t cause noticeable symptoms. A groundbreaking new study is looking at whether the Apple Watch ECG app can help find previously undetected AFib. Peter Kowey, MD, a cardiologist at Lankenau Heart Institute, part of Main Line Health, is one of the study’s authors.

About 420,000 app users took part in this research. Those who received an app alert about an irregular heartbeat were sent a patch containing a small sensor device, which they wore for a full week. The researchers are now analyzing how well the app alert matched up to the weeklong monitoring. The first results should be available soon.

“AFib detection is a hot issue, and for good reasons,” Dr. Kowey concludes. “If we can find AFib and treat it, we believe we can prevent thousands of strokes every year. Given how devastating a stroke can be, the potential patient benefit is enormous.”

Local study leads to better treatment for AFib

Do you or someone you love have an irregular, quivering heartbeat called atrial fibrillation (AFib)? Left untreated, AFib can cause blood clots that can lead to stroke and heart failure. The most common place for these blood clots to form is a little pouch connected to the left atrium of the heart. Treatment usually includes taking oral medication to prevent those clots. But medication is not right for all patients. As an alternative, medical manufacturers have developed devices that close off the opening to the pouch.

Lankenau Heart Institute, part of Main Line Health, recently opened an early feasibility study for one such device. The study will help the manufacturer finalize the design of the device, which could lead to better outcomes for people with AFib who are at increased risk for stroke. We are one of only a few centers in the world to offer this new technology to patients.

To learn more about this study, please email our cardiovascular research manager at cardiologytrials@mlhs.org.

KEEP AN EYE ON GOOD HEALTH

If you've got 20/20 vision, you may not think you need an eye exam. But it's still important to make (and keep!) regular eye appointments — not only to maintain sharp vision, but to protect your overall health.

"Eye exams allow us to identify eye diseases such as cataracts, which can be corrected with surgery. An exam can also help detect glaucoma and macular degeneration, which can lead to permanent vision loss without early detection and treatment," explains Richard Jahnle, MD, an ophthalmologist affiliated with Riddle Hospital, part of Main Line Health. "In addition, eye exams can help detect important health issues such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis and thyroid disease."

Dr. Jahnle recommends that people younger than age 40 have an eye exam at least once every three to five years. Those older than 40 should see the eye doctor every one to three years. Most people who wear glasses or contact lenses need an eye exam every year, as their prescription can change in as little as six months.

"The older we get, the greater the risk for eye disease. But no matter your age, see an eye doctor right away if you experience sudden vision changes, which can signal a medical problem," advises Dr. Jahnle.

In addition to scheduling regular eye exams, protect your vision by wearing UV-protective sunglasses outdoors. Exposure to harmful UV rays over time increases the risk for eye diseases and cancer.

"UV rays can damage the eyes even on overcast days," says Dr. Jahnle. "Our vision is precious. Take the steps necessary to protect yours."

Main Line Health offers eye care services throughout the region. Visit mainlinehealth.org/ophthalmology to learn more or make an appointment.



The benefits of exercise when you have asthma

Being physically active is one of the keys to good health. But for people with asthma, exercise may set off symptoms such as breathlessness and wheezing—a condition called exercise-induced asthma (EIA).

"When EIA goes unchecked, people often stop exercising. This helps explain why adults with asthma are less fit, on average, than those without asthma," explains Shailen Shah, MD, with Paoli Hospital, part of Main Line Health.

Yet things don't have to turn out that way. When EIA is well-controlled, regular exercise is possible. And it may actually improve asthma control.

For instance, exercise helps you manage weight. In people with asthma who are obese, asthma symptoms tend to be harder to control and lung function is often worse. Physical activity may also reduce asthma symptoms. In one study, walking on a treadmill twice a week for three months reduced airway overreaction and inflammation in adults with asthma.

Your doctor can help you plan a workout routine. EIA can be treated with

medication before exercise. These strategies may also help reduce symptoms:

- **Choose asthma-friendly activities.** Try swimming, walking or cycling. Sports such as baseball and football, which require short bursts of energy alternating with rest periods, are also good choices. "In contrast, activities that require nonstop, strenuous activity—such as running, soccer and basketball—are more likely to trigger asthma symptoms," says Dr. Shah.
- **Warm up before exercise and cool down afterward.** Try stretching or walking.
- **Know when to move indoors.** Pollen and air pollution can make asthma symptoms worse. If cold air is a trigger, consider wearing a scarf or cold-air mask over your nose and mouth until your airways warm up. ●

BREATHE EASY

Talk with your doctor about what you can do for asthma relief. Looking for a physician who specializes in asthma? Visit mainlinehealth.org/doctors.

HOW TO COPE WITH CAREGIVER STRESS

If you help a loved one who is elderly, ill or disabled, you are a caregiver. And even though it's a labor of love, this "job" can take its toll on you.

Caregiving can take away from the time you have for yourself, your job and your relationships. As a result, caregivers are at risk for depression, anxiety, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks, obesity and chronic pain.

This can have an especially big impact on women, who represent two-thirds of unpaid caregivers for older adults in the United States. "A growing number of women may find themselves in this role as their parents age, leaving less time than ever to take care of their own physical, emotional and financial health," says Jennifer Hwang, DO, who practices geriatric medicine at Main Line Health Center in Newtown Square. She notes that there is a twofold higher rate of caregiver burden in women compared to men.

Take care of yourself

It's important to manage your stress and protect your own health. Here's how:

- Get enough sleep, eat well and set aside time for exercise.
- Schedule regular health appointments.
- If you work, ask your manager if a flexible schedule is possible.
- Keep up your hobbies and friendships.
- You may lose your patience sometimes. Take a brief break before reacting. Contact a friend or write in a journal.

- Ask for and accept help.
- Research caregiver resources in your community.

"Be aware of the signs of depression, such as crying, loneliness, and changes in sleeping or eating habits," Dr. Hwang says. "Talk with your doctor if you're experiencing these symptoms."

Spread the responsibility

You can burn out if you try to do everything yourself. Whether it's actual caregiving or chores such as driving or cooking, try developing a schedule that

spreads the responsibilities among family members and friends. Or, look into home care or respite care services that can help with these tasks. Call Main Line Health's Senior Care Line at **484.580.1234** if you need assistance. ●



JOIN US

Come share your experience, advice and support with other caregivers at one of our support groups. Visit mainlinehealth.org/caregiver to learn more.



YOUR LIFE, YOUR WAY: ADVANCE CARE PLANNING MAKES DIFFICULT DECISIONS EASIER

It's a fact of life: We tend to put off difficult tasks. But getting them done brings peace of mind. That's especially true for advance care planning—making decisions about the quality of life and level of care you want if you develop a serious medical condition. Having a plan assures that your wishes are followed if you're not able to express them. And it spares loved ones the distress of making decisions for you without knowing what you'd want.

"Creating an advance care plan is more important than ever," says Karl Ahlswede, MD, medical director of palliative

care at Main Line Health. "Modern medicine can prolong life in ways that weren't possible in the past. But the quality of that life may not be at all what the patient had in mind."

MAKE YOUR PLAN WITH A FREE KIT

Main Line Health offers a free kit with everything you need to complete an advance care plan. Included are simple, step-by-step instructions and blank forms, plus easy-to-understand definitions of terms. To get your kit, call **484.580.1234**. Or access the forms at mainlinehealth.org/acp.

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EXERCISING THROUGH THE DECADES

Looking for the fountain of youth? It isn't hiding in a yet-to-be-invented pill. "In truth, exercise helps slow the aging process by keeping your cardiovascular system healthy, protecting your bones and joints and improving your mental health," says Kevin Freedman, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Bryn Mawr Hospital, part of Main Line Health.

Staying active is also key to avoiding injuries as you age. "Your muscles act as shock absorbers for your joints and can diminish arthritic changes that can happen in your knees and hips," says David Vegari, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Lankenau Medical Center, also part of Main Line Health.

Of course, your body's needs and abilities change over time. Here are some of the best types of exercise for each decade:



High-intensity interval training (HIIT) alternates short bursts of high-intensity activity, such as running, with periods of lower intensity exercise like jogging. "Your 30s are often a busy time of life, and with HIIT you can fit in an effective workout in as little as 20 minutes," Dr. Freedman says.



Muscle-strengthening exercises are great for bone mass, which decreases rapidly in your 40s, raising your risk for osteoporosis. Lifting weights can help your body make more bone and keep your skeleton strong.



Aerobic activity is important for heart health and weight maintenance. "Low-impact exercises like the elliptical trainer, stationary bike, swimming and water aerobics are gentle on your joints but can still provide a high-intensity workout," Dr. Freedman says.



Practicing yoga poses helps keep your muscles limber and prevents stiffness, aches and pains. The relaxation aspect helps reduce stress and keep depression at bay.



Tai chi, an ancient Chinese exercise, strengthens your balance and reduces chronic pain. "Balance declines with age, so improving your stability can help prevent falls and fractures," Dr. Vegari says.



Keep moving! The older you get, the more time you spend sitting, research shows. "Look for ways to remain active throughout the day, by walking, doing housework or taking exercise classes," Dr. Vegari says.