

HealthyLiving

CONNECTING WITH OUR PATIENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY

Breast Cancer Awareness: Advances in Screening, Treatment and Care

More than 321,000 women in the United States are expected to be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in 2026, according to the American Cancer Society. Breast cancer remains the most diagnosed cancer among women in the United States.

Today, improvements in breast imaging are helping physicians find cancers earlier. Genetic testing can identify inherited risks, and new treatments are allowing oncologists to target cancer in precise ways. At the same time, advances in rehabilitation and survivorship care are helping patients manage the effects of treatment and return to their favorite activities.

Screening and Early Detection

For women at average risk, the American College of Radiology (ACR) recommends an annual mammogram beginning at age 40. Saint Peter's Women's Imaging Center offers screening and diagnostic mammography using Hologic Genius™ 3D Mammography™ technology. The Center also uses Hologic SmartCurve™ paddles, which are designed to follow the natural curve of the breast and provide a more comfortable mammogram.

"During a 3D mammogram, the system captures multiple images of the breast from different angles and creates a series of detailed images that radiologists can examine layer by layer," said Deanna Chin, MD, radiologist at Saint Peter's University Hospital. "This can help reduce the effect of overlapping breast tissue, which can sometimes make abnormalities more difficult to see on a traditional mammogram."

When additional evaluation is needed, Saint Peter's also offers diagnostic breast imaging, including breast ultrasound and image-guided breast biopsy.

To schedule a mammogram at Saint Peter's Women's Imaging Center, call 732.339.7704.

Continued on page 2



*Stock photo
posed by models.*

Innovations Changing Breast Cancer Treatment

While mammography helps find breast cancer, advances in treatment are changing what happens after a diagnosis. Researchers and physicians now have a growing number of ways to target the specific characteristics of a tumor.

One example is antibody-drug conjugates, or ADCs. These therapies combine an antibody with a powerful cancer-fighting drug. The antibody is designed to recognize specific characteristics of cancer cells and help deliver the drug to them. ADCs are now used as first-line treatment for some patients with metastatic triple-negative and HER2-positive breast cancers and are increasingly being used before or after surgery in earlier-stage disease.

For individuals with hormone receptor-positive breast cancer, another emerging approach is a class of treatments known as PROTAC degraders. Rather than simply blocking estrogen receptors, these therapies use the body's natural protein-recycling system to break down estrogen receptors that can contribute to cancer growth.

Other innovations are helping physicians better understand what is happening at the molecular level. Circulating tumor DNA, or ctDNA, refers to small fragments of cancer-related DNA that can be found in the bloodstream. Testing for ctDNA may provide additional information on the response to treatment. Next-generation sequencing can analyze genetic changes in a tumor and may help identify treatments that are more likely to benefit an individual patient.

"Clinical research is another important part of advancing breast cancer treatment. Saint Peter's patients benefit from Astera Cancer Care's partnership with The START Center for Cancer Research, which brings groundbreaking clinical trials and innovative therapies directly to the community, ensuring patients have access to the latest advances in their cancer journey," said Ghazal H. Kango, MD, a medical oncologist with Astera Cancer Care treating patients at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

Saint Peter's Cancer Center offers effective radiation therapy to breast cancer patients while safeguarding their overall health. While radiation therapy is a powerful tool in the fight against breast cancer, it carries risks, particularly when healthy tissue and organs such as the heart and lungs are inadvertently exposed to unnecessary radiation. These risks can lead to possible side effects, including long-term damage to vital organs and an increased risk of secondary cancers.

Prone breast positioning is an innovative approach that has been developed to mitigate these risks. In this technique, patients lie face down on a specially designed treatment table, allowing the breast to hang away from the body.

"This positioning naturally increases the distance between the breast and critical organs, such as the heart and lungs, thereby reducing their exposure to radiation," said Henry K. Tsai, MD, a radiation oncologist with Astera Cancer Care treating patients at Saint Peter's University Hospital. "By minimizing radiation exposure to these healthy tissues, prone breast positioning significantly lowers the risk of side effects such as cardiac complications or lung damage."

Learn more about the services provided at Saint Peter's Breast Center by visiting saintpetershcs.com/breastcenter. Learn more about Saint Peter's Cancer Center by visiting saintpetershcs.com/cancercare.

Genetic Testing to Identify Cancer Risk

Saint Peter's Department of Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine provides cancer genetic risk assessment and genetic counseling for patients with a personal or family history of cancer. The program brings together a medical geneticist, genetic counselors and other specialists to evaluate a person's medical and family history, discuss testing options and help patients understand what genetic results may mean for them and their families.

"A person's family history can provide important clues about their risk for breast and other cancers. Genetic testing can help determine whether there is an inherited risk, including changes in genes such as BRCA1 and BRCA2," said Debra-Lynn Day-Salvatore, MD, PhD, FAAP, FACMGG, medical geneticist and chair of the Department of Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine at Saint Peter's. "When an inherited risk is identified, it can help guide medical decisions for patients and their family members."

To schedule an appointment with Saint Peter's Department of Medical Genetics and Genomic Medicine, visit saintpetershcs.com/genetics.

Managing Lymphedema After Cancer Treatment

For some people, the effects of cancer treatment can continue long after treatment ends. Lymphedema is one possible complication, particularly for individuals who have had lymph nodes removed or whose lymphatic system has been affected by surgery or radiation.

Lymphedema occurs when protein-rich lymph fluid builds up in the tissues beneath the skin, causing swelling. Individuals treated for breast cancer may develop lymphedema in the arm, breast or chest area. It can also affect other areas of the body depending on the location of treatment. Lymphedema can develop during treatment or months or years later, making ongoing monitoring and early intervention important.

At Saint Peter's Health and Wellness Center in Somerset, physical and occupational therapists who are certified lymphedema therapists (CLTs) provide individualized rehabilitation for those with primary and secondary lymphedema. As partners with the Astera Cancer Care specialists, the therapists understand the effects of breast cancer and its treatments and provide rehabilitation focused on helping patients manage complications and regain function.

Certified lymphedema therapists may help patients:

- Decrease pain and improve comfort
- Improve strength, range of motion and physical function
- Increase energy and endurance
- Improve balance and coordination
- Manage scar tissue and other treatment-related changes
- Reduce swelling and manage lymphedema symptoms
- Return to daily activities and an active lifestyle

"Lymphedema is a chronic condition, but it can often be managed with appropriate care," said Bonnie Saunders, PT, MPA, DPT, manager of Physical Rehabilitation Services at Saint Peter's Health and Wellness Center. "At Saint Peter's, lymphedema rehabilitation is part of a broader approach to cancer recovery, helping patients address the physical effects of treatment and work toward greater comfort, mobility and independence."

To learn more or to schedule an appointment, visit saintpetershcs.com/lymphedema.



Treatment for Lymphedema

Treatment is individualized based on each patient's symptoms, needs and stage of recovery. Options may include:

- **Prevention and surveillance:** Ongoing monitoring throughout cancer treatment and recovery to identify lymphedema and other complications early
- **Education and self-management:** Guidance to help patients recognize symptoms and take an active role in managing their condition
- **Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT):** A comprehensive approach that combines manual lymph drainage, compression bandaging, skin care and therapeutic exercise
- **Manual lymph drainage and specialized hands-on treatment:** Techniques such as scar massage and myofascial release can help reduce pain, improve scar mobility and support lymphatic flow
- **Low-level laser therapy:** A handheld treatment that may help soften fibrotic scar tissue, reduce pain and improve range of motion, particularly for lymphatic cording
- **Individualized exercise:** Customized exercises to improve strength, endurance, coordination, balance and posture
- **Compression garment fitting:** Recommendations and fitting for compression garments to help manage lymphedema and support function

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.

Diabetes Education*

For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.

Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630

Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education

Call for information: 732.339.7630



New Session October 21!

Prevent T2 Program

Call for information:

732.339.7772



Support Groups

Bariatric Nutrition Support

2nd Thursday of each month

Next meeting: October 8 • 6 – 7 pm

Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

Bereavement

Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565

MyGoal Autism Family

2nd Sunday of each month

Next meeting: October 11 • 3 pm

Call 877.886.9462 or email info@mygoalautism.org for virtual meeting information

SHARE

3rd Thursday of each month

Next meeting: October 15 • 7 – 9 pm

Call 732.745.8522 or email imariano@saintpetersuh.com for Zoom link

Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support

Call for information:

732.745.8600, x8653

Stroke Survivors

First Wednesday of each month

Next meeting: October 7 • 10 am

To register, call 732.565.5455 or email cknospe@saintpetersuh.com

Parent Education

Some classes online. Access information will be provided after registration.

Register at saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd. For more information, call 732.745.8579.

Baby Care

Birth Center Class

(for moms under midwifery care)

Breastfeeding Class

Childbirth Education

(in Spanish)

Grandparents Class

Hypnobirthing™

New Daddy Class

Prenatal Breastfeeding

(in Spanish)

Prenatal Yoga/ Exercise Class

Prepared Childbirth/ Lamaze Classes

Sibling Class

Parent Support

Registration is required. Visit saintpetershcs.com/ParentEd or call 732.745.8579.

New Moms Support Group

"Life Will Never Be The Same"

1st Tuesday of each month

Next meeting: October 6 • 12 pm

Breastfeeding Support Group

1st Tuesday of each month

Next meeting: October 6 • 1 pm

Michael J. LaQuaglia, MD, MS
John Gallucci, MD, FACS
Chief of the Division of Pediatric Surgery
Yi-Hong Lee, MD

Pediatric surgeons specializing in complex conditions.

Visit saintpetershcs.com/pedsurgery to learn more.



That's treating you better...for life.

Saint Peter's Maternity, Baby and Kids Health Expo

October 3, 2026 • 10 am – 2 pm

Saint Peter's University Hospital
254 Easton Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Car seat information and demonstrations

Educational breakout sessions

Maternity unit tours*

Meet Saint Peter's maternity and pediatric experts

Pregnancy and newborn resources

Giveaways, prizes and more!

Free admission and parking!

***Advance registration is required. Space is limited. Scan to Register:**



The Wound Care Center® and Hyperbaric Services

treats conditions such as:

Bone infections

Compromised skin grafts

Diabetic foot ulcers/wounds

Pressure ulcers

Reopened surgical wounds

Tissue damage from radiation

Venous and arterial ulcers

New Brunswick: 732.846.6199

Monroe: 609.860.0008

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician.

Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at <http://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.



254 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

732.745.8600 | 800.269.7508 | saintpetershcs.com

Sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Metuchen
State-designated children's hospital and regional perinatal center

