WARD OFF WINTER WOES
Tips to Stay Healthy

WELL AWARE

New Choices in Heart Repair

What You Need to Know About Head and Neck Cancer

WINTER 2013
Dear Friends,

Every day we read about high-tech advances in medicine and health care. In this issue of Well Aware, we’ll explore some of these outstanding new opportunities for treatment, in use at Atlantic Health System. For example, Morristown Medical Center is among only a few hospitals in the United States using minimally invasive options for repairing damaged heart valves. Both Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center have been using robotic surgery for some cardiac, gynecologic, oral and urologic surgeries. At Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, endoscopic and robotic surgeries are among the less-invasive surgical options used for head and neck cancers, resulting in faster recovery times for many And at Newton Medical Center, our new wound care center is truly a state-of-the-art facility.

At Atlantic Health System, we aim to be on the forefront of quality health care. We’d love to hear from you: well.aware@atlantichealth.org

Joseph A. Trunfio
President and CEO
Atlantic Health System

Winter Health Tips

Winter weather — and the colds and flus that seem to be everywhere — present some ever-present health challenges.

These tips can help you stay healthy all season long.

HUMIDITY. Winter air tends to be dry, and heating systems can dry out the air even more which can cause cracks in the drier cracks whose colds and viruses can enter the body. Consider a whole-house humidifier or individual units for rooms where you spend the most time.

WEAR SUNSCREEN. Many people associate sunscreen with summertime, but UVA and UVB rays are still present in winter and on cloudy days (can be intensified by reflecting off snow), so protect all exposed skin, including your lips, every day.

EAT MORE GARLIC. Many believe garlic boosts immunity, with 100+ allium compounds that may improve production of antibodies. Detect carbon monoxide. When windows are closed and stoves, ovens and fireplaces can enter the body. Consider a whole-house humidifier or individual units for rooms where you spend the most time.

Wash your hands correctly. Hand-washing is one of the most important steps to staying healthy; so do it right. Create a lather and rub for at least 20 seconds (say the alphabet) before rinsing.

Choose heart-healthy winter foods. It’s Heart Health Month, a great time to consider the importance of diet on cardiac care. Add these winter-time foods to your menus to help protect your heart — and the rest of you, too.

Acer squash. This relative of the melon is a good source of magnesium and potassium, which may be in frequent use, it’s more important than ever to have a carbon monoxide detector.

Cold and flu season has begun and Atlantic Health System is bariatric surgery right for you?

Is Bariatric Surgery Right for You?

Less-invasive Options for Head and Neck Cancer Patients

Pet Therapy

Atlantic Health System is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in New Jersey, comprised of Morristown Medical Center, Overlook Medical Center and Goryeb Children’s Hospital. The four medical facilities have a combined total of 1,315 licensed beds and more than 3,123 affiliated physicians providing a wide array of health care services to the residents of northern and central New Jersey. The medical centers, and Goryeb Children’s Hospital as part of Morristown Medical Center, are accredited by The Joint Commission; specialty services include advanced cardiovascular care, pediatrics medical and surgical specialties, neurology, orthopedics and sports medicine. Each of these programs has earned top ratings and recognition in their respective fields. Atlantic Health System is the official health care home of the New Jersey Devils.

Disclaimer: The information contained within this magazine and website is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, for which your physician is your best choice. The information in the articles, website or the sites to which it links should not be used as the basis for diagnosing or treating any medical condition. Reproduction of Well Aware’s whole or in part without permission from the publisher is prohibited. Copyright ©2013. All rights reserved.

In Brief

BLOOD DONATION IN NEW JERSEY

It’s called the “gift of life” for good reason. One in every three people will require a donated blood at some point in their lives. But of the 60 percent of Americans who are eligible to donate blood, only about 1 percent actually do it. And in New Jersey, those numbers are even lower. About 3 percent of eligible people in the state give blood, meaning New Jersey faces an ongoing blood shortage.

The New Jersey State Department of Health has created a program — called Jersey 4 Jersey — because one donation of a pint of blood saves three lives — to raise awareness across New Jersey residents to donate. To learn more, or to schedule a donation, contact Atlantic Health System Blood Donor Services atatlantichealth.org/blooddonor or, call Blood Donor Services at 973-931-6621 or 904-522-3590.

Visit our blog

Well Aware is published for Atlantic Health System by Wax Custom Media.

To learn more, or to schedule a donation, contact Atlantic Health System Blood Donor Services atatlantichealth.org/blooddonor or, call Blood Donor Services at 973-931-6621 or 904-522-3590.

Well Aware is published for Atlantic Health System by Wax Custom Media.

Visit our blog

Well Aware is published for Atlantic Health System by Wax Custom Media.
Your heart valves are remarkable devices, doing crucial (and irreplaceable) work. They ensure that blood always flows through your heart in the right direction, opening and closing constantly, creating the sound of your heartbeat.

Although they’re strong, resilient membranes, sometimes things go awry with heart valves. When that happens, it’s most often in one of two ways: The aortic valve, which controls blood leaving the heart, can become narrow and restricted; or the mitral valve, which controls blood returning to the heart, can leak. Either scenario poses a serious health risk.

Three new methods of repairing those types of damaged valves — without surgery — now exist. Only 20 U.S. hospitals are offering all three options, and Morristown Medical Center is among those few.

These new treatments are all the more important because no drugs effectively treat valvular heart disease, says Linda D. Gillam, MD, MPH, FACC, FAHA, FASE, chair, Cardiovascular Medicine Atlantic Health System. “Before these nonsurgical options were available, the traditional treatment for valvular disease had been open heart surgery. That approach, for the majority of patients, is still the way to go.”

But for some patients, especially those with other medical conditions, open heart surgery is not an option. “Until the development of these transcatheter treatments, there was really no alternative for treating these patients,” Dr. Gillam says. These treatments offer them new hope because they are much less invasive than surgery. All three involve inserting a catheter through the large blood vessels at the top of the heart to the valve to be repaired, with a clip — to stop the leak. Most patients feel better immediately.

Testing, such as Morristown Medical Center, had to have high surgical volumes for valvular heart disease as well as demonstrated surgical excellence plus highly skilled interventional cardiologists. The maker of the third device — called the SYMPLECTIC aortic valve — has already released it commercially, but conditionally; the FDA determined that only sites with a demonstrated ability to use it properly could do so. “So the number of sites that have access to that valve is quite small,” Dr. Gillam says.

Because all three devices have been available in Europe since 2007, there are already thousands of successful implantations and outcomes. “So it’s clear that we have devices that do work, that have a relatively long track record, and that will provide an alternative to no intervention or surgical intervention for many people,” Dr. Gillam says.

These catheter-based valve treatments are one piece of a larger valve program at Morristown Medical Center, designed to make sure patients with valvular heart disease get the best possible management. That starts with getting an accurate diagnosis. “In valve disease, that means understanding what’s wrong, whether it’s mild, moderate or severe, what the cause is and what treatment to appropriate,” Dr. Gillam says.

Following medical assessment using advanced imaging, the valve program offers surgery where needed, and nonsurgical options (such as these catheter-based valve treatments) where appropriate. The program has a particular interest in patients with mitral valve prolapse, in whom it may be challenging to get a correct assessment of how severe the leakage is.

“We have clear-cut protocols for following patients to make sure there isn’t an intervention before one is needed,” Dr. Gillam says. “But when one is needed, we will identify that the time has come, and we will be able to make sure they have either the best surgery that’s available or access to these catheter-based options.”

The valve program is an integrated effort between clinical cardiology, imaging, interventional cardiology and cardiovascular surgery, and includes hospital- and community-based physicians. Because there are gender issues related to valvular disease (as well as coronary disease), the valve program works closely with the Women’s Heart Program, as well as integrative medicine and cardiac rehab, Dr. Gillam says. “It truly is coordinated care.”

If you are interested in being assessed through the valve program, contact 973-971-7416. If you have severe aortic stenosis or mitral regurgitation and are specifically interested in catheter-based aortic or mitral procedures, contact 973-971-7001.

Morristown Medical Center is among just a few hospitals in the country offering new options for treating common types of valvular disease.

ATLANTIC HEALTH SYSTEM HYPERTENSION TRIAL

High blood pressure is a major problem in this country. It’s associated with stroke, coronary heart disease and heart failure. While many people can treat their high blood pressure with medication, for some, even multiple medications are inadequate.

Researchers selected Atlantic Health System — “based on the strength of our blood pressure program, the skill of our interventional cardiologists and the track record of our research team,” Dr. Gillam says — to participate in a trial of a new device to treat patients with chronic, uncontrolled high blood pressure.

Called Symplicity, this catheter is placed into an artery to disrupt nerve communication to and from the kidneys. “Because the kidneys are an important part of the way the body regulates blood pressure, it’s been shown that this approach can give normal blood pressure to people who have unacceptably high blood pressure even when on multiple medications,” Dr. Gillam says.

The trial is still seeking participants who have uncontrolled high blood pressure despite taking three or more medications.

To find out more, contact the Hypertension Clinic at 973-971-4515. Enrollment in the SYMPLECTIC HTN-3 study is ongoing. More information about SYMPLECTIC HTN-3 and renal denervation is available online at atlantichs.org/sympLECTICtrial.

Linda D. Gillam, MD, MPH, FACC, FAHA, FASE
Chair, Cardiovascular Medicine
Atlantic Health System
control the movements of the surgical tools — micro-instruments — says. “To operate, you slide two fingers on each hand into little rings that videoscope with a pair of cameras on a robotic arm,” Dr. Rolandelli explains.

Atlantic Health System surgeons have performed over 2,300 robotic procedures — and were among the first East Coast teams to perform robotic surgery for pelvic prolapse. “We pull the rectum up and blood vessels in that area that robotics is very helpful. You can see through tiny tubes that just puncture the skin, leaving little scarring.”

“Another case in point: better outcomes after prostate cancer surgery. ‘Robotic surgery allows us to do what we would normally do with an open procedure — and a six-inch incision — but with better outcomes,’ Dr. Kanan says. ‘The cancer is removed using tiny access ports, and the patient regains sexual potency and urinary control faster. With robotic surgery, a much finer repair of the junction between the bladder and the urethra is possible, greatly reducing the risk of scarring. Blood transfusions are rarely needed anymore. Thought leaders around the world who’ve performed open and robotic prostatectomies prefer robotic-assisted procedures for these reasons, and men with prostate cancer are asking for this.’

For women, Dr. Rolandelli says that robotic surgery has distinct advantages for prolapse of the rectum. “We pull the rectum up and attach it to the sacrum,” he explains. “There are so many little nerves and blood vessels in that area that robotics is very helpful. You can see every detail, making sutures and tying knots very easy.”

The Woman’s Cancer Center, part of Carol G. Simon Cancer Center, performed over 500 robotic procedures in the past year. Robotics has changed the way surgery is performed, enabling patients with uterine and early-stage cervical cancers to be treated in a minimally invasive way. This usually means a one-night hospital stay, less blood loss and less postoperative pain. “Robotic surgery has really improved the overall quality of care for our patient population and provides access to the best technology available,” says Daniel Tobias, MD, director for the Woman’s Cancer Center. Another benefit is for patients who need additional therapy, treatment can usually begin sooner. “Based on the types of radical robotic surgeries we perform and our expertise with robots, we have been fortunate to enable patients from the tri-state area to take advantage of our services,” says Brian Sterne, MD, associate director for the Woman’s Cancer Center.

I f the words “robotic surgery” conjure images of a space-age intelligent machine wielding a scalpel — think of something between Star Wars’ R2D2 and Star Trek’s Data — then listen to Rolando H. Rolandelli, MD, chairman of surgery for Morristown Medical Center, describe what robotic-assisted procedure is really like: “Robotics allows you to work very precisely in areas deep within the body — but the surgeon is always the one doing the work,” says Dr. Rolandelli, who specializes in gastrointestinal and colorectal surgery.

At Atlantic Health System’s Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center, surgeons use the da Vinci® Surgical System for a wide range of applications, including some cardiac, gynecological, oral and urologic procedures. It is often used for cancer surgeries of the bladder, cervix, endometrium, kidneys, ovaries and prostate.

What happens in the operating room? “The surgeon sits at a console where he or she sees brightly lit, high-resolution, three-dimensional, real-time images of the interior of the patient’s body sent from a videoscope with a pair of cameras on a robotic arm,” Dr. Rolandelli says. “To operate, you slide two fingers on each hand into little rings that control the movements of the surgical tools — micro-instruments — with great precision in very small spaces. With your feet, you operate pedals that actuate and switch instruments.”

“Robotic surgery for Morristown Medical Center. ‘When we use a laparoscope to operate, we have two-dimensional vision but with the robot, we have three-dimensional vision. During robotic surgery, we still introduce the instrument into the body, but through tiny tubes that just puncture the skin, leaving little scarring.’

Another doctor remains at the side of the surgical patient at all times during a procedure. Meanwhile, robotic arms hold the surgical site open. ‘Those arms don’t get tired the way human arms can during a longer procedure,’ Dr. Rolandelli says. ‘And there are other advantages. If a surgeon is working on the esophagus, which is located behind the heart, a robotic arm can elevate the beating heart gently and steadily — the pulsing motion is transmitted upward and doesn’t disturb the surgeon.’

THE PATIENT’S PERSPECTIVE

The benefit for the patient? Decreased risk of infection. Less scarring, blood loss and pain. Reduced risk of complications from injury to surrounding structures in the body. A faster recovery — and a shorter hospital stay. When a patient has a robotic-assisted procedure, she is able to leave the hospital sooner.”

For more information on robotic surgery, visit: atlantichealth.org/robotic.
### cpr registration Form

**Attn:** Community Health

**Date(s):** ______________________________________ **Location:** ___  NMC    ___  MHWC    ___  SHWC

Make checks out and send form to:

___  New: $70   ___  Renewal: $60

If renewal, date current card expires: _________________

Eve. Phone  __________________

**Mailing Address _______________________________________________**

**Name  _______________________________________________________**

Refunds will not be issued for classes that are not attended; you may reschedule within six months.

**payment has been received.**

Please note that you are NOT registered until full registration is required:

__ New Provider

**BASIC LIFE SUPPORT AND FIRST AID**

The American Heart Association strongly promotes knowledge and proficiency in ACLS, PALS and ALS and has developed instructional materials for this purpose. Use of these materials in an educational course does not represent course sponsorship by the American Heart Association (AHA). Any fees charged for such a course, except for a portion of fees needed for course materials, do not represent income to the AHA.

---

### Behavioral Health Programs

#### New Provider

**Mental Health:** Newtov Medical Center

**Community Health Center:** 175 High St., Newton, NJ 07860

Registration is required for all programs:

1-800-247-8340

---

### Free Health Screenings

**Milton Medical Center**

**Newton Medical Center**

**Sparta Health & Wellness Center**

Use form below to register.

---

### Registration and payment are required before confirmation in class.

**Please Print**

**Name**

**Mailing Address**

---

### Health Care Provider CPR ---

**New Provider**

**Tuesday, March 5 and March 12 7-10pm**

**Saturday, March 9 9am-3pm**

**Saturday, March 20 9am-3pm**

**Saturday, April 6 9am-3pm**

**Tuesday, April 9 and April 16 7-10pm**

**Saturday, April 13 9am-3pm**

**Saturday, April 27 9am-3pm**

**Tuesday, May 7 and May 14 7-10pm**

**Saturday, May 11 9am-3pm**

**Thursday, May 16 and May 23 7-10pm**

**Tuesday, May 18 9am-3pm**

**Health Care Provider CPR ---**

**Monday, March 4 6:30-10:30pm**

**Monday, March 18 6:30-10:30pm**

**Wednesday, March 20 6:30-10:30pm**

**Wednesday, April 3 6:30-10:30pm**

**Friday, April 19 6:30-10:30pm**

**Tuesday, May 25 6:30-10:30pm**

**Thursday, May 9 6:30-10:30pm**

**Saturday, May 25 6:30-10:30pm**

**Heartsaver CPR for Adults, Children and Infants With AED**

**Friday, March 1 7-10pm**

**Wednesday, March 6 7-10pm**

**Monday, March 14 7-10pm**

**Saturday, March 16 9am-1pm**

**Tuesday, March 26 7-10pm**

**Thursday, April 4 7-10pm**

**Thursday, April 11 7-10pm**

**Monday, April 22 7-10pm**

**Tuesday, April 30 7:30-10:30pm**

**Wednesday, May 1 7-10pm**

**Monday, May 17 7-10pm**

**Monday, May 20 7-10pm**

**Friday, May 21 7-10pm**

**Heartsaver First Aid With Adult, Child and Infant CPR and AED**

**Saturday, March 23 9am-7pm**

**Saturday, April 20 9am-7pm**

**Saturday, May 4 9am-7pm**

---

### Important Information

- Please note that you are NOT registered until full payment has been received.
- Refunds will not be issued for classes that are not attended.
- Class size is limited to 20.
- Dress comfortably.
- In case of inclement weather, please contact the conference center at 973-379-8340 to confirm class time.
- All programs are subject to a $70 admittance fee.
Lung cancer causes more deaths in the United States than any other cancer—and more deaths than breast, cervix, colon and prostate cancer combined. Why? Most lung cancer patients discover their disease in later stages—when they have symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath or pain,” says Dr. Widmann, who is I-ELCAP’s principal investigator at Atlantic Health System. “But these are usually late-stage lung cancers that are more challenging to treat.”

Early detection, he says, makes the difference. “There are only two ways to stop lung cancer from killing people,” he says. “One way is to never smoke. The other way is to catch cancers as early as possible. That’s what we’re trying to do here.”

Levine’s success story underscores the benefits of early lung cancer screening—and of the I-ELCAP study, says Dr. Widmann, surgical director of the lung cancer program at Carol G. Simon Cancer Center for both Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center. “The best hope for curing lung cancer is detecting it as early as possible,” he says. “The I-ELCAP study is looking at the best ways to use low-dose CT scans to do that.”

Joining the study can help reduce cancer deaths for others—and for you, Dr. Widmann says. “So far, we’ve screened 364 people and found three early-stage lung cancers,” Dr. Widmann notes. “All three people have been treated and are doing just fine. It’s very gratifying.”

You may be a candidate for CT scanning through the I-ELCAP study if you are over age 40 and have a 40 pack-year smoking history—defined as smoking half a pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years, one pack a day for 10 years, or two packs a day for five years. You may also be a candidate if you are over age 40 and have had significant exposure to secondhand smoke or to other airborne carcinogens.

If you are accepted, you will receive a CT scan. The scans use a low dose of radiation, which exposes you to a fraction of the radiation you would receive from a standard chest x-ray or conventional abdominal CT scan. “Most people will not have cancer,” Dr. Widmann says. “About one in four may have small nodules, but most of those will not be cancers, either. But by scanning people at high risk, you find those who can receive lifesaving treatment.”

For more information on the trial, please call 908-522-6104.
Is Bariatric Surgery Right for You?

The Surprising Answer

Until recently, weight-loss surgery was reserved for people battling extreme obesity — those needing to lose 100 pounds or more. Today, bariatric procedures are a real option at lower weights for people with life-threatening health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or severe sleep apnea.

“I don’t think people or their doctors realize they may be candidates,” says Michael Nusbaum, MD, chief of bariatric surgery and surgical director for the Atlantic Health Weight & Wellness Center at Morristown Medical Center. “Losing excess weight is wonderful for your appearance and quality of life, but the health benefits can be immeasurable. When you see diabetes go into remission within 72 hours after some procedures, for example, that’s a real benefit.”

“Being overweight can also affect fertility,” says Ajay Goyal, MD, director of bariatric surgery for Overlook Medical Center. “Many bariatric patients are women who are in their childbearing years. Weight loss may enable a woman to conceive without fertility treatments.”

According to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), weight-loss procedures may also improve health conditions such as sleep apnea, asthma, migraines, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, polycystic ovarian syndrome, stress urinary incontinence and gastroesophageal reflux disease.

As more and more scientific research documents the health advantages, the profile of the ideal candidate for weight-loss surgery has changed, Dr. Nusbaum says. “We follow the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines. A person with a body mass index (BMI) of 35 or higher [a weight of 230 if you are 5 feet 8 inches tall] and a serious, weight-related medical condition may be a candidate. And in 2011, one type of gastric band — the LAP-BAND® — was approved by the FDA for people with a BMI as low as 30 [a weight of 197 pounds if you’re 5 feet 8] if they also have excess weight and maintain the loss,” Dr. Nusbaum says.

LAP-BAND® — was approved by the FDA for people with a BMI as low as 30 [a weight of 197 pounds if you’re 5 feet 8] if they also have excess weight and maintain the loss.

THE SELF-PAY OPTION

Health insurance often covers bariatric surgery procedures, but not always. That’s no reason to miss out on the benefits you meet weight and health guidelines. The private-pay option for the REALIZE® Band or the LAP-BAND® may be for you. This $14,000 package includes surgery, consultations before and after the procedure, a one-hour postoperative nutritional counseling session, free access to support groups and an eating adjustment class.

For more information about bariatric surgery, contact: Atlantic Health Weight & Wellness Center at Morristown Medical Center, 973-971-7144.

Atlantic Health Weight & Wellness Center at Overlook Medical Center, 908-522-5794.

For more information on bariatric surgery, visit atlantichealth.org/weightloss.
Help Prevent Head and Neck Cancers

Although three-quarters of head and neck cancers are caused by tobacco and alcohol use, another cause is the human papillomavirus (HPV), according to the National Cancer Institute.

- Avoid smoking and chewing tobacco (nicotine)
- Don’t drink too much alcohol
- Practice safe sex — infection with HPV, the most common sexually transmitted infection, is a risk factor
- Two HPV vaccines have been approved by the FDA.

Facing a cancer diagnosis today is not nearly as bleak as it once was. More treatment options exist than ever before, opening up an array of choices. For patients with head and neck cancers, such as larynx, mouth/oral cavity, throat and thyroid, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Medical is offering more options, all in one location. “Rather than recommending the same treatment for every patient with the same diagnosis, we can individualize the treatment,” says Erik Cohen, MD, an otolaryngologist specializing in head and neck surgical oncology who joined Atlantic Health System in 2012. Dr. Cohen’s expertise covers cancers in the mouth and throat, and may involve the esophagus, lymph nodes and thyroid (but not the brain, which falls under the purview of neurosurgery).

Dr. Cohen is driven by the size and location of the tumor, as well as what will be most likely to cure the cancer and offer the best functional outcome for the patient. In these cases, this means preserving maximum swallowing function and speech quality.

Among the causes of these cancers is the HPV virus, which has also been linked to cervical cancer in women. Physicians now see it as an increasingly common cause of cancer of the base of the tongue and tonsils. The good news, Dr. Cohen says, is that these cases usually have a better prognosis than smoking-related head and neck cancers.

Patients who have been diagnosed with cancer of the head and neck may have the option of endoscopic surgery (which uses a tube with a small camera on the end), or robotic surgery if the tumor is small to medium-sized. In the future, Dr. Cohen expects to do more robotic surgeries because they mean a lesser invasive experience for the patient, resulting in fewer complications and faster recoveries.

“You can take the tumor out through the mouth, without doing an open surgical procedure,” he says. In the case of a larger or more advanced tumor, robotic surgery may not be possible; chemotherapy and radiation might be the best options for those patients.

No matter what course of treatment patients choose after a cancer diagnosis, they may have various needs outside of that treatment. Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Medical Center provides many support services free of charge to all patients. “If people need help dealing with the emotional impacts or financial or transportation issues, social workers and support groups can be helpful,” Dr. Cohen says. “During treatment, a lot of patients have difficulty swallowing temporally, so having the support of a dietitian is helpful.”

Such support can make all the difference during cancer treatment. “These services aren’t necessarily available everywhere,” Dr. Cohen says. But they’re an important element that is truly comprehensive, while being individualized for every patient, too.

Therapy encourages patients to take part in physical therapy – speech therapy — and distills their pain from them, according to research.

“Pet therapy is an important part of the overall healing culture. Atlantic Health System cultivates it,” she adds.

Pet therapy falls into two categories, says Mary Beth Leaton, MS, RN, CCRN, clinical nurse specialist for Morristown Medical Center ICU/Medical ICU.

Animal-assisted therapy is simply socialization with a pet to induce the relaxation responses and aid healing. But a physician may also integrate the dog into the patient’s plan of care. Walking the dog, for example, might provide therapy for stroke victims, she says, that is called animal-assisted therapy.

At Morristown Medical Center, a study is under way to examine the effects of pet therapy on postoperative joint replacements including a patient’s pain level, the amount of pain medication used and overall sense of well-being. Those patients who continue their base therapy at Atlantic Rehabilitation

Planning a Legacy Gift

When you think “bequest,” what comes to mind? If you picture an elderly person of means making an end-of-life plan, please think again. Whether you are young or old, wealthy or middle-class, a bequest can ensure that your legacy lives on and that you can continue to make a difference in the organizations that matter most to you.

Whether you choose to include a bequest when creating your will or add it later with a codicil, to begin your legacy, use this language:

“I give, devise and bequeath to the (insert either Foundation for Morristown Medical Center, a charitable corporation located in Morristown, N.J. or Newton Medical Center Foundation, a charitable corporation located in Newton, N.J.) the sum of Dollars ($_____) (or percent of the residue of my estate) or (other personal or real property appropriately described) to be used for (as part of my bequest to be used for) (as part of the overall healing culture)

Questions? At the Foundation for Morristown Medical Center, contact Cynthia W. O’Donnell, JD, director of gift planning, at cwodonnell@atlantichealth.org. At the Newton Medical Center Foundation, contact Megan Sandow, chief development officer, 973-579-8456 or megan.sandow@atlantichealth.org.

Atlantic Health System is state-of-the-art technologies and medical team, doctors can tailor treatments to each patient’s needs.

Call the Dogs

Pets can be a healing presence — and research proves it.

A few months ago, Newton Medical Center admitted a man, diagnosed with dementia and depression, who refused to leave his bed or speak. One day, a therapy dog and handler walked by his room. He got up and followed the dog into the lounge.

“He was petting the dog and interacting with everyone on a level we’d never seen,” says Barbara Mattheos, RN, inpatient psychiatric nurse coordinator for Newton Medical Center. “For that brief moment, it brought him out. It moved us all to tears.”

It was a real-life example of the benefit of animal-assisted therapy that inspired the creation of Atlantic Health System’s “Healing Paws” program, which arranges pet therapy visits to patients through certifying agencies such as Creature Comforts, Dr. Hubble’s and The Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dogs. The agencies make sure the dogs (and sometimes cats and rabbits) have health documentation and are suitable for their main job: interacting with patients.

Pet therapy encourages patients to take part in physical therapy – speech therapy — and distills their pain from them, according to research.

“Pet therapy is important for many reasons. One is that it reduces the patient’s stress and improves the patient’s perception of pain,” says Jennifer M. Jackson, RN, CCRN, manager of ICU/Medical ICU at Atlantic Rehabilitation System. According to Jackson, a bedside pet helps to keep the patient more engaged and involved in their care. “It decreases stress hormones and blood pressures,” says Denise Fochoso, MS, RN, CCRN, manager of ICU/Medical ICU/ Hyperbaric/Nursing Resource Center for Morristown Medical Center. “In research with children, the benefit of petting an animal lasted three to four hours in terms of pain reduction.” That makes pet-assisted therapy an important part of the overall healing culture Atlantic Health System cultivates, she adds.

Pet therapy falls into two categories, says Mary Beth Leaton, MS, RN, CCRN, clinical nurse specialist for Morristown Medical Center ICU/Medical ICU. Animal-assisted therapy is simply socialization with a pet to induce the relaxation responses and aid healing. But a physician may also integrate the dog into the patient’s plan of care. Walking the dog, for example, might provide therapy for stroke victims, she says, that is called animal-assisted therapy.

Prospective patients may visit Atlantic Health System’s Animal-Assisted Therapy webpage for more information.

Institute will also continue in the study to determine the impact of pet therapy through the rehabilitation phase. Future studies are planned to examine the impact of pet therapy on the geriatric population and The Women’s Association of Morristown Medical Center has generously donated to the program for expansion and future research in all aspects of pet therapy. Leaton hopes these research efforts will one day lead to a symposium on animal-assisted therapy hosted at Atlantic Health System, growing their reputation as leaders in the field. In the meantime, pet therapy teams regularly visit some Atlantic Health System units, and all patients and families can request a pet visit and experiences for themselves the benefits of Healing Paws.

WANTED Therapists and Owners

Do you own a pet? Are you looking for dogs and owners to get certified in pet-assisted therapy? For more information, contact:

Atlantic Health System Healing Arts atlantichealth.org/pettherapy

Less-Invasive Options for Patients With HEAD AND NECK CANCER

Thanks to Atlantic Health System's state-of-the-art technologies and medical team, doctors can tailor treatments to each patient’s needs.