

# WOMEN'S healthsource

## A+ CARE

The pioneering  
treatment that  
got a teacher  
back to school

*read inside*

Treatment option for  
spine surgery offers  
**FASTER RELIEF**

See page 6

**SPRING 2021** IS YOUR TEEN'S SOCIAL MEDIA HABIT HEALTHY?  
LOOK AND FEEL YOUR BEST THIS SUMMER  
NEW OPTION FOR PATIENTS WITH CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE



Main Line Health®

# Is your teen's social media habit healthy?

**If you have a teenager, it's likely that social media plays a major role in their life.** It's not just a form of communication; it can be a barometer of social status, a record of daily events and an endless stream of entertainment. But how is social media impacting mental health? A Main Line Health expert weighs in.

"We are just beginning to understand exactly how social media affects our youth, and there is still a lot to learn," explains Charles Wisniewski, DO, adolescent psychiatrist for Main Line Health. "It's not just the amount of time spent engaged in social media that's

important; it's how the time is spent, the content they are exposed to and their mood prior to and after using it. It's also important to understand why a teen is turning to social media in the first place."

Dr. Wisniewski explains that social media is not regulated. With the use of algorithms, these sites and apps amplify certain paths of thinking.

"It's difficult for kids to see how they are being exploited by technology," he says. "Artificial intelligence can understand and manipulate children's psyche at a vulnerable time when their own identity is undergoing normal developmental changes."

## UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

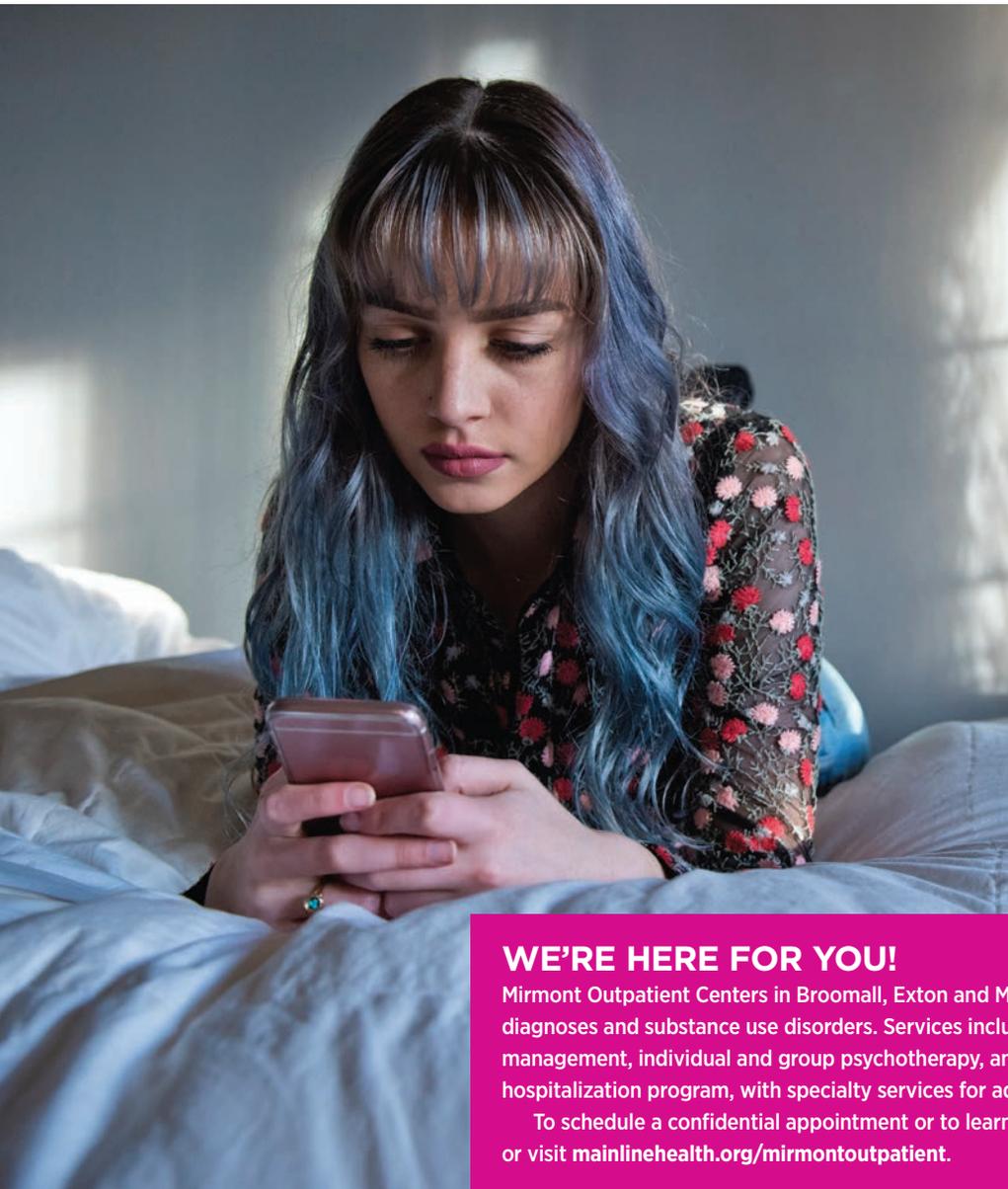
Dr. Wisniewski works with teens (ages 14-18) in Mirmont Treatment Center's adolescent outpatient behavioral health program who are struggling with issues involving social media. Some may be addicted to social media or dealing with anxiety or depression. Others may be using social media as a coping method to avoid other emotional problems.

"Social media sites are designed to make 'getting attention' the goal—it's how they make money. Like playing a slot machine, it's the 'what else' mentality that makes it hard to quit," says Dr. Wisniewski. "Children and adolescents are highly susceptible to these processes given their brains have not fully matured and they have less ability to regulate impulses."

## KEEPING IT UNDER CONTROL

Not all social media is bad. During increased isolation, especially due to the pandemic, it provides a way to connect with others. But it's important to model appropriate usage. Follow these tips and encourage your teens to do the same:

- **Be intentional.** Have a purpose before going online. Avoid picking up a device just because you're bored.
- **Set limits.** Make specific times of the day off-limits, such as during mealtime. Keep electronics out of the bedroom.
- **Review your settings.** Modify your device's push notification settings so that you aren't alerted (and tempted!) every time someone posts.
- **Get personal.** Simply reading and "liking" posts is not real interaction and can become problematic when used to define one's social status. Instead, send a private message to friends. Or better yet, text or call them.



## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!

Mirmont Outpatient Centers in Broomall, Exton and Media provide treatment for mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders. Services include psychiatric evaluation and medication management, individual and group psychotherapy, an intensive outpatient program and a partial hospitalization program, with specialty services for adolescents and adults.

To schedule a confidential appointment or to learn more, call 1.888.CARE.898 (1.888.227.3898) or visit [mainlinehealth.org/mirmontoutpatient](https://mainlinehealth.org/mirmontoutpatient).

# ASK THE EXPERTS:

## An ounce of prevention ...

We asked four Main Line Health experts: “What should someone do now to reduce the risk for unwanted health surprises later—or at least to get through them with less stress.”

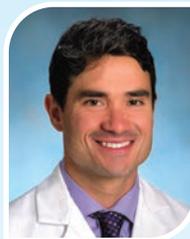


**Katherine MacLean, MD**  
*Obstetrician  
gynecologist*

### Take steps to prevent bone loss

As we age, our bones get weaker. In women, this bone loss speeds up during the “change of life” years when periods stop and they produce less estrogen. This puts women at a higher risk of breaking a bone, which can result in a serious disability if it occurs in the spine or hips.

Getting enough calcium and vitamin D in your diet is key to helping boost bone strength. Staying active is also important. A bone density scan will determine how much bone you’ve retained. Based on the results, your doctor may prescribe a medication or suggest supplements.



**Brian Spradio, MD**  
*Palliative care  
physician*

### Create an advance care plan

Creating a living will or an advance directive is the best way to make your wishes known and ensure they’re respected in the event of a life-threatening or end-of-life situation where you can’t speak for yourself.

People tend to put off advance care planning. They say they’re not at that point yet. But, in reality, we’re all at “that point.” Anyone can have a medical crisis at any time, so it’s best to make your plan and share it with family and your doctors sooner versus later. You can find resources to assist you with advance care planning at [mainlinehealth.org/acp](http://mainlinehealth.org/acp).



**Hazel Guinto, MD**  
*Pediatric ER physician*

### Be ready if your child needs emergency care

If your child ever needs to go to the ER, thinking ahead can help avoid some panic. One thing you can do now is to make sure you have your child’s medical history and insurance information readily at hand. Consider opening an online patient portal for your child or putting the information on your smartphone.

During an emergency, thinking ahead before going to the ER is also helpful. If possible, jot down as many things as you can about your child’s problem: when it started, symptoms, treatments you’ve tried and when your child last ate or drank. If your child ingested something harmful, bring the container with you. If they swallowed an object, bring an example if possible. If it’s a dog bite, bring shot records or note anything you know about the animal. Such details will help the doctors make treatment decisions more rapidly.

And if you have time, grab a favorite book, toy or device to help pass the time and ease your child’s stress.



**Regina Kemery, LPC,  
MA, MBA**  
*Behavioral health  
therapist*

### Know the signs of depression in your “tough guy”

Some men may not seek help for depression because they think it’s a sign of weakness or failure. But men commit suicide at least three times as often as women do. Being able to spot the signs of depression can help prevent it from escalating.

Rather than saying anything, men may show depression by becoming withdrawn and having less motivation to do things. Others become more irritable and easily frustrated. Escalating anger and hostility can signal an intent to harm oneself or others. It’s important to pay attention to worrisome behavior changes because early treatment reduces risks. If you think a man in your life may be depressed, gentle encouragement and support may provide the nudge they need to seek professional help. Another door-opener may be making an appointment with their primary care doctor as this can be a good opportunity to assess mental as well as physical health.

### BE PROACTIVE

To schedule an appointment with a Main Line Health provider about any of these topics, or other health conditions, call **1.866.CALL.MLH (1.866.225.5654)**.



# Doing her homework to find world-class

## HOW RESEARCH LED A WILMINGTON, DELAWARE, TEACHER TO A PIONEERING MAIN LINE HEALTH COLORECTAL SURGEON

**When Diane Cox of Wilmington, Delaware, experienced a small amount of rectal bleeding last summer, she saw her primary care physician right away.**

He suspected Diane had an anal skin tag—usually harmless excess skin around the anus—and referred her to a nearby colorectal surgeon for further evaluation.

The surgeon recommended a colonoscopy. But instead of a skin tag, the procedure showed that Diane had a large polyp in her colon. She would need surgery to remove the polyp and part of her colon. Diane would also need to spend a week in the hospital and two months recovering.

She was stunned.

“I’m 64, and this was the first time I really had any health issue,” Diane says. “I left there in tears, thinking ‘I cannot believe this is happening to me.’ I didn’t want a part of my colon removed. Research indicated a colon resection could create problems for years to come.”

### STUDYING UP

Diane immediately started contacting friends and acquaintances in health care for advice. During those conversations, one name kept coming up: John Marks, MD.

Through online research, Diane learned how Dr. Marks, chief of colorectal surgery at Main Line Health, is known internationally for pioneering minimally invasive surgical techniques. She made an appointment for a consultation with him, and in October 2020, after a thorough examination, Diane got what she was hoping for—a better option.

Dr. Marks told her she was a candidate for a state-of-the-art procedure he performs at Lankenau Medical Center that enables him to remove select polyps and rectal cancers while preserving the colon. Called single port robotic transanal minimally invasive surgery (SP rTAMIS), it involves removing the polyp entirely through the anus without any abdominal incision. Patients have less postoperative pain, fewer complications and a much faster recovery than with open surgery.



Diane Cox strongly believes in the value of research.

“This is really a tremendous story of technology and innovation being brought to the clinical forefront to help our patients have optimal outcomes for colorectal diseases,” Dr. Marks says.

### HEAD-OF-THE-CLASS CARE

Dr. Marks is one of an elite group of surgeons using the latest generation of robotic technology to improve patient care. In fact, Dr. Marks helped develop the procedure Diane would have, and he has the most experience performing the procedure worldwide.

The da Vinci® SP surgical system is designed for deep and narrow access through tissue in the body, making it easier for surgeons to maneuver their specialized instruments in a small, confined space. During robotic TAMIS with the da Vinci SP system, these instruments are passed through a single cannula, or thin tube, to the rectum to remove the polyp. The hole in the rectum is then closed with sutures, from the inside out.

The ability to enter the body through a single 1-inch incision or no incision at all allows surgeons to perform complex procedures in the most minimally invasive way.

### EXCELLENCE RECOGNIZED

In 2019 Lankenau Medical Center became the first and only hospital on the East Coast to be awarded three-year accreditation by the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC) for its rectal cancer program.

“In the division of colorectal surgery at Main Line Health, we are leaders in the field of robotic surgery and in achieving excellent outcomes. We have extraordinarily low cancer recurrence rates with minimal complications,” Dr. Marks says. “With progressive treatment options, we are giving patients who are essentially undergoing major surgery almost the same recovery they would have after a colonoscopy, which is remarkable.”

“We’re proud that we’re one of the first dozen centers in America to earn this distinction,” Dr. Marks says. “It’s recognition that our multidisciplinary approach to rectal cancer management at Lankenau, involving radiation oncology, medical oncology, radiology, pathology and of course colorectal surgery, leads to far better outcomes for patients.”

Dr. Marks further explains, “By better outcomes we mean longer survival, less frequent local recurrence, higher rates of sphincter preservation and higher rates of cure with the highest quality of life, meaning avoiding colostomy.”

### BACK TO SCHOOL

Dr. Marks performed Diane’s robotic TAMIS in December 2020 at Lankenau. Fortunately, the pathology showed the polyp was benign. After the procedure, Diane’s pain was so minimal it was easily managed with only Tylenol.

“Shortly after the surgery—I’d say 20 minutes after coming out of general anesthesia—I walked to the restroom, which was probably 50 yards away,”

# colorectal care

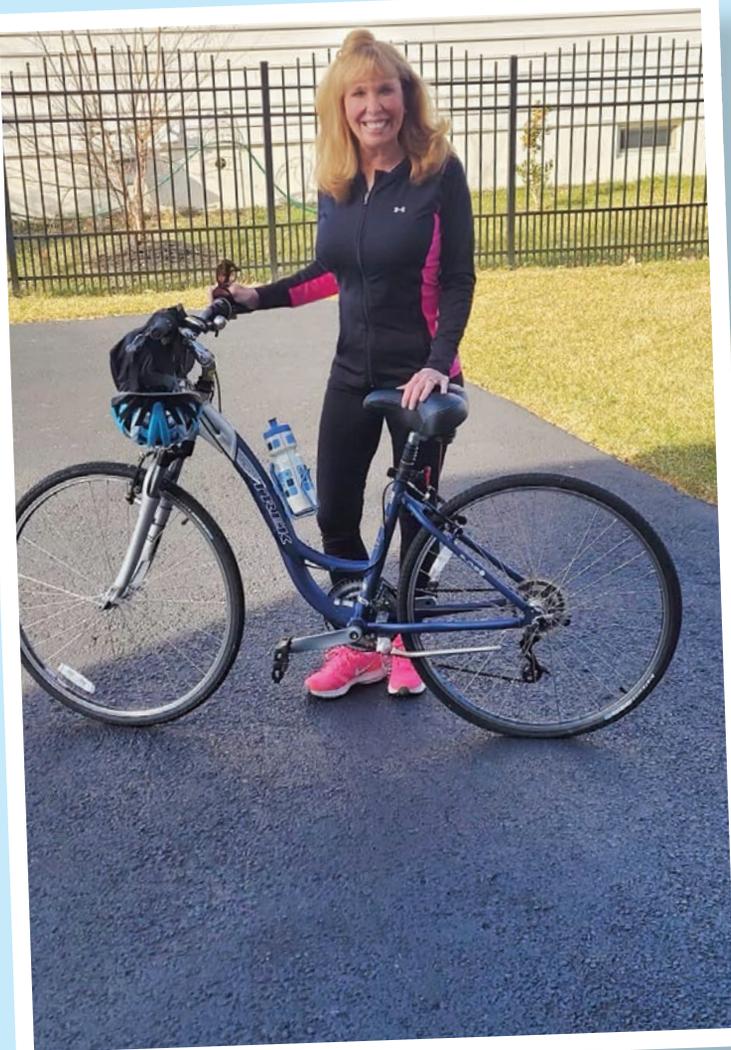
she says. “And I felt pretty good. I left the hospital on a Friday, after spending just one night. And after resting Saturday and Sunday, Monday I was back to teaching my seventh graders.

“Since this has happened to me, I’ve told so many people: ‘Do your research,’” she says. “Dr. Marks is a miracle worker. The care he and his team give is outstanding.”



## INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING YOUR OPTIONS?

For more information about colorectal cancer services at Main Line Health, visit [mainlinehealth.org/colorectal](https://mainlinehealth.org/colorectal).



## WITH YOU THROUGH YOUR CANCER JOURNEY

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Information, support, connections

- **Breast Cancer Support Group**  
First Tuesday of each month, 5:30 pm  
Contact: 484.227.3141 or [mantegnad@mlhs.org](mailto:mantegnad@mlhs.org)
- **Caregiver Support Group**  
Second Wednesday of each month, 5:30 pm  
Contact: 484.565.1253 or [powersv@mlhs.org](mailto:powersv@mlhs.org)
- **Cancer Support Group**  
Second Monday of each month, 1:00 pm  
Contact: 484.227.3794 or [stolbergt@mlhs.org](mailto:stolbergt@mlhs.org)
- **Colorectal Cancer Support Group**  
Second Thursday of each month, 1:00 pm  
Contact: 484.476.8503 or [bidasg@mlhs.org](mailto:bidasg@mlhs.org)
- **Metastatic Breast Cancer Support Group**  
First Tuesday of each month, 4:30 pm  
Contact: 484.565.1054 or [ashworths@mlhs.org](mailto:ashworths@mlhs.org)

### NUTRITION SEMINARS

Virtual classes

Visit [mainlinehealth.org/kopevents](https://mainlinehealth.org/kopevents)

- **Fighting Cancer with a Fork and Knife**  
May 4, 12:00 pm  
June 16, 2:00 pm  
July 29, 10:00 am
- **Eating While Treating:  
Nutrition During Cancer Treatment**  
June 2, 2:00 pm  
July 15, 10:00 am  
August 24, 12:00 pm

Additional nutrition seminars:

- **Healthy Ingredient Swaps**
- **Healthy Eating on a Budget**
- **The Mediterranean Diet**

### THRIVING DURING & AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Virtual seminars with Q&A

Visit [mainlinehealth.org/events](https://mainlinehealth.org/events)

- **Tai Chi Workshop—Discovering the Benefits of Energy and Movement**  
May 19, 4:00 pm
- **Cancer Genetic Testing—Making Sense of My Family Tree**  
June 16, 5:00 pm
- **Mindfulness and Movement—Utilizing Yoga and Breathing to Decrease Stress and Anxiety**  
July 20, 4:00 pm



## PREVENTING TECH NECK IN THE AGE OF ZOOM

Now that many of us are working or hosting gatherings virtually, our bodies are under a different kind of strain: tech neck. Tech neck refers to the neck pain, strain and discomfort that may result from spending many hours a day using electronics.

“With every inch that our head moves forward and down, our neck has more weight to bear and it ultimately puts an incredible amount of strain on our neck and spine,” explains Dr. Murray.

Common symptoms of tech neck include:

- Neck pain, discomfort or spasms
- Headaches
- Shoulder pain
- Weakness or tingling in your arms

Long term, your positioning can also cause a herniated disc or affect the curvature of your spine.

It’s best to limit the amount of time you spend hunched over looking at screens when you’re not working, too. If pain lasts for several weeks or you’re finding it difficult to complete daily activities, talk to your health care provider.

Read the full article at [mainlinehealth.org/techneck](https://mainlinehealth.org/techneck).

### ▶ TIPS TO PREVENT TECH NECK

- Take a 10-minute break every hour to get up and walk around
- Take phone calls standing up
- Invest in some high-quality office furniture like a high-backed chair, standing desk, etc.
- Make time every day for exercise

# A spine surgery option that gets patients back on track faster

**When facing spinal fusion surgery, fear about how long recovery takes can seem almost as daunting as the back problem itself.** But with lateral lumbar interbody fusion (LLIF), time is on your side.

LLIF is a type of spinal surgery that’s performed through the side of the body rather than through the back. As a result, there is less disruption to muscles and nerves in the area. That helps patients recover faster and get back to their lives sooner.

You might also hear LLIF referred to as direct lateral interbody fusion (DLIF) or extreme lateral interbody fusion (XLIF). By any name, it’s a form of spinal fusion surgery—a procedure to unite two vertebrae (bones in the spine) that have shifted out of place or have developed severe arthritis.

During the procedure, the worn-out natural disk (cushioning pad) between the vertebrae is removed and replaced with a manmade spacer. After the surgery, the vertebrae fuse together as healing occurs. “LLIF is a less invasive way of doing the spinal fusion procedure,” says Michael Murray, MD, a spine surgeon at Main Line Health who has performed hundreds of these operations.

## HOW LLIF RAISES THE BAR

Dr. Murray notes that LLIF has several advantages over traditional surgery, including:

- Less blood loss during surgery
- Shorter hospital stays
- Faster recovery after surgery

“In my experience, LLIF cuts the recovery time nearly in half,” says Dr. Murray. “I had one patient who returned to rock climbing just three months after undergoing LLIF.”

## WHO BENEFITS FROM LLIF?

“Almost anyone who needs a spinal fusion can have it done this way,” Dr. Murray says. Two common reasons for the surgery are:

- Spondylolisthesis, a condition in which a vertebra shifts out of position and onto the bone below it
- Scoliosis, a sideways curve of the spine

These conditions may cause back and/or leg pain. Nonsurgical approaches—such as medications, injections and physical therapy—are the first line of treatment. But if the pain persists, LLIF offers an alternative. It’s particularly helpful for pain that shoots down the leg. “In the right patients, LLIF has over a 90% success rate at relieving this kind of pain,” Dr. Murray says.



**TIME FOR RELIEF?**  
To schedule an appointment with a spine specialist at Main Line Health, call **484.324.7100**.



# Look and feel your best this summer



**If you have been considering cosmetic surgery, the coming of warmer weather can make you feel even more motivated to pursue next steps.** If you've been putting off a consultation, now may be the perfect time.

"Cosmetic surgery procedures, such as breast augmentations, tummy tucks, liposuction and eyelid lifts, require some recovery time," says Sean Wright, MD, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon with Riddle Hospital, part of Main Line Health. "For many patients who are working from home, the coronavirus pandemic has provided an opportunity to recover without having to take time off from their jobs."

Dr. Wright offers the following three tips for ensuring a positive experience with cosmetic surgery:

## **Research your surgeon's credentials.**

"Many different health care providers, including general surgeons and dentists, offer cosmetic enhancement and rejuvenation," Dr. Wright notes. "But only board-certified plastic surgeons can provide expertise in a wide range of procedures. We're also required to continually refine our skills and knowledge and stay up to date on the latest techniques."

Dr. Wright is a certified diplomate of the American Board of Plastic Surgery,

a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

**Keep an open mind.** Rather than requesting a particular procedure, a tummy tuck or breast augmentation, think more generally about what you'd like to improve. "For example, a woman may consult with me about liposuction," Dr. Wright says. "After consultation, I may recommend SculpSure®, a tummy tuck or liposuction combined with a laser to tighten the skin. A skilled surgeon will be able to consider your goals and design a personalized plan."

## **Have realistic expectations for recovery.**

"Just because your friend was back at work the week after her eyelid lift doesn't mean that you will have the same experience," Dr. Wright says. "Everyone's results and recovery time will be different, and it's important to have an honest discussion with your surgeon about what to expect afterward."

## **SCHEDULE A CONSULTATION**

To talk with a Main Line Health cosmetic specialist about your goals and needs, call **1.866.CALL.MLH (1.866.225.5654)**.



## **CARING FOR THE WHOLE WOMAN: NEW CENTER OFFERS ALL-INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO WELLNESS**

Offering concierge services for body, mind and spirit, integrative primary care blends the best of traditional medicine and holistic treatment. This evidence-based, whole-body approach to health is now available in Bryn Mawr at the Dee Adams Center for Integrative and Regenerative Medicine.

The new concierge care practice, led by Sara Slattery, MD, primary care physician and expert in preventive care, fitness and nutrition, puts you at the center of your health. By investing in an annual membership, patients have access to a wealth of amenities and services, including:

- Direct access to your physician
- Extended office visits
- Nutrition assessment
- Exercise and metabolic testing
- In-depth lab evaluation
- After-hours cellphone and virtual visits
- Convenient, often same-day scheduling

Membership includes acupuncture, massage, yoga and other integrative services. (Membership benefits vary for Medicare patients.)

"We provide all the traditional services of a primary care practice, but integrate holistic therapies to create a total health plan for each patient," explains Dr. Slattery. "This holistic, personalized approach helps patients achieve a higher level of wellness."

Limited memberships remain available. Learn more by visiting [mainlinehealth.org/brynmawrintegrative](https://mainlinehealth.org/brynmawrintegrative) or calling **484.337.2670**.

# Innovative, specialized care focused on “silent” aortic disease

**Most people who have problems with their aorta—the main artery that carries blood to the body—are unaware of their condition.** That’s because aortic disease doesn’t cause symptoms until it becomes potentially life-threatening. Thankfully, experts at Lankenau Heart Institute, part of Main Line Health, are focused specifically on this complex disease.

“Oftentimes, patients learn they have aortic disease by accident, such as during imaging for another issue. Others aren’t aware of it until an emergency occurs. For example, an aortic aneurysm can burst or the aorta can tear,” explains Dr. Basel Ramlawi, MD, system chief of cardiothoracic surgery and co-director of the Lankenau Heart Institute. “There are so many advances in the treatment of aortic disease. The biggest battle is early detection.”

## RISK AWARENESS

One of the greatest predictors for aortic disease is chronic high blood pressure. But family history and genetics play a major role as well. The Lankenau Heart Institute provides advanced imaging to help diagnose aortic disease and genetic testing to help identify family members who may be at increased risk.

“If you or a family member has a history of aneurysm, high blood pressure, a congenital valve issue or connective tissue disorder, it’s important to get screened,” advises Dr. Ramlawi. “Aortic disease can occur in otherwise healthy people.”

## EXPERT CARE

Not everyone who has an aortic disease needs extensive treatment. Many patients need only monitoring and blood pressure management. When surgery is necessary, Lankenau Heart Institute’s multidisciplinary team of experts offers cutting-edge expertise.

“In addition to treating the vast majority of surgical patients with minimally invasive techniques, we offer appropriate patients access to the very latest therapies through our involvement in clinical trials,” explains Robert Meisner, MD, vascular surgeon at Lankenau Heart Institute.



Above: Basel Ramlawi, MD, and Maysoon Dayoub, PA-C, discuss the clinical trial options available at Lankenau Heart Institute.



Left: For a patient with a family history of aortic disease, imaging can reveal the problem before an emergency happens.

## CUTTING-EDGE OPTIONS

Debra Young is one patient who received life-changing care as a result of a clinical trial. Young’s brother had died of aortic disease, but she was not aware it could run in families. When the healthy 61-year-old experienced severe, tearing pain in her chest, she went to her local emergency room, where she collapsed. Young, who had suffered an aortic dissection, was quickly transferred to Lankenau Medical Center for advanced care.

A tear in Young’s aorta caused the artery to enlarge and layers of the aorta wall to separate and leak, reducing blood flow to the rest of her body. The condition, which mimics symptoms of a heart attack, can quickly lead to fatal aortic rupture.

Young was a candidate for a clinical trial at Lankenau Heart Institute studying the use of an endovascular aortic stent-graft with aortic dissections. (Traditionally this therapy has only been used for aortic aneurysms.) This new, innovative treatment for aortic dissection helps seal

the layers of the separated aorta wall, allowing them to grow together and heal.

The surgery, performed by Drs. Ramlawi and Meisner, was a success. And today, just weeks after the minimally invasive procedure, Young’s aorta is healing. She is also working with the institute’s genetic specialists to help identify the risk to other family members.

“The kindness, support and care I received at Lankenau was unbelievable,” says Young. “I won’t go anywhere else.”

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Family history and genetics are the most important indicators for increased risk of aortic disease. Lankenau Heart Institute provides comprehensive care including advanced diagnostic testing, screening, monitoring and individualized treatment plans for the full spectrum of aortic problems. To schedule an evaluation, call 484.476.1000.

# Pregnant or thinking about it? Consider getting your COVID-19 vaccine

**If you're pregnant or considering pregnancy, you may wonder whether you should get a COVID-19 vaccine.** We spoke to Antonette T. Dulay, MD, FACOG, a maternal-fetal medicine specialist, and Jie Xu, MD, FACOG, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Main Line Health, to get the facts you need to consider when making a decision.

To start, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine and other women's health societies do recommend that COVID-19 vaccines are made available to pregnant and lactating parents. "Although pregnant patients were not included in clinical trials for the vaccines, there is no evidence suggesting that the vaccines affect fertility or harm a developing baby," says Dr. Dulay.

In regards to the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, Dr. Xu further explains, "They are only a blueprint of a harmless protein unique to the virus. Our bodies make copies of this protein and then break down this blueprint. The mRNA material should not cross the placenta to the baby."

"Research is ongoing to track any long-term effects of the vaccines. Whenever possible, the ideal time to get vaccinated is before you become pregnant," advises Dr. Dulay.

If you are already pregnant, you'll want to carefully weigh the risks of COVID-19 with the benefits of vaccination. "Pregnant patients have an increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness compared to nonpregnant patients," says Dr. Xu.

"Severe COVID-19 also raises the risk for preterm births and emergency cesarean sections," adds Dr. Dulay. "It's important to consider future risk, too. Some patients suffer cardiac, pulmonary and neurocognitive issues many months after having COVID-19, which can certainly make parenthood even more challenging."

In addition to pregnancy, other risk factors, including obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, also raise your risk of severe COVID-19 illness. Consider, too, that your risk of exposure to COVID-19 infection is higher if you or others you live with work closely with other people.

If you are pregnant, or thinking of starting a family, speak to an obstetrician-gynecologist or maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Main Line Health about the COVID-19 vaccine. They will discuss your personal risk factors to help you decide your best course of action.

## ONLINE RESOURCES FOR PATIENTS

- Find current information on COVID-19 vaccinations at [mainlinehealth.org/covid19](https://mainlinehealth.org/covid19)
- Search for "Vaccine considerations for pregnant or breastfeeding women" and "Myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccines" at [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)
- Search for "Statement on vaccinating pregnant and lactating patients" at [acog.org](https://acog.org)



## Calendar of events

As our region maintains social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Main Line Health is excited to continue to support our community. Visit [mainlinehealth.org/events](https://mainlinehealth.org/events) to learn more about the events below and to register.

### GEAR UP FOR FAMILY BIKING

Family bike rides are great exercise, and a properly fitting helmet is a must. Helmets may be ordered through Community Health & Equity for \$10 each. Call **484.337.5224** for details.

### VIRTUAL SENIOR SUPPERS

Grab your meal and join us for informative presentations on health topics geared to promote well-being as you age. Connect using your smartphone, computer, laptop or tablet.

### SAFE SITTER BABYSITTING

In this intensive one-day virtual training program for ages 11-14 you'll learn to care for children and prevent avoidable injuries while babysitting. Cost: \$40.

### SMOKEFREE

Our virtual SmokeFREE six-session program helps tobacco and e-cigarette users quit. Participants can enroll in group or individual counseling and may be eligible to receive free nicotine replacement therapy. Call **484.227.FREE** to register.

### THE DEAVER HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER AND THE WELLNESS FARM

We offer virtual health education classes to schools, community and church organizations. Classes can be scheduled by calling **484.476.3434** or emailing [lhhealthcenter@mlhs.org](mailto:lhhealthcenter@mlhs.org).

# New less invasive treatment option for patients with carotid artery disease

**Carotid artery disease occurs when the carotid arteries in your neck get blocked by a substance called plaque.** Over time, the plaque can cause the artery to narrow, putting you at risk for a stroke. In fact, one-third of strokes originate in the carotid arteries.

If you have carotid artery disease, your doctor may recommend having surgery to remove the plaque. For patients who are at high risk for surgery, due to age or other medical conditions, Lankenau Heart Institute offers a safe, less invasive procedure called transcatheter carotid artery revascularization (TCAR).

## BENEFITS TO TREATMENT

“There are positive benefits to patients who get treatment for carotid artery disease, including a reduced risk for stroke,” says Alex Uribe, MD, chief of vascular surgery at Lankenau Heart Institute, part of Main Line Health.

“The minimally invasive TCAR procedure allows us to place stents in high-risk patients, and they recover more quickly with less pain,” says Dr. Uribe. “This includes older patients, those who have had previous surgery or radiation treatment, or those with other diseases that make open surgery risky.”

## ONE PATIENT’S EXPERIENCE

Louise Craig, age 84, is a perfect example. She had the TCAR procedure in June 2020 after she had been diagnosed with carotid artery disease a few years before. “My doctor recommended a catheter procedure, but it didn’t work because they couldn’t reach the blockage,” she says. But when she switched doctors last year, her new doctor recommended she try again. He referred her to Robert Meisner, MD, a vascular surgeon at Lankenau Heart Institute and a colleague of Dr. Uribe.

“Dr. Meisner said my condition was pretty serious and recommended I try TCAR this time,” says Louise. “While it is a new procedure, Dr. Meisner reassured me it was safe and the best option for my condition. It seemed pretty straightforward,

Louise Craig is happy with the positive results after her recent TCAR procedure.



so I decided to do it.” She says everything went well, and she’s now feeling great and can’t even see the small scar.

## HOW TCAR WORKS

TCAR is done with a small incision just above the collarbone. During the procedure, a small tube or catheter is inserted into the carotid artery and is attached to a filtering system that directs blood flow away from the brain. This protects against any debris from the procedure reaching the brain and causing a stroke.

A stent is placed directly into the carotid artery to keep the plaque from moving, preventing future strokes. “The procedure takes about 45 minutes and is performed under local anesthesia. Most patients go home the next day with limited restrictions on their activities,” says Dr. Meisner.

“I would absolutely recommend TCAR to anyone who needs this surgery,” Louise says. “There were no stitches involved, and I just spent one night in the hospital. I came through everything fine.”

“To be among the first in our region to offer this treatment as an option for high-risk patients is another testament to Main Line Health’s reputation for excellent stroke care and intervention,” says Dr. Uribe.

## IS TCAR RIGHT FOR YOU?

To schedule a consultation with a Lankenau Heart Institute vascular specialist, call 610.565.8564. To learn more visit [mainlinehealth.org/tcar](https://mainlinehealth.org/tcar).



# State-of-the-art care after stroke, close to home

**If you or a loved one has had a stroke, it's essential to receive specialized stroke after-care as soon as possible.** A stroke can affect the ability to perform activities often taken for granted, such as walking, eating and speaking. Re-establishing coordination between the body and brain is a challenging process that requires expert care.

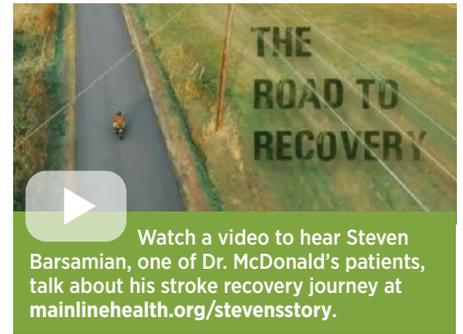
At Bryn Mawr Rehab, acute inpatient rehab begins as quickly as possible after a stroke. Patients receive a minimum of three hours of therapy a day, five days a week. "Our goal is to help patients recover to their highest level of function possible, as fast as possible, using the best technology and hands on therapy treatment available," says Brian McDonald, DO, medical director of the outpatient mild traumatic brain injury and concussion program at Bryn Mawr Rehab.

At Bryn Mawr Rehab, stroke patients have access to cutting-edge technology including robotic exoskeletons and body weight supported walking devices, as well as upper extremity robotic devices, both of which help the patient to rebuild the strength and coordination of movement and improve overall function. Technology coupled with the skilled hands of our expert clinicians, provides our patients with the best opportunity for success.

After the inpatient rehab stay has concluded, patients may benefit from ongoing specialized services in the outpatient stroke rehab program. We pride ourselves on a seamless continuum of care where an effective handoff occurs between the inpatient and outpatient care team. The patient and family are part of

the goal setting process which helps our team develop a comprehensive plan of treatment in the outpatient setting. This treatment plan may also include activities to be performed in the home setting.

"We're fortunate to have such an excellent stroke after-care program for our community," says Dr. McDonald. "Our patients get the best possible care here at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital."



## AFTER-STROKE RECOVERY STARTS HERE

Learn more about our advanced therapy care for stroke recovery at [mainlinehealth.org/strokerecovery](https://mainlinehealth.org/strokerecovery) or call 484.596.6000 to schedule a tour.



## ABOUT SPEECH THERAPY AT BRYN MAWR REHAB

The outpatient speech therapy team at Bryn Mawr Rehab helps people with speech and language disorders, voice and cognition deficits, and swallowing disorders.

As for how the team has been able to safely treat patients during the pandemic? Given the nature of the care, Maria Kurtz, MA, CCC-SLP, a speech language therapist, explains that many precautions are in place.

When treating those with swallowing disorders, for example, therapy is provided in a room with a plexiglass barrier between the patient and the speech language pathologist (SLP). The SLP wears protective gear to ensure optimal safety. After the session, the room is left empty for one hour and the room is cleaned thoroughly before it can be used again.

"These procedures have allowed us to do our job and treat our patients so that they may continue to reach their goals during this difficult and challenging time," says Kurtz.

To learn more about the outpatient speech therapy services at Bryn Mawr Rehab, call **484.596.5000**.



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# COVID-19 Vaccine Facts



**For more than a year, the coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on everyday life.** Now that vaccines are available to protect against the virus that causes COVID-19, the physicians at Main Line Health encourage patients to consider getting vaccinated.

"Like polio, like measles, we need to stamp out this virus by vaccination," says Mark J. Ingerman, MD, chief of infectious diseases and chairman of infection control and prevention at Main Line Health. "There is not a cure for this virus; therefore, the only prevention in my mind is vaccination."

Lawrence L. Livornese Jr., MD, chairman of the department of medicine at Main Line Health, agrees.

"As a public health measure, vaccination is one of our major tools in terms of stopping the pandemic," says Dr. Livornese. He recommends that patients speak with their doctor about whether vaccination is right for them.

## HOW THE VACCINES WORK

The vaccines that Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech developed use messenger RNA (mRNA). This molecule teaches your cells how to make a harmless piece of protein found only in the virus that causes COVID-19. This helps your immune system recognize the protein and build immune cells to defend against it. Because these vaccines don't use any real virus, they can't give you COVID-19. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine works similarly, except instead of mRNA it uses a harmless cold virus to carry instructions to the cells that help your immune system recognize and fight off COVID-19. "The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have been shown to be incredibly effective,"

says Dr. Ingerman. "We know that these vaccines prevent minor to severe disease and hospitalization." Likewise, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is proving highly effective against COVID-19.

Although the vaccines were developed fast, the pharmaceutical companies didn't take shortcuts, says Dr. Livornese. The COVID-19 vaccines were held to the same strict safety and effectiveness standards used for all vaccines.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU GET VACCINATED

You will most likely have no side effects at all or will have only local side effects, such as a sore arm, fatigue or muscle aches, says Dr. Ingerman. Serious side effects are possible but are extremely rare.

If you do feel under the weather after getting a vaccine, it doesn't necessarily mean you're actually sick. Symptoms such as a fever or chills generally last no more than a few days and simply indicate that the vaccine is doing its job.

Finally, if you are wondering which vaccine is best or which you should get, the answer is simple. All are effective. You should get the vaccine that is readily available when it's your turn to be vaccinated.

## ADDITIONAL VACCINE INFORMATION

Visit [mainlinehealth.org/covid19](https://mainlinehealth.org/covid19) for vaccine updates or to learn more about Main Line Health vaccination processes and state eligibility requirements.