metropolitan familyhealth network

Healthwise

September/
October 2022

www.MetropolitanFHN.com

A Message from the President and CEO

Dear Friends,

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people postponed or completely disregarded making and keeping appointments for annual physical exams and checkups, vaccinations, tests, and treatment for chronic conditions and general health. As a result, there has been a major increase in the number of those now dealing with intensified, negative diseases and conditions – high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic pulmonary disease, cancer, arthritis, acute stress, depression, alcohol use disorder, to name a few.

In September and October, we promote awareness for preventable cancers – ovarian, breast, prostate, and childhood cancers. We strongly encourage you to make and to keep appointments for regular and follow-up visits for yourself and your family. MFHN never turns anyone away because of a lack of insurance or means to pay. We have built relationships with many testing sites so we are able to refer patients for comprehensive education, screening, case management, and follow-up services for breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancers.

Call 201-478-5827 for appointments. We are now open weekdays at times that meet your needs.

Warm regards,

Joan Dublin

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

Lower Your Baby's Risk of SIDS

A newborn may spend over 20 hours a day sleeping.

Every year, about 1 of 1,000 babies who seem healthy before being put to bed never wake up. These unexplained, silent deaths devastate families.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the leading cause of death in children younger than one year of age in the United States. The majority of SIDS deaths affect infants between one and four months of age. The risk is higher in male babies, non-white babies, babies born with brain defects, low birth weight or premature babies, babies who recently had a respiratory infection, and babies who live with those who smoke or use drugs.

As a result of educational campaigns, SIDS incidences have dropped by more than 50% since the 1990s. Although the cause of death from SIDS is unknown, the risk is reduced by following these guidelines:

Create a safe sleep environment. Babies should sleep on their backs and on flat and firm surfaces with fitted sheets and nothing else. Remove soft objects like stuffed animals, loose blankets, pillows, and bumper pads that can interfere with breathing if baby rolls over. Do not cover baby's head, overdress during sleep time, bundle or overheat baby. Use a sleep sack or wearable blanket during colder months. Keep baby in a crib or bassinet that meets June 2021 Consumer Product Safety Commission rules.

Share a room, not sleep space. Exhausted parents who nap on the couch with a baby on their chest make cute Instagram photos. The risk of sleep-related infant death is 67 times higher on a couch, armchair or cushion. Infants should sleep in their parents' room but in their own sleep space for at least the first six months. Babies who share a bed with other children or sleep between two adults have a greater chance of accidental suffocation or SIDS.

Don't use sitting devices for sleeping. Car seats, strollers, swings, infant carriers and infant slings are not recommended for sleep. Use these products only as directed. If the baby falls asleep in a sitting device, promptly move the little one to a safe, flat sleep space.

Breastfeed your baby. At least six months of breastfeeding can lower the risk of SIDS. If you bring the baby to your bed for breastfeeding, put them back in their sleep space when finished.

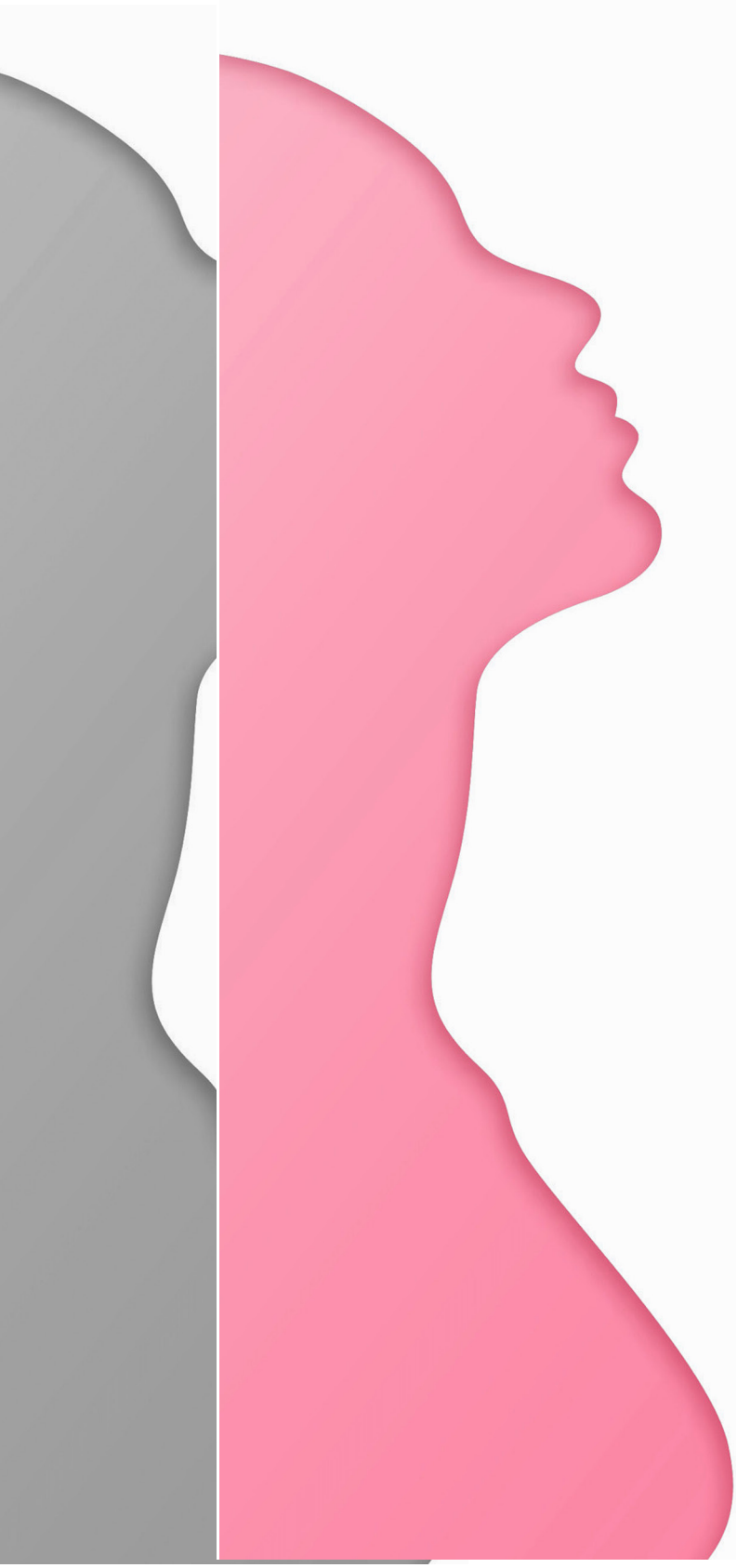
Use a pacifier. During bedtime, give the baby a pacifier, which can reduce the risk of SIDS.

Give baby tummy time. By the seventh week, put the baby on his/her stomach every day for 15 to 30 minutes supervised. Tummy time helps babies develop strength, allows them to explore surroundings, and prevents flat spots on heads.

Avoid drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. New parents may be tempted to relax with these substances but they increase the risk of SIDS.

Immunize your baby. Evidence suggests that vaccines may have a protective effect against SIDS. All children should see their MFHN provider regularly for checkups and shots.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Aiming to Reduce Disparities with Preventive Care



The most common and treatable cancer among women in the United States is also the second leading cause of cancer deaths of American women, especially Black women – largely due to racial and socioeconomic disparities. Each year, an estimated 281,550 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

Breast cancer risk factors include age, family history, early menstruation, late menopause, not having children, birthing after age 35, dense breasts, alcohol and tobacco use, and obesity.

Minority and poor women are disproportionately affected due to barriers to early diagnosis and treatment, lack of high-quality care, genetics, discrimination, and the aggressive nature of certain breast cancers they develop.

Black women have slightly lower or similar incidences of breast cancer compared to white women in the United States. However, Black women are 41% more likely to die of the disease and have a lower five-year survival rate (82%) at all stages of breast cancer, primarily due to lack of access to high-quality cancer care. Black women will account for an estimated 36,260 cases of breast cancer, and 6,800 breast cancer deaths in the U.S. this year. Only 57% of breast cancers in Black women are diagnosed early, compared to 67% in white women. According to the American Cancer Society, better than half of this disparity is due to differences in health insurance coverage.

Fortunately, MFHN accepts all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. MFHN helps reduce these disparities with clinical exams and comprehensive OB/GYN yearly checkups, during which women learn about breast cancer prevention and education. The MFHN OB/GYN team provided women with care during 8,771 clinic visits and 36 virtual visits in 2021; 1,167 women received a mammogram referral. MFHN partners with the New Jersey Cancer Education and Early Detection (NJCEED) Program, which provides an average of 14,752 free or low-cost mammograms every year throughout New Jersey.

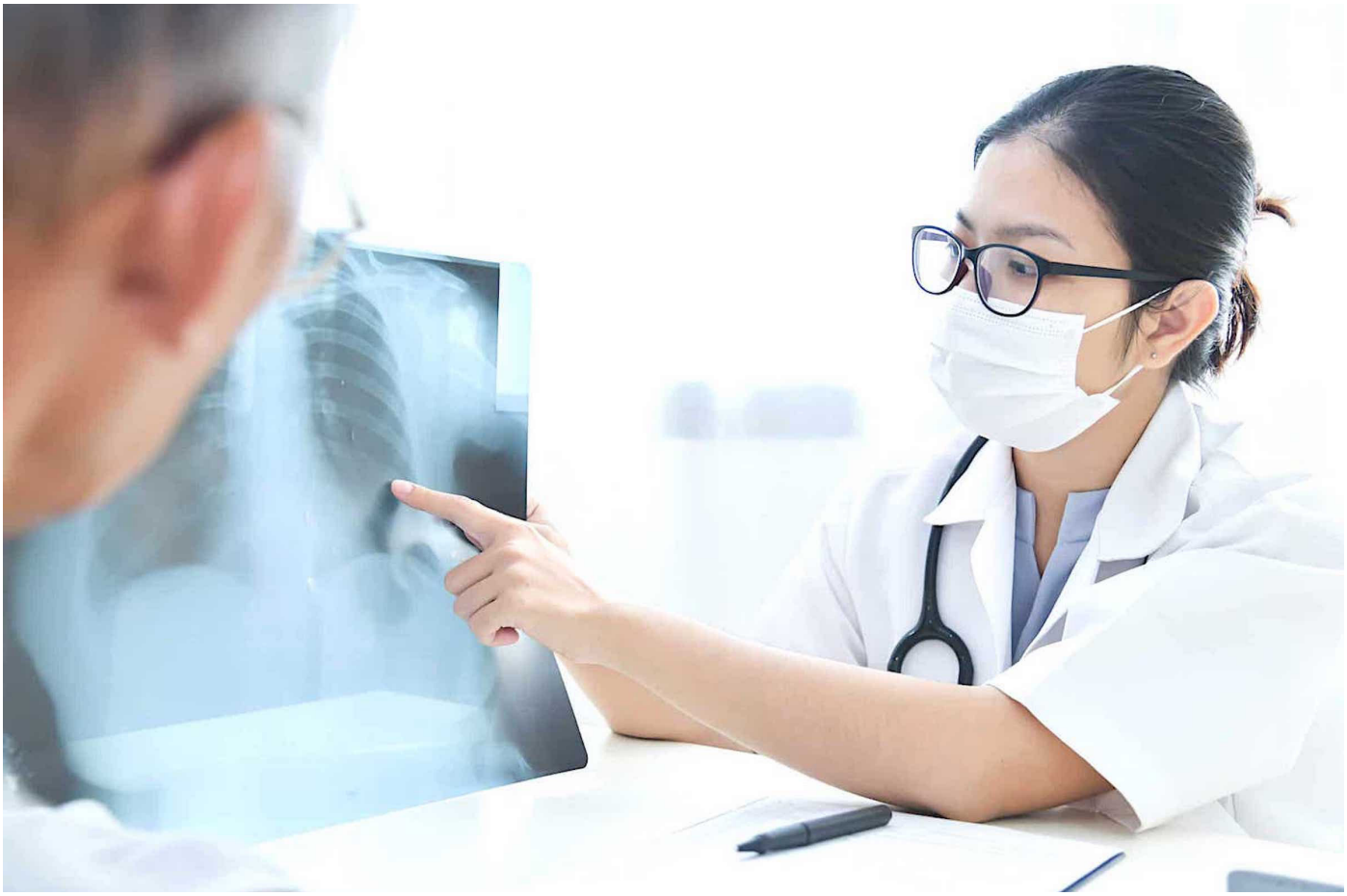
One in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Since recommendations for the timing of mammograms vary by age and risk factors, your MFHN provider will advise you. They will also inform you of lifestyle factors that can help decrease breast cancer risk: eating fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats; getting 30 minutes of exercise daily; quitting smoking; and losing weight.

The first step in preventing breast cancer is to receive an OB/GYN exam. MFHN provides high-quality, compassionate care at both of our sites – at 935 Garfield Avenue in Jersey City, and 5300 Bergenline Avenue in West New York; both, easily accessible via mass transit. Call 201-478-5800 to make an appointment.

October is Patient-Centered Care Awareness Month
Get Motivated to Make Your Health a Priority

At Metropolitan Family Health Network, our patients and their families play an important role in their health care.

Patient-Centered Care is a model that engages patients to build trust with our providers and improve health. When patients take an active role in their health care, they become empowered and live more independent and fulfilling lives. When they consult with their providers they are more likely to understand their lab tests and diagnoses, stick to treatment plans, manage medications, and have fewer adverse event.



Patient-Centered Care helps patients make informed decisions, adopt healthy lifestyles, and achieve better health outcomes. It focuses on respect for patients' values, preferences, and needs; coordination and integration of care; education; physical comfort; emotional support; involvement of family and friends; continuity of transition; and access to care.

Patient-Centered Care is applicable in all MFHN Departments. A patient who has not seen a dentist in years needs emotional support to ease their fear and anxiety before a cleaning, checkup, and X-rays. A patient with diabetes who struggles to lose weight can learn how to control their glucose through the MFHN Diabetes Management Program. A nurse may suggest activities to fit into the patient's lifestyle instead of just handing them diet and exercise plans. A patient grieving over the death of a loved one or struggling with substance abuse may speak with a member of the MFHN Integrated Behavioral Health Care Team about their overall well-being for counseling and support.

MFHN treats every patient with dignity, compassion, and respect.

So we encourage you to take an active role in your health by collaborating with our providers, who coordinate health care to best meet patients' needs. MFHN aims to strengthen patient-provider relationships through clear communication. MFHN providers guide patients and their families through their health care options and assist them in making good health a priority.

Protecting Vision: October is Eye Injury Prevention Month

A sports accident. Dust and household chemicals. Fireworks. Battery acid or fluid leaks from a motor vehicle repair. Broken twigs while landscaping. All of these can lead to the eye injuries that affect more than one million people every year.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, 90% of eye injuries are preventable. More than 40% of all eye injuries occur during home repairs, yard work, cleaning and cooking; another 40% are related to sports or recreational activities. Each year, household chemicals like bleach cause 125,000 eye injuries; 42,000 sports-related eye injuries are treated in emergency rooms; and 20,000 eye injuries occur at work.

Cooking, exercising, and housekeeping can pose risks to your eyes. Follow these tips and precautions to protect your vision:

Wear eye protection and follow safety guidelines. Balls, bats, fingers, and elbows are dangerous on the field, court, or rink. Face shields or sports glasses with shatterproof polycarbonate lenses should be worn during sports or recreational activities, while working with machinery, doing yardwork, clearing debris, and using chemicals. Read labels, don't mix cleaning products, and keep spray nozzles pointed away from you.

Practice kitchen safety. There's a lid for almost every pot or frying pan. When cooking with liquids that could splatter, use a lid or splash screen to protect your eyes from burns. Wash your hands after preparing food to remove residue from spices, hot peppers, and anything else that can stick to your fingers and irritate your eyes.

Don't forget the younger kids. Make sure they safely use items like paper clips, pencils, scissors, bungee cords, wire hangers, and rubber bands. Only buy age-appropriate toys.

Know what to do if you're injured. If any liquid splashes into your eye, immediately rinse it with water. Get medical help right away if you have eye pain or trouble seeing, a cut or torn eyelid, blood on the eye, debris under the eyelid, or if one eye has limited movement or looks different than the other eye. If you get debris in your eye, do not rub it. Blink to allow tears to remove the particle. If you get hit in the eye, apply a cold compress. If your eye has been cut or punctured, do not rub, rinse, or apply pressure; place a shield over it and get emergency medical help.

A Professional Cleaning Can Prevent or Reverse Gum Disease

Even if your mouth feels fine, getting your teeth professionally cleaned allows the MFHN Dental Team to examine your mouth and check for bleeding (gingivitis), inflammation, tenderness, cracked fillings, receding gums, oral cancer, and other oral health issues.

While brushing and flossing keeps teeth feeling clean and healthy, it's not enough to prevent gum disease. The sticky film of plaque that hardens into yellow or brownish tartar around teeth can only be cleaned away by a dental hygienist during a professional cleaning. If tartar is not removed, it can cause the gums to loosen their grip on teeth and form periodontal "pockets" that will deepen and lead to gum disease. This stage of periodontal disease can be reversed with a professional cleaning every six months and good oral hygiene.

Periodontal disease risk factors include age, smoking, diabetes, bad oral hygiene, stress, heredity, crooked teeth, certain medications, female hormonal changes, and immune-deficiencies. Periodontal disease affects 47% of adults age 30 and older, 70% of those 65 and older, and 67% of smokers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Older adults are at increased risk for periodontal disease due to physiologic changes associated with aging. Pregnancy often leads to gum inflammation. Moms-to-be need more frequent dental care, beginning in the first trimester.

Regular cleanings are essential for oral health. Dentists may take X-rays, depending on a patient's last visit and any pre-existing dental issues. After tartar is cleaned away, the teeth are flossed and polished. The Dental Team will answer questions about proper brushing and flossing, gum disease, tooth or gum sensitivity, cavities, tooth replacement options, whitening, and other topics.

It takes work to keep a great smile. Brush teeth in the morning, after meals, and before bedtime. Floss once a day. Teach children proper brushing and flossing. Make sure you and the whole family come to MFHN for regular checkups, beginning with the emergence of their first tooth. Call 201-478-5800 to make an appointment.

MFHN Celebrates National Health Center Week with Food and Clothing Drives, Free Screenings, Giveaways and More!

On Tuesday, August 9, despite blistering heat and humidity, hundreds of community members came to MFHN for the Annual celebration of National Health Center Week.

The event began with welcoming remarks from MFHN President and CEO, Joan Dublin and MFHN Chief Operating Officer, Scott Carey. Distinguished guests included New Jersey Primary Care Association President and CEO, Selina Haq; Senator Robert Menendez's Director of Constituent Services, Jeremy Julis; Executive Director of the New Jersey Department of Health's Office of Primary Care and Rural Health, Dr. Omolola Taiwo; U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Region II Executive Officer, Dennis Gonzalez; and Congressional candidate Rob Menendez, who visited vendors at the event, met and spoke with attendees and MFHN staff, and toured MFHN.

Thanks to the generosity of individuals, organizations, and MFHN staff, more than 450 community members took home bags of shelf-stable food and fresh fruit and vegetables, and over 200 people were able to select and take home women's, men's, and children's clean, gently worn clothing and shoes. Dental screening appointments were scheduled for 50 attendees. Plus, MFHN provided attendees and participants with special hot-day treats – frozen ices, ice cream, cold beverages, and snacks!

The event also featured MFHN community partners who were on-hand with giveaways and health care information, and MFHN extends special thanks to Aetna Better Health of New Jersey; Amerigroup; Anti-Violence Coalition of Hudson County; HOPES CAP, Inc.; Horizon NJ Health; Hudson Pride Center; Hudson River Radiology; It Takes A Village Preschool; Jersey City Medical Center; Medly Pharmacy; New Jersey Department of Health; New Jersey Primary Care Association; PSE&G Payment Assistance Outreach; Senior Spirit of Jersey City; United HealthCare; and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

"We are truly grateful to everyone who donated to our food and clothing/shoe drives, to our dedicated community partners, and our special guests," said Ms. Dublin. "I especially want to thank the MFHN staff and volunteers who braved the heat to set up and help with every aspect of the event, as well as all of those who helped plan and make this event such a great success."

Check Out Our New Hours!

935 Garfield Avenue, Jersey City:
Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

5300 Bergenline Avenue, West New York:
Monday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
First Saturday of each month: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Make Sure Your Kids Have Healthy Smiles – Join MFHN's 'A Healthier Me = Fruits & Veggies for FREE!'

Our Dental and Pediatrics Teams will help make sure 6 to 11 year-olds have good oral health care *and* good nutrition with **FREE** fresh fruits and vegetables. Call 201-478-5875 and schedule an appointment to enroll today!

Take Control of Your Health! Use our Patient Portal and Healow app

You can schedule appointments, check medical records and test results, join a Televisit and much more! Go to the MFHN website home page – www.MetropolitanFHN.com – and click on the text in the purple banner to sign up!

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

Kids' Corner: Being Respectful and Kind

Bullying is being mean to someone all the time. Bullies tease, spread rumors, leave kids out on purpose, threaten, and hit or yell. Bullying hurts people inside and out.

Kids who are bullied feel alone, different, and scared. They may have a hard time standing up for themselves. Bullying makes them feel sick and sad. It can lead them to bully other kids too!

Follow these tips to help stop bullying:

Don't leave people out. It's okay not to invite everyone to a party or playtime. But leaving one person out on purpose is hurtful.

Treat everyone with respect. Don't be mean in what you say or do. Stop and think before you speak. If you are angry about something, talk to a friend, watch TV, or go for a walk. Let an adult know about bullies.

Stand up for others. Be a role model for other kids. Bullying hurts everyone, including the people watching. Don't be afraid to talk about it with your friends and get an adult involved.

Protect yourself. If you are bullied, tell the person to stop. If speaking up feels unsafe or too hard, walk away and stay away. Tell an adult you trust about the bullying.

Be caring and kind. Sit with kids who are alone at lunch or on the bus. Talk to the unpopular kids, or invite them to play. Some kids have a hard time making friends, especially if they are shy or just started at a new school.

Own up. Apologize if you think you hurt someone's feelings. You will both feel better.

Check out these anti-bullying art activities: https://www.pacer.org/bullying/classroom/elementary/