

JUNE
2020



SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Treating you better...for life.

Emergencies Can't Wait!

Saint Peter's Always Open to Care for Patients – Safely!

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are staying away from hospital emergency rooms, even when they are experiencing true emergencies, such as chest pains or trouble breathing, for fear of being infected by Coronavirus.

Saint Peter's University Hospital wants you to know that the Emergency Department (ED) has never stopped caring for patients, even in unprecedented healthcare circumstances like COVID-19.

Many hospitals throughout New Jersey, including Saint Peter's, report that patient visits for true emergency conditions have been on the decline since the COVID-19 virus gripped the state, according to the New Jersey Hospital Association. Additionally, there has been a decline in inpatient admissions – up to 40 percent compared to prior to the mandated shelter-in-place guidelines.

"Rest assured, Saint Peter's has separate treatment areas in our Emergency Department to keep you safe," said Borislav Stoev, DO, FACEP, chairman of Emergency Medicine at Saint Peter's. "We encourage you to come to the ED under the same circumstances you would have before the public health crisis. Be smart and safe. Don't avoid critical care – emergencies can't wait!"

Faster treatment means better outcomes, so if you are suffering from any of the following conditions, it's important that you get to an emergency room as quickly as possible:

- **Chest pains**
- **Slurred speech**
- **Numbness on one side**
- **Trouble breathing**
- **A head injury or seizure**
- **Vaginal bleeding with pregnancy**
- **Broken bone or dislocated joint**
- **Severe cut or pain**

Saint Peter's continues to have special precautions in place to treat non-COVID-19 emergencies in both its adult and pediatric emergency departments. These protocols include screening all persons entering the hospital, requiring them to wear masks and practicing social distancing, respiratory etiquette and hand washing practices.

Dr. Stoev said, "while visiting hours and elective surgeries were curtailed due to state-mandated social distancing guidelines, Saint Peter's ED is open and ready to care for you and your family."



Borislav Stoev, DO

Plans for Moving Forward

Saint Peter's has resumed the scheduling of elective surgeries and procedures now that state-mandated restrictions on performing these services have been lifted.

In preparing for this, Saint Peter's has been readying the hospital and outpatient areas to ensure the safety of our patients, staff and physicians.

Patient care units of the hospital that were transitioned to care for COVID-19 patients will have extensive cleaning before non-COVID patients will be accepted there. An enhanced cleaning process is under way that includes the Xenex LightStrike Germ-Zapping Robot that emits waves of ultraviolet (UV) light to destroy germs in hard-to-clean places, disinfecting an entire patient room in as little as 20 minutes.

In addition, the cleaning process includes removing and washing bed curtains; cleaning and fogging ceiling vents, duct work and heating and cooling wall units; and the cleaning of floors and high-touch areas. Lastly, a chemical disinfectant misting of the entire area and everything in it will be performed prior to the application of a chemical barrier on high-touch areas, such as doorknobs and switches.

Saint Peter's continues to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines on infection prevention in the hospital, ED and outpatient areas where children and adults are being scheduled for in-person well care, sick care and specialty care visits. Telemedicine, when appropriate, had been used to connect with patients during the public health crisis.

Our healthcare team looks forward to once again serving all those who have entrusted us in their care. Updates about our services, visitor guidelines and more will be posted at www.saintpetershcs.com.

Don't avoid critical care



Community Calendar

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit saintpetershcs.com/Events. Most programs are **FREE** unless noted; please call for information.

Cancer Support

Bone Marrow Transplant

For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant
Call for information: 732.235.8522

Breast Cancer

Call for information: 732.235.7011

Gynecologic Cancer

In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central New Jersey
Call for information: 732.235.6792

Living with Cancer

Call for information: 732.235.7557

Support Groups

Bariatric

Call for information: 732.339.7450

Bereavement

Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565

SHARE (for those who have suffered miscarriage)

Call for information: 732.745.8522

Craniofacial Teen Girls

Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113

MyGoal Autism Family

Call for information: 877.886.9462

Spouse/Partner Caregiver

Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8662

Diabetes Education

For more information about the following classes, please call the phone numbers listed below.

Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

Type I Diabetes Support Group for Children and Their Families

Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8610

Parent Education

Parenting classes are currently being held online. Register at saintpetershcs.com/Services/Parent-Education. Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you.

For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579

Baby Care

Birth Center Class (for moms under midwifery care)

Breastfeeding Class

Breastfeeding Support Group

Grandparents Class

Hypnobirthing

Marvelous Multiples

New Daddy Class

New Mom Support Group

Prenatal Yoga & Exercise Class

Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes

Sibling Class

Saint Peter's Offers Guidance for Families in Crisis

Incidents of Child Abuse on the Rise during Quarantine

The COVID-19 pandemic has captured the world's attention with a focus on symptoms of the virus including breathing issues, high fever and sore throat. One need only look at the harrowing statistics of cases and deaths in New Jersey to know that we are in the fight of our lives – *for* our lives.

However, while all eyes have been on COVID-19 news, another truly unfortunate reality has been revealed. Due to state-mandated shelter-in-place guidelines, incidents of child abuse are on the rise in the Garden State and beyond, said Gladibel Medina, MD, CAP, director of the Dorothy B. Hersh Child Protection Center at The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

In pre-COVID times, the New Jersey Department of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP) relied on referrals from pediatricians, teachers, coaches, family and friends to report suspected child abuse and neglect. However, these referrals are *down 30 percent*.

"In other circumstances, that would be great news. But in the context of this pandemic, we know the decrease in calls to the hotline is because there are no eyes on these children," said Dr. Medina. "Kids may very well now be sheltered-in-place with their



abusers and/or with caregivers under a tremendous amount of stress figuring out how to secure the wellbeing of their families."

This crisis impacts not only adults, but children as well as they face abrupt changes in their educational experience, isolation from peers, and very different home dynamics, she added, noting increased anxiety, worry, and relational conflicts can be triggers of domestic violence, behavioral difficulties and emotional distress.

So, what can be done to combat the problem? Dr. Medina explained this crisis has given caregivers a unique opportunity to connect with their children in ways not possible before with such hectic schedules and daily demands. She suggested the following guidelines to help reduce stress and anxiety in the home while at the same time minimizing opportunities for mistreating a child.

The Triple Es: Expectations, Engagement and Education

Expectations

As much as possible, maintain a daily routine or structure. Children (and adults) perform best when they are aware of what to expect.

This means establishing – and sticking with – schedules for sleep, meal and snack times, activities, school, free play time and even bathroom breaks. A schedule will allow both children and caregivers to enjoy attention, personal space and rest.

"Often, misbehavior by children is attention-seeking. Caregivers can create a daily routine that is fun and applicable to the child's developmental age," Dr. Medina suggested

This can include creating schedules with fun charts/stickers, integrating kids in choosing and planning meals and coming up with interesting/special snacks. Activities can involve arts/crafts, exercise, reading, music, etc. She said this will help children realize that adults also need their own personal time, too.

Engagement

"Connecting with our kids is essential," Dr. Medina said. Children crave attention from their parents. Take this opportunity to ask how your child is doing and what he or she is feeling. By doing this, you can address fears and concerns in ways that are easy to understand.

Conversations can take place while sharing a meal, doing an activity, or before bed. "Reassure and support. Be honest, listen, hear their point of view and allow the child to express without interruption," she suggested, noting the adult can then provide guidance in a positive manner.



Gladibel Medina, MD

Education

We know that knowledge empowers people. Dr. Medina suggested taking the time to provide education and guidance regarding boundaries and personal safety. This will allow the child to share anything that may be making them uncomfortable without fear of punishment.

"If the occasion allows and the child shows interest, talk about peer pressures, substances and Internet safety in an informational way to raise awareness in the child about potential harms," she added. "Whatever you do, remain non-judgmental so children will feel comfortable confiding in you."

Dr. Medina stressed that corporal punishment often exacerbates behavioral problems and adds anxiety. When stress abounds, so does overreaction to even the smallest things. "Taking time to educate yourself about developmentally appropriate non-physical methods of discipline to address misbehavior when it happens (and, it will happen!) in a positive manner can encourage the child and keep that poor behavior to a minimum."

Above all, know that there are agencies that can help and be contacted in dire circumstances. If you have reason to suspect that a child is being emotionally, physically or sexually abused, please call 877-NJ-ABUSE. For sexual abuse concerns, you can also call the National Sexual Assault hotline at 800-656-HOPE. All calls will be confidential and will simply create a referral to a local agency equipped to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the situation.

"When it comes to child abuse, prevention is key," Dr. Medina said. "These tips can help enhance parenting skills, nurture the parent-child relationship and strengthen healthy families in our community."

A state-designated child protection center, Saint Peter's Dorothy B. Hersh Regional Child Protection Center (CPC) serves seven counties in central New Jersey. It is located at 123 How Lane, New Brunswick. Call (732) 448-1000 for assistance.

The CPC provides crisis intervention, child abuse assessments and referrals to community resources. A multidisciplinary team of doctors, nurses, psychologists and clinical social workers trained to recognize and help victims works with children and their families to try and prevent future abuse. In addition, our staff provides expert consultation to social agencies, reviews sexual and physical cases for the prosecutor's office, and testifies in court cases of child abuse and neglect.

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, call 1.855.SP.MY.DOC (1.855.776.9362).

Also available, online scheduling with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at BookMySPDoc.com

This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.



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