

A Publication of  
**ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON  
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HAMILTON**

Winter 2022

# healthy *together*

**NEW JOINTS  
WITH LESS PAIN**

**CATCHING  
THE MOST  
COMMON  
CANCERS**

**EATING FOR  
ENERGY**

**PROTECT YOUR HEART  
THIS WINTER**



## MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP



“At RWJBarnabas Health, we enter the new year with renewed strength. We’ve taken the challenges of the pandemic and used them to find ways to better serve our communities, patients and staff. Additionally, we are expanding telehealth, offering advanced genomic testing for infants and pushing toward breakthroughs in pediatric cancer research, with a focus and dedication to creating a healthier 2022 for all.”

### **BARRY H. OSTROWSKY**

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, RWJBARNABAS HEALTH



“We are excited about what our 51st year in Hamilton brings. Our Cancer Center, in conjunction with Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, offers some of the country’s best oncologists. Better Health is expanding to help older adults live their healthiest lives. Our new offices in Pennington enhance the life-changing care offered by our Center for Neurosciences. And the Orthopedics and Spine Institute provides even more specialized care, as part of our Center for Orthopedic and Spine Health.”

### **RICHARD FREEMAN**

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HAMILTON

## Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton | RWJBarnabas HEALTH

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## HEALTH NEWS



Praveen G. Murthy, MD

### WELCOMING A SURGEON WITH HAND AND UPPER EXTREMITY EXPERTISE

The Orthopedic and Spine Institute at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton welcomes orthopedic hand and upper extremity surgeon Praveen G. Murthy, MD, a member of the Philadelphia Hand to Shoulder Center. Dr. Murthy’s expertise in hand and upper extremity surgery further strengthens the capabilities of RWJUH Hamilton’s outstanding orthopedic program, providing easily accessible, world-class treatment for our community.

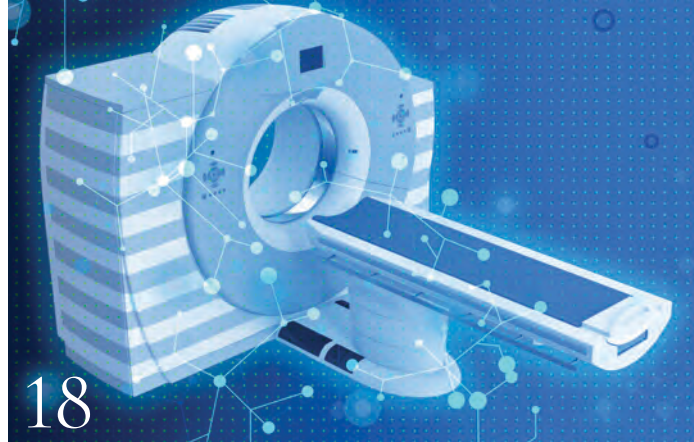


### RECOGNIZED FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXCELLENCE

RWJUH Hamilton was named a Most Wired hospital for 2021 with a Performance Excellence Level of 8 by CHIME, the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives. This high score indicates a hospital’s efficiency of care delivery through advances in technology and information technology systems across a multitude of platforms, with the goal of realizing meaningful outcomes, improving quality of care, improving patient experience, reducing costs and increasing patient access to healthcare services.

# healthy *together* contents

WINTER 2022



18



7



17



20



22

**2. WELCOME LETTER.**

A community update from our CEOs.

**4. CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING.**

A roundup of health, education, screening and support programs.

**7. BETTER HEALTH PROGRAM.**

Complimentary classes for people 65+.

**8. ASK THE DOCTOR: CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME.**

An orthopedic hand and upper extremity surgeon explains hand and wrist pain.



16

**9. FAST ANSWERS FOR VERY SICK BABIES.**

Advanced genomic testing is here.

**10. HOW COVID-19 IS RESHAPING HEALTHCARE.**

Innovation and resilience in the face of a crisis.

**12. CHILDHOOD CANCER: FINDING THE BEST CARE.**

World-class pediatric hematology/oncology services, close to home.

**14. HEADING OFF WINTER HEART ATTACKS.**

Read this before you shovel snow.

**16. SPECIAL NEEDS, SPECIAL TREATMENT.**

Children's Specialized Hospital expands access to care.

**17. FROM PATIENT TO BOARD MEMBER.**

Exceptional care for a risky surgery inspires a woman to support RWJUH Hamilton.

**18. CATCHING THE MOST COMMON CANCERS.**

Screening for these four malignancies could save your life.

**20. JOINT MAKEOVERS WITH MAKO.**

Robotic-assisted surgery offers advanced care for common procedures.

**22. THE POSITIVES OF PLANT-BASED COOKING.**

How produce in your diet reduces risks and improves health.

# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

All programs are **IN PERSON** unless otherwise noted. In-person classes will be limited in size and held at the RWJ Fitness and Wellness Center. Attendees will be required to bring a mask and practice social distancing to help ensure the safety of everyone present. For more information or to register, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at [www.rwjbh.org/hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamilton).



## 50+ Bridge Club

**Fridays, noon to 3 p.m.**

Join us if you have basic knowledge of the game and point system.

## 1st Saturday Walks: Walking in Nature—A Prescription for a Healthier You

Come discover the Abbott Marshlands with a knowledgeable guide. Each 1st Saturday Walk will explore a different part of this rich and diverse natural area. Guides and locations will vary so that all marshland trails will be explored during the year. For meeting times, location, trails and cancellation information, go to [www.abbottmarshlands.org](http://www.abbottmarshlands.org).

## State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Trained counselors provide free, objective, confidential help on questions and issues related to Medicare. To make an appointment, call 609.695.6274, ext. 215.

## 50+ Charity Knitting Club

**Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon**  
Experienced knitters of all levels are welcome to make articles for the hospital. For more information, call 609.298.7040.

## Orthopedics Open House: Joint Replacement

**Tue., February 1; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Discover the latest advances in knee and hip replacement surgery, including robotic-assisted surgery. Learn how the Center for Orthopedic & Spine Health and our rehabilitation team prepare you for a successful joint replacement. Michael R. Duch, MD, orthopedic surgeon fellowship-trained in sports medicine, with RWJUH Hamilton physical therapists Maureen Stevens, PT, DPT, GCS, Cert. MDT, and Courtney Fluehr, PT, DPT

## The Baby Boomer Heart: A Generation at Risk

**Wed., February 2; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Are you one of the 79 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964? Boomers are the first American generation to grow up with affluence and plenty. The price for this abundance may be heart disease. Join Ronald Ryder, DO, board-certified in cardiovascular disease, and RWJUH Hamilton rehab specialist Maureen Stevens, PT, DPT, GCS, Cert. MDT, as they discuss the good news—that we can change our own personal world and, in so doing, reduce our risk of heart disease.

## AARP Income Tax Preparation

**Wednesdays, February 2 through April 6;**  
by appointment only. AARP volunteers will prepare and e-file your federal and state income returns. Bring all necessary paperwork.

## The AARP Driving Course

**Mon., February 7, March 7 & April 4; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**  
Be a safer, better driver. Most insurance companies will lower your premium with a completion certificate. Bring your NJ or PA driver's license. Fee: \$20 for AARP members presenting a valid AARP card; \$25 for nonmembers. Cash or check only to AARP. Call 609.584.5900 for more information.

## Cold, Flu or COVID? How Can I Tell the Difference?

**Wed., February 9; 6 to 7 p.m.**  
Join Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, SVP, CMO, Infectious Disease Specialist, as he helps us sort through symptoms that can be confusing and sometimes frightening. Learn more about the symptoms of colds, influenza and COVID-19.

## “Love Your Heart” Discussion Group

**Thu., February 10; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**  
If you were diagnosed with a cardiac condition or had a recent cardiac procedure, please join us to explore the Blue Zones, areas where more people than usual live to be over 100 and healthy. Taste recipes and discuss the challenges of creating new habits. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC, and Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## The Link Between Hearing Loss and Dementia: Can Hearing Aids Save Your Brain?

**Wed., February 16; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
According to several major studies, older adults with hearing loss are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and dementia, compared with those who have normal hearing. Prevention is key. Audiologist Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD, discusses your options.

## Why Are My Ears Ringing? A New Approach to Tinnitus Management

**Wed., March 9; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
Tinnitus is a fairly common problem, and there are many effective methods to treat or at least reduce the impact of the sensation. Join Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD, to learn about the latest in treatment options.

## What's Causing My GI Distress?

**Thu., March 10; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Symptoms of gastrointestinal conditions can include bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhea/constipation and nausea. However, the causes are varied. Could it be irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, celiac disease or something else? Shivaprasad Marulendra, MD

## Let's Bingo! Give It a Shot to Win and Learn Diabetes Lingo

**Wed., March 23; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Have some fun and play diabetes bingo while brushing up on diabetes vocabulary and jargon. Gear up and be ready for a chance to win. Shesha Desai, PharmD, RPh, BC-ADM

## Carpal Tunnel, Trigger Finger, Arthritis—Oh My!

**Thu., March 31; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Hand pain can affect many of your daily activities, from dressing to eating to playing. Find out some of the causes and options for treatment. Join Praveen G. Murthy, MD, hand and upper extremity surgeon, for an exploration of the hand and wrist.

## The Psychology of Clutter: Learning to Let Go

**Tue., April 5; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**  
Explore how clutter affects your mood and attitude, how to overcome the emotional ties to your “stuff” and how to let go. Whether you're downsizing or creating healthier surroundings, this discussion is for you.

## Hearing Problems? The Brain Connection

**Wed., April 6; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
If you have normal hearing but have difficulty understanding words and speech in group or noisy settings, you may have an auditory processing disorder. Learn how to get tested for APD and how the latest treatments can train your brain. Audiologist Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

## Chronic Lung Problems Post-COVID

**Thu., April 21; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Are you still experiencing a cough, tightness in your chest, fatigue or shortness of breath? Do you wonder if your symptoms are related to having had COVID-19? Pulmonologist Anthony Ricketti, MD, and Infectious Disease Specialist Seth Rosenbaum, MD, will address the pharmacotherapy, vaccines and issues around “long COVID.”

## SPRING MINI MEDICAL SCHOOL: A FOUR-WEEK SERIES

### “How Did That Happen?” An Investigative Approach to Medicine

**Tue., March 15, 22 & 29 and April 5; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Enjoy a four-week course taught by RWJBarnabas Health physicians and professionals. Explore the cause and effect of injury and illness through case studies as if you were the healthcare professional. Learn about different career opportunities from a variety of health professionals. Fee: \$24; free to high school students

#### WEEK 1 Opening Address and Welcome

F. Javier Villota, MD, Internal Medicine, Medical Director of Mini Medical School

#### The Pathology of Bruises: They Can Tell a Bigger Story

Asima Arslan, MD, Hematopathology Fellow, Director of Pathology, RWJUH Hamilton

#### WEEK 2 Orthopedic Trauma: Breaks, Tears and Dislocations—How Much Stress Can Your Bones Really Take?

Michael R. Duch, MD, Orthopedic Surgery and Sports Medicine

#### WEEK 3 Stroke! An Assault on the Brain

Connie J. Mocerri, MSN, RN, AGNP-C, Director of Disease Management and Cardiovascular Services, Stroke Coordinator, RWJUH Hamilton, with RWJUH Hamilton Physical Therapist Nicole D'Orazio, PT, DPT

#### WEEK 4 Stories from the Emergency Department: Things Are Not Always As They Present

Lauren Stabinsky, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, CEN, Director of Occupational and Community Health



## BODY

### NUTRITION, FITNESS & WELLNESS

#### KidsFit

**Mondays, 6 to 8 p.m.**

KidsFit is an eight-week, all-inclusive wellness program that teaches children ages 8 to 13 and their families how to live a healthier lifestyle, following a multidisciplinary approach to help make healthier food choices and incorporate activity.

#### Kids in the Kitchen

Cook up some fun and sample healthy foods in new ways! For children ages 5 and older with parent/caregiver. Fee: \$5 per child, \$5 per parent/caregiver. Register early; limited class size.

- **Tue., February 8; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**You Have a Pizza My Heart**  
National Pizza Day is February 9. Learn how to make heart-shaped pies loaded with veggies and love.
- **Tue., March 8; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**A Toast to National Nutrition Month**  
Get into the latest food craze, from sweet almond butter to savory avocado.
- **Tue., April 19; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**Going Green**  
April 22 is Earth Day! Let's reduce, reuse and recycle to make grab-and-go, kid-friendly, superfood shakes and snacks.

#### Clinical Culinary Nutrition

Get up to date on current nutrition issues, hear from other health/culinary professionals and sample tasty new recipes with our registered dietitians. Fee: \$5 per in-person participant. Space is

limited; register at least 48 hours prior to event.

- **Tue., February 15; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**From the Head to the Heart!**  
Learn how to boost blood flow throughout your body and decrease risk of cardiac disease, including hypertension and high cholesterol. On the menu: soups!
- **Tue., March 22; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**Plant-Based to Prevent and Treat Type 2 Diabetes**  
Learn how to embrace high-protein carbohydrate foods for better glucose control. On the menu: sauces!
- **Tue., April 12; 5 to 6:30 p.m.**  
**Antioxidant-Rich Foods & Cancer**  
Discover the fresh flavors based on up-to-date research. On the menu: salads!

#### Ask the Dietitian

**Wed., February 16, March 16 & April 27; 9 to 11 a.m.**

Do you have a question about diet and nutrition? Join a Community Ed dietitian for a one-on-one Q&A and receive a body fat screening. Registration required. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

#### What's in the Box?

**Thu., February 17, March 17 & April 21; 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.**  
Thanks to winter farmers and the onset of the growing season, there are some seriously delicious and new veggies to try! Each session will cover a star seasonal ingredient and a recipe or two to make it shine. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM

#### Food—Fact vs. Fiction

**Fri., February 18; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
Sign in for a session with Registered Dietitian Jennifer Choi, RDN, as she discusses and debunks common nutrition-related claims and concerns.

#### National Registered Dietitians Day

**Wed., March 9; 11 a.m. to noon**  
Join Taryn Krietzman, RDN, as she shares her passion, dedication and incredible foodie knowledge, expanding to some of America's Michelin star restaurants.

#### Instant Pot for Beginners

**Fri., March 18; 10 to 11 a.m.**  
To continue our National Nutrition Month celebration, log in for some great Instant Pot tips and tricks from RWJBH kitchen colleagues.

#### Spring into Cultural Food Traditions

**Fri., April 1; 10 to 11:30 a.m.**  
Learn how to prepare celebratory spring foods from the world around you using whole food, plant-based ingredients with Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM.

#### Let's Become a Blue Zone Community

**Fri., April 29; 10 to 11:30 a.m.**  
Log in to learn about the places in the world where people live to be over 100 with the lowest amount of disease—and how we can bring their practices to our community. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM



## SPIRIT

### HOLISTIC HEALTH

#### Create Your Own Personal Mission Statement

**Thu., February 10, 7 to 8:30 p.m.**  
Why are you here? What is your vision of the world? What's your "why"? Your "why" is your personal mission statement. Join Transformational Life Coach Kathi Szabo of Eclectic Well-Being for this special workshop that will help you gain clarity on your "why" and create a personal mission statement that you can share with the world.

#### Private Reiki Sessions

**Tue., February 15, March 15 & April 19; 3 to 7 p.m., by appointment.**

Reiki (or universal life force) is an energetic healing technique that helps activate the natural healing process and assists in restoring physical and emotional well-being. Fee: \$60/hour. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Reiki Master

#### Mindfulness Meditation for Beginners

**Wed., February 16, March 16 & April 20; 1 to 2 p.m.**  
Learn how to relax your body and quiet your busy mind with meditation. No experience necessary. Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Reiki Master

#### Health Rhythms® Drumming Circle

**Wed., February 16, March 16 & April 20; 7 to 8 p.m.**

Drum away your worries with this evidence-based program to help reduce stress and blood pressure. It's also great fun. Drums provided. Fee: \$15. Mauri Tyler, CTRS, CMP

#### Reiki Share

**Wed., February 23, March 23 & April 27; 7 to 9 p.m.**

Have you been Reiki certified at any level? Share the gift of Reiki with other certified practitioners. Bring a sheet and small pillow. Fee: \$5

#### Introduction to Soul Collage

**Thu., March 3; 1 to 4 p.m.**

Soul Collage is a method for unlocking the wisdom of your creative, intuitive self. No artistic ability necessary. Fee: \$20 (includes all supplies). Amy Rhett, certified Soul Collage® Facilitator

#### Chakras 101: Understanding Your Energetic Anatomy

**Tue., March 22; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

This workshop explores the chakras—energy centers within the body that interact with physical and emotional well-being. You will come away with an understanding of this energy system and the ways it can help you lead your best life. Please bring a journal and pen. Fee: \$15. Michelle Gerdes, RYT-200, of Princeton Doula Center

#### Breast Health: A Holistic Approach

**Thu., April 7; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

Caring for your breasts means more than just mammograms and pink ribbons. Explore ways to keep your breasts healthy using nutrition and other holistic methods. Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM, and Patti McDougall, BSN, RN, Reiki Master

#### Introduction to Homeopathy

**Tue., April 26; 6:30 to 8 p.m.**

The theory behind homeopathy is that "like cures like," or similia similibus curentur, which can help the body heal itself. Join Ekta Makani, APN, to learn about this complementary approach.

# CLASSES FOR HEALTHY LIVING



## YOU SUPPORT GROUPS

### Bereavement Support

Call 609.631.6980 for registration information and location.

### Peripheral Neuropathy Support

Call 609.587.7215 for assistance or information.

### Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program

**Mondays & Wednesdays, 1 to 5 p.m.**

One-on-one and walk-in hours for individual/group counseling. Prescriptions for smoking cessation medication (gum, patches, etc.) available upon request. To preregister or for information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, CTTTS, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416, or email [quitcenter@rwjbh.org](mailto:quitcenter@rwjbh.org).

### Breast Cancer Support Group

**First Tuesday of every month; 6:30 p.m.**

Please call ahead to confirm attendance: 609.584.2836. This group meets at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, 2575 Klockner Road, Hamilton.

### Stroke Survivors Support Group

**Wed., February 2, March 2 & April 6; 6 to 7:30 p.m.**

Call 609.584.5900 for information.

### Caregiver Support Group

**Wed., February 2, March 2 & April 6; 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.**

Supportive discussion group for those caring for a loved one who is aging or has a chronic illness—shared experiences can be healing. Oaks Integrated Care

### Grief & Loss Support Group

**Thu., February 3 & 17, March 3 & 17 and April 7 & 21; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

If you have lost a loved one or been separated from your support system, you can find comfort and begin to cope better by interacting with others.

### Nicotine and Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program: Group Discussion

**Thursdays, 5 to 6 p.m.**

Group counseling. Prescriptions for smoking cessation medication (gum, patches, etc.) available upon request. To preregister or for information, contact Michael Kosloski, BA, CTTTS, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, 732.837.9416, or email [quitcenter@rwjbh.org](mailto:quitcenter@rwjbh.org).

### Caregiver Series: Caring for Loved Ones with Chronic Conditions

**Mondays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

- **February 7:** Importance of a Living Will
  - **February 28:** Coping with Memory Loss
  - **March 7:** Seven Stages of Dementia
  - **March 21:** Community Resources
  - **April 4:** Keeping Your Loved Ones Safe at Home
  - **April 18:** Dementia: Ways to Communicate Effectively
- Caring for a chronically ill senior can take a physical and emotional toll on family members. An Oaks Integrated Care Senior Well-Being Specialist will moderate.

### Adult Children Caring for Parents

**Mondays, 5:30 to 7 p.m.**

- **February 7:** Coping with Memory Loss
  - **February 28:** Strategies for Keeping Your Loved One Engaged
  - **March 7:** Dementia: Ways to Communicate Effectively
  - **March 21:** Importance of a Living Will
  - **April 4:** Exploring Types of Dementia
  - **April 18:** Signs That Your Loved One May Need Assistance
- An Oaks Integrated Care Caregiver Specialist will conduct these interactive workshops on crucial topics and facilitate a supportive group experience.

### Letting Go of Clutter

**Tue., February 8, March 8 & April 12; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

This support group explores how our emotional ties to our “stuff” can create clutter and affect mood. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### Alzheimer's Support Group

**Wed., February 16, March 16 & April 20; 6 to 7 p.m.**

Support and information for family and friends of people with Alzheimer's disease.

### Bariatric Weight Loss Support Group

**Tue., March 8; 6 to 7 p.m.**

Call 609.584.5900 to register.

### Wise Women

**Thu., February 24, March 24 & April 28; 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

As we age, the twists and turns of life challenge us to remain positive, stay engaged in life and find new meaning. Discussion group format. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

- **February 24:** The Whole Heart of a Woman
- **March 24:** Nutrition Month: Food & Mood
- **April 28:** Tips for Good Health in Later Life

## HEALTH SCREENINGS

### Body Fat Screening

**Wed., February 2; Thu., March 3 & Fri., April 1; 10 a.m. to noon**

Excess body fat is a preventable risk factor for heart disease. Track your diet and fitness progress and learn how much excess weight is safe to lose. Appointment and registration required.

### Hearing Screening

**Tue., February 8 & March 8; 9 a.m. to noon**

2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton Township, NJ 08690  
Call 609.245.7390 to register. Lorraine Sgarlato, AuD

### Fall Prevention/Balance Screening

**Tue., February 8 & March 8; 9 a.m. to noon**

2 Hamilton Health Place, Hamilton Township, NJ 08690  
Call 609.245.7390 to register.

### Osteoporosis Screening

**Tue., February 15 & March 15 and Wed., April 13; 10 a.m. to noon**

Ultrasound of heel and personalized information. Registration and appointment required.

### Memory Screening

**Tue., February 22 & March 22 and Wed., April 20; 10 a.m. to noon**

Are you concerned about “senior moments?” The Mini-Mental State Exam is a quick assessment to discern normal aging versus potential problems. Appointment and registration required. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### Are You Stressed?

**Tue., March 29; 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.**

Does life seem overwhelming? Take a simple test to find out your stress level. You'll also receive information and coping strategies. Appointment and registration required. Shirley Roberts, MA, LPC, NCC

### Take-Home Colorectal Screening

**Tue., March 15; 10 to 11 a.m.**

Learn how to use a simple take-home test to detect early colon cancer. Registration required.

# The Better Health Program

## AT RWJUH HAMILTON

Rediscover your Mind, Body, & Spirit in Retirement  
**Better Health Program**  
Complimentary Membership at 65+ years old



There's no better time to be 65+ years old, and there's no better place to experience it than at the Better Health Program at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. This complimentary program's mantra is "Rediscover your mind, body and spirit in retirement."

Members meet like-minded people and learn from doctors and professionals who make your well-being a priority.

The programs listed below are exclusively for Better Health members. Registration is required for each one. To become a Better Health member or register for a program, call the Health Connection at 609.584.5900 or visit us online at [www.rwjbh.org/Hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/Hamilton).

### Gentle Yoga Classes

Tue., February 8, March 8 & April 5;  
10 to 11 a.m.

Gentle Flow Yoga, great for those new to yoga or who want a gentle practice, focuses on warming the body, alignment, strength, balance and flexibility. No experience or flexibility required. Must be a Better Health member to attend.

### Tai Chi

Thu., February 3 & 17, March 3 & 24  
and April 14 & 28; 10 to 11 a.m.

Tony Jackson focuses on improving balance and strengthening legs. Gently stretch and improve flexibility. Learn how to get up if you fall. Must be a Better Health member to attend.

### Plant-Based Recipes, One Meal at a Time

Wed., February 9 & 23 and March 9  
& 23; 3 to 4 p.m.

What is a plant-based diet? How and why should you include these foods in your menu? Registered dietitian Alyssa Luning explains and shares easy suggestions for breakfast, lunch and dinner. New recipes every class.

### Canvas Painting for Valentine's Day

Mon., February 14; 1 to 3 p.m.

Kate Moore of Brookdale Senior Living Hamilton leads us in canvas painting. There will be light snacks served and a good time for all!

### Game Time

Tue., March 29; 1 to 3 p.m.

Join us for game time, snacks and some wholesome fun. A variety of board games will be available.

### Flower Arranging

Tue., April 12; 1 to 3 p.m.

Kate Moore of Brookdale Senior Living Hamilton is back to teach us fresh-flower arranging. Everyone leaves with the bouquet they create.

## DISCUSSIONS WITH SARA I. ALI, MD, Geriatric and Internal Medicine

### LUNCH AND LEARN

#### Healthy Heart

Thu., February 10; 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Join Dr. Ali and Connie Mocerri, Director, Disease Management/Stroke Coordinator at RWJUH Hamilton, for an informative talk about getting and keeping your heart healthy. Must be a Better Health member to attend.

#### Technology Help: Bring Your Phone, Laptop & Questions

Thu., March 10; 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Yes, you read that correctly. Dr. Ali and Team help you fix everyday issues (not the high tech) that get you stuck—one-on-one! Must be a Better Health member to attend.

#### Diabetes & What to Eat

Thu., April 21, 12:30 to 2 p.m.

Join Dr. Ali and registered dietitian Alyssa Luning for an enlightening conversation about the real deal on diabetes—and the foods you should or shouldn't eat. Must be a Better Health member to attend.

### OTHER PROGRAMS

#### Top 7 Geriatric Conditions You Need to Know About

Thu., February 24; 1 to 2 p.m.

Dr. Ali will discuss the top health concerns impacting our senior population with a focus on prevention and treatment.

#### Let's Talk Vitamins & Supplements

Thu., March 31; 1 to 2 p.m.

Separating fact from fiction is a difficult task. Dr. Ali shares the facts on what works and what doesn't.

#### Osteoporosis, Falls & Gait Impairment

Thu., April 7; 1 to 2 p.m.

Dr. Ali and Huzefa Hussain, MS, OTR/L, Senior Occupational Therapist, discuss prevention, ways to improve balance and fall prevention.

# GIVE A HAND TO SURGERY

## ENDOSCOPIC CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE CAN RELIEVE PAIN QUICKLY.

**C**arpal tunnel syndrome may be more notorious than it deserves to be. “It’s probably the most common hand and wrist diagnosis that people hear about,” says Praveen Murthy, MD, a fellowship-trained orthopedic hand and upper extremity surgeon at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton’s Orthopedic and Spine Institute and member of the Philadelphia Hand to Shoulder Center.

If you have pain or tingling in the hands due to carpal tunnel syndrome, simple steps often resolve symptoms. If nonoperative measures aren’t effective, surgery can provide fast relief. “Many patients tell me they wish they had come to see me sooner,” Dr. Murthy says. He offers essential information about hand health.

### What don’t people tend to know about hands and wrists?

Many elements are at play. Several bones and joints can develop problems like arthritis. Ligaments and cartilage can develop sprains and tears. Tendons can develop tendonitis. A nerve can become compressed. All of these can result from injury, overuse or simply wear and tear over time. A hand specialist can determine what’s really causing pain.

### What causes carpal tunnel syndrome?

Nerve compression. The carpal tunnel goes through the wrist into the hand and contains a nerve plus nine tendons that bend the fingers. Over time, a variety of conditions can cause these structures to become inflamed and swollen, reducing the space available in the tunnel. The nerve becomes pinched against the

To make an appointment with a hand and wrist surgeon at RWJUH Hamilton, call 888.724.7123 or visit [www.rwjbh.org/ortho](http://www.rwjbh.org/ortho).



PRAVEEN MURTHY, MD

roof of the tunnel, on the palm side, which leads to finger pain and numbness that often wake people at night.

### How can people deal with it?

There’s a natural tendency to sleep with bent wrists, which compresses the tunnel like kinking a garden hose. Wearing an over-the-counter carpal tunnel brace that holds the wrist straight every night for a few weeks sometimes relieves pain sufficiently that people don’t need further treatment. Cortisone injections can further help to decrease swelling in the tunnel.

### What does surgery do?

If nonoperative steps don’t relieve pain or a nerve test determines that signals through the wrist are severely impaired, we can open the roof of the tunnel in a procedure called carpal tunnel release, so that the nerve has all the space it needs. This has been done for decades as an open procedure, using a longer incision in the palm. Today, we also offer minimally invasive endoscopic carpal tunnel release, in which we enter through a small incision in a natural crease of the wrist and release the tunnel from the inside using a camera.

### What results can people expect?

Endoscopic carpal tunnel release typically offers a fast recovery and minimizes post-operative pain in the palm. Patients can use their hand freely after surgery, and many return to work as early as the next day. Patients often tell me they got their best sleep in a long time the night after surgery. Heavy gripping and lifting can hurt for a few weeks, but everyday activities are not impaired. If I had carpal tunnel syndrome, I’d have this highly effective procedure in a heartbeat because of how happy patients are with their results.

## MEDICAL ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

The following physicians and experts provide guidance and expertise in developing our community health education programs.

**Richard Freeman, CEO**

**Seth Rosenbaum, MD, MMM, SVP, CMO,** *Infectious Disease*

**Javier F. Villota, MD,** *Chair, Internal & Occupational Medicine*

**Diane Grillo, MS,** *VP, Health Promotion*

**Sara Ali, MD,** *Internal Medicine / Geriatrics*

**Leslie Adelman Banks,** *Fitness & Wellness Center / Managing Partner*

**Hari P. Bezwada, MD,** *Orthopedic Surgery*

**Anjali Bhandarkar, MD,** *Internal Medicine*

**Gurvan Blackman, MD,** *Interventional Radiology*

**Sean Bradley, DMD,** *Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery*

**Oleg Chebotarev, MD,** *Cardiology*

**George DiFerdinando, Jr., MD, MPH,** *Public Health*

**Michael Duch, MD,** *Orthopedic Surgery*

**Firas Eladoumikdachi, MD,** *Oncology / Breast Surgery*

**Jill Giordano-Farmer, DO, MPH,** *Neurology*

**David Feldstein, MD,** *Interventional Radiology*

**Jarad Fingerman, DO,** *Urology*

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**Lauren Stabinsky, MSN, RN,** *Director, Community and Corporate Wellness*

**Kim Zambito, MD,** *Hand Surgery*





# FAST ANSWERS FOR VERY SICK BABIES

**ADVANCED GENOMIC TESTING RESULTS ALLOW DOCTORS TO BEGIN TARGETED TREATMENT WITHIN DAYS.**

**B**aby girl Frankie was born early—at 35 weeks—but all seemed well, except for some minor health complications that kept her in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center (CBMC).

However, within a few days of birth, Frankie had developed severe blisters on her feet and was losing skin.



KAMTORN VANGVANICHYAKORN, MD

Even routine screenings now posed a risk, and the baby was vulnerable to life-threatening bacteria entering her body. Her family was afraid to

hold her. A diagnosis was needed, right away.

Not long ago, genetic testing for infants could test just a few genes at a time, and results took weeks or months to come back. But thanks to a collaboration between Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine and RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH), Level III and Level IV NICUs in the RWJBH system can offer rapid Whole Genome Sequencing (rWGS). For medically urgent cases, preliminary diagnoses are available in three to five days.

Using a blood sample, rWGS can scan a child's entire genetic makeup for thousands of anomalies. The test results provide vital information that leads to individualized care and fewer costly, invasive procedures.

"Rapid genome sequencing is a game changer," says Kamtorn Vangvanichyakorn, MD, Director of Neonatology at CBMC. "It allows us to provide critical answers and targeted treatment at a time when the therapeutic window is often narrow."

## "A SENSE OF RELIEF"

The testing revealed that Frankie has a type of epidermolysis bullosa (EB), a rare group of diseases that are most often caused by a genetic mutation. Frankie's mother, Jeri Berinato, knew that her own mother lived with a severe form of EB, leading to constant blistering and pain, difficulty swallowing, loss of her fingernails and dental problems.

"As soon as we received the results, I felt a huge sense of relief," Jeri says. "Not knowing what was wrong with my beautiful newborn baby was the worst feeling I've ever had. Now I know that, with proper care from the beginning, Frankie will have a much better quality of life than my mom has."

In addition to CBMC, rWGS is available to critically ill infants at Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital; the Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center; Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center; and Jersey City Medical Center.

The use of rWGS at RWJBH came about through a long-standing partnership between Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego, the parent organization of Rady Children's Institute for Genomic Medicine, and Children's Specialized Hospital, an RWJBH facility.

"We're proud to be the only health system in New Jersey to partner with Rady Children's to offer rapid genetic testing," says William Faverzani, Senior Vice President of Children's Services at RWJBH. "With this test, our physicians have access to cutting-edge technology, enabling them to intervene quickly to improve the lives of our tiniest patients and their loved ones."

To learn more about rapid Whole Genome Sequencing at RWJBarnabas Health, visit [www.rwjbh.org/pediatricgeneticstesting](http://www.rwjbh.org/pediatricgeneticstesting).



# HOW COVID-19 IS RESHAPING HEALTHCARE

A CRISIS HAS LED TO SOME BIG CHANGES FOR THE BETTER.

COVID-19 created challenges that healthcare providers had never experienced in their careers. But the pandemic, while taking a toll on providers and patients alike, has also



ANDY ANDERSON, MD



JOHN BONAMO, MD

enabled the discovery of deep reserves of resilience and innovation. “Many of the changes we’re seeing in healthcare,” says John Bonamo, MD, Chief Medical and Quality Officer at RWJBarnabas Health, “are good things that came out of a terrible situation.” Here are six examples:

## 1 The rise of telehealth.

The technology for video healthcare visits has existed for decades, but providers as well as patients resisted virtual care—until the onset of

COVID-19 and social distancing.

“Before the pandemic, we were doing some virtual urgent care visits, but not routinely doing scheduled visits,” says Andy Anderson, MD, President and CEO, Combined Medical Group of RWJBarnabas Health and

Rutgers Health. “However, at the peak of the pandemic we were doing 10,000 scheduled visits weekly, and even today we continue to do thousands each week.”

The increased





## 2 Increased awareness of preventing the spread of disease.

In response to the pandemic, healthcare providers have redoubled their efforts to sanitize spaces and even filter the air, and the use of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes has become commonplace.

“We’ve always been committed to infection control through our system-wide journey to become a high reliability organization,” says Dr. Bonamo. “We amplified those principles to keep our facilities even safer, such as using new ventilation techniques, employing UV-C lights to clean rooms, paying continued attention to visitation policies and more.”



## 3 Enhanced teamwork.

“At the peak of the pandemic, the needs were so great that our people began working together much more collaboratively,” says Dr. Bonamo. “Instead of staying in their own lane and handing off a patient or a procedure to a specialist, providers worked together—respiratory therapists teamed with nurses, primary care doctors worked in intensive care units at the elbow of intensivists, and so on. We learned how professionals can be ‘skilled up’ and trained to help in a crisis, and that has broken down levels of hierarchy and increased esprit de corps.”



## 4 An emphasis on mental well-being.

“Mental health has become a bigger issue due to the pandemic. People are afraid of becoming ill, they may have greater financial burdens and they’re missing social interaction,” says Dr. Anderson. “Our behavioral health providers have been very busy.”

All kinds of healthcare providers are tuning in to their patients’ state of mind. “As doctors, we realize the importance of reaching out to people and asking them how they’ve been doing during the

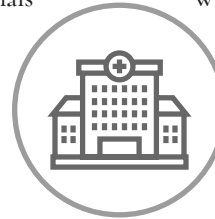
pandemic,” he says. “Everybody has a story, and it’s important for us to take the time to listen and, if necessary, become an advocate or a resource for the patient.”

That kind of outreach is equally important for people who work in healthcare, Dr. Anderson says: “In the RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group, we set aside time each week to text or call people we work with to see if they’re doing OK, and provide help or a note of encouragement as needed.”



## 5 A brighter spotlight on healthcare disparities.

“At RWJBarnabas Health, we’ve had an ongoing and important system-wide effort in regard to social justice and anti-racism,” says Dr. Bonamo. “However, the disparity in the rates of COVID-19 sickness and death among people of color was so blatant that it brought many things to the surface and made us, as well as the healthcare industry as a whole, take a closer look. We’ve realized that saying ‘we treat everybody the same’ isn’t enough because some populations have many more resources than others.” To learn more about RWJBarnabas Health’s Ending Racism Together initiative, visit [www.rwjbh.org/endingracism](http://www.rwjbh.org/endingracism).



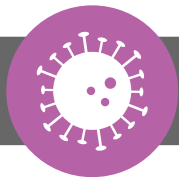
## 6 A new flexibility.

“Healthcare is intensely regulated, and because of that we have a tendency to be very prescriptive about what we can do and how we do it,” says Dr. Bonamo. “The COVID-19 need was so intense that we had to learn to be more flexible. For example, medical-surgical floors were turned into ICUs and we learned, OK, it may not be the ICU we would have built, but we can make this work. A lot of the old regulations were lifted during COVID-19, which enabled us to be flexible, but some of what we had been doing was just a result of old habits. Now we’ve expanded our horizons and have become much more nimble.”

demand led to technology upgrades, he says, such as making it easier to have visits that include multiple attendees—patient, family members, other providers or an interpreter if needed.

“Telemedicine has opened up access for patients, who can stay in a home environment to get the healthcare they need, whether it’s acute, chronic or preventive, and that will continue,” Dr. Anderson says. “We’re moving toward a good balance of in-person and remote appointments so patients can receive care more efficiently and effectively.”

For resources and information about COVID-19, visit [www.rwjbh.org/covid19](http://www.rwjbh.org/covid19).



# CHILDHOOD CANCER: FINDING THE BEST CARE

WORLD-CLASS PEDIATRIC  
HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY  
SERVICES ARE CLOSE TO  
HOME FOR NEW JERSEYANS.

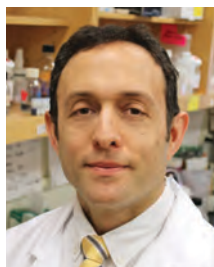


JODI CRANDELL PHOTOGRAPHY



RWJBarnabas Health and 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).

“Cancer doesn’t travel well—especially cancer in children,” says Peter Cole, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/



PETER COLE, MD

Oncology at Rutgers Cancer Institute, the state’s only National Cancer Institute-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. “New Jersey families dealing with a

diagnosis as significant as cancer shouldn’t have to leave their neighborhood and support systems to travel to another state for treatment.”

The Pediatric Cancer Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute partners with RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) facilities throughout the state to provide the most advanced treatments for children with cancer and blood disorders.

“I tell my friends and family and anyone who asks that whenever you get an unexpected diagnosis, it’s always good to get a second opinion,” Dr. Cole says.

◀ The \$10 million in state funding was championed by Grace Eline, a 12-year-old survivor of brain cancer and a childhood cancer awareness advocate, and her mother, Aubrey Eline, in collaboration with the American Childhood Cancer Organization. Grace was treated at Rutgers Cancer Institute and Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center.

“But when you have the option to get cutting-edge care close to home, where you have access to your support system, you should do it. At Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBarnabas Health, your child will get the highest level of expertise and treatment, right here in New Jersey.”

The pediatric hematology/oncology team takes a multidisciplinary approach to providing the most advanced treatments for pediatric cancer and blood disorders, such as complex surgical techniques, precision medicine, immunotherapy and innovative radiation therapy procedures, including the state's only hospital-based proton therapy center. In addition, as New Jersey's only NCI-Designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, Rutgers Cancer Institute offers access to cutting-edge clinical trials and cellular therapies that may not be available at other programs.

## A HOLISTIC APPROACH

The specialists at Rutgers Cancer Institute and RWJBH know that, in addition to treating the body, it's important to pay close attention to the emotional and social challenges of the patient and family. “A diagnosis of cancer turns a family's life upside down, so we have a robust psychosocial support team to address the needs not just of the patient, but of parents and siblings as well,” says Dr. Cole. That team includes psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, nutritionists and educators.

“We're committed to keeping kids on top of their studies,” says Dr. Cole. “At Rutgers Cancer Institute, we have a full-time teacher on staff in the building on school days. I'll often sit with our patients and do math problems with them, though I suspect I may enjoy that much more than they do,” he says with a laugh.

He recalls a teenage patient who had acute lymphoblastic leukemia, the most common cancer in children but also one of the most curable. “He had to spend the first month of treatment in the hospital, away from his support network of friends and coaches,” says Dr. Cole. “Some of the side effects of his treatment, such as vomiting, were



## CENTERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CARE

RWJBarnabas Health and Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey partner to provide world-class care to New Jersey cancer patients. Specialists from the Pediatric Cancer Center at Rutgers Cancer Institute work with experts to provide care at the following RWJBarnabas Health facilities:

- Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, New Brunswick, under the direction of Peter Cole, MD, Chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
- The Valerie Fund Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Children's Hospital of New Jersey at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, under the direction of Teena Bhatla, MD, Director, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
- The Valerie Fund Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at the Unterberg Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, Long Branch, under the direction of Richard Drachtman, MD, Section Chief, Clinical Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

Children with cancer or blood disorders are also seen for consultations at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston.

miserable, and he was embarrassed to lose his hair. He was depressed, but he received the support he needed from our psychosocial team.

“I'm happy to report that he's doing much better now. He's back in school on a modified schedule and if he needs any continued support from our team as he fully reenters his routine, we'll be there for him.”



## AN INFUSION OF FUNDS FOR RESEARCH

Survival rates for children with cancer have improved significantly in the past 50 years, but pediatric cancer remains the leading cause of death from disease among children. It is among the least funded areas of cancer research.

Advocates cheered when a \$10 million appropriation to support pediatric cancer research at Rutgers Cancer Institute was included in the New Jersey 2022 state budget.

“The funding allows us to expand our ongoing efforts. One of our areas of focus is research in children that will help reduce acute side effects of treatment and the risk of it resulting in long-term organ damage,” explains Peter Cole, MD, Chief of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology and Embrace Kids Foundation Endowed Chair at Rutgers Cancer Institute, who is also Director, Pediatric Hematology, Oncology and Cellular Therapies at Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Dr. Cole's laboratory is also supported by the Hugs for Brady Foundation.

“Another area of focus is bringing innovative treatment modalities to children with cancer and blood disorders,” Dr. Cole says, “including cellular therapies like CAR T-cell therapy, blood and marrow transplants and immunotherapies, which use the patient's own immune cells to fight cancer.”



# HEADING OFF WINTER HEART ATTACKS

**READ THIS BEFORE YOU SHOVEL SNOW.**

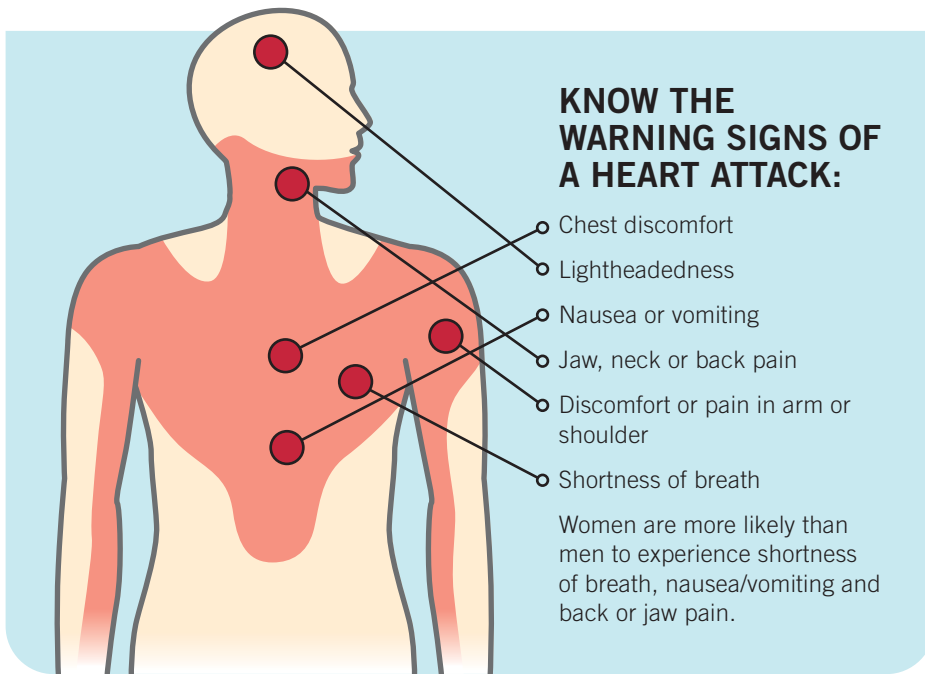
**W**inter is prime time for heart attacks, as research studies show and doctors know all too well. “It’s expected in the hospital community that we’ll see a bump in the number of heart attacks coming in during the winter season, especially around the holidays and during the first couple of months of the year,” says Isaac Tawfik, MD, Chief of Cardiology at Monmouth Medical Center and a member of RWJBarnabas Health Medical Group.

“It’s been theorized that if your core temperature is lower because you’re outside and not really bundled up, the body’s natural response is for arteries to vasoconstrict, or to narrow,” Dr. Tawfik explains. “If somebody already has a narrowing or blockage in the artery, it’s going to interfere with normal blood flow, and that’s the definition of a heart attack.”



ISAAC TAWFIK, MD

Ruptured plaque is another main culprit for heart attacks in cold weather, he says. “Any exertional work that’s heavy and not gradual, like



## KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK:

- Chest discomfort
- Lightheadedness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Jaw, neck or back pain
- Discomfort or pain in arm or shoulder
- Shortness of breath

Women are more likely than men to experience shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

shoveling snow, puts stress on coronary arteries. If those arteries have plaque, it may crack or rupture, which can lead to a whole cascade of platelet aggregation and other inflammatory mediators that eventually lead to a heart attack.”

In winter, middle-aged patients—people in their 40s, 50s, 60s—may be more prone to heart attacks than seniors. “They feel that they’re healthy enough for shoveling snow and other types of outdoor exertion, so they don’t warm up first and may not wear warm enough clothing,” Dr. Tawfik says.

Unlike older patients, they may be unaware of their limitations, he notes, and may not understand the possible consequences of existing conditions, such as hypertension, uncontrolled diabetes or tobacco use. The risk of a heart attack increases with every additional risk factor a person has.

“All of this is not to say that shoveling snow is automatically going to give you a heart attack,” says Dr. Tawfik. “What we are saying is that if you have known heart disease, or one or more risk factors for heart disease, you should think carefully before going out to shovel snow.”

## SAFEGUARD YOUR HEART

How can people protect themselves against heart attacks in cold weather? “Number one, make sure you speak to your doctor so that any risk factors you have are addressed—if you have hypertension, that your blood pressure is well controlled, if you are diabetic, that your blood sugar is under control, if you are a smoker, that you are working on a cessation plan,” says Dr. Tawfik.

Stay warm when you’re outside and take frequent breaks to go inside and assess how you feel. “If you’re breathing in cold air, it cools your chest a little bit. You don’t necessarily have the burning in the chest that can be a symptom until you go inside,” he says. “Do the work in short intervals so you’re not outside for hours at a time.”

Be aware of anything different in the way you feel. “A heart attack symptom doesn’t have to be chest pain, because not everybody gets that. If you’re nauseous, or if you’re more fatigued or breathless than you expected to be, those can be red flags,” he says.

Dr. Tawfik shows his patients images that illustrate their cardiovascular condition—an X-ray, an ultrasound, a



## HOW COLD WEATHER AFFECTS THE HEART

- Low temperatures cause blood vessels and arteries to narrow.
- Blood flow is restricted and the delivery of oxygen to the heart is reduced.
- The heart must pump harder to circulate blood through the constricted blood vessels.
- As a result, blood pressure and heart rate increase.
- A sudden spike in blood pressure, especially when combined with exertion such as shoveling, can lead to heart attack or stroke.
- Narrowing of or stress on coronary arteries may lead to plaque rupture and blood clots that block blood flow to the heart.
- Hypothermia—when body temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit—affects the workings of the heart, nervous system and other organs.

CT scan—as a means of helping them grasp their risks. “If I have a patient who’s 60 years old and I can tell him his risk for heart disease in the next 10 years is X versus someone who didn’t have those risk factors, they tend to be more compliant,” he says.

Dr. Tawfik advises his patients to consult their primary care physician or cardiologist before undertaking any high-effort physical activity in cold weather. “It’s like driving your car and putting a seat belt on,” he says. “It’s always best to err on the side of safety.”

Whoever your heart beats for, our hearts beat for you. To connect with a top cardiovascular specialist at RWJBarnabas Health, call **888.724.7123** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/heart](http://www.rwjbh.org/heart).





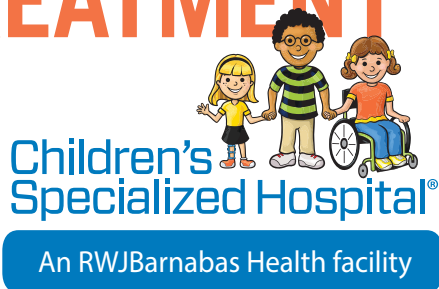
# SPECIAL NEEDS, SPECIAL TREATMENT

**NEW LOCATIONS PROVIDE MORE WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN FULFILL THEIR POTENTIAL.**

For more than a century, children or adolescents who face special health challenges—from chronic illnesses to complex physical disabilities to developmental or behavioral issues—have been able to turn to Children’s Specialized Hospital (CSH) for inpatient and outpatient care.

Since its 1892 origin as a “summer haven” in Westfield for city children, CSH continued to grow until it became the largest provider of pediatric rehabilitation services in the United States, with locations throughout New Jersey.

Now, in response to an increasing number of outpatient visits and the rising rates of emotional, developmental and behavioral disorders in children and adolescents, CSH is expanding access to the highest level of care. Four new CSH locations, each with state-of-the-art facilities and located close to major highways and bus



routes, have opened or soon will open: **WEST ORANGE:** CSH is now managing the Pediatric Rehabilitation Services of its affiliate hospital, Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, at 375 Mt. Pleasant Avenue.

**UNION:** All outpatient services offered at CSH’s Mountainside and Warren locations have transitioned to this new, advanced facility at 2840 Morris Avenue.

**EATONTOWN:** In the spring, Monmouth Medical Center and CSH will open RWJBarnabas Health Family Care & Wellness, located at the Monmouth Mall.

**TOMS RIVER:** Next year, a brand-new, 80,000-square-foot facility on Route 37 will replace the current CSH Toms River locations. The clinical space will be shared with RWJBarnabas Health Children’s Services and Community Medical Center, which will provide an ambulatory surgery

Children with a wide range of needs receive individualized care at CSH locations throughout New Jersey.

center, imaging, preadmission testing, primary care and orthopedics.


All CSH facilities offer the most advanced technology and a full suite of therapy and physician services, including developmental and behavioral pediatrics, neurology, special needs primary care, physiatry, psychiatry, audiology, neuropsychology, neurorehabilitation, nutrition, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychology, and speech and language therapy.

“Our vision is a world where all children can reach their full potential,” says Matthew B. McDonald III, MD, President and CEO, CSH. “In order to make that vision a reality, we must continually enhance access to our innovative and individualized therapies and medical treatments. These new sites not only serve as additional access points for our current patients and families, but as an introduction to new communities of patients and families who may need our services.”

For more information about Children’s Specialized Hospital, call **888.244.5373** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized](http://www.rwjbh.org/childrensspecialized).

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. We treat everything from chronic illnesses and complex physical disabilities, like brain and spinal cord injuries, to a full scope of developmental, behavioral and mental health concerns. We have convenient locations throughout the state: Bayonne, Clifton, East Brunswick, Eatontown, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton, Jersey City, New Brunswick, Newark, Somerset, Toms River, Union and West Orange.





# FROM PATIENT TO BOARD MEMBER

## EXCEPTIONAL CARE FOR A RISKY SURGERY INSPIRES ONE WOMAN TO SUPPORT RWJBH.

Donna Bouchard had dealt with gastrointestinal problems related to nonhealing ulcers for years. Gastric bypass surgery a decade ago seemed to help by changing how her stomach and intestines handle food. But in late 2019, her GI issues came back with a vengeance. “I knew this was not just a flare-up of my usual ulcers,” Donna says. “This was an entirely new level of sickness.”

Donna tried to power through her job as Vice President (now Senior Vice President—Specialty Business) at Hamilton Jewelers. But pain and difficulty keeping food and fluid down were taking a toll. “I was crashing very quickly,” Donna says. In the space of three or four weeks, she dropped 40 pounds. “My body couldn’t sustain that kind of weight loss,” she says. “The situation needed to be addressed.”

She finally

sought emergency care at a hospital near her home in Hopewell. Doctors there diagnosed the same old ulcers. “They said I would be okay,” she says. “I was definitely not okay.” She and her fiancé instead immediately drove 15 to 20 minutes to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton for a second opinion.

Zahid Baig, MD, a gastroenterologist at RWJUH Hamilton, determined that large, overlapping ulcers had caused an obstruction that was interfering with Donna’s GI function. “Dr. Baig was hyper-involved with my care and literally saved my life,” Donna says.

### EXPERT CARE

Realizing that Donna needed surgery, Dr. Baig referred her to Susannah Wise, MD, a surgeon at Robert Wood Johnson

University Hospital in New Brunswick and Associate Professor of Surgery at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. “Dr. Wise decided to do another extensive procedure like the one I’d had before,” Donna says. “There was a lot of risk, and if it didn’t go well, I would essentially not be able to eat or drink without a feeding tube.”

Donna was struck by the multidisciplinary care she received at both hospitals. “Dr. Wise personally made sure she was comfortable this surgery would be successful,”

Donna says. “She spoke with several colleagues, including from oncology, who were accustomed to extensive procedures.”

The surgery was so successful that after Donna was discharged in December 2019 after four weeks in the hospital, she resolved to help RWJBarnabas Health (RWJBH) however she could.

In April 2021, she was elected to the RWJUH Hamilton Foundation board, where her connections in the local business community have helped with planning events such as We vs. C, which supports the Cancer Center’s Holistic Healing Program.

“I was beyond impressed with the quality of care and compassion I received,” Donna says. “I’ve had a lot of surgeries for various things over the years, and RWJBH provided a completely different experience from anywhere else I had been.”

Donna follows up with Dr. Baig regularly, but is healthy, physically active and able to eat and drink without restriction. “Now that I’ve had the RWJBH experience, I would never go anywhere else,” she says. “As a board member and business leader, I tell that to everyone I can.”



Donna  
Bouchard



ZAHID BAIG, MD

To learn more about the Foundation and how to support RWJUH Hamilton, visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltongivenow](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltongivenow).



# CATCHING THE MOST COMMON CANCERS

**SCREENING FOR THESE FOUR DISEASES COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people put off cancer screenings due to concerns about contracting the virus. But COVID-19 vaccinations are increasing, and healthcare facilities have taken steps to minimize coronavirus exposure and keep patients safe. Delaying important cancer tests can have potentially devastating consequences.

“It’s important to get recommended screening tests even if you are not experiencing any particular symptoms,” says Malini Patel, MD, Director of Medical Oncology at the Cancer Center at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton. “Screening can detect cancers at early stages, which makes them easier to cure and treat. When people start experiencing symptoms, cancers may be at a more advanced stage that makes these diseases more challenging to control.”

If you’ve put off an important screening, it’s time to schedule that appointment. Here’s what you need to know about screenings for four of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in the United States.



MALINI PATEL, MD



RWJBarnabas Health and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton, 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 most advanced treatment options. Call 844.CANCERNJ or visit [www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer](http://www.rwjbh.org/beatcancer).



## BREAST

### TYPE OF TEST

Mammogram.

### WHEN TO GET IT

Women ages 40 to 44 have the choice to start annual screenings; women ages 45 to 54 should have mammograms every year; women 55 and older can switch to every other year or can continue yearly screening. Women at high risk for breast cancer because of factors such as a family history should have a mammogram every year beginning at age 30. This includes women who have a specific gene mutation (BRCA1 or BRCA2) or who have had radiation to the chest between ages 13 and 30.



## COLORECTAL

### TYPE OF TEST

Colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, CT colonography.

### WHEN TO GET IT

Individuals should start regular screening at age 45 and continue through age 75. Talk with your doctor about getting screened earlier if you're at high risk for colorectal cancer because of factors such as a family history or inflammatory bowel disease. The frequency of testing will depend on the type of screening method you choose. At 76, talk with your doctor about whether to continue screening based on factors such as your overall health and past screening history; over 85, you should no longer need colorectal cancer screening.



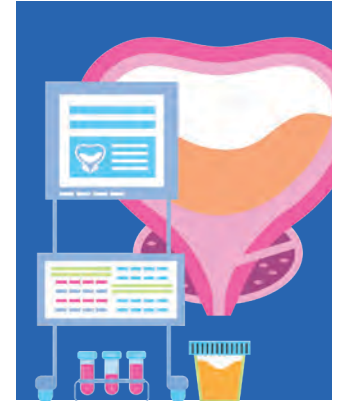
## LUNG

### TYPE OF TEST

Low-dose computed tomography (LDCT) scan.

### WHEN TO GET IT

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends a yearly LDCT scan for lung cancer in people ages 50 to 80 who are current smokers or have quit in the past 15 years, and who have at least a 20 pack-year smoking history. (A pack year is the number of packs of cigarettes smoked per day multiplied by the number of years you smoked, so a 20 pack-year history could mean you smoked one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.) Research has shown that LDCT scans for people at higher risk of lung cancer save more lives than X-ray screenings.



## PROSTATE

### TYPE OF TEST

A prostate specific antigen (PSA) blood test with or without a digital rectal exam.

### WHEN TO GET IT

Prostate tumors usually are slow-growing and often can be monitored by a physician, but aggressive types can be deadly and require treatment. Start talking with your doctor at 50 about whether to undergo routine prostate cancer screening, and engage in a shared decision-making process about appropriate timing and frequency. If you're at higher risk because you're African American or have a family history of prostate cancer, start these conversations at 45—or 40 if you had more than one immediate family member develop prostate cancer at an early age. Ongoing screening decisions should weigh variables such as your risk profile, overall health, family history, age, PSA test results and trends, and the balance of benefits and risks related to treatment.

Sources: American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute

To learn more about the Cancer Center at RWJUH Hamilton, call **609.631.6960** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/our-locations/med-school-outpatient-centers/cancer-center-at-rwj-hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/our-locations/med-school-outpatient-centers/cancer-center-at-rwj-hamilton).



# JOINT MAKEOVERS WITH MAKO

**ROBOTIC-ASSISTED SURGERY  
OFFERS ADVANCED CARE FOR  
COMMON PROCEDURES.**

**Y**ou've had the X-rays and your doctor says your knee or hip is in bad shape. Maybe you've even heard the phrase "bone on bone," meaning cartilage deterioration has allowed bones to rub against each other. The doctor says you're a candidate for joint replacement surgery. But not all



**JOHN SCHNELL, MD**

joint replacement surgeries are the same, and it pays to consider how and where the procedure might be done.

Joint replacement surgery removes a

damaged or diseased joint and replaces it with a combination of plastic, metal and/or ceramic parts that replicate the movements of a healthy joint. Sometimes the whole joint is replaced, and sometimes only the damaged parts are replaced.

The Joint Commission has certified Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton in both hip and knee surgery, ensuring the hospital has met the highest standards in quality and patient safety.

RWJUH Hamilton's Orthopedic and Spine Institute has raised the bar in orthopedics so local residents can receive top orthopedic care without leaving their community. The center's

orthopedic surgeons use advanced training, evidence-based protocols and a variety of high-quality implants and advanced technologies.

Among these is an advanced technology that RWJUH Hamilton was first in the area to offer: the Mako Robotic-Assisted surgery platform.

## **BETTER OUTCOMES**

The Mako system is an innovative orthopedic surgery solution in which a surgeon-controlled robotic arm enables accurate alignment and placement of implants in hip or knee replacements.

"Technology like this is a wonderful tool for the surgeon," says John Schnell, MD, Section Chief of Orthopedics at

## DO YOU NEED JOINT REPLACEMENT?

Whether to replace a joint is a personal decision you should make together with your doctor. Many people with joint pain put the decision off or are not sure when the time is right. Factors like these can help guide your thinking.



### SIGNS YOU MAY NEED KNEE REPLACEMENT:

- Knee pain limits routine activities
- You have moderate or severe pain even while resting
- Your leg bows in or out
- You have severe or continuous knee stiffness
- Tenderness or swelling doesn't improve with rest or medication



### SIGNS YOU MAY NEED HIP REPLACEMENT:

- Pain prevents you from walking or bending the joint
- Severe stiffness makes it difficult to put on or take off socks or shoes
- You have continuous pain with little or no interruption, including at night or at rest
- Stiffness and pain prevent you from lifting your leg
- Nonsurgical treatments don't help relieve pain and stiffness

RWJUH Hamilton. "We've invested in a number of resources like this to ensure our surgeons have the ability to give our patients the best outcomes possible."

The Mako system has numerous potential benefits for patients. These include:

- Greater surgical precision and accuracy that can lead to less implant wear over time.
- Smaller incisions that make your surgeon better able to spare healthy bone and tissue and leave less scarring.
- Faster recovery, shorter hospital stays and a quicker return to normal activities.
- A prosthetic joint that many patients who undergo Mako-assisted surgeries report has a natural feeling.

### HOW MAKO WORKS

The Mako system assists with total hip replacement indicated for patients with degenerative joint disease of the hip, along with both total and partial knee replacements. Partial

knee replacement alleviates arthritis occurring in some parts of the knee, while total knee replacement provides an entirely new joint.

Whatever the surgery, the Mako system first creates a precise image of your knee to help your surgeon pre-plan the replacement procedure. The process starts with a CT scan to develop a 3D model of your anatomy. The Mako system uses this to ensure the precision of each step as your surgeon guides the robotic arm to remove diseased bone and tissue in preparation for the joint implant.

In knee surgery, this process allows the surgeon to resurface the diseased portion of the knee, sparing healthy bone, cartilage and surrounding tissue for a more natural-feeling knee. An implant is then secured in the joint to allow the knee to move smoothly

## HABITS FOR HAPPIER JOINTS

If joints are not yet bad enough for surgery, you may be able to preserve them or reduce pain if you:



### Maintain a healthy weight.

Losing 10 pounds takes 40 pounds of pressure off the knees.



### Eat a Mediterranean-style diet.

A diet low in processed foods and saturated fats and rich in vegetables, fruits, fish, nuts and beans has anti-inflammatory powers.



### Choose low-impact workouts.

Gentle-on-the-joints workouts include swimming, biking, elliptical, rowing and yoga. Having a strong core can ease joint pain.



### Stop smoking.

Smoking affects bones, joints and connective tissue, increasing injury and disease risk.



### Stand and sit straight.

Align your spine by practicing good posture, which reduces strain and pressure on other joints.

again. In hip surgery, the technology provides visualization of the joint and biomechanical data to guide bone preparation and implant positioning to match the presurgical plan.

In addition to the Mako system, RWJUH Hamilton surgeons use tools like patient-specific instrumentation and handheld computer navigation to help further ensure precision, accuracy and potential for improved function. "Having technologies like these here at RWJUH Hamilton is a great benefit for our patients, who can get the state-of-the-art care they deserve close to home," Dr. Schnell says.

To learn more about RWJUH Hamilton's Orthopedic and Spine Institute or schedule an appointment, call **609.689.7031**.



# THE POSITIVES OF PLANT-BASED COOKING

HOW PRODUCE IN YOUR DIET REDUCES  
RISKS AND IMPROVES HEALTH.

Cold-weather cravings for warm, hearty foods are often satisfied with ingredients that sabotage health, such as refined flours and sugars or cheeses and meats high in saturated fats. Solution: Shift to plant-based cooking.

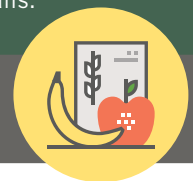
Working more fruits, vegetables, beans, grains and animal-free foods, like tofu, into daily meals and snacks does more than avoid unhealthy nutrients, says Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM, registered dietitian nutritionist and board-certified specialist in obesity and weight management, and part of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) Hamilton's Community Education team.

"Plants are the only foods that contain fiber, a nutrient many Americans are deficient in," Luning says. Getting fiber from produce staves off potential deficiency-related problems including high cholesterol, digestive problems

## LEARN THE DELICIOUS SCIENCE OF FOOD

Get the latest information on nutrition issues from health/culinary professionals and sample recipes with a registered dietitian in a monthly series called Clinical Culinary Nutrition. Classes take place 5 to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, February 15, March 22 and April 12, and cost \$5 per in-person participant. Topics include reducing risks for disease, controlling glucose and understanding the latest research. To register, call **609.584.5900** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamilton](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamilton). See the calendar at the front of this issue for details.

To join the complimentary Better Health Program at RWJUH Hamilton, call **609.584.5900** or visit [www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth](http://www.rwjbh.org/hamiltonbetterhealth).





## TOP TOOLS FOR A PLANT-PACKED PANTRY

Of course, you'll want a good can opener for all those beans, lentils and sealed succulents. But registered dietitian nutritionist Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM, also recommends these plant-cooking staples for a well-stocked kitchen.

- **A colander to rinse beans.** "It's also worth having a fine-mesh strainer to rinse dusty grains before cooking," Luning says.
- **A small to medium pot for cooking beans.**
- **A rice cooker with a steamer basket inside.** "Put vegetables in the basket while rice or grains cook," Luning says. "You don't have to sauté if you don't have time or energy."
- **A big cutting board.** "You want a lot of space to cut large greens safely," Luning says.
- **Neutral flavored oil.** "Choose something monounsaturated like olive oil," Luning says. "Avocado oil is another good option."
- **Low-sodium taco mix.** "If you don't know how to season something, this is a great start," Luning says. "It already has spices like cumin." Steak seasoning containing garlic is another good bet for cooked vegetables. "I've used it on cauliflower," Luning says. "Delicious."
- **Canned tomatoes.** "They sometimes have Italian seasonings already in them," Luning says. "I buy canned tomatoes by the case."
- **Soy sauce, balsamic vinegar, apple cider vinegar.** "They're versatile and used in a lot of recipes," Luning says.

and inflammation, which is linked to higher incidence of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and colorectal cancer.

"Plants also contain phytonutrients, including antioxidants such as beta-carotene, lycopene and anthocyanins," Luning says. Phytonutrients combat inflammation and perform molecular cleanup that reduces toxins capable of triggering illness-related DNA mutations.

### POWER PLANTS

Don't assume winter is a poor season for plant-based eating. "Foods may be out of season here, but in season in places like South America, where we get a lot of our fresh fruits and vegetables," Luning says.

That's especially true of brassica, or cruciferous, vegetables like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens and kale. "These are some of the most nutritious vegetables," Luning says. "They have more antioxidant potential than a lot of other fresh plant foods."

Try to eat different fruits and vegetables to maximize your nutrition, Luning advises. "Variety is huge," she says. "When you transition to a plant-based diet, it can be harder to get enough protein, but you can do it if you eat a range of different beans, whole grains, nuts and seeds—including foods you may not have eaten before."

If you still want protein-rich meat in your diet, Luning recommends choosing lean beef, turkey, chicken or seafood in easily digested portions about the size of your hand. "Even a small shift away from animal-based foods can improve health," Luning says.



## VEGETARIAN CHILI

Servings: about 6-8

Throw this hearty chili together for a game-day gathering of friends and family or freeze leftovers for future meals. "It's got everything you need from different plant-based food groups, including vegetable-based protein and fiber," says registered dietitian nutritionist Alyssa Luning, RD, CSOWM. Serve by itself or over a grain like quinoa or short-grain brown rice. "It's a one-pot meal," Luning says.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 red or green pepper, chopped
- 5-6 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, chopped
- 1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes, fire roasted if available
- 1 cup water or vegetable broth
- 1 can low-sodium black beans, rinsed, drained
- 1 can low-sodium red kidney beans, rinsed, drained
- 1 can yellow corn, rinsed, drained
- 2-3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- Salt to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Gather all equipment and ingredients. Heat oil in a medium/large pot. Add onion, pepper, jalapeno and garlic. Cook for about 5 minutes or until the vegetables start to sweat. Add spices/herbs (cumin, chili powder, oregano) and stir to combine. Pour in the tomatoes, beans, corn and water. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce to a simmer for about 30 minutes or until heated throughout. Taste and season with salt as needed.

# Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton

## Best in the U.S. for the 12<sup>th</sup> time



Achieving a Leapfrog A for the 12<sup>th</sup> time underscores Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton's commitment as a High Reliability Organization (HRO).

Through the concerted effort of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton's physicians, nurses, staff, volunteers and leadership, patients and families benefit from the highest level of quality care and the safest hospital experience.

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HEALTH

Let's be healthy together.