

SUMMER 2020

A Publication of  
**NEWARK BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL  
CENTER AND CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL OF NEW JERSEY**

# healthy

*together*

RECIPES FROM  
THE FARMERS MARKET

HIDDEN SIGNS  
OF HEART DISEASE

THE LATEST TOOLS  
FOR COMPLEX  
SURGERY

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting together, smiling warmly. The man is on the left, wearing a dark blue sweater, and the woman is on the right, wearing a pink button-down shirt over a white top. They are holding hands, and the background is a bright, indoor setting.

**CANCER CARE:  
THE HUMAN TOUCH**

## New Ways to Care

At RWJBarnabas Health, in addition to treating medical conditions, we actively engage on a variety of levels to promote the health and well-being of our communities.

That outreach takes many shapes, including healthy living classes, educational programs for seniors, partnerships with local arts organizations, providing healthy food and much more.

Social distancing and other pandemic-related restrictions haven't stopped these efforts, only changed their form. We're providing virtual support for all kinds of needs, including breastfeeding, perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, arthritis, addiction recovery and more. People who want to learn about wellness techniques, such as guided relaxation or chair yoga, can find what they need through our online programs. For a full list, visit [www.rwjbh.org/events](http://www.rwjbh.org/events).

Meanwhile, we are creatively retooling signature events such as runs, walks and galas to include virtual participation. Our annual Running with the Devils 5K will be going virtual as well (learn more at [www.rwjbh.org/runningwiththedevils](http://www.rwjbh.org/runningwiththedevils)). Our partners are also creating new events, such as the Somerset Patriots, who hosted sold-out drive-in movies at TD Bank Ballpark with proceeds going to the RWJBarnabas Health Emergency Response Fund to help local healthcare workers. To make a donation to the fund, visit [www.rwjbh.org/give](http://www.rwjbh.org/give).

At Newark Beth Israel, we have resumed all clinical operations, elective surgeries and Emergency Department care. Our doors are open and we are ready to serve you. In addition, social distancing and pandemic-related restrictions are opening up new opportunities for direct communication and engagement with our neighbors. Our Beth Greenhouse now offers online ordering with curbside pickup, so that local residents can continue to access fresh fruits and vegetables during this time. Our clinical experts are hosting online webinars to provide the vital resources and health information the public needs to stop the spread of this virus, and we are planning to hold virtual health events this fall.

How we meet the needs of our diverse communities will continue to evolve, but our commitment to providing a broad range of culturally competent care for our communities hasn't changed—and never will.

Yours in good health,



**BARRY H. OSTROWSKY**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
RWJBARNABAS HEALTH




**DARRELL K. TERRY, SR.**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
NEWARK BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL CENTER  
AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF NEW JERSEY



## HEALTH NEWS



### WORLD'S BEST HOSPITAL—AGAIN

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI) has been named one of the World's Best Hospitals 2020 by *Newsweek* magazine, marking two years in a row that the medical center has received this recognition.





The honor places NBI among the top 225 U.S. hospitals, a group that includes Mayo Clinic, Cleveland Clinic, Johns Hopkins and Massachusetts General. NBI is one of only five New Jersey hospitals on this prestigious list.

NBI has long been a center of excellence and a destination center for the most advanced cardiac care, heart and lung transplant, comprehensive cancer care and pediatric specialties at Children's Hospital of New Jersey.

**Newark Beth Israel Medical Center** | **RWJBarnabas HEALTH**  
**Children's Hospital of New Jersey**

201 Lyons Ave. at Osborne Terrace, Newark, NJ 07112  
973.926.7000 | [www.rwjbh.org/newarkbeth](http://www.rwjbh.org/newarkbeth)

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-  @Newark\_Beth
-  RWJBarnabas Health
-  Newark Beth Israel Medical Center

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# healthy *together* contents

SUMMER 2020



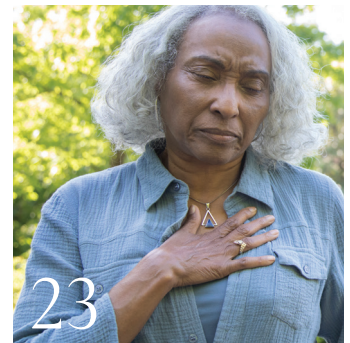
20



5\*



18



23



6



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**2. WELCOME LETTER.**

A community update from our CEOs.

**4. B.E. F.A.S.T. IF YOU SUSPECT A STROKE.**

What to do if you or a loved one has these signs.

**5. NURTURING NEW MOMS.**

Healthier habits, good advice and friendly faces.

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Artificial intelligence powers a noninvasive, highly accurate test for coronary artery disease.

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Tasty meals from the Farmers Market.

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Robotic tools can lead to safer surgical procedures.

**22. BREATHING EASY AGAIN.**

A double lung transplant gives a Roselle man his independence back.

**23. UNEXPECTED SIGNS OF HEART DISEASE.**

Take these symptoms seriously.

\* Note: Photo taken pre-pandemic and before mask and social distancing requirements.

# B.E. F.A.S.T.

## IF YOU SUSPECT A STROKE

KEEP THIS PAGE HANDY IN CASE YOU OR A LOVED ONE HAS THESE SIGNS.

The faster you get to the Emergency Department during or after a stroke, the better your chances for successful treatment. Use these B.E. F.A.S.T. tips to know what to do in the event of symptoms that indicate a stroke may be occurring. High blood pressure, uncontrolled diabetes, heart disease and obesity are all risk factors. If you have any of these conditions, talk to your doctor and learn how to control them with medication and lifestyle changes.

**B**

**BALANCE.** The person has dizziness or sudden problems with coordination.



**E**

**EYE.** A sudden loss of vision in one or both eyes, or double vision, occurs.



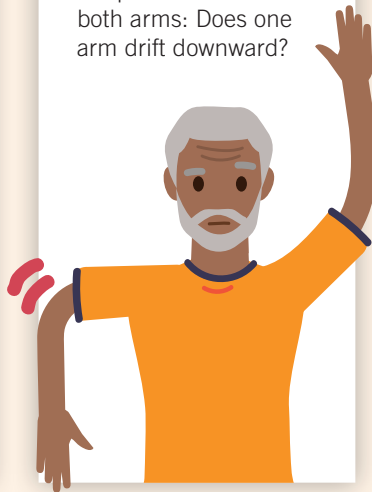
**F**

**FACE Drooping.** Ask the person to smile. Is the smile lopsided?



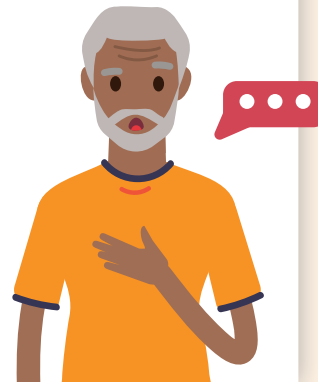
**A**

**ARM Weakness.** Ask the person to raise both arms: Does one arm drift downward?



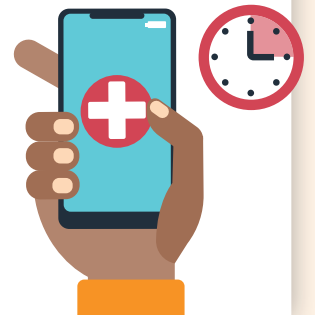
**S**

**SPEECH Difficulty.** Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Is it hard to understand?



**T**

**TIME to call 911.** If any of these symptoms exist, even if they go away, call 911. That's the fastest and safest way to get to the hospital.



Other signs of stroke include the sudden onset of these symptoms: numbness, trouble walking and severe headache.

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is a New Jersey-designated Primary Stroke Center and is certified as a Stroke Center by The Joint Commission. For more information, call **888.724.7123** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/neuroscience](http://www.rwjbh.org/neuroscience).



At left, Kerri Likakis, MS, RDN, CPT, Karen Basedow, MS, RDN, CDE, and Molly Fallon Dixon, MS, RDN, at the Women's Wellness Pantry. Above, intern Aakanksha Deoli, Rutgers MHA 2020, stocks the shelves. **Note: Photos taken before mask and social distancing requirements.**

# NURTURING NEW MOMS

**HEALTHIER HABITS START WITH NUTRITIOUS FOOD,  
GOOD ADVICE AND FRIENDLY FACES.**

When mothers of young children take good care of themselves, they're better able to take care of their kids.

Too often, though, a mother's circumstances—things like lack of time, lack of transportation, lack of child care and lack of access to healthy food—interfere with self-care. "Young mothers often take care of their children first, then don't pay enough attention to their own needs," says Barbara Mintz, MS, RD, System Senior Vice President of Healthy Living and Community Engagement at RWJBarnabas Health.

Now, those women can take advantage of the Women's Wellness Pantry Program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center's Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center. The program enrolls pregnant women and new moms and serves their family through age 5 of the child by providing a balanced variety of healthy pantry items, fresh produce and, if needed, period products and diapers.

The program, created in partnership with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey and ShopRite, includes nutrition education and connections to prenatal and postpartum healthcare.

This circle of support is enhanced by the women who participate. "We're delivering nutrition information in a casual way, over a cup of tea or a bowl of soup in our kitchen at the Community Health and Wellness Center," says Molly Fallon Dixon, MS, RDN, Community Wellness Coordinator. "The mothers can find support, sharing and friendly faces around the table."

## NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

One way Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI) is spreading the word to young mothers is through screenings at its outpatient Women's Health Center. "When I see mothers as patients, we talk about eating and what resources and challenges they have," says Karen Basedow, MS, RDN, CDE. "If they don't have access to SNAP

[New Jersey's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program], I can help them with an application. If they are eating mostly processed foods and going to fast-food restaurants, we can address the nutritional implications of that kind of poor diet." Community members can also get fresh produce at The Beth Greenhouse Farmers Market, held each Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Beth Greenhouse at the corner of Osborne Terrace and Lehigh Avenue.

"When a woman is pregnant, whatever she eats is what her baby eats. And when children are young, they tend to eat what their mom eats as well," says Kerri Likakis, MS, RDN, CPT. "One of the reasons we focus on this population is that nutrient deficiencies prior to the age of 2 can lead to problems in children's development. If you don't eat right, you don't grow right."

"Sometimes, making the right choice is very difficult," says Mintz. "Many women are facing obstacles to their health that have less to do with clinical issues and more to do with social boundaries. These women need our support through access to nutrition and prenatal and postpartum education as well as access to healthy and affordable food. Women are often the center of the family, and reaching them can change the health of many both in the short and long term."

Adds Fallon Dixon, "Here, you can learn about nutrition and cooking and get healthy food—all in a comfortable place where you can have a seat and feel welcome."

The Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center, located at 208 Lyons Avenue, offers free wellness classes to community members. To learn more, call **973.926.7371**.



Elizabeth Versacio, 84, bounced back quickly after minimally invasive TAVR surgery to correct aortic stenosis.



# A SAFER HEART VALVE SURGERY

**A MINIMALLY INVASIVE PROCEDURE WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR A WOMAN WITH AORTIC STENOSIS.**

At the beginning of 2019, Elizabeth Versacio, then 83 years old, felt in good shape. “I was always a walker,” she says. “I could walk from here to there and God knows where.”

“Here” is the independent-living apartment that Elizabeth occupies in a Jersey City senior residence. “There” might be the grocery store four-and-a-half blocks away. “I have to shop for myself,” she says. “It was never a problem.”

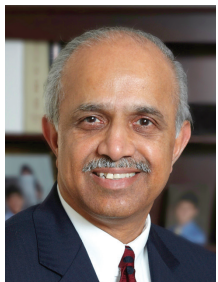
But something changed with the new year. Elizabeth began having trouble breathing. “That had never happened before,” she says. In May and July 2019, she was hospitalized to drain fluid that had built up in her lungs. Walking to the market was now out of the question. “I missed that,” she says. “But I was out of breath all the time.”

Fluid in her lungs wasn’t the only problem. Doctors discovered she had aortic stenosis. The valve in her aorta—the large blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body—had narrowed, contributing to her breathing difficulties.

Elizabeth’s condition was serious. “Aortic stenosis is a progressively worsening disease,” says board-certified surgeon Arash Salemi, MD, newly appointed Clinical Chairman of Cardiothoracic Surgery for RWJBarnabas Health, Northern Region, Chairman of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI) and a member of RWJBarnabas Health medical group. “The two-year survival rate for untreated people with symptoms of aortic stenosis is only 50 percent.”

## AN INNOVATIVE OPTION

Yet until recently, treatment for aortic stenosis had significant limits. “There is no medical therapy, diet or exercise for this condition,” Dr. Salemi says. “The only available therapy for many years was valve replacement with open-heart surgery.” Even so, he says, up to two-thirds



**RAVI KARANAM, MD**

of patients with aortic stenosis over age 75 were not given open-heart surgery.

Elizabeth provided almost a textbook example of why: Many older people with aortic stenosis also have other serious conditions or are frail in ways that could complicate an intricate major surgery.

“She absolutely would not have been a good candidate for open-heart surgery,” says Ravi Karanam, MD, cardiothoracic surgeon at NBI and Director of the Cardiothoracic Residency Program at RWJBarnabas Health.

Fortunately, NBI could offer another option: transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR). This minimally invasive procedure anchors a new aortic valve on top of the existing one via a catheter that’s inserted in an artery in the groin and threaded to the heart through blood vessels.

TAVR is radically different from open-heart surgery. Open-heart surgery can last from three to four hours and includes general anesthesia, the use of a heart-lung machine, the stopping and restarting of the heart and a five-to-seven-day hospital stay, followed by about a month to recover.

“In contrast, TAVR is a one-hour procedure that does not require general anesthesia or a breathing machine, and the patient goes home the same day or the next,” Dr. Karanam says. “Stress on the body is relatively minimal, and people are back to normal activity in a matter of days.”

TAVR initially was reserved for high-risk patients like Elizabeth Versacio. But research by Dr. Salemi and others at multiple centers nationwide, including NBI, demonstrated that TAVR outcomes in lower-risk patients are at least as good as—and possibly better than—outcomes for aortic stenosis patients who have open-heart surgery.

In 2019, the Food and Drug Administration approved TAVR for lower-risk patients. “We essentially are now able to offer it to anyone with aortic stenosis,” says Dr. Salemi, who has performed more than 2,000 TAVR procedures in addition to having deep experience with open-heart operations. “TAVR is a revolutionary technology and represents a paradigm shift in how we treat aortic stenosis.”



“TAVR is a revolutionary technology,” says Arash Salemi, MD, Clinical Chairman of Cardiothoracic Surgery, RWJBarnabas Health, Northern Region.

## BACK TO THE MARKET

Despite TAVR’s advantages, Elizabeth was reluctant to undergo the procedure. “I was against surgery, period,” she says. “I was now 84 and afraid to take a risk, let’s be honest.” Then members of her large extended family weighed in.

“There’s always somebody here, and we talked about it,” Elizabeth says. “They’d say, ‘What do you mean you don’t want to do it?’ I had lost my older sister in September and they said, ‘You want a longer life—it’s something you have to do.’ I guess they talked some sense into me.”

Elizabeth had her TAVR surgery on Thursday, December 19. On Saturday, she went home. “I could have gone home the next day. I almost hate to admit it but the surgery was a piece of cake, it was fabulous. I could hardly believe I had practically no recovery at all.”

Now that Elizabeth’s aortic valve is fixed, doctors can turn to resolving her lung issue. But she’s already made a turnaround. “My breathing is so much better after surgery,” she says. She has returned to walking to the market for her groceries.

Several residents in her building have gone through open-heart surgery. “I’ve seen how long their recovery took,” Elizabeth says. “I would recommend my surgery to anybody.”

Don’t delay getting the care you need. Your heart doesn’t beat just for you. Get it checked. To reach a Newark Beth Israel Medical Center cardiac specialist, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.

# Create a healthy tomorrow by leaving a lasting legacy today.

Help ensure that the next generation has easy access to extraordinary health care by including Newark Beth Israel Medical Center or Children's Hospital of New Jersey in your estate plans. You can create your legacy today by including the medical center as a partial beneficiary of your will or retirement account. It's simple. It's impactful. It's lasting.

For more information, please contact Greg Ellmer at **973-322-4302** or **Gregory.Ellmer@rwjbh.org**. Information is also available online by visiting [newarkbethgiving.org](http://newarkbethgiving.org)

**Newark Beth Israel  
Medical Center**  
**Children's Hospital  
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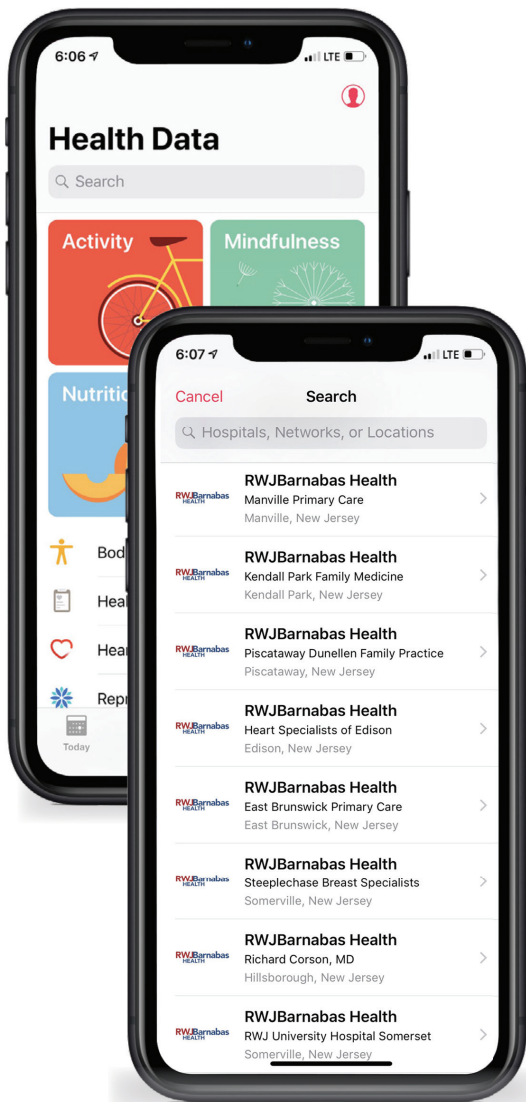
**RWJBarnabas**  
HEALTH





# YOUR HEALTH, AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Now you can manage your healthcare right from the Apple Health app on your iPhone. You can easily keep track of allergies, conditions, immunizations, vitals and more, and consolidate your health records in a timeline—all in one place. Here's how:



1

If you don't have one yet, create a username and password for the RWJBarnabas Health Patient Portal ([www.rwjbh.org/patientportalenroll](http://www.rwjbh.org/patientportalenroll)).



2

Download the Apple Health app from the Apple Store. (You'll need an iPhone running iOS 11.3 or later.)



3

Be sure your iPhone is password-protected, ideally with two-factor authentication.



4

Go to the Health Records section of the Health app, search for RWJBarnabas Health, and log in.



5

After you log in once, your health records will start to appear in the Health app, and will update automatically.

Download the Apple Health app at the Apple Store and access your RWJBarnabas Health medical records at [www.rwjbh.org/patientportalenroll](http://www.rwjbh.org/patientportalenroll).





**\***  
RWJBarnabas Health,  
together with Rutgers Cancer  
Institute of New Jersey—the state’s  
only NCI-Designated Comprehensive  
Cancer Center—provides  
close-to-home access to the  
latest treatment options.  
For more information,  
call 844.CANCERNJ or visit  
[www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).

patient’s home,”  
Silva says.

**Communicate constantly.** This is essential in two ways. First, the nurse navigator is the central clearinghouse for information provided

from the many specialists on a cancer patient’s care team—medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, surgical oncologists, social workers, nutritionists and more. The navigator can ensure that no aspects of treatment fall through the cracks and that the patient receives the highest quality of care.

Second, the navigator can follow up to be sure a patient understands what’s happening.

“Doctors do a great job of explaining, but often you can see the patient’s mind drift off as the person starts to worry about things like, ‘Who’s going to pick my kids up from school?’” Silva explains. “A navigator can talk to the patient later about what he or she understood and relay the necessary information over again in smaller bits so it’s easier to process.”

**Set priorities.** “Sometimes what feels urgent to a patient is not clinically urgent, but our nurse navigators have the ability to know what is truly time-sensitive,” Silva explains. “For example, recently a young man needed to see a specialist as soon as possible. Based on the navigator’s intervention, he was able to get in to see the doctor in one day.”

**Save time.** Often, a patient needs several medical procedures—for example, an echocardiogram and a port insertion before chemotherapy treatment can begin. A nurse navigator can arrange for multiple appointments to be scheduled at the same facility on the same day. “A navigator is key to making sure all the pieces fit together and to minimizing the time a patient needs to spend at a facility,” Silva says.

“An oncology nurse navigator is a critical part of a patient’s cancer care team,” she continues. “He or she is the kind of person who can anticipate what’s needed and make it happen—and who has a relentless desire to help patients.”

# CANCER CARE: THE HUMAN TOUCH

## HOW ONCOLOGY NURSE NAVIGATORS HELP PATIENTS

**P**atients who seek care through the RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) Oncology Access Center have a big advantage: They get connected to an oncology nurse navigator who acts as their problem-solver and supporter before, during and after treatment. The oncology nurse navigator becomes an important member of the patient’s healthcare team and serves as his or her advocate while compassionately supporting their physical, emotional and spiritual needs from diagnosis through survivorship.

“When you choose RWJBarnabas Health for your cancer care, you’re not only getting quality care, but someone to walk beside you on your treatment journey,” explains Jeanne Silva, RN, Director, Nurse Navigation, Oncology Services at RWJBH. “Moreover, we coordinate all of our resources, so that if a patient has a problem—be it financial,

social or medical—the navigator can help the patient get the benefit of resources from throughout the health system.”

When a patient makes an appointment with an RWJBH cancer provider, the oncology nurse navigator will follow up with the patient the next day. “The navigator asks if there are any questions about the upcoming appointment and goes through some of the specifics of what will happen,” Silva says.

That’s just the beginning. Oncology nurse navigators, who are located at each RWJBH facility, also do the following:

**Identify possible barriers to treatment.** Does the patient have financial or insurance concerns? Does the patient have family or friends who can provide support? Is there a transportation issue? The nurse navigator can identify and help with these problems right away. “In one case, we

were able to get a patient to see a specialist located 70 miles away from the



To contact the Oncology Access Center,  
call **844.CANCERNJ (844.226.2376)**.



Sam Jarmer made remarkable progress at Children's Specialized Hospital and continues doing well with outpatient therapy.

# 'THE SKY'S THE LIMIT'



Children's Specialized Hospital®

An RWJBarnabas Health facility

## AFTER A TRAUMATIC NECK INJURY, INTENSE PHYSICAL THERAPY HELPS A TEENAGER MOVE AGAIN.

July 24, 2019: a grayish, unremarkable day on the beach at Ocean Grove. Lifeguard Sam Jarmer, 16, dives into the water to cool down, but hits a hidden sandbar.

Soon after, Sam's mom, Jessica, sitting on the beach several blocks away, sees a call from Sam's boss come in on her phone. "I immediately knew not only that he was injured; I could feel that it was bad," she remembers.

When he hit the sandbar, Sam suffered a burst fracture in the C6 vertebra near the base of the neck and lost the ability to move his arms and legs. A fellow lifeguard jumped in to lift his head above the water, and a trauma team was dispatched from a nearby hospital. Sam was strapped to a backboard, and six of his fellow lifeguards carried him to a waiting ambulance.

"He kept saying, 'I'm so sorry, Mom,' because we were supposed to go on vacation the next day," Jessica remembers.

Sam was in surgery for six hours while the burst vertebra was replaced with a titanium cage. He spent the next five days

recovering at the hospital. At that point, he could occasionally raise his arms a bit, but nothing more.

It was time for intensive inpatient rehabilitation and therapy at Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) in New Brunswick. "I remember feeling that this would be the place that would make it all better," Jessica says.

### MAKING PROGRESS

The first piece of good news came from Michele Fantasia, MD, Director of the Spinal Cord Injury Program at CSH. Her evaluation determined that Sam's injury was "incomplete," meaning that Sam still had some motor and sensory function below the level of injury. "As I say with all incomplete injuries, 'The sky's the limit,'" Dr. Fantasia told Jessica.

Four months of recreational, physical and occupational therapies followed. "The occupational therapists made modifications

for everything," Jessica remembers. "They kept constructing things in some kind of magical workshop they had." There was a special fork to help Sam relearn how to feed himself, a device to help him brush his teeth and more.

"Everyone at Children's really helped me when I was at one of the lowest points in my life with my injury," says Sam. "They just showed compassion in all of the support and love that they gave me." On November 19, Sam was discharged from CSH.

Today, Sam continues with a rigorous program of outpatient physical therapy. During the COVID-19 lockdown, he did his exercises via telemedicine for a few weeks. His older brother, home from college, was there to help.

Sam continues to work on his core muscles, arms and fingers. He now has muscle control in all parts of his legs and continues to work on walking independently. "I'm staying positive," he says. "I know it will take time and I'll be back to where I was, but for now I've just got to keep pushing forward."

To learn more about Children's Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit **[www.childrens-specialized.org](http://www.childrens-specialized.org)**.

At Children's Specialized Hospital, we provide world-class care for children and young adults who face special health challenges across the state of New Jersey and beyond. Our locations in Bayonne, Clifton, East Brunswick, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Jersey City, Mountainside, New Brunswick, Newark, Toms River and Warren treat everything from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities like brain and spinal cord injuries to developmental and behavioral issues like autism and mental health.



**[ANYTOWN]** A musical with a mission: “Anytown,” an original educational musical, tells the story of Hope, a high-achieving high school student who becomes addicted to opioids after a soccer injury. The show has toured middle and high schools in New Jersey and was developed through a partnership with George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick, RWJBH and the Horizon Foundation of New Jersey.



**[BEAT BUS]** They've got the beat: Students in Long Branch, Asbury Park and Neptune have experienced a state-of-the-art mobile recording studio to create their own music thanks to the Beat Bus, a collaboration between Lakehouse Music Academy and the Asbury Park Music Foundation that is supported in part by RWJBH. In addition to providing a means of creative expression and new ways to collaborate, the Beat Bus helps prepare students for success in the digital age.



## [ASBURY PARK MUSIC + FILM FESTIVAL]

**Making (sound) waves:** The Asbury Park Music + Film Festival, of which RWJBH is a Founding Partner, celebrates the role of music in film, as well as the shore town's long history as an incubator of great music. It benefits underserved children in Asbury Park and surrounding areas by providing music education, instruments and social connection opportunities.

**Note:** All photos on these pages were taken before the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing guidelines.



# SUPPORTING ARTS FOR THE HEALTH OF IT

**PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL ARTS GROUPS HELP PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITIES.**

Research has shown that the arts stimulate creativity, ease stress, promote joy, improve memory and enhance education. That's why RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), with its strong commitment to creating and sustaining healthy communities, partners with local arts organizations.

"We understand the clear and beneficial impact that taking part in the arts has on health and well-being," says Michael Knecht, Senior Vice President of Strategic Marketing and Communications for RWJBH. "These partnerships are an important way for us to help people in our communities and also support local grassroots organizations."

RWJBH supports a broad range of arts events. Music, dance and film are high on the list: RWJBH has sponsored the Asbury Park Music + Film Festival; the Bridge Arts Festival

in Bayonne; the Montclair Jazz Festival; the Central Jersey Jazz Festival; Maplewoodstock Music & Art Festival; the "Sounds of the City" free outdoor concerts presented by the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark; and the SOMA Film Festival in South Orange and Maplewood.

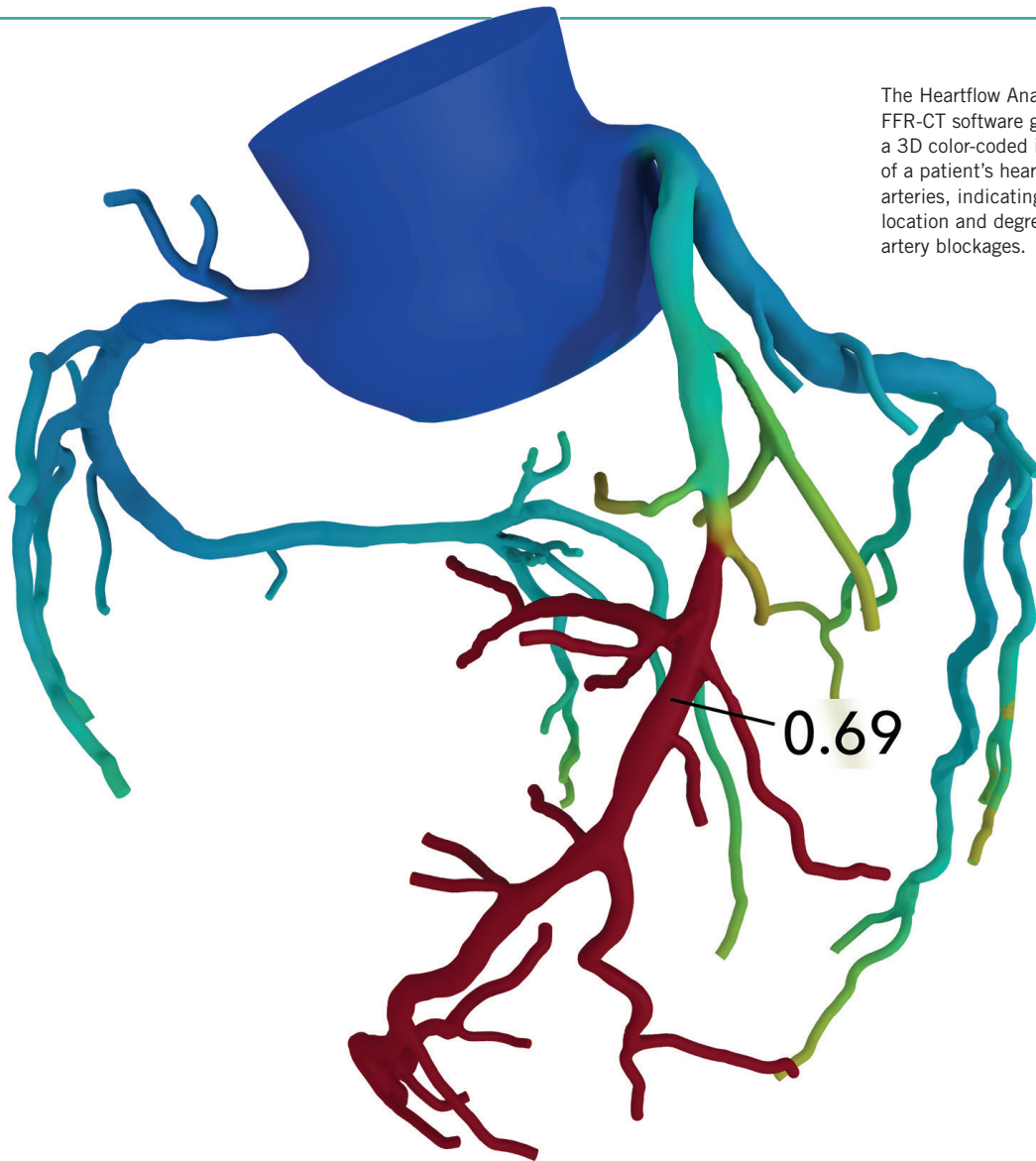
Drama has a place as well. RWJBH is a sponsor of the New Jersey Repertory Company, a professional nonprofit theater in Long Branch with a mission to develop and present new plays. And in a proactive move to help stem the opioid epidemic among young people, RWJBH has partnered with the George Street Playhouse in New

Brunswick and the Horizon Foundation of New Jersey to create "Anytown," a one-hour musical that demonstrates how addiction can happen to anyone. The show has toured to schools throughout the state, followed by Q&A discussions with students.

"These partnerships are all part of the RWJBarnabas Health commitment to reaching out beyond the walls of our medical centers to help people get and stay healthy in all kinds of ways," says Knecht. "And they're wonderful examples of how meaningful collaboration with local organizations can make an impact throughout the state."

To learn more about RWJBarnabas Health corporate partnerships, visit [www.rwjbh.org/corporatepartners](http://www.rwjbh.org/corporatepartners).





The Heartflow Analysis FFR-CT software generates a 3D color-coded image of a patient's heart and arteries, indicating the location and degree of artery blockages.

# A HIGH-TECH LOOK AT THE HEART

**DOCTORS CAN NOW USE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR A NONINVASIVE,  
HIGHLY ACCURATE TEST FOR CORONARY ARTERY DISEASE.**

“After the test, they told me I was a walking time bomb,” says Ray Duarte, 50.

As the Regional Director of Information Technology at Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus and at Monmouth Medical Center, Ray had volunteered to be among the first for an advanced noninvasive technology known as Fractional Flow Reserve Computed Tomography (FFR-CT). This test evaluates how well blood flows through a patient’s heart arteries and determines whether—and where—blockages exist.

“I had upper back pain on and off, for which I was seeing a chiropractor with no relief,” says Ray. “I did have high cholesterol, which I was addressing with improved diet and exercise, and a family history of heart disease.

“However, due to my active lifestyle and symptoms that were not typical for heart disease, my primary care doctor told me he would never have recommended so much as a stress test for me,” Ray recalls.

But the FFR-CT test showed that Ray’s right coronary artery was 99 percent blocked. Without the test and subsequent treatment, such a blockage could have led to a heart attack at any time.

## FINDING THE BLOCKAGES

The powerful, artificial intelligence-based FFR-CT test is used to diagnose coronary artery disease (CAD)—blockages in the blood vessels supplying the heart. CAD is a leading cause of death in the U.S., accounting for 600,000 to 700,000 deaths

per year. It can cause shortness of breath, chest pain (typical and atypical) and heart attack, and can lead to death.

When a patient has chest pain or suspicious symptoms, the usual

noninvasive ways of detecting inadequate blood flow include an **electrocardiogram (ECG)**, which uses electrical signals; a **stress test**, in which blood flow is tested while a patient exercises, via ECG or an **echocardiogram (ECHO)**, which uses ultrasound waves; or a **nuclear stress test**, which uses radioactive dye and an imaging machine. In addition, a **computed tomography (CT) scan** can show calcium deposits that could narrow arteries.

Prior to FFR-CT technology, however, the only way physicians could see for certain whether coronary arteries were blocked was to do an invasive procedure, known as **cardiac catheterization and angiogram**. In this procedure, a special dye is injected through a long, thin, flexible tube (catheter) that is threaded through an artery in the leg up to the arteries of the heart.

If a blockage is found, the cardiologist can decide whether to correct it during the angiogram—for example, by inserting a small tube (stent) to keep the artery open—or to send the patient for bypass surgery.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

While a crucial and sometimes lifesaving technology, an angiogram often shows no significant blockages, according to Rajesh Mohan, MD, MBA, FACC, FSCAI, an interventional cardiologist and Chief Medical Officer at Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus (MMCSC).

That’s where noninvasive FFR-CT comes in. Using “machine learning,” an application of artificial intelligence, the software compares images from existing CT scans of a patient’s heart to an ever-growing database of tens of thousands of other CT images. This large database helps physicians analyze the likelihood that any specific blockage could cause harm and also provides direction about treatment.

“The FFR-CT technology creates a three-dimensional image of blood vessels and color-codes them based on

the severity of the blockage,” says Dr. Mohan. “It then also shows how each blockage impacts blood flow to the heart.” Armed with this knowledge, a physician can decide whether lifestyle changes, medication, a stent or surgery is the best course of action.

“With this information, we can give our patients a more definite diagnosis and have confidence in the best treatment plan without putting them through unnecessary invasive procedures,” says Dr. Mohan. “Its accuracy is unlike that of any other noninvasive tests available to us.”

## IS FFR-CT FOR YOU?

Since CAD is a common type of heart disease, many patients can benefit from this advanced technology.

However, FFR-CT is not available everywhere. Specialists at MMCSC are among the first in the state to use it, and MMCSC is the earliest hospital in the state to utilize it in the Emergency Department and throughout the hospital, as well as for outpatients.

“The test needs to be done appropriately, according to criteria set by the American College of Cardiology,” says Dr. Mohan. “Patients need to have symptoms—for example, chest pain or shortness of breath on exertion, which a lot of people actually disregard.

“If these exist in association with some of the coronary risk factors like smoking, hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol and family history, then I think that patient is an ideal candidate for this study.”

As for Ray Duarte, a stent procedure opened his blocked artery, his back pain has resolved and medication is controlling his cholesterol. He is back to an active lifestyle.

Says Dr. Mohan, “We at Monmouth Medical Center Southern Campus are excited and privileged to introduce such a cutting-edge, revolutionary technology.”



RAJESH MOHAN, MD



Your heart doesn’t beat just for you. Get it checked. To learn more about FFR-CT or to find a cardiac specialist, call **888.724.7123** or visit **www.rwjbh.org/heart**.



# MIND, BODY AND HEALTH

## WHY CARING FOR THE WHOLE PERSON IS THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE

**A**t his yearly physical, a patient is found to be 35 pounds over ideal body weight. He has hypertension, and his lab results indicate prediabetes. His doctor urges him to change his diet, be more active and lose the extra weight to reduce his risk for stroke, heart disease and diabetes.



FRANK A. GHINASSI, PhD

The patient acknowledges that he should. But at his next yearly physical, he's still 35 pounds overweight.

In that all-too-common scenario lies the possibility for a new approach to healthcare,

one that simultaneously provides help for behavioral as well as physical issues. "The goal is to help people make better choices—about things like what they eat, how they exercise and about alcohol and nicotine—and thereby avoid many chronic health disorders," says Frank A. Ghinassi, PhD, ABBP, Senior Vice President, Behavioral Health and Addiction at RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), and President and CEO of Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care.

"Through integrated care delivery, we want to treat both body and mind, preferably in the same location and during the same healthcare visit," he says.

In the case of the overweight patient, for example, the primary care provider will look to determine the cause of the

patient's inability to lose weight. "Is the issue genetic? Does the patient have a low metabolism?" asks Dr. Ghinassi. "Or is there a mood disorder that's affecting energy level and motivation?"

Once barriers to a healthier lifestyle are identified, doctors and behavioral health specialists can work together to develop solutions tailored to the patient's specific needs.

### AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

"Often, people with behavioral and addiction disorders are treated 'from the neck up' and are referred to dedicated behavioral health offices," says Dr. Ghinassi.

But that approach can create roadblocks. "Maybe the patient can't get an appointment for three weeks, or he doesn't like the idea of walking into a building that says 'counseling services' or 'psychiatry' on the sign," he explains.

To provide coordinated care, RWJBH and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care are bringing services closer together. "At many of our primary care and pediatric delivery sites, primary care physicians work with psychologists or social workers who are located in the same office suite or in the same building," says Dr. Ghinassi. "A patient can be offered a chance to meet the physician's behavioral health colleague even before leaving the initial appointment, find out what might be possible and perhaps find it easier to commit to following up with a subsequent call or visit." The next evolution of care at RWJBH and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care will be to have a clinical social worker or psychologist located right in the same office space as the primary care provider.

Integrated healthcare is the future, Dr. Ghinassi believes. "People tend to come to a healthcare system when they're in crisis—they need coronary artery surgery, for example, or their depression makes them unable to function in daily life. Of course, we'll always be there for those people," he says.

"However, we're evolving to an equal focus on early screening and intervention. Together, RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers University Behavioral Health Care are on a mission to improve the health and life satisfaction of patients and families throughout New Jersey."

For help accessing mental health services, call the RWJBarnabas Health Access Center at **800.300.0628**.







## SUN-SENSITIZING DRUGS

A wide range of drugs can cause sun sensitivity, including some medications in the categories below. Ask your pharmacist about any concerns you have about a medication.

- Antibiotics
- Allergy medications (oral antihistamines)
- Antidepressants
- Cholesterol-lowering drugs
- Diuretics
- Oral contraceptives
- Non-steroidal inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen and naproxen
- Retinoids



# MEDICATIONS AND THE SUN: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



## MEDICATION SUPPORT FOR THE UNINSURED

Barnabas Health Retail Pharmacy at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center participates in the nationwide Dispensary of Hope program to distribute certain generic medications, free of cost, to low-income and uninsured people who need them. “In this program, pharmaceutical manufacturers donate generic medications, and they are sent to pharmacies across the nation,” explains Joe Voelkel, RPH, Assistant Vice President, Barnabas Health Retail Pharmacies. “At RWJBarnabas Health, we’re proud to participate in this program, and give vulnerable community members the access to medications they need, without charge for our services.”

Currently, only oral medications are available, but the program is seeking to expand into other medications, including injectables. To be eligible, patients must be uninsured and have an income that is at or less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

To learn more, visit [www.dispensaryofhope.org](http://www.dispensaryofhope.org) or call your local Barnabas Health Retail Pharmacy.

## YOUR PRESCRIPTION MAY MAKE YOU MORE PRONE TO SUNBURN AND OTHER EFFECTS.

asking in sunshine is good for the soul—but not always for the skin, particularly if you’re taking medication.

That’s because many drugs, including common over-the-counter ones, can intensify the effect of sun on skin by causing a reaction to UV (ultraviolet) light. The risks: sunburn, rashes or even blistering, and aggravation of existing skin conditions, such as eczema.

“In the case of a medication that causes sun sensitivity, you should see a sticker on the bottle or package notifying you that taking this might increase your risk,” says Lucio Volino, PharmD, clinical pharmacist with RWJBarnabas Health and Clinical Associate Professor at Rutgers University.

That sticker, or a similar warning on a package insert, means you need to be

especially vigilant about applying and reapplying sunscreen, whether you’re going to spend a day in the sun at a family barbecue or are heading out to do a little yard work. The time it takes for your skin to get sunburned will be greatly reduced, so use a product with SPF (sun protection factor) and reapply it according to the instructions on the label. (The lower the SPF number, the shorter the length of its protective benefits.)

In addition, wear sunglasses and protective clothing, and try to avoid the sun between the peak hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. “People should also be conscious of staying well hydrated in the heat,” Volino says. Although the sun’s rays are less intense in the fall and winter seasons, these precautions should be followed year-round, he says. They also apply to all skin tones.

The Barnabas Health Retail Pharmacy at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is located at 201 Lyons Avenue in Newark. For more information, call 973.926.7422.



# SUMMER RECIPES: FRESH, FAST AND HEALTHY

**TRY THESE QUICK, COOL DISHES  
USING FOODS YOU CAN FIND AT  
THE FARMERS MARKET.**

Locally grown produce is tasty, nutritious and affordable. Maybe you're looking for Jersey sweet corn, heirloom tomatoes and hydroponic greens and herbs; or perhaps you're ready to be adventurous and try something new. Either way, be sure to check out the seasonal offerings each week at the Farmers Market at The Beth Greenhouse. The recipes here have been created by registered dietitians at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center's Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center.



## GET FRESH AT THE FARMERS MARKET

Many of the ingredients for the recipes on these pages can be found each week at the Farmers Market, held at The Beth Greenhouse at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI). "Every Thursday, our Wellness team works alongside our community partners to bring in food grown by local urban and New Jersey-based rural farmers for the weekly Farmers Market located at The Beth Greenhouse," says Molly Fallon Dixon, MS, RDN, Community Wellness Coordinator at NBI's Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center.

The Farmers Market is held every Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at The Beth Greenhouse, located on the corner of Osborne Terrace and Lehigh Avenue. SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Vouchers are accepted.



## SWEET AND CRUNCHY COLESLAW

Serves 4

Cabbage and carrots are great ways to stretch your food dollar in the produce aisle. These hearty vegetables will last quite a while when properly stored at home. This coleslaw is a good source of both Vitamin A and Vitamin C—good for the eyes, immune system and taste buds, too.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ small red cabbage, shredded (about 2 cups)
- 2 carrots, shredded (about ½ cup)
- 1 Granny Smith apple, julienned (cut into matchsticks) or diced

### DIRECTIONS:

- In a large bowl, combine yogurt, olive oil, cider vinegar, lemon juice, salt and pepper.
- Add shredded cabbage, carrots and apples and toss to coat evenly.
- For best results, cover coleslaw with plastic wrap and set it in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour to allow flavors to combine.

The Reverend Dr. Ronald B. Christian Community Health and Wellness Center, located at 208 Lyons Avenue, offers free wellness classes to community members. To learn more, call **973.926.7371**.



## WALDORF CHICKEN SALAD IN LETTUCE CUPS

Serves 6

Chicken salad gets a fresh makeover with our Waldorf Chicken Salad recipe. We cook the chicken ourselves, skipping the canned stuff to make sure we're using fresh, lean chicken breast. To keep the recipe light, nonfat Greek yogurt replaces the traditional mayonnaise. Add fresh fruit and crunchy walnuts for a cool summer lunch or dinner.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- ¼ teaspoon salt, divided
- ¼ cup walnuts
- ¼ cup plain, nonfat Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 small apple, diced
- 1 cup seedless red grapes, halved
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- ¼ cup raisins
- 12 leaves Boston or Bibb lettuce

### DIRECTIONS:

- Place chicken breasts in a large pot and cover with water. Add ⅛ teaspoon salt and bring to a boil. Boil for 30 minutes, then set chicken aside to cool. When cooled, shred chicken with 2 forks.
- Meanwhile, add walnuts to a small, dry sauté pan and toast over medium heat for about 3 minutes until fragrant. Set aside to cool. When cooled, roughly chop walnuts.
- Combine yogurt, olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, pepper and remaining ⅛ teaspoon salt in a large mixing bowl.
- Add shredded chicken, toasted walnuts, apple, grapes, celery and raisins to the dressing.
- To serve, fill lettuce leaves with chicken salad.

## GRILLED PEACHES WITH YOGURT DRIZZLE

Serves 4

This recipe makes a great fresh breakfast or perfect summer dessert. Prep the yogurt and toast almonds ahead of time so all you need to wait for is the peaches to grill before digging in.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 ripe peaches, pitted and quartered
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, divided
- 1½ cups plain, fat-free yogurt
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ¼ cup sliced almonds

### DIRECTIONS:

- Place the quartered peaches in a large bowl with brown sugar and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Allow to marinate for 10–15 minutes.
- Combine yogurt, remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla and honey in a small bowl and set aside.
- Heat outdoor grill or grill pan to medium-high heat. Place peaches on grill skin side down and grill for 3–4 minutes until grill marks appear. Turn to remaining sides and allow to cook 1–2 minutes more on each side until grill marks appear.
- Meanwhile, add sliced almonds to a small, dry sauté pan and toast over medium heat for about 3 minutes until fragrant.
- Place grilled peaches in 4 serving bowls, dividing evenly. Drizzle with yogurt and top with toasted almonds.



## BROILED TILAPIA OVER RATATOUILLE

Serves 4

This ratatouille uses the summer's freshest produce, including zucchini, eggplant and basil, to make a delicious bed of vegetables for a light tilapia fillet. Tilapia is a plain, flaky white fish, perfect for those who are trying fish for the first time.

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 small eggplant, peeled and diced
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 large zucchini, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) diced tomatoes, no salt added
- ¼ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, divided
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried rosemary
- ¼ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 4 tilapia fillets, 4 ounces each
- Juice of ½ a lemon

### DIRECTIONS:

- Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the eggplant and cook to soften slightly, about 5 minutes. Remove the eggplant from the skillet and set aside.
- Heat remaining tablespoon olive oil in the skillet. Add onions and cook for 5 minutes until softened. Add zucchini and garlic and cook until soft, 5–7 minutes. Add eggplant, tomatoes, ⅛ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, thyme and rosemary. Simmer for 10 minutes until thickened. Stir in fresh basil and remove from heat.
- While ratatouille is cooking, preheat broiler. Place tilapia fillets on a greased baking sheet. Sprinkle with ⅛ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper; squeeze lemon juice over fillets.
- Broil until fish is cooked through, about 7 minutes. Serve fish over 1 cup ratatouille.



On this page, the robotic surgical system is housed in a specially designed operating room suite. NBI has three state-of-the-art robotic systems, each with different advantages, to accommodate individual patient needs.

**\***  
RWJBarnabas Health and the Frederick B. Cohen, MD, Cancer and Blood Disorders Center at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, in partnership with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey—the state's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—provide close-to-home access to the latest treatment options. For more information, call 844.CANCERNJ or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).

# ADVANCED TECHNIQUES IN THE OR

**ROBOTIC TOOLS, WIELDED BY AN EXPERIENCED  
TEAM, CAN LEAD TO SAFER SURGERY.**



We have taken all necessary steps to ensure the safety of our patients and our facilities. To learn more about robotic surgery at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, call **888.724.7123** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/newarkbeth](http://www.rwjbh.org/newarkbeth).



The pancreas (highlighted) is about six inches long and sits across the back of the abdomen. The wide end (head) is removed in the Whipple procedure.

## WHIPPLE PROCEDURE: A COMPLEX SURGERY

The experience of the robot-assisted surgery team at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI) allows it to offer one of the most complex of all cancer surgeries: removal of part of the pancreas in a surgery called the Whipple procedure.

Named for the physician who popularized it decades ago, the Whipple procedure is used to remove cancer in the pancreas when cancer has not spread to other parts of the body. It involves removing the head of the pancreas, as well as parts of adjacent organs, during a six-to-eight-hour operation.

The pancreas is located deep in the abdomen, with many organs nearby plus major blood vessels that pump 50 percent of the body's blood.

"In order to remove the head of the pancreas, we also have to divide the stomach, small intestine and bile duct, reconnecting everything once the tumor is out," says David Pertsemlidis, MD, Director of NBI's Department of General Surgery.

"These patients usually need chemotherapy after surgery, but they have to heal before they can begin it," says Dr. Pertsemlidis. "Robot-assisted surgery can shave weeks off of their recovery time, so they can begin that treatment sooner than ever before."

More than a decade of dedicated work with robotic tools for surgery is paying off for patients, according to Adam M. Kopelan, MD, Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI).

"Since the mid-2000s, we've been using robot-assisted tools for more and more complicated surgeries," Dr. Kopelan says. "During that time, we've become very familiar with how to maximize the advances of each new piece of equipment. That's been the key to allowing us to offer robotic surgery for more and more patients."

NBI surgical teams can offer patients robot-assisted surgery for urologic and gynecologic procedures, as well as for elective surgery for the gallbladder, colon, stomach and esophagus. They can also treat patients who require one of the most complex surgical procedures, known as the

Whipple procedure, for pancreatic cancer (see "A Complex Surgery," above).

"Most hospitals do not offer the option of robot-assisted surgery for the Whipple procedure," Dr. Kopelan says, "but because the robot offers significant safety advantages to our patients, we've committed the time and resources to become expert at it. It's a process at NBI that's been a decade in the making."

### WHY A ROBOT?

Advances in robot-assisted surgery tools, like the da Vinci Xi Surgical System used at NBI, are exciting for physicians. But unless you're in the medical field, it can be hard to fully appreciate how robotic surgery works and what benefits it offers.

"Robot-assisted tools allow us to perform increasingly complicated surgeries using minimally invasive techniques," says Dr. Kopelan. Tiny tools allow trained surgeons to perform operations without the large incisions required by traditional surgery. And that brings patients many benefits: less pain; faster recovery; shorter hospital stays; less risk for infection after surgery; and less blood loss, so less need for blood transfusions.

During the operation, the surgeon uses robotic arms that are precisely guided by highly advanced computer software. "The

surgeon has 100 percent control of these computer-guided tools," Dr. Kopelan says. "Additionally, the system gives us much more control than you can have with the human hand."

These systems also give the surgical team a clearer view inside the body. The miniature 3D cameras provide live, highly detailed video images during surgery. The team can magnify the view up to 10 times when needed, to better see intricate blood vessels and nerves.

In addition to experienced surgeons, NBI has a dedicated staff just for robotic surgeries, including registered nurses with special training in the procedures. "During surgery, this team focuses on the equipment, including high-definition video monitors and placement of the robotic arms, so surgeons can focus on the surgery," says David Pertsemlidis, MD, Director of NBI's Department of General Surgery.

"Not every hospital has made this investment in robotic training, and in my experience, it makes a difference in patient care," says Dr. Pertsemlidis.

"We have a long history of using these robots," Dr. Kopelan says. "It's part of our belief here that minimally invasive surgery should be the standard of care whenever possible, because it's safer for most patients."



ADAM M. KOPELAN, MD



DAVID PERTSEMLIDIS, MD



# BREATHING EASY AGAIN

## A DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT GAVE A ROSELLE MAN HIS INDEPENDENCE BACK.

**G**ustavo Larrahondo, 67, first noticed something was wrong back in 2018, when he began experiencing a persistent dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty lifting heavy objects.



THOMAS KALEEKAL, MD

Gustavo, who had never smoked and was in otherwise good health, went to see his doctor. In October of that year, a surgical

biopsy of his lung tissue determined that he had idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, which occurs when lung tissue becomes scarred, making it difficult for the lungs to function properly. (Idiopathic means that the cause of the disease is unknown.) “I never imagined I would have something like this,” says Gustavo.

In the months after his diagnosis, Gustavo required an oxygen tank to breathe and a walker to get around. “I lost my independence,” he says.

With a prognosis of only six months to a year to live, doctors determined that Gustavo’s best chance of survival was a

Gustavo Larrahondo can now perform everyday activities, like climbing stairs, that weren’t possible before his double lung transplant.

double lung transplant at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI).

### THE WAIT BEGINS

In February 2019, he was added to the national transplant waitlist, and began pulmonary rehabilitation to strengthen his muscles at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Rahway, near his Roselle home. Both NBI and RWJUH Rahway are members of the RWJBarnabas Health system.

In late May 2019, Gustavo got the call: Two donor lungs that were a match, based on factors such as body size and blood and tissue type, were available.

“Usually patients have about two hours to get to the hospital after they get the call,” says pulmonologist Thomas Kaleekal, MD, Medical Director of NBI’s Advanced Lung Diseases and Transplant Program, the only lung transplant program in New Jersey. “We have surgeons available 24/7 to do a lung transplant at any time.”

While Gustavo was prepped for surgery, a recovery team from NBI traveled to the donor’s hospital to remove the lungs, place them on ice and travel back to NBI. “We always take a moment of silence and thank the donor for the gift of life,” says Dr. Kaleekal, who was part of that team.

### SURGERY AND SUCCESS

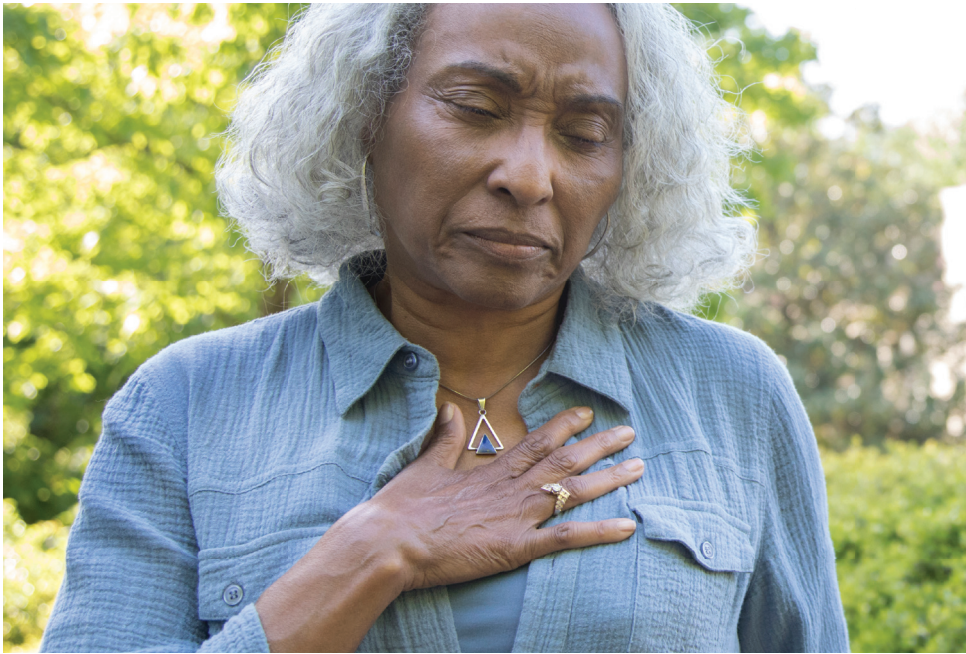
Gustavo’s surgery took about seven hours and once it was complete, he was taken to the Cardiothoracic Intensive Care Unit to begin his recovery. “He was very self-motivated and had a great family who gave him extra encouragement to get to the next level,” says Dr. Kaleekal.

Today Gustavo is home, continuing with pulmonary rehabilitation and thriving with his new lungs. He no longer requires an oxygen tank to breathe and can go for walks, drive a car and has even been cleared to travel on a plane.

“I feel really good and have so much more quality of life than before,” he says.

To learn more about the Advanced Lung Diseases and Transplant Program at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, call **1.888.NJLung1** or visit **[www.rwjbh.org/lungtransplant](http://www.rwjbh.org/lungtransplant)**.





## NEW AMBULATORY HEART CARE CLINIC

Until recently, many people in the region who have heart disease did not have easy access to cardiac care. That's why Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI) recently opened a Comprehensive Cardiac Clinic for people who have heart conditions.

"Patients are seen in a timely manner, offering, for many, an alternative to the Emergency Department," says Howard Levitt, MD, a heart specialist at NBI. "Sometimes this care can even help to avoid a hospital stay."

The clinic, located within the hospital at 201 Lyons Avenue, is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call **973.926.7852** for an in-person appointment or a telemedicine visit.

# UNEXPECTED SIGNS OF HEART DISEASE

**BE SURE TO TAKE THESE POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS SERIOUSLY.**

Most of us have heard about warning signs of a heart attack: pain in the chest or loss of feeling (numbness) in the left arm. When those symptoms appear, a call to 911 is often the best course of action.

However, some signs of heart trouble are less dramatic and less obvious—but they still need medical attention.

"Some people don't feel any pain, even during a heart attack," says Howard Levitt, MD, a heart specialist and Medical Director of Ambulatory Cardiology at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBI). "Others have heart problems they're not aware of because the symptoms are vague and don't seem to be related to the heart at all."



HOWARD LEVITT, MD

Whether you know you have a heart condition or not, there are certain signs that a doctor should check out, he says. These include:

- Feeling of heaviness, tightness

or squeezing in the chest

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Feeling lightheaded
- Pain in the jaw or ear
- Unexplained and rapid weight gain
- Swelling in the legs
- Dry or hacking cough
- Fatigue.

Though some of these symptoms may not seem heart-related, they could be. "The brain interprets pain differently when it's coming from inside your body, versus pain on the skin from a cut, for example," explains Dr. Levitt. "So if the heart isn't working correctly, nausea or jaw pain might be a sign."

Such signs could provide useful direction for a healthier lifestyle. "They could point to different heart conditions that you can help control," Dr. Levitt

says. "While some will require invasive interventions, in other cases exercise, healthy eating and medication can help prevent, minimize or sometimes even reverse damage to the heart."

If you're unsure whether you have symptoms of an unhealthy heart, talk to your doctor, especially if a symptom is new. If it is severe, err on the side of caution: Call your doctor or visit the Emergency Department.

Physicians at NBI can offer a range of options and support for heart health, including a new walk-in clinic.

"The beauty of our team here at Newark Beth Israel is there's nothing we can't take care of, from high blood pressure and heart failure through heart transplant," Dr. Levitt says. "We have an experienced team to help each person find the best path to a healthier life."

Don't delay your healthcare. Your heart doesn't beat just for you. Get it checked. To find a Newark Beth Israel Medical Center cardiac specialist, call **888.724.7123** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/heart](http://www.rwjbh.org/heart).



# Getting Healthy Together!

When in-person meetings can't happen, we can still help. Newark Beth Israel Medical Center is ready to meet you virtually for a telemedicine appointment, consultation or support. Below are some of our virtual support groups and educational programs. To learn about more programs, visit [www.rwjbh.org/events](http://www.rwjbh.org/events).

## All Recovery Virtual

**Meetings** for everyone who supports recovery. Find a full calendar of All Recovery meetings that you can join online or by phone at [www.rwjbh.org/allrecovery](http://www.rwjbh.org/allrecovery).

## BETH BABIES

**Breastfeeding Class**  
Virtual meeting, Tuesdays  
at 1 p.m.

Join us to learn techniques to latch your baby well. Receive skilled guidance from Lactation Counselors and meet other pregnant and nursing mothers. Partners and nursing babies are welcome. To register and receive login details and confirmation: [Janine.Marley@rwjbh.org](mailto:Janine.Marley@rwjbh.org)

## Healthy Lifestyles Class

**Virtual meeting,**  
**Thursdays at 1 p.m.**  
Weekly group discussion and presentation on current health and nutrition topics. Join meeting with login using phone, tablet or computer. Register and receive login details and confirmation: [Karen.Basedow@rwjbh.org](mailto:Karen.Basedow@rwjbh.org), 973.926.3312



## ONLINE SUPPORT FOR NEW AND EXPECTING MOTHERS

### Breastfeeding Support

**Every Monday from 12 to 1 p.m.**

International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants will provide guidance and answer questions about latch issues, breast/nipple pain, milk supply concerns, pumping, supplementation, returning to work and weaning. Register at [www.rwjbh.org/breastfeedingsupport](http://www.rwjbh.org/breastfeedingsupport).

### Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders

**Every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

One of the most common complications of childbirth is anxiety or feelings of anger or sadness. You are not alone. Join our judgement-free and supportive virtual community, led by a perinatal mood disorder certified specialist. Register at [www.rwjbh.org/PMADsupport](http://www.rwjbh.org/PMADsupport).



## FARMERS MARKET

**Thursdays,**  
**11 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

The Beth Greenhouse  
Corner of Osborne Terrace and  
Lehigh Avenue  
Newark, NJ 07112

New this year: Now accepting  
SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmers  
Market Vouchers

Social distancing practiced, masks  
recommended

For more information or for online  
ordering: Molly Fallon Dixon,  
973.926.7371 or [Molly.Fallon@rwjbh.org](mailto:Molly.Fallon@rwjbh.org)