

HEALTH MATTERS



Celebrating 95 years
of serving our community
1929-2024

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Health Briefs



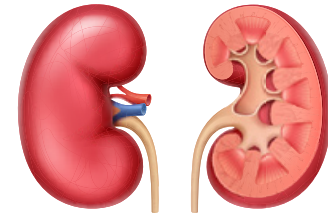
THE WORLD'S FIRST ROBOTIC SPINAL SURGERY was performed at Providence St. Joseph using a new open spine platform by eCential Robotics to implant a Spineart medical device. The two companies are collaborators in a new age of open technology sharing that allows cross-functional use of implantation devices and robotic surgical platforms.

"The integration of Spineart's advanced implant system with eCential's open robotic platform enables us to perform minimally invasive surgeries with high predictability, reproducibility and outcomes," says Providence St. Joseph spine surgeon Erick Westbroek, MD.

Providence St. Joseph is the first clinical institution in the world to be equipped with the state-of-the-art robot. "St. Joseph Hospital has built a strong reputation for world-class surgical care, and our patients often travel from far and wide to seek treatment and care from our stellar spine and orthopedic surgeons, who are armed with cutting-edge technology," says Brian Helleland, chief executive of Providence St. Joseph Hospital and the Orange County/High Desert area. "These advances provide yet another sophisticated platform for our surgeons to do what they do best."



IN THE LATEST U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKINGS for 2024–2025, Providence St. Joseph has again been distinguished as a High Performing Hospital. The hospital received "High Performing" ratings in 14 medical specialties and conditions.



FOR THE SECOND TIME IN A ROW, Providence St. Joseph is the top-rated kidney transplant facility in California according to a published report from the industry-leading Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients, a national database of transplant statistics. The hospital has the highest transplant rate and one-year survival rating in the state.

Don't miss these classes!

Register at providence.org/sjoevents or call 844-925-0945. Virtual events are conducted via Zoom. After registration, a confirmation email with the Zoom link will be sent to the registered email address.

SUFFERING FROM FOOT PAIN AND BUNIONS? Brandon Haghverdian, MD, a foot and ankle orthopedic surgeon, will discuss treatment options for bunions and other forefoot maladies at a virtual lecture on Wednesday, September 25, at 12:00 noon. These solutions will help you get back to doing the things you enjoy, one step at a time.

FREEDOM FROM SHOULDER PAIN. Join orthopedic surgeon Jeffrey Sodi, MD, at a virtual lecture as he discusses common shoulder maladies and current treatments on Wednesday, October 9, at 12:00 noon. Find relief from shoulder pain by registering for this informative class.

NAVIGATING MEDICARE. Many classes are available through December. Whether you're a novice or an expert, learn more from trusted professionals leading these Medicare education workshops and events.



Getting Enough Vitamin D in the Fading Autumn Light

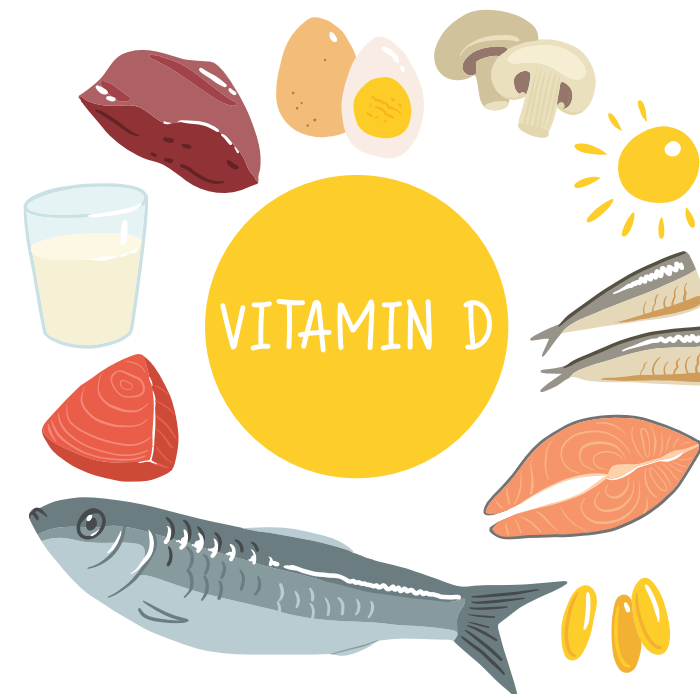
Your doctor may have told you that nutrition is one of the most important factors in overall health. We asked registered dietitian Stephanie Detoya at Providence St. Joseph to explain the importance of a nutrient that many of us don't get enough of: vitamin D. Here's what she shared with us:

As the fall season arrives, maintaining adequate vitamin D levels becomes increasingly important. With shorter days and reduced sunlight exposure, the body's ability to synthesize this nutrient diminishes, potentially leading to deficiencies.

Vitamin D is vital in supporting bone and immune health. It acts as an anti-inflammatory agent and is linked to the prevention of chronic diseases. In addition, it helps regulate our moods and prevent seasonal affective disorder.

What makes this vitamin unique is that it is produced primarily in the skin. It is often called the "sunshine vitamin" because the skin converts the sun's ultraviolet rays into a form of the vitamin that the body can use. When sunlight exposure is limited, vitamin D can be obtained from dietary sources or supplements. Consult your primary care provider to assess your vitamin D levels and needs.

Vitamin D is naturally found in whole milk, butter, egg yolks, fatty fish and mushrooms. It can also be found in fortified dairy products and breakfast cereals. Whether you're craving a nutritious breakfast or a satisfying snack, check out this recipe for Mushroom Egg Bites, which provide a healthy boost of vitamin D. Make them ahead of time and enjoy them throughout the week!



VITAMIN D-RICH MUSHROOM EGG BITES

Ingredients

Serves 12

- 8 large eggs
- ½ cup milk (fortified with vitamin D)
- ¼ cup grated mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup grated Gruyère or Swiss cheese
- 1-2 tablespoons avocado oil or extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cups white mushrooms, diced
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- ½ red bell pepper, diced
- ½ green bell pepper, diced
- Salt and ground pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325° F and generously coat a standard 12-cup muffin pan with avocado or olive oil cooking spray. In a blender, mix the eggs, milk and cheese. Blend for 50–60 seconds; set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large skillet and sauté mushrooms until they start to brown. Stir in the onion and bell pepper. Add salt and pepper to taste. Continue to sauté for 2–3 minutes, then remove skillet from heat. Let cool for 3 minutes.
3. In a large bowl, stir the sauteed veggies into the egg mixture. Then pour the mixture into muffin tins equally, about ¾ full. Bake 20–25 minutes or until eggs are puffed and firm to the touch. Allow to cool slightly before carefully removing from the muffin pan.



Carrol Nuss outside her church, Christ Cathedral in Garden Grove

Michael Neveux Photography

A Life Well Lived

A cardiac patient partners with a Providence cardiologist on her journey to wellness of the heart.

In 2012 Carrol Nuss had been enjoying retirement for about a decade. During her working years she stayed very busy running her own real estate asset disposition firm and also providing extensive fundraising efforts for various nonprofit organizations like the March of Dimes and the Red Cross. This nonstop, high-stress lifestyle took a toll on Carrol's health—even though she walked several miles a day and prioritized a healthy diet.

She found herself exhausted all the time, with frequent shortness of breath. And then one day she collapsed at her home. Paramedics rushed her to Providence St. Joseph, and she ended up in the cardiac ICU. Doctors informed her that she needed a pacemaker. "That was a shock to me," Carrol says. "My entire family history is of strokes and heart attacks, but no one had a pacemaker."

She hoped the pacemaker would give her the boost she needed, but her recovery was extremely slow and she felt exhausted all the time. So in 2015 she received a heart stent, performed by Brian Kolski, MD, the director of structural heart disease at Providence St. Joseph. Dr. Kolski is an expert in his field and helped start the hospital's transcatheter valve program.

Over time Carrol returned to Dr. Kolski for additional stents to improve her artery function. All the while she continued her volunteer work, but chest pain and shortness of breath were preventing her from being as active in the community as she wanted. She was also diagnosed with cardiac amyloidosis, a genetic protein buildup in the heart that can cause heart failure.

By 2021 Dr. Kolski had discovered that a heavily calcified lesion was causing a 90% constriction of Carrol's right coronary artery. They decided that the next step in her healing journey needed to be a coronary atherectomy and a percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) to remove plaque

buildup from her arteries. During this minimally invasive procedure, Dr. Kolski used shockwave intravascular lithotripsy to break up the calcium. St. Joseph was the first hospital in Orange County to use shockwave, which was a newer technology at the time of Carrol's treatment.

In 2023 Dr. Kolski inserted Carrol's fourth heart stent. After recovering, she was pleased to find that her symptoms had greatly improved.

"We live in exciting times," says Dr. Kolski, who is board-certified in interventional cardiology and cardiovascular diseases and performs more than 200 structural heart interventions annually. "Caring for patients with cardiac and vascular disease is more rewarding than ever. Nothing

is more satisfying than helping a patient with education, prevention and the treatment of complex problems."

Today Carrol is an active 73-year-old who stays busier than she did during her career. She jokes with Dr. Kolski that he knows the inside of her body better than she does.

"I'm alive today through the grace of God, my spiritual director, Father Bao Thai, and the best doctor and cardiologist I've ever known: Dr. Brian Kolski," she says. "He is compassionate, attentive and always on the cutting edge of heart-related medical innovations. I've been blessed to have purpose and a strong drive to keep moving forward."

“ I ACT AS IF EVERY DAY IS THE LAST DAY OF MY LIFE! ”

– CARROL NUSS



Are you at risk of heart disease? Take a quiz to learn more at providence.org/sjoheart.



While much has changed over the years, the heart of our mission remains.



Celebrating 95 years of serving our community. 1929-2024



A Journey of Compassion

Sarai Vaca was 30 years old and pregnant with her third child—a joyous time for her and her husband, Omar. That is, until she got the news that she had breast cancer. Turning to the Center for Cancer Prevention and Treatment at Providence St. Joseph Hospital, Sarai had a mastectomy followed by chemotherapy. Her medical team provided comprehensive care for Sarai and her family, helping alleviate their fears about keeping the unborn child safe. Baby Olivia arrived in February 2023. *Health Matters* recently checked in with Sarai to see how she and her family are doing today.

Hi, Sarai. Give us an update on your health.

I am doing really well! I try to run most days, because it increases my energy. I finished my cancer treatment in July 2023, and I am thankful to be able to say I feel healthy and am cancer-free today.

Your passion for running led you to participate in the Los Angeles Marathon recently.

Yes. I wanted to inspire other people after I survived cancer. Training for the marathon and crossing the finish line showed me that all things are possible. I have so much respect for marathoners, and I appreciate my body for all it has been through.

How is Olivia doing now?

Olivia is great. She is 16 months old, and she is a very bright little girl. She loves to dance, be around dogs, play with her older brother and sister, and have all the attention on her!

Speaking of her siblings, how are Ezra and Amaya?

Ezra is eight years old and loves baseball and basketball. He is playing summer ball, and as a family, we enjoy being there and supporting his passion. Amaya is

three years old, and she is one of a kind. She loves music and loves to dance, play with her brother and shop with me.

Are you still teaching?

I just finished my eighth year of teaching, and it's something that I find joy and love in. I love second grade; it's the only grade I've taught.

How would you describe the care you received from Providence St. Joseph?

They changed my life! Everyone at the Center for Cancer Prevention and Treatment truly cares for their patients. They always made me feel like a human being and not just someone battling cancer. I am very appreciative of the care and attention I received. I always felt valued and heard, and I still do to this day. I am thankful that I was in the best hands throughout this journey. I wouldn't have wanted to be anywhere else. ●

Cancer survivor Sarai Vaca, her baby Olivia and her family are thriving, thanks to her successful treatment at the Center for Cancer Prevention and Treatment.



5 Reasons to See a Pulmonologist

What is a pulmonologist, and do you need to see one? Read on to find out.

If you find yourself with a persistent cough, shortness of breath, wheezing or congestion, your doctor may refer you to a lung specialist, or pulmonologist. These experts specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases of the lungs and airways.

"You may benefit from a pulmonologist evaluation if you have been having one or more of these symptoms for more than a few weeks," says Christopher Hwe, MD, a board-certified pulmonologist with Providence St. Joseph Hospital Orange. "After discussing your symptoms with you, your pulmonologist will determine whether you need further laboratory, imaging or pulmonary function testing to form a diagnosis and treatment plan. They may also perform diagnostic or therapeutic procedures if necessary."



Dr. Christopher Hwe

By working in collaboration with cardiologists, thoracic surgeons and other specialized physicians, your pulmonologist will set you on a path to healing for a wide range of pulmonary and bronchial disorders. Dr. Hwe says that some common reasons to visit a pulmonologist include:

1. YOU HAVE LABORED BREATHING, WHEEZING OR COUGHING.

You may have asthma, a chronic disease that involves sensitivity of the airway and is triggered by hyperreactivity to various stimuli. With proper treatment, symptoms can be controlled so you can live a normal life.

2. YOU'RE A SMOKER OR FORMER SMOKER.

Smoking can cause bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or other conditions. It's a good idea to have an annual screening and a regular visit with a pulmonologist.

3. YOU HAVE SHORTNESS OF BREATH THAT GETS WORSE WHEN EXERCISING.

It could be a symptom of interstitial lung disease, or inflammation of lung tissue, which makes it difficult to get oxygen into the

bloodstream. Treatment will include slowing the disease's progress and managing symptoms to help you stay active.

4. YOU HAVE PERSISTENT COUGH, fever and sweats, chest tightness, shortness of breath and fatigue. This could be a sign of a chronic lung infection from fungal or mycobacterial causes.

5. YOUR DOCTOR MAY SEE ABNORMAL AREAS ON CHEST X-RAYS, such as lung nodules or masses, that may require monitoring or a biopsy to determine the cause.

Other maladies may warrant a visit with a pulmonologist, so please ask your doctor. Our pulmonary specialists at Providence St. Joseph are dedicated to helping you stay healthy. They will provide the care you need and help you breathe easier.



Scan the QR code to make an appointment with a Providence pulmonologist.



EARLY DETECTION IS THE BEST PROTECTION

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



Dr. Hang T. Dang

Mammograms save lives, and the guidelines from many trusted sources urge women to get annual screenings beginning at age 40.

“For many years, most breast surgeons have advised patients to opt for an annual mammogram starting at age 40, based on recommendations from organizations such as the American Society of Breast Surgeons, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the American Cancer Society,” says Hang T. Dang, DO, Providence St. Joseph breast surgical oncologist. “Additional supplementation imaging, such as an ultrasound or MRI, may be recommended based on individual risk assessment.”

There’s no question that mammography is your best defense against breast cancer, because it can spot the disease in its early stages—before it can be felt during a breast exam. Visit providence.org/treatments/mammography to schedule a mammogram today.



Pelvic Health

Be sure to speak up about pelvic pain.

Pelvic floor muscles and ligaments support and protect the bladder, bowel and internal reproductive organs. But aging, childbirth, injury, family history, genetics and other factors may weaken them over time.

Common symptoms include:

- A bulge in the vaginal area
- Leaking urine (urinary incontinence)
- Constipation and fecal incontinence
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Dryness in the vagina or painful sex

About one-third of women in the United States suffer from pelvic floor disorders, such as organ prolapse, and urinary or bowel incontinence. If you’re one of them, it’s time to speak up.

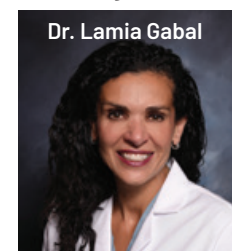
“A thorough evaluation is needed, because other conditions may mimic pelvic floor disorders,” says Lamia Gabal, MD, a board-certified urogynecologist at Providence St. Joseph Hospital. “It’s important to talk to a specialist about these symptoms, especially if they are impacting your quality of life to the point that you cannot leave the house or take a vacation.”

EFFECTIVE TREATMENT

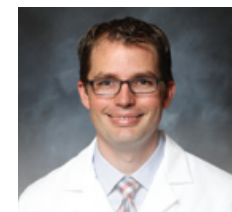
Treatment depends on the cause underlying the symptoms. For pelvic pain and functional problems, heat, yoga, pelvic floor physical therapy, muscle relaxants or medication may be effective. In some cases, surgery may be necessary to help put a prolapsed pelvic organ back into place.

Many treatments are available for urinary and bowel incontinence. For some women, lowering coffee intake, doing regular Kegel exercises or taking medication may provide relief. Others may benefit from injections of Botox to relax muscles or a bulking gel to prevent bladder leakage during daily physical activities. InterStim and Axonics are implanted devices, like a pacemaker, that stimulate the nerves affecting the bladder and help reduce urinary incontinence.

“Although it is common to have a prolapse or urine leakage, that does not mean it’s normal,” says urogynecologist Taylor J. Brueseke, MD, of Providence St. Joseph Center for Pelvic Health. “There are a variety of treatments available, and you should not just live with it.”



Dr. Lamia Gabal



Dr. Taylor J. Brueseke

For more information, visit providence.org/stjoseph.



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providence.org/irvine

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Pediatrics



Billy Zhang, MD
Internal Medicine



Laura Leon, MD
Family Medicine



Lisa Hoang, MD
Pediatrics



Summer Walker, PA-C
Family Medicine

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Providence St. Joseph Hospital

Fall 2024

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