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SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Safely treating you better...for life.

Growing Older Gracefully Annual Wellness Visits are the Key to Living Your Very Best Life

It's understandable many of us – especially our gracefully aging population – have been focused on staying properly masked and socially distant in an effort to stay well during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it's equally as important to make general wellness, including annual health screenings and immunizations, a priority – this year and every year to come.

Aijaz Hussain, MD, (pictured at right) board-certified in internal medicine and geriatric medicine, is affiliated with Saint Peter's Physician Associates at Monroe. He encourages all seniors to make time for an annual comprehensive wellness visit because “nothing is more important than your health.”

Don't put it off! Make the time to discuss your healthcare concerns during a once-a-year visit with a physician who specializes in treating the aging population. This visit is a time to identify any conditions that need early medical intervention so you are able to make sure you are living your healthiest life. Note: Medicare provides patients with free annual wellness visits.

A yearly wellness visit is a perfect opportunity to discuss healthy living strategies. Dr. Hussain partners with a social worker, Tamsin Metzler, BSW, CSW, CDP, CMDCP. Together, they evaluate patients from a “whole” perspective to ascertain where there may be any gaps or concerns.

“Some of these conversations may be tough to have because they often lead to further awareness of what's really going on, perhaps even to things you have been avoiding thinking about or dealing with,” said Metzler. “But these assessments and discussions are of utmost importance. Dr. Hussain and I are focused on solving patient challenges together. We offer our patients a team approach to wellness.”



What Happens at a Well Visit?

You may want to have a companion (who will be screened) accompany you because a second set of ears might be helpful. Also, bring a list of questions and topics to discuss to your annual wellness appointment to make sure everything that is important to you gets the attention it deserves.

Immunizations

There are set schedules for the annual influenza, pneumococcal and shingles vaccines. It's important to not only stay current with these vital immunizations but to discuss best practices for staying healthy during the upcoming cold and flu season, and all year round.

Annual Screenings

You are likely already familiar with many of the annual screenings designed for early detection of breast, prostate, colon and other cancers as well as bone density scans. Dr. Hussain said it's very important to continue with these screenings because the body changes throughout life. For example, after age 65, people become predisposed to bone loss which can lead to osteoporosis. This condition impacts balance and mobility and often leads to falls and fractures.

No Reason to Feel Embarrassed

It's not unusual to feel fearful or embarrassed, said Dr. Hussain, about some of the screenings. Some people feel hesitant to go for a colonoscopy or a mammogram. “I understand this, but these procedures are important, especially for people of advanced age. There is a direct correlation between life expectancy and these diseases.”

Mental Screenings for Cognitive Challenges

Have you ever felt like something might be amiss – perhaps your memory is a bit fuzzy or you are not feeling yourself and don't quite know why? The wellness visit is a perfect time to discuss these feelings. And, even if you don't bring them up, Dr. Hussain and Metzler consider it their job to ask questions and uncover your concerns.

“I understand that there are many issues people are frightened to discuss. They may not even be fully aware they are experiencing something that isn't right,” he said. “Is it aging or something that needs further investigation and possible treatment?”

Memory loss and other cognitive disorders can truly impact your quality of life. “If there is a concern, there are things we can do, actions we can take.

It may be as simple as working your brain a bit more – puzzles, new learning strategies to enhance memory activity,” Dr. Hussain explained. “And, if there is something that needs a different type of treatment, we can do that as expeditiously as possible.”

Incontinence

Do not hesitate to discuss your concerns about bathroom habits with your doctor. There are medications and procedures to help manage these challenges. Additionally, Dr. Hussain added, an incontinence issue could help diagnose a more serious problem, including prostate cancer. It's very important to put aside embarrassment and talk to your doctor.

“People feel like these are personal issues that they don't want to discuss,” he said. “Additionally, people are hesitant to want to talk about feeling depressed or having trouble with sexual performance.”

Beyond routine tests, the wellness visit is also dedicated to discussions about daily living habits including exercise, dietary decisions, tobacco/alcohol intake, ability to perform self-care (dressing, bathing or bathroom habits), as well as one's ability to live alone or whether they need some assistance.

Hearing and Vision Issues

If you are concerned about your hearing and/or vision, or someone else has repeatedly mentioned their concerns, it is time to find out what is going on. You aren't the first and won't be the last person with hearing challenges associated with aging. Poor hearing can impact communication as well as cause balance issues that may lead to falls.

Similarly, vision often worsens as we age. Take a vision test because, if you are having a problem, there may be a simple solution. Vision problems can impair your ability to drive or take part in other activities.

“Please, come in for your wellness visit. Don't be afraid to talk about what's going on in your mind and body. Let's do everything we can to make sure that your Golden Years sparkle in good health,” Dr. Hussain said.

Physicians specializing in geriatric medicine can be found at saintpetershcs.com/findphysician.

Saint Peter's Healthcare System is New Jersey's first designated Age-Friendly Health System – committed to care excellence for older adults.

The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's is Tops in NJ – Again!

U.S. News & World Report, the global authority in hospital rankings and consumer advice, once again ranked The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital among the top 50 hospitals in the nation for Neonatology.

It is the only children's hospital in New Jersey to be ranked among the top 50 hospitals for Neonatology.

The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's is ranked 46th among the best children's hospitals for Neonatology, as listed in the new 2020-21 Best Children's Hospitals rankings. This is the second year in a row Saint Peter's has received this honor.

"It truly is an honor to be ranked among the top 50 best children's hospitals in the country for excellence in neonatal care," said Mark Hiatt, MD, director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and chief of the Division of Neonatal Medicine at The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's. "Each day, our clinical team works to make a difference in the lives of every premature or fragile newborn and their families."

In fact, Saint Peter's Level III NICU, part of its state-designated Regional Perinatal Center, is among the largest in the country and has achieved numerous accolades over the years.



Most recently, the NICU received a gold-level Beacon Award for Nursing Excellence from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. The Beacon Awards are presented every three years.

"This is the third consecutive Beacon Award for the Saint Peter's NICU, having first received the silver-level Beacon Award in 2014 and again in 2017," said Pamela Harmon, MSN, RNC-NIC, director, Saint Peter's Women and Children's Services. "There are only 10 NICUs in the nation to achieve a gold-level Beacon Award."

"I'm so proud of our highly skilled and compassionate staff," said Dolly Allen, MSN, RN-CCRN, NICU manager. "We work tirelessly together to make sure each child cared for in our NICU receives the highest level of quality care."

Delivering Compassionate, Safe Maternal Care During COVID-19 Crisis

Saint Peter's is well-known for its comprehensive maternal health services and its Women and Children's Services throughout New Jersey and beyond. Managing the Coronavirus pandemic created challenges, but Saint Peter's established practices and procedures early on that became a model of care.



In fact, Saint Peter's was one of the first hospitals to commit to ensuring at least one support person could remain in the delivery room while still maintaining protocols that ensure the health of mother and child.

"This has been, and continues to be, a challenging time for everyone, but especially for pregnant women," said Pamela Harmon, MSN, RNC-NIC, director, Saint Peter's Women and Children's Services.

Beyond universal masking for mothers, their support person and providers, as well as curtailed visitation guidelines, the hospital is taking great care to make sure everyone involved in L&D activity (including newborns) are appropriately screened for COVID-19 regularly.

Harmon added Saint Peter's Women and Children's Services provides separate Labor and Delivery and postpartum units, as well as operating rooms, depending on whether a pregnant woman tests positive or negative for the virus. "For pregnant women who test negative, rest assured you and your baby will be cared for in a separate, safe environment."

Outpatient Visits

Prenatal visits are recommended only after women have been screened and deemed to be at low risk for COVID-19 infection. A phone screen the day before each appointment is conducted to assess risk.

Telemedicine and other technologies are used, when possible, to reduce the risk of exposure posed by face-to-face visits.

Inpatient Care

Saint Peter's screens all expectant mothers for COVID-19 before admission and has specific protocols to reduce risk and keep mother and baby safe.

- Only one support person (who passes the COVID-19 screening) may accompany the patient to Labor and Delivery and postpartum recovery.
- Support persons must wear a surgical mask in the hospital and are required to remain in the patient's room while onsite.
- There are separate L&D and postpartum units and operating rooms for pregnant women who test either COVID-19 positive or negative.

"We are very sensitive to the fact that these protocols may be challenging, but it is the safest thing to do," said Leslie D. Hirsch, president and CEO, Saint Peter's Healthcare System.

Support the NICU and help us raise funds for essential equipment!
Visit saintpetershcs.com/donate/support-the-nicu to learn how you can help.

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

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

Support Groups

- Bereavement**
Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565
- Craniofacial Teen Girls**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113
- Spouse/Partner Caregiver**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8662

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

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| Baby Care | Grandparents Class | New Mom Support Group |
| Birth Center Class (for moms under midwifery care) | Hypnobirthing | Prenatal Yoga & Exercise Class |
| Breastfeeding Class | Marvelous Multiples | Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes |
| Breastfeeding Support Group | New Daddy Class | Sibling Class |

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| SHARE 3 rd Thursday of each month. Next meeting: August 20 7 to 9 pm Irina Mariano-Brown, MSW, LCSW Email for Zoom link: imariano@saintpetersuh.com Call 732.745.8522 FREE | Weight Loss Seminar 3 rd Tuesday of each month. Next meeting: August 18 12 to 1:30 pm Kelly Del Rosario, Nurse Navigator of Bariatric Surgery Email for Zoom link: kdelrosario@saintpetersuh.com Call 732.339.7450 | MyGoal Autism Family 2 nd Sunday of each month. Next meeting: August 9 3 pm <i>In-person (socially distanced seating)</i> Call 877.886.9462 or email info@mygoalautism.org for location details |
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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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State-designated children's hospital and regional perinatal center

