First-time Mom Katelyn’s "Amazing" Birthing Experience

The Lasting Benefits of Breastfeeding

Thank You for Your Support!

Improving Stroke Patient Outcomes

Plus
Get to know your greens
Fireworks safety tips
Learning healthy habits
Home health services

SUMMER 2020
Mission Health’s Telehealth Services

Providing excellent, patient-centered care through telehealth.

In an effort to meet your healthcare needs, telehealth is now available! You can have a real-time visit with our providers by simply using your existing mobile device. Be sure you have a reliable audio and video connection for a fully interactive communication.

Call one of our many offices to schedule an appointment. Depending on your needs, your provider will determine the best telehealth method for you, from the comfort of your home.
Summer 2020

2 . . . Mission and You

4 . . . Social Distancing and Helpful Routines
Learning helpful new habits during COVID-19

5 . . . Ask the Nurse
Perinatal navigator works with high-risk moms

6 . . . Fire Up the Grill
Warm evenings outside provide the perfect backdrop for these healthy dishes

8 . . . From Apprehension to Joy
Mission Hospital McDowell delivers “amazing” birthing experience for first-time mom

12 . . . Thank You!
To the community for your support!

14 . . . The Breast Is Best
Baby-friendly hospitals support breastfeeding for its lasting benefits

15 . . . Should You Consider Genetic Services for Your Baby?
Here’s what available before and after delivery

17 . . . Cancer Patients and COVID-19
Treatment during social distancing

18 . . . Silent (and Deadly) Threats
Taking care of your vascular system

19 . . . A Beautiful Mind
New techniques and technology are improving stroke patient outcomes

20 . . . Changing Roles to Help Others
“I chose a place that’s more high risk for exposure”
Earlier this year, Eckerd Living Center (ELC) at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, a part of Mission Health, has earned a 5-star rating from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). ELC uses an interdisciplinary team approach to ensure administrators, physicians, nurse managers, social workers, dieticians, along with therapists and special consultants work together to provide the highest level of care. CMS creates the overall star rating for nursing homes from three parts: health inspections, quality of resident care measures and staffing. “This recognition is truly a testament to the hard work and selflessness of our wonderful staff,” said Ava Ammons, Eckerd Living Center Administrator. “The star ratings provided by CMS help families identify a facility that they can trust to care for a loved one.” Learn more at EckerdLivingCenter.com.

Virtual Clinic
Coughing fit keeping you up? In approximately 5 minutes, you can use your computer to get help for these conditions: strep throat, cold, flu and allergies, sinus infection, sore throat, UTIs, vaginal yeast infections, pink eye, canker and cold sores, eczema, dermatitis and more. The Mission Virtual Clinic (MVC) is open from 7 am-7 pm. This option is ideal for western North Carolina citizens because it is convenient and helps maintain social distancing, a key method to reduce the COVID-19 spread. We cover an array of different illnesses remotely. If you access the MVC after 7 pm, you will still be allowed to complete the virtual visit — however, you won’t receive a provider response until after 7 am the next day.

5-Star Center

71 Organs Transplanted
59 Lives Saved

“LifeShare Carolinas could not fulfill our mission of giving hope, life and healing without the hard work and dedication of our partners at Mission Health,” said Mike Daniels, LifeShare Carolinas Executive Director. In 2019 Mission Health’s donations included 20 organ donors, 53 tissue donors, 48 eye donors, 7 hearts, 30 kidneys, 17 livers, 15 lungs and 2 pancreata. “From the moment a hospital team member calls LifeShare with a donor referral to the completion of a donation recovery, every person involved in the process has a critical role in saving lives through organ, eye and tissue donation,” said Daniels. Learn more about organ, eye and tissue donation at lifesharecarolinas.org.

Have a Safe and Healthy Hamburger Day, May 28

- Grill meat slowly at a lower temperature, rather than searing over high heat, until the center is 165 degrees F. Charring can trigger formation of carcinogens that have been associated with certain types of cancer.
- Trim away fat before grilling meat.
- Marinate meat for at least 30 minutes before grilling. Good marinades include vinegar, citrus juice, beer, wine or green tea.
- Choose lighter options like tomatoes, onions, squash, mushrooms, pineapple, peppers or veggie burgers.
- Use long-handled tools and flame retardant mitts to prevent burns.
- Keep your grill clean and positioned in a safe place where it will not be a safety hazard before, during or after grilling.

Source: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Healthy Father’s Day

For most men, visiting a doctor is one of the last things they’ll be thinking about this Father’s Day. It seems that men don’t like to visit their doctors, which is reflected in a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that shows that women in all range groups are more likely to see a doctor than men. In another CDC report, men are more likely to suffer from a life-threatening disease than women. The diseases the report specified include heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases, stroke and diabetes. One thing each of these have in common is that the earlier they are diagnosed, the greater chance of extending your life. If you’re a man — or married to one — Father’s Day is good time to think about getting a checkup with your primary care provider.

To find a Mission Health primary care provider who’s best for you, call 828-213-3222 or visit missionhealth.org/primarycare.

It Takes a Village

That was the thinking when Mission Hospital’s Community Investment team launched the Healthy Neighbors Network (HNN) Blue Ridge, a local collaboration between Blue Ridge Regional Hospital (BRRH) in Spruce Pine, community organizations, church congregations and public service agencies. HNN identifies people in Mitchell and Yancey counties who are in need and connects them to resources or organizations that can provide assistance in ways that other organizations cannot. “HNN was developed out of the recognized need for those in the community who suffer from the social determinants of health,” said Colby Boston, community relations liaison for BRRH. The initiative, which was unveiled in spring 2019, has grown to include 10 churches and agencies like food banks and other outlets in addition to Blue Ridge Regional Hospital. To facilitate collaboration and leverage collective resources, liaisons at participating HNN organizations utilize a software system that allows them to coordinate volunteers and services. Ways the HNN impacts local lives include:
- pays for past due electric bills and for roofing and floor repairs
- builds or renovates handicap-accessible ramps
- provides emergency funding for property damage from flooding and fires
- aligns with local food pantries
- assists with purchase of car insurance to enable driving to work.

To learn more about Healthy Neighbors Network or to volunteer, visit hnnwnc.org.

Fireworks Safety Tips

Little ones look adorable holding those sparklers. Unfortunately, fireworks can lead to accidents for children, including burns and other injuries. This Fourth of July, take a little extra precaution to have a safe and happy event:

Find a substitute for sparklers. Little arms are too short to hold sparklers, which can heat up to 1,200 degrees. Encourage your young ones to use glow sticks.

Take necessary precautions. If you decide to light fireworks yourself, be extra careful. Purchase fireworks from a credible source. Make sure you’re not wearing loose clothing when handling matches or fireworks.

Never use fireworks indoors! Use them outside, point them away from homes and people, and steer clear of brush, leaves, dry grass and flammable substances.

Keep your distance. Make sure everyone is positioned far back from where fireworks are being lit.

Be prepared and have a plan. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby and make sure you know how to operate it. When you’re finished, douse the remains with water before disposing of them to avoid a trash fire.

Leave fireworks to the pros. The best way to protect your family is to not use any fireworks at home. Instead, attend public fireworks displays or watch the celebrations on tv.

Mission Children’s Hospital offers inpatient, outpatient and outreach services. To learn more about keeping your kids healthy or to find a pediatrician near you, visit MissionChildrens.org.
Humans are creatures of habit. From daily grooming routines to how we relate to others, we tend to operate in fixed patterns of behavior. Once in place, however, habits can be difficult to change.

**Why Habits Are Formed**

Have you ever been driving on your day off and somehow end up heading toward work? While it can be a nuisance when you find yourself in the wrong place, our brain’s ability to pick up on subtle cues and initiate actions based on past behaviors is actually quite adaptive. On most days, this ability actually helps you get to work.

Our bodies are constantly surveilling our surroundings, and our subconscious brains process this information to drive behavior. Our mouths water when we smell baking bread, because the subconscious mind tells the digestive system to start preparing for food. Our heart rate and breathing rate go up when the brain senses danger in preparation for self-defense. We start to smile and our body relaxes when our eyes spot a friendly face.

Despite having many positive benefits, routines can also trip us up. Sometimes the same natural mechanisms that help reinforce helpful behaviors can reinforce maladaptive behaviors — and we can get stuck in a rut. For example, it is easy to slip into patterns of unhealthy eating, overextending our schedules and not getting to bed on time. And, once in place, patterns can be difficult to change.

**From Crisis to Changing Habits**

The COVID-19 crisis has given us the gift of pushing — okay, shoving — us out of our routines. The crisis has disrupted the normal patterns of our daily lives and has forced us to reshuffle, reconfigure and reprioritize. While this has certainly not been without negative consequences, many beautiful new routines have emerged. Imposed restrictions and disrupted schedules have created time for and space for us to experience the joy of simple activities like taking long walks, honing new culinary skills, catching up on reading lists and indulging in unanticipated afternoon naps.

Our lives have been forever etched by this pandemic and, undoubtedly, many scars will be long lasting. However, my hope is that there will be many positive changes as well. I hope we continue to wash our hands and stay home when we are sick. I hope that we continue to prioritize self-care. I hope we continue to check on our neighbors and take care of our communities. I hope kids continue to ride bikes in the neighborhood circle, families continue to play marathon games of Monopoly and blossoming chefs continue their culinary adventures.

Above all else, I hope we continue to recognize and celebrate our healthcare workers as heroes.
Q. What is a perinatal navigator?
A. Pregnancy can be exciting, but high-risk pregnancies can also be stressful and complicated. As a perinatal nurse navigator, I’m an extra layer of support when moms or babies are at higher risk for complications. Some instances include fetal anomalies, placental anomalies or when moms have conditions like hypertension, diabetes, cardiac conditions, advanced maternal age or have had prior pregnancy complications or fetal losses.

Q. How can a perinatal nurse navigator help?
A. My passion is building relationships with patients. I learn families’ needs and communication preferences. I provide guided tours of the hospital, labor and delivery, our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and antepartum unit. I maintain regular contact with patients, answer questions and provide information. Since it can be overwhelming to follow all of providers’ instructions, I often go with patients to their specialist appointments for added emotional support. I also partner with hospital providers, helping them understand the families’ preferences. If we anticipate a complicated delivery, we develop a plan of care so providers and the family are aware of the decisions that have been made and know what expect.

Q. What is the education and training for this role?
A. I’m a registered nurse and earned a certification in inpatient obstetrics (OB). While I’ve taken specialized training to serve as perinatal nurse navigator, most of my skills and practice comes through 38 years of experience working in OB. For 18 years, I also served as the nurse supervisor on the high-risk antepartum unit.

Q. How long has this program been offered at Mission Hospital?
A. While other nurse navigators exist at Mission Hospital, I’m the first perinatal nurse navigator. It’s been very fulfilling to see patients’ expressions change from being scared with questions to having increased understanding. It brings families comfort and peace to understand what may happen and the decisions they’ve made. I feel joy and satisfaction knowing we’ve reduced stress and helped families know what to expect.

Q. Why is it important for nurses to seek certifications?
A. Medicine is always changing and advancing. It’s important for nurses to demonstrate their skills, abilities and passion for continuing their education and providing excellent care for patients. Having certifications builds confidence and shows others we prioritize continuing our education and advancing our skills.

Q. How does a patient become connected with a perinatal navigator?
A. Expectant moms having a high-risk pregnancy can refer themselves into our program or their healthcare providers can make referrals.

Having a baby? To learn more about the maternity services at Mission Hospital, visit missionhealth.org/babyMHL.
Fire Up the Grill

Warm evenings outside provide the perfect backdrop for these healthy dishes

By Mary Lindsey Jackson, RN, LDN, Clinical Nutritionist Educator for Mission Weight Management

Sweet Potato and Spinach Turkey Burgers

To get started on your life-changing weight-loss journey today at Mission Weight Management, call 828-213-4100 or visit missionhealth.org/weightMHL.

ingredients
1 medium sweet potato, cut into ¾-inch chunks (about 2 cups)
1 lb lean ground turkey
2 cups medium packed fresh spinach, chopped small
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 large cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary
2 tsp finely chopped fresh sage
2 tsp finely chopped fresh thyme
¾ tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
6 whole-grain buns or 6 large lettuce leaves
cooking spray

preparation
Microwave sweet potato 4-6 minutes or steam 15 minutes until tender. While sweet potato is cooking, prepare grill and set heat on medium-high. If broiling, set top rack on second rung (at least 6 inches from broiler) and set heat on broil.
Prepare large broiler pan with cooking spray.

In large bowl, mash sweet potato. Add turkey, spinach, onion, garlic, herbs, salt, pepper and oil. Mix together and form 6 patties about ½-inch thick.
Grill patties 4-8 minutes on each side or until center is 165 degrees F. If broiling, arrange patties on broiler pan and broil 4-8 minutes on each side or until center is 165 degrees F.

6 servings
Nutritional information (per serving): 340 calories, 6 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 43 g carbohydrates, 29 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 680 mg sodium, 6 g sugar, 0 g added sugar

Courtesy American Institute for Cancer Research

The Scoop: Greens

Score one for mom. Turns out those green vegetables you always turned your nose up at when you saw them on the dinner table really are good for you. Packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber, leafy greens are an important part of a balanced diet and have a number of health benefits. Here are a few of the best:

Collard Greens
A staple in many Southern kitchens, collard greens are a good source of calcium, folate, and vitamins A and C. They’re also loaded with vitamin K, which has been shown to reduce blood clotting and improve bone health.

Iceberg Lettuce
Less nutrient-rich than its darker-green counterparts, iceberg is the go-to lettuce for many salad eaters and as a condiment for other foods. It also provides significant amounts of vitamins A and K and helps to combat anemia, heart disease and age-related illnesses.

Kale
In terms of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, kale is a veritable super food. This dense, green-leaved vegetable helps to support weight loss, lower risk of developing cancer, improve digestion, reduce chronic inflammation and improve eye health.
Black-Eyed Pea Salad

**ingredients**
- 3 cups cooked black-eyed peas
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 orange or yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 green onions or scallions
- 2 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ½ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tsp honey

**preparation**
Add black eyed peas, green and yellow peppers, celery, jalapeños, green onions and parsley to a large bowl. Whisk together balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper and honey until emulsified. Pour over black-eyed pea mixture and mix to combine. Let sit for 15 minutes before eating.

**8 servings**
Nutritional information: 172 calories, 5.3 g total fat, 25.2 g carbohydrates, 6.9 g dietary fiber, 8.4 g sugar, 7.5 g protein

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Berry Yogurt Popsicles

**ingredients**
- 1½ cups pitted fresh or frozen cherries
- ½ cup fresh or frozen blackberries
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 24 oz vanilla Greek yogurt
- 12 3-oz paper cups
- 12 popsicle sticks

**preparation**
In small mixing bowl, mash cherries and blackberries. Drizzle on honey and mix together. In paper cups, layer alternating spoonfuls of yogurt and fruit until full. Place popsicle stick or plastic spoon in each cup. Freeze. When ready to serve, tear paper cup off popsicle and enjoy.

**12 servings (12 popsicles)**
Nutritional information: 70 calories, 0 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 11 g carbohydrates, 5 g protein, 1 g dietary fiber, 20 mg sodium, 10 g sugar, 1 g added sugar

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Romaine Lettuce
The crunchy texture of Romaine makes it a popular lettuce choice in produce departments and on Caesar salads. Rich in vitamins A and C, Romaine promotes heart health, helps to lower blood pressure and reduces the risk of stroke.

Spinach
Although Popeye used this leafy green primarily to pump up his muscles, spinach has been shown to aid digestion, promote heart health, prevent cancer and strengthen bones. The folate found in spinach can also help prevent neural tube defects such as spina bifida in pregnant women.

Swiss Chard
Used frequently in Mediterranean cooking, Swiss chard is a colorful vegetable that has an earthy taste. More important, it’s packed with nutrients that reduce blood sugar levels, boost cognitive development, improve circulation and help to reduce the risk of diabetes, stroke and cancer.
From Apprehension to Joy

Mission Hospital McDowell delivers “amazing” birthing experience for first-time mom

By Deanna Thompson
In October 2019, Katelyn Hutchins was a bundle of nerves as she made her way to Mission Hospital McDowell. Not only was she about to become a mother for the first time, but “I had never been admitted to the hospital or had surgery before," said Hutchins. “So, this was my first time for everything.”

Within minutes of her arrival for a planned Cesarean section, Hutchins felt a blanket of warmth envelop her. The hospital staff not only delivered personalized care and quelled her fears, but also shared in her joy as she gave birth to a 7-pound, 14-ounce girl.

“The doctors, nurses, anesthesiologist and other staff blew me away with their love and genuine care for me and my family,” said Hutchins. “I had an amazing birthing experience thanks to Mission Hospital McDowell.”

Family-centered C-section
Because her baby was breech, Hutchins was scheduled for a C-section. Initially disappointed that she wouldn’t have a traditional labor and delivery experience, Hutchins was elated to discover that the hospital offers a family-centered C-section, allowing mom and her partner to be involved as much as their circumstances will allow in the birth of their baby in the operating room (OR).

“We try to make the experience as close as possible to what patients want from a vaginal birth,” said Ellen Hearty, MD, an obstetrician at Mission Women’s Care - McDowell, who delivered Hutchins’s baby.

Hutchins’s husband, Andy, sat next to her in the operating room and held her hand as their baby was delivered. The drape protecting Hutchins’s view of the surgery was lowered, and her head was raised so she could see the baby immediately after delivery. Then, Dr. Hearty placed new daughter, Harlow, on Hutchins’s chest.

“It was immediate skin-to-skin,” said Hutchins. “It made it feel like there was no difference from what would happen after a vaginal delivery. I felt like everything was the way it was supposed to be.”

Help with a Gender Reveal
The staff offered a personal touch throughout her stay, going the extra mile to meet their patient’s needs. According to Hutchins, this included the nurses who stayed with her as an anesthesiologist administered spinal anesthesia, Dr. Hearty “explaining everything before we went in,” and the numerous nurses and doctors who visited her and their baby after the delivery.

Hutchins especially appreciated those who eagerly helped with a gender reveal immediately after Harlow’s birth. Hutchins and her husband had chosen not to know the gender in advance.

When doctors and nurses learned that a contingent of 14-15 family members was waiting expectantly outside the OR, they jumped into action, finding a neutral-color hat for Harlow, so the traditional pink headwear wouldn’t give away the surprise. “They were more excited than we were, I think, to announce what the baby was,” Hutchins said.

Caring at Every Step
“As a smaller hospital, Mission Hospital McDowell has nurtured a strong sense of community in its staff and doctors,” said Dr. Hearty. “This translates into the personalized caring for patients that Hutchins experienced.” Dr. Hearty also noted that patients have easy access, if needed, to the specialized services of a larger hospital nearby. Mission Hospital in Asheville offers the area’s only Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, a dedicated infant transport team for transfers, and support for high-risk pregnancies.

“Today, the mom who was nervous about her first stay in a hospital, her first trip to surgery and her first childbirth says the experience couldn’t have been better. “The staff were amazing through the whole thing,” Hutchins said. “I felt like they actually, genuinely cared. I really trusted them to do the best for me and Harlow and my husband.”

missionhealth.org
When it comes to committing to healthy living despite overwhelming challenges, Tami Overly has a lot of experience. After surviving a heart attack at age 55 last year, she will soon be graduating from Angel Medical Center’s Cardiac Rehab program – after quitting twice.

As a single mother of two adult sons with autism, Overly (also a diabetic) has a high-stress lifestyle and works two jobs. “It’s probably why I had a heart attack,” said Overly. In fact, her specific type of heart attack is the result of arterial spasms blocking blood flow, often caused by stress. After recovering and undergoing in-patient rehab, Overly had trouble fitting in outpatient rehab appointments. “Just trying to get there was stressing me out,” said Overly.

Heart attack survivor prioritizes her health with help from unique rehab program

By Trisha McBride Ferguson
An Extra Level of Help

After trying unsuccessfully to continue rehab, Overly quit for a second time. Then she got a phone call from Amanda Pack, RN, director of Cardiac Rehab at Angel Medical Center. “Amanda called me, and she couldn’t have been more helpful,” said Overly.

Pack worked with her to create a personalized plan and appointments Overly could follow. “Amanda is amazing, she really focuses on the positive,” said Overly. “If she hadn’t called me, I wouldn’t have returned.”

At present, Overly has lost 35 pounds and taken advantage of the program’s array of exercise and nutrition offerings. “When she first came, Tami was anxious and scared about her health and life expectancy,” said Pack. “Since she’s been coming, she’s been a rock star.”

Designed to be 36 sessions over about 12 weeks, Angel Medical Center’s Cardiac Rehab program helps patients exercise to their level of ability without fear of relapse or injury. Patients with cardiac or pulmonary issues, who are often afraid to work out for fear of overdoing it, wear a telemetry monitor bag with a heart monitor. “It makes me feel safe, knowing my heart is okay,” said Overly. “And the staff there are so encouraging.”

“It’s like having a personal nurse with you at your gym,” said Pack. When participants lose a pound or achieve a milestone — large or small — they’re rewarded with gold stars to display on their bag. “They’re proud to show off these little victories,” added Pack.

Support and Encouragement

“Tami has been my patient for over 10 years,” said her primary care provider Patti Sparling, DNP, FNP-BC, owner of Mountain Advanced Practice. “She has a very busy life and a lot of responsibilities with her family, she needed the support and encouragement Angel Medical Center’s Cardiac Rehab program can provide. She is now motivated to stay healthy; she is doing much better with diet, exercise, taking her medications and following medical advice.”

Dr. Sparling encouraged Overly to attend the rehab program after her heart attack and explained how it could help her, said Pack. “She is a wonderful doctor,” said Overly. “She’s the one who got me to go there.”

Overly credits the rehab staff with much of her progress. “They have taught me how to change my lifestyle — which isn’t an easy thing. They really go above and beyond.” When she first started, Overly felt out of place being younger than many typical patients. “They made me feel like I belong. They are so encouraging, and they showed me the pictures and explained what happened to my heart.”

For more information on Angel Medical Center’s Cardiac Rehabilitation Program, contact Amanda Pack, RN, at 828-349-8290.
Thank You!

To the community for your support!

Mission Health @MissionHealthNC - Apr 13

Thank you to Lynne Broman for giving our Materials Management Team 50 boxed lunches from Firehouse Sub. We greatly appreciate your support.

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital added 23 new photos to the album: Chalk Art 4-2-20 — at Eckerd Living Center.

On April 2nd, 2020, kind messages and words of encouragement decorated the sidewalks outside Eckerd Living Center at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. We are so grateful for our supportive community and our front-line members for these words of encouragement for all who may come and go.

Chalk Art 4-2-20

23 Photos

We are grateful for Flora Asheville for these beautiful bouquets of flowers. With help from a couple of cheerleaders on our Spiritual Care team, they were delivered to our nursing units to spread hope and encouragement.

Mission Health @MissionHealthNC - Apr 14

Thank you so much for your generosity in supporting our team members.

@BiscuitHeadE and @FloralFlourish

ELC loves our Families & Friends

Pictured is our pulmonary medicine staff enjoying a delicious lunch from Stella's Italian.

We continue to be amazed by the outpouring of support from our local restaurants and organizations each day. Thank you!
On Friday, our team members were treated to delicious cookies from Simply, provided by Joanne Howell Realty and Marion Credit Company, Steve Janea, Chairman of the Mission Hospital McDowell Board of Trustees and Jed Rankin, Vice Chair showed their support for our team members and emphasized the support of our wonderful community!

We would like to send a message of thanks to Sara Wells @wellssarah1 for donating 15 gift cards to local restaurants to 15 of our team members and to 15 of our 15 schoolmates #MissionUs

We are extremely grateful for our wonderful North Carolina family together. Support local businesses

We are very thankful for Compassionate Care Western North Carolina who donated food for our team members from Bubba’s Good Eats (NC) on support. #LifeAtMission #MissionUs

Thank you @mellowmushroomsashville for your support. We are just in the beginning of support in our community right now. After having to make so many difficult decisions with our staff and hours and all the things like so many others in this time, we’re still strong with just a few healthy and able folks able to help us running curbside pizza pickup for our community. Because of your support, we were able to donate dinner bills to 45 E.R. nurses and doctors at Mission Hospital, working bravely for our front lines.

Thank you @yerbamateahacedor for bringing yerba mate to our staff.

Thank you to @MissionHealthNC for bringing hospital!
World Breastfeeding Week in August is a great time to celebrate the long-term health benefits of breastfeeding — the most natural and nutritious way to sustain babies.

“Many new moms haven’t had much exposure to breastfeeding and have to learn quickly to gain confidence and an understanding of how to be successful,” said Amy Moore, MSN, RN, IBCLC, lactation consultant at Mission’s Breastfeeding Center and Boutique, who is also certified by the International Board of Certified Lactation Consultants.

Trained for Support
A mom’s choice to breastfeed is influenced by factors such as family support, her own history with infant feeding and whether providers have offered enough education. A big part of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is nurse training to support patients during the first few days after childbirth.

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (babyfriendlyusa.org) is a 10-step framework established by the World Health Organization and UNICEF. The program ensures moms are supported at key points throughout their breastfeeding journey. Hospital-wide training, family education and access to supports like lactation consultants who help with latching techniques offer a foundation for overcoming early challenges.

“Having a Baby-Friendly Hospital designation signals that Mission provides the most supportive and evidence-based environment to get babies off to the very best start nutritionally,” said Moore.

Breastfeeding Benefits
- Natural and perfect nutrition for babies
- Promotes bonding between mom and baby
- Improves baby’s immunity and decreases risk of infections
- Lowers mom’s risk of breast and ovarian cancer
- Decreases child’s chances of being overweight and obese in later childhood
- Speeds mom’s return to prepregnancy weight
- Saves money

Skin-to-skin Is Best
The first hour after delivery is a critical time for babies to have their first breastfeeding experience. “Skin-to-skin contact with mom helps establish a bond when babies are quiet and most likely to seek the breast,” said Moore. “Our nursing teams know it is a critical point and support that early experience.”

Evidence suggests breast milk is the best nutrition and recommended exclusively for babies’ first six months. Studies show the health benefits for moms and babies can be long lasting. “We sought the designation so we would be providing the best care possible for moms and babies. Having a hospital that supports families in this way is important to the health of this community,” said Moore.

Having a baby?
To learn more about the maternity services at Mission Hospital, visit missionhealth.org/babyMHL.
Big news comes in small packages, especially when it comes to our genes. Traits like eye color or cleft chins are governed by our genes. Genes also carry important and sometimes hidden health information.

Information Is Knowledge

“Each of us are carriers for certain recessive medical conditions,” said Carolyn Wilson, certified genetic counselor with Mission Fullerton Genetics Center. “But most people don’t realize it.”

One in 25 Caucasians is a carrier for cystic fibrosis, which occurs in children only when both parents have a mutation in the cystic fibrosis gene. Other serious recessive medical conditions are sickle cell anemia, spinal muscular atrophy and Tay Sachs disease.

The Fullerton Genetics Center is the only facility in our region with a comprehensive prenatal genetic counseling team that can offer testing for a wide range of recessive medical conditions and analyze family histories to discuss risks for specific conditions that may be in a family. Patients may also want counseling services to better understand their risks for having a baby with a chromosomal disorder like Down syndrome.

“The technology is really changing and helping us make diagnoses we were not able to make previously,” said Chad Haldeman-Englert, MD, FACMG, clinical geneticist at Mission Fullerton Genetics Center.

Knowledge Is Power

“Our goal is for parents to feel empowered in their pregnancy and prepregnancy planning. It allows parents to select a hospital with all of the specialized services their baby would need in one place,” said Wilson.

Armed with information, couples can weigh their options and plan or make decisions about the health needs of their unborn babies. Some conditions like spinal muscular atrophy have treatments beneficial early in a child’s life, making early diagnosis so important.

Once a baby is born with unique features or other symptoms, Mission’s clinical geneticists may be called to evaluate the baby, using genetic testing to try to confirm a diagnosis. But it’s not an exact science.

“Sometimes we need to cast a wider net by testing thousands of genes at one time to find what may be causing the symptoms and ultimately hope that this will help us better manage the baby’s condition,” said Dr. Haldeman-Englert.

Services Offered through the Fullerton Genetics Center

- Carrier testing and counseling services
- Family history genetic counseling
- Age-related genetic risk counseling
- Ultrasound finding evaluations
- Pregnancy genetic screening and testing

For more information about Mission Fullerton Genetics Center services, visit missionhealth.org/genetics.

Having a baby?

To learn more about the maternity services at Mission Hospital, visit missionhealth.org/babyMHL.

Carolyn Wilson is a certified genetic counselor with Mission Fullerton Genetics Center.

Chad Haldeman-Englert, MD, FACMG, is a clinical geneticist with Mission Fullerton Genetics Center.

Should You Consider Genetic Services for Your Baby?

Here’s what is available before and after delivery

By Cheri Hinshelwood
Home Is Where the Heart Is

Home health services prove pivotal for local couple

By Carolyn Comeau

The week after his laryngeal cancer was detected, Gary Garner, age 76, had his voice box removed and extensive reconstructive surgery in an 11-hour procedure, the first of four. “They took skin from Gary’s arm for his neck, then took skin from his thigh to help replace what was missing from his arm,” said Jan, Gary’s wife.

An Arduous and Unpredictable Recovery

“Fortunately, our daughter-in-law, Katie, arranged postsurgery care for me with CarePartners Home Health services while I was still hospitalized,” said Gary, who now speaks with the help of an electrolarynx device and is doing well. Jan added, “It was especially intimidating for me because I have no medical background.”

The Garners’ first encounter with CarePartners Home Health was meeting Emily Schepers, RN, on Gary’s first day home after his surgery. “When I met them, I could see that Gary had undergone a complex surgery. He had a catheter, trach [for the airway] and a feeding tube. I took his vitals and he had a high fever, elevated blood pressure and the beginnings of sepsis,” she said.

If left untreated, sepsis leads to rapid decline, organ shutdown and death. Schepers called 911. “It happened so fast,” said Jan, still visibly shaken. “I know Emily saved his life.”

Home Services Becomes a Lifeline

“My patients and I have mutual goals: to keep them in their homes, educate them and their caregivers about proper care, and advise them on which symptoms warrant a call to the doctor,” Schepers said. “It’s my job to identify problems before they get out of hand. We offer occupational, physical and speech therapy, medication management, and more.”

Jan’s eyes teared as she recalled Schepers’s practical and emotional support. “Emily gave me a crash course in wound care and tending to Gary’s catheter, port and the stomach tube, to ensure he didn’t get an infection. It was a lot,” Jan said.

Another CarePartners Home Health provider pivotal to Gary’s recovery was his physical therapist Dayna Lewis, PT. Typically, the first thing she does is perform an evaluation in the patient’s home. “I identify fall risk factors like insufficient lighting and stray electrical cords. Then I recommend how patients can make their homes safer with shower grab bars or a bed railing, and provide education about good body mechanics for both patients and caregivers,” she said.

Lewis taught Gary how to safely navigate his home and helped progress him off his walker. “We worked to build his endurance and increase his affected arm’s range of motion,” she said. “My goal was to challenge, but not overwork him.”

The Garners agree that CarePartners Home Health services made all the difference — for both of them. “Emily and Dayna’s support provided me with reinforcement and a break anytime I needed it,” said Jan.

“It’s been a stressful seven months,” Gary said. “I’m still adjusting to my new normal, but I’m certain I wouldn’t be where I am now without these women’s help and deep caring.”

CarePartners Home Health services include

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech-language therapy
- Social workers
- Home safety evaluations

To learn more, visit missionhealth.org/carepartnersMHL.
We all need to be vigilant and faithful in this pandemic. This is particularly important for patients with cancer. I would strongly recommend that you discuss the unique circumstances of your care with your surgical oncologist, radiation oncologist and/or hematologist/oncologist.

Cancer Treatment during COVID-19
The CDC has recommended that elective surgery be postponed. Cancer surgery, however, is not typically considered elective. Considerations include whether the surgery can be safely delayed without a negative impact on the patient’s cancer outcome. Consideration must also be given to whether the planned surgery will likely require intensive care resources and, if so, whether these resources are available.

Similarly, patients in the midst of radiation or those in need of emergent radiation for cancer control should discuss the timing and potential changes to the radiation schedule with their radiation oncologist.

Chemotherapy, which commonly suppresses a patient’s immune system, may increase a patient’s risk for complications to COVID-19 infection. The decision to proceed with chemotherapy or immunotherapy needs to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Based on available data, the American Society of Clinical Oncology has not yet recommended the routine withholding of chemotherapy. Patients in consultation with his/her medical oncologist must assess the risks associated with delaying or interrupting treatment on cancer control, the risk for disease recurrence and the overall goals of their cancer care.

For patients in remission, stopping maintenance chemotherapy may be an option. Home infusion or transition to an oral therapy may be considered, if feasible, to reduce risk for COVID-19 exposure.

The use of Neupogen/Neulasta and prophylactic antibiotics may reduce the risk of some COVID-19 complications.

In cases where a patient’s cancer is well controlled, delaying a planned stem-cell transplant may be reasonable. Visitation post-transplant should be limited, and visitors should be screened for symptoms and potential exposure to COVID-19.

Although there is no data on the safety of immunotherapy in the COVID-19 era, the treatment-related lung inflammation (pneumonitis) seen with the use of these therapies may place these patients at higher risk for the complications associated with COVID-19 infection.

Port flushes can be transitioned to every 12 weeks, and imaging (CT, PET and echocardiograms) for patients who are doing well can be delayed.

Should You Call a Doctor or Go to the Hospital?
If you develop fever, cough or shortness of breath, if feasible, you should contact your physician immediately for recommendations. For serious symptoms, you may be directed to the emergency department for immediate evaluation and treatment.
Do you smoke or have diabetes? If you do, you have a 400 percent increased chance of developing atherosclerosis (plaque buildup) and other forms of vascular disease, according to W. Kent Williamson, MD, a board-certified vascular surgeon with Carolina Vascular. He said, “Smoking is like fertilizer for aneurysms (ballooning of blood vessels) and makes an aneurysm more likely to burst.”

What Is the Vascular System?
The vascular, or circulatory, system is a massive thoroughfare of arteries, veins, capillaries and lymph vessels that sends oxygen and nutrients to body tissues and removes wastes. Vascular circulation impacts essential bodily processes, such as respiration, digestion, kidney and urinary function, and temperature control.

Vascular Disease
Vascular diseases come in many forms, including atherosclerosis, hypertension, blood clots, stroke, heart disease and aneurysms. “Abdominal aneurysms run in families,” Dr. Williamson said, “and may go undetected until they burst, often leading to death.”

Vascular disease may impact various organs. For this reason, treatment of the disease may involve the services of multiple physicians in specialty areas, such as vascular medicine, vascular surgery, internal medicine, interventional radiology, cardiology and others.

Prevention of Vascular Disease
Dr. Williamson recommends the following measures to help prevent vascular disease:
- Do not smoke
- Avoid processed foods and salt, and eat green leafy vegetables
- Take medication as prescribed for high blood pressure and diabetes
- Exercise and maintain a healthy weight
- Report a family history of aneurysms or other vascular diseases to your primary care provider who can order appropriate screenings. This may save your life.

Common effects of vascular disease

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Seek medical attention when you have*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart attack or angina</td>
<td>Chest pain, shortness of breath, pain in the arms or jaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA)</td>
<td>Facial drooping, arm weakness or speech difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudication</td>
<td>Pain in the thigh, calf or buttocks when walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aortic aneurysm</td>
<td>Back pain, pulsations in the abdomen, groin pain or sometimes sores on the feet; family history of aortic aneurysm; sometimes no symptoms until fatal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lymphedema</td>
<td>Aching, feeling of heaviness or tightness or swelling in arms or legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockage of kidney artery</td>
<td>Elevated blood pressure or swelling of legs or ankles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vascular erectile dysfunction</td>
<td>Sexual impotence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood clot in leg deep veins (deep vein thrombosis or DVT)</td>
<td>Swelling of leg, ankle or foot; severe leg pain; redness and increased warmth at affected area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This list is not all-inclusive. Always seek medical care when you are concerned about your health for any reason.
A Beautiful Mind

New techniques and technology are improving stroke patient outcomes

By Ronnie Musselwhite

Decades ago, treatment of strokes was ‘Take two aspirin and call me in the morning,’ and then it transitioned into acute treatment where we had options within the first few hours,” said Alexander Schneider, MD, a stroke neurologist and Chief of Neuroscience with Mission Hospital. “Now, we’re able to treat out to six, and in some cases 24, hours in patients who have large strokes. Our advanced neuroimaging techniques allow us to determine who may benefit from these treatments.”

Treatment varies based on the individual and his or her symptoms, as well as the type of stroke he or she experiences.

Ischemic

Ischemic events, which account for roughly 87 percent of all strokes, are most often treated with intravenous tissue plasminogen activator (tPA), a clot-busting drug that improves blood flow to the brain.

Doctors at Mission Hospital, the only comprehensive stroke center in western North Carolina, can also perform clot retrievals (mechanical thrombectomies), a minimally invasive procedure in which a wire stent retriever is threaded through an artery in the groin up to the blocked vessel in the brain. The stent then opens up to engage the clot for extraction. Suction catheters can also be utilized for clot removal. In western North Carolina, these advanced treatment options are only available at Mission Hospital.

Hemorrhagic

With hemorrhagic strokes, the first course of action is to reduce blood pressure and bleeding on the brain. In hemorrhages due to aneurysms, steps are taken to secure it and prevent it from rebleeding. One option is surgical clipping, whereby a neurosurgeon opens the skull and places a small clip across the aneurysm to prevent rebleeding.

Another option is endovascular coiling where an interventional neuroradiologist feeds a catheter through the groin artery to the brain and inserts platinum wires (coils) inside the aneurysm to seal off the aneurysm from the artery. “Coiling is a very effective procedure with much lower risks than open surgery,” said Dr. Schneider. “It’s become the preferred method of aneurysm securing in practice today.”

With newer technologies and approaches, Mission Hospital also offers minimally invasive surgical approaches to the treatment of brain hemorrhages not due to aneurysms.

Transient Ischemic Attack

Transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) differ from the major types of stroke because blood flow to the brain remains blocked for only a short amount of time — usually no more than several minutes or hours. However, these events are early indicators that something is wrong and that a more serious event is likely.

In fact, one-third of people who have a TIA go on to have a more severe stroke within a year. Treatment options for TIA are generally more preventive in nature and may include carotid endarterectomy and carotid stenting, both of which are performed at Mission Hospital.

Mission Hospital’s Comprehensive Stroke Center offers a variety of highly effective treatments that can limit damage to the brain and body during a stroke. Learn more at missionhealth.org/stroke.

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Spectrum of Care

“The main differentiator at Mission Hospital’s Comprehensive Stroke Center is the technologies and therapies for stroke we have to offer all of WNC. The providers here across the healthcare spectrum are what make us particularly special. From the nurses and therapists to the specialist physicians, our dedicated team maintains high level neurologic competencies to provide quality, safe, and personalized care. All of this in conjunction with other ancillary services and administrative support allows us to be the premier neuroscience center in western North Carolina.”

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Changing Roles to Help Others

“I chose a place that’s more high risk for exposure”

By Eliza Parker

I’m an Athletic Trainer though Mission, but I’m contracted to the University of North Carolina Asheville. Upon all this happening and the kids being told they’re not returning to the campus, they have found other uses for us athletic trainers being screeners or personal protective equipment runners. I chose to do the screening.

I chose a place that’s more high risk for exposure, because I’m younger. I’m fairly healthy and I don’t have anyone in the high-risk category depending on me for care. I don’t have grandparents at home, and I don’t have children. That’s how I ended up here doing screening.

For the screening process, we ask a few simple questions about signs and symptoms to make sure they haven’t had any contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. For those going upstairs for surgeries, we make sure they’re not positive for anything to reduce the risk of exposure for other people and our healthcare professionals taking care of them. That way, we can prevent the spread better.

It feels important for me to help screen because we can help keep the population safe, and help keep our healthcare workers safe so they can continue to treat those who become ill.

I’ve had people come up to me to just ask questions about COVID-19, not that they are ill or seeking help. They just wanted to know what’s going on, and want to know if we have any information that we can give them. In those cases, I try to direct them to resources that have that information.

So, if you come to the hospital, you’ll see me or another screener asking a couple of simple questions. And then we’ll direct you to the best resource to answer all of your questions regarding COVID-19 or get you into the hospital to get the care you need.

Questions about Mission Health and COVID-19? To keep up to date and learn more, visit missionhealth.org/covid-19.

Have a great Mission Health story like Eliza’s to tell? Email us at MyHealthyLifeMagazine@msj.org.
GET BACK TO WHAT MOVES YOU

Your hips and knees allow you to move, perform everyday tasks, and take part in the activities you enjoy. If arthritis or chronic pain is limiting you, Mission Health Orthopedics can provide personalized nonsurgical treatments and state-of-the-art surgical care to safely return you to a healthy, active lifestyle.

Find a location or walk-in clinic: missionhealth.org/orthopedics
Gratitude.

To the doctors, the nurses, the respiratory therapists, the environmental services workers – to every person working to keep us safe, thank you.

At Mission, we are proud to say we provide the best care with the most care, but in this time of crisis we are also seeing your selflessness, your bravery, your heroism.

For your courage and compassion, your dedication, your resilience, we will be forever grateful.

MISSION HEALTH