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Spring 2022

- 2 It's Our Privilege
 Delivering Care, Respect and Compassion to Seniors
- 5 Use Your Doodle
 Why Coloring is Good for Your Health
- Time to Start the Conversation
 Health Care Documents
- 8 7 Surprising Benefits of Spring Cleaning
- Which Should I Choose?
 Emergency Department, Same Day Care,
 Provider Office or Telehealth Visit
- 12 The Air Out There
 Discover the Health Benefits of Going Outside
- 13 Individually and Together
 Supporting Both Parents After the Loss of an Infant
- 14 Ask the Doctor
 The Importance of Colorectal Screening
- 16 A New Career in

 Just Eight to Twelve Weeks
 St. Joseph School of Nursing
- 17 Renew Your Resolution & Support Your Community
 Commit to Get Fit on September 10 at Mine Falls Park

Spring Into Healthy Eating!





A Note from the President

Dear Friends,

Health care organizations are experiencing staffing challenges — and our hospital is no exception. We're addressing the issue in a variety of creative ways while our current provider team continues to work tirelessly to care for our patients throughout the increased demand due to COVID-19 variants and deferred care by patients.

As we continue to navigate an ever-changing landscape, I'd like to encourage our community to thank a health care worker for their remarkable dedication during incredibly challenging times. We all know a little expression of appreciation goes a very long way.

Speaking of appreciation — that's part of what *thrive* is all about — appreciating your health and enjoying your life. In this issue, you'll learn more about:

- Delivering care, respect and compassion to seniors
- New guidelines for colorectal screenings
- Beginning a new health care career in eight to twelve weeks

Be sure to let us know what you think of this issue of *thrive* by completing the postage-paid business reply card included in the magazine or dropping us a line at thrivemagazine@covh.org.

Again, please take a moment to thank a health care worker for their commitment and perseverance. I appreciate your support.

John A. Jurczyk
President, St. Joseph Hospital and
Senior Vice President, Covenant Health

thrive Magazine content is for general information purposes only, and should not be used as medical/health advice or instruction. No recommendations are made to diagnose, test or provide treatment for any health ailment, medical condition or disease.

On the Cover Christine Brennan is a resident of Nashua. She is a patient of Prasanna Gulur, MD at St. Joseph Hospital Gastroenterology.



100 Ames Pond Drive, Suite 102 Tewksbury, MA 01876 (978) 312-4300 Vice President Marketing and Communications Karen Sullivan
Editor Suzanne Dumaresq / Creative Director Sharon Elwell / Executive Publisher James Y. Davis
Contributing Writers Suzanne Dumaresq, Lindsey Grossman, Cheri Hinshelwood, Erin McKenney, Cherry Odom
Marketing Directors Jason Gould, Bethany McKnight, Tim McMahon, Amy Proffitt
Contributing Photographers Séan Alonzo Harris, Meg Moore, Jason Paige Smith



By Cheri Hinshelwood

Delivering Care, Respect and Compassion to Seniors

an Philbrick is a 74-year-old resident of Nashua. She shares, "As I age and my body changes, it's important for me to feel as though my providers will always take the time to talk with me, listen to my concerns and care for me accordingly with both respect and compassion."

Jan was a nurse for more than 50 years. She typically sees Mary Peterson, PA-C at St. Joseph Primary and Specialty Care, and completely understands the importance of feeling comfortable with your health care system and provider.

Changing Needs

With more health care needs and sometimes complex conditions,

aging adults may be at higher risk for illness and require specialty care. This makes caring for those 65 and older, many without a home support system, a vital part of St. Joseph's focus.

"I truly love taking care of our older patients. If I can help them be healthier and live as independently as possible, as well as honor their vision and wishes as they age, then I've done a very good thing," says Peterson.

"Seniors in our community are not only unique individuals, they are an invaluable community resource," adds Deepak Vatti, MD, Chief of Emergency Services, St. Joseph Hospital. "They are our history keepers. It is our privilege to care for them as their needs change."

A Baseline

St. Joseph Primary and Specialty Care practices have earned the age-friendly designation demonstrating a senior focus. Providers are trained to recognize small changes that may have a big impact in the health of older adults.

During annual wellness visits, seniors' preferences, medication, mobility and mental status are documented, providing a baseline so that providers may note subtle changes in the future.

"Having spent my career as a nurse, I appreciate the importance of preventative care. I make sure I schedule wellness visits and make appointments to be seen if I'm not feeling well," shares Philbrick. "I'm also diabetic. I speed walk daily in an effort to take care of myself, but it's important to me to have a provider know what's happening with my health."

Emergency Department

With its focus on seniors, St. Joseph is keeping pace with health care's continuing evolution. The hospital's emergency department is among an elite group across the nation that has achieved Level III geriatric accreditation from the American

College of Emergency Physicians.

Conveniences like easy-to-read clocks and continuously available snacks are simple amenities aimed at ensuring seniors are comfortable. Specially trained staff and access to 24-hour wheelchairs or walkers ensure seniors get supportive care when they needed it.

"We have a responsibility to take care of the elderly, especially those who may not have close family connections or fully understand detailed care instructions, said Dr. Vatti.

Senior Behavioral Health Unit

It's been well documented that COVID-19 isolation brought on the challenge of managing mental health issues in our community — and the senior population was considerably impacted. Senior care is a priority for St. Joseph's and plans were already

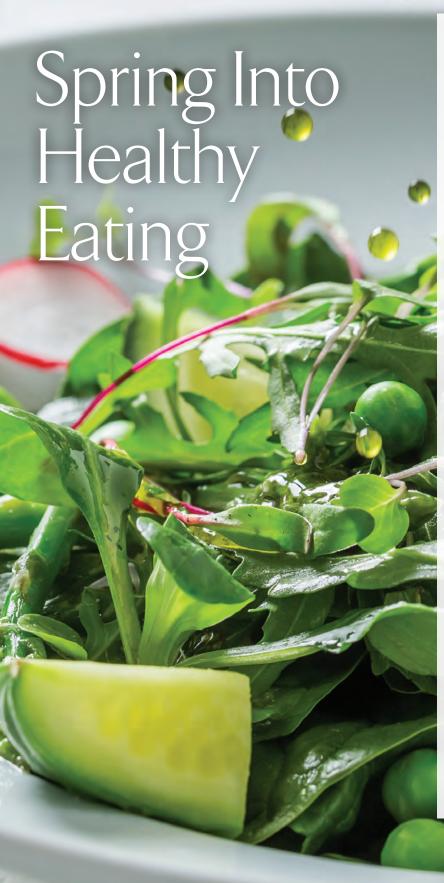
well in motion to open a 24-bed inpatient senior behavioral health unit in 2020, which met a timely community need.

Dr. Vatti adds, "Having the Senior Behavioral Health Unit within our walls has meant getting patients the care they need much faster."

earn 1ore

Are you in need of a continuum of care delivered with respect and compassion? For more information about services and care for older adults, please visit stjosephhospital.com.





Spring Salad with Walnut Vinaigrette Dressing

Makes 4 side salads

Ingredients

½ head iceberg lettuce washed and torn into bite-size pieces

½ bag 50/50 spring mix with baby spinach, washed 1 pickling cucumber, sliced

¼ pint yellow grape tomatoes, sliced lengthwise 8 strawberries, hulled and sliced in quarters lengthwise

½ pint blueberries

½ small package blackberries or raspberries

2 Tbsp. large diced fresh Vidalia or purple onion

¼ cup crumbled cheese such as feta, gorgonzola or sharp cheddar

¼ cup crumbled nuts such as almonds, walnuts or pecans

Optional ingredients: Pomegranate seeds, apple slices, mandarin wedges, sunflower seeds

Preparation

Mix lettuces and arrange on a serving plate or bowl. Arrange all other sliced ingredients on top of lettuces. Sprinkle blueberries, blackberries or raspberries, onions, cheese and nuts over the top. Serve with the vinaigrette on the side.

Walnut Vinaigrette

Ingredients

¼ cup maple syrup

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

½ cup mayo

2 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar

34 tsp. salt

¼ tsp. black pepper

14 cup walnut oil

Preparation

Mix all vinaigrette ingredients, except for walnut oil, in a blender. With the blender running slowly, drizzle the walnut oil into the mixture and blend for one minute. Serve immediately.

Thank you to Shawna Santamore, Histology Technician, for sharing this recipe.

thrive mindfulness

Use Your Doodle

Why Coloring is Good for Your Health

By Lindsey Grossman

indfulness is nothing new — the practice dates back thousands of years. But this ancient technique has many modern benefits. According to the American Psychological Association, practicing mindfulness reduces stress, improves memory, heightens focus and can even improve your relationships. You can work to achieve this highly sought after Zen state through meditation, yoga, tai chi and ... Crayola®?

You've probably seen adult coloring books in the magazine aisle at your supermarket. What seems like a leisurely nostalgic pastime can have as much of an effect on your mental clarity as your weekly fitness class. A study published by the American Art Therapy Association indicates that coloring mandalas and similarly complex designs reduces anxiety. And just like mindfulness itself, this whimsical offshoot isn't merely a passing trend. Renowned psychiatrist Carl Jung first prescribed adult coloring to his patients in the

early 1900s. He describes coloring mandalas as "a safe refuge of inner reconciliation and wholeness."

So how does it work exactly? Research shows that coloring relaxes the amygdala, the "fear center" of your brain, bringing about a meditative state. In the simplest of terms, focusing on an easy activity, like coloring, stops the 24-hour news ticker of worries running through your mind. A perfect blend of logic and

creativity lights up both sides of the brain for some serious cerebral cardio.

Still skeptical of this childlike activity? Try for yourself and see! Find fun, free downloadable adult coloring pages at **MondayMandala.com**.





Time to Start the Conversation Health Care Documents By Cherry Odom, BSN, RN, NPD-BC



ealth care documents provide important information about your health history. These documents identify the person designated to make decisions for you in the event you are too ill to do so, and what measures you'd like taken if you are unable to make decisions due to a medical, mental health or other issue. It's tough stuff, but it's important to empower your loved ones to carry out your wishes.

- Medical Record Summary. A list of your health history is invaluable in relaying information quickly to health care professionals. Include your name, birth date, allergies, medications with dosages, physicians' names, health conditions and detailed emergency contact information.
- HIPAA Release of Information. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects patient privacy. HIPAA guidelines also allow you to designate how you would like to share this information with family, friends and designated representatives, such as insurance companies. Health care providers and other entities, such as hospitals, provide a notice of privacy practices form and ask patients to sign it, to ensure information is shared appropriately.
- HIPAA and Parents of Young Adult Children. When older teen children reach 18, their parents no longer have the right to obtain their medical information or make decisions about the adult child's care. This applies even if the child is covered by the parents' insurance.

Therefore, it's important for parents and a child to have an open conversation about whether or not they're comfortable signing a HIPAA Release of Information to allow parents to participate in a child's care. Typically, the form is completed when a child turns 18 and does not require notarization. Both the parent and child should keep a copy.

■ Medical Power of Attorney. A Medical Power of Attorney can also be called Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA). This is a legal document that allows a patient to name someone to make

medical decisions on their behalf if they are too ill to decide for themselves, or if they unexpectedly become incapacitated. Having this document in place saves time and prevents confusion at what may be a crucial time.

- Durable Power of Attorney. The Durable Power of Attorney is a legal document in which someone designates another person to make legal, financial and health care decisions on their behalf in the event of serious illness, an accident or mental incapacity. If this is not in place, and a patient is unable to make decisions and manage their own affairs, a family must go to court to establish a designee.
- Advance Directives. Advance Directives are legal directives that state a person's wishes for end-of-life care when they are unable to make their own decisions. Selections can be made to omit or include medical care, such as dialysis, a breathing machine, tube feedings and/or organ donations.

Talk to Your Family and Friends

It is important to start the conversation with your family and friends to make your health care wishes known before a health crisis. It is equally important to complete documents that reduce doubt in your loved ones' minds and properly guide them in participating in your care.

"Health care records are critical to helping providers deliver high-quality treatment and a continuum of care consistent with patient wishes," shares Susan I. Belanger, PhD, MA, RN, NEA-BC, HEC-C and Senior Vice President of Mission Integration and Ethics, Covenant Health. "You should also meet with your family, share your feelings and ensure the documentation related to your health care is clear and provided to your physician. You can't plan everything, but you can ease the burden on your loved ones by telling them what's most important to you."

If you would like to learn more about getting started, please visit **theconversationproject.org.** It's a valuable resource for helping people share their wishes for care through end of life. It is important to note that states may have variations and specific requirements for these documents. Consult an attorney if you have questions.

It's Time to Complete These Health Care Documents

- Medical Record Summary
- HIPAA Release of Information
- Medical Power of Attorney
- Durable Power of Attorney
- Advance Directives

Keep in mind that copies of these documents should be given to all designated family members and friends. In addition, the location of original copies should be provided to all designees. To obtain more information about these forms, talk with your attorney.





Surprising Health Benefits of Spring Cleaning By Lindsey Grossman

ackling housework can be downright overwhelming ... after all, it's called "work" for a reason. If you need some motivation to get off that couch and start dusting under it, check out these seven healthful incentives.

- Stress Less
 Wipe away your worries! Just 20 minutes of cleaning can reduce stress and anxiety levels by as much as 20%, according to the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.
- Boost Productivity
 Perhaps you've heard the saying, "clean space, clean mind?" The
 Journal of Neuroscience discovered that too much of a mess significantly
 clutters up your brain's ability to process. Less chaos means more
 headspace for tackling that to-do list.
- Breathe Easier
 The American Lung Association notes that hundreds of thousands of dust mites can live in bedding, mattresses, upholstered furniture, carpets or curtains in your home, triggering allergies and asthma. Dusting regularly helps you breathe better by preventing respiratory issues and supporting a healthy immune system.
- Fewer Falls
 According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in five falls causes a serious injury, such as broken bones or a head injury. Reducing home hazards, such as clutter, minimizes your risk of tripping and hurting yourself.
- Eat Healthier

 How you keep your cubicle can affect your food choices. A study published in *Psychology Science* showed people who worked in an organized area were twice as likely to opt for an apple over a chocolate bar than those who worked at a messy desk.
- Sleep Better
 The National Sleep Foundation found that people who wash their bedding and sheets about once a week, reported 19% better rest at night.
- Burn Calories
 This spring, you can get your gut and gutters in gear. The American Heart
 Association counts housework as moderate exercise, meaning you can burn
 as many calories vacuuming as you can on a leisurely walk.



Which Should Emergency Department, Same Day Care, Provider Office or Telehealth Visit Choose?

By Cherry Odom, BSN, RN, NPD-BC



f you or a family member has shortness of breath while watching TV, what would you do? What if you deeply cut your finger slicing tomatoes? What if you have a fever and a painful earache? Considering these scenarios and the decision you'd make about what level of care you need, could save you a considerable amount of angst and time.

Typically, you can access medical care in three settings: the emergency department (ED), a same day care center or in a provider's office. Knowing your options will help you make the right choice when time is of the essence.

Emergency Department

The ED offers care in very serious or life-threatening situations. Common conditions treated there are:

- Sudden and/or severe pain
- Shortness of breath and asthma attacks.
- Heart attacks and strokes
- Abdominal pain and prolonged vomiting
- Injuries from falls
- Auto accident injuries
- Burns
- Uncontrolled bleeding

"You should go to an ED if you are having a serious, possibly life-threatening issue, such as chest pain, loss of speech or function

thrive family health

of a limb, difficulty breathing, profuse bleeding, major trauma from an accident or severe abdominal pain," says Douglas C. Waite, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Covenant Health. "People who have complex medical problems or weakened immune systems should also visit the ED if they're concerned a symptom may be related to their existing medical condition."

Same Day Care

If your issue is not a life-threatening emergency, same day care is your best choice. The following illnesses and injuries can be well-managed at these facilities:

- Common illnesses: colds, bronchitis, sinus infections, stomach bugs, earaches, sore throats, migraines, low-grade fevers and rashes
- Minor injuries: sprains, back pain, minor cuts and burns, minor broken bones or minor eye injuries/infections

Primary Care/Specialty Care Provider Office

If you need an annual physical or to see a doctor about an ongoing health concern, your primary care physician or advanced practice professional is the best resource. They diagnose a wide variety of medical conditions and are skilled at managing your health over time. If your issue is not urgent, simply make an appointment to be seen. If you need to be seen quickly, most providers offer same day in-person or telehealth appointments. If you have symptoms you think may be due to COVID-19 and they are not severe, you should contact your primary care provider first. They will best determine how you should be tested and managed.

Specialty providers offer advanced training in a particular branch of medicine, such as cardiology, endocrinology or orthopedics. Many may also perform

surgery. If you have a serious and specific health issue, your primary care provider may decide to refer you to a specialty care provider for an expert opinion.

Telehealth

Telehealth leverages technology to bring your care provider conveniently into your home. You may receive a medical assessment via your smartphone or computer, while talking with and seeing a provider. Check with your care provider if this would be an option for your specific need.

Telehealth use has significantly increased across the U.S. since the onset of COVID-19. This progressive and convenient option also minimizes exposure to others in a waiting room who may be ill.

Be Prepared

It may be helpful for you to jot down your health information and carry it with you. Include your name, date of birth and any drug allergies. List all your medicines with the dose and when you take them. Add your health history conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and others. Include the name and phone number of your primary care provider as well as your emergency contact.

Be Informed

You can be sure you get the right care, in the right place at the right time by using your best judgement and carefully considering what type of care you need and how quickly you need it.



The Air Out There

Discover the Health Benefits of Going Outside

By Lindsey Grossman

he family that gets outside together, improves their health together. After a long New England winter, it's time to come out of hibernation and connect with loved ones in the fresh spring air and warm sunshine. Fresh air not only cleans your lungs, it can also boost your mood, lower your heart rate, increase energy levels and even improve digestion (yes, that's right). Florence Nightingale knew the benefits of fresh air long before any scientific study. "It is the unqualified result of all my experience with the sick, that second only to their need of fresh air is their need of light," she once said. Read on for fun ways to cure that COVID-spawned cabin fever while boosting your well-being.

Right In Your Own Backyard

Getting out doesn't have to mean going far. Planting a garden as a family or community creates some great teachable moments for eating your veggies. And there's nothing more satisfying than sticking your hands in the dirt to de-stress.

Into the Great Wide Open

Looking for a change of scenery? Take to the trails! Hiking not only decreases stress and anxiety, it's also great cardio. Or if the mention of a hike ignites eye rolls from your family, try geocaching. These GPS-based treasure hunts offer a playful way to explore your surroundings. Visit your area's parks and recreation website to learn more about how to play.

No matter where you go, it's gratifying just to know that the second you step out the door, you can reap fresh air's rewards. Spending 30 minutes sitting in the sun every day will earn you a full day's dose of vitamin D. Now all you have to do is lather on some sunscreen, head out and breathe in.



ertainly, there isn't a guidebook on how to overcome loss. However, most people would agree the most devastating trauma anyone could ever suffer is the loss of an infant. Imagine the excitement of pregnancy ending in tragedy. It simply goes against the natural order of things.

Compassion and Support

Thankfully, St. Joseph Perinatal Bereavement Group is there when couples are struggling with grief, feeling permanently stuck, truly lost or completely unsure of how to move forward. The six-week group program was recently redesigned and expanded to ensure it provides compassion and support to both parents, individually and together.

The support team includes Nicole Snow, a Licensed Practical Nurse, who is also Resolve Through Sharing® (RTS) Bereavement Certified, as well as Shannon Osterhoudt and Eric Leader, who both hold a Master of Social Work and are also RTS Certified.

"Men often take on the role of protector. They feel responsible for their child's well-being," explains Eric. "They suppress their emotions. When in reality, they're profoundly suffering."



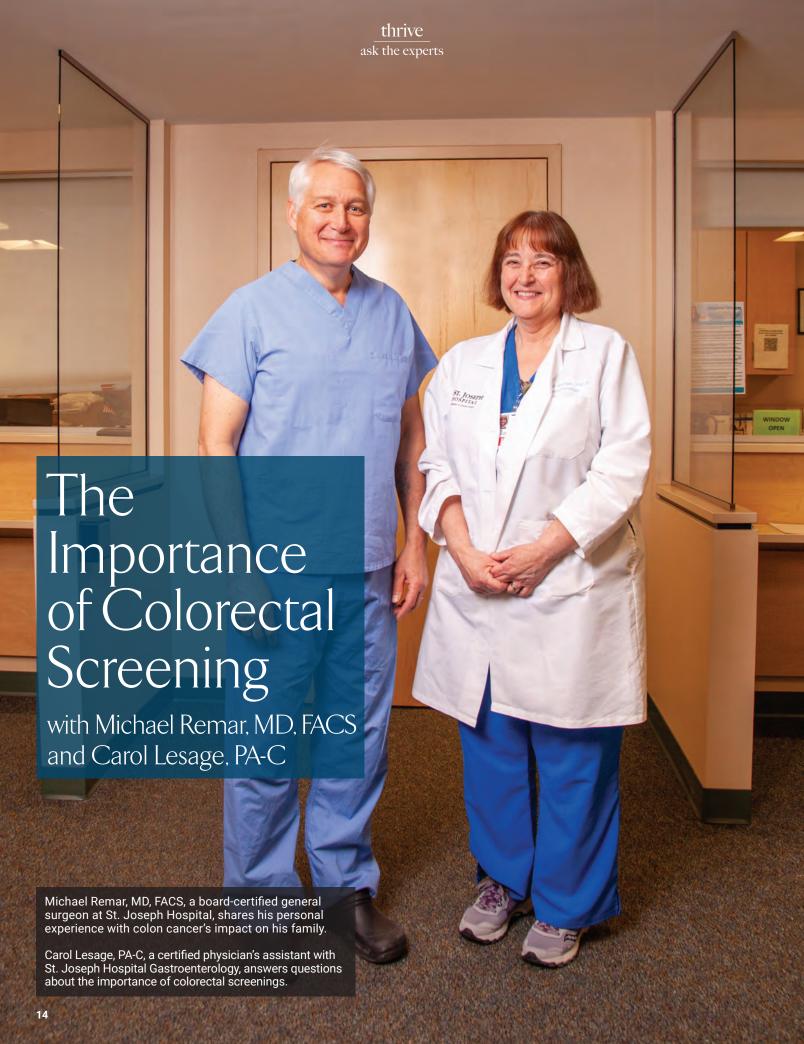
Listening and Connecting

"The group focuses on teaching couples how to cope, both individually and as partners," shares Shannon. "When couples experience loss, sometimes all they need is to be comforted by their partner's listening ear, but often that's not openly expressed."

Nicole adds, "The group is a great place to connect with others. One of the best ways to foster healing is by sharing experiences."

The free, six-week support group takes place at the hospital on the second Wednesday of every month. You do not need to be a St. Joseph's patient. Everyone is welcome, no matter how long it has been since your loss.

Reach out to Nicole Snow at 603.884.3206 or nsnow@sjhnh.org to learn more.



For Me, It's Personal

Dr. Remar's older sister, Katy, developed colorectal cancer at age 45. At the time, she had two young children. Two years later, she passed away of metastatic colon cancer, leaving her husband to raise their kids as a single parent.

"Losing my sister frightened me and my wife, as we had small kids too," shares Remar. "So, I followed the advice of my doctor, which was to begin colonoscopies 10 years before my sister's age of diagnosis. I started in my 30s and have had a colonoscopy every five years since."

Remar has worked at St. Joseph's Hospital for 28 years. You might think it would be embarrassing for him to have his screenings done where he knows the staff, but he disagrees. He says, "The prep is no fun, but the colonoscopy is a completely uneventful thing. The whole team gives me such great care. The sedation you receive is just a nice sleep. You do not even realize you are having the procedure done."

After every colonoscopy, Remar has a tradition of going out to enjoy a giant breakfast with his wife. He shares, "The only thing

anyone should be afraid of is not having it done. It is one of the few things we do in medicine that can prevent the development of cancer."

A Colorectal Cancer Screening Could Save Your Life!

- According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer, excluding skin cancers, in men and women in the US.
- They recommended lowering the screening age to 45 years old due to a significant increase of cancer in younger adults. If you're at increased risk, screenings should begin even sooner.

Why is 45 years old now the recommended age to begin periodic screening for colorectal cancer?

In May 2018, the American Cancer Society reduced the age from 50 years old to 45 years old due to an increased incidence of colon cancer in adults younger than 50.

What is colorectal cancer?

It is a malignancy anywhere in the large intestine or rectal section of the colon. The cancer usually starts with a polyp, a small cluster of cells on the intestine's inside lining. Some polyps do not become cancerous. Other polyps, called adenoma, are precancerous and will likely turn into cancer, if not removed.

What are some of the risk factors for this cancer?

- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Personal history or family history of large, multiple or precancerous polyps
- Being overweight or obese
- Eating a diet high in red meats and processed meats
- Smoking
- Physical inactivity

What are common symptoms?

Some people notice bowel changes, such as new constipation, rectal bleeding or abdominal pain. Unexplained weight loss may also be of concern. Any change in bowel habits should be discussed with your health care provider. Sometimes colorectal cancer is present when there is no evidence of bleeding. Conversely, rectal bleeding may only occur with advanced cancer. Patients shouldn't wait until they have symptoms to get screened.

When and how often should someone get screened?

Everyone should have a colonoscopy at age 45 or earlier as recommended by their provider when there is a family history of colon cancer. If someone has precancerous or large polyps or a lot of polyps, we may ask them to repeat their screening every three to five years.



To learn more about **St. Joseph Gastroenterology,** visit **stjosephhospital.com** or scan this QR code.

To make an appointment, call **603.578.9363**. If necessary, be sure to ask your primary care provider for a referral.

A New Career in Just Eight to Twelve Weeks

St. Joseph School of Nursing

By Suzanne Dumaresq



re you looking for a new career? Are you interested in a path that offers purpose, passion and lots of possibilities? If so, health care may be the calling for you.

St. Joseph Hospital needs medical assistants who typically work in doctor's offices and urgent care centers and nursing assistants who typically provide direct patient care in hospitals.

"If a student has the heart it takes to work in health care, I will help them to succeed," said Kim L. Hashem-Dugal, MBA, CCMA, Associate Dean, St. Joseph School of Nursing. "I take great pride in supporting the launch of new careers."

Certified in Just Eight to Twelve Weeks

St. Joseph School of Nursing offers in-person training for highdemand positions like medical and nursing assistants takes as little as eight to twelve weeks. Once a student completes classroom lectures, hands-on clinical labs and internships, they're encouraged to take national certification exams to bolster their marketability.

Hashem-Dugal says, "Being nationally certified reinforces to prospective employers that candidates have the knowledge and experience they need."

A Bright Future

All the school's programs provide a solid foundation for a successful medical career. Best of all, graduates are poised to potentially take on full-time positions at St. Joseph Hospital.

Maggie Paré is a Nashua resident and a student in the Associate of Science Nursing Program. She is also the president of the August 2022 cohort, which will graduate this summer. In addition, she works at St. Joseph Hospital as a licensed nursing assistant or LNA. Maggie plans to continue pursuing her education with

the ultimate goal of working in women's health or critical care.

"What I like most about the St. Joseph School of Nursing is its supportive instructors and small class sizes. Everyone is caring and nurturing. It genuinely feels like a family," says Paré. "I believe that nursing is more than taking care of people. It's about being a light for patients who may be experiencing their darkest days. I'm thankful to St. Joseph's for preparing me to take on such a rewarding career."

To learn more about **St. Joseph School of Nursing**, as well as its specific programs and application deadlines, please visit **sjson.edu**, scan this QR code or call **603.594.2567**.



Renew Your Resolution & Support Your Community

Commit to Get Fit on September 10 at Mine Falls Park

By Erin McKenney

id you make a New Year's resolution to get moving, fit or spend more time outside? Now that it's spring, renew your resolution with us!

St. Joseph Hospital has challenged our community to commit to get fit in 2022! Start training now and join us for a walk/run at our annual Commit to Get Fit event on Saturday, September 10, at Nashua's Mine Falls

Park. Whether it's your first 5K, a new annual tradition, or just a way to get the family outside together, Commit to Get Fit is a great way to reach your goals in 2022.

Proceeds from race registrations, donations and sponsorships will benefit St. Joseph Hospital ventilator and critical care needs. Given our current challenges, acquiring additional ICU equipment and supplies remains a priority to ensure we provide the very best care to our patients.

Last year, 420 people took on the Commit to Get Fit challenge and ran or walked with us. This year, you can too! Do it for you, do it for your community. Get Ready!

- 1. Warm up before runs with some light movement.
- 2.Don't worry about your speed, focus on increasing your running time.
- 3.Do a 5-minute cool down walk after a run.
- 4. Stretch after your run to increase flexibility and avoid injury.





Scan this QR code to register now and set your intention to walk or run a 5K. We can't wait to celebrate with you.



Scan this QR code to register.

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Being a nurse is rewarding.

At St. Joseph Hospital it's also empowering. We wholeheartedly believe in:

Our nurses playing a significant role in point of care decisions

 Recognizing nurses who demonstrate clinical expertise, leadership and more through a Professional Recognition for Excellence Program

- Offering competitive salaries, comprehensive benefits and a collaborative culture
- Encouraging work/life balance, self-care and community involvement

