

# WOMEN'S healthsource

SPECIAL EDITION | FALL 2020

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all in one place,  
including women's  
primary care



**At Main Line Health King of Prussia**, you'll find expert physicians and a vast offering of specialties right in your community. Offering primary care, specialty care, specialized care and services for women, lab, radiology, physical therapy and more. Visit [mainlinehealth.org/kop](https://mainlinehealth.org/kop) to learn more.



**Main Line Health®**

# Physical therapy treats pelvic floor problems



**Francesca Beavers, DPT**  
*pelvic floor  
physical  
therapist*

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles and other tissues at the base of your pelvis. It has the critical job of supporting all the organs in the area, such as the bladder, rectum and uterus. It also helps prevent bladder and bowel leakage.

There are a number of reasons the pelvic floor muscles can become weakened or damaged, which leads to symptoms such as:

- Pain in the pelvis or lower back
  - Urinary urgency, frequency or leakage
  - Bowel leakage or constipation
- Painful sexual activity
  - Pressure or heaviness at the base of the pelvis

Specialized pelvic floor physical therapy can help ease these problems. “Our goal is to create an individualized treatment approach that caters to the patient’s unique symptoms,” says Francesca Beavers, DPT, a pelvic floor physical therapist at Bryn Mawr Rehab Outpatient Network, part of Main Line Health. Several treatment options are available, including:

- Exercises to strengthen the muscles of the pelvic floor, abs, lower back and hips
- Behavioral education, such as bladder urgency suppression strategies
- Biofeedback training, using muscle activity feedback on a computer screen to teach patients to use the pelvic muscles correctly
- Myofascial release or hands-on therapies to help relieve pain

“It’s important to realize that these symptoms are treatable and preventable. Pelvic floor rehab can greatly reduce the burden and quality-of-life issues associated with these symptoms,” says Beavers.



## GET THE CARE YOU NEED

If the symptoms of pelvic floor dysfunction are affecting you and your quality of life, Bryn Mawr Rehab can help. Call **484.324.7100** or visit [mainlinehealth.org/pelvicfloorrehab](https://mainlinehealth.org/pelvicfloorrehab).



**Samantha Flanagan, DO**  
*primary care  
physician*

## Primary care for women, by women

As in any relationship, the outcomes are best when primary care physicians (PCPs) and patients understand and trust each other. And for many women, those bonds are easier to develop when their doctor is also a woman. Health care for women, by women, is now more convenient than ever at Main Line HealthCare Women’s Primary Care in King of Prussia.

Ideally, your PCP helps manage your health and well-being over time, not just when you’re ill. Maybe you’re looking for ways to live healthier. You’re due for a routine exam or screening. Or you have a condition that requires medical attention. In all cases, your PCP can ensure you receive the care you need.

“Now is not the time to delay preventive health; we want to keep you on the path to better health

overall,” says Samantha Flanagan, DO. She is joined by Allison Rhodes, MD, in providing primary care at the center.

In addition to individualized primary care, the Women’s Specialty Center provides quick referrals and tests.

“We have many great providers all in one place. Often, I can simply walk down the hall and get my patient in to see a specialist right away,” notes Dr. Flanagan. Because these doctors all access the same medical records, they can get up to speed quickly on your condition to determine the care that’s right for you.

## FIND YOUR PHYSICIAN PARTNER

Main Line HealthCare Women’s Primary Care is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call **484.324.7100**.



**Allison Rhodes, MD**  
*primary care  
physician*



# Boosting your fertility naturally: Preparing for pregnancy and improving your odds for success



**Annette Lee, MD**  
reproductive  
endocrinologist

Despite what your high school health teacher told you, getting pregnant actually isn't that easy. During any given month, a healthy couple has only about a 20% chance of achieving pregnancy. Therefore, many women trying to conceive look for ways to increase their chances. While some may need the help of a fertility specialist, it's also possible to naturally boost your fertility—in a healthy way.

## IMPROVING YOUR PREGNANCY ODDS

When preparing your body for pregnancy, the best place to start is with a better understanding of your menstrual cycle and ovulation. If you are not currently tracking your menstrual cycle, you could be missing out on crucial ovulation timing, which typically occurs on cycle days 10 to 14 for those with a regular cycle. Timing your intercourse to align with ovulation will help ensure the meeting of sperm and egg. An egg can be fertilized for an estimated 12 to 24 hours after ovulation, and normal sperm remain able to fertilize eggs for up to three days.

A period-tracker app is an effective way to time intercourse within your ovulation window. You can also invest in at-home ovulation predictor kits, which are helpful for those with irregular cycles. A positive urine test suggests ovulation within the next 24 to 48 hours.

## PREPARING YOUR BODY FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

When trying to conceive, treat your body as you would if you were already pregnant. This means taking certain vitamins and supplements, avoiding smoking and alcohol, and maintaining a regular exercise routine and balanced diet.

Taking an over-the-counter prenatal vitamin is a common recommendation. Prenatal vitamins contain folic acid, which decreases the risk of neural tube birth defects. In addition, CoQ10 is an antioxidant that can help improve egg quality and is often recommended for infertility patients.

Your diet matters to fertility, too. In general, studies have shown that it's advisable to avoid highly processed foods and eat a Mediterranean-type diet. Certain seafoods should be avoided, such as shark, kingfish, tilefish, swordfish and mackerel.

Another helpful tip is to heat your foods in glass containers, not plastic, and avoid using plastics that contain BPA. Your male partner should also eat a healthy diet, avoid smoking and try to maintain a healthy body weight to optimize his sperm quality.

## HELPING YOU GROW YOUR FAMILY

To learn more about fertility care, contact the experts at Sincera Reproductive Medicine, located in the Women's Specialty Center at Main Line Health King of Prussia, at **484.324.7100**.

## WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Understanding when to turn to a fertility specialist is an important step on your journey to parenthood. General guidelines suggest that if you are younger than age 35 and have been trying for one year without success, it's time for a fertility evaluation. If you are older than age 35 and have been trying for six months or more, an appointment with a fertility specialist is recommended. If you have an underlying condition that affects fertility, such as PCOS, tubal disease or sperm dysfunction, it's recommended that you see a specialist at any time. If unsuccessful attempts are causing you distress, it's acceptable to seek help earlier.



# Smart choices can protect your vascular health



**Hank Hirsch, MD**  
vascular surgeon

We hear a lot about how to prevent heart disease. And for good reason: It's the No. 1 killer of both men and women. But our vascular system—made up of arteries, veins and blood vessels—doesn't just supply oxygen-rich blood to the heart. It circulates blood throughout the entire body, from the brain down to your toes.

When vessels and arteries become blocked or weakened by plaque buildup, it can cause a host of problems. In addition to heart attack, an unhealthy vascular system can lead to aneurysm, stroke, pain and difficulty walking, varicose veins, and even limb amputation. But take heart: You can reduce your risk for all vascular problems with healthy lifestyle choices.

## KNOW YOUR RISK

"Vascular disease in women is often underdiagnosed. That's why it's important to understand your risk and discuss it with your doctor," advises Hank Hirsch, MD, vascular surgeon for Main Line Health. "Remember, vascular disease is a whole-body disease. Treating a specific problem such as an arterial blockage is a local fix to a global problem. To truly address vascular disease, you need to lower your overall risk."

Risk factors for vascular disease include:

- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Elevated cholesterol levels
- Diabetes
- Smoking
- Lack of exercise
- Poor diet
- Family history of vascular disease

"Although we can't change our family history, it can help guide disease prevention," explains Dr. Hirsch. "For example, if you have a strong family history of vascular problems, your doctor may suggest earlier testing or more aggressive risk management."

## ADDRESS THE BIG PICTURE

As women, we're good at multitasking. By making a few key lifestyle changes, we can reduce many risk factors for vascular disease at the same time. Try to:

- **Move more.** Not only can exercise help you lose weight, it can improve HDL ("good") cholesterol, lower blood pressure and control blood sugar. It also improves blood circulation, which may prevent the development of clots or blockages in the arteries. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderately intense exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise every week.
- **Eat wisely.** A nutritious diet can help stave off diabetes, shed unwanted pounds and reduce plaque buildup. Choose lean meats, whole grains, and plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- **See your doctor.** Get your blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels checked regularly.
- **Make a plan to quit smoking.** Vascular disease is three times higher in smokers than nonsmokers. Talk with your doctor about how to quit for good.

## Cardiac surgery consultations and second opinions now available at Main Line Health King of Prussia

Basel Ramlawi, MD, Chief of Cardiac Surgery for Main Line Health, is dedicated to providing best-in-class heart care. He offers patients the most current, technically advanced treatments with the knowledge of which is best for each patient. To hear more from Dr. Ramlawi, visit [mainlinehealth.org/baselramlawi](https://mainlinehealth.org/baselramlawi) or call 484.324.7100.

## FIND A SPECIALIST

At Main Line Health, our vascular specialists provide the most effective therapy tailored to each individual. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Hirsch, call 484.324.7100 or visit [mainlinehealth.org/vascular](https://mainlinehealth.org/vascular).



## A destination for women's health

The Women's Specialty Center delivers an innovative combination of high-quality primary and specialty care amenities and programs to advance each woman on her personal journey to health and wellness. To read more about these services, meet our doctors and schedule an appointment, visit [mainlinehealth.org/kop](https://mainlinehealth.org/kop).

### PRIMARY CARE

- General primary care
- Women's primary care

### IMAGING AND LAB SERVICES

- X-rays
- Ultrasounds
- Bone scans
- 3D mammograms

### SPECIALTY CARE

- Autoimmune health
- Bariatric surgical consultations
- Breast health
- Dermatology
- Emotional wellness
- Endocrinology
- Facial cosmetic services
- Genetic risk
- Gynecological care
- Headache care
- Heart care
- Integrative and functional medicine
- Maternity care
- Occupational therapy
- Pelvic floor health
- Physical therapy
- Reproductive medicine
- Speech therapy
- Surgical consultation
- Vein and vascular care
- Weight and wellness

# The heartfelt effects of COVID-19



**Linda Barrasse, MD**  
cardiologist

We know COVID-19 can attack the lungs. But it turns out the virus can also damage the heart.

Doctors are seeing heart conditions in COVID patients—even when they were previously healthy or their case wasn't serious enough for the hospital. These conditions may be COVID's most serious damage, says Linda Barrasse, MD, a cardiologist who specializes in cardiovascular disease diagnosis and management at Main Line Health King of Prussia.

People with high blood pressure, diabetes or related conditions, such as obesity, are at the highest risk. And the older you are, the more likely you are to have these conditions. But even young and previously healthy people are experiencing heart problems because of COVID, for example, irregular heartbeats, shortness of breath, blood clots, stroke or heart failure.

"Other viruses can do similar things to the body, but COVID does them in a very big way," reports Dr. Barrasse.

## HOW COVID CAN AFFECT CARDIAC HEALTH

COVID can invade the heart, inflaming and weakening it. The virus may also set off a nasty storm of cytokines, proteins that are secreted by cells. Normally, they're part of our body's response to any virus. But with COVID, they can spread inflammation throughout the body and seriously damage and compromise heart muscle.

Unfortunately, even COVID's treatment may sometimes cause heart troubles. Some drugs used to combat the virus have side effects that can affect the heart.

## DON'T IGNORE THE SYMPTOMS

Among the saddest outcomes of COVID are cases where people experience symptoms of a heart attack or stroke but don't go to the emergency room because they're afraid of the virus. As a result, they may die unnecessarily at home. Anyone who's experiencing chest pains, trouble breathing, weakness, numbness or other signs of heart trouble should seek care. "Don't ignore the symptoms if you don't feel well," Dr. Barrasse emphasizes.

## HELP CONQUER COVID

The cardiac impacts of COVID are another powerful reason to do all you can to avoid spreading it. That means social distancing, washing your hands often, wearing a mask in public and keeping close to home when possible. Until a vaccine is ready, "the virus is in charge; we're not," Dr. Barrasse concludes. "COVID has robbed us of so much. But we need to stay vigilant a while longer."



## SCHEDULE A CARDIAC CONSULTATION

Taking care of our hearts begins with knowledge and awareness of unique risk factors. To schedule an appointment with a cardiologist at Main Line Health King of Prussia, call **484.324.7100**.

## SPECIALIZED CARE FOR WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

The Women's Emotional Wellness Center (WEWC) in King of Prussia is proud to offer a Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) exclusively for women. The program is designed for women ages 18 and older whose mental health symptoms require more care than intensive outpatient services, but who do not require inpatient psychiatric hospitalization.

Our WEWC PHP curriculum was developed by women and is dialectical behavior therapy-, trauma- and mindfulness-informed. Treatment focuses on emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, resiliency building, distress

tolerance, self-care and more.

PHP care includes psychiatry, individual therapy and the services of a staff nurse. There are five daily treatment groups, including psychoeducational skills, open process psychotherapy and experiential/holistic/life skills.

If you'd like to schedule a screening for the program, call the Women's Emotional Wellness Center at **888.227.3898**. For more about the program, visit [mainlinehealth.org/wewc](http://mainlinehealth.org/wewc) and [facebook.com/groups/wewcmlh](https://facebook.com/groups/wewcmlh).



# Is your hormonal health in balance?



**Rachel Sugarman, DO**  
*integrative and functional medicine specialist*

In women, hormones play a central role through every phase of life—from the beginning of menarche through childbearing years and into menopause. These hormones shift to meet our body's needs. But sometimes they can become unbalanced, causing uncomfortable

or painful symptoms. Main Line Health's integrative and functional medicine services help women address these hormonal problems and feel their best through each stage of life.

"Conditions related to hormone fluctuation and imbalance are extremely common. They include premenstrual syndrome, endometriosis, fibroids and symptoms related to perimenopause and menopause," explains Rachel Sugarman, DO, integrative and functional medicine specialist for Main Line Health. "Premenstrual syndrome alone affects 85% of women. But women don't need to just live with hormonal problems. We can help them find relief and significantly improve their quality of life."

## TAILORED, PERSONALIZED CARE

Dr. Sugarman sees patients on a consultative basis at Main Line Health King of Prussia, tailoring her guidance and care to each woman. She starts by understanding the patient's personal health journey—from her medical history,

symptoms and genetics to lifestyle habits, stress and tested hormone levels.

"Functional medicine is really personalized medicine. No one size fits all," says Dr. Sugarman. "We develop a plan that works for each individual."

## TAKING CONTROL

Dr. Sugarman provides specific lifestyle guidance and advice that takes the guesswork out of how to support hormonal health. She focuses on:

- Personalized nutrition
- Exercise
- Vitamin supplementation
- Mindfulness and stress reduction
- Sleep
- Digestion
- Endocrine health
- Reduction of estrogen-disrupting chemicals in household products, personal care items and food

"We focus on identifying and treating the root cause of the problem, not the symptoms," explains Dr. Sugarman. "Women are empowered to take control of their body and improve how they feel."

## HOLISTIC SUPPORT

The unique healing environment of Main Line Health King of Prussia also supports patients' health journey. For example, women may be referred to a nutritionist or health coach. Women learning better dietary habits may take advantage of the facility's grocery store tours or cooking demonstrations.

"It's never too early or too late to care for your hormonal health," says Dr. Sugarman. "We are here to help."

## SCHEDULE YOUR CONSULTATION

Treating the whole person—mind, body, spirit. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Sugarman, visit [mainlinehealth.org/kopintegrative](https://mainlinehealth.org/kopintegrative) or call 484.324.7100.

## Calendar of virtual events

At Main Line Health King of Prussia, you'll find expert physicians and a variety of medical specialties. Sign up for virtual cooking demonstrations, nutrition classes and informative lectures on cancer, pregnancy, pain, diabetes and more! Upcoming classes include:

### VIRTUAL COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

- **Beyond Bananas: Homemade Baby Food & More**—Learn simple recipes that are fast, inexpensive, nutritious and delicious.
- **Healthy Ingredient Swaps**—Discover good-for-you ingredient substitutions that preserve the deliciousness of your favorite recipes.
- **Playing Hide & Seek With Your Veggies**—Outsmart everyone with these sneaky recipes, packed with nutrient-dense vegetables!

### VIRTUAL LECTURES

- **Eating for Two**—Learn how you can best nourish yourself and your baby.
- **Preventing Prediabetes**—Learn how healthy lifestyle changes can help prevent type 2 diabetes.
- **Small Steps to Better Health**—Discover easy tips and tricks to improve your health, one step at a time.

Browse our calendar and get all the details at [mainlinehealth.org/kopevents](https://mainlinehealth.org/kopevents).



# Q&A: What you need to know about gynecologic cancer



**David Holtz, MD**  
chief of  
Gynecologic  
Oncology

*Women's Health Source* spoke to David Holtz, MD, chief of Gynecologic Oncology, Main Line Health, to answer some of the most frequently asked questions on gynecologic cancers, including ovarian, cervical and endometrial cancers.

## **What's one of the most important things most young women don't realize about cervical and vaginal cancers?**

They don't realize that the human papillomavirus (HPV) causes a vast majority of these cancers, and they are preventable with vaccination. HPV causes most cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancers, as well as anal and penile cancers and cancers of the back of the throat, tongue or tonsils, called oropharyngeal cancers. HPV spreads through genital contact: Most sexually active Americans become infected with HPV at some point in their lives. The virus can lay dormant for years before cancer arises. That's why every male and female between ages 11 and 44 should be vaccinated.

## **Which cancer patients are the best candidates for minimally invasive surgeries, such as laparoscopic or robot-assisted procedures?**

We know the benefits of these surgeries can include faster recovery, less scarring and less pain than open surgery. We consider all patients potential candidates for minimally invasive

surgery, including elderly or overweight patients, and those who have had multiple operations. For the small fraction of patients who require more complex surgery, we can perform open procedures.

## **Can women undergoing treatment for gynecologic cancer still have children?**

We refer women who wish to have children to reproductive fertility specialists to learn about fertility preservation options before cancer treatments begin. Depending on the cancer, during surgery we try to avoid removing both fallopian tubes and ovaries and spare the uterus in young women who have not had children. Moreover, there are ways to decrease the effects of chemotherapy on fertility. Some women may choose to save their eggs in advance.

We also discuss preserving the ovaries with women younger than 50 since removing them causes early menopause, associated with higher risk of bone fractures, heart disease and stroke.

## **LOOKING FOR A GYNECOLOGIC CANCER SPECIALIST?**

Our cancer care team adheres to the highest standards and best practices for treating ovarian, endometrial, cervical and vulvar-vaginal cancers, close to home. Search online at [mainlinehealth.org/findadoctor](http://mainlinehealth.org/findadoctor).



## **Don't delay breast cancer screening**

In these challenging times, everyday life can feel stressful, as we juggle altered work and school schedules while dealing with family concerns. But it's still important to make your own health a priority, pandemic or not.

"If you are due for your mammogram, make the appointment today. Catching breast cancer early results in less invasive treatment and better survival," explains Robin Ciocca, DO, breast surgeon at Main Line Health King of Prussia.

Main Line Health King of Prussia offers imaging services, genetic counseling, breast surgeon consultation and same-day biopsies. And because it's an all-outpatient facility, women can access convenient care without stepping into a hospital.

"Our safety precautions are paramount," says Dr. Ciocca. "Women can feel comfortable getting the preventive care they need."

To schedule a mammogram at Main Line Health King of Prussia, call 484.324.7100.





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# There's no time like the present to consider a cosmetic enhancement



**Catherine Weng, MD**  
*facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon*

Facial imperfections are more visible than ever before, thanks to social media selfies and an increase in video calls. Wearing a mask in public hides the lower half of your face but draws attention to those pesky signs of aging around your eyes.

With so many people working from home, this is the perfect time to consider cosmetic procedures. "There is some pain for the first few days after a face-lift, eyelid lift or rhinoplasty, but most downtime after the procedure is for managing the appearance of bruising and swelling," says Catherine Weng, MD, a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon at the Women's Specialty Center, Main Line Health King of Prussia. "Instead of taking a few weeks off work to recover, you could return after a few days and simply turn off your video cam."

## INJECTABLE FILLERS

Injectable fillers can address small imperfections and signs of aging, such as frown lines, forehead creases, crow's feet, lip lines, smile lines and tear troughs.

"Tear troughs are hollowed arcs that appear under the eyes," Dr. Weng says. "Some people think they have bags, but what they really have is hollowing caused by a loss of volume." It's also possible to make small enhancements to the shape of the nose with injectables, she says.

Except for minor bruising, injectables require little or no downtime. Results are immediate and last for three to six months.

## FACIAL COSMETIC SURGERY

Cosmetic surgery can also address functional issues. For example, Dr. Weng performs rhinoplasties, also called "nose jobs," to change the size or shape of the nose, repair it after injury or open up nasal passages in patients with breathing issues.

"Today, more patients are requesting improvements in both form and function," says Dr. Weng. "We can address the whole picture in one procedure." Rhinoplasty can be performed with local or general anesthesia, depending on the procedure, and requires a few weeks of recovery time for bruising and swelling to subside.

## TAKE THE FIRST STEP

If issues with facial appearance are bothering you, schedule a virtual health video consultation or an in-person appointment with a cosmetic facial surgery specialist at Main Line Health by visiting [mainlinehealth.org/entfacialplastics](https://mainlinehealth.org/entfacialplastics) or calling 484.324.7100.

