

MONMOUTH

health & life

November 2009
\$3.95



THE GREEN ISSUE!

QUIZ:
How green is your diet?

'My week of green living'

A 'reuse, recycle' home makeover

HEALTH LINK

- 7 ways to keep flu bugs at bay
- Weathering the 'downturn blues'
- Welcome back, 'copters

Welcome LETTER

Battling H1N1

ANY STRAIN OF INFLUENZA CAN BE DEADLY, usually in those who have underdeveloped immune systems (such as infants and very young children) and those with weakened immune systems (including the elderly or those with prior immune deficiencies).

The H1N1 virus—referred to as “swine flu” early on—has spread from person to person worldwide, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. Most people who have become ill with this new virus have recovered without requiring medical treatment. As with any virus, there is no cure; there is, however, treatment available for severe cases.

In this issue of *Monmouth Health & Life*, R. Sivaprasad, M.D., chief of infectious diseases at Monmouth Medical Center, and Meg Fisher, M.D., chair of Pediatrics and medical director of The Children’s Hospital at Monmouth who specializes in pediatric infectious disease, discuss precautions you can take this winter to keep your family healthy.

Infectious disease specialists are qualified as experts in the diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases, and their extensive training focuses on all kinds of infections, including those caused by viruses like H1N1. Along with their specialized knowledge comes a particular insight into immunology (how the body fights infection), epidemiology (how infections spread) and infection control—and Monmouth is so fortunate to have these renowned pediatric and adult infectious disease specialists leading the hospital’s efforts to combat H1N1.

The Saint Barnabas Health Care System is receiving regular updates from the New Jersey Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and is making preparations in the event New Jersey experiences a large number of H1N1 flu cases. And as always, Monmouth Medical Center stands ready to confront this emerging threat and together, as a hospital family, we are prepared to protect our community.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank J. Vozos". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

FRANK J. VOZOS, M.D., FACS
Executive Director
Monmouth Medical Center

Gift for teens

INSPIRED BY A CANCER VICTIM'S SPIRIT, A BUSINESSMAN BRIGHTENS YOUNG PATIENTS' LIVES

Ezra Abraham "To Life" Foundation members (left to right)
Susan Abraham, Irwin Abraham, Rachel Pardo, Michael Shweky,
Elaine Parker, Sari Shamah, Zeke Abraham and Craig Viechec



IT'S HARD ENOUGH TO BE AN ADOLESCENT fighting cancer without the indignity of being treated like a small child. That's what Michael Shweky decided.

Shweky wasn't a sick teen himself. He didn't even have one in his family. But the Oakhurst businessman, a married man of 50 with three grown children, is someone who looks for chances to do a good deed for others—a mitzvah, his Jewish faith calls it. And today, thanks in part to his efforts, teens at The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center have a special room where they can relax, hang out and get away from that hospital-patient feeling. They're not consigned to the "kiddie room."

Shweky's opportunity came in 2005 at the funeral of a family acquaintance, Ezra "Eddie" Abraham, who'd been diagnosed at 16 with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare pediatric cancer, which claimed his life seven years later.

"I noticed many people wearing green bracelets and asked Eddie's parents, Irwin and Susan, what they were," Shweky recalls. He learned they were symbols of the Ezra Abraham "To Life" Foundation, which Eddie had founded during his treatment as a way of raising funds for several charitable organizations—including a summer camp for sick kids.

"I was touched by such a sick boy finding the strength to 'give back,'" Shweky recalls.

Experience had primed Shweky to spot his chance to help. Growing up in Brooklyn, he'd seen his father, Jack, visit area hospitals to raise patients' spirits as a member of a religion-based group that practiced *bikur cholim*—a Hebrew phrase that translates as "visiting the sick" but actually encompasses many ways of providing comfort and support to people who are ill, homebound or otherwise in distress.

"My father was a self-made man who struggled to create a business, but he was always good to people," says Shweky. (Jack, now 82, founded Regent International Inc., an apparel company now run by Shweky and his brother, Richard.) "Visiting sick people was just part of his kindness. And he liked that it was hands-on, not just giving money."

Not surprisingly, Shweky bought a green bracelet and joined the late Eddie Abraham's foundation. Discussing ways to honor Eddie by helping other teens in his name, he and other members realized that while many hospitals have rooms for children, a teen hangout is rare.

"In the hospitals that treated him, Eddie often had nowhere to go to relax that felt right for his age," Shweky says. "He had to sit at a little kids' table or on a little couch surrounded by blocks and coloring books. That's insulting. I am very passionate about people's self-esteem. I believe it's important in fighting illness."

With Shweky's help, the "To Life" Foundation raised money through fashion shows, basketball tournaments, cabarets and other events. These funds were then given to the Monmouth Medical Center Foundation as part of its Pediatric Unit capital renovation project. An existing room was split, one side remaining a young children's area and the other outfitted with computers, a TV, couches, an age-appropriate library and other teen-friendly amenities.

The Living Room, as it's now known, was officially dedicated on August 25—Eddie's birthday. Eddie's parents and four siblings were there. "It was a tremendous feeling to finally see the end result," says Shweky. "I gave a speech, but I could barely get through it." ■



Fighting the H1N1 FLU

VACCINATION IS THE BEST WEAPON AGAINST THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC

INFLUENZA—THE FLU—IS A HEALTH CONCERN every autumn, but it's a special worry this season, as infectious-disease specialists prepare for the return of the much-discussed H1N1 ("swine flu") virus first seen earlier this year.

"It caused significant illness in the Southern Hemisphere's winter [our summer], and was circulating here in New Jersey in the spring and early summer as well," says Margaret C. Fisher, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics and medical director of The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center. "It's very likely that H1N1 will be back, but when is anybody's guess."

So far, the new virus has acted much like the typical seasonal flu, says Dr. Fisher, who is a pediatric infectious disease specialist. But that's not too reassuring, because, as she points out, the flu claims 36,000

American lives and causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations each year.

"Most of the symptoms of H1N1 and seasonal flu are similar," agrees R. Sivaprasad, M.D., Monmouth's chief of infectious disease. They include fever, cough, headaches, body aches, chills and sore throat. "But H1N1 also causes more vomiting and diarrhea than seasonal flu," he says. Still, H1N1 is, so far, no more lethal than its annual cousin. It's the unknowns—and the potential numbers—that make the new global pandemic scary.

"Perhaps 50 percent of the population could be infected by H1N1 alone," Dr. Sivaprasad says.

To find out more about the treatment of infectious diseases at Monmouth Medical Center, please call 1-888-724-7123.

ISTOCK

No wonder there has been a major push for prevention heading into the flu season. And the best way to prevent flu, both doctors agree, is with vaccination. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have issued specific guidelines for both H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccination.

The seasonal flu vaccine is designed to provide immunity for the three to five strains of flu that are expected to affect us this winter. H1N1, as an entirely different strain, needs a different vaccine.

The CDC have developed a priority list for who should receive the vaccine, based on who seems to be most likely to get sick from the virus and who can more safely wait until more doses are manufactured and distributed. The first groups that should be vaccinated are:

- **Pregnant women.** "They are at risk of more severe complications from the disease, and their unborn babies are at risk," Dr. Fisher says. "The vaccine will also protect the babies after birth."
- **Health care workers and first responders.** These people will be more exposed to the disease and more likely to spread it, so they have been placed at a high priority for vaccination.
- **Family members of infants under 6 months old.** The H1N1 vaccine has not been approved for infants, so the CDC recommends protecting their families.
- **Children and adults from 6 months to 24 years.**
- **Persons between 25 and 64 who have medical conditions that put them at high risk for complications,** such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes.

"One big difference between the two flus is that seasonal flu affects more older individuals, while H1N1 has caused greater disease in those under 25," says Dr. Sivaprasad. No one knows for sure why that is, he says, but older adults may have been exposed

Learn the latest news on the flu

Check out the websites of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for up-to-the-minute information on H1N1 and seasonal flu:

- www.aap.org
- www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

to earlier flu strains similar to H1N1 and thus may have some immunity to it.

Everyone is still encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccine as well. As of late summer, it was unclear if the different shots could be administered at the same time, so both physicians recommend keeping a close eye on the news and staying in touch with your primary care doctors to learn when,

where and how to get the appropriate vaccinations to protect your family's health this fall. ■

7 ways to keep flu bugs at bay

Besides getting vaccinated, here are other things you can do to help prevent the spread of flu, seasonal or H1N1:

- 1 Wash hands often, but especially whenever you are in contact with someone who coughs or sneezes.
- 2 Maintain a healthy lifestyle—you're less vulnerable if you are well rested and have eaten well and exercised regularly.
- 3 Keep some distance from other people. "Cough droplets can travel about 3 feet, so avoid close contact as much as possible," says Margaret C. Fisher, M.D., chair of the Department of Pediatrics and medical director of The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center.
- 4 Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing. Wash with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- 5 Pay attention to public health announcements about the flu epidemic, such as school closings and the availability of vaccine.
- 6 See your doctor at the first sign of flu. Prescription antiviral medications such as Tamiflu and Relenza may help shorten the course of the disease and ease symptoms.
- 7 If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit your contact with others to keep from infecting them. Most people should stay home at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.



Special care for kids' bad breaks

WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A BONE OR JOINT INJURY, A PEDIATRIC ORTHOPEDIST IS YOUR BEST BET

ANY PARENT KNOWS THAT KIDS ARE ACCIDENTS waiting to happen. Toddlers topple on the furniture, teens get hurt playing hockey, and the childhood years in between are filled with a hundred other possible detours to the emergency room. And when they're injured, children often require orthopedic care. What's rare is to find, once you reach the hospital, that there's a specially trained pediatric orthopedic surgeon there to treat children's bone or joint injuries.

Take a bone fracture, the most common reason kids are brought to the ER—especially now that school sports are back in season. “Kids’ fractures often are in different patterns than adults’, and there are different consequences, especially if they involve the bone’s

growth centers,” says Lawrence Stankovits, M.D., director of pediatric orthopedics at The Children’s Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center. “These fractures may require special management in how they are set and how casts are put on.”

Other orthopedic problems in kids are also frequently different from those of adults and need careful treatment to ensure not only healing but proper development as the child grows, says Dr. Stankovits. Procedures may also require that the youngster be sedated, and Dr. Stankovits’ team includes pediatric anesthesiologists, also specially trained in treating children.

Pediatric orthopedics is “a bit of a scarce subspecialty,” says Dr. Stankovits, who did residency training at Monmouth and then a fellowship at the A.I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware. “You have to like dealing with kids and parents, and many doctors do not,” he says. “But I love it. I was going to be a pediatrician before I was accepted in the residency.”

It helps that he’s a father of three, ages 4 to 11, who are all “jocks,” he says. “And I played football at Princeton, so I know about injuries. I have a good rap with the kids.” ■

What pediatric orthopedic surgeons do

“Pediatric orthopedic surgeons treat children from the newborn stage through the teenage years. They choose to make pediatric care the core of their medical practice, and the unique nature of medical and surgical care of children is learned from advanced training and experience in practice.

“Pediatric orthopedic surgeons diagnose, treat and manage children’s musculoskeletal problems including the following:

- limb and spine deformities, such as club foot and scoliosis
- gait abnormalities, such as limping
- bone and joint infections
- broken bones

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

For more information on pediatric orthopedic care at The Children’s Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, please call 1-888-724-7123.

ISTOCK

WELCOME BACK, 'copters



HAVING A HELIPAD HANDY WILL REDUCE TRAVEL TIME FOR HOSPITAL PATIENTS WHO NEED TO MOVE FAST

THERE’S GOOD NEWS FOR THE OCCASIONAL patient who requires a quick transfer to or from Monmouth Medical Center: On the grounds of Long Branch Middle and High Schools, located down the street from the hospital, the helicopters are back.

For five years, as the campus underwent extensive renovations, the playing field that had been used as a landing zone for helicopters bringing patients in and out of the hospital was closed. The only other suitable landing site was at Allaire Airport, nearly 15 miles away.

“It was a real inconvenience to the ambulance squads, the patients and the hospital,” says Bill Arnold, Monmouth’s chief operating officer. “It took 20 to 25 minutes to get to and from the airport. We really needed a local spot.”

That spot returned this fall. The Long Branch School District once again is allowing its land to be used as a helipad. “School superintendent Joe Ferranti, the town council and our hospital officials all worked together to help to make the location work,” Arnold says.

“We thought the new soccer field at the high school would be perfect,” says Mike Perdoni, Monmouth’s administrative director of support services. “It has a fence all around it to keep bystanders away and out of danger. There are no tall impediments such as trees, light towers or electrical lines to block the pilots’ sight lines. The town, the school officials and MONOC, the ambulance service that owns the choppers, all looked at the site and agreed it would work.” Only small modifications, such as installing a larger, locked gate to allow

ambulances onto and off of the field, were needed to satisfy state regulations for a helipad.

Monmouth is not a trauma center, so the pad will rarely be used for immediate emergencies such as car accidents. But should an emergency takeoff or landing be needed, the school, hospital and MONOC have carefully planned how the various parties will communicate. “When we do a landing, our procedures are to notify the school to get the field cleared in time, the police and fire departments to deploy units to the site and the hospital’s internal departments to get them ready to receive patients,” Perdoni says.

The helicopter is most often used to transfer patients to Monmouth from other regional hospitals, or from Monmouth to other facilities. For example, patients sometimes are flown to Newark Beth Israel Medical Center—like Monmouth, an affiliate of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System—for certain cardiac procedures. “On average, we do two helicopter transports a month, and most of our transports can be planned ahead of time, so we often have several hours to get things ready,” says Arnold. In fact, most flights will be scheduled for the evening, after school lets out, he says.

Arnold is grateful to the school and the town for returning the helipad to its former location. “It’s as close as you can be to the hospital without actually being on the premises,” he says. ■

To find out more about services available at Monmouth Medical Center, call 1-888-724-7123.



The genius of follow-up

A NEW HOSPITAL 'CONCIERGE' PROGRAM SAVES MONEY BY HELPING PATIENTS

AN ELDERLY WOMAN WHO LIVES ALONE WAS startled. "She told me no hospital has ever offered to help her with anything before," says Ginnie Costello, customer service representative at Monmouth Medical Center, who in August was installed as the hospital's first "conciERGE." But Costello did assist her—and the nation's health care system too—by scheduling her follow-up doctor visits for after her discharge.

Hospital readmissions cost society billions—that's one thing all sides in the health care reform debate agree on. Many readmissions are due to patients not making or keeping follow-up appointments, not taking their medications correctly and otherwise failing to follow their postdischarge instructions. Monmouth's new concierge program tackles that problem head-on. The in-hospital concierge helps soon-to-be-discharged patients arrange the follow-up services they need. Doing this not

only makes life easier for the patient; it also makes it less likely that they'll need another hospital stay soon.

The potential savings from such services are significant. According to a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that looked at nearly 12 million Medicare hospital claims from 2003 and 2004, one in five patients was readmitted within 30 days. Half of all such nonsurgical patients were rehospitalized without having seen an outpatient doctor for follow-up care. The estimated cost of unplanned hospital readmissions in 2004 was \$17.4 billion. The researchers recommended intervention at the time of discharge, including improved transition planning, reliable and prompt follow-up care by primary care physicians and aggressive management of chronic illnesses to reduce these frequent and costly readmissions.

The Obama administration has estimated that incentives and penalties aimed at encouraging

"We thought, 'Why don't we focus on the patient after discharge from the hospital?'"



Ginnie Costello

better oversight of care in the 30 days after a hospital discharge could save \$26 billion over a decade—and that's just with Medicare patients. *The New York Times* called such a strategy "a sound idea that should also improve the lives of patients."

At Monmouth, the idea is already at work. Costello, whose background includes 14 years as an office manager at the brokerage firm Morgan Stanley, currently offers help to patients in three hospital areas: medical (which includes patients with heart, orthopedic, diabetic and other common or chronic conditions), surgical and stroke.

"I touch base with everyone on those floors and tell them about what we offer," Costello says. She meets with new patients as they arrive in the hospital and follows them right up to discharge. "I can develop a rapport with them throughout their stay here," she says. "And then, if they wish, I stay in contact with them as long as they like. My job is to ensure that the patients are satisfied and their overall needs have been met."

Costello reports that in the first month of the new initiative, about 25 percent of the patients used her help, which is free to the patient. "And every week we are getting more interest," she says. "The program eases the burden on the patients, and it also puts physicians' minds at ease by ensuring that their patients get the follow-up care they need in an efficient and timely manner following their discharge. It contributes to better outcomes and decreases unnecessary readmissions."

The concierge program is offered under the aegis of Saint Barnabas Health Care Link, the customer service center for all patients of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System, of which Monmouth Medical Center is an affiliate.

"Since we already do so many things on behalf of patients," says nurse Belynda Delgado, Health Care Link's director, "we thought, 'Why don't we incorporate everything and focus on the patient after discharge from the hospital?' We decided to put someone right in the facility, to meet with the patients and offer assistance once they leave the hospital."

The service is especially helpful for elderly patients, she says. They can be confused by dealing with insurance companies, new doctors, new pharmacies and a host of other challenges. "But we do that all day, every

Help for patients as they leave the hospital

The concierge program at Monmouth Medical Center works to meet many postdischarge needs and requests, including:

- scheduling of follow-up physician appointment or appointments
- scheduling of outpatient services such as radiology and laboratory tests
- filling prescriptions from the hospital's pharmacy
- calling patients after they are discharged to remind them about follow-up appointments
- arranging for transportation to appointments if needed

day," Delgado says. "We can shop around and find them the best and most convenient follow-up care." She recalls hearing words of gratitude from an elderly couple's adult daughter. Even though she and her two siblings had been involved with their parents' care, says Delgado, "they all have very busy lives and they really welcomed and appreciated the help."

Seniors, however, are not the only ones taking advantage of the program. "I've had patients in their 20s and 30s say that they are just really bad at scheduling doctor appointments and tests, and were very pleased to have someone else take care of this for them," Costello says.

An added benefit of the program, she says, is that it has raised awareness of the benefits of using the hospital pharmacy. Many patients don't realize that, as part of the discharge process, they can have their prescriptions filled on their way out of the hospital rather than having to make a stop at their local drugstore. "This is a huge convenience to our patients, and one less thing to have to worry about immediately following discharge," Costello says.

"Quality of patient care is what it's all about," she says. "Our concierge program is just one more way to help meet that goal." ■

About 18% of Medicare patients are readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of their original visit.

FAST FACT SOURCE: MEDICARE PAYMENT ADVISORY COMMISSION

GETTY

To obtain more information on the concierge program at Monmouth Medical Center, please call 1-888-724-7123.



Downturn BLUES?

DON'T LET THE ECONOMIC RECESSION TRIGGER A PERSONAL DEPRESSION

THE GOVERNMENT POINTS TO SIGNS OF AN economic rebound, but people are still hurting. It's no surprise that money and the state of the economy are two top sources of emotional stress for 80 percent of Americans, according to the American Psychological Association. Fortunately, help is available.

"We have seen an increase in the use of all our services, both by people newly seeking help and by those with preexisting mental health conditions, and a large percentage of that increase is due to the economy,"

says Jorge Cagide, administrative director for behavioral health services at Monmouth Medical Center.

"We can't solve people's economic problems, so we try to get them to talk about their feelings and direct them to resources that can help them cope," says Stephen M. Theccanat, M.D., chair of the department of psychiatry and medical director of outpatient behavioral health services, who says at least 25 percent of the patients he sees are being seriously affected emotionally by the economy.

If you need professional help, Monmouth's mental and behavioral health experts can direct you to the proper therapy, in an individual or a group setting. "Groups can give you a sense that you are not alone," says Dr. Theccanat. "A group can help with suggestions to improve your situation, such as job-training workshops. That kind of support can be very helpful while you wait for the job market to improve."

When symptoms are more severe and impair daily functioning, a psychiatrist may prescribe medication. If you have thoughts of harming yourself or others, hospitalization may be necessary.

Taking action is key, Dr. Theccanat says. "Come to us whenever your symptoms are preventing you from being a part of your world." ■

Where to turn for help

If you think you or a loved one needs help coping with stress, call the Monmouth Medical Center Behavioral Health Intake Coordinator at 732-923-5270. A representative will speak with you and direct you to the type of therapy best suited for you.

If you or a loved one are in a serious mental health crisis with thoughts of suicide, call Monmouth's Psychiatric Emergency Screening Service at 732-923-6999. Representatives are available 24 hours a day to send help, including police and ambulance, and even to come to your house if needed.

To learn more about behavioral health care treatment at Monmouth Medical Center, call 1-888-724-7123.



Jorge Cagide



Stephen M. Theccanat, M.D.

Kids' doctors find the right place

TWO NEWLY ARRIVED PEDIATRIC SPECIALISTS LOVE THE JERSEY SHORE

KEREN PHILLIPS, M.D.

TEENAGERS ARE FAMOUS FOR CLAMMING up when an adult asks questions. But time and again the adolescents Keren Phillips, M.D., sees in the Monmouth Family Health Center prove they didn't get the memo.

"Once I'm alone with them, with their parents in the waiting room, they easily open up about what's hurting or bothering them, or what difficult issues they're struggling with, such as drugs, sex or eating disorders," she reports.

Dr. Phillips, 41, joined The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center in March 2009 after taking time off from medicine to focus on her own two children: Jordan, now 8, and Samantha, 4. She graduated from the State



University of New York Health Science Center of Syracuse School of Medicine in 1996, finished her pediatrics residency at the Children's Hospital of New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center in 1999, and completed a fellowship in adolescent medicine at North Shore University Hospital in 2002.

Having been an assistant professor of pediatrics at New York Medical College from 2002 to 2004, she now teaches medical students and pediatrics residents on rotation through the Monmouth Family Health Center, a federally qualified health center. She is working to expand adolescent medicine services at The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center—for example, she's developing an eating disorders program.

A self-described "New York City girl trying to become a Jersey girl," Dr. Phillips lives in Manalapan with her husband, Bradley, and their children. They enjoy visiting Jersey Shore beaches and hiking around the Manasquan River Reservoir.

I. THOMAS COHEN, M.D.

AFTER 30 YEARS OF PERFORMING SURGERY on children of all ages, I. Thomas Cohen, M.D., is embarking upon what he calls an "amazing opportunity." As the first full-time pediatric surgeon at The Children's Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center, he plans to establish a comprehensive inpatient and same-day surgery program for newborns, children and adolescents. This will allow him to continue to use his expertise in neonatal surgery and childhood surgical oncology care.

Dr. Cohen and his wife, Dianne, settled in Tinton Falls almost two years ago, leaving behind the bitter winters of Massachusetts and upstate New York, where they had worked for more than two decades. "The timing was perfect" for his new career challenge, says Dr. Cohen. "The Children's Hospital at Monmouth is a state-of-the-art facility and I'm 15 minutes away from my home and the Jersey Shore beaches."

Originally from South Africa, Dr. Cohen and his wife emigrated to the U.S. more than 30 years ago. He completed his medical education, general surgery residency and pediatric surgery fellowship in South Africa and England, and also had fellowship training in pediatric surgical oncology at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

The Cohens have two grown sons: Paul, a cardiology fellow in Boston; and Justin, who is completing a doctorate in wine marketing. ■



CHAIRMAN OF PEDIATRIC SURGERY

ADOLESCENT MEDICINE SPECIALIST

ISTOCK

What's HAPPENING at Monmouth Medical Center

CHILDBIRTH PREPARATION/PARENTING

Programs are held at Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch. To register, call 732-923-6990 unless otherwise noted.

■ **One-Day Preparation for Childbirth** November 22, December 13, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. \$179/couple (includes breakfast and lunch).

■ **Two-Day Preparation for Childbirth** (two-session program) November 7 and 14, December 5 and 12, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. \$150/couple (includes continental breakfast).

■ **Preparation for Childbirth** (five-session program) November 9, 16, 23, 30 and December 7, 7:30–9:30 p.m. \$125/couple.

■ **Two-Day Marvelous Multiples** November 1 and 15, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. For those expecting twins, triplets or more. \$150/couple (includes continental breakfast).

■ **Eisenberg Family Center Tours** October 25, November 8 and 22, 1:30 p.m. Free. (No children under 14 years old.)

■ **Baby Fair** February 28, 1–3 p.m. For parents-to-be and those considering starting a family, featuring Eisenberg Family Center tours, refreshments and gifts. To register, call 1-888-SBHS-123. Free. (No children under 14 years old.)

■ **Make Room for Baby** November 14, December 19, 10–11 a.m. For siblings ages 3 to 5. \$40/family.

■ **Becoming a Big Brother/Big Sister** November 21, 10–11:30 a.m. For siblings age 6 and older. \$40/family.

■ **Childbirth Update/VBAC** November 11, 7:30–9:30 p.m. Refresher program including information on vaginal birth after cesarean. \$40/couple.

■ **NEW: The Happiest Baby on the Block** December 10, 7:30–9:30 p.m. \$40/couple, includes DVD and *Soothing Sounds* CD (\$40 retail value). Learn an extraordinary approach to keeping your baby happy based on the book by Harvey Karp, M.D.

■ **Baby Care Basics** (two-session program) November 5 and 12, 7:30–9:30 p.m.; December 12 and 19, noon–2 p.m. \$80/couple.

■ **Breastfeeding Today** December 3, 7–9:30 p.m. \$50/couple.

■ **Cesarean Birth Education** December 9, 7:30–9:30 p.m. \$40/couple.

■ **Grandparents Program** November 9, 7–9 p.m. \$30/person, \$40/couple.

■ **Parenting Young Children Through S.T.E.P.** (five-session program) February 10, 17, 24, March 3 and 10, 7–9 p.m. Systematic Training for Effective Parenting from infancy to age 6. \$75/person or \$100/couple.

■ **Adoptive Parenting** Private, two-session programs conveniently scheduled to accommodate your needs. \$150/couple.

■ **Gestational Diabetes Education Program** One-session class for women who develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy. Convenient appointments available; call the Center for Diabetes Education at 732-923-5025. Fee required.

JUST FOR KIDS

(Also see sibling preparation programs above.)

■ **Safe Sitter** (one-session program) November 7, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. For 11- to 13-year-olds on responsible, creative and attentive babysitting. Monmouth Medical Center. Call 1-888-SBHS-123. \$50/person. (Bring snack and bag lunch.)

GENERAL HEALTH

■ **Drumming Up Health**, October 22, 7:30–9 p.m.; **Introduction to the World of Essential Oils and Aromatherapy**, November 3, 7:30–9 p.m.; **Exploring the Dynamics of Complementary Medicine**, November 10, 7:30–9 p.m. At Tatum Park Activity Center, Red Hill Road, Middletown. To register for any session, call 732-842-4000, ext. 1. Fee required.

■ **Parenting Education Series** “Dating and Domestic Violence,” October 23, 6–8 p.m.; “Internet Safety,” November 20, 6–8 p.m.; “Current Drug Trends,” December 4, 6–8 p.m. Cosponsored by The Coastal Monmouth Alliance and Monmouth Medical Center, with speakers from the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office. At Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch. Registration required; call 1-888-724-7123.

■ **Free Glucose Screening** November 10, December 8, 10–11:30 a.m. At the Center for Diabetes Education, Monmouth Medical Center, Diabetes Education Classroom, Maysie Stroock Pavilion, corner of Pavilion and Second avenues, Long Branch.

■ **Meditation for Inner Calm**, November 10, 7–9 p.m.; **Releasing Worry, Finding Peace**, December 8, 7–9 p.m. At Monmouth Medical Center, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch. Registration required; call 1-888-724-7123. \$10/person.

■ **Free Child Car Seat Inspection** November 19, December 17, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Offered by the Long Branch Police, N.J. Highway Traffic Safety, The Children’s Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center and the Medical Center’s Safe Kids Chapter. At Long Branch Union Fire Company, 199 Union Avenue, Long Branch.

■ **Free Blood Pressure Screenings** October 28, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. At Monmouth Medical Center ground floor lobby, 300 Second Avenue, Long Branch.

■ **Diabetes Self-Management Series** Four-session program focusing on nutrition, glucose monitoring, medications, exercise and prevention/treatment of complications. For dates and times, call the Center for Diabetes Education, 732-923-5025. Fee required.

SENIOR HEALTH

■ **The Importance of Breast Self-Exams** October 21, 1 p.m. SCAN.*

■ **Understanding Celiac Disease** October 28, 1 p.m. Presented by Margaret Weiss Masiello, clinical coordinator, Kogan Celiac Center at Monmouth Medical Center. SCAN.*

■ **Strategies to Reduce Your Risk for Alzheimer’s Disease** November 4, 1 p.m. Presented by Priya Angi, M.D., geriatrics and internal medicine. SCAN.*

■ **Understanding TIAs** November 11, 1 p.m. Presented by Florence Armour, Stroke Center coordinator. SCAN.*

■ **Reduce Your Diabetes Risk** November 18, 1 p.m. Presented by Autumn Dempsey, Center for Diabetes Education. Includes a free glucose screening for first 30 registrants. SCAN.*

*SCAN Learning Center (Senior Citizens Activities Network, for those age 50 and over) is located at Monmouth Mall, Eatontown. To register for programs, call 732-542-1326. SCAN membership is not required. ■