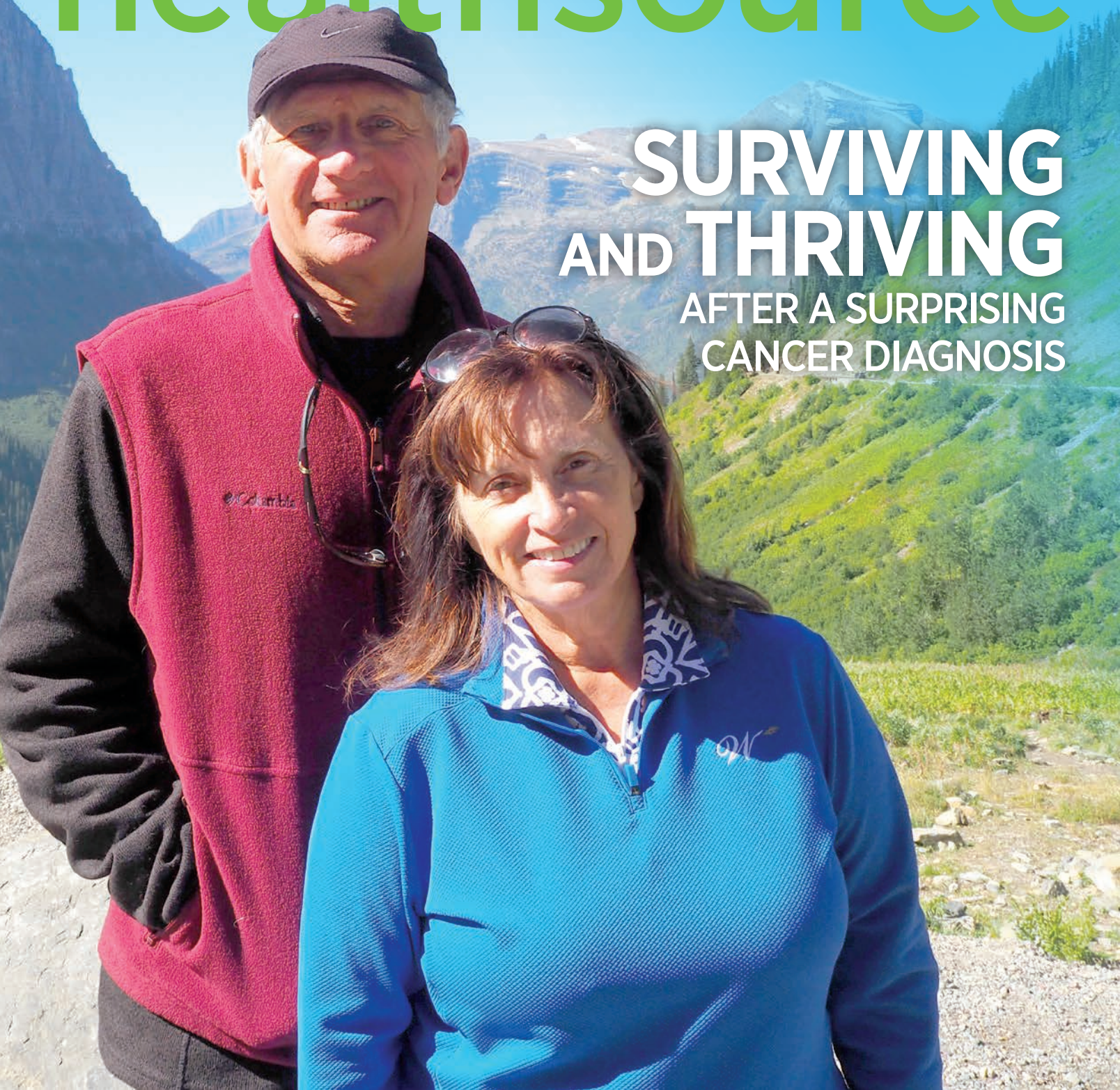


# WOMEN'S healthsource

## SURVIVING AND THRIVING AFTER A SURPRISING CANCER DIAGNOSIS



**WINTER 2021** PREPARING FOR THIS YEAR'S COLD AND FLU SEASON  
IS CARDIOVASCULAR GENETIC COUNSELING RIGHT FOR YOU?  
3 MYTHS ABOUT THERAPY THAT NEED TO BE REWRITTEN



Main Line Health®



# Preparing for this year's cold and flu season

**Whether you're sneezing, coughing or feeling achy, sometimes it's difficult to know what's causing your symptoms.** Is it just a pesky cold? Or could it be something more serious?

Getting a flu shot is an important step to take to safeguard everyone's health this winter. "Everyone age six months and older, including pregnant women, should get a flu shot every year, and this year is no different," says Laura Picciano, DO, primary care physician at Main Line Health in Roxborough. While the flu shot won't protect you from other viruses, like COVID-19, both are contagious respiratory illnesses that can lead to pneumonia, more severe infections and hospitalization.

This winter, sorting through symptoms may seem even more confusing—and stressful. Here's what you need to know.

**FIGHTING THE FLU.** With similar symptoms ranging from mild to severe, it's easy to mistake the flu for COVID-19. While both are caused by viruses, one of the telltale signs of the flu is that it tends to come on suddenly:

- **Onset:** Symptoms develop abruptly.
- **Duration:** Less than two weeks.
- **Symptoms:** Coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, muscle or body aches, fatigue, fever or chills, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children).
- **Care tips:** Stay at home, rest in bed, drink a lot of fluids and avoid interacting with other people. If you are very sick or have a high risk for flu complications, your health care provider may prescribe an antiviral medication to help ease your symptoms.

**COPING WITH CORONAVIRUS.** Suspecting you have COVID-19 can be scary. And while there is cause for concern, remember that most cases are mild and don't require any special treatment:

- **Onset:** Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.
- **Duration:** A few days to a week (for most people).
- **Symptoms:** Fever or chills, coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

- **Care tips:** "Contact your provider right away if you think you were exposed to the coronavirus," says Dr. Picciano. "If you have only mild symptoms, stay home in a room or area away from other people. Rest and drink a lot of fluids. See if over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen help you feel better."

**CATCHING A COLD.** Compared with the flu and COVID-19, the common cold usually doesn't cause a fever and has milder symptoms:

- **Onset:** Symptoms tend to develop slowly.
- **Duration:** About seven to 10 days.
- **Symptoms:** Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, coughing, slight body aches, headaches.
- **Care tips:** Stay hydrated and get plenty of rest. Taking over-the-counter medicine can help manage your symptoms, too.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN SYMPTOMS START

Now more than ever, make your health a priority. If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, call your primary care provider. You can also save time and reserve your place in line at one of our Main Line Health Urgent Care centers at [mainlinehealth.org/urgentcare](https://mainlinehealth.org/urgentcare).



# ASK A DOCTOR:

## ‘What’s one thing I can do to improve my health in the new year?’



**Samantha Flanagan, DO**  
family medicine  
physician

### Eat a diet rich in vitamins and nutrients.

A well-balanced diet is essential to good health. Eating healthy and filling foods, while avoiding processed foods, helps you feel full longer and maintain a healthy weight.

It’s always better to get your vitamins and nutrients through vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and healthy fats. But if you’re unable to eat a well-balanced diet, a multivitamin can supplement the vitamins and nutrients that are lacking. Look for one that has been verified by an independent organization such as USP or Consumer Lab.

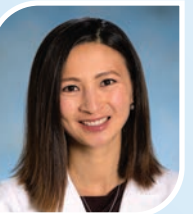


**Laura Immordino, MD**  
cardiologist

### Spend more time moving.

Regular aerobic exercise can make a big difference in your heart health—and it may be easier than you think. The American Heart Association recommends getting at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise. That’s just over 20 minutes a day, time that can be divided into even smaller increments. Nearly everyone can find five or 10 minutes to be active throughout the day.

With so many people working from home, it’s more important than ever to get out and get moving. Try listening to a conference call while walking around the neighborhood. Remember, if you’ve been sedentary for years, see your doctor before starting an exercise program.



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

### Give your self-confidence a boost.

We all know we feel more self-assured and ready to face the day’s challenges when we look in the mirror and like what we see. Many women consider facial cosmetic enhancement and rejuvenation services (browlifts, chin implants, facelifts, injectable fillers) a worthwhile investment because they improve self-confidence. If your goal is to achieve a more youthful appearance, or to repair damaged skin, now may be the perfect time to consult with a facial plastic surgery expert about surgical and nonsurgical treatment options.



**Lauren Turker, MD**  
gynecologic  
oncologist

### Schedule a gynecology appointment.

Although guidelines no longer recommend an annual Pap test for women at average risk for cervical cancer, a yearly visit with your GYN is still important to detect problems early, when they’re easier to treat.

Regular cervical cancer screening can detect both pre-cancers and early cervical cancers when a woman is asymptomatic. Cervical cancer is highly treatable when found early. Women ages 21 to 29 years should have a Pap test every three years. Women ages 30 to 65 years should have a Pap test and an HPV test every five years. It also is acceptable to have a Pap test alone every three years.



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

### Support your hormonal health.

Foods high in refined carbohydrates, salt and sugar have low nutrient density, which can hinder hormonal balance and healthy bowel function. I educate my patients on the importance of eating a nutrient-dense, Mediterranean-style diet filled with colorful vegetables and fruits, along with organic, grass-fed meat and poultry and wild-caught fish for heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

Reducing stress is another way to improve your hormonal balance. Many of my patients see benefits with meditation, yoga and breath-work. Heart rate variability training is a newer technique that gives people real-time feedback about their current level of stress.

### DON'T HESITATE TO GET CARE

While you hold the keys to many aspects of good health, it’s important to pay attention to symptoms and not postpone getting care if you need it. Learn more about the patient safety measures and appointment options at Main Line Health by contacting your health care provider. To schedule an appointment with a Main Line Health provider, call **1.866.CALL.MLH (225.5654)**.





# Lung surgery saved her life

HAVERFORD WOMAN'S CANCER IS DIAGNOSED, TREATED AND STAGED

**Marilynne Rose was shocked** when a routine cardiac CT scan revealed a large growth on her lung. The 62-year-old resident of Haverford, Pennsylvania, was an avid golfer and professor of interior design at Drexel University—and a nonsmoker.

Marilynne was referred to Main Line Health for further evaluation. Results from a PET scan were inconclusive, but the size of the nodule suggested it was cancer. She needed surgery to find out. “The last thing I expected to hear was that I might have lung cancer,” says Marilynne. “I don’t smoke, and I had no symptoms.”

## ONE OPERATION

Patrick Ross, MD, PhD, a thoracic surgeon at Main Line Health, performed Marilynne’s minimally invasive surgery. While she was under anesthesia, he inserted a camera and robotic arms through four small incisions in her chest. After he removed a wedge of her lung tissue that contained the suspicious growth, the pathology lab took only 15 minutes to confirm that it was cancer. Accordingly, Dr. Ross removed the whole lobe and all nearby lymph nodes to complete the operation. Post-op testing confirmed the cancer was stage 1, meaning that it had not spread, and Marilynne did not need any chemotherapy or radiation.

Dr. Ross, who has been performing minimally invasive surgery since 1993, had diagnosed, treated and staged Marilynne’s cancer, all in one operation. “Older lung surgery techniques required long incisions from the front of the chest to the back and spreading the ribs,” says Dr. Ross. “With the minimally invasive approach, patients have significantly less pain, which makes it easier for them to breathe deeply and cough, helping to prevent complications like pneumonia. Patients recover faster and return to their usual activities sooner.”

Full tumor removal with robotic surgery allows for accurate staging to identify which patients will need more treatments after surgery, Dr. Ross adds.



Cancer survivor Marilynne Rose

## CANCER SURVIVOR AND THRIVER

When Marilynne woke up after the operation, she could breathe on her own and didn’t need assistance from a ventilator. She went home after 48 hours. Four months after surgery, Marilynne started swimming for lung and heart health, and today, at 66, she swims half a mile, three times a week.

“My lungs feel good: Even though I’m missing a lobe, I don’t notice it,” says Marilynne. “Swimming has also helped me

overcome the shock of my cancer diagnosis and the fear that it might come back.”

Like many people diagnosed with cancer unexpectedly, Marilynne was anxious with every follow-up scan. One day, Dr. Ross told her that the day her cancer was treated she became a cancer survivor, and she needed to live her life as if she were cancer-free.

“That advice was very helpful. It took a while to get over the shock and depression of having cancer,” says Marilynne, who retired six months after surgery. “With cancer, there are lots of unknowns, but Dr. Ross always took time to explain things. I feel incredibly lucky to be in the Main Line Health system, where I received the best care in the world. Dr. Ross and his team saved my life.”

## ADVANCES ON THE HORIZON

Today, a new technique called robotic bronchoscopy allows Dr. Ross and other robotic surgeons to reach all parts of the lung and biopsy small nodules without any incisions. In this novel procedure, the surgeon inserts a tube called a bronchoscope, which



Marilynne is back to swimming and enjoying the beach with her son and grandson.

## IN ONE OPERATION

contains a camera, and uses a GPS-like system to navigate with robotic assistance to previously unreachable locations in the lung. This is done through a breathing tube in the windpipe while the patient is under general anesthesia. A small needle is used to collect cells for analysis to make the diagnosis.

“Robotic bronchoscopy is excellent for diagnosing early lung cancers,” says Dr. Ross. “Within the next year or two, we expect to be using this approach to reach small nodules to destroy tumors from the inside, with no external incisions.

“We are often able to cure cancer if we catch it early,” Dr. Ross concludes. “Saying the words ‘You have cancer’ changes the patient’s world. Telling patients we have treated their cancer restores their hope for a future.”



### MORE THAN CANCER CARE. HUMAN CARE.

To schedule an appointment with a cancer specialist at Main Line Health, call **866.CALL.MLH (866.225.5654)**. Or visit [mainlinehealth.org/appointments](https://mainlinehealth.org/appointments) to fill in our secure online appointment request form.

## 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 [curcillobidasg@mlhs.org](mailto:curcillobidasg@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/KOEvents](https://mainlinehealth.org/KOEvents)

- **Fighting Cancer with a Fork & Knife**  
January 21, 10:00 am  
February 25, 12:00 pm  
March 24, 4:00 pm  
April 20, 12:00 pm
- **Eating While Treating: Nutrition During Cancer Treatment**  
January 28, 10:00 am  
March 9, 12:00 pm  
April 8, 4:00 pm
- **The Mediterranean Diet**  
February 3, 12:00 pm

### THRIVING DURING & AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Virtual seminars with Q&A; visit [mainlinehealth.org/events](https://mainlinehealth.org/events)

- **Creative Arts and Cancer: Developing Coping Skills to Reduce Anxiety and Stress**  
January 13, 5:30 pm
- **The Nuts and Bolts of Medical Marijuana**  
March 9, 5:00 pm
- **Holistic Healing and Cancer Care: Female Sexual Health**  
April 22, 2:00 pm

## GROUNDBREAKING CANCER RESEARCH

The Lankenau Institute for Medical Research (LIMR), part of Main Line Health, is devoted to advancing new approaches to the most difficult medical challenges.

Immunotherapies, drugs that help immune cells identify and attack cancer cells, have improved survival rates for people with certain cancers. However, immunotherapies are less effective in patients with advanced disease when tumors become more resistant to these drugs. LIMR scientists recently discovered treatments that may improve the effectiveness of immunotherapies in advanced disease. The scientists discovered a way to block tumors from absorbing molecules called polyamines, which are found in large quantities in tumors. This research found that polyamine-blocking therapy (PBT) boosted the ability of the immune system to kill cancer cells in laboratory models with advanced breast cancer and melanoma. The combination of PBT and immunotherapy shrank tumors and increased long-term survival in these models that had advanced disease resistant to immunotherapy alone.

LIMR scientists, in collaboration with IO Biotech, discovered that a protein called IDO1 limits the cancer-fighting activity of chemotherapy by preventing immune system activity. Building on this discovery, the company developed a cancer vaccine that targets different sections of the IDO1 protein. The scientists found that a cancer vaccine containing two agents directed against the IDO1 protein combined with an immune checkpoint inhibitor completely eradicated the tumor in laboratory models. Furthermore, when tumor cells were reintroduced to the models, the vaccine protected them from relapse.



### WE'RE ON A MISSION TO CURE CANCER, BUT WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT.

Learn more about the work underway at LIMR and how you can support our research—including studies on COVID-19—at [mainlinehealth.org/limr](https://mainlinehealth.org/limr).





# Cardiovascular genetic counseling: Is it right for you?

**You have your mother's eyes and wavy hair.** Could you also have inherited her heart condition?

Many cardiovascular conditions (problems involving the heart and blood vessels) can be inherited, or related in part to genetics. Now the good news: Genetic counseling can help determine which cardiovascular disorders you may be at higher risk for and help you prevent or minimize potential health problems.

Here, Cristina Nixon, MS, LCGC, a licensed genetic counselor with the Genetics and Risk Assessment Program at Main Line Health, answers common questions about cardiovascular genetic counseling.

## **Q: WHAT DOES CARDIOVASCULAR GENETIC COUNSELING ENCOMPASS?**

**A:** During cardiovascular genetic counseling, a certified genetic counselor performs a comprehensive analysis of your personal and family history to determine your risk for cardiovascular disease. You'll learn if genetic testing is appropriate for you and, if you choose to have this testing, what the results mean for you and your family. Your genetic counselor will discuss ways you can manage your cardiovascular disease risk and provide resources for more information and support.

## **Q: WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF INHERITED HEART CONDITIONS?**

**A:** Inherited heart conditions include cardiomyopathy (diseases of the heart muscle), arrhythmias (heart rhythm disorders), aortopathy (aortic aneurysms), familial hypercholesterolemia (lipid disorders) and congenital heart defects.

## **Q: HOW COMMON ARE INHERITED HEART CONDITIONS?**

**A:** Many types of heart disorders can be inherited. Some are more common than others. In the U.S., those include hypertrophic cardiomyopathy, an abnormal thickening of the heart muscle, which may affect as many as 1 in 200 people; and familial hypercholesterolemia, which affects 1 in 250 people.

## **Q: WHO SHOULD CONSIDER EVALUATION FOR AN INHERITED HEART CONDITION?**

**A:** Consider cardiovascular genetic testing if you or your relative with a heart condition were diagnosed at an early age, or if you have multiple family members with the same or similar types of heart disease. This could be multiple individuals on the same side of the family who have had a heart attack, arrhythmia, heart failure or a heart transplant. You may also be at increased cardiovascular risk if you or your family members have experienced unexplained cardiac arrest or sudden death, including SIDS.

## **Q: WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FIND THAT A PATIENT HAS A HIGHER GENETIC RISK FOR HEART DISEASE?**

**A:** Knowing your genetic risk for cardiac disorders can help you, your family and your health care providers be proactive about lowering that risk. Your genetic counselor will work with you to develop a personalized care plan. This might entail making lifestyle changes to prevent triggering cardiac events. It may also include exploring treatment options such as an implantable cardiac defibrillator, a pacemaker, enzyme replacement therapy, early surgical intervention or heart transplantation.

Since at-risk family members are also identified during genetic testing, they too can take steps to protect their health with strategies like screening and early intervention.

## **MAKING SENSE OF HEALTH RISKS**

The Genetics and Risk Assessment Program at Main Line Health provides appropriate, accurate and compassionate genetic counseling services for people concerned about cardiovascular health due to their personal or family history. For more information about genetic counseling or to schedule an appointment, call 484.565.GENE (4363).

# Get the facts about fibroids

**If you've been told that you have fibroids,** you're not alone. These muscular tumors in the wall of the uterus, which are almost always benign (noncancerous), are common in women of childbearing age. Over the course of a woman's lifetime, 70% of white women and 90% of African American women may develop fibroids. After menopause, these hormonally sensitive tumors usually shrink.

"Having fibroids doesn't necessarily require either medical or surgical treatment. It is only when those fibroids cause unwanted symptoms that treatment is indicated," notes Jordan Klebanoff, MD, minimally invasive gynecologic surgeon at Lankenau Medical Center, part of Main Line Health. "Many women with fibroids never experience any problems. However, even the smallest fibroids can be associated with undesirable symptoms or sometimes infertility in certain cases."

Some women develop symptoms such as:

- Heavy or irregular menstrual bleeding
- Painful cramping during menstrual cycles
- Feeling of fullness in the lower belly
- Pain during sex
- Low back pain
- Frequent urination
- Difficulty getting pregnant
- Problems during labor and delivery

## MEDICAL OPTIONS

If your fibroids are causing problems, several types of treatment are available. Your doctor may prescribe medication, like the following:

- Pain relievers (such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen) to ease mild pain
- Nonhormonal medications to reduce bleeding
- Hormonal birth control (such as certain birth control pills or the Mirena IUD) to reduce heavy bleeding during periods
- Iron supplements to prevent anemia caused by heavy periods

Some cases require gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists/antagonists (such as Lupron or Orilissa) to treat anemia or shrink fibroids prior to surgery.

## SURGICAL OPTIONS

Sometimes fibroid-related symptoms require surgery. Your doctor may recommend a procedure such as:

- Myomectomy to remove fibroids while leaving the rest of the uterus intact—a good choice for women who want to become pregnant later
- Hysterectomy to remove the entire uterus and fibroids
- Endometrial ablation to destroy the lining of the uterus, which reduces heavy bleeding during periods
- Uterine fibroid embolization to block the blood supply to fibroids, which causes them to shrink

"The choice of procedure depends on the size, location and number of fibroids as well as whether you want to have children in the future," says Dr. Klebanoff. "Talk with your doctor to discuss which treatment may be right for you."



## RELIEF FOR PELVIC PAIN

Main Line Health gynecologists offer advanced treatments for women who are experiencing pelvic pain or have benign gynecological disorders, including minimally invasive approaches when surgery is indicated. Visit [mainlinehealth.org/migs](https://mainlinehealth.org/migs) to learn more.

# 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. We have transitioned many events to virtual solutions to continue our mission of engaging with our patients and community. Main Line Health offers virtual community health learning opportunities, including:

- Monthly Senior Suppers
- Support Groups
- Prediabetes & Diabetes 101
- Childbirth & Childcare Classes
- Fall Prevention Programs

Visit [mainlinehealth.org/events](https://mainlinehealth.org/events) to learn more and register.

## STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

This virtual 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. A sturdy chair without arms is needed. Fee: \$5/class. Call **1.866.CALL.MLH** to register and **484.337.5206** for more details.

## 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 (NRT). Call **484.227.FREE** to register and talk with a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

## FREE WIG PROGRAM

Designed for female cancer patients preparing to undergo or undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment. For details or to schedule a free wig fitting, call Bryn Mawr Hospital Community Health and Equity at **484.337.5215**.

# Feeling left behind?

## Treatment of spinal condition relieves pain from walking



Scott Rushton, MD

**Staying active as we age allows us to do things we love—**from traveling to enjoying time with family. But for those living with a spine condition like lumbar spinal

stenosis, participating in even simple activities can be a challenge. That's because the condition can cause difficulty standing or walking for any length of time. Thankfully, Main Line Health offers effective treatments that help people get back to their lives.

### RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM

"Lumbar spinal stenosis is caused by a narrowing of the spinal canal, which can put pressure on the nerves in the lower back," explains Scott Rushton, MD, orthopaedic surgeon with Lankenau Medical Center, part of Main Line Health. "It occurs naturally with age, but having osteoarthritis or stability issues in the spine can increase your risk. Women are more prone to developing lumbar spinal stenosis because of their anatomy."

Spinal stenosis is diagnosed with imaging tests as well as discussion with your doctor. Common symptoms include heaviness, pain, cramping or numbness in the legs that limits tolerance for walking.

"Many people with spinal stenosis compensate by leaning on someone or something—like a shopping cart—to extend their activity," says Dr. Rushton.

### FINDING RELIEF

Most people with spinal stenosis can manage the condition without surgery. Dr. Rushton recommends doing activities that strengthen the core and encourage flexibility, such as physical therapy, yoga and Pilates. Epidural injections can help reduce pain and inflammation for some patients. However, if symptoms are severe, surgery can offer a long-term solution.

"Surgery to relieve lumbar spinal stenosis is one of the most effective, rewarding procedures we do in health care today," says Dr. Rushton, who has helped thousands of patients with the condition. "The majority of patients find relief of leg pain and regain excellent walking tolerance."

The surgery, called decompressive laminectomy, involves removing the roof of the spine to alleviate pressure on the nerves. Patients often report immediate relief.

"I've successfully performed this surgery on appropriate patients who are well into their 80s. An 84-year-old woman wants and deserves as much quality of life as someone who is younger," says Dr. Rushton. "Age should not be a limiting factor to obtaining relief with spine surgery."

Dr. Rushton and the team at Main Line Health Orthopaedic and Spine provide expert care for a full range of orthopaedic conditions.



### BACK TO GOOD HEALTH

Dr. Rushton sees patients at Lankenau Medical Center. To make an appointment, call 610.642.3005 or visit [mainlinehealth.org/lankenauorthospine](https://mainlinehealth.org/lankenauorthospine).



## COMMON SIGNS OF SPINE CONDITIONS

Back pain is a common symptom of a spine issue, but it is not the only sign. Spine conditions can cause a variety of symptoms, including:

- Numbness or tingling in one of your arms or legs
- Pain in your back, neck, leg or buttocks
- Back pain after activity
- Stiffness in your back or neck
- Limited mobility

While spine issues can occur at any age, it is common for adults ages 20 to 50 to have problems with disks that have degenerated or slipped out of position. Older adults may experience more complex spine issues due to aging, such as spinal stenosis.

Main Line Health Orthopaedic and Spine experts develop customized treatment plans tailored to each patient's unique health needs.



# New device helps teach brain, muscles how to walk again

Although we often take it for granted, walking is a complex process. It involves whole-body coordination, communication, balance and strength. For those recovering from a stroke, brain injury or spinal cord injury, relearning this process can be difficult.

Therapists at Bryn Mawr Rehab, part of Main Line Health, are trained to teach patients how to walk again. And they have a new, state-of-the-art device to help: the Ekso exoskeleton robotic device.

"The exoskeleton helps retrain the brain in motor control, balance and gait so patients learn to walk properly, without any compensations such as dragging a foot or favoring one side of the body," explains Neha Buddemeier, PT, DPT, physical therapist at Bryn Mawr Rehab. "With the device, patients can take

hundreds of steps during therapy using the correct gait, flow and pattern. This repetition is key for developing the neural pathways necessary for walking."

"Bryn Mawr Rehab invests in technology that we believe will do the best for our patients," says Clare Small McEvoy, director of therapy services for Main Line Health. "This technology complements the skilled hands of our therapy team and enables them to take their treatment to the next level."

The Ekso wearable device includes a motorized backpack harness connected to robotic legs and footplates. It provides power to the legs and hips while ensuring correct posture and movement. Therapists control the device in real time, adjusting the level of power—from full assistance to patient-initiated movement.

"The exoskeleton and the person move as one," explains Buddemeier. "Our goal is to gradually reduce assistance from the device until patients are able to replicate the movements on their own."

Bryn Mawr Rehab acquired the Ekso exoskeleton robotic device in December 2019. Since then, physical therapists have been using it in both inpatient and outpatient therapy programs.

"Stroke, brain injury and spinal cord injury patients have a window of opportunity to drive neuroplasticity—the time period when their brains can relearn pathways," says Buddemeier. "Ekso is one more tool we can use in therapy and is allowing us to move rehabilitation forward for our patients."



## VIRTUAL THERAPY OFFERS ALTERNATIVE ACCESS TO PHYSICAL REHAB CARE

Now more than ever, we understand the importance of staying healthy. But for some, the coronavirus pandemic has created a physical barrier to health care. That's why Main Line Health introduced virtual therapy—an alternative way for people to receive physical, occupational and speech therapy.

"Although we maintain strict safety protocols, we know not everyone can come or is comfortable coming to our facility," explains Lauren High, therapy services director for Main Line Health. "Now that we offer therapy sessions via telemedicine, patients can continue needed therapies in the comfort of their home."

Patients are first evaluated to ensure they are a candidate for virtual therapy, then walked through each step of the process by Patient Access staff. During therapy sessions, therapists communicate with patients face to face online using the Zoom platform, which is integrated into each patient's MyChart account for easy access. Due to licensure restrictions, patients must be in the state of Pennsylvania.

"We were already exploring virtual therapy as a care delivery option, and current events pushed us to make it accessible that much sooner," says High.

With the Ekso, Bryn Mawr Rehab patients are able to take up to 200 steps before needing to rest.



## THE FIRST STEP TO ALL OTHERS STARTS HERE

Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital offers the latest technology and advanced therapy care, close to home. Learn more at [mainlinehealth.org/brynmawrrehab](https://mainlinehealth.org/brynmawrrehab) or call 484.596.6000 to schedule a tour.



# 3 myths about therapy that need to be rewritten

## **You've likely heard it said: These are unprecedented times.**

And if ever there were a time to seek therapy, this may be it.

"The disruption of daily routines brought on by the pandemic can be enough to drive up old anxieties, fears or resentments," says Barb Catania of the Women's Emotional Wellness Center (WEWC), part of Main Line Health.

Although therapy has increased in social acceptance over the years, myths persist. Here are three common ones:

## **MYTH #1: I should be able to handle this on my own.**

Seeking help is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign of courage, investment in yourself and commitment to those you love. Even people who have "already dealt with stuff" may need therapy, in the same way that great athletes still need a coach.

Men in particular may be resistant to therapy. Yet their mental health is at stake just as much as women's, especially since men are at higher risk for suicide and for drug and alcohol abuse.

## **MYTH #2: I could just talk with my friends.**

There is a big difference between talking with friends and a trained psychotherapist. "A good therapist helps disrupt negative patterns in the way a



person thinks about themselves," explains Catania. "Sometimes a person has been living with a depressed mindset for so long, they're unable to distinguish so-called 'normal' thinking from depressive thoughts. Working with a skilled therapist can help people reconnect with their true selves and feel greater happiness and ease."

## **MYTH #3: They're just going to put me on medication.**

This misconception assumes that all therapists are psychiatrists, the only mental health professionals who can prescribe medication. In fact, most therapists hold different types of licenses. Therapists will refer patients to a psychiatrist if needed. If medication is prescribed, it is usually in combination with therapy.

## **IT ALL BEGINS WITH A PHONE CALL**

Main Line Health offers a wide range of mental health and therapy services at our Mirmont Outpatient Centers and Women's Emotional Wellness Center. Many are available via videoconference. Call **1.888.CARE.898 (227.3898)** to schedule a confidential appointment or visit [mainlinehealth.org/gethelpnow](https://mainlinehealth.org/gethelpnow) to learn more.



## **PERSONALIZED INTEGRATIVE PRIMARY CARE, AT YOUR CONVENIENCE**

Main Line Health Integrative and Functional Medicine's concierge integrative primary care provides an unparalleled standard of achieving optimal health, all built on a powerful relationship—the one between you and your doctor.

Integrative medicine is an approach to care that puts the patient at the center. It addresses the full spectrum of physical, emotional, social, spiritual and environmental influences that affect a person's health.

Sara Slattery, MD, is your partner in wellness, offering an integrative approach to manage all aspects of your care at her concierge practice in King of Prussia. Dr. Slattery and her team of integrative practitioners will be your health care champions.

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- Fitness and metabolic testing
- Introductory alternative care appointments

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



# The benefits of bariatric surgery for weight loss



## Even with the strongest motivations and thoughtful nutrition and exercise goals,

sometimes that's not enough to help seriously overweight women lose weight and keep it off.

Weight-loss surgery, or bariatric surgery, is a safe and effective option.

"Weight-loss surgery is the most effective weight-loss plan we can offer," says Samantha Witte, MD, a surgeon with the Bariatric Center at Bryn Mawr Hospital, part of Main Line Health. She says that even with medically managed programs, very few people are able to lose a significant amount of weight and keep it off with diet and exercise alone. "However, bariatric surgery patients can lose 60% or more of their excess body weight and are more likely to keep it off because there's a permanent anatomical change involved."

## THE HEALTH BENEFITS ARE SIGNIFICANT

Losing excess weight can have a tremendous effect on your overall health. According to Dr. Witte, some of the benefits include:

- 30% reduction in mortality
- 50% reduction in first-time cardiovascular events, such as heart attack
- 50% recovery from diabetes
- 70–80% recovery from sleep apnea
- 60% or greater reduction in high blood pressure

"These are big changes," says Dr. Witte. "Surgery is overall the best thing people can do to improve their health when they have obesity."

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY?

In general, people with a body mass index (BMI) over 40 qualify for bariatric surgery, according to Dr. Witte. Those with a BMI greater than 35 may also be eligible if they also have another weight-related health issue, such as diabetes, sleep apnea or high blood pressure.

The Bariatric Center offers a full range of bariatric surgery options, including Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and sleeve gastrectomy. "Our program is education-driven, and we offer a lot of support for our patients," says Dr. Witte. "I tell patients that having bariatric surgery does not mean you have failed—it's just another tool you can use to improve your quality of life and often your longevity, too."

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Meet our surgeons, view patient success stories and sign up for a virtual information session at [mainlinehealth.org/bariatrics](https://mainlinehealth.org/bariatrics).



## CLINICAL TRIAL SEEKS TO TREAT NEUROPATHY IN CANCER PATIENTS

Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, part of Main Line Health, is conducting a clinical trial to find out if cannabidiol (CBD), a compound found in the hemp cannabis plant, may help patients with chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy (CIPN).

If you have undergone chemotherapy for nonmetastatic cancer of the breast, ovary, endometrium or colon and are experiencing peripheral neuropathy—tingling, pain, numbness or weakness in the hands or feet—you may be eligible to participate in this trial. Peripheral neuropathy is a common complication of chemotherapy with only minimally effective treatments.

"CIPN is one of the most common and difficult side effects of the most widely used chemotherapies. It reduces quality of life and the ability of some patients to complete treatment," says radiation oncologist Marisa Weiss, MD, the study's co-principal investigator. "We want to determine if CBD can help relieve CIPN and improve the patient experience."

CBD is a hemp-based product. It is not marijuana and is not intoxicating. In this trial, participants will receive either CBD gels or placebo gels daily for 12 weeks and will receive follow-up care for six months.



## LEARN MORE

Contact Sam Meske, MS, project manager, at 484.476.3502 or [coala-t@mlhs.org](mailto:coala-t@mlhs.org).

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# Parents: Don't put off routine vaccines

## Most parents understand the importance of childhood vaccines to

fight illnesses such as whooping cough and measles. But during the coronavirus pandemic, many parents have been putting off routine checkups and vaccines—afraid a trip to the doctor's office is too risky.

This trend is worrying to many physicians.

"While I understand people are concerned about coronavirus, another concern is that we're starting to see the emergence of diseases that were previously eradicated, such as measles and mumps," says Karthya Potti, MD, a family medicine physician with Main Line Health in Westtown. "We've all heard about the measles outbreaks that occurred over the past few years, and that will become a more serious issue if children aren't vaccinated."

## VACCINES ARE THE SAFEST WAY TO PREVENT ILLNESS

Dr. Potti says routine vaccines are the safest and most effective way to protect children from many childhood diseases, including hepatitis, mumps and whooping cough. "There is a lot of misinformation out there," she says. "Vaccines are safe, and people often forget how dangerous these illnesses can be. Many also spread very easily from person to person, so getting your child vaccinated helps protect the whole community."

She says children who are not vaccinated risk getting both COVID-19 and another disease, such as measles, at the same time, which could cause serious illness.

## DON'T FORGET THE FLU VACCINE

In addition to other routine vaccines, children need the flu vaccine each year to protect against the most common strains of flu for that season. It's recommended for all people ages 6 months and older.

"Flu can be especially serious in young children," says Dr. Potti. Although not always 100% effective, a flu shot can make the illness less severe if you do get sick. It takes roughly two weeks after getting the shot for immunity to develop, so physicians recommend getting the vaccine as early as possible.

## YOUR SAFETY IS TOP OF MIND

Dr. Potti encourages parents not to skip these important vaccines. "We understand that parents feel anxious about the pandemic, and we're doing all we can to keep people safe," she says. That means taking extra steps to protect both patients and staff, including screening patients before visits, wearing masks and eye protection, and having patients wait in their cars until they are ready to be seen.

If you have questions about coronavirus or the safety of vaccines in general, Dr. Potti suggests contacting your provider. "I'm always happy to talk with parents and answer questions. We're here as a community to get through this."

## TOP CARE FOR KIDS

Looking for a pediatrician? Meet our providers and make an appointment at [mainlinehealth.org/pediatrics](https://mainlinehealth.org/pediatrics).

