

WOMEN'S healthsource



**EXPERT
CARE FOR
EVERY
STEP**

**INTRODUCING
PATRICK DONAGHUE, MD,
FOOT AND ANKLE
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON**

WINTER 2026 A LIFE RECLAIMED FROM ADDICTION
NEW ADVANCEMENT IN HEART FAILURE TREATMENT
GENEROSITY CHANGES WOMEN'S LIVES
PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR LOW BACK PAIN



Main Line Health®

Expert care for every step: Meet Patrick Donaghue, MD



Patrick Donaghue, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Dr. Patrick Donaghue is a fellowship-trained foot and ankle orthopaedic surgeon who provides comprehensive surgical and nonsurgical care for a full range of foot and ankle conditions. We

spoke with Dr. Donaghue about his practice and tips for keeping your feet and ankles healthy.

Q What types of foot and ankle problems do you treat?

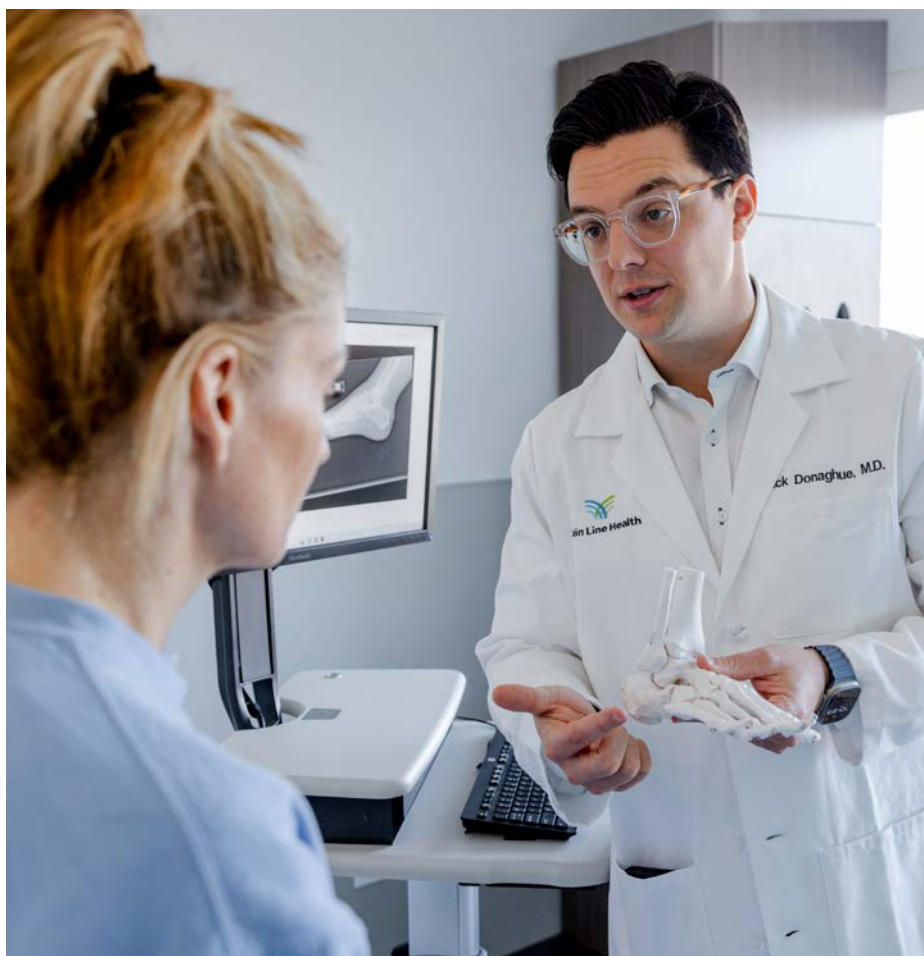
Dr. Donaghue: My practice provides comprehensive care for all foot and ankle conditions, from common ailments to complex sports injuries. My goal is to get patients back to the activities they love, whether that's walking comfortably or setting a new personal record.

Q How do patients know if foot or ankle pain needs medical attention?

Dr. Donaghue: If you have pain that's limiting your normal daily activities, it's probably worth getting it checked out. For acute issues, clear red flags include not being able to bear weight on your ankle or foot, having an obvious deformity after an injury, or feeling increasing numbness or tingling. For chronic conditions, you want to get medical attention if you have pain that's getting worse or have persistent swelling or pain that does not go away with elevation and rest.

Q What are some easy ways to keep your feet and ankles healthy?

Dr. Donaghue: First, wear good, supportive footwear that fits your feet well and is appropriate for the activity you're doing. For my patients who are active, I often recommend going to the local running store and getting fit for a good pair of sneakers. And be sure to replace your shoes when they're worn out. It's also smart to stretch. A lot of my patients have tight



calves, and that can cause problems in the foot and ankle. You also want to try to maintain a healthy body weight because your feet support all your weight. Finally, be sure to listen to your body and make sure you're not pushing through pain.

Q What are some of the latest advancements in foot and ankle surgery?

Dr. Donaghue: One of the latest advancements is minimally invasive surgery, which uses small incisions and special tools. With this type of surgery, patients have less swelling and pain and a faster recovery. Total ankle replacement

has also been a game-changer for ankle arthritis. Replacing the joint preserves its motion and feels more natural for our patients than the traditional fusion surgery. Another advancement is patient-specific technology. We use this in our total ankle replacements, where we get a CT scan of a patient's ankle before surgery and then create a 3D printed guide to help put in the ankle replacement. We use this for union surgery, as well. The last thing is the advancement in biologics, which is harnessing the body's own healing properties. We are using this to help with chronic tendon issues and in surgery to help with fusions.

HEALTHY FEET, HAPPIER LIFE

Don't let foot or ankle pain slow you down. To learn more or to schedule an appointment, visit mainlinehealth.org/patrickdonaghue.



A life reclaimed from addiction: Remy's path to recovery

For Remy, alcohol wasn't always the problem. It was the solution. A way to numb the silence, bury the grief and escape the painful memories that had followed her since childhood. By the time she realized the drinking had taken over her life, it was already her constant companion.

"I wasn't drinking to live anymore," she admits. "I was drinking to die."

When she found herself living alone during the COVID-19 pandemic, alcohol quickly became the way she coped ... and eventually, the way she surrendered.

When her body began rejecting alcohol, the truth became undeniable.

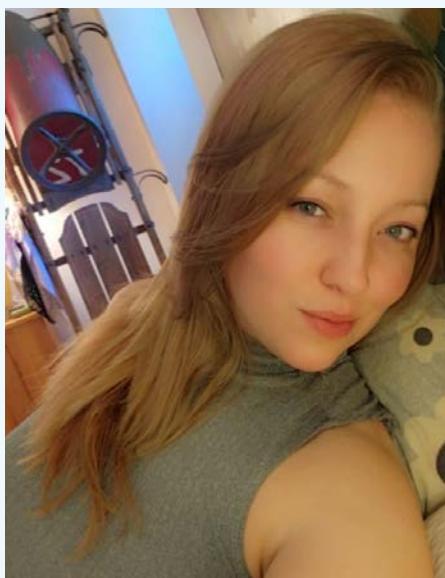
DISCOVERING THE RIGHT PLACE

Remy was drawn to Mirmont Treatment Center, part of Main Line Health, for its unique trauma-informed care options. She knew her healing required more than just detox — it required facing the pain she had carried for years.

Remy checked herself into Mirmont's inpatient program in October 2023. When she completed that level of care, she transitioned into Mirmont's step-down intensive outpatient program (IOP), a structure designed to provide ongoing support as patients re-enter daily life.

FINDING HER VOICE

Walking into Mirmont's rehabilitation center was both overwhelming and comforting. For the first time in years, Remy felt safe.



But she also faced the challenge of breaking through her own insecurities.

"My biggest struggle wasn't detox — it was speaking up," she says. "I've always had this voice in my head telling me no one wants to hear what I have to say."

Through group therapy and activities, she slowly learned to challenge that voice. She found acceptance, validation and encouragement in the community around her.

"Everything at Mirmont worked together to create this feeling of belonging," she reflects. "That's what kept me going."

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While life in recovery isn't without challenges, Remy's outlook has shifted dramatically.

"The biggest change is that I feel hopeful instead of hopeless."

For Remy, the key to recovery is balance.

"I try to stay busy without overloading myself," she explains. "I look for beauty in everyday life and I remind myself to be kind to myself."

She also stays accountable by being present for others in the recovery community. "If I can't show up for myself, it's a lot harder to show up for others," she adds.

For anyone considering treatment, Remy's advice is simple but powerful:

"It's worth it to give yourself the best shot at being happy — and more importantly, at peace. It feels scary at first, but once you start, life gets better. One of my favorite sayings in recovery is: 'Let us love you until you can love yourself.' That's exactly what happened for me at Mirmont."



TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Don't know where to start? Contact us at **1.888.227.3898** to speak to a member of our admissions team and learn more about the services and programs offered at Mirmont Treatment Center at mainlinehealth.org/mirmont.



Breathing easier thanks to new heart failure treatment



Justin Pelberg, DO
Heart Failure
Cardiologist



William A. Gray, MD
Chief of Cardiovascular
Diseases and Interventional
Cardiologist

Beginning in 2020, Sue Ellen Bigioni, 70, experienced a string of significant personal losses.

"I lost my brother in August of 2021 and my husband of 50 years, Vince, later that year. Then in 2022 I lost another brother in March and my sister on Memorial Day, so it was rough," recalls Sue Ellen.

For years, Sue Ellen had struggled with a number of chronic conditions, including heart disease and COPD. Her main complaint was severe shortness of breath, and her symptoms worsened as she grieved the loss of her family members.

"I was in a huge home by myself. I could barely move from one room to another," says Sue Ellen.

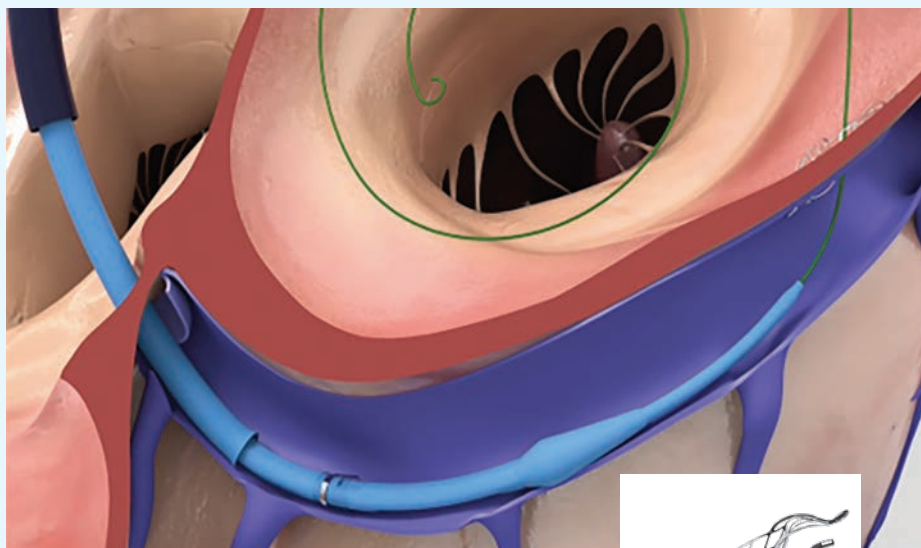
DIFFICULTY BREATHING LEADS TO HEART FAILURE

Medication adjustments did not relieve Sue Ellen's escalating symptoms. Maribel Hernandez, MD, a cardiologist at Main Line Health, suggested a consultation with her colleague, Justin Pelberg, DO, a heart failure specialist.

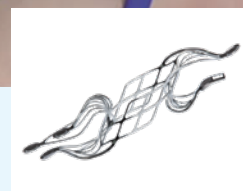
Dr. Pelberg diagnosed Sue Ellen with heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, or HFpEF (pronounced "heff-peff"), in which the muscle of the left ventricle becomes stiff and does not relax to fill with oxygen-rich blood between each heartbeat.

"When you exert yourself and increase the amount of blood circulating throughout your body, a stiff left heart is unable to accommodate this increase in circulating blood, and patients become short of breath," explains Dr. Pelberg.

Dr. Pelberg suggested Sue Ellen may be a candidate for a clinical trial for a new heart failure treatment option called the APTURE device.



The APTURE shunt (right) is used in the ALT-FLOW II trial procedure (above) to treat heart failure. Images courtesy of Edwards Lifesciences, LLC, Irvine, California.



NEW CLINICAL TRIAL FOR HEART FAILURE

Through a minimally invasive procedure, the APTURE device, part of the ALT-FLOW II clinical trial, is implanted in the heart to redirect blood flow from the left atrium into the right atrium. In certain patients with HFpEF, this has proven to ease shortness of breath.

"We were first in the United States and second in the world to implant this device. I'm hopeful that ongoing trials will ultimately lead to it receiving Food and Drug Administration approval and being widely available for heart failure," says William A. Gray, MD, chief of cardiovascular diseases at Main Line Health and national co-principal investigator for the ALT-FLOW II clinical trial.

Sue Ellen completed the pre-trial testing and discovered she qualified for the procedure.

"MOM, YOU'RE NOT GASPING TO BREATHE!"

Dr. Gray and the Lankenau Heart Institute care team successfully implanted the

APTURE device in Sue Ellen's heart. Her breathing improved almost immediately.

"I got up from bed and walked to and from the bathroom, and my daughter, Jennifer, said, 'Mom, you're not gasping to breathe!'" says Sue Ellen.

Sue Ellen was discharged the following day. "At my post-op checkup, Dr. Pelberg asked me how improved I felt, and I said at least 75%," she recalls.

A SIGH OF RELIEF

It has been over a year since she received the APTURE device, and Sue Ellen is looking forward to several trips with her family, all of which would have been impossible before her heart procedure.

"Sue Ellen is doing great. Now she comes to me and literally has no complaints. It is a complete turnaround for the better," notes Dr. Pelberg.

"This was my last chance to have a life, and I wasn't ready to give up. I'm so grateful for Dr. Pelberg and the entire team for giving me my life back," says Sue Ellen.

STRUGGLING WITH HEART FAILURE SYMPTOMS?

To learn more about cardiovascular research at Main Line Health or to schedule an appointment with a cardiologist, visit mainlinehealth.org/heart or call 1.866.CALL.MLH.



Bringing new heart treatments to patients sooner

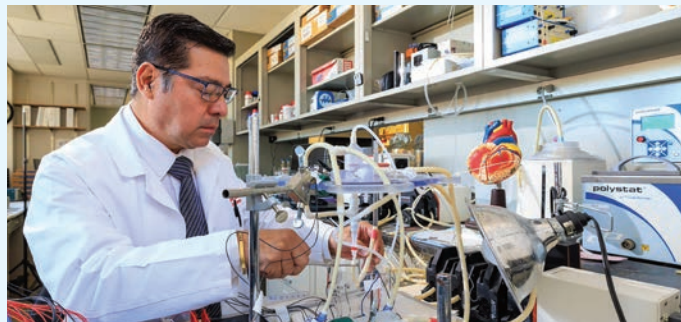
At Main Line Health, research isn't something that happens behind the scenes — it's part of how we care for patients every day. One of the newest examples is a clinical trial led by William A. Gray, MD, a nationally recognized heart specialist and system chief of cardiovascular diseases at Main Line Health.

Dr. Gray and his heart care team are part of a select group of hospitals across the country testing a new, less-invasive treatment for people with heart failure who still struggle with symptoms even after medication. These early research projects, approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), allow doctors to carefully study promising new devices in a small number of patients. Being chosen to participate means patients here may be among the first to benefit from treatments not yet available to the public.

Main Line Health has been involved in this kind of research from the beginning, thanks to the expertise of our physicians and the strong support of the Lankenau Institute for Medical Research (LIMR). Few health systems nationwide are invited to take part at this early stage.

By sharing the story of our first patient involved in this new heart failure treatment, we're not only celebrating one person's experience — we're showing how research can lead to better options for many others. Through this work, Main Line Health is helping move heart care forward with compassion, innovation and hope.

Learn more about how Main Line Health is advancing heart care through research at mainlinehealth.org/cvresearch.



MAIN LINE HEALTH'S WOMEN'S HEART INITIATIVE

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR

Heart-to-Heart Conversations

This free in-person and virtual support group is for women who have experienced a cardiac event or are at risk for heart disease. Connect with others who understand your journey, share experiences, ask questions and gain encouragement in a safe, supportive space.

Main Line Health King of Prussia

First Thursday of every month | 4:15-5:15 p.m.
In-person or Zoom

Lankenau Medical Center

Third Thursday of every month | 4:15-5:15 p.m.
In-person or Zoom

FOR INFORMATION, visit mainlinehealth.org/heart2heart



Leading the fight against head and neck cancer



Amit Bhojwani, DO
Surgical Oncologist

Amit Bhojwani, DO, a head and neck surgical oncologist at Main Line Health, specializes in the treatment of head and neck tumors, including oral, oropharyngeal and throat squamous cell

carcinoma; thyroid and parathyroid tumors; and salivary gland tumors.

Patients are generally referred to Dr. Bhojwani after their primary care provider detects a suspicious lump in the neck or a swollen lymph node. If cancer is found, his goal is to remove it completely while retaining and restoring function and physical appearance.

"Head and neck cancer affects the way patients speak, swallow and interact," he says. "The treatment involves meticulous surgical planning, advanced surgical tools and a multidisciplinary team approach, both in the operating room and during recovery."

MINIMALLY INVASIVE TECHNOLOGY

Virtual Surgical Planning (VSP) uses CT scans and other imaging to create a customized surgical approach.

"If I'm operating on a cancer that has spread to the jawbone, I can plan exactly where I'm going to make the incisions to remove the affected portions of bone and reconstruct the jaw," Dr. Bhojwani says. He works with biomedical engineers who create 3D printed models and surgical instruments that are designed specifically for the patient's anatomy.

For certain oropharyngeal tumors in the back of the throat, such as tonsil tumors, Dr. Bhojwani offers robotic-assisted surgery using the da Vinci Surgical System.

"With the robot, we can access and remove tumors in these tight spaces with a high degree of precision without affecting critical blood vessels," he says.

A TEAM APPROACH

Dr. Bhojwani collaborates closely with radiation oncologists, medical oncologists and nurse navigators during a head and neck multidisciplinary conference, a comprehensive meeting that encompasses specialists from across the health system.

"In this way, we ensure we are providing the best possible care for each patient, allowing us to provide a personalized approach," he says. "Our team is here to do the best we can for our patients, and our nurse navigators are some of the best I have ever worked with. Plus, they are only a phone call away," Dr. Bhojwani says.

"I develop a relationship with patients at the first meeting, and I'll often see them for many years," he adds. "I'm privileged to get them through a very challenging time and be there for them every step of the way."

HPV AND OROPHARYNGEAL CANCER

About 60 to 70% of oropharyngeal tumors develop due to human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted infection.

The HPV vaccine, which was designed to protect against cervical cancer, is now also recommended to prevent HPV+ head and neck cancer.

"The typical patient is male, a nonsmoker, around 50 to 60 years old, who comes in with a lump in the neck," Dr. Bhojwani says. Other symptoms may include persistent earaches or sore throats, trouble swallowing, tongue pain, or blood-tinged mucus. If you have any of these symptoms, see your doctor right away.

EXPERT CARE, CLOSE TO HOME

For more information about head and neck cancer, visit mainlinehealth.org/headandneckcancer.



With you through your cancer journey

SUPPORT GROUPS

Information | Support | Connections

BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Second Tuesday of every month,
5:30 p.m.

Contact: 484.227.3794 or
stolbergt@mlhs.org

CANCER SURVIVORS SUPPORT GROUP

Third Thursday of every month,
4:30 p.m.

Contact: 484.476.6239 or
brogans@mlhs.org

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Third Thursday of every month, 12 p.m.

Contact: 484.565.1253 or
powersv@mlhs.org

COLORECTAL CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Second Monday of each month, 1 p.m.

Contact: 484.476.8503 or
curcillo@mlhs.org

COPING WITH CANCER A TO Z

Second Tuesday of each month, 4 p.m.

Contact: 484.476.8514 or
harriski@mlhs.org

LUNG CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

Fourth Thursday of each month, 12 p.m.

Contact: 484.476.6239 or
brogans@mlhs.org

THRIVING DURING AND AFTER CANCER TREATMENT

Cancer Survivorship: Conversations on
Women's Sexual Health
February 24, 12 p.m.

Contact: 484.337.8775 or
sweeneyta@mlhs.org



Bringing care closer to you.

MAIN LINE HEALTH DEVON | **NOW OPEN**

At **Main Line Health Devon**, you can now access primary care, physical therapy, imaging and radiology, and lab services at one convenient location.

Learn more at mainlinehealth.org/devon.



Main Line Health®

*Additional health centers are located in Broomall, Collegeville,
Concordville, Exton Square, King of Prussia and Newtown Square.*

Calendar of events

FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH!

For more than a decade, Main Line Health has proudly partnered with the American Heart Association as the Philadelphia Goes Red for Women sponsor. Join us on Friday, February 6, for National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease. Learn how to take charge of your heart health, know your numbers and become your own health advocate. Check out our Heart Month events at mainlinehealth.org/heartmonth.



VIRTUAL PAIN SEMINARS

Join our free virtual seminars to learn about shoulder, back, hip and knee pain. Our experts will explain joint anatomy, common causes of pain and the latest treatment options — helping you make informed decisions about your care. To register, visit mainlinehealth.org/orthoclasses.

HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATIONS

This free support group provides education, emotional support and encouragement for women facing a heart-health journey. Held virtually and in-person, these meetings are open to all women — regardless of where you are receiving care. Take the first step by attending a meeting and learn from a dynamic group of women facing similar situations. To register, please email mlhwomensheart@mlhs.org.

DEAVER EDUCATION CENTER AND THE WELLNESS FARM

Offering in-person and virtual health and education classes to schools and community or church organizations. Classes are for school-age or adult groups. To schedule, call 484.476.3434 or email lhhealthcenter@mlhs.org.

MAIN LINE HEALTH KING OF PRUSSIA TEACHING KITCHEN

Our King of Prussia Community Health and Outreach team offers a variety of nutrition-related nutrition virtual educational programs and in-person cooking demonstrations free of charge. See upcoming events and register at mainlinehealth.org/kopevents.

STOP THE BLEED®

Severe bleeding injuries left unattended can result in death. When individuals learn the skills to stop uncontrolled bleeding during an emergency, lives can be saved. STOP THE BLEED® is designed for anyone! For questions, individual registration or to schedule this free program for your organization, call or email: 484.565.8328/eckenrodel@mlhs.org or 484.476.8494/krousem@mlhs.org.

SMOKEFREE

This free virtual program consists of six sessions and is used to encourage smoking cessation among tobacco users and vapers. Participants may be eligible for free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). For more information or to register: 484.227.FREE (3733).

COMMUNITY CPR CLASSES

We offer several courses to meet your needs. **Basic Life Support (BLS)** is designed for healthcare professionals and other personnel who need to know how to perform CPR in a variety of in-facility and prehospital settings. **Heartsaver** is designed for nonmedical professionals who need a course completion card for their job. **Family & Friends® CPR Course for Expecting Parents and Caregivers** focuses on the lifesaving skills of child CPR/AED/choking and infant CPR/choking. For more information or to register, visit mainlinehealth.org/events.

HEALTHY STEPS FOR OLDER ADULTS

A free falls risk awareness program for PA adults ages 60+. This evidence-based program is designed to raise awareness of falls, introduce steps on how to reduce falls, improve overall health, and provide referrals and resources. For more information about upcoming programs, visit mainlinehealth.org/events.

FREE WIG PROGRAM

This program is for female cancer patients currently or about ready to undergo chemotherapy or radiation therapy. For information or to schedule a free wig fitting, call 484.337.5215.

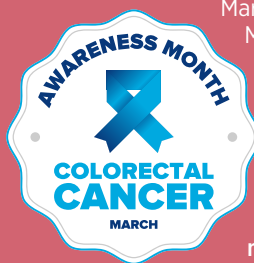
MEDICATION SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

Free one-hour virtual presentation focused on proper safety measures when taking medications, appropriate disposal of medications and resources available to inform safe medication use within our community. March 10, 2026, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Register at mainlinehealth.org/events and call 484.565.8328 with questions.

VIRTUAL STRETCH YOUR LIMITS

A free virtual exercise program for adults ages 55+. Includes light aerobic warm-up, strength training with elastic tubing and dumbbells, balance training and stretching with modified yoga, and chair tai chi. For more information and to register, visit mainlinehealth.org/events.

GET SCREENED. STAY HEALTHY.



March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month! Main Line Health reminds you that colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable cancers when detected early through regular screening. Know your risks, learn the signs and talk to your doctor about the screening that's right for you. To learn more, visit mainlinehealth.org/colorectal.

What every parent should know about choking prevention



Hazel Guinto, MD
Pediatric Emergency
Medicine Physician

Curious young children explore their surroundings. Part of early development includes putting food and objects in their mouths. These can get stuck in their windpipe (trachea).

“Unfortunately, about 110 children

under age 5 die from choking each year in the United States,” says Hazel Guinto, MD, a pediatric emergency medicine physician and Medical Director of the Pediatric Emergency Service at Main Line Health. “Hot dogs and balloons are the most common causes of choking deaths.”

MAKE MEALTIMES SAFE

Food is the most common cause of choking in young children. Before age 4, children aren't able to grind their food into small pieces as effectively as older children.

To keep your child safe:

- Don't leave your child alone while they eat.
- Sit your child upright in a highchair.
- Cut food into small pieces and modify high-risk foods appropriately until at least age 4.

Avoid giving children younger than age 4 these foods:

- Hot dogs (unless cut lengthwise and into small pieces)
- Nuts or seeds
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter (spread thinly instead); large chunks of meat or cheese
- Popcorn, pretzels, chips and similar snack foods
- Hard, gooey or sticky candy

- Whole grapes (cut grapes lengthwise into quarters)
- Raisins
- Hard raw vegetables (cook or grate them instead)
- Chewing gum

REMOVE COMMON HAZARDS

Keep small items and toys with small removable parts out of young children's reach. For example:

- Balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Pen caps
- Button-type batteries

IF A CHILD CHOKES

Choking can happen even if you are careful. If your child is coughing forcefully, crying, or able to speak or make sounds, let them try to get the object out on their own.

If your child can't make a sound, call 911. Then do the following:

- **For infants under 1 year:** Give five back blows followed by five chest thrusts.
- **For children 1 year and older:** Give five back blows followed by five abdominal thrusts.

Repeat this cycle until the obstruction clears or the child becomes unconscious.

The American Heart Association gives standard procedures for choking victims of all ages.

“Even if the food or object comes out, seek immediate emergency care, because a piece of the object can remain in the airway,” says Dr. Guinto.

EMERGENCY CARE DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN

At Main Line Health, pediatricians from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) collaborate with our skilled staff to provide comforting, high-quality treatment for your little ones. Learn more about our pediatric services, including our Pediatric Emergency Department and Pediatric Unit at Bryn Mawr Hospital, at mainlinehealth.org/pediatrics.



How generosity is changing women's lives



Leslie Lipson, LCSW
Director, Women's
Emotional Wellness
Center

Life transitions, hormonal changes, trauma and the pressures of caregiving often contribute to increased rates of depression, anxiety and mood disorders among women. The Women's Emotional Wellness Center (WEWC), part

of Main Line Health, offers a full spectrum of behavioral health services designed to meet their diverse and unique needs.

In addition to individual therapy, outpatient psychotherapy groups, telehealth, psychiatric evaluation and medication management, the WEWC offers specialized services that are unique in the region, including a partial hospitalization program and an intensive outpatient program. All programs are led by a team of experienced psychiatrists, therapists and behavioral health professionals. The program has two locations in Newtown Square and King of Prussia.

INCREASING ACCESS

Philanthropic support made it possible for the WEWC to open its King of Prussia location in 2020. It continues to play a vital role in helping more women access care, overcome obstacles to treatment and benefit from new, innovative programs.

"Although the WEWC does accept most insurances, reimbursements do not fully cover costs," says Leslie Lipson, LCSW, Director, WEWC. "Generous donations from the Paoli Hospital Auxiliary, the Bryn Mawr Hospital Women's Board and private donors have directly fueled innovation, access and quality of care."

EXPANDING PROGRAMS

"In the last five years, generous philanthropic support has allowed us to grow our services in ways that reflect what women in our community are asking for," says Lipson. "We're listening closely and responding to their needs."

Here are just a few ways donations have made a difference:



Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

Program: DBT teaches skills for coping with and changing unhealthy behaviors by accepting troubling thoughts, feelings and behaviors, instead of struggling against them. Thanks to donor support, WEWC was able to provide professional DBT training for clinicians and launch a systemwide program — the first of its kind in our region.

Beyond Menopause Outpatient Therapy

Group: Created in 2025 directly in response to patient requests, this group helps women navigate the emotional and physical changes that come with menopause and beyond. Philanthropic support funded facilitator training and provided journals, books and support materials for participants.

Transportation Assistance: One of the WEWC's most impactful programs is the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), which

offers group therapy several times a week for patients who need more than weekly psychotherapy, but do not require the intensity of partial or inpatient hospitalization.

"The Intensive Outpatient Program saved my life," one patient said. "I knew I felt bad. The IOP helped me to understand what was going on within me."

To help women stay connected to care, donor-funded rideshare services have made it possible for those without access to reliable transportation to attend regularly.

Philanthropic support continues to be at the heart of everything WEWC does — helping women find healing, hope and strength during some of life's most challenging moments. As one patient put it: "I am thankful for WEWC staff. All were kind, caring and professional during some very tough times. I am glad to have this resource in the community."



BE OUR PARTNER

By donating to the WEWC, you'll help us continue to meet the rising need for women's mental health services and reach women at all stages of life. We invite you to visit mainlinehealth.org/wewc to learn more and scan the QR code if you'd like to support this important work.



Aching back? Try physical therapy



Zachary Scott, PT, DPT
Physical Therapist

Chronic low back pain — soreness, stiffness or a nagging ache that persists for three months or longer —

may have several causes, including arthritis of the spine, a herniated disk or a muscle strain.

Although there's rarely

a quick or permanent fix for chronic back pain, heading to physical therapy can improve outcomes and reduce costly treatments in the long run.

"Most people who live with back pain need to move more, not less," says Zachary Scott, PT, DPT, a physical therapist at Main Line Health. "But the type of activity has to be specific, targeted and consistent to effectively address the pain."

Every course of physical therapy starts with a full evaluation. "We ask patients what they were doing when they initially felt pain, and what movements seem to contribute to it," Scott says. "We then do a series of tests to rule in or rule out contributing factors to the pain and determine range of motion, flexibility, mobility and strength."

His goal is to help patients understand why they're in pain, as well as how to get better. This process includes three key steps:

1 Activation:

By learning to breathe from the abdomen and diaphragm, patients are able to identify, activate and strengthen their core abdominal muscles to take pressure off of the back.

2 Acquisition:

Therapists can correct movement mechanics by helping patients incorporate their upper and lower limbs more effectively. For example, rather than simply bending over to lift a heavy object, patients learn to "lift with intent" by standing close to the object, bending the knees and hinging forward at the hips.

3 Assimilation:

Gradually, patients integrate these squatting, bending, lifting and other movement techniques into their everyday life.

Physical therapy sessions generally last one hour and continue over a six- to eight-week period. Patients receive a customized set of exercises to do on their own and are evaluated every four weeks to measure their progress.

"Our main goals are to educate patients, improve symptoms and instill confidence that they will get better if they are consistent," Scott says. "We can't tell them when and if their pain will go away completely, but we can assure them that they will improve."

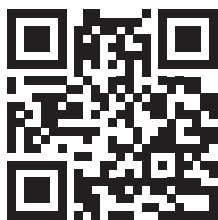
PERSONALIZED CARE THAT BRINGS RESULTS

We offer comprehensive rehabilitation services — including physical, occupational and speech therapy — to support your recovery at every step. Whatever your needs, our specialists are here to help you regain strength, mobility and confidence. Learn more at mainlinehealth.org/rehab.



WHEN YOUR BACK NEEDS BACKUP

Main Line Health's large network of experienced spine surgeons is ready with advanced treatment options. From new injuries to long-standing spine concerns, they'll help you get back to feeling like yourself. Visit mainlinehealth.org/spine or scan the QR code.



Lankenau Medical Center
Bryn Mawr Hospital
Paoli Hospital
Riddle Hospital
Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital
Mirmont Treatment Center
HomeCare & Hospice
Lankenau Institute for Medical Research



MAIN LINE HEALTH
130 South Bryn Mawr Avenue
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania 19010

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Main Line Health

January 2026 *Women's Health Source* is published by Main Line Health. The information is intended to educate women about subjects pertinent to their health, not as a substitute for consultation with a personal physician. © 2026. Developed by WebMD Ignite. Printed in USA.

This publication is part of the Women's Health Source health and wellness program. You may unsubscribe at any time by emailing whs@mlhs.org.



Proud sponsor of the Main Line Society of Professional Women



018M Printed on Recyclable Paper

Busy day ahead? Get fast access to care.



When life doesn't slow down — but your health needs attention — our Main Line Health urgent care facilities are here for you with fast, expert care close to home.

We treat a wide range of non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries, with everything you need under one roof:

- Coughs, colds and flu
- COVID-19 testing
- Sprains and strains
- Digital X-rays
- Minor cuts and burns
- Physicals
- Fevers and infections

WHY CHOOSE MAIN LINE HEALTH URGENT CARE?

- No appointments
- Open on weekends, evenings and holidays
- Staffed by Main Line Health clinicians
- Close proximity to Main Line Health hospitals if a higher level of care is needed



Visit us in: Broomall | Concordville | Exton | Oaks | Wynnewood

HUMAN CARE RIGHT IN YOUR BACKYARD.

Jump in line and join the waitlist or learn more at mainlinehealth.org/urgentcare

