Well Aware

Keeping Your Family Healthy This Winter

School Nurses Take on Tummy Aches
A Shot at Flu Prevention

CyberKnife Solves Yet Another Mystery of the Brain

atlantichealth.org
Dear Friend,

At Atlantic Health, we continue to attract top physicians to our medical staff and bring you the latest medical procedures and technology in the area. In this issue, you’ll read about our physicians making strides in the field of children’s orthopedics and sleep medicine. This issue will also tell you about a new medical study for children with recurrent stomachaches, an all-too-common problem that school nurses deal with in a very imaginative way.

So once again, as a new year approaches, we at Atlantic Health are here to guide you in making wiser health decisions in the years to come—from tips to quit smoking to ongoing information about nutrition and fitness. Here at Atlantic Health, we want to help you make your new year a healthy one.

Very best wishes from our family to yours,

Joseph Trunfio
President and CEO
ATLANTIC HEALTH

LETTER FROM THE CEO

WELL AWARE

Protocols Your Family from the Flu This Season

Your children leave the house in warm coats, mittens, scarves and hats. Think you’re doing your part to protect them from the flu? Unfortunately, the flu is highly contagious, and it’s spread through germs—not cold weather.

The best way to protect your children—and yourself—is as simple as getting a flu shot.

“As many as 36,000 people in the United States die each year from complications of influenza,” says Jan Schwarz-Miller, MD, director of occupational medicine for Atlantic Health. “The flu is highly communicable, and a person can infect others for a full day before or she experiences any symptoms, meaning everyone around that person has been exposed to the disease.”

To prevent getting and spreading the flu, Dr. Schwarz-Miller recommends an annual flu shot, which is available for everyone and is a must for children 6 months to 5 years old, seniors and those who work in childcare and health care.

Dr. Schwarz-Miller leads an annual initiative to vaccinate Atlantic Health employees, medical staff and volunteers, keeping them healthy so they can help keep their patients and their families healthy. Last year, a vaccination drill was held to evaluate how Atlantic Health would respond to an epidemic. During the two, day-long clinics, more than 2,000 employees received the flu shot.

We want your feedback!

What do you think of Well Aware?

Do you feel Well Aware is helping you to make better health decisions for you and your family? Tell us how, and you will be eligible to win a $100 Target gift card!

Send us an example of how we were able to help you:
• make an educated choice
• find a physician or healthcare expert
• explain a misunderstood medical condition
• care better for a loved one

Along with your name, address and phone number, indicate which article helped you to gain better insight into the medical community and email us at well.aware@atlantichealth.org or send it to:
Atlantic Health, Attn: Well Aware
PO Box 1905 | Morristown, NJ 07962

Must be 18 years or older to enter. Atlantic Health employees and their immediate families are not eligible for the drawing. We welcome your comments and suggestions along with your entry.

atlantichealth.org

Your Body in 3-D

Have you ever wondered what exactly the pancreas does? Why does your child need ear tubes and how do they work? These answers and more can be found on our website atlantichealth.org, through Human Atlas, an exciting new feature on our site, that uses video and 3-D models of the body.

Whether you’ve just been diagnosed with diabetes and want to learn more about the condition, your doctor recommends an angiogram and you want to learn more or your child is doing research for a school project, simply visit the website and click on “Health Information,” then “Human Atlas,” or the Human Atlas image in the right-hand column of the homepage.

Select from an encyclopedia list of health conditions, procedures or new technology. More than 2,000 users have already benefited from the easy-to-follow and easy-to-understand video demonstrations and slide presentations.

Check out atlantichealth.org today and click on Human Atlas to learn how your body works—in an innovative new way!

We apologize for the omission of the following information in the article, Living with Lymphedema (V2N4)

• feelings of skin tightness
• swelling in the arm(s), leg(s), face, neck, abdomen or genitals
• aching or heaviness in the involved body part
• tightness in jewelry or clothing in a specific area

Did you know?

Lymphedema is graded according to severity, and is referred to as either stage one, stage two or stage three. The signs and symptoms mentioned above depict the early stages of lymphedema. Although lymphedema cannot be prevented, its progression into more severe stages can be controlled through early detection and management. If you notice persistent swelling, it is important to seek medical advice from your physician.

* Lymphedema is rarely painful. Pain associated with warmth or redness in the affected area may indicate infection and should be reported to your doctor immediately.

atlantichealth.org
When Ruth Jackson, MD, the first female orthopedic surgeon, started her practice in Dallas, Texas, 75 years ago, she was met with resistance and was even excluded from the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons for several years. Even today, fewer than 11 percent of women choose to enter an orthopedic surgery residency program, though half of all medical school graduates are women. A female pediatric orthopedic surgeon is even more rare.

Times are changing, however. Barbara Minkowitz, MD, and Samara Friedman, MD—both of whom are pediatric orthopedic surgeons—have recently joined the staff at Morristown Memorial Hospital and Overlook Hospital.

Little Kids, Big Injuries

With more athletic options available and at younger ages, the risk of pediatric orthopedic injuries has increased dramatically within the past 20 years. However, the number of pediatric orthopedic surgeons hasn’t increased to match that demand.

“While sports at an early age can be beneficial, children’s bodies aren’t necessarily ready for the physical impact this can create,” says Dr. Friedman. “As a result, children are sustaining more severe injuries earlier and that can impact their growth and development. Pediatricians often want to refer their patients to pediatric orthopedic surgeons.”

From a Female’s Perspective

Parents may feel that it’s best to have a female perspective on their daughter’s injuries. The girls in turn might feel more comfortable with female physicians.

“Being a mother affects my treatment, because I have experienced things with my kids and I can relate to the parents and children,” says Dr. Minkowitz. “You can be truly sympathetic to the child’s pain and the parents’ concerns, and it’s completely possible to empathize with any situation.”

To speak to an Atlantic Health representative about this topic, or to obtain a physician referral, call 973-656-6916, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Reduce the Risk

1. Help keep your kids safe by ensuring they wear properly fitting, appropriate gear for their chosen activity, including helmets, wrist guards and elbow and knee pads.

2. Make sure your child is warmed up (and properly trained) before hitting the field for any athletic activity.

3. Talk to your child about how to recognize an injury—and not to play through the pain.

Did you know? Because of their unique bone structure, girls injure themselves at a rate four times greater than that of boys.
In the past, many people felt they had to travel to New York City for their major medical concerns. Not anymore. Overlook Hospital has evolved into a regional medical facility capable of caring for your family’s healthcare needs no matter how big or small.

“Overlook Hospital is an example of the recent trend in community hospitals becoming regional medical centers,” says Alan Lieber, chief operating officer for Overlook Hospital. “We want to meet the needs of the extended community and offer specialized services that you can’t find in all medical facilities.”

**Specialized Expansion**

Overlook’s new Medical Arts Center Two building houses several specialties that have expanded into full comprehensive centers of care. The complex is home to the Women’s Health Center; the Pain Management Center; Cancer Center; Breast Center with digital mammography and advanced equipment; Wound Care Center; and the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, which includes a Brain Tumor Center, comprehensive Stroke Center and epilepsy program, as well as neurointerventional radiology.

**Equipped for Any Emergency**

At Overlook Hospital, the emergency department (ED) has been expanded to include services not typically found in a community setting. The ED is now separated into pediatric and adult areas, with a special section for seniors that features easier-to-maneuver beds and stools, along with informational signs in larger fonts. The ED also includes a chest pain observation unit, a critical-care unit and a federally funded area for decontamination.

**Focused on Care**

Despite offering numerous advanced specialties, Overlook has not lost the patient-focused, personalized care you expect from a community hospital. You are still greeted with a friendly smile, and you still have access to the convenience of valet parking in a neighborhood setting.

“We are a very service-oriented hospital,” Lieber says. “We’re not just providing medical care, we are meeting the needs of the whole person and his or her family members. We offer free massages to our hospital patients and a concierge service for visitors that helps them find local accommodations or other non-medical services. The Medical Arts Center Two complex provides services in a spa-like atmosphere to help patients relax.”

**Are You a Patient or a Consumer?**

The choice is yours!

With more resources and health information available on the Internet, many people are taking a proactive approach to their healthcare decision-making process by becoming conscious consumers instead of passive patients. No longer are patients simply following the doctor’s orders; instead, they are researching options and making educated decisions about their healthcare choices. Discerning healthcare consumers are also looking for regional medical centers with advanced specialties like those offered at Overlook Hospital.

For more information about Overlook Hospital, visit atlantichealth.org.
You Gotta Have Friends

“How does one keep from ‘growing old inside’? Surely only in community. The only way to make friends with time is to stay friends with people…”—Robert McAfee Brown, author

For seniors, friendship can mean more than a listening ear or a hand to hold. According to recent research, having a strong network of friends can lead to a longer, healthier life. Building friendships can help lower a person’s risk of depression and be an important part of a prescription for a longer life. In fact, Harvard researchers recently found social activities—including playing bingo or attending church—are as important to seniors’ health as regular exercise.

“Humans are social beings and enjoy the comfort and support that visiting with friends and family can provide,” says Vineesh Bhatnagar, MD, director of geriatrics for Overlook Hospital. “The mental benefits of friendship really do have an effect on the physical body, particularly on neurological health.”

Further supporting the link between friendship and long life is a separate study by the Australian Longitudinal Study of Aging, which followed 1,500 people over age 70 for 10 years. Researchers discovered that people with a strong network of friends lived longer than those without friends.

The study also found that those with many friendships had a reduced risk of death—even more than people who maintain close contact with their children or family. Researchers suggested the reason why seniors benefit more from friendships is because friends encourage each other to better care for themselves as well as help through difficult times in life.

Take Action to Live Longer

Engaging in a new hobby and attending a support group or seminar are just some of the ways seniors can begin to build relationships (for more suggestions, see “Making Friends”).

“When others take a genuine interest in what a senior has to say, it can change that senior’s outlook on life and help him or her focus less on illness and the effects of aging,” Dr. Bhatnagar says. “The best message to seniors is that they are not alone, and there are opportunities and people who want to get to know them—sometimes all it takes is someone who will listen.”

Making Friends

- Make a standing date. Arrange to meet a friend for lunch every Wednesday, go to a movie the first Friday of the month with a family member or start a game night once a month.
- Get out there. Whether through volunteering at Overlook Hospital or attending a group or event just for seniors, shared experiences help build friendships. For volunteer opportunities, visit atlantichealth.org and click on “Ways to Give.”
- Don’t stay glued to the tube. While you may enjoy watching a favorite program, don’t let the television—or the Internet—become a replacement for human contact.

To learn more about our geriatric services, call 908-964-8010.
SUSPECT YOUR CHILD may be faking his stomachache? If he has a math test he’s been dreading, chances are the pains could be caused by anxiety. However, they could be signs of something more serious.

“A stomachache can be very real,” says Nader Youssef, MD, pediatric gastroenterologist and director of the Center for Pediatric Irritable Bowel and Motility Disorders for the Goryeb Children’s Hospital at Atlantic Health. “When I surveyed school nurses, one thing I learned was that they felt helpless. They didn’t know what to do for kids who kept coming back to them for stomach pain. I wanted to provide education that would help school nurses better care for these students.”

Defining the Condition

Recurrent abdominal pain occurs when a child suffers at least 12 weeks of abdominal discomfort in a year. The pain is usually a daily discomfort and isn’t associated with any other type of illness or symptoms, such as fever, vomiting or diarrhea.

As many as 20 percent of middle and high school students suffer from recurrent abdominal pain, so it is vital that school nurses understand how to recognize and care for the condition. Typically, if a child has episodes of pain that affect daily function or cause him or her to want to stay in bed, it’s likely recurrent abdominal pain. However, if a child complains of pain and then goes about his or her typical activities once at home, the stomachache may just be an excuse to get out of school.

Taking Intuition Forward

According to Dr. Youssef, school nurses intuitively understand that children with recurrent abdominal pain need something to correct their problem, and rest is often offered as a solution. When nurses feel other issues are playing a part in the pain, such as hunger or constipation, they offer crackers or send them to the bathroom. After recently interacting with Dr. Youssef, school nurses now have another tool available—guided imagery. With this technique, similar to self-hypnosis, children listen to compact discs designed to lead them into a relaxed state.

“Guided imagery uses the power of imagination to aid in healing. The technique helps students focus on something besides their pain,” Dr. Youssef explains. “If they aren’t hurting, they can remain in school instead of heading home, which is a better solution that keeps students from missing class and parents from missing work to care for them.”
Do you toss and turn through the night or feel drained during the day? If so, you may be one of the nearly three-fourths of American women who don’t obtain the recommended hours of sleep they need.

“WOMEN ARE TWICE as likely as men to have difficulty sleeping,” says Federico Cerrone, MD, medical director of the Sleep Disorder Center for Overlook Hospital. “While a woman’s recommended hours of sleep stay the same as she ages, her commitments and life changes may alter her sleep schedule. It’s important for women to get the sleep they need to function during the day, especially since lack of sleep could equal weight gain.”

Here’s a look at common sleep stealers through the ages and ways to get a better night’s rest.

20s
Twenty-somethings often try to balance work, school, social life and family time, sometimes missing the recommended eight hours of sleep.

“Women in this age group should maintain a regular schedule of bedtimes and wake-up times,” says Marc Benton, MD, co-director of the Sleep Disorder Center for Morristown Memorial Hospital. “Avoiding late meals and stimulants like caffeine, alcohol and nicotine before bed also helps.”

30s and 40s
Women in their thirties and forties generally need seven and a half to eight hours of sleep. However, work and family responsibilities may put sleep on the backburner.

While napping with the children may seem tempting, if the nap lasts longer than 20 minutes, it could interfere with the quality of sleep you get that night. Instead, Dr. Benton recommends going to bed earlier to get ample sleep.

50s and above
The sleep patterns you’ll have for the remainder of your life begin to surface in your 50s. However, for many women, the arrival of menopause can disturb their sleep schedules. Menopause-related hormonal changes and hot flashes can make it difficult for women in this age group to obtain the six and a half hours of sleep they need.

“One key to more restful sleep is relaxing about an hour before bed,” Dr. Cerrone says. “Regular exercise and increasing the time spent outdoors can also help women sleep better during menopause.”

Golf (be)Fore Sleep
A new study aims to help women and men sleep better using their favorite leisure activity—golf.

“Playing golf to the best of one’s ability requires concentration, an even temper and good hand and eye coordination,” says Marc Benton, MD, co-director of the Sleep Disorder Center for Morristown Memorial Hospital. “Untreated sleep apnea can negatively affect mental and physical function. Thus, tracking a golfer’s score (handicap) before and after treatment of sleep apnea may provide insight as to whether untreated sleep apnea can negatively affect a golfer’s score.”

Dr. Benton is looking for participants in this new study. For more information on how you can become a part of the Golf Sleep study, call 973-971-4569.

Regardless of your age, Morristown Memorial and Overlook hospitals are here to help if you have trouble sleeping. Through a consultation session, you and your doctor will sit down and evaluate your sleep patterns to help find a cure for your sleep disorder.

For the Sleep Disorder Center at Morristown Memorial Hospital, call 973-971-4569, or for Overlook Hospital, call 908-522-2650, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. For additional information about this health topic or others, visit us online at atlantichealth.org.
**HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

**Literature and Medicine: A Community Dialogue**
A book club focusing on contemporary and classic literature and film that will stimulate discussion of issues facing us all—health/wellness, medical decision-making and end of life care. Registration is required.
**Thursday, December 13**, 1:00 to 3:00 pm  
Overlook Hospital, Medical Library  
99 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit  
Fee: $50

**The Skinny on Bariatric Surgery**
If you or a loved one is considering weight-loss surgery, this session will answer important questions. Registration is required.
**Thursday, January 17**, 5:00 to 7:00 pm  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield

**Cardiac Health Fair**
The 18th annual health fair includes screenings for cholesterol and blood pressure, plus informative talks by cardiologists. Screenings are available to the first 75 registrants. Registration is required.
**Saturday, February 9**, 7:30 am to Noon  
Overlook Hospital, Wallace Auditorium  
99 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit

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**SCREENINGS**

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<th>SCREENING</th>
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| **Body Mass Index/Body Fat Analysis** | Learn how your body fat percentage and BMI impact your heart health. Registration is required.  
**Wednesday, December 12**, January 2, 16, 23 and 30 and February 6  
**Thursday, December 20**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Tuesday, December 18**, Thursdays, January 10 and 24 and February 7  
5:00 to 7:00 pm  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Monday, January 14**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Scotch Plains YMCA  
Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains  
**Thursday, February 7**, 10:00 am to Noon  
5 Points YMCA  
201 Tucker Avenue, Union | **Diabetes**  
Learn your blood sugar and risk factors for Type II diabetes with a nonfasting fingerstick that gives immediate results. Registration is required.  
**Tuesday, December 18**, Thursdays, January 10 and 24 and February 7  
5:00 to 7:00 pm  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Thursday, December 20**, Wednesdays, January 2, 16, 23 and 30 and February 6  
10:00 am to Noon  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield |
| **Blood Pressure** | A normal blood pressure is below 120/80. Learn your numbers and how to reduce your risks for heart attack and stroke. Registration is required.  
**Tuesday, December 11**, **Wednesday, December 19**, Thursdays, January 3 and 31  
5:00 to 7:00 pm  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Wednesday, December 12**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Thursday, December 13**, Tuesdays, January 8, 15, 22, 29, February 5 and 12  
10:00 am to Noon  
Westfield YMCA  
220 Clark Street, Westfield  
**Monday, January 14**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Scotch Plains YMCA  
Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains | **Diabetes and HbA1C**  
Learn your blood sugar and risk factors for Type II diabetes with a nonfasting fingerstick that gives immediate results. For previously diagnosed diabetics only, an HbA1c test, which reveals average blood sugar over the past two to three months, can be performed. Registration is required.  
**Wednesday, January 9**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Walgreens  
120 East First Street, Roselle  
**Friday, January 25**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Summit Board of Health  
512 Springfield Avenue, Summit  
**Saturday, January 26**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Home Depot  
Springfield Avenue, Union  
**Monday, February 11**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Scotch Plains YMCA  
Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains |
| **Hearing** | Have your hearing tested for potential problems. Registration required.  
**Tuesday, January 8**, 10:00 am to Noon  
Summit YMCA  
67 Maple Street, Summit | **Hypnosis for Weight Loss**  
Learn how to permanently lose weight using hypnotic suggestions and proven behavior modification techniques. Tuesdays, December 11 and January 22, 7:00 to 9:00 pm  
Overlook Hospital, Conference Room A |

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To register for any of the Health and Wellness programs, call 973-666-6916.

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**ALTERATIVE MEDICINE**

**Hypnosis for Weight Loss**
Learn how to permanently lose weight using hypnotic suggestions and proven behavior modification techniques. Tuesdays, December 11 and January 22, 7:00 to 9:00 pm  
Overlook Hospital, Conference Room A
To register for the following Atlantic Health programs, please call the number provided below each section.

**HEAlTH AnD WEllnESS**
A book club focusing on contemporary and classic literature and film that will stimulate discussion of issues facing us with a nonfasting fingerstick that gives immediate results.

**Heart Health.** Registration is required.

- **Thursday, December 13,** 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- **Tuesday, December 18**
- **Thursdays, January 10 and 24**
- **February 7**

**Overlook Hospital, Medical Library**

**Thursday, December 20**

**Wednesdays, January 2, 16, 23 and 30**

**February 6**

**Westfield YMCA**
120 East First Street, Roselle

**Walgreens**
120 East First Street, Roselle

**Cholesterol**
Total cholesterol, HDL and TC/HDL ratio are measured using a simple fingerstick. Fasting is not required but registration is required.

**Tuesday, December 11, 10:00 am to Noon**

**Summit YMCA**
67 Maple Street, Summit

**Thursday, January 3, 10:00 am to Noon**

**5 Points YMCA**
201 Tucker Avenue, Union

**Wednesday, January 9, 10:00 am to Noon**

**Westfield YMCA**
220 Clark Street, Westfield

**Overlook Hospital, Wallace Auditorium**

**Saturday, January 26, 10:00 am to Noon**

**Home Depot**
1976 Morris Avenue, Friberger Park, Union

**Scotch Plains YMCAs**

- **Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains**
- **Thursday, January 24, 10:00 am to Noon**
- **Westfield Board of Health**
- **425 East Broad Street, Westfield**
- **Thursday, February 7, 10:00 am to Noon**
- **5 Points YMCA**
- **201 Tucker Avenue, Union**

**Westfield Board of Health**
5 Points YMCA
220 Clark Street, Westfield

**Thursday, January 17, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm**

**Union Public Library**
1980 Morris Avenue, Friberger Park, Union

**Cardiac**
Free screening includes cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure and counseling on a heart-friendly lifestyle. Registration is required.

**Thursday, January 17, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm**

**Union Municipal Hall, Bonnel Room, Second Floor,**
1976 Morris Avenue, Union

**All screenings offer professional individualized counseling and educational hand-outs.**

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**Adult Diabetes**
For adults living with diabetes.

**First Monday of each month, 7:00 to 8:30 pm**

**Overlook Hospital**
99 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit

**Substance Abuse Family**
Learn ways to cope with substance-abusing family members.

No registration required.

**Every Tuesday, 6:30 to 8:00 pm**

**Atlantic Behavioral Health Outpatient**
46-48 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit

**Adults with Epilepsy and Caretakers**
Join other adults with epilepsy or those caring for family or friends with epilepsy. Share experiences and strategies on how to best live with this disorder. Registration is required.

**Second Thursday of every month, 6:30 to 8:00 pm**

**Overlook Hospital,**
Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, Conference Center
99 Beauvoir Avenue, Summit

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Get the latest health and wellness news by signing up for your free, personalized e-health newsletter at atlantichealth.org.
IN THE COURSE of your life, you may have had someone suggest you attend a support group. If you didn’t go, there’s something you should know.

“People often assume support groups are depressing or upsetting, so they avoid attending,” says Catherine Owens, oncology patient services coordinator for the Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Atlantic Health. “Many groups deal with difficult subjects, but they may also use humor, and members offer positive ways to cope with a given situation. Participation in a support group can be very beneficial.”

Here to Help

At Atlantic Health, an array of support groups is available to help individuals cope with conditions as well as for caregivers. Some are focused on education, while others act as a forum to discuss feelings and thoughts. From support groups that meet every week with no start or end date to those with defined beginning and end dates, Atlantic Health has a support group to meet your needs.

The following are a few conditions with support groups at Atlantic Health:
- specific cancers (breast, prostate, etc.)
- arthritis
- gambling addiction
- diabetes
- osteoporosis
- chemical dependency

“Group treatment is often the treatment of choice—especially for people dealing with chemical dependency,” says Donna Hansbury, network manager of behavioral health for Atlantic Health. “However, people must be willing to participate in the group, and they may not be quite ready when first learning of a diagnosis. Once they are ready for a support or treatment group, we welcome them with open arms and help them get started quickly.”

To speak to an Atlantic Health representative about our support groups, call 973-656-6916, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
A few weeks ago you were in a car accident, and your airbag didn’t inflate. The doctor said you were fine, but now you’re having problems with your vision and can’t seem to concentrate at work. Could you have a mild brain injury?

A MILD BRAIN INJURY (MBI) occurs when the brain is disrupted physiologically in a traumatic situation like a car accident, fall, stroke or concussion. Until recently, not much attention was paid to the condition. However, soldiers returning from Iraq with MBI have brought this diagnosis to the forefront.

Initial signs of MBI include loss of consciousness, memory loss or a feeling of being dazed or confused. The long-term effects may be much more subtle, and many people may not even know they’ve been seriously injured.

“After an accident or injury, a person may go back to his or her daily activities and not know why he or she is having attention problems, short-term memory loss, trouble speaking or difficulty processing information,” says Bonnie Feldman, speech language pathologist, MACCC, coordinator for the Mild Brain Injury Program at Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute. “He or she may know something’s wrong but can’t figure out what it is. That’s where we come in.”

On the Brain

Atlantic Health’s Mild Brain Injury Program provides a multidisciplinary approach for patients with MBI. The program concentrates on educating patients regarding the topic of Mild Brain Injury and providing strategies that allow patients to function in their usual environment. Neuropsychological testing and a screening interview are provided prior to the patient beginning the MBI program. Patients then meet with a speech and occupational therapist twice a week for 8 to 12 weeks, learning strategies to help them return to their normal lives.

“Individuals with mild brain injury often haven’t worked in a while and may have lost self-confidence and structure in their daily lives,” Feldman says. “ Patients establish structure by using daily planners and to-do lists. Writing things down can help free up space in the brain and get them through the day more easily.”

To speak to an Atlantic Health representative about MBI, or to obtain a physician referral, call 973-656-6916, Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.
Our arteries and veins work together to carry blood to and from the heart to the rest of the body. When this connection is broken, a dangerous and sometimes fatal bleeding can result. Sen. Johnson was lucky. The South Dakota senator, 59, has since returned to work.

For Emily DeMasi of Springfield, the bleeding in her brain almost cost her her life.

Several doctors told DeMasi that she had carpal tunnel syndrome when she complained of the numbness in her right hand and arm. But, on a typical day of running errands, searing pain shot through her right arm and she found that she could no longer grip her shopping bags.

“It was as though someone had poured gasoline on my arm and lit me on fire,” DeMasi recalls. “I then lost my ability to speak. That was when I knew I had to get to help.”

At her doctor’s office, DeMasi went into a seizure. Her doctor immediately sent her to the emergency room at Overlook Hospital, where she

You may recall the news story of Sen. Tim Johnson’s stroke, which was caused by bleeding in the brain due to a tangled mass of arteries and veins. The condition, called arteriovenous malformation (AVM), affects about 300,000 Americans—and only about 12 percent of them will ever experience symptoms.

Most people with arteriovenous malformations (AVMs) have few, if any, symptoms. However, about 12 percent of those with AVMs do experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- seizures
- headaches
- muscle weakness or paralysis

- loss of coordination
- difficulty carrying out tasks that require planning
- dizziness
- visual disturbances
- problems using or understanding language

- abnormal sensations (numbness, tingling or spontaneous pain)
- memory deficits
- mental confusion
- hallucinations
- dementia

What to Watch For
underwent a computed tomography (CT) scan. The diagnostic tool revealed that DeMasi had an AVM in her brain.

AVMs Explained
“I had never heard of an AVM before, and that scared me,” DeMasi recalls. “But Dr. Benitez has a talent for putting medical terms into language that the rest of us can understand.”

Ron Benitez, MD, cerebrovascular neurosurgeon and chief of neuroendovascular surgery for the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, explained to DeMasi that AVMs are believed to be birth defects caused by capillaries that did not properly develop. The result is an abnormal connection of arteries and veins that disrupts blood flow.

Typically, blood flows from the heart, through the arteries and into the capillaries. Blood then travels from the capillaries and into the veins, which return the blood to the heart. However, an AVM causes the higher-pressure blood flowing from the arteries to flow directly into the veins, which have thinner walls than capillaries and are not as capable of withstanding the pressure.

“Over time, the higher blood pressure in the veins caused by an AVM exposes an individual to the risk of bleeding,” Dr. Benitez says. “The bleeding usually presents itself in one of three ways—hemorrhagic stroke, seizure or death.”

AVMs are relatively rare and generally affect adults between 20 and 40 years old. AVMs that occur in the brain or spinal cord pose the greatest health risk. Of the estimated 300,000 Americans who have an AVM of the brain or spinal cord, between 2 and 4 percent will experience a bleed.

Proactive Treatment
With the modern technology of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), more and more individuals are learning they have an AVM before they bleed. These individuals can have their AVMs treated before their health is affected.

At the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute, Dr. Benitez and the medical staff tailor a treatment to meet the individual needs of each patient. Treatment options for an AVM include glue embolization, microsurgery and radiosurgery. Often, as in DeMasi’s case, Dr. Benitez and a team of neurological specialists utilize a combination of these treatments.

DeMasi opted to undergo the minimally invasive glue embolization procedure rather than microsurgery. Microsurgery, a method in which a microscope is used to help surgically remove the AVM, often provides immediate treatment. However, DeMasi did not want to assume the risks associated with brain surgery.

“I chose not to have the surgery because I didn’t want to risk losing my speech,” DeMasi explains. “I’m a copywriter, so words are my livelihood.”

During the glue embolization procedure, a medical-grade cousin of crazy glue was injected into the blood vessels in DeMasi’s brain that supplied her AVM. The glue is a liquid when first injected. As it solidifies, it works to shrink the AVM.

DeMasi had glue embolizations at two strategic spots in her brain, but her blood vessels were so coiled that Dr. Benitez could not reach the third. Dr. Benitez and DeMasi then chose CyberKnife radiosurgery.

Innovative Uses for CyberKnife
CyberKnife is a noninvasive treatment that uses image-guided robotics to deliver a high dose of focused radiation directly to the AVM. Overlook Hospital, the first hospital in the New York City metro area to offer CyberKnife, has used this innovative treatment to help individuals with a variety of serious health conditions for almost four years.

CyberKnife is primarily used to treat inoperable brain and spinal cord tumors, inoperable lung cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), liver tumors and prostate cancer. Doctors are hopeful that CyberKnife will be used to treat breast cancers in the near future.

Not only can CyberKnife treat AVMs and inoperable tumors, but it has also revolutionized the quality of patient care. CyberKnife requires no incisions, no anesthesia and no recovery time. The focused radiation minimizes damage to healthy tissue and the number of treatment sessions required.

Good News
Thanks to Dr. Benitez, the medical staff at the Atlantic Neuroscience Institute and CyberKnife, DeMasi is cured of her AVM. But the lessons she learned from the experience will last a lifetime.

“My experience really put things into perspective,” DeMasi says. “Now, I make the very best out of life. I have so much faith in doctors as well. Dr. Benitez saved my life.”
MAYBE YOU’VE THOUGHT about participating in the study of a new treatment or medication because you hope for a cure—either for yourself or for future generations of patients. Or perhaps current standard therapies have not been effective for your condition. A clinical trial may be the key to a longer life or greater relief from symptoms.

What Happens in a Clinical Trial?
Regardless of the details of the particular studies in which they participate, all volunteers receive at least the best current standard of care. Some participants also receive a new, potentially more effective therapy. Among other things, clinical trials have helped physicians develop today’s more targeted and effective approaches to treatment of certain cancers.

What Should I Look For?
It’s essential to seek a healthcare provider with professional affiliations with leading medical organizations and academic hospitals. Atlantic Health’s partnerships with the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, Mount Sinai School of Medicine and national cooperative oncology groups provide access to the latest research from leading healthcare and academic organizations. Such relationships also enhance patients’ safety by ensuring that clinical trials have close, comprehensive oversight.

HELPING MEDICINE ADVANCE
Clinical trials are important last steps along the path from promising laboratory discoveries to life-changing medical advancements.

A HEALTHY WORK setting is not only good for your social life, it’s also great for your health. Why? Workplace stress can wear you down and wear your body out, possibly resulting in illness, absences, fatigue, decreased concentration and career burnout.

“When employees are happy, they have less stress and are more motivated to contribute,” says Lesley Meyer, RN, manager of human resources for Atlantic Health. “That sense of well-being helps keep them healthy.”

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TAKING OUR OWN ADVICE
Atlantic Health works hard to take care of its employees so they can better serve patients. On AARP’s list of top 50 companies for workers aged 50 and older, Atlantic Health recently ranked 15—up from 22 the previous year. From delivering seminars on such topics as financial planning and Medicare to offering free wellness services, continuing art education scholarships and an in-house employee pharmacy, Atlantic Health provides its associates with the tools to live healthy, well-rounded lives.

“Our employees are our most important assets,” says Andy Kovach, vice president of human resources and chief administrative officer for Atlantic Health. “They have made us the premier health system of New Jersey, and we appreciate their contributions.”
OF THE 4,000 chemical compounds found in cigarette smoke, more than 60 are known or suspected carcinogens—cancer-causing agents—according to the American Cancer Society. Making the decision to quit smoking can have immediate and long-term benefits.

From the time of your last cigarette:
- Blood pressure, pulse and body temperature will return to normal within 20 minutes.
- Oxygen levels in your blood will increase, and carbon monoxide levels will drop to normal levels within eight hours.
- Regrowth of nerve endings will begin within two days, restoring your ability to smell and taste.
- Lung function will increase up to 30 percent, and circulation will improve within three months.

Clearing the Air
The Surgeon General’s 2006 report concluded there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. That’s why the entire Morristown Memorial and Overlook Hospital campuses will be smoke free in January 2009.

“A smoke-free campus furthers our mission of good health for every member of our community,” says Lynn Turner, director of human resources for Morristown Memorial and Overlook Hospitals. “We have a committee made up of smokers and nonsmokers to provide resources for employees and community members during this time of transition.”

7 Natural Ways to Curb Your Craving to Smoke

1. Start your day with breakfast and eat smaller meals throughout to stabilize your blood sugar and brain chemistry.
2. Respond to food cravings, but eat only a small portion.
3. Heed smokers’ typical craving for fats, and choose healthy sources, such as olive oil, avocado or nuts.
4. Emphasize whole grains and fresh fruit in your diet.
5. Avoid alcohol, coffee and other drinks you associate with smoking.
6. Skip spicy and sugary foods that can enhance your cravings to smoke.
7. Add a regular dose of moderate exercise. Walking briskly for as little as five minutes can help curb cigarette cravings.
Atlantic Health – Mount Sinai School of Medicine – The Mount Sinai Hospital.

Joining forces for better healthcare.

Atlantic Health is proud to announce that we are the primary academic and clinical affiliate in New Jersey of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and The Mount Sinai Hospital.

This enhances our role in academic medicine and gives us the ability to offer even more advanced care to our patients, in New Jersey and New York.

This alliance brings even more academic talent into Morristown Memorial Hospital, Overlook Hospital and our other facilities, and gives Mount Sinai medical students the opportunity to learn from our leading specialists. This new affiliation also enables physicians from each organization to participate in more collaborative research projects and clinical trials, moving medicine forward.

For information about Atlantic Health visit atlantichealth.org and to learn about Mount Sinai School of Medicine, visit mssm.edu.