Times News Media Group

Medical Book

February 2023

A Special Supplement of Times News & Lehigh Valley Press LVP
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Highest Ranked
HEART & VASCULAR
Program in the Region

• Superior patient-focused care
• Better clinical outcomes
• Cost-effective care
• More satisfied patients

St. Luke’s cardiac surgeons and cardiologists work hand in hand as a team with vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists to provide superior care when you need it most.

For more than 20 years, St. Luke’s Heart & Vascular Center has provided the most comprehensive care from minimally invasive procedures to the latest, high-tech innovations to ensure you receive the best cardiovascular care possible.
St. Luke’s University Health Network’s Heart & Vascular Center—Leading the Region in Quality Care

St. Luke’s University Health Network is among the country’s leading heart and vascular centers, treating patients with conditions ranging from atrial fibrillation to blocked arteries, heart valve problems, and vascular disease. Fortune and IBM Watson Health have named St. Luke’s one of the 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals in the United States for seven years.

Our team provides comprehensive care, including medicine therapy, minimally invasive procedures and surgery, high-tech devices and other innovations, through our advanced care programs at more than 20 physician practices throughout our network.


Structural Heart Program
St. Luke’s transcatheter aortic valve replacement program (TAVR) is one of the busiest, high-quality programs on the East Coast for replacing failing aortic valves. We pioneered the use of the Lehigh Valley of the minimally invasive MitraClip™ device for treating persons with a weak or damaged mitral valve. In 2021, St. Luke’s heart specialists introduced the Watchman FLX™ device for closing a “pocket” in the heart where blood clots can collect and cause a stroke in patients with atrial fibrillation. We were first in Northeastern Pennsylvania to pulverize solid heart artery blockages using Shockwave Intravascular Lithotripsy (IVL) technology.

Cardiothoracic Surgery Program
Our board-certified surgeons perform more than 700 surgeries annually to bypass blocked coronary arteries, repair aortas, repair or replace heart valves, implant heart pumps and treat arrhythmias. They introduce new surgical and non-surgical treatments for heart disease, including TAVR for replacing aortic valves.

Interventional Cardiology Program
St. Luke’s operates cardiac catheterization laboratories where our cardiologists skillfully open narrowed coronary arteries using tiny balloons and stents. We treat heart attacks 24/7, with a typical “door-to-balloon time” of 60 minutes, under the 90-minute national standard of excellence.

Electrophysiology Program
Our board-certified electrophysiologists perform one of the highest volumes of procedures on the East Coast to treat atrial fibrillation and other irregular heart rhythms. They implant the most modern cardiac defibrillators, pacemakers and other devices to correct and maintain a healthy heartbeat. Last year, they made medical history in this region by implanting the first leadless and retrievable pacemaker in a patient.

Advanced Heart Failure Program
Our heart failure team diagnoses and treats patients with weakened heart muscles using medicines, surgery, interventional procedures and devices that improve quality of life and survival. St. Luke’s heart specialists were among the nation’s first to implant the Optimizer device, stimulating a weak heart muscle to squeeze more strongly with each beat. Our highly regarded Pulmonary Hypertension Program provides comprehensive care, which helps avoid right-heart failure.

Women’s Heart Center
St. Luke’s Women’s Heart Center offers cardiac care focused on the unique needs of women who have heart disease, are at risk for heart disease or want guidance for its prevention.

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Program
This program treats people with abnormally thick heart muscle, using genetic testing, medical therapy, surgery and devices to prevent life-threatening arrhythmias. We treat young athletes with this condition in conjunction with our sports medicine program.

Advanced Imaging Program
For non-invasive evaluation of heart disease, St Luke’s cardiologists use the most advanced technology, including ultrasound (echocardiogram), cardiac CT scan and cardiac MRI.

Vascular Center
St. Luke’s vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists collaborate to diagnose and treat conditions of the blood vessels outside the heart. Non-invasive testing of peripheral arteries and veins at our more than 20 nationally accredited vascular laboratories determines the best treatment.

St. Luke’s Vascular Center specialists repair diseased, enlarged and injured arteries using non-surgical “endovascular” stent-graft technology in the hybrid operating rooms at the Allentown and Bethlehem campuses.

Our team of cardiac surgeons, vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists performs thoracic endovascular aneurysm repair (TEVAR) to mend or replace diseased or ballooning tissue in the aorta in the chest. This often-lifesaving treatment is provided at both St. Luke’s Bethlehem and Allentown Campuses.

We offer transcarotid artery revascularization (TCAR), using a catheter and a novel blood reversal technique to safely insert a stent in the neck’s carotid artery to prevent strokes.

For more information about St. Luke’s Heart & Vascular Center, or to make an appointment, visit sluhn.org/heart, or call 1-866-STLUKES (785-8537), option 4.
**Six Questions That Could Save Your Life**  
(or the Life of Someone You Love)

1. Colorectal cancer is predominantly a “man’s disease,” affecting many more men than women annually.

**FALSE.** Colorectal cancer affects an equal number of men and women. Many women, however, think of CRC as a disease only affecting men and might be unaware of important information about screening and preventing colorectal cancer that could save their lives, says the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

2. Only women over the age of 50 who are currently experiencing some symptoms or problems should be screened for colorectal cancer or polyps.

**FALSE.** Beginning at age 50, all men and women should be screened for colorectal cancer **EVEN IF THEY ARE EXPERIENCING NO PROBLEMS OR SYMPTOMS.**

In a colonoscopy, the physician passes the endoscope through your rectum and into the colon, allowing the physician to examine the tissue of the colon wall for abnormalities such as polyps.

3. A colonoscopy screening exam typically requires an overnight stay in a hospital.

**FALSE.** A colonoscopy screening exam is almost always done on an outpatient basis. A mild sedative is usually given before the procedure and then a flexible, slender tube is inserted into the rectum to look inside the colon. The test is safe and the procedure itself typically takes less than 45 minutes.

4. Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

**TRUE.** After lung cancer, colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. Annually, approximately 150,000 new cases of colorectal cancer are diagnosed in the United States and 50,000 people die from the disease. It has been estimated that increased awareness and screening would save at least 30,000 lives each year.

5. Tests used for screening for colon cancer include digital rectal exam, stool blood test, flexible sigmoidoscopy and colonoscopy.

**TRUE.** These tests are used to screen for colorectal cancer even before there are symptoms. Talk to your healthcare provider about which test is best for you. Current recommended screening options* include:

Beginning at age 50, men and women should have:

- An annual occult blood test on spontaneously passed stool (at a minimum);
- A flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years; or,
- A complete colonoscopy every 10 years.

The endoscope is a thin, flexible tube with a camera and a light on the end of it. During the procedure, images of the colon wall are simultaneously viewed on a monitor.

Important: You may need to begin periodic screening colonoscopy earlier than age 50 years if you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, polyps or long-standing ulcerative colitis.

6. Colon cancer is often preventable.

**TRUE.** Colorectal cancer is highly preventable. Colonoscopy may detect polyps (small growths on the lining of the colon). Removal of these polyps (by biopsy or snare polypectomy) results in a major reduction in the likelihood of developing colorectal cancer in the future.
Cognitive health is not something to take for granted. Although a certain level of memory loss can be expected as people age, when the ability to clearly think, learn and remember is compromised, those changes can affect an individual’s ability to perform daily activities and should serve as a cause for concern.

Brain health should be a priority for everyone. The National Institute on Aging says brain health is an umbrella term that encompasses a host of factors, including:

· cognitive health, which is how well you think, learn and remember
· motor function, or how you make and control movements
· tactile function, which is how you feel sensations; and
· emotional function, or how emotions are interpreted and responded to.

Individuals can safeguard brain health - particularly cognitive health - by taking these steps.

Be more health-conscious
Working with doctors, individuals can put their health first. This includes getting routine screenings, managing chronic

How to protect long-term cognitive health

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Fellowship Community Personal Care Promotes a Carefree Lifestyle

When you’re looking to live a carefree lifestyle, choose Personal Care at Fellowship Community.

You’ll enjoy the loving atmosphere with staff who truly care about you and are dedicated to enriching your life. With medical staff available 24/7, there’s no worrying about “what might happen”. You can feel at ease, as there’s always someone there to help.

You’ll be surrounded by friends with opportunities to join in an exercise class, create a unique craft, participate in a Bible study or enjoy chatting over a cup of coffee. Special activities including speakers and musical performances brighten the day.

When you prefer some quiet time to relax and read a book or browse through a magazine, take a seat in our living room areas.

Before moving to Fellowship, toss your pots and pans! Our award-winning executive chef, Anthony Salvatore, prepares delicious meals to tantalize your taste buds. Your 5-star meals will be served to you in our restaurant-style dining rooms complete with decadent desserts created by our pastry chef.

Our vice president of personal care, Cheryl Mengel, RN, PCHA, and her excellent staff are eager to welcome you to our Fellowship family. It’s time to enjoy life and to focus on what you love. Contact us at 610-769-8111 or visit FellowshipCommunity.com.
COGNITIVE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

health problems, limiting or avoiding alcohol and nicotine products, and getting the recommend-
ed amount of sleep each night.

Manage high blood pressure
All chronic conditions cause long-term repercussions, but the NIA indicates that observational studies show having high blood pressure in mid-life increases the risk of cognitive decline later in life. Lowering blood pressure lowers the risk for mild cognitive impairment and possibly dementia.

Challenge your brain
Harvard Medical School says nurturing social contacts, engaging in stimulating mental ac-
tivities like reading and doing puzzles, seeing new places, and learning new things can help keep the brain in top form.

Manage stress
Stress can take its toll on the body, and there is reason to believe that it may adversely affect cognitive health as well. Make every stride to reduce stress, whether that involves taking vacations, meditating, laughing with friends and family, or engaging in relaxing activities that relieve stress.

Get enough vitamin D
Vitamin D is linked to a host health benefits, including its potential to promote a healthy brain. Individuals can get more time outdoors to get vitamin D naturally from the sun and eat foods rich in vitamin D. If doctors find that vitamin D levels are exceptionally low, supplementation can help.

Pay attention to hearing loss
Certain hearing loss has been linked to cognitive decline, says Healthline. Researchers in Italy concluded that people with central hearing loss had a higher risk of mild cognitive impairment than those with no hearing loss or peripheral hearing loss. Individuals with central hearing loss are urged to speak to their physicians to determine if they can take preventive action to stave off further decline. Cognitive health should be a priority. Adults can employ various strategies to reduce their risk of cognitive decline as they age.
Accidents are often traumatic and it can be difficult to know what steps to take moving forward. You may be suffering from an unforeseen injury and are now facing medical expenses and lost wages. You need an attorney who is not afraid to stand up for what you deserve. With over 30 years of experience, Rapa Law Office, P.C., has helped injured clients throughout Pennsylvania.

Our firm is experienced in handling all areas of your case. Do not risk your physical, mental or financial well-being by handling this complex area of law by yourself. The choices you make after an injury may affect you for the rest of your life. The insurance companies are trying to pay you as little as possible. They want to get you a quick payment before you realize that your injuries may linger longer than expected. We will fight to get you everything you are entitled to.

We know that you have questions and concerns. We have answers, strategies and experience. If we take your case, you can have peace of mind knowing that our services will be compensated on a contingency basis, meaning we only get paid if we recover for you. No matter what your injury, your case is serious, important and unique, and it requires the attention of a dedicated personal injury attorney.

Our dedicated team can help you with a wide range of personal injury cases, helping you seek maximum compensation for your situation.

- Car accidents
- Truck accidents
- Premises liability
- Other situations involving civil litigation

Our firm is here for you when it matters most. Let us get you the compensation you deserve. We have offices in Lehighton and Allentown.
A healthy diet can help people lower their risk for various conditions, including heart disease. That’s a significant benefit, as the World Health Organization estimates that 32 percent of deaths across the globe can be attributed to cardiovascular disease, which is an umbrella term used to refer to a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels.

Individuals who want to change their diets are urged to speak with their physicians for insight regarding specific changes that can address any pre-existing issues they may have. But it never hurts to consider heart-healthy foods, and the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends adding these heart-healthy foods to your shopping list.

**Fruits and vegetables**

Variety is the spice of life, and the good news is that an assortment of fruits and vegetables promote heart health. That means individuals can eat a heart-healthy diet without eating the same foods every day. The ODPHP notes that fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables can all promote a healthy heart.

- Fresh vegetables: Tomatoes, cabbage and carrots
- Fresh fruits: Apples, oranges, bananas, pears, and peaches
- Leafy greens: Spinach, Romaine lettuce and kale
- Canned vegetables: Look for low-sodium canned veggies
- Frozen vegetables: Look for products without added butter or sauces
- Canned, frozen or dried fruit: Look for varieties with no added sugars

**Dairy**

The ODPHP recommends fat-free or low-fat dairy. Such products include:

- Fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk
- Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt
- Fat-free or low-fat cheese or cottage cheese
- Soy milk with added calcium, vitamin A and vitamin D

**Whole grains**

Various products may be promoted as “whole grain,” but the ODPHP notes that whole wheat or another whole grain should be listed first in the ingredient list. Products that are “100 percent whole grain” also should be chosen over the alternatives.

- Whole-grain bread, bagels, English muffins, and tortillas
- Whole-grain hot or cold breakfast cereals with no added sugar, such as oatmeal or shredded wheat
- Whole grains like brown or wild rice, quinoa, or oats
- Whole-wheat or whole-grain pasta and

See **FOODS** on Page 12
What is diverticulosis?
Diverticulosis is a condition in which there are small pouches or pockets in the wall or lining of any portion of the digestive tract. These pockets occur when the inner layer of the digestive tract pushes through weak spots in the outer layer. A single pouch is called a diverticulum. The pouches associated with diverticulosis are most often located in the lower part of the large intestine (the colon). Some people may have only several small pouches on the left side of the colon, while others may have involvement in most of the colon.

Who gets diverticulosis?
Diverticulosis is a common condition in the United States that affects half of all people over 60 years of age and nearly everyone by the age of 80. As a person gets older, the pouches in the digestive tract become more prominent. Diverticulosis is unusual in people under 40 years of age. In addition, it is uncommon in certain parts of the world, such as Asia and Africa.

What are the symptoms of diverticulosis?
Most people who have diverticulosis are unaware that they have the condition because it usually does not cause symptoms. It is possible that some people with diverticulosis experience bloating, abdominal cramps or constipation due to difficulty in stool passage through the affected region of the colon.

What is the treatment for diverticulosis?
Once diverticula form, they do not disappear by themselves. Fortunately, most patients with diverticulosis do not have symptoms and, therefore, do not need treatment.

When diverticulosis is accompanied by abdominal pain, bloating or constipation, your doctor may recommend a high-fiber diet to help make stools softer and easier to pass. While it is recommended that we consume 20 to 35 grams of fiber daily, most people only get about half that amount. The easiest way to increase fiber intake is to eat more fruits, vegetables and grains. Apples, pears, broccoli, carrots, squash, baked beans, kidney beans, and lima beans are a few examples of high-fiber foods. As an alternative, your doctor may recommend a supplemental fiber product such as psyllium, methylcellulose, or poly-carbophil. These products come in various forms including pills, powders and wafers. Supplemental fiber products help to bulk up and soften the stool, which makes bowel movements easier to pass. Your doctor may also prescribe medications to help relax spasms in the colon that cause abdominal cramping or discomfort.
FOODS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

couscous

Proteins
Heart-healthy proteins can add variety to a diet, which can make it easier to enjoy different flavors and dishes.
· Seafood, such as fish and shellfish
· Poultry: Chicken or turkey breast without skin, or lean ground chicken or turkey (at least 93 percent lean)
· Lean meats: Pork shoulder, beef sirloin or lean ground beef (at least 93 percent lean)
· Beans, peas and lentils: Black beans and chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
· Eggs
· Unsalted nuts, seeds and nut butters, such as almond or peanut butter

· Tofu

Healthy fats and oils
When cooking with fat and oil, cooks are urged to replace saturated fat with healthier unsaturated fats.
· Avoid cooking with butter and instead cook with oil, including canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, or sunflower oils
· Choose oil-based salad dressings, such as balsamic vinaigrette or Italian, instead of creamy dressings like ranch

A heart-healthy diet is full of flavor and can help people reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

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Wedding planners, travel planners, financial planners, and others make our lives easier by managing a million little but important details. So why carry the burden of one of life’s biggest life transitions all alone? When you are moving from one home to another, there are seven steps to a successful move. What most folks don’t realize is that the guys with the muscles and the truck are just one of the seven steps! Someone has to manage the other six steps.

Founded as SENIOR Moves by Design fourteen years ago, Specialty Moves by Design has helped over 1800 local families joyfully transition from one home to another. One of the nation’s most respected providers of Move Management services, they answer the most-asked questions: what can I keep? what do I do with what’s left over? how do I prep my home for sale? and how am I physically going to manage a move between work, family responsibilities and sometimes health issues?

Experts at downsizing, designing furniture arrangements, sorting, packing and then unpacking in one day, the professionals at Specialty Moves by Design can also manage a whole-home online auction for everything you choose to leave behind.

Details of all of the services can be found at SpecialtyMovesByDesign.com You can also call to book a sorting or downsizing appointment or an auction consultation for a fee. Or ask for a free in-home consultation to discuss all the questions you have about an upcoming move and hear more about how they can partner with you to help insure you have a joyful move process. In the end, they care about you as a person as well as those things that are important to you. They believe what they do is as much a ministry as a business. Call 610-295-0036 or email info@SpecialtyMovesByDesign.com.
Test your knowledge of the common cold

Sniffles, cough, sore throat ... these can be symptoms of any number of conditions, but are often a byproduct of the common cold.

Colds are the result of more than 200 different viruses, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Adults experience an average of two to three colds per year, and rhinoviruses cause most of them. The American Lung Association states that colds are minor infections of the nose and throat. Despite typically producing only mild illness, colds account for more visits to the doctor than any other condition in the United States.

People will experience many colds in their lifetimes, and this true or false quiz can test their knowledge about them.

1. Coldls are highly contagious.
   True: Colds most often spread when droplets of fluid that contain the cold virus are transferred by touch or inhaled.
   False: Antibiotics treat bacterial infections, while colds are viral. That means antibiotics will be ineffective at helping a person recover from a cold.

2. Cold weather or being chilled causes colds.
   True: These rhinoviruses also have been known remedy for a cold.
   False: Antibiotics can be ineffective at helping a person recover from a cold.

3. Antibiotics are a known remedy for a cold.
   True: These rhinoviruses also have been known remedy for a cold.
Prosthetics

Lower Extremity Prosthetics: We are devoted to meeting the special needs of those with all levels of amputation by providing custom socket designs that incorporate your anatomical contours to allow you the comfort and control you require to return to your active lifestyle. We have experience with a wide variety of the prosthetic components and designs available today. We strive to ensure that your prosthetic design will function at the highest level.

Upper Extremity Prosthetics: Our goal is to provide you with a prosthesis that gives you the highest degree of function while being aesthetically pleasing. We use the most advanced upper extremity systems available (when appropriate), ensuring that you get the newest technology at every stage.

Steven Chu, CPO, (President and CEO) has 20 plus years of clinical experience and serves as a Prosthetics Board Examiner for the American Board of Certification (ABC) in Orthotics & Prosthetics.

We Offer:

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VPO is committed to providing the surrounding communities with:

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- Advanced Clinical Certifications
- Continued Interdisciplinary Communication
- Educational In-services/Courses for Referral Sources
- Extensive Adult & Pediatric Clinical experience
- Full Service Fabrication Facility

Many insurances do not have set networks, please contact us with any coverage questions.
Canned foods can provide significant nutrition, especially for individuals who cannot find fresh fruits and vegetables during certain times of year, such as winter. In fact, the Produce for Better Health Foundation notes that research indicates canned foods offer comparable nutrients to fresh and frozen foods. In addition, the PBHF reports that canned foods are minimally processed, which helps to preserve nutrients and flavor. However, dietitians note that all canned foods are not made the same, so it’s imperative that shoppers read food labels prior to purchasing any canned goods. Overconsumption of sodium, which has been linked to health problems such as hypertension, heart attack and stroke, is a common consumer concern about canned foods. Shoppers can ease such concerns by reading product labels and looking for items described as “sodium-free,” “low sodium” and/or “no salt added.”

Did you know?

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February 2023

It’s our focus to make sure every day is one of dignity and vitality. From fresh, modern spaces to health specialists for every need, life can be lived as it should—to the fullest, free of guilt, knowing you’re doing all you can.

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Many people know that poor oral hygiene can lead to gum disease, tooth decay and even lost teeth. But are you aware that failing to brush or visit the dentist regularly also can lead to more serious health issues? Recent research suggests that there may be an association between oral infections, particularly gum disease, and cardiovascular disease and preterm birth. Gum disease also may make diabetes more difficult to control, since infections may cause insulin resistance and disrupt blood sugar.

Your mouth also can serve as an infection source elsewhere in the body. Bacteria from your mouth can enter the bloodstream through infection sites in the gums. If your immune system is healthy, there should not be any adverse effects. However, if your immune system is compromised, these bacteria can flow to other areas of the body where they can cause infection. An example of this is oral bacteria sticking to the lining of diseased heart valves.

An important step in maintaining good overall health is to include dental care in your list of preventative measures. Visit the dentist for biannual cleanings or as determined by the doctor. Do not ignore any abnormalities in the mouth. Maintain good oral hygiene at home by brushing twice a day and flossing at least once per day. Mouthwashes and rinses also may help keep teeth and gums healthy.

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Heart disease is a leading cause of death across the globe. According to the World Health Organization, ischaemic heart disease is responsible for 16 percent of the world’s total deaths. The WHO also points out that, between 2000 and 2019, deaths due to ischaemic heart disease rose by more than two million.

Though not all deaths due to heart disease are preventable, many are, and researchers have discovered various ways individuals can reduce their risk for heart disease. One way individuals can protect their heart health is to eat a healthy diet. The link between diet and heart health is significant. Recognition of that link can help people concerned about heart disease develop a dietary plan that reduces their risk for this all-too-common killer.

A healthy diet, weight and heart health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that a healthy diet is balanced and includes a variety of nutritious foods. In fact, one easy way to determine if a plate is healthy is to see how colorful it is. The CDC notes that “eating the rainbow” means a plate is filled with an array of colors, which typically means an individual is eating healthy foods. Such a plate may include dark, leafy greens; bright red tomatoes; colorful fruits like oranges; and even fresh herbs. Such foods tend to be loaded with vitamins, fibers and minerals and low in added sugars, sodium, saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol. That makes it easier for individuals to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, which in turn reduces their risk for heart disease. A recent study from researchers at Johns Hopkins found that obesity itself can lead to heart failure, even in the absence of markers for heart disease like high blood pressure, diabetes and elevated cholesterol that have long been used to determine an individual’s risk for heart disease. So by using a nutritious diet to maintain or achieve a healthy weight, individuals are thus lowering their risk for heart disease, even if they do not presently have any of the established markers indicating that risk has been elevated.

A healthy diet, cholesterol and heart health

Of course, many people already have learned that they are at an elevated risk for heart disease due to certain lifestyle choices. See HEART on Page 20.
Taking steps to safeguard mental health is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. The National Institute of Mental Health notes that mental health affects how individuals think and feel, the choices they make, and how they relate to others, which underscores just how important it is to prioritize mental health.

Meditation is a popular practice with a history so lengthy it may surprise even its most devoted practitioners. According to Psychology Today, some archaeologists trace the origins of meditation all the way back to 5,000 BCE. The global spread of the practice is believed to have started around the fifth or sixth century BCE, when trading along Eurasia’s famed Silk Road exposed the practice to various cultures.

The lengthy history of meditation is proof that the practice is no mere fad. In fact, people from all walks of life have much to gain from meditation. Novices can start their meditation journeys with this basic rundown of a practice that has inspired devotees for thousands of years.

**What is meditation?**

The Mayo Clinic notes that meditation is considered a type of mind-body complementary medicine that intends to produce a tranquil, relaxed state of mind. When practicing meditation, individuals focus their attention and aspire to remove potentially stress-inducing, jumbled thoughts from their mind.

**Are there different types of meditation?**

The Mayo Clinic reports that there are various ways to meditate. Guided meditation is a popular form of the practice in which

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MEDITATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

individuals form mental images of places or situations they find relaxing. Guided meditation practitioners employ their senses of smell, sight, sound, and touch during a session, which may be led by a guide or teacher.

Mantra meditation is another form of the practice in which individuals silently repeat a calming word, thought or phrase. The repetition is designed to block out distractions.

Mindfulness meditation is a popular form of the practice that emphasizes awareness, or mindfulness, and acceptance of living in the moment. The Mayo Clinic notes that individuals practicing mindfulness meditation will focus on what they experience during meditation, such as the flow of their breath, as they attempt to observe their thoughts and emotions.

**How do I meditate?**

Mindful Communications, which offers corporate training, practical advice and other insights regarding mindfulness and meditation, notes that meditation is both simpler and more complex than most people think. But the following seven-step prospectus can serve as a useful foundation for meditation novices.

1. Take a seat. Individuals are urged to find a calm, quiet place to sit.
2. Set a time limit. A short session between five and 10 minutes can help novices.
3. Notice your body. Individuals should be stable and sit in a position they choose. They should be seated upright in a chair with legs uncrossed or on a meditation cushion with a straight back. They should keep their feet on the floor or on a stool. They should sit quietly for the duration of their session.
4. Feel your breath. As you breathe in and out, make an effort to feel the sensation of your breath.
5. Notice if your mind wanders. It’s likely that your mind will wander to other places during your sessions. Pay attention to when it does and then refocus your attention to your breath.
6. Don’t judge your thoughts. Wandering thoughts during meditation are not deserving of scorn. When the mind wanders, simply return to meditating without obsessing over the thoughts that came into your head when your mind wandered off.
7. Close with kindness. As your session draws to a close, gently lift your gaze and take a moment to notice your surrounding environment, how your body feels and your thoughts and emotions.

Meditation can pay numerous dividends. More information about meditation can be found at mindful.org.

HEART

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

including poor diet. A poor diet can cause a host of health problems, including elevating cholesterol levels. According to the Heart & Vascular Center at Valley View Hospital in western Colorado, a diet high in saturated fat can lead to heart disease because it can increase cholesterol levels. The Mayo Clinic notes that, when a person has high cholesterol, fatty deposits can develop in the blood vessels. Those deposits eventually grow, making it difficult for sufficient blood to flow through the arteries. The deposits also can break and form clots that can cause heart attack or stroke. Though Harvard Health notes that some people are genetically predisposed to high blood cholesterol, a diet that limits intake of saturated fat can help most people maintain healthy cholesterol levels, thus reducing their risk for heart disease. Foods high in saturated fat include pork, beef, lamb, cream, butter, and cheese.

Heart disease claims the lives of millions of people across the globe every year. Diet is an undeniable ally in the fight against heart disease, and individuals who commit to eating right can greatly reduce their risk for heart disease.

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Billions of people across the globe take medications each day. Certain medications can help people with potentially debilitating or even deadly conditions live normal lives, while others can help people overcome relatively minor issues like muscle aches or seasonal allergies.

The American Heart Association notes that mixing drugs can produce unexpected side effects. This can make it dangerous for people already on prescription medications to use over-the-counter drugs for issues like headache or seasonal allergies. Understanding the potential interactions between their prescriptions and common prescription and over-the-counter medications can help people stay safe.

- **Antihistamines**: Antihistamines are widely used to alleviate symptoms of the common cold or seasonal allergies, such as runny nose, itchy eyes and sneezing. The AHA notes that, when taken along with blood pressure medication, antihistamines can contribute to an accelerated heart rate and cause blood pressure to spike. The AHA also cautions people taking sedatives, tranquilizers or prescriptions to treat high blood pressure or depression to consult their physicians.

See **DRUGS** on Page 22

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**Richard J. Lizak, DO**  
Michael Obert, CRNP  
St. Luke’s Hospital—Lehighton Campus  
281 North 12th Street, Suite B, Lehighton, PA 18235

Dr. Richard Lizak is board certified in Internal Medicine and has been practicing in the community for over 25 years. Michael Obert, CRNP has been practicing with Dr. Lizak and in the community for over 10 years. They are affiliated with both Lehigh Valley Health Network and St. Luke’s Health Network and specialize in geriatric medicine; preventative screening and wellness exams; chronic disease management for diabetes, hypertension and hyperlipidemia; and complex collaborative care and treatment in patients with cancer, coronary artery disease, infectious diseases, depression and anxiety.

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before taking antihistamines.

- Bronchodilators: Bronchodilators relax and open the airways in the lungs and are used to treat various lung conditions, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. These drugs make it easier to breathe and are available via prescriptions. But patients with heart disease, high blood pressure, thyroid disease, and/or diabetes should discuss the potential interactions between bronchodilators and other medications they may be taking with their physicians.

- Cordarone: According to Drugs.com, Cordarone is used to treat potentially deadly abnormal heartbeats. Cordarone can cause severe problems that affect the lungs, thyroid or liver, and can be dangerous when combined with other drugs. For example, the AHA notes that patients who take more than 20 milligrams of Zocor, a drug used to lower “bad” cholesterol and potentially to lower the risk of stroke, heart attack and other conditions, while also taking Cordarone are at risk of developing rhabdomyolysis. Rhabdomyolysis is a condition marked by the breakdown of muscle tissue that can lead to kidney failure or death. The AHA also says that Cordarone can inhibit or reduce the effects of the blood thinner Coumadin.

- Nicotine replacement products: People taking prescriptions for depression or asthma should consult their physicians before taking any nicotine replacement products. The Federal Drug Administration notes that doctors may want to change dosages of patients’ current medications before recommending they take any nicotine replacement products. The FDA also advises people to speak with their physicians before trying these products if they have diabetes, heart disease, asthma or stomach ulcers; have had a recent heart attack; have high blood pressure but do not take any medication for it; or have a history of irregular heartbeat.
Common respiratory system ailments

Oxygen is essential to life. The respiratory system works tirelessly to provide fresh oxygen to the body and ensure that all metabolic activities can occur unhindered. The respiratory system is what makes the inhalation and exhalation of air possible, and it’s a responsible for the distribution of oxygen throughout the body.

The respiratory system is a network of organs and tissues that help a person breathe. In addition to facilitating the absorption of oxygen from the air, the respiratory system cleans out waste gases like carbon dioxide. In a healthy person, the respiratory system functions like a well-oiled machine. But that same system is sometimes hampered by illness, allergies and infections, according to the Cleveland Clinic. With so much riding on a healthy respiratory system, it can help to learn about some of the more common conditions.

See RESPIRATORY on Page 24

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CONDITIONS THAT CAN AFFECT IT

- Asthma: Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease caused by narrowed airways affected by inflammation. Asthma causes breathing difficulties, coughing, wheezing, and other symptoms. Most people need to take preventive medicines to control symptoms.

- COPD: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is comprised of chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Bronchitis is when the lining of the bronchial tubes become inflamed and irritated. Swelling may cause an abundance of mucus. Emphysema occurs when the tiny air sacs (alveoli) become damaged and less flexible. This reduces the alveoli’s ability to move oxygen and other gases, which adversely affects breathing, according to Verywell Health.

- Influenza: Influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral illness that can produce a number of symptoms. The flu viruses can be inhaled or brought into the body by touching items that contain the virus. Mild fever, runny nose, cough, fatigue, and sore throat are common symptoms of influenza. While most people recover, the Mayo Clinic warns that flu complications can be deadly.

- COVID-19: SARS-CoV-2 is the virus responsible for causing COVID-19, which was discovered in the winter of 2019. It is a highly infectious illness caused by a coronavirus. It is spread from person to person, and has caused millions of deaths around the world as well as lasting health problems, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. Depending on the individual, the effects of COVID-19 can be mild or severe. Because the virus mutates easily, researchers continue to develop new vaccines to help boost defense against it. Symptoms appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus. A person infected with the coronavirus is contagious to others for up to two days before symptoms appear, and they remain contagious to others for 10 to 20 days, depending on their immune system and the severity of their illness.

- Tuberculosis: TB is a contagious and potentially life-threatening infectious disease caused by the bacterium mycobacterium tuberculosis, which is spread through the air. The CDC says TB is preventable and treatable in most cases. Infection control practices can help reduce TB transmission.

- Pneumonia: With pneumonia, a virus, bacteria or another infectious agent causes alveoli to fill with fluid or pus, affecting breathing and gas exchange. Pneumonia symptoms may be mild and not affect daily activities, while others can be severe and require hospitalization.

- Cystic fibrosis: This is a genetic condition that creates very thick mucus in the body, which can cause both breathing and digestive problems. Blockages from thick mucus can trap harmful bacteria and lead to infections, says the Mayo Clinic.
Personal Care vs Independent Living

As we age we often find ourselves facing decisions on our living situations. More often than not, we begin to think about our future living arrangements after the death of a spouse or a medical scare. There are many different options when it comes to senior living and knowing your options is important.

Independent Living

Independent living allows many seniors the ability to live independently in a more social environment amongst peers with less household upkeep. Independent living communities offer active seniors the opportunity to socialize with peers and others who have common interests. These seniors do not have to worry about the upkeep of a house or chores like mowing the lawn or shoveling snow. Because these communities are geared toward independent seniors, their living accommodations are private. Seniors living in independent living communities tend to their own medical and personal care needs as well as their medication with no support from others.

Personal Care

Personal care is essentially a bridge between independent living and a skilled nursing home, however in some personal care homes there are accommodations in place that allow seniors to age in place. Personal care homes assist seniors who may be physically or cognitively unable to live alone. Seniors who choose personal care may have chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or dementia. In personal care, seniors have their own living space (may be private or semi-private), while having 24/7 staff available to assist them with medical and personal care needs as well as administer medications as needed. Personal care also has a very social setting with community events, activities and programs that seniors may participate in.

Finding the right fit for your needs is important. The biggest difference between independent living and personal care is the full-time supervision and care options that are included in personal care. Additionally, some amenities such as meals and housekeeping services are included in the cost of personal care; whereas, it may be an option with an additional cost for independent living. In the end, deciding on your living arrangements as you age comes down to your needs.

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Time for a children’s vision checkup

Healthy vision is an important component of success in school and can even affect children’s social development.

As the routine of a school year settles in, families may direct their focus to factors that have nothing to do with school supplies or enrolling youngsters in extracurricular activities. For example, the weeks after families settle into a new school year routine can be a great time to have students’ vision checked.

According to Prevent Blindness, the oldest eye health and safety nonprofit organization in the United States, common vision problems in children include amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (crossed eyes), and refractive errors like myopia, astigmatism and hyperopia.

A recent study titled “Children’s Vision and Eye Health: A Snapshot of Current National Issues, 2nd Edition,” points out that vision has a critical role in children’s physical, cognitive and social development. Furthermore, visual functioning is a strong predictor of academic performance in school-age children, according to the study. In fact, without early detection and treatment, uncorrected vision disorders can interfere with learning and impair children’s development.

Parents and educators are urged to be aware of symptoms of common eye disorders in children, which include the following:

- Rubs eyes a lot.
- Closes or covers one eye to read or see.
- Tilts head or thrusts forward.
- Has trouble reading or doing other close-up work.
- Holds objects close to eyes to see.
- Blinks more than usual.
- Complains things are blurry or hard to see.
- Squints eyes or frowns.

All children, and especially those who are having issues with their eyes, should visit with an eye professional annually to have their vision checked. In addition, parents can rely on Prevent Blindness in conjunction with Children’s Vision Massachusetts and School Health for a new web resource to assess their kids’ digital screen time use. Tips are available at https://preventblindness.org/childrens-screen-time-tips/.

HOW TO TEST YOUR EYES WITH THIS AMSLER GRID

- Test your eyes under normal room lighting used for reading.
- Wear the eyeglasses you normally wear for reading.
- Hold the grid approximately 14 to 16 inches from your eyes.
- Test each eye separately: Cup your hand over one eye while testing the other eye.
- Keep your eye focused on the dot in the center of the grid and answer these questions:

1. Do any of the lines in the grid appear wavy, blurred or distorted?
2. Do all the boxes in the grid look square and the same size?
3. Are there any “holes” (missing areas) or dark areas in the grid?
4. Can you see all corners and sides of the grid (while keeping your eye on the central dot)?

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A Triumph of the Heart – A Life Renewed
Allentown’s Anita Krick is active again and cancer-free

Getting back on skis and back on the golf course might seem routine, but for Anita Krick, they are symbols of triumph over life-and-death health challenges.

Krick successfully manages her congestive heart failure, discovered about six years ago, and is cancer-free after an operation last fall for lung cancer, discovered during ongoing monitoring of her heart failure. In both cases, her health journey was with Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN), and she wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I tell the world. I always tell them I went to Lehigh Valley,” Krick says.

Breathless on the slopes

Nearly six years ago, Krick, now 71, came off the ski slopes more out of breath than she could ever remember. She went to her primary care doctor, John Peters, DO, for what she surmised was bronchitis, but he quickly ruled it out and sent her for heart tests. She learned she had severe congestive heart failure. “I was scared,” she recalls. “I had a grandson on the way and all I wanted to do was live.”

Krick, from Allentown, recalls working with cardiologists from Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute. Medication helped improve her heart function and in August 2017, she received an implanted automatic defibrillator to counter any potentially lethal heart rhythm disturbance.

What is heart failure?

Heart failure occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough oxygen-rich blood with each beat. When that happens, there is a shortage of blood to vital organs, such as the lungs. Krick’s heart failure was on the more severe side of the scale because she experienced shortness of breath with minimal physical exertion.

“We were able to improve Anita’s heart pumping ability and her quality of life, how much exercise she can do, and most importantly her length of life,” says Krick’s cardiologist, Ronald Freudenberger, MD, Physician in Chief, Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute.

With heart failure, Freudenberger says the first task is to figure out why the heart isn’t pumping as it should. Treatment options vary based on the cause and could include medication, clearing blocked arteries and installing stents to keep them open, or bypass surgery. Other potential options, also depending on the patient, are things such as the defibrillator Krick received, or a left ventricular assist device.

Cancer scare

A few years after her heart failure diagnosis, routine monitoring for Krick discovered she had emphysema, and spots were later found on her lungs. She recalled seeing the words “possible cancerous growth” in the test report on her MyLVHN patient portal.

This past October, after continued monitoring, Krick underwent robotic-assisted surgery to remove the growth, which was indeed cancerous. Surgeon Richard Chang, MD, was able to remove all the cancer and not have to take any of Krick’s lymph nodes. She did not require chemotherapy or radiation.

“If they weren’t watching me from the get-go, this would have spread. I’m truly lucky and blessed,” says Krick, a retired regional sales director for a talent management company.

Heart failure under control

Krick says she feels great. “I sometime wonder: Do I really have it [heart failure]?” Krick says. I walk about four miles three times a week.”

Freudenberger says teamwork is key to success. “We’re fortunate because we have built a team for treatment of advanced heart failure patients with cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, nurse practitioners, nurses and therapists.”

He added the Heart and Vascular Institute has a full heart failure program that wraps around the patient and can address all their needs. “We also have more advanced heart failure doctors in our organization than anyone else in the area and that allows us to really get the world’s experts in advanced heart failure treatment,” he says.

“There is nothing more exciting and rewarding than being able to feel you’ve contributed to the health and well-being of someone who might not have done well without your help,” he says.

The Heart and Vascular Institute, says Freudenberger, is committed not only to taking excellent care of patients, and teaching, but also to developing the next generation of therapies for patients with heart failure and other heart diseases.

For Krick, successfully dealing with heart failure and cancer came by way of a combination of expertise and compassion from LVHN. “I had a great team and found them all [LVHN doctors and caregivers] to be personally caring. I never felt like a number in any of it,” says Krick.
Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute is renowned for world-class heart care, thanks to world-class physicians. When there’s heart trouble, no matter how complex, trust Lehigh Valley Heart and Vascular Institute, the region’s leader in heart care.

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