Thank you for all you do
A MESSAGE TO OUR COMMUNITY

In any ordinary year, we would be starting the fall season with familiar routines and rituals. But the COVID-19 pandemic brought extraordinary situations that continue to play out now and into the foreseeable future. During a time when everything seems topsy-turvy and uncertainty looms, there are a few constants. First, nothing is more important than your health—both physical and mental. So, take care of yourself. Be mindful of your emotional well-being. And, don’t put off seeing your doctor for essential care. The adage is true: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Also, know that we can get through anything if we work together. At SMG, I see evidence of this every day in all our providers and health care professionals—from the front desk to the exam room to the surgical suite—and in countless others behind the scenes. Adapting to this new normal and continuing to put our patients first was an oversize task and I could not be prouder of how this organization responded. SMG frontline teams at our urgent care centers and our hospitalists and intensivists, who have played critical roles in caring for the sickest patients in our local hospitals, have served an incredibly important role in helping our communities get through this unprecedented crisis.

We’re not out of the woods yet, so we must all continue to wear masks, wash hands, and practice social distancing. If the number of coronavirus cases continues to mount as flu season approaches, we could experience a second wave of outbreaks and infections. So, it’s more important than ever for everyone to get their flu shots to reduce the amount of illness.

Let’s stay well and get through this together.

Jeffrey Le Benger, MD
Chief Executive Officer

COVID-19 has required us to adapt in many ways. While the safety of our teammates and patients has always been our top priority, we have reinforced best practices to resume in-office visits in the safest manner possible.

You may be hesitant to seek in-person care during the pandemic, but please know that we are prepared. For the safety and well-being of our patients and in-office teams, our safety measures and protocols include:

- Universal screening of all patients and employees using no-contact infrared thermometers
- Mandatory use of masks by everyone on our premises
- Rigorous cleaning and disinfecting of all areas
- Strict social- and physical-distancing measures
  - Minimal time spent in waiting areas
  - Chairs spaced at least 6 feet apart
  - Low patient volumes
- Restriction of visitors (unless medically necessary)
- Expanded Saturday hours for your convenience and safety

It’s our privilege to be the health care provider for you and your family. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Safety Measures and Protocols at SMG

CONNECT WITH US!
Keep up with breaking health news, new physicians, new services, events, videos, and more from Summit Medical Group.

Hello

Before entering you must:

✓ Check-in with a Patient Screener

✗ Be wearing a mask at all times while on SMG premises*$

✗ Have your temperature checked

Before entering you must:

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- Have your temperature checked

*This includes parking areas and sidewalks

**Publishing Note: This marks the last issue of Healthy Connections. Our team will continue to work to share timely, engaging content through our digital channels and products, such as the new and improved monthly patient newsletter, Thrive.

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Preventive Care

evaluate and address health concerns, keeping illness at bay so intensive treatment isn’t necessary. At Summit Medical Group, PCPs work closely with specialists and can help orchestrate care among them to deliver highly coordinated, multispecialty care.”

PREVENTION IS THE KEY TO GOOD HEALTH
PCPs guide patients in needed vaccinations and screening tests to help prevent major health issues. For example, colon cancer screening allows doctors to detect and remove precancerous tissue before it has the chance to turn into cancer. PCPs also track health markers, such as weight, cholesterol, and blood glucose, to flag possible health concerns.

“The optimal time to address a medical issue is before it becomes a problem,” says Dr. Leibu. “Many chronic health problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, don’t cause symptoms in their early stages. By seeing your primary care physician and undergoing simple tests, you can detect and address these issues before they greatly impact your health.”

YOU HAVE HELP BOOSTING YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM
More than ever before, the past few months have taught us the value of a healthy immune system. To ensure your virus-fighting system is at its best, partner with your PCP.

“Anytime our health is not optimized, our immune system is compromised. For example, uncontrolled health issues or poor lifestyle choices can unknowingly occupy the focus of our immune system,” explains Dr. Leibu. “We help patients focus on overall health and well-being, so their immune system is equipped to handle anything that comes its way, such as coronavirus.”
IMPROVING WOMEN’S LIVES WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART BREAST CANCER AND OVARIAN CANCER CARE

Advances in prevention and treatment have significantly improved the lives of women with breast and ovarian cancers. More women diagnosed with these cancers today are living longer lives than ever before.

The multidisciplinary team of cancer specialists at Summit Medical Group (SMG) Cancer Center provides patients with the latest advances in cancer care. “We treat each patient as an individual,” says Darlene Gibbon, MD, FACOG, Medical Director of Gynecologic Oncology. “We ensure they get the most innovative therapies possible.”

INNOVATIONS IN OVARIAN CANCER CARE

“Thanks to recent treatment advances, we are now looking at 10-year survival times for ovarian cancer,” says Dr. Gibbon.

Researchers discovered that mutations in genes called BRCA1 and BRCA2 raise the risk of developing ovarian cancer. These genes were already known to drive some breast cancers. Today, genetic testing looks for BRCA mutations and a growing list of other gene mutations.

“Since there are no reliable screening tests for ovarian cancer, women need to know if they have an increased risk of disease based on family history or an inherited genetic predisposition,” says Dr. Gibbon. “They also need to be aware of the signs and symptoms, especially if they persist for more than two weeks, and speak to their doctor.”

Symptoms of ovarian cancer often include feeling the need to urinate urgently or frequently, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, abdominal pain, and bloating. Since these symptoms are vague and usually occur as a tumor grows larger, most ovarian cancers are diagnosed at advanced stages.

Genetic test results may guide approaches to prevention in women at risk. “Women with inherited gene mutations may decide to reduce their lifetime risk of developing ovarian cancer by having their ovaries removed after their childbearing years are complete,” says Dr. Roshini George, DO, who specializes in treating breast and gynecologic cancers.

Surgery is the first treatment for ovarian cancer, followed by a growing range of other therapies to help prevent disease recurrence. Previously, most women with newly diagnosed ovarian cancer were treated with standard surgery and chemotherapy, but most relapsed within three years. Today, drugs called PARP inhibitors target BRCA mutations by preventing cancer cells from repairing damaged DNA.

The PARP inhibitor olaparib, first approved only for women with BRCA mutations, was recently approved for women who relapsed after standard therapy, and in combination with bevacizumab as maintenance therapy for patients with specific gene mutations and advanced disease.

INNOVATIONS IN BREAST CANCER CARE

“Mammograms save lives. They can find tiny, early cancers that are easily curable,” says breast surgeon Alison Price, MD. A common misconception by women without a family history of breast cancer is that they don’t need screening. But only 10% of breast cancers are caused by inherited gene mutations.”

3-D mammography can detect breast cancer better than traditional 2-D technology, especially in women with dense breasts. Breast cancer that is detected earlier usually requires less surgery, which means faster recoveries and better outcomes for patients.

Today, many women diagnosed with breast cancer do not need to lose their breasts. Less extensive options include lumpectomy, nipple-sparing surgery, and partial mastectomy with reconstruction.

“Some tumors can be shrunk in advance of surgery with chemotherapy, allowing us to conserve the breast instead of a mastectomy,” says Dr. Price. “But there’s no one right answer. We provide patients with a ‘menu’ of effective options based on their cancer. Our goal is to do the safest,
MANAGE YOUR CANCER RISK

Here are three tips to manage risk. Remember:
- Tell your provider if you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer.
- SMG offers genetic testing and counseling for women with a family history of cancer.
- Ask your provider about the right time and frequency for cervical cancer screenings and mammograms.

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COORDINATED CARE

“At SMG, specialized oncologists, surgeons, and nurses collaborate to provide cancer care in a nurturing environment,” Dr. George says. “We also have a multidisciplinary team of social workers, nutritionists, and genetic counselors. We care about each patient’s well-being throughout their cancer journey.”

PERSONALIZED TREATMENT PLANS

Personalized treatment plans help ensure the best possible outcomes for each patient, and a nurse navigation program facilitates a seamless experience to help patients move beyond the initial diagnosis through each stage of their recovery and survivorship.

SMG Breast Care Center is one of only two centers in New Jersey designated a National Consortium of Breast Centers Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence.

Additionally, our Breast Care Center has been NAPBC Accredited since 2015. Together, these two designations put our center among the top breast care centers in the nation.

10 YEARS OF PATIENT-CENTERED CARE

Formed in 2010, SMG’s comprehensive Breast Care Center opened its first facility at the flagship campus in Berkeley Heights, followed by two other centers in Florham Park and Livingston. Since its inception, the Breast Care Center has provided a multidisciplinary approach to the evaluation, treatment, and support of benign breast health conditions and all stages of breast cancer.

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Most cosmetically appealing surgery and empower patients in the decision-making process.”

Less extensive surgery also applies to lymph nodes, the “stations” in the immune system’s network that drain fluid away from the breast. “Instead of removing all nodes, we test the sentinel nodes first,” says Dr. Price. “If they are cancer-free, we can leave the remaining nodes in place.” This advancement significantly reduces the risk of lymphedema, a condition that involves fluid buildup and swelling that can occur after lymph node removal.

Today, most breast surgeries do not require an overnight stay in the hospital. Even with a mastectomy, many patients can go home the same day comfortably thanks to nerve block anesthesia. This provides long-lasting pain control and minimizes the need for narcotic pain relievers, allowing patients to return to normal activities sooner.

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Our Doctors

SUMMIT MEDICAL GROUP Welcomes 35 New Doctors

Noeen Ahmad, DO
Pulmonology
Florham Park
973-404-9930
Millburn
973-763-6800

Lalitha Anand, MD
Oncology/Hematology
Berkeley Heights
908-277-8890

Andrew Beharrie, MD
Orthopedic Surgery
Paramus
973-437-2615

Laurie Belosa, MD
Pediatrics/Adolescent Medicine
Westfield
908-673-7227

Danil Brahver, MD
Family Medicine
Clifton
973-447-4905 and
973-794-8297
Fair Lawn
201-796-2255

V. Christopher Inzerillo, MD, FAAOS
Orthopedic Surgery
Paramus
973-437-2615

John Franzese, MD
Gastroenterology
Chatham
973-701-8277

Berit Goro, OD
Ophthalmology
New Providence
908-277-8682

Ruba Hanna, MD
Pediatrics/Adolescent Medicine
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973-779-3911
Montclair
973-744-6939

Ki Won Kim, MD
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Florham Park
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Clifton
973-277-8668
Livingston
973-436-1360

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973-333-2585

Joao Lopes, MD, FACS
Bariatric and General Surgery
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Berkeley Heights
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Clifton
973-779-3911
Pine Brook
973-227-0169

Lai Ping Lew-Zeisel, MD
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Livingston
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Carol Mendez, MD
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973-794-8297
Fair Lawn
201-796-2255

(Continued on page 8)
OUR HEROES WEAR MASKS

We are grateful to all our Summit Medical Group providers and health care professionals who tirelessly serve to protect us from COVID-19 and keep our communities healthy.

Thank you!
FREE VIRTUAL COMMUNITY LECTURES

POST & SAVE

973-538-6161
.mmtlibrary.org
.mainlib.org
marylynn.becza@mmt

Can't Sleep?
Thursday, October 22, 1 p.m.
Presented by: Jenny Kim, MD, FCCP, Sleep Medicine
Hear from our expert about the basics of good sleep and the physical impact of poor sleep. Learn tips for improving sleep and treatment options for common sleep disorders. Hosted by the Livingston Health Department via Zoom. To receive the meeting information, call 973-535-7961, ext. 227 or 228, or email jekelly@livingstonnj.org.

Understanding Knee Arthritis and Cartilage Disorders
Wednesday, November 4, 7 p.m.
Presented by: V. Christopher Tzirerillo, MD, FAAROS, Orthopedics
Many people suffer from pain, swelling, stiffness, and loss of function as a result of knee arthritis. Our expert will discuss the causes, symptoms, and nonsurgical and surgical treatment options available. Hosted by Maurice M. Pine Free Public Library via Zoom. To register visit https://bccls.libcal.com/event/6894517.

Why Does My Stomach Ache?
Wednesday, November 11, 7 p.m.
Presented by: Dennis Han, MD, Gastroenterology
Learn about what could be causing your abdominal pain or discomfort. Our expert will discuss conditions, such as irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, celiac disease, and GERD (reflux), and explain the differences between these conditions, how they are diagnosed, and available treatment options. Hosted by Morristown & Morris Township Public Library. Registration is required for this virtual event, which will be held via GoToMeeting. For more information, email marylynn.becca@mmt.mainlib.org or visit www.mmtlibrary.org, or call 973-538-6161.

VIRTUAL SERIES

What Now? A Cancer Survivorship Speaker Series
Mondays, September 21, October 19, November 16, 5:30 p.m.
Open to any cancer survivor who has completed treatment (not including ongoing hormonal or immunotherapy). Each session via Zoom will include a guest speaker and Q & A session, immediately followed by an optional 45-minute support group discussion. Planned topics include intimacy and sexuality, options for lingering side effects from treatment, and nutrition suggestions following cancer treatment. See summitmedicalgroup.com/events for information on the speakers and registration details.

Surviving & Thriving Women’s Cancers Virtual Lecture Series
Open to women with any type of cancer. See our website for details on this two-session series.

VIRTUAL SEMINARS

Considering Weight-Loss Surgery?
Learn how weight-loss surgery can help you improve your health, feel better, and get your life back! Join us for a review of the surgical options and lifestyle changes to keep you on track with a healthy weight after weight-loss surgery. Check our website for Saturday seminar dates. To register for one of our virtual sessions, visit our website or call our events line at 908-277-8889.

Breast Cancer Support Group for Newly Diagnosed Patients (within one year of diagnosis)
Tuesdays, September 29, October 27, November 24, December 29, 1 p.m.
This program is for those who have recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. Patients can share concerns and advice about their experiences with breast cancer treatments and more. For information on how to register, contact the Oncology Care Navigator at 973-437-2343.

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Find the right Medicare plan for you
Summit Medical Group is partnering with the Medicare experts at Advise to help our patients understand the complexities of Medicare. Advise is a licensed Medicare agency that helps Medicare beneficiaries select, understand, and use their Medicare health insurance. Advise offers several opportunities for Summit Medical Group patients to learn about their Medicare options at no cost through one-on-one benefit consultations and virtual educational seminars. To register for an upcoming seminar, visit Advisesinsurance.com/SMG. Or call 908-238-4355 to discuss your Medicare options with a licensed agent.
Why Diabetes Care Is More Important Than Ever

Preventing or managing diabetes has always been a top health priority. Now there’s one more reason for taking diabetes seriously: COVID-19. If you catch the virus, having diabetes increases your risk of becoming severely ill.

“In general, people with well-controlled diabetes tend to heal better than those with poorly controlled diabetes,” says Andrew Parziale, MD, an endocrinologist at Summit Medical Group. “They are also less likely to develop diabetes-related health problems that may make it harder to recover from COVID-19.”

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES
Whether your goal is avoiding or controlling diabetes, a healthy lifestyle is always important.

- **Diet:** “Several types of diets can help with diabetes prevention,” says Dr. Parziale. “They include low-fat, Mediterranean, vegetarian, and carb-controlled (moderately reduced-carb) diets.”
- **Physical activity:** “Exercise is critical for insulin sensitivity, which is how well insulin works in your body,” Dr. Parziale says. “A daily 20-minute walk after dinner is an easy way to start exercising. And it does great things for digestion, too.”
- **Weight control:** In his endocrinology practice, Dr. Parziale has a special interest in weight management. (Thyroid disorders are another area of expertise.) “For patients who need to lose weight, dropping 10 to 15 pounds can have a dramatic impact on diabetes prevention,” he says.

CONTROLLING DIABETES
If you already have diabetes, controlling your blood sugar can reduce your risk of developing serious complications, such as:

- Heart attacks
- Strokes
- Vision loss
- Nerve damage
- Kidney disease

Work closely with your doctor or an endocrinologist to manage your diabetes. Take your diabetes medicine or insulin as prescribed. And check your blood sugar regularly.

STAYING SAFE FROM COVID-19
Everyone should also take precautions against COVID-19. That means washing your hands often, wearing a mask in public, avoiding crowded places, and keeping at least six feet between yourself and others outside your household.

For people with diabetes, Dr. Parziale advises having enough supplies on hand for at least two weeks in case you need to shelter in place again. That includes diabetes medicine or insulin, testing supplies, and hypoglycemia treatments, such as glucose tablets or hard candies.

“We’re in this for the long haul,” says Dr. Parziale. “COVID-19 isn’t going away anytime soon, so we need to remain diligent about these precautions.”

TIME FOR TESTING?
Ask your provider whether you’re due for testing to screen for diabetes or its complications.
Mental Health Quick Tips

Many people are experiencing increased stress, fear, and anxiety as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. SMG’s James Korman, PsyD, ACT, Chief of Behavioral Health, has a few tips to help improve your mental health during this and other challenging times.

1. **JUST FOR NOW**
   Anytime you’re thinking or talking about the current COVID-19 circumstances we’re in, add three words to the end of anything that you’re thinking or saying: just for now. It’s useful to remind yourself and others of the temporary nature of what is going on right now and knowing it will end.

2. **GRATITUDE**
   Positive emotions can protect us from all the stress and pressure that is going on in the world. Expressions of gratitude for someone can invoke strong positive emotions. For seven minutes, write an authentic and heartfelt letter of gratitude to someone. This exercise allows you to tap into positive emotions, thereby reducing anxiety and depression, while making you less vulnerable to stress and burnout.

3. **THREE GOOD THINGS**
   Rewire your brain to focus on the positive. Within the two hours before you go to bed, write down three things that went well during your day. Be specific. Do it for a minimum of two weeks. Research shows you’ll benefit for a full year by doing this exercise for just two weeks, including lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression—and you’ll get better-quality sleep.