

Healthwise

The Official Newsletter of MFHN



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What You Should Know About Thyroid Disease

By Patrick Beaty, M.D., MFHN Chief Medical Officer

January is “Thyroid Awareness Month.” Thyroid disease is as common as diabetes or heart disease, with as many as 30 million Americans suffering from the condition. If thyroid disease is not diagnosed and not treated, it can lead to higher cholesterol levels, heart disease, infertility and osteoporosis. Recent research also shows there is a connection between thyroid disease and some types of arthritis, diabetes and anemia.

The thyroid, a small, butterfly-shaped gland located just below your Adam’s apple, plays a vital role in the way your heart, brain, liver, kidneys and skin function. The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormone, which controls nearly all of the cells and tissues in the body by regulating metabolism. When not working properly, the thyroid gland can produce too much thyroid hormone, causing the body’s systems to speed up (hyperthyroidism), or it can produce too little thyroid hormone, which can make the body’s systems slow down (hypothyroidism).

Some warning signs of hyperthyroidism are: rapid weight loss; high blood pressure; anxiety; and insomnia. Symptoms of hypothyroidism are: weak or slow heartbeat; weight gain (even when eating less); muscle weakness; constant fatigue; depression; being sensitive to cold; having thick, puffy, or dry skin; experiencing slowed thinking and poor memory; and constipation. Women may notice changes in their menstrual cycles and thyroid disease may be a cause of infertility.

Graves’ disease, an autoimmune disease, is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism in the United States. Sometimes, people with this disease have bulging, red, and swollen eyes and double vision.

Hashimoto’s disease, an inflammation of the thyroid, is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the U.S. Women, especially those who are 60 years of age and older, are five times more likely to suffer from this than men. When the elderly are being evaluated for dementia, hypothyroidism must be explored as a correctable cause.

Goiter is another thyroid condition. It occurs when the thyroid gland becomes enlarged and it can cause an irritating cough, and problems with swallowing or breathing.

As many as 15 million people in the U.S. have thyroid disease and don’t know it. Because many thyroid disease symptoms are not obvious or can look like the symptoms of other diseases, the best way to know for sure if a person has the disease is for a doctor to do an examination and order a TSH (thyroid-stimulating hormone) blood test.

If you have a parent, brother, sister or child who has thyroid disease – or if you have any of the symptoms of thyroid disease – make an appointment with your MFHN healthcare professional. Call 201-478-5827 to schedule your appointment.

A Message from the President & CEO

Dear Friends:

We at Metropolitan Family Health Network are starting 2017 by renewing our commitment to you and your health. We are dedicated to making certain that our healthcare professionals and staff members are here when you need us – Monday through Saturday, with late nights on weekdays. More importantly, we are here to provide you with the care you need, and to do so in the most thoughtful and professional manner possible.

We hope you will make a promise to take care of yourself in 2017 with a health check-up at least once a year, and dental exams twice a year.

Wishing you all the best in this New Year!

Joan Dublin

Joan Dublin, RN, MPA, ACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer

The Importance of Preventive Care and Screenings



One of the best things you can do to take care of yourself and your family is to practice a healthy lifestyle. Healthy habits prevent health problems and help stop disease before it starts. Making healthy choices every day, even in small things, like taking the stairs instead of an elevator, improves your health. You also lower your risk of getting some common but avoidable illnesses. And if you do get ill, healthy habits will help you get better more quickly.

Living a healthy lifestyle helps people feel better and happier. Healthy children miss fewer school days and are better able to learn. Healthy adults do more overall, and are on the job more days. Seniors who are healthy and want to live alone can do so for a longer period of time.

Try to make healthy choices every day. Exercising, eating right, and staying in touch with friends and family are like bricks in a wall. If you practice them every day you will build a strong wall against illness and disease. Some important practices are:

- Not smoking
- Not abusing drugs or alcohol
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Exercising and staying active
- Keeping in touch with loved ones
- Practicing safe sex

- Finding ways to deal with stress and emotional challenges

Regular health check-ups and screenings are an important part of staying healthy. For example, immunizations and flu shots can stop illnesses before they start.

Screenings (also called screening tests) are medical tests that healthcare professionals use to check for diseases and health conditions before there are any signs or symptoms. Screenings help find problems early, when they may be easier to treat. Depending on your age, sex, and medical history, you may need to be screened for things like:

- Certain types of cancer
- High blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis (weak bones)
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Hearing loss or vision loss
- Mental health conditions, like depression

By blending a healthy lifestyle with regular yearly check-ups and screenings, you can enjoy better health. Get started today, it's the prescription for a healthy and happy New Year!

The Heart and Your Health

Heart disease is the biggest cause of death in the United States. More than 600,000 people die from it every year. What's more, about half of all Americans (49%) have at least one of these three risk factors:

- High blood pressure
- High LDL cholesterol
- Smoking

Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease, which affects men and women equally. Almost two-thirds (64%) of women and half of men who died suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms. Sometimes heart disease may be silent and go undiagnosed until there are signs or symptoms of a heart attack, heart failure, an arrhythmia, or stroke. These symptoms may include:

- Heart Attack: Chest pain or discomfort, upper back pain, indigestion, heartburn, nausea/vomiting, extreme tiredness, upper body discomfort, and shortness of breath.
- Arrhythmia: Fluttering feelings in the chest (palpitations)
- Heart Failure: Shortness of breath, fatigue, swelling of the feet/ankles/legs/abdomen.

- Stroke: Sudden weakness, paralysis (inability to move) or numbness of the face/arms/legs, especially on one side of the body. Other symptoms may include: confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech, difficulty seeing in one or both eyes, shortness of breath, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination, loss of consciousness, or sudden and severe headache.

Several other conditions and lifestyle choices can also put a person at a higher risk for heart disease, including:

- Diabetes
- Overweight and obesity
- Poor diet
- Physical inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use
- A family history of heart disease
- Age 55+

Because many people have no symptoms of heart disease, it is important to have your blood pressure and cholesterol checked regularly. Your cholesterol level gives your doctor a snapshot of your heart's health.

There are two kinds of cholesterol: HDL (good) and LDL (bad) cholesterol. A high HDL level is not a risk factor for heart

disease. A high LDL level, on the other hand, can mean trouble. You should have your cholesterol checked at least every five years after age 20. In some situations, if your cholesterol is high, your doctor may prescribe medications to lower it.

The good news is there is a lot you easily can do to avoid getting heart disease:

- Exercise regularly
- Follow a low-fat, low-salt diet
- Don't smoke

Preventing disease is the best gift you can ever give to yourself and your family. Small actions and decisions every day add up to a healthy heart. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Sign up for zumba or a dancing class with your spouse and spend some quality time together. Prepare healthy meals at home with your family and friends.

Most importantly, visit your MFHN doctor regularly! Call 201-478-5827 for your appointment.



Seal the Deal!

on Your Child's Oral Health!



Cavities are the biggest chronic childhood disease, and cavities can start in tots as young as 1 or 2 years old. Not only do cavities cause pain, they can prevent a child from being able to eat and sleep properly, keep a youngster from learning and enjoying play, and ruin a beautiful smile.

Good oral care is an important part of being healthy. In our new, "Seal the Deal" campaign, Metropolitan Family Health Network's pediatric and dental staff members are working with parents to make sure children's teeth and gums stay healthy and strong from the time they start getting baby teeth and all through their lives. The "Seal the Deal" campaign is supported by a grant from the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey Kids' Oral Health Program.

As part of the campaign, our healthcare

and dental professionals are looking at children's teeth to make sure there are no problems. They are also teaching parents and children how to properly care for teeth and gums at every age.

If needed, our staff will apply fluoride varnish (for baby teeth) and dental sealants (for permanent teeth). The varnish and sealants are safe and pain-free ways of making children's teeth stronger and helping to protect from cavities, tooth decay and long-term problems.

Fluoride varnish can be applied to a baby's teeth as soon as baby starts getting teeth. The fluoride varnish goes on quickly and easily with a small brush. After the varnish is applied, parents are advised to feed the child soft foods that day, and not to brush the child's teeth until the next day. Right after the varnish is applied, the child's teeth will be yellow, but the color

will disappear with brushing the next day.

Dental sealants should be applied to first molars that come in about the time a child is 6 years of age, and to second molars that come in around age 12. Sealants can even be applied to teeth that are in the early stages of decay to prevent further damage. Sealants are clear, white or slightly tinted, and usually can't be seen when a child is talking or smiling. There is no drilling involved in applying sealants; they go on with a small brush in a few minutes. Sealants can last for as long as 5 to 10 years.

Talk with your Metropolitan Family Health Network pediatrician and dentist about how we can work with you to "Seal the Deal," and keep your child's teeth healthy and growing strong. Call 201-478-5827 and make an appointment today!



Bring your kids on

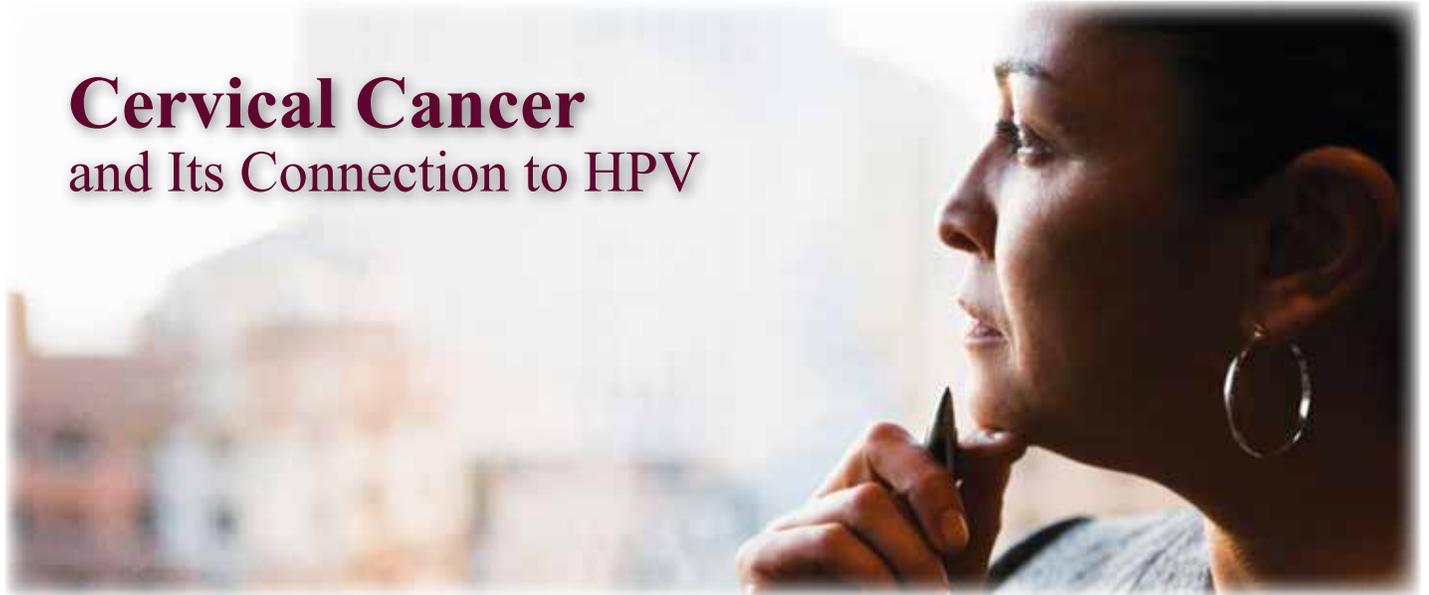
**Friday, February 3, 2017 for
Give Kids a Smile Day –
FREE dental services for kids 17 and younger!**

Make an appointment for ...

- FREE dental exam and cleaning with FREE dental hygiene gift bag
- FREE oral healthcare instruction
- Games • Music • Fun
- Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- 935 Garfield Avenue in Jersey City - right by the Garfield Avenue Light Rail.

Appointments are a must – call 201-478-5875 today.

Cervical Cancer and Its Connection to HPV



Cervical cancer is a cancer that is found in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.

While many factors can cause cervical cancer, almost all can be traced back to HPV (human papillomavirus), the same virus that causes genital warts.

There are more than 100 different types of HPV, but only about five are considered high-risk and are linked to cervical cancer. The American Cancer Society reports that about 67% of all cervical cancers are caused by just two of these five types of HPV, both of which can be prevented with the HPV vaccination.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that six million people in our country get the HPV virus every year, and that nearly half of all sexually active adults will have a HPV infection during their lifetime. While HPV is very common, most women with the virus do not develop cervical cancer. The infections that last longer than a few years are those that are most likely to become cancer.

Some cervical cancer risk factors include:

- Early sexual activity, which increases the risk of getting HPV.
- Having many sexual partners also increases the risk of getting HPV.
- Getting other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, and HIV/AIDS.
- A weakened immune system, or having your health weakened by another health condition.
- Cigarette smoking, being overweight and long-term use of oral contraceptives also increase the risk of developing cervical cancer.

The best way to prevent HPV is to get one of the vaccines that protects against the dangerous types of the virus. The HPV vaccination is recommended for: preteen and teenage girls and boys; young women through age 26; young men through

age 21; young men who have sex with men; young adults who are transgender; and young adults with compromised immune systems through age 26.

For those who are sexually active, the best means of HPV and cervical cancer prevention is to be in a monogamous relationship with a partner who is also monogamous, and who is not infected with

any STI or STD. Using a condom during sexual intercourse is also an important means of prevention.

Regular yearly OB/GYN check-ups and cervical screenings are important to every woman's overall health, regardless of her age. **Call 201-478-5827 and make your appointment to see a MFHN professional today!**

M.D. Spotlight Patrick Beaty, M.D., MFHN Chief Medical Officer

Since 2006, Dr. Beaty has served as the Chief Medical Officer for Metropolitan Family Health Network, providing leadership to our medical staff, and overseeing and coordinating services for our patients' care.

A graduate of Rutgers University Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Dr. Beaty served his residency and fellowship at University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Hospital in Newark. He is Board Certified in both Internal Medicine and Digestive Diseases. A member of the Clinical Director's Network (a non-profit network of primary care clinicians in community health centers in the U.S.), he served as a member of their Board from 1997- 2004, and as Chairman for Region II from 1999 - 2000.

Dr. Beaty's community activities include serving as a Prostate Cancer Screening Program Educator, being on the Peer and Quality Committee for AmeriChoice and University Health Plan HMOs, and being the Chairperson of Metropolitan Family Health Network's Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Program.

Dr. Beaty and his wife Janice have been married for more than 25 years and are the proud parents of two sons — Christopher and Michael.



MFHN News



In the true spirit of the holiday season, MFHN staff prepared foods baskets for our patients. Each department collected and assembled all the fixings for delicious Thanksgiving Day meals. Special thanks to everyone who contributed so generously, and to those who did such a beautiful job in making up the baskets.



MFHN patient Verdan Fontaine was one of just 3 people to meet with U.S. Senator Cory Booker and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Matthews Burwell for a discussion of the importance of the Affordable Care Act. The meeting took place on December 14th in East Newark.



Metropolitan Family Health Network's Best-Kept Secret in 2016 ... Our Dedicated, Hard-Working Staff Members. Special thanks to Karon Delacruz, RN, Tanisha Malden LPN, Erickson Dominguez, LPN, Soely Vasquez, LPN and Gillian Symmonds, Dental Coordinator, for all you do. **Congratulations and Best Wishes to Karon Delacruz**, who was promoted from RN in Pediatrics to Nursing Supervisor effective January 3, 2017.



The MFHN Dental Program celebrated its 5th Anniversary in December! The state-of-the-art dental suite at Metropolitan's 935 Garfield Avenue center includes a reception area, laboratory and four operatories, and has digital x-ray technology and electronic dental records. Complete services are offered for children and adults. Pictured here: MFHN President & CEO Joan Dublin, RN, MPA, ACHE (far right), Dental Director Hallie Williams, DDS (third from right), Chief Medical Officer Patrick Beaty, MD (third from left), COO Scott Carey (second from left) and the MFHN Dental Staff.

UnitedHealthCare hosted a Staff Appreciation-Health Education Event at Metropolitan on December 14, 2016. Ten MFHN staff members who went above and beyond the call of duty in 2016 (i.e., National Health Center Week, ACA Open Enrollment, and other events and programs) were selected to attend as a sign of our appreciation. Jenny Benitez, Christina Gonzalez, Wanda Flecha, Garrick Hall, Judy Hoang, Soledad Javier, Stephanie Lee, Louris Mikael, Olga Navarro, and Novelyn Tudio were presented with healthy kits and medals inscribed with, "Heart of Gold."

Kids' Corner: Take Care of Your Teeth



How often do you think about your teeth? Once a week? Once a month? Never? That's not good for you or your teeth. Your teeth work hard for you every day. They make you look happy when you smile. Teeth chew your food. They help you speak clearly. They make you look good in photos. And without your teeth, eating pizza would be well, *impossible*.

Like everything we use a lot, we need to take care of our teeth. You see, teeth have enemies. Like plaque (say: plak). After you eat anything, bacteria (say: bak-TEER-ee-uh) stick to your teeth. If you don't brush them off, your gums will get red, swollen and sore. Plus, they can make holes in your teeth called cavities.

Toothpaste has only been around about 100 years. Before then, people used twigs, lemon juice, ashes, and tobacco and honey mixed together to clean their teeth. Yuck! Now, you can choose from many different flavors of toothpaste. This makes brushing your teeth a lot more fun and gets your teeth a lot cleaner. Here's a secret, though. You don't need much toothpaste to do a good job of cleaning your teeth. A squirt of toothpaste the size of a pea is enough. The secret to healthy teeth is to brush them gently for two minutes.

Think about it. Have you ever seen a great singer or actor, superhero, athlete, or anyone famous, who didn't have great teeth? We want you to be superstars as well. So take good care of *your* teeth.

