



THE SPECIALIST



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

My Friends,

As we welcome the winter season and approach the year's end, I'd like to pause for a moment of reflection on the accomplishments we've shared throughout the past year. As December unfolds with its festive holiday spirit, my heartfelt wishes extend to you and your family for moments of peace and abundant happiness.

In this month's issue of The Specialist, we offer mindfulness tips to help you slow down, make time for yourself, and honor all of your accomplishments and hard work in 2023. We also created a holiday gift guide tailored to that person in your life who needs some extra love and support this holiday season.

We cannot change the genes we are born with, but more and more research suggests that many different practices can change the expression of our genes. In this edition, we share an informative and inspiring read about integrative medicine and its use to decrease the symptoms caused by cancer and the side effects of therapy. Thanks to all the patients, scientists, investigators, and other health care team members who have helped us gather the evidence needed to advance in this field. We're grateful for all of our team members who have joined the NYCBS family this year, including the addition of board-certified Radiation Oncologist Dr. Walter Choi.

As flu activity is at its peak during this time of year, we highlight the importance of getting your flu vaccination this winter. We encourage you to talk to your provider to determine if the flu shot is right for you.

Excitingly, we announce the opening of East End Health and Imaging Center's new state-of-the-art facility in Westhampton Beach. This cutting-edge center is set to serve the entire East End of Long Island, providing a comprehensive range of health and imaging services.

From all of us at NYCBS, may you have a peaceful, happy, and healthy holiday season and New Year.

Warm regards,

Dr. V



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PATIENT FEEDBACK

▶ Dr. Michael Elias

Dr. Elias was very professional and thorough. He answered all my questions and made me feel good about my options.

Tzanisha L.



▶ Dr. Regina Jablonski

Great doctor! Was not rushed.

James H.



▶ Dr. Efat Azizi

Dr. Azizi listens to my concerns and explains things well. I did not feel rushed. I had a great 1st visit with her.

Ikea T.



▶ Dr. Shahzaib Nabi

Dr. Nabi is a dedicated doctor who cares and shows compassion towards his patients. When I have a concern about my health, he takes his time and answers all of my questions. Dr. Nabi is my doctor and I am proud to be his patient.

Marisol G.

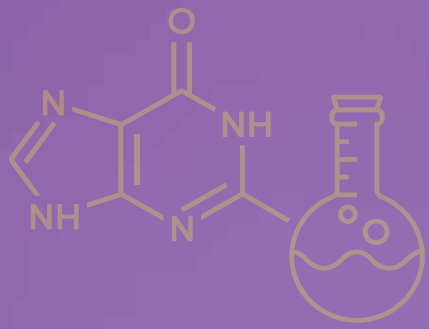


▶ Dr. Richard Zuniga

Thank you, Dr. Zuniga, for your attention, and God bless you always.

Andy M.



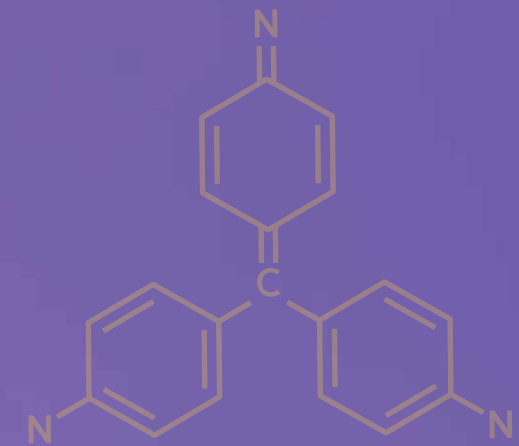
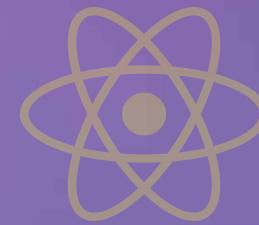


SECTION 1 Health ONCOLOGY & MORE

6 Integrative Health Care in Oncology

By Tarun Wasil, MD & Wendy Kaplan, MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN

Integrative medicine is the inclusion of some of the non-traditional medical approaches to the standard medical/oncological treatments. [Read more.](#)



Integrative Health Care in Oncology

By Tarun Wasil, MD & Wendy Kaplan, MS, RDN, CSO, CDCES, CDN

Integrative medicine is the zz to the standard medical/ oncological treatments. It differs from alternative or complementary medicine, where the users do not take traditional medications and resort to unconventional methods as the only treatment modality. Standard medical/ oncological treatments have been developed after careful studies conducted over the last several decades. We are reaping the fruits of this approach these days, and patients with several cancers are living much longer than before. Thanks to all those patients, scientists, investigators, and other health care team members who have helped us gather the evidence needed to advance in the field.

However, there are several unmet needs of our patients because cancer and almost all medications have some annoying symptoms or side effects. Patients have been doing their own research, and it is estimated that 60-80% use some sort of non-traditional approaches in order to feel better and hope to attack cancers with these methods. For the last few years, major cancer centers have realized the need to study these methods scientifically so that we can guide our patients to decrease/minimize the harm that can occur with the use of untested chemicals in supplements and non-medicinal techniques. There is evidence generated from these scientific studies to show that resorting to a healthy lifestyle can decrease the symptoms caused by cancer and the side effects of therapy. Such an approach may also prevent disease states. There is no one-size-fits-all all. There are many different ways to achieve the same goal. Various components of the complementary approaches are (there is an overlap in some cases):

Diet – Many of us have heard quotes such as “We are what we eat” and “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,” which means food has a lot of influence on our bodies. Our Nutrition expert, Wendy Kaplan, will discuss it in detail.



Dr. Tarun Wasil



Wendy Kaplan
Registered Dietitian
Nutritionist

Exercise – it can be light, moderate, or vigorous – any amount of exercise is beneficial. For cancer-related fatigue, ASCO (American Society of Clinical Oncology) recommends 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise every week, including brisk walking, cycling, and swimming. Resisted or stretching exercises have also been shown to reduce fatigue in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.

Mindful Techniques to minimize stress include yoga, Tai Chi, Reiki, Qi-Gong, acupuncture, massage, meditation, prayers, music therapy, hypnotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, good sleep, staying in a positive environment, avoidance of loneliness and company full of negativity, staying happy, keeping busy in some purposeful way and others. Avoid bad chemicals such as smoking, tobacco products, alcohol, processed foods, supplements, refined sugars, and animal fat. Unless otherwise contraindicated, consumption of plenty of electrolyte-rich fluids is recommended.

There is evidence that the above behaviors can be useful in relieving the following symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hot flashes
- Peripheral neuropathy
- Fatigue
- Mood alterations
- Nausea

Other than control of various symptoms, early data suggests these techniques may have deeper effects at the cellular and genome levels. A lot more work needs to be done in this area.

We have heard so much about nature vs nurture. Nature gives us our genes. We cannot change the genes we are born with, but more and more research suggests that many different practices can change the expression of the genes. The environment we stay in, the prayers, meditation, exercises (yoga, Tai Chi, Reiki, and others), diet, our beliefs and perceptions, the air we breathe, the fluids we consume, and the way we lead our lives all can influence our genes for better or worse. Stress also affects our genes at the epigenetic level and may change the expression of these genes. Genes are not active if they are not expressed. Eventually, genes make proteins, which are the building blocks for life. The role of integrative medicine is to combine the knowledge gathered by the current medical system and that from the complementary world. It may benefit healthy people or those suffering from chronic diseases in order to achieve maximal health benefits. This is in addition to and not a substitute for the recommendations made by medical professionals based on the advances made by science.

The effects of the diet are discussed in detail by Wendy Kaplan. There are studies to show that some diets are responsible for causing inflammation in our bodies, and others have anti-inflammatory effects. The balance between these two different types can determine the health status.

The environment we live in is extremely important for our health. When we culture the live cells in the culture media (environment and nutrition for these cells), we see different results depending on the quantity and quality of the medium we use for these cells. The same is true for the human body. Our cells react to the environment and the nutrition we consume. Loneliness has been associated with a marked decrease in immune responses and disease states. Those individuals who like to socialize in order to achieve happiness have changes at the genetic levels that show some health benefits. Even better genomic changes have been shown in those who lead their lives with a strong purpose and help others without a selfish motive. The company we keep is also important. If we are in a group of individuals who constantly talk about positives, there is a different type of energy created vs those where most people shed negative thoughts. This can be true even for various support groups we tell our patients to join.

Stress is not one entity. Acute stress is needed to protect us from certain dangerous experiences. Chronic stress can also be divided into at least two different kinds. Taking care of a loved one with passion and a full sense of purpose (such as taking care of a child most of the time) causes useful changes in the body at the cellular and genetic levels. However, for those individuals who consider such an experience as burdensome, their genome changes differently and may look just like those with loneliness, which can result in disease states. Chronic stress of the wrong kind is associated with inflammation. It seems logical that the reduction/elimination of stress by any method can result in reversing cellular changes and good health.

Relief of stress by mindful techniques such as yoga, Tai Chi, Reiki, Qi-Gong, acupuncture, massage, meditation, prayers, music therapy, hypnotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, good sleep, staying in a positive environment, avoidance of loneliness and company full of negativity, staying happy, keeping busy in some purposeful way and others decrease inflammation and may help decrease the diseases related to such internal inflammation. These techniques have been shown to reverse some of the adverse genomic changes induced by stress into favorable profiles.

Healthy lifestyle measures, as described above, may decrease the chances of diseases related to inflammation, such as cancer, but this is not a guarantee. Some unfortunate people may do many things right in a healthy manner but may still develop some disease states, including malignancy. On the other hand, there are some rare examples of people

smoking or drinking heavily for > 40 years and not having any major health issues. Most likely, interactions between the genes and environment seem to play a role. If the genetics are robust and strongly protective, bad chemicals may not be able to harm, but if the genes are mutated adversely, even small amounts of toxins may cause serious disease.

The use of supplements is very controversial, especially during chemo. These are regulated after they come to the market and when there are reports of potential harm, unlike the standard medications, which are regulated before and after their availability to the consumers. In general, single supplements have not been shown to be beneficial. The nutrition we get from whole foods has several vitamins, minerals, and supplements and is much better for attaining good long-term health benefits.

Herbal medicine is an integral part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Indian (Ayurvedic) Medicine. It involves the use of natural plant-based remedies to treat a wide range of conditions. Herbal formulas are typically prescribed based on the individual's unique pattern of symptoms and may be taken in the form of teas, capsules, or powders. Both disciplines use a wide range of natural herbs and plants, including roots, stems, flowers, and leaves. These herbs are used in various forms, such as teas, decoctions, powders, and pills, and are often combined in formulas to enhance their therapeutic effects. Each herb has a specific taste, "temperature," and medicinal properties, which are matched to the conditions it aims to treat.

It is very important to note that some herbs can lead to adverse reactions and interactions with medications. Precautions need to be taken while using them.

These products seem harmless since many of these herbs are used when you're cooking. However, some may not be safe, especially if you have certain medical conditions or take some medications that contain herbs in concentrated forms, which may negatively change the efficacy of your medication. It is important to always talk with your doctor and Registered Dietitian Nutritionist before taking any supplements.

The use of alternative "medicines" among cancer survivors is known to be high despite limited research regarding safety and efficacy. Patients like alternative practices for various reasons, including their perception that they provide them with more ways to take an active role in taking control of their care, especially while hoping to achieve symptom relief that has not responded to medical treatment or has caused significant side effects. Other patients may be averse to medications and simply want "natural therapies" due to past experiences or preferences. Many times, the patient has most likely heard anecdotal evidence from a friend or on the internet that certain herbs contain anticancer properties and that the only way to "get the amount the body needs" is via a supplement.

As a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, gathering additional information such as the patient's expectations, holistic view of their issues and potential alternatives is essential for responsible practice. For example, the patient may expect symptom reduction or possibly a cure.

We need to have an honest discussion with our patients based on currently available research data. Also, let them know that there is no one-size-fits-all plan and that herbal supplements may, in fact, bring on their own side effects. Sometimes, there are large doses of the herb which may be harmful.

Popular Supplements to Be Mindful of:



St. John's Wort: This supplement is commonly used for depression, anxiety, and sleep issues but may lead to side effects such as headache, nausea, dizziness, dry mouth, and increased sun sensitivity. Additionally, it can interact with various medications, including heart drugs, antidepressants, and birth control pills, and may reduce the effectiveness of certain chemotherapy treatments.



Kava: This is intended to alleviate anxiety and sleep issues. However, it can result in liver damage, such as hepatitis. Therefore, individuals with liver or kidney issues should avoid taking it.



Ginkgo: Many individuals take this to address chemo-brain-related memory issues. Some believe that ginkgo biloba also aids in circulation, mental function, and alleviates altitude sickness, among other health conditions. However, it's important to note that it can also thin your blood and cause bleeding.



Ginger: Individuals take this to alleviate nausea resulting from surgery, chemotherapy, or motion sickness, and sometimes for treating arthritis or joint pain. However, ginger may pose issues with blood clotting, heart rhythms, blood pressure, and blood sugar levels.



Goldenseal: This remedy is utilized for constipation, colds, eye infections, and even cancer. However, goldenseal can impact your heart's rhythm, blood clotting, and lower blood pressure.



Black Cohosh: This supplement is frequently used by cancer patients to suppress menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes and night sweats. Some women also use it to manage PMS. However, individuals with liver issues should avoid it, as it may potentially cause inflammation or failure. Additionally, women with breast cancer should abstain from using it until more research establishes its impact on their condition. Currently, there is insufficient

evidence to support the use of black cohosh in cancer treatment. It may also interfere with the biological activity of other medications as well.

Every day, our bodies face oxidative stress, leading to the generation of free radicals that can cause damage to cells, tissues, and DNA. A free radical is an unpaired electron, which is not good. This unpaired electron seeks to form a pair by taking a partner from another atom or molecule, resulting in a process called oxidation.

Various sources contribute to this damage, including a poor diet, environmental pollution, radiation, UV light, smoking, alcohol consumption, exercise, and even normal bodily processes such as the conversion of food into energy within cells. This daily onslaught of oxidative damage can be repaired by the body in many instances, but some damage may persist. Prolonged oxidative damage can lead to chronic inflammation, which in turn increases the risk of developing diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

Certain dietary habits have been linked to a reduced risk of inflammation, with some studies suggesting that specific food choices could potentially enhance the body's ability to combat and reduce chronic inflammation. Increasing the intake of foods with potential

anti-inflammatory properties appears to provide notable health benefits. Antioxidants are substances that delay or inhibit oxidative damage to target molecules. For example, putting lemon juice on a cut-up apple will delay browning and oxidative damage. They protect our cells from free radical damage.

Phytochemicals derived from plants act as antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agents to reduce inflammation levels and counteract the detrimental effects of chronic inflammation.

Diet can significantly impact our health and well-being. By including foods with anti-inflammatory properties, we can aid our bodies in combating the effects of oxidative stress and reduce the risk of chronic inflammation and related diseases. Incorporating antioxidant and phytochemical-rich foods and foods, along with other anti-inflammatory foods (such as fatty fish like salmon), plus engaging in an active lifestyle, is a proactive step in promoting long-term health and vitality.

Some phytochemicals are antioxidants that exert scavenge free radicals. Others may affect cell differentiation, increase the activity of enzymes that detoxify carcinogens, block the formation of carcinogens, preserve the integrity of intracellular matrices, promote maintenance of normal DNA repair, increase apoptosis (spontaneous death of cancer cells) and decrease cell proliferation.

Fruit, vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds have hundreds of different antioxidants and phytonutrients that synergize to increase disease-fighting potential. This also includes herbs and spices, as they contain numerous phytonutrients. Research studies that have focused on whole foods solidly back this up, whereas research that focused on individual antioxidants (or phytonutrients) has shown mixed results and has not proved protective against cancer.

Numerous dietary patterns embody this style of eating, collectively known as a plant-forward diet. One example is the Mediterranean dietary pattern, distinguished by its incorporation of a social component and an exercise component. In addition to emphasizing the consumption of fruits and vegetables, olive oil, nuts and seeds, pulses, and fish rich in omega-3s EPA and DHA, this diet also promotes regular exercise and encourages spending time and dining with loved ones.

To sum up, we recommend that standard medical care must be adhered to. The use of CAM alone is harmful to treat a disease such as cancer. However, the addition of these complementary approaches can help patients counter several symptoms and make them feel better, as described above. For those who have indolent diseases and are on watchful

waiting/monitoring, as well as those who are otherwise healthy, resorting to beneficial lifestyle methods may keep them in that relatively healthier state.

The following sources are helpful in getting more information:

- Cancer therapy interactions with foods and dietary supplements by the National Cancer Institute
- Society of Integrative Oncology
- Natural Medicines, Therapeutic Research
- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center – About Herbs
- Other references are available upon request.

Avoid the Flu! Influenza Vaccinations Available

National Influenza Vaccination Week highlights the importance of continuing flu vaccination throughout the holiday season. If you haven't already taken your vaccination shot this December, it's not too late. We encourage you to get your dose as early as possible. The season for flu is quite unpredictable; it can begin as early as fall and last until spring. Flu activity is at its peak during winter, so talk to your provider to determine if the flu shot is right for you.

- **Get your flu shot at any of our offices**
- **No appointment necessary**
- **Free with most insurance plans**



SECTION

2 Wellness

NUTRITION & MORE

16 **Self-Massage Techniques to Ease Holiday Stress**

The Holiday hustle and bustle is upon us. It's a joyous time of year filled with gatherings, celebrations, and what can feel like a never-ending to-do list. [Read more.](#)

20 **Validating Feelings During the Holiday Season**

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

The Holiday season brings forth many emotions. We often think of this as the "most wonderful time of the year"; however, people with a cancer diagnosis or serious illness often have conflicting feelings surrounding this time of year. [Read more.](#)

22 **Mindfulness Practices to Ease Your Treatment Journey**

Daily rituals to help spark joy, cultivate peace, and relieve stress.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be a jaw-dropping and unbelievable moment, leaving you feeling uncertain of the future and out of control. [Read more.](#)

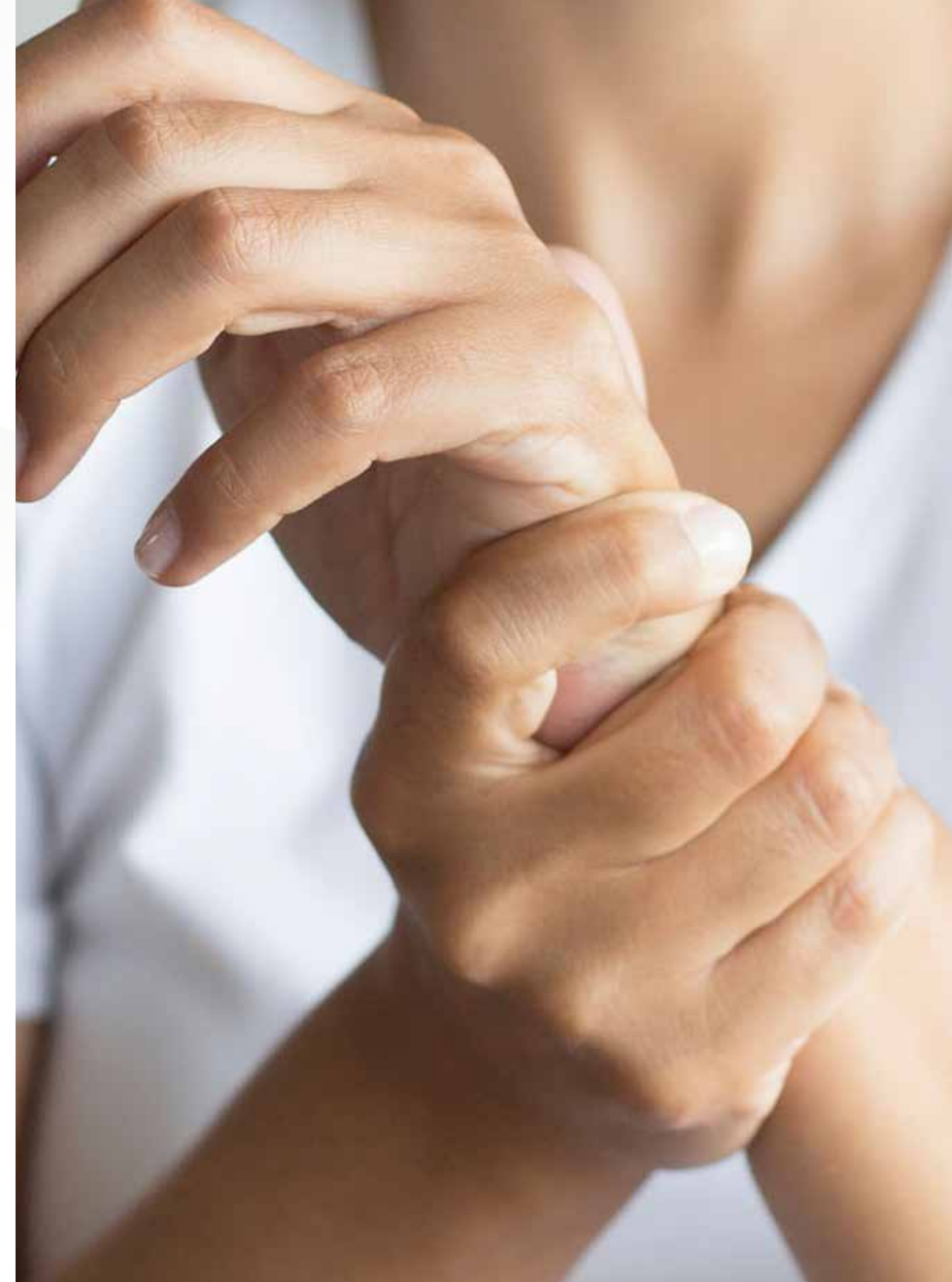


Self-Massage Techniques to Ease Holiday Stress

The Holiday hustle and bustle is upon us. It's a joyous time of year filled with gatherings, celebrations, and what can feel like a never-ending to-do list. Whether you're hosting family, feeling financial pressure from holiday expenses, or if the holidays are a hard time emotionally, it's imperative to prioritize self-care. There are a variety of self-care practices out there dependent on your free time and wallet, but one tried and true option that's free and accessible is self-massage. It's a go-to option that you can incorporate daily to keep calm, relieve stress, and help promote relaxation. So, when you don't have the time or funds for a spa day, look no further than your own two hands.

Benefits of Self-Massage:

Before delving into specific types of self-massage and areas of the body to focus on, let's explore the potential benefits of incorporating self-massage into your self-care routine this holiday season and beyond.



Relaxation: Massage can help relax your muscles, alleviate tension, and break up fascia, helping to calm the nervous system and promote relaxation. This nervous system regulation can even help you with better sleep quality and the ability to catch more Zzzs.

Improved Circulation: Gentle massage may promote blood circulation, potentially benefiting overall health and detoxification of the skin and body.

Body Awareness: Regular self-massage equips you to become more in tune with your body, allowing you to notice any changes or abnormalities. If you notice something that just doesn't feel right, you should make an appointment with your doctor so they can take a look. If needed, they will send you for any additional screenings and imaging tests needed to determine what's going on.

Pain Relief: Massaging targeted areas where you experience pain might help alleviate tension and



Types of Self-Massage:

Breast and Chest: Breast massage can help you destress, improve circulation, release pain and breast tenderness, and might support lymphatic drainage.

Find somewhere cozy, put on some relaxing music, and begin by gently massaging each breast in a circular motion, moving from the center toward the outside of the breasts. Focus on one breast at a time. Next, make your way to the armpit and outer edge of the breast, moving upward toward the shoulder joint. Massage your collarbone, shoulder and neck on both sides and follow with a breastbone massage focussing on the center in a gentle clockwise circular motion.

If you, for some reason, notice anything off balance, weird, or what could be a lump, it's recommended to do a breast self-exam for further exploration of a potential health risk. As always, breast self-exams don't replace the need for mammograms and aren't as effective at screening for breast cancer. If you find something abnormal, you should make an appointment with your doctor and discuss the possibility of scheduling a mammogram.

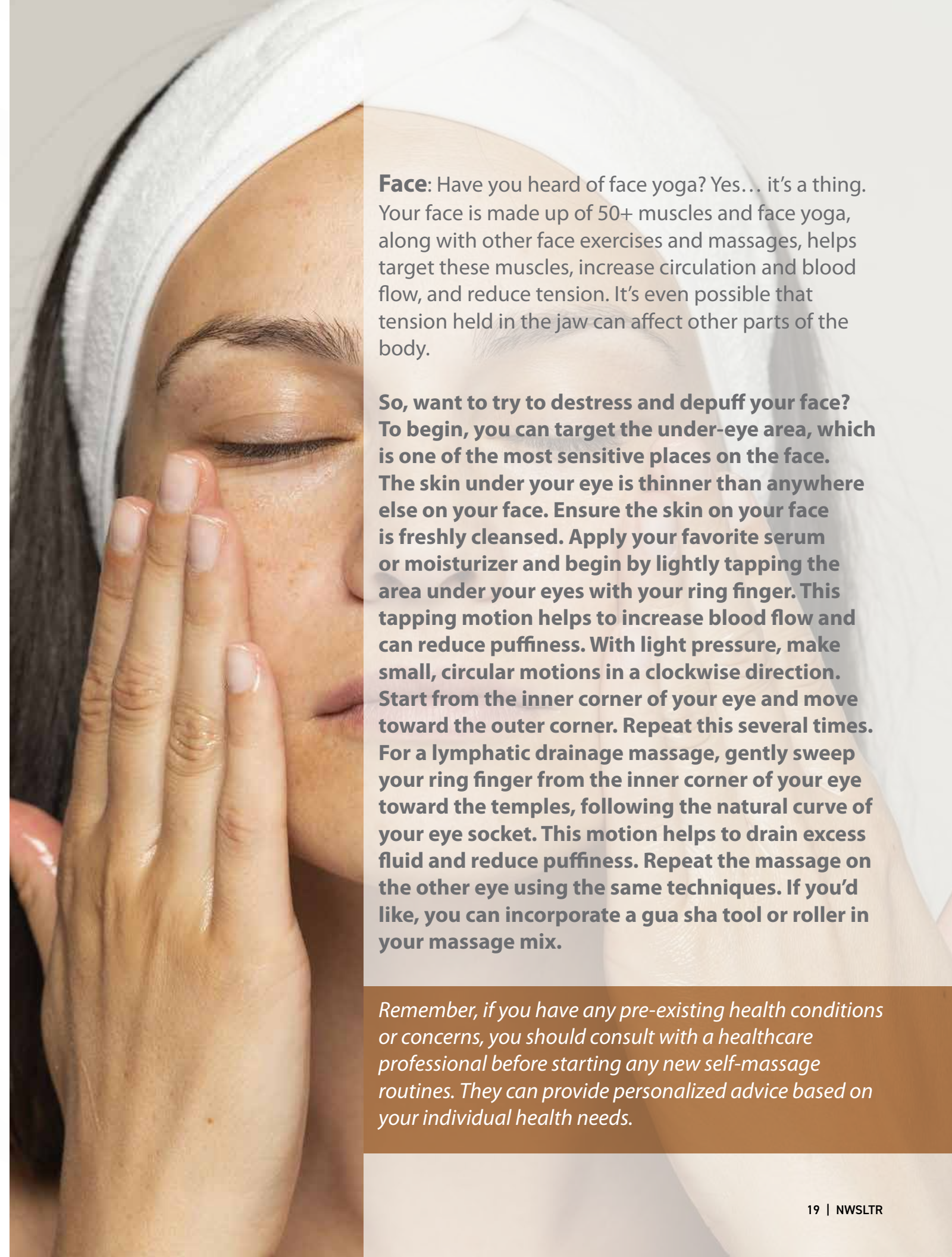
Abdominal: Abdominal massages can help ease an upset stomach, alleviate stomach pain, aid in healthy digestion, reduce bloating, and even help with bowel movements.

Start by Lying on your back somewhere comfortable, like your bed or a yoga mat. Gently rub your hands together to generate some heat before placing them on your stomach. Next, you'll want to place your hands on your abdomen and take a few moments to bring warmth to this area while you focus on your breath with deep inhales and exhales. Use gentle pressure and move your hands in circular motions, massaging your abdomen in a clockwise direction using your palms or fingertips. This follows the natural path of the digestive system. Imagine you are tracing the path of your colon. Work your way around your entire abdomen, including the lower, middle, and upper regions. Spend more time in areas that feel tense or tight.

Lower Back: The lower back often holds tension and can even harbor pain, which is why this area regularly needs extra TLC.

So let the lower back self-massage commence. There are a variety of massages for the lower back. One to start with is by sitting on the floor with your legs crossed and a straight back. Start by focussing on your breath, breathing deeply in and out of the mouth. Place your thumbs on each side of your sacrum and move them in small circular motions up and down your sacrum. If you notice any tense spots, apply some pressure here and release. Repeat this process a few times.

You can also incorporate tools like a foam roller or tennis ball to get deeper into your fascia and relieve any tension in the lower back.



Face: Have you heard of face yoga? Yes... it's a thing. Your face is made up of 50+ muscles and face yoga, along with other face exercises and massages, helps target these muscles, increase circulation and blood flow, and reduce tension. It's even possible that tension held in the jaw can affect other parts of the body.

So, want to try to destress and depuff your face? To begin, you can target the under-eye area, which is one of the most sensitive places on the face. The skin under your eye is thinner than anywhere else on your face. Ensure the skin on your face is freshly cleansed. Apply your favorite serum or moisturizer and begin by lightly tapping the area under your eyes with your ring finger. This tapping motion helps to increase blood flow and can reduce puffiness. With light pressure, make small, circular motions in a clockwise direction. Start from the inner corner of your eye and move toward the outer corner. Repeat this several times. For a lymphatic drainage massage, gently sweep your ring finger from the inner corner of your eye toward the temples, following the natural curve of your eye socket. This motion helps to drain excess fluid and reduce puffiness. Repeat the massage on the other eye using the same techniques. If you'd like, you can incorporate a gua sha tool or roller in your massage mix.

Remember, if you have any pre-existing health conditions or concerns, you should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any new self-massage routines. They can provide personalized advice based on your individual health needs.

Validating Feelings During the Holiday Season

By MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

The Holiday season brings forth many emotions. We often think of this as the “most wonderful time of the year”; however, people with a cancer diagnosis or serious illness often have conflicting feelings surrounding this time of year. Just as cancer patients are dealing with a new normal during the season, so are the family members and caregivers, as they may try to keep everything normal.

Often, patients worry about how they may feel with the hustle and bustle of traditions, shopping, decorating, and cooking—also wondering if they will feel well enough to join in the family celebrations. Not all patients and how they are feeling. They may be uneasy, or just overall unsure. Some traditions may have to be ok! Treatment side effects such as an impact on daily activities. It is a very normal aspect of living with a person’s (patient or caregiver) is not always “fixing” what they are and validating to normalize it. normal may help in accepting the it any less special. The supportive to assist in planning for patients to of a planned celebration. Treating symptoms and side effects early and focusing on prevention may also encourage patients to look ahead and look forward to upcoming gatherings.



MaryAnn Fragola, DNP

family members will talk about feel worried, uncomfortable, of bringing up these feelings. modified or adjusted, which is fatigue, nausea, or pain may have important to shed light on this as a chronic illness. Often, validating feelings brings a sense of relief. It feeling but instead acknowledging Even referring to these stressors as “new normal”- that does not make services we provide may be able feel better overall in anticipation

Ask what is important to them this holiday season, and reflect on ways to make these significant aspects attainable. Allow rest and less pressure overall on the day-to-day activities, and take it one day at a time. Remember, special times and memories do not have to be on the exact day of a holiday. Every day matters, and the moments of family, laughter, and joy can be celebrated even on “normal” days to lessen the holiday pressure. Validate, support, and allow the emotions that come in the hopes of moving past that to more joy in discovering the strengths and courage they didn’t know they had.

Most importantly, it provides hope, as hope can be an instrument of empowerment. We can support hope as a team by keeping positive attitudes and providing supportive care. The supportive services and palliative team are here as an extra layer of support for all. I wish everyone hope for the holidays, joy in the moments, and peace overall. May all that is beautiful, meaningful, and joyful be yours this holiday season and always.

**NEW YORK
CANCER FOUNDATION**
Advocates For Hope

**DO YOU OR SOMEONE
YOU KNOW
HAVE THE NEED?**

**TO PROVIDE A
DONATION**

**FOR FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**

**FOR RIDES TO & FROM
TREATMENT**

**TO BE AN
ADVOCATE**

If you've answered yes to any of the above, please call our toll free line
1-833-588-6923
or scan the QR Code or go to our website: nycancerfoundation.org

Mindfulness Practices to Ease Your Treatment Journey

Daily rituals to help spark joy, cultivate peace, and relieve stress.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be a jaw-dropping and unbelievable moment, leaving you feeling uncertain of the future and out of control. The treatment journey won't be easy, and there will be many aspects of the process that might generate feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, taking a toll on your mental health. Understandably, you might feel this way. You're not alone. It's important to focus on things you do have control over, like your mindset, treatment plan, and care team. With this in mind, it's imperative to create and implement a mindfulness practice to aid your treatment journey, and surround yourself with a support system. Below is a list of mindfulness practices that can help perpetuate positivity and assist you with making your journey more calm and peaceful. The strength to persevere is within.

Benefits of Mindfulness:

Mindfulness is a moment-to-moment conscious awareness brought into existence by focusing on the present experience with no judgment directed toward any thoughts that might pop up. There are a variety of ways to practice mindfulness, offering a myriad of benefits.

- 1 Stress Reduction:** Mindfulness practices like meditation can help reduce stress by promoting relaxation and fostering a calmer state of mind.
- 2 Improved Mental Clarity:** A mindfulness practice regimen can enhance attention and concentration, improving cognitive function and aiding in better decision-making. Keeping the signals clear will help you stay grounded during this difficult time.
- 3 Nervous System Regulation:** Mindfulness helps in understanding and managing emotions, leading to increased emotional resilience and a better ability to navigate tough situations.



- 4 Pain Management:** Mindfulness techniques have been shown to help individuals cope with chronic pain by changing their perception and relationship with the pain sensation.
- 5 Increased Resilience:** Practicing mindfulness can improve resilience by helping individuals bounce back from challenges and setbacks more effectively.
- 6 Improves Quality of Life:** Mindfulness can help increase positive emotions and enjoyment. A positive perspective can help reduce stress and anxiety, improving mental and physical well-being.
- 7 Better Sleep:** Mindfulness meditation has been linked to improved sleep quality, helping individuals fall asleep faster, sleep through the night, and experience better rest.

Types of Mindfulness Practices:

Meditation: Meditation is about accepting who you are in this moment and honoring who you want to become. It's about observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment, with the goal to better understand yourself. There's no one-size-fits-all way to meditate. You can meditate while seated or lying down, or even while doing a physical activity like yoga, walking, or tai chi. There are an array of ways to meditate. Some meditations to explore are Mindfulness Meditation, Guided Imagery Meditation, Body Scan Meditation, Mantra Meditation, and Transcendental Meditation. Try practicing a few to find what resonates best for you.

Mindfulness Practices to Ease Your (continued)

Treatment Journey

Daily rituals to help spark joy, cultivate peace, and relieve stress.

8 Yoga: There is strong evidence about the positive effects of yoga practice on stress management. Practicing yoga encourages relaxation of the mind and body, breath slowness, and focus on the present moment. This shifts the balance from the sympathetic nervous system and the flight-or-fight response to the parasympathetic and rest-and-digest responses. There are many styles of yoga out there. Try Hatha Yoga, Yin Yoga, Restorative Yoga, or Yoga Nidra for a slower-paced practice. For something more fast-paced, try Vinyasa or Ashtanga Yoga. Perhaps the most relaxing form of yoga is Yoga Nidra, which literally means “Yogic Sleep.” You’re not actually sleeping during Yoga Nidra, but the goal is to move into a deep state of relaxation and enter a state between waking and sleeping. Yoga Nidra is guided and practiced lying down, often accompanied by props, blankets, and bolsters for optimal support.

9 Walking: Walking can be a form of mindful movement. So, what differentiates going for a walk vs. a mindful walk? It’s about the journey, not the destination. During a mindful walk, you’ll bring present awareness to your body and the environment. Try starting or ending your day with a mindful walk, and see what comes up for you.

10 Journaling: The impact of a journaling practice is real. There are so many ways you can journal. Try gratitude journaling, reflective journaling, or stream-of-conscious journaling, to name a few. You can even just write down one word that sums up your day or week. As long as you’re putting pen to paper and expressing your thoughts and feelings, you should be provided with a sense of release and relief.



11 Nature: The healing power of nature is magnificent. Go for a walk outside, sit on a park bench and listen to the birds chirp, lie in the grass and soak up some vitamin D, stand on the beach, and hear waves crash against the sand. Whatever nature you can access, experience it and let Mother Earth nurture your mind, body, and soul.



12 Breathwork: Our breath is a blessing, and breathing is something we do every day. Breathwork is a mindfulness practice that turns our autopilot breath into controlled breathing as an effort to create a tool to cultivate calmness during times of stress. Breathwork can promote relaxation, reduce stress, and improve quality of sleep, contributing to overall better mental and physical health. Some breathwork techniques to try based on your goals are diaphragmatic breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, three-part breathing, box breathing, and alternate nostril breathing. Inhale the positive, exhale the negative.

13 Creative Outlets: Find and engage in creative outlets that bring you joy. Whether it’s drawing, painting, writing, playing an instrument, cooking, stitch therapy, you name it. The creative list goes on. Find something creative that you love to do and make it happen.

Remember, you’re on your own unique journey, so it’s important to find the mindfulness regimen that works best for you.



SECTION **3** Holiday
SPECTACULAR

28 **Holiday Gift Ideas for Your Loved One Navigating**

The holiday season is a joyous time to celebrate loved ones and gather with family and friends. It's filled with festivities, traditions, gift giving, and a whole lot of love. For some folks, like those navigating a cancer diagnosis and treatment, this season can be especially challenging. [Read more.](#)

31 **Top Ten Healthy New Year Tips**

By Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Michelle Slowey

Each new year gives us all the opportunity to make amends, improve our health and achieve the things we didn't years past. This quick list of tips offers helpful ways to make the journey easier. [Read more.](#)

32 **NYCBS Holiday Photos**

Staff from across our many offices got into the holiday spirit by decorating, having an ugly sweater day and even dressing up as the Grinch! [Read more.](#)

Holiday Gift Ideas for Your Loved One Navigating Cancer

Ultimately, the greatest gift you can give is love and support.

The holiday season is a joyous time to celebrate loved ones and gather with family and friends. It's filled with festivities, traditions, gift giving, and a whole lot of love. For some folks, like those navigating a cancer diagnosis and treatment, this season can be especially challenging. That's why we compiled a list of holiday gift ideas for that person in your life who is struggling and needs a dose of extra cheer. Although tangible items are often the first thing that comes to mind when brainstorming holiday gift ideas, it's great to think outside of the holiday gift box. There are a variety of other options out there that won't break the bank, and some that are even free. We've got you covered with thoughtful and heartfelt gift ideas to help bring comfort and joy to your loved one with cancer.

For Cozier Times:

- Soft blanket
- Cozy slippers
- Comfy robe with pockets
- Comfortable loungewear



For Treatment:

- Lightweight tote bag
- Memory foam neck pillow
- Puzzle book
- Collapsible food storage containers for snacks
- Refillable and insulated stainless steel water bottle
- Tablet or portable wireless electronic reading devices (e-reader)
- Noise-cancelling bluetooth headphones
- Compression socks
- Books



For Their Self-Care Ritual:

- Candle
- Essential oil diffuser
- Skincare products
- Face mask
- Gua sha tools, like a jade massaging tool or jade roller
- Spa treatment gift card
- Handheld electronic massager
- Fresh flowers



CONTINUE TO THE
NEXT PAGE

For Fun:

- Meditation app subscription
- TV show and movie streaming service subscription
- Music streaming service subscription
- Digital frame pre-loaded with photos of family and friends
- Puzzle
- Coloring book
- Art supplies: drawing pad, colored pencils, watercolors, or other art materials
- Arrange a personalized video message from one of their favorite celebrities

For Better Sleep:

- Silk eye mask
- Silk pillowcase
- Cozy pajama set
- Roll-on essential oils
- White noise sleep sound machine

For Helping to Make Their Life Easier:

- Meal kit delivery service subscription
- Grocery delivery service subscription
- Popsicle molds to make DIY popsicles at home
- Pre-arrange a custom cleaning service to come for a home cleaning
- Coordinate for a service for lawn or garden maintenance
- Clothing subscription box with a curated selection of new threads

For Time and Support from You:

- Cook and deliver a meal, keeping in mind healthy meals to help maintain digestive health
- Handwritten note
- Organize a meal train with friends and family
- Compile photos and create a printed photo book
- Offer your help to run errands or assist with a home project

Ultimately, it's the thought behind your gift that counts. Whether it's a physical item, act of service, phone call, or handwritten letter, the kind gesture of making an effort to give love and support can have a meaningful impact.



Top Ten Healthy New Year Tips

By Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Michelle Slowey

- 1) If you find it difficult to start an exercise program, begin with small, realistic goals and build from there. ie: Walk on the treadmill for 10 minutes every day. That's 70 minutes for the week.
- 2) If it's too cold to go to the gym, take an online exercise class in the comfort of your own home.
- 3) Make this the year you try a new exercise you have never done before. ie, pickleball, yogalates, barre. Variety keeps you motivated.
- 4) Create a food and feelings diary to help manage overeating. Keep a food record and include your emotions and hunger level.
- 5) If you feel unmotivated to exercise, sit down! Chair exercises can be just as effective as other activities.
- 6) Check out libraries or adult education for healthy cooking classes to take. Learn about new foods and cooking techniques.
- 7) Include weights in your exercise routine. Strength training will build muscle and increase your metabolism.
- 8) Know the importance of a good night's sleep. Not getting enough sleep can affect your hunger, stress, and overall health. Prepare for sleep with a calming nightly routine such as meditation, breathing techniques, chamomile tea, and turning off electronics a couple of hours before bedtime.
- 9) Stay hydrated. Have a goal of at least 64 ounces of fluid each day. Water helps aid in digestion. Fatigue, headaches, constipation, and sugar cravings may be related to dehydration.
- 10) Meal prepping can ensure healthy weekly food options, decreasing the need to order take-out meals and processed foods. You can roast a tray of vegetables or grill 2 pounds of chicken. For a healthy snack option, portion out nuts and dried fruit. Meal prepping can be simple or more extensive, based on your available time.







SECTION **4** Bulletin
NEWS & UPDATES

40 East End Health and Imaging Center Opens State-Of-The-Art Center In Westhampton Beach

The technologically advanced and well-designed imaging center assures community members easy access to affordable imaging services, including 3D mammogram, ultrasound, MRI, and image-guided breast biopsy. [Read more.](#)

42 Career Opportunities & New Hires

Check out who joined our team and what opportunities are available. [Read more.](#)



OPENS STATE-OF-THE-ART CENTER IN WESTHAMPTON BEACH

East End Health and Imaging Center is proud to announce the opening of its cutting-edge healthcare facility in Westhampton Beach, NY, offering a wide range of health and imaging services.

This state-of-the-art center, located at 40 Main Street, Westhampton Beach, NY 11978, is dedicated to providing Long Island's East End with the latest surgical breast care and advanced diagnostic imaging.



"We are excited to introduce East End Health and Imaging Center to Westhampton Beach and the entire East End of Long Island," said Dr. Jeff Vacirca, CEO. "The new center is driven by the need in the community for increased access to high-quality care and medical imaging services."

The technologically advanced and well-designed imaging center assures community members easy access to affordable imaging services, including 3D mammogram, ultrasound, MRI, and image-guided breast biopsy.

The center is staffed by Surgical Oncologist Dr. David P. Mangiameli, renowned for his dedication to enhancing breast cancer screening for high-risk patients, minimally invasive breast surgery, oncoplastic surgery, and the customization of cancer surgery for each unique individual. Alongside him is fellowship-trained Dr. Krystal Airola, an expert in breast imaging, committed to providing personalized, high-quality patient care.

To schedule an appointment, please call (631) 998-2500 for Imaging or (631) 508-5795 for Breast Surgery. For more information about East End Health and Imaging Center, please visit our website at EastEndImaging.com.



Career Opportunities

HEMATOLOGIST/ONCOLOGIST

Babylon/Bay Shore
Bayonne
Bethpage
Bronx
Brooklyn
Jersey City
Middletown
Newburgh
Patchogue
Port Jefferson
Queens
Smithtown
Staten Island
Valley Stream
Upper East Side

PALLIATIVE CARE PHYSICIAN

Manhattan
New Hyde Park
Queens
Rockaway
Suffolk County

BREAST RADIOLOGIST

Westhampton

APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Newburgh
Forest Hills

BI-LINGUAL (SPANISH) PATCHOGUE-APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Patchogue

BRONX-APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Bronx

FACILITIES ASSOCIATE

Queens
Staten Island

FISH LABORATORY TECHNOLOGIST (NYS LICENSED)

Rutherford

FOUNDATION COORDINATOR

Westhampton

HOSPITAL ROUNDING-APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Port Jefferson
Setauket
Smithtown

INTAKE LPN

Bronx

LAB TECHNICIAN - NYS LICENSED

Manhattan

LPN CARE COORDINATION

Middletown

MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST

Port Jefferson
Riverhead

MEDICAL FRONT DESK RECEPTIONIST - FLOAT

Riverhead

MEDICAL RESEARCH COORDINATOR

Shirley

APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Nassau/Queens - Float
New Hyde Park - Float

NURSE PRACTITIONER (NP) / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT (PA)

Bronx

NYS LICENSED LAB TECHNICIAN

Patchogue
Ridge
PATIENT COMMUNICATIONS
OPERATOR
Ridge

PHONE TRIAGE-APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER / PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Ridge

PHYSICAL THERAPY AIDE (PART TIME)

Port Jefferson

APP (NURSE PRACTITIONER/ PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT)

Queens
Suffolk County - Float

REGISTERED NURSE (BSN/RN)

Bronx

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New Hires

Alexander Negrón (NP)

Amanda Laureano (Triage RN)

Capri Pigott (LPN)

Cassandra Seidman (Receptionist)

Christine Lehmann (Office Manager)

Cindy Jo Relyea (Radiology RN)

Danielle Campione (Imaging Priors Coordinator)

David Moisan (PA)

Donna Viemeister (Receptionist)

Elias Reyes (Patient Communications Operator)

Evan Caldwell (IT Intern)

Jane Pecoraro (NHP Breast Imaging)

Kayla Macfarlane (Pharmacy Technician)

Keanna Sarmiento (SOBGYN receptionist)

Kelly Stanford (Patient Communications Operator)

Keri Massa (Triage RN)

Kevin Song (RT Aide Per Diem)

Krystelle Afif (APP)

Laneiry Mercedes (Office Supervisor)

Lauren Repperger (Patient Communications Operator)

Lillian Stumme (Receptionist)

Lynn Rein (Receptionist)

Mariola Sadowski (LPN)

Maritza Melendrez (Receptionist)

Maureen Kingren (Staffing Manager)

Melanie Lentini (NP)

Natalie Malandrino (Patient Communications Operator)

Nelsi Bonilla (PCM LPN)

Nicole Ciaravino (Patient Communications Operator)

Rafael Rodriguez (MA)

Ria Rivera (NP)

Sasha Caesar (Lab Medical Technologist)

Saulo Lopez (X-Ray/Interventional Radiology Technologist)

Svetlana Dorfman (MRI Technologist)

Theresa Cartabuke (Medical Front Desk Receptionist)

Tiffany Williams (Medical Front Desk Receptionist)

Tracey Civiok (Mammography Technologist)

Wynny Chaver (RN)



OUR PATIENTS & THEIR FAMILIES

Our patients and their families tell the story of conquering cancer like no other. They help us connect, inspire, and empower. If you know a patient or have a family member who would like to make an impact and share their experience with us, please have them contact marketing@nycancer.com.