

# HEALTHY DIRECTIONS

SUMMER 2024

## *move into* **BETTER HEALTH**

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**CentraState**  
Healthcare System®

ATLANTIC HEALTH SYSTEM PARTNER

# New AI Technology

## IMPROVES VISUALIZATION OF HEART BLOCKAGES

Accurately assessing the severity of a blockage in a coronary artery can be a challenge. Interventional cardiologists at CentraState now have access to cutting-edge technology that combines 3D cardiac imaging with artificial intelligence. Called CathWorks FFRangio®, the system improves artery visualization and facilitates a more customized treatment plan with a less invasive approach.



"When determining the correct plan of care for a patient with a coronary blockage, understanding the level at which blood flow is impeded is key," explains

▲ **Jatinchandra Patel, DO**, medical director of CentraState's Robertshaw Cardiovascular Interventional Center. "When an artery is 70% blocked or more, angioplasty and stenting clearly help. But stenting is not recommended when an artery is only 20% to 69% blocked."

Until now, the percentage of the blockage has been based on a visual estimation. The new CathWorks FFRangio technology allows interventional cardiologists to evaluate the reduction in blood flow with scientific certainty, not just an estimation.

### The Traditional Approach

An angiogram is typically used to assess a blockage. During this test, a catheter (tiny tube) is threaded through an IV to the artery, and video X-rays are used to look at the heart's blood vessel as dye is injected into the artery. A diagnostic measurement called fractional flow reserve (FFR) evaluates blood pressure and flow through the artery to assess the amount of narrowing. This traditionally has been performed by advancing a wire into the artery to obtain these measurements.



Image courtesy of CathWorks®

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The summer months afford us an even broader opportunity to move our bodies in various ways – and at CentraState, we believe that movement is medicine. Movement not only serves as a leading way to promote physical health and prevent disease, but the benefits also extend to social, emotional and mental well-being.

In this issue of *Healthy Directions*, we highlight many forms of movement and the resulting positive impact. Our ZeroG® technology is helping patients with brain conditions confidently regain motor skills and improve their balance. A CentraState neurosurgeon describes why swimming has become his activity of choice and explains the interesting connection between exercise and brain function. Movement can even keep your knees healthier for longer, as you'll see within these pages.

On other fronts, as we continue to move care quality and workplace excellence forward at CentraState, I'd like to commend our team on achieving Great Place to Work Certification™ for the fourth consecutive year. In addition, congratulations to our nursing team for their role in earning two prestigious honors: the Silver-level Beacon Award for Excellence from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, and entry-to-practice nurse residency program accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

We hope you enjoy the fleeting days of summer – and take every opportunity to move joyfully.

**Thomas W. Scott, President and CEO**

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If the FFR value confirms that blood flow is significantly reduced, the interventional cardiologist may choose to insert a stent to keep the artery open. If the FFR value suggests a blockage is not limiting blood flow, medication is usually recommended instead of placing a stent.

## Benefits of New Technology

CathWorks FFRangio allows the interventional cardiologist to measure FFR without the need for the more invasive procedure of placing a wire into the artery. Through its partnership with Atlantic Health System, CentraState is the first hospital in Central New Jersey with this technology.

The system builds a 3D coronary artery model by combining images from three two-dimensional angiograms (video X-rays). Then, the system's algorithm determines the FFR, the size of the cardiac vessels and the location of any blockages – all without a more invasive procedure, additional medications or prolonged observation.



"This technology enables us to make more accurate, evidence-based treatment decisions without additional uncomfortable procedures using wires, which decreases

the risk for complications," explains

▲ **Aaron VanHise, DO**, who performed the first assessment at CentraState using CathWorks FFRangio. "It provides physicians with an important decision-making tool that ultimately benefits patients."

Dr. Patel adds, "This system is an innovative addition to our toolkit, enabling us to give patients the best possible treatment and outcomes with the least amount of risk."

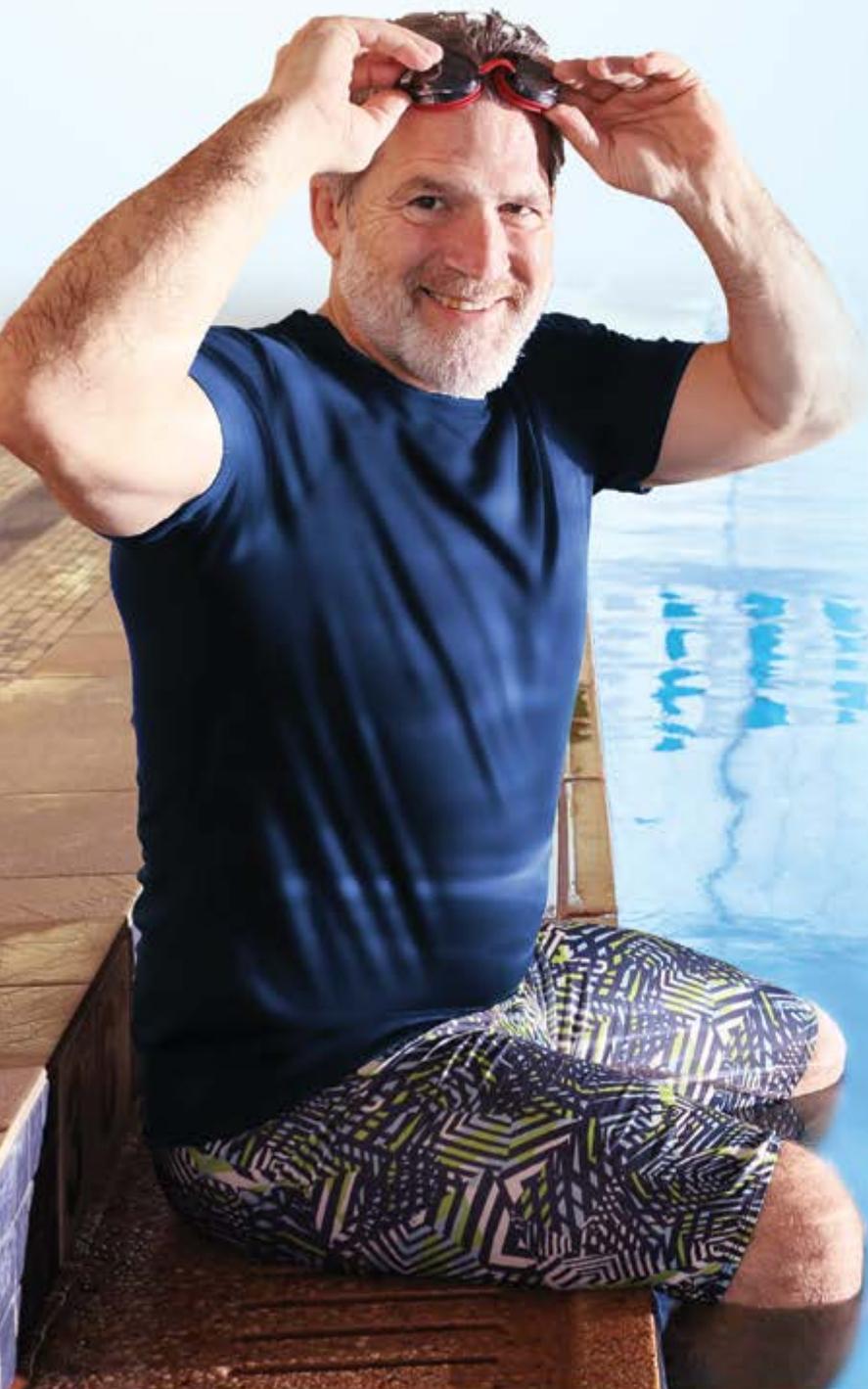
## CARDIAC CARE AT CENTRASTATE

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# Swimming:

## THE PERFECT FULL-BODY EXERCISE



When Julie McLaughlin suggested that her husband, [Mark McLaughlin, MD](#), join her for a swim class at the CentraState Fitness & Wellness Center, he couldn't have predicted it would become one of his favorite ways to exercise.

"I'm a wrestler and a runner, but these activities come with muscle and joint soreness," says Dr. McLaughlin, a CentraState neurosurgeon specializing in minimally invasive spine surgery. "I fell in love with swimming because it's a full-body workout and intense calorie burner minus the post-workout aches and pains."

### **Physical and Mental Benefits**

Swimming offers many physical benefits, including building lean muscle, improving cardiovascular health and enhancing stamina.

"My body adapted quickly," says Dr. McLaughlin. "I went from swimming 20-30 to 70-80 laps relatively quickly, and my stamina increased for other activities like walking and biking."

Beyond its physical benefits, swimming helps release feel-good biochemicals like endorphins and serotonin while increasing blood flow to the brain, making it a potent mood booster and pain reliever.

"People often come to me looking for a surgical solution for back pain when a lifestyle solution is what's needed," explains Dr. McLaughlin. "Swimming counteracts gravity, which decreases pressure on the spine, eases existing pain and allows you to exercise without additional pain and microtrauma to the discs and spine."

# BOOST YOUR BRAIN *with Exercise*

## **A Great Rehabilitation Tool**

Swimming is a safe way to recover from bone and joint issues and is beneficial for people with injury-induced or chronic balance problems.

"Being buoyant and feeling the water on your skin engages the entire nervous system," says Dr. McLaughlin. "It helps strengthen and integrate the sensory nerves associated with balance and proprioception, your body's ability to perceive its own position in space."

## **How to Start a Swimming Routine**

"Just being in the water and swimming as much as you can is a good start," says Lynda Dobbins, aquatics manager at the CentraState Fitness & Wellness Center. "To take it up a notch, aim for 10 laps."

Alternating between front crawl stroke and breaststroke keeps it interesting and works different muscles. If the pool is shallow enough, you can mix in walking.

CentraState offers private swim lessons to improve your technique and create a personalized program. Instructors recommend practicing at least two or three times a week.

**Exercise is good for your body, but did you know that those benefits also extend to your brain?**

"Exercise improves the function of your cardiovascular, respiratory, muscular, skeletal and nervous systems, all of which support your brain's health and ability to do its job," says CentraState neurosurgeon **Mark McLaughlin, MD**. "But exercise can also directly affect and even change your brain."

From maximizing memory to harnessing happiness, Dr. McLaughlin highlights three key ways breaking a sweat positively impacts your brain.

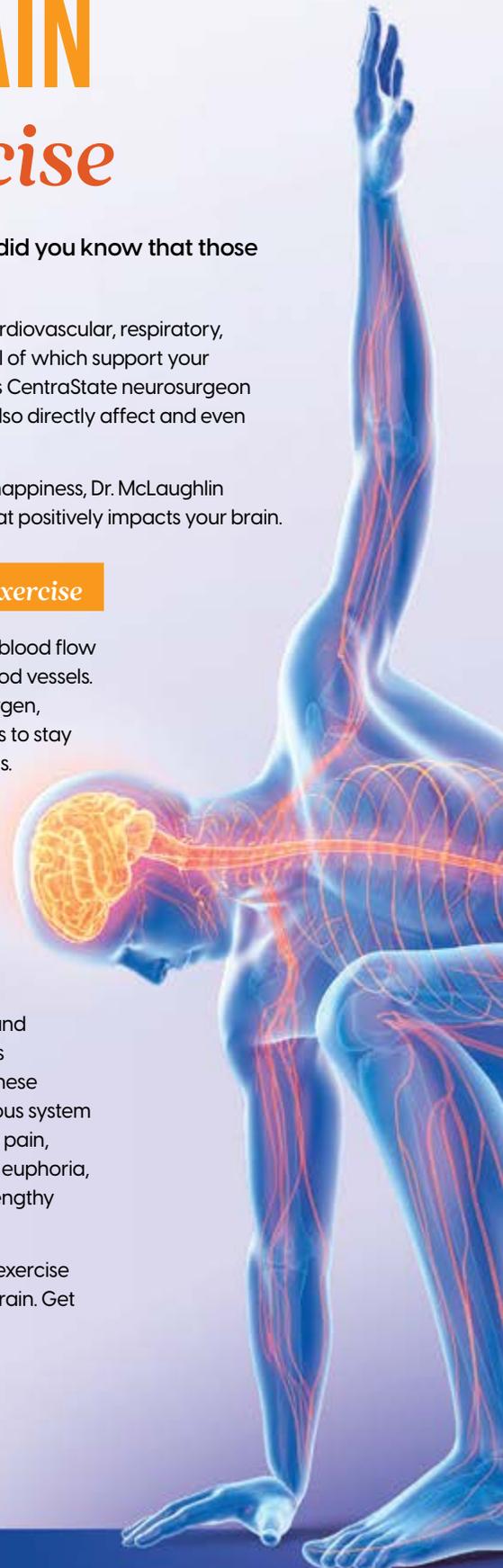
## **3 Powerful Brain Benefits of Exercise**

- 1** Exercise feeds the brain by increasing blood flow and promoting the growth of new blood vessels. This ensures the steady delivery of oxygen, energy and nutrients the brain requires to stay healthy and perform its many functions.
- 2** It improves cognition by producing brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that protects, repairs and supports the growth of brain neurons (brain cells) vital to learning, memory and higher thinking.
- 3** It also creates "feel-good" hormones like endorphins, serotonin, dopamine and endocannabinoids (similar to cannabis but naturally produced in the body). These chemical messengers act on the nervous system to increase focus, boost mood, reduce pain, buffer stress and even fuel a feeling of euphoria, which can happen during intense or lengthy cardiovascular exercise.

Whether hiking, biking or playing a sport, exercise is a smart way to bolster your body and brain. Get moving and bask in the benefits!

## **FITNESS OPTIONS FOR EVERYONE**

To take advantage of various exercise and fitness programs at CentraState, visit: [📍 centrastate.com/events](https://www.centrastate.com/events) [📍 centrastatefitness.com](https://www.centrastatefitness.com)





# NEW HOPE

## for Patients with Brain Conditions

Cutting-edge technology is helping patients with brain and balance issues learn to adjust their movements to become more stable – and more confident when walking.

Ataxia is a type of poor muscle control that can affect everything from walking and eye-hand coordination to speech and swallowing. It is typically caused by an issue with the cerebellum, the part of the brain that controls muscle coordination. For those with this condition, learning how to maximize bodily movement is the key to regaining balance.

The ZeroG® Gait and Balance System, a new treatment option at CentraState's OceanFirst Rehabilitation Center, enables patients of all ages to practice walking and balance exercises more safely and confidently. It can help patients with ataxia and other conditions regain motor skills, rebuild muscle strength and retrain their nervous systems. Because the system is mounted to an overhead track that protects patients from falling, they can practice walking, balance tasks, sit-to-stand maneuvers and walking up stairs.

### REGAINING CONTROL AFTER STROKE

➤ **Rachel Paverman** was 25 years old when she learned she had a cavernous malformation (a cluster of blood vessels that put pressure on her brainstem), which had bled and caused a stroke. The Howell resident endured three brainstem surgeries to remove the lesion, suffering additional strokes in the process. She began physical therapy at CentraState in 2020 to improve her balance and regain some of her strength.

"I'm not able to put much weight on my right side because I have paralysis," says Rachel, now 29, who uses a walker while out and a wheelchair at home. "It's hard for me to know when my body is centered, so staying balanced is difficult."

Under the guidance of CentraState physical therapist ➤ **Danielle Scozzari, PT, DPT**, the ZeroG system allows Rachel to walk without a spotter to catch her if she starts to fall.



"The system helps me translate my walking pattern in the real world and learn how to move better," she explains. "It also helps me practice walking up and down stairs without holding onto the railing. Using ZeroG gives me more confidence to walk and allows others around me to feel confident that I can do it safely without assistance. If I lose my balance, the technology helps me learn how to correct it."

Thanks to therapy, Rachel can now practice adaptive CrossFit, a form of high-intensity interval training. In conjunction with the new technology, she credits Scozzari with improving her condition.

"Dani knows me so well and is always thinking of innovative techniques for me to try," she says. "I've seen a lot of therapists, but Dani is one of the best."



## WORKING TOWARD A BOY'S DREAM OF WALKING

When **Rider Hayek** was 18 months old, he was diagnosed with ataxia due to an underdeveloped cerebellum. Because he is unable to walk on his own, his doctors recommended starting outpatient physical therapy at age three in addition to the therapy he received at school.

The Jackson resident has worked with CentraState physical therapist **Edita Kotes Nestepny, MS, PT**, for several years and recently began ZeroG therapy. The dynamic body weight support system helps improve his balance as he gets used to the motion and feeling of walking.

"PT has been a positive experience for him – and us," explains Rider's mother, Sarah. "CentraState has accommodated our schedule to ensure Rider has access to therapy. They've made it easy for us and enjoyable for him. The staff has pushed him and helped him get stronger."

Rider, now 7, is a typical elementary school student who loves spending time with his sisters and playing with dinosaurs, monster trucks and trains. He even plays baseball in an adaptive league.

"Rider has improved so much since going to CentraState and working with Miss Edita," adds his father, Josh. "He can stand much longer on his own. We won't know if he can walk until he does. We hope he will and won't stop trying until he can."

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# Keeping Aging Knees Healthy



Throughout life, our knees help us in ways we don't even think about, from our initial first steps to riding a bike, lifting a child or tending a garden – and they do it all while bearing the weight of our bodies. Yet over time, the protective cartilage that cushions the knee joint can wear down, leading to osteoarthritis.

In fact, up to 40% of adults will experience osteoarthritis after age 60, according to CentraState rheumatologist **Nisheet Prasad, MD**. Osteoarthritis of the knee is more common in women than in men.

While you can't reverse joint damage from osteoarthritis – especially if you have a family history of the condition – there are steps you can take to delay its onset, minimize pain and improve function. Dr. Prasad provides the following advice for protecting your knees as you age.

## Small weight changes have a big impact.

Maintaining a healthy weight is one of the best ways to protect your knees, and losing even a small amount of weight can make a difference. Research shows that losing 1 pound of body weight removes 4 pounds of pressure from your knees. In turn, a 5-pound weight loss eliminates 20 pounds of knee pressure!

## Regular exercise is good for your knees.

Exercise strengthens your body and supports your joints. Plus, it can help ease pain and promote better movement for those who have osteoarthritis. Low-impact activities like walking, biking and swimming are especially beneficial. Many people believe that running will worsen osteoarthritis and knee pain, but that's not true. With proper form, running can improve symptoms of knee osteoarthritis, including pain. Stretching exercises that put joints through their full range of motion are also helpful, and strength-training exercises focused on the quadriceps muscles and tendons can provide extra support for your knees.

## The right shoes will carry you far.

Soft, flexible, well-cushioned shoes and sneakers are best. Keep in mind that too much arch support can place more impact on the knee by limiting pronation, the natural inward movement of your foot as you walk. Save the high heels for special occasions, if possible.

## Early osteoarthritis may not cause pain.

Arthritic changes can develop before symptoms like pain and stiffness appear. Know your knees and see a physician if something doesn't seem right.

"If you injure your knee or if your knees are swollen, sore, feel persistently puffy or make a cracking or grinding sound, talk to your physician," says Dr. Prasad. "Early diagnosis and preventive measures for osteoarthritis are effective ways to slow its progress."

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# 5 Signs Your Child May Need Speech or Occupational Therapy

While every child is different, some may need additional help to meet developmental milestones. CentraState speech-language pathologist **Danielle DaCunha, MS, CCC-SLP**, and occupational therapist **Diana Cruz, MS, OTR/L, CSRS**, share five signs that your child may benefit from a speech or occupational therapy evaluation.

- 1** They have trouble meeting developmental milestones, such as saying their first words, walking, sitting up without support, eating solid foods or regulating emotions. For school-aged children, this includes getting dressed, feeding themselves, going to the bathroom, brushing their teeth, playing and completing school-based tasks.
- 2** They struggle with communication milestones, such as communicating through pointing or gesturing by six months or babbling or speaking by about 18 months. With communication issues, you may notice your child frequently becoming frustrated or having trouble controlling their emotions.
- 3** They become overwhelmed in social situations that can overstimulate the senses, such as loud or crowded places. In this case, a child may prefer to play alone or avoid interactions with other kids or adults.
- 4** They can't maintain attention in situations where other children can, such as following directions at soccer practice.
- 5** They show behavioral patterns like avoiding eye contact, not turning toward their name or having trouble deviating from their set routine. These behaviors may warrant follow-up with a developmental pediatrician.



If you think your child could benefit from a speech or occupational therapy consultation, talk to their physician about a referral. To find a physician, visit: [centrastate.com/physicians](https://www.centrastate.com/physicians)

## INTEGRATED PEDIATRIC REHAB SERVICES

In addition to pediatric speech-language therapy and occupational therapy, CentraState offers pediatric physical therapy, aquatic therapy and scoliosis screenings and treatment. These outpatient pediatric rehabilitation services are customized to support the individual developmental needs of infants, children and adolescents. Team members

work together in an integrated approach, so patients can see multiple disciplines under one roof – making it even more convenient for parents to access the care their children need.

To learn more, visit [centrastate.com/rehab](https://www.centrastate.com/rehab) or call **866-CENTRA7 (866-236-8727)**.

# THE FUTURE OF STARTS WITH CLINICAL TRIALS

Without clinical research, medicine would not have cancer immunotherapy, cardiac angioplasty or the data showing that ulcers are caused by a bacterium and not spicy foods.



Through clinical trials – studies that test new therapies, medications or medical devices in humans – researchers have investigated and developed breakthroughs that have saved countless lives and contributed to the body of knowledge of diseases and medical conditions all over the globe.

CentraState proudly participates in clinical trials in collaboration with major U.S. hospitals and research institutions through Atlantic Health System's partnership with the National Cancer Institute and its Community Oncology Research Partnership (NCORP). This alliance grants patients within the greater Monmouth County community access to promising new developments in cancer care, prevention, screening, supportive care management, surveillance and quality of life initiatives.

CentraState's clinical trials allow patients to stay within their communities and still receive state-of-the-art care overseen by specialists at the medical center and those working in NCORP's prestigious institutions.

## SAFETY FIRST

All CentraState clinical trials are reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that research is conducted ethically and complies with federal rules and regulations. Patient safety and privacy are paramount.

Whether a patient enrolls in a clinical trial is their choice, if they are eligible. Patients must meet specific criteria before being enrolled. A clinical research nurse reviews all aspects of the trials, including consent forms, appointments and supportive resources, before a patient enrolls. Every clinical trial is different, and some may extend for months or years.

"By participating in clinical trials, patients drive the standards of practice that are used in treating those with cancer and other diseases and illnesses," says **Shannon Aldi, RN, BSN**, CentraState's clinical research nurse. "Patients may personally benefit from the therapies

or care they receive in clinical trials, as well as contribute to the future of treatment for that condition."

Aldi points out that patients who are enrolled in clinical trials always receive the current standard of care for their illness; they are not deprived of any potential lifesaving or life-extending treatment. The medication, device or protocol that is being investigated may be added to their treatment plan. Clinical trials are tightly controlled, and patients are monitored closely with lab tests, imaging studies (such as X-rays or ultrasounds) and physical exams.

## NURSING RESEARCH IMPROVES PATIENT CARE

Bathtubs that swaddle newborns and keep them warm during their first bath, technology that evaluates chemotherapy infusions and protocols that improve ICU patients' nutrition are

# MEDICINE



just a few innovations that have been implemented at CentraState thanks to studies conducted by its nurse-researchers.

“Evidence-based research is necessary to provide optimal treatment for all patients, from babies to the critically ill, and it assists us in advancing patient care,” says **Irene DeCelie, RN, PhD**, CentraState nurse-investigator. “Our nurses know their patients well. By suggesting and designing new evidence-based research studies, they are instrumental in improving patient care and quality of life.”

## Current Clinical Trials at CentraState

Some clinical trials require specific patient populations. Others are open to all genders, ethnic backgrounds and ages. The CentraState clinical research team is currently recruiting for the following open studies in cancer care:

- ▶ An internet-based program to help cancer survivors manage pain (open to men and women of any age in active treatment and post-treatment)
- ▶ Evaluating tests for early cancer detection (open to healthy non-white men ages 40 to 75 with no history of cancer)
- ▶ The SHINE trial, an internet-based program to help manage cancer-related sexual concerns (open to breast cancer survivors over age 18 with a sexual partner)

### CLINICAL TRIALS AT CENTRASTATE

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## Upcoming Clinical Trials

- ▶ Multiple sclerosis therapies
- ▶ Pancreatic cyst treatment

# DO'S & DON'TS

## FOR A HEALTHY PREGNANCY

The pregnancy journey comes with lots of questions, especially when you're having your first baby. In the age of information overload, your OB/GYN team can serve as a trusted resource on what's healthy for you and your baby – as well as what lifestyle adjustments should be made.

CentraState OB/GYNs **Angela Markman, MD**, and **Benoit Mapa, DO**, are often asked what's safe and what to avoid during pregnancy. Here's their advice on some common questions.

### ! COFFEE

It's important to stay well hydrated during pregnancy, and ideally, that means drinking plenty of water and other caffeine-free beverages. But you don't have to kick the coffee habit completely. Up to 300 mg of caffeine per day – about three 8-ounce cups of brewed coffee – is acceptable. Or try decaf, which averages 2 mg per cup. Keep in mind that caffeine levels at your favorite coffeehouse may be higher.

### ✗ CANNABIS (MARIJUANA)

Some people use cannabis to help ease nausea, which can be a common symptom during early pregnancy. But there's not enough data on how it impacts a baby's neurodevelopment, so it's advised to avoid it. If you experience nausea, your doctor can recommend safe treatment options.

### ✗ ALCOHOL

Avoid alcohol use during pregnancy, as it can lead to birth defects and other issues in your baby.

### ✓ PLANE TRAVEL

Flying is safe for most healthy pregnant women before 36 weeks of pregnancy, although it's a good idea to check with your doctor first. Stay well hydrated and get up to walk during the flight, especially for longer trips.

### ✗ HOT TUBS AND SAUNAS

An increase in your body's temperature can mean the same for your baby, and hot tubs and saunas may harbor bacteria. Avoid them altogether during pregnancy.

### ! HAIR DYE

Small amounts of the chemicals in hair coloring may be absorbed through the scalp, and research on the effects during pregnancy is limited. It's best to avoid coloring your hair during the first trimester (through the 13th week of pregnancy), when your baby's organs are developing. It's fine after that, especially for options that aren't applied directly to the scalp.

### ✗ KITTY LITTER

If you have a cat, delegate the kitty litter duty to someone else. Cat stool can carry an infection called toxoplasmosis, which is harmful to a developing baby.

### ✓ EXERCISE

Exercise has been shown to reduce the risk for certain pregnancy-related complications, so continuing to exercise during pregnancy has many benefits. Talk to your OB/GYN about the level of exercise that's right for you.

## WATCH THE VIDEOS

Access more tips from Drs. Markman and Mapa with our **WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE FIRST TRIMESTER** videos.



# Sip SMART

## Explore the Alcohol-Free Drink Trend

Picture yourself at an after-work happy hour sipping a beautifully crafted drink. The cherry on top? It's alcohol-free.

As part of a "sober-curious" movement, more people are taking a closer look at the role alcohol plays in their lives and, in turn, choosing to reduce or eliminate it. And many are feeling better as a result.



"Cutting back or cutting out alcohol helps decrease systemic inflammation and increase your overall health and well-being," says CentraState primary care physician Vishwala Kasbekar, MD, MPH.

According to Dr. Kasbekar, benefits can include:

- ◆ Lower risk for stroke, heart disease, certain cancers and liver disease
- ◆ Improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- ◆ Better weight management
- ◆ Less fatigue, more energy and better quality of sleep
- ◆ Improved memory and focus along with a boosted mood
- ◆ Healthier-looking skin
- ◆ The ability to be more present in your life and your relationships

Restaurants, bars, liquor stores and spirit manufacturers are embracing the trend. So, whether you're going out or staying home, you can still enjoy the social experience of having a cocktail, while savoring every satisfying sip.

### Mocktails, zero-proof drinks and more

Mocktails are nonalcoholic versions of traditional cocktails. They remove alcohol while retaining the same ingredients, flavors and presentation. Zero-proof drinks use nonalcoholic versions of spirits like gin, rum and whisky, allowing for more layered, complex drinks. There are also nonalcoholic options for beer and wine drinkers.

Want to try your hand at a little mixology magic? Enjoy this refreshing recipe from CentraState's Food and Nutrition Services team and raise a glass to your good health.

### Pomegranate Mint Sparkler (Serves 4)

#### Ingredients

12 oz pomegranate juice  
24 oz seltzer  
1/2 cup fresh pomegranate arils (seeds)  
8-10 fresh mint leaves  
Additional mint sprigs for garnish

#### Instructions

##### 1. Prepare the mint leaves

Using a muddler or the back of a wooden spoon, gently muddle (press down on) mint leaves in a pitcher to release their aroma and flavor. Be careful not to tear them into small pieces.

##### 2. Add remaining ingredients

Pour in the juice and seltzer, stirring gently to mix without losing too much carbonation. Add pomegranate arils for a burst of flavor and a nice visual element.

##### 3. Serve and garnish

Fill glasses with ice and pour in the pomegranate mixture. Add a sprig of mint and enjoy!



# The Truth About Menopause

## Debunking Myths, Embracing Relief

Menopause can feel like a rollercoaster of symptoms that turns your world upside down. But hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, brain fog and painful sex do not have to be your new normal. You can take steps to reclaim your life and feel like yourself again.

Charlsie Celestine, MD, a women's health expert and OB/GYN at Women's Health Specialists of CentraState, understands the challenges women face during menopause.

"If it's affecting your life and confidence, let's take care of it," she advises. "What you're feeling is real. It's not just a passage of life you need to accept."





## Managing Menopause Symptoms

Dr. Celestine begins by determining whether her patient is in menopause,

which is defined as going one full year without a menstrual period.

Next, she reviews symptoms and medical history and discusses treatment options, beginning with simple lifestyle changes. Dressing in layers, keeping a cold beverage nearby, layering bedding, lowering the room temperature and using a portable fan can help with hot flashes and night sweats, which can last anywhere from five to eight years for some women. Relaxation techniques, healthy eating, cardiovascular exercise and weightlifting can help manage mood swings and keep weight in check.

For women who need additional support, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is the next step. HRT helps steady the levels of estrogen and progesterone in the body, which decrease during menopause.

“For healthy women, including those who have had a hysterectomy, HRT can literally stop hot flashes, night sweats and vaginal dryness in their tracks,” says Dr. Celestine.

HRT may also help with decreased concentration, hair thinning, dry skin, weight gain and sleeplessness. While it's not a cure-all, it can significantly improve the quality of life for many women.

## Misconceptions About HRT

Women are sometimes hesitant to try HRT because earlier studies suggested an increased risk for breast cancer. But newer research, including a recent JAMA study, indicates that the benefits may outweigh the risks for symptom relief in women under age 60.

According to Dr. Celestine, research has shown that HRT may also help reduce the risk of heart disease, bone loss and urinary issues, especially when used at the lowest effective dose for short durations.

Dr. Celestine ensures that her patients have the information they need to make an informed choice. If they choose to try HRT, she eases them in, starting at the lowest dose.

“After eight weeks, we see what symptoms remain, readjust and try for another eight weeks,” explains Dr. Celestine. “Because prescription-based hormones come in different delivery forms – including pills, patches and vaginal rings – patients have options.”

## Understanding HRT’s Risk Factors

While HRT can be beneficial, it's not without risks, such as an increased risk for blood clots in certain women. A personal history of breast cancer or blood clots, smoking, uncontrolled blood pressure and diabetes can increase the risks associated with HRT.

Dr. Celestine emphasizes the importance of discussing risks and benefits with your doctor and developing an individualized plan based on your unique health profile.

“Just because menopause is a natural process doesn't mean you have to suffer through it,” adds Dr. Celestine. “You deserve to live your best life at any age.”

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## Ease Menopause Mayhem with Meditation

Relaxation and mindfulness techniques may help with menopause symptoms. Try this meditative exercise:

- Sit or lie down comfortably and imagine your body is an ice cube melting in a warm cup of tea.
- Exhale through your mouth by softly sighing and holding a “ha” sound. The exhale should be longer than the inhale, helping to promote relaxation.
- Feel all the tension release from your muscles and mind.
- Repeat until you feel centered and calm.
- Breathe in slowly through your nose, letting your belly rise and lungs expand
- When you reach the top of the breath, hold for a second or two.

## Perimenopause: The Transition to Menopause

Women's hormones decline before menopause, typically starting at around age 40. During this transition, called perimenopause, menstrual periods become more irregular and may be lighter or heavier than usual. Women in perimenopause can experience the same bothersome symptoms as menopause, and treatments are similar. Talk to your doctor about available options.

# LIVE LIFE WELL

## Tips & Trends

### RELEASE TENSION with Somatic Stretching

When you roll your neck to release tension after looking down at your phone for too long, you are instinctively doing somatic stretching. It's your body's way of releasing sore, overworked muscles.

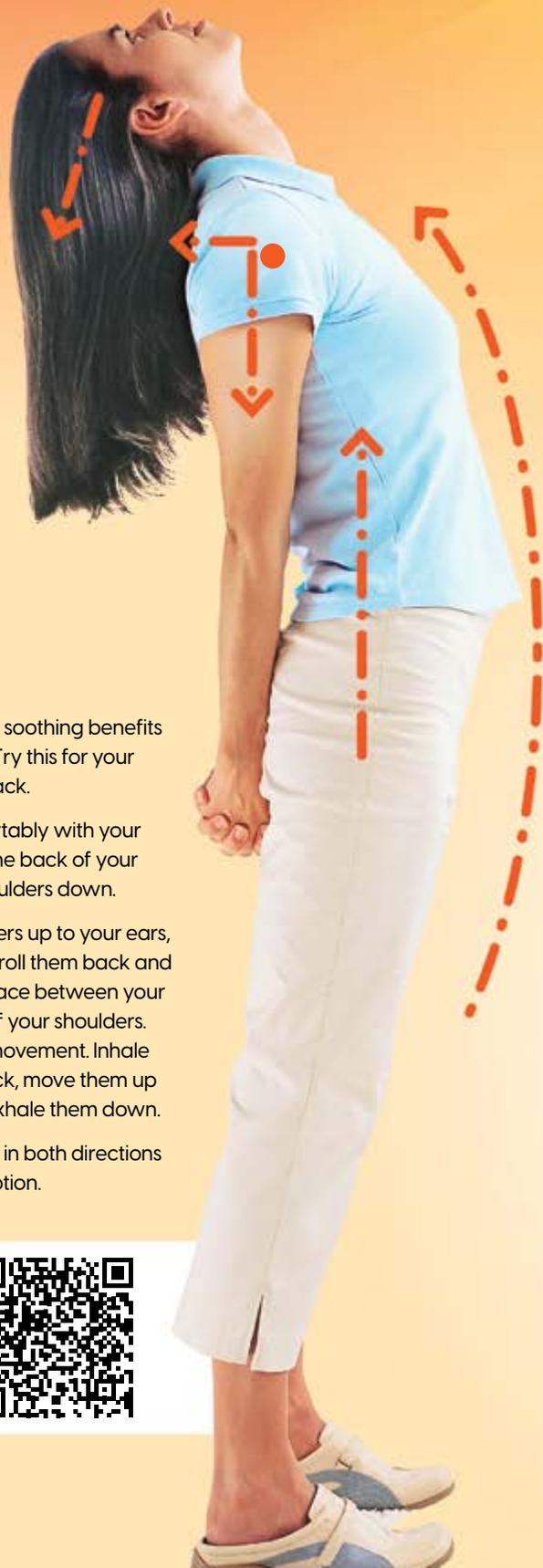
Over time, muscles can become chronically tight due to stress, injuries and repetitive activities. This can negatively impact how you feel and move.

"The goal of somatic stretching is to turn inward, become aware of where you're holding tension and use your breath and gentle movement to release built-up stress in your body," says CentraState health coach and mind-body expert **Beth Ando-Brenman, MPT**. "The breath powers the mind-body connection – it's the key to relieving tension and feeling centered and calm."

#### TRY THIS EXERCISE

Want to experience the soothing benefits of somatic stretching? Try this for your shoulders and upper back.

- 1 Stand or sit comfortably with your spine elongated, the back of your neck long and shoulders down.
- 2 Inhale your shoulders up to your ears, and on the exhale roll them back and down, creating space between your ears and the top of your shoulders. Next, reverse the movement. Inhale your shoulders back, move them up to your ears and exhale them down.
- 3 Do this a few times in both directions in a fluid, rolling motion.



Scan here for more tension-relieving stretches for your neck, shoulders and back.



# How to Recognize HEAT EXHAUSTION

Whether you're sweating it out in a hot yoga class or jogging outside in the dog days of summer, your body works hard to keep you cool in extreme heat.

"When pushed too far, your body can run out of energy and resources, resulting in heat exhaustion," says CentraState emergency medicine physician **Jeremy Dayner, MD**. "If it's not addressed, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke – a life-threatening condition."

When you know the signs of heat exhaustion, you can respond immediately and prevent it from escalating.

## Signs & Symptoms

- ✿ Muscle cramps
- ✿ Headache
- ✿ Intense thirst
- ✿ Nausea and dizziness
- ✿ Fatigue
- ✿ Heavy sweating
- ✿ Cold, clammy skin
- ✿ Weak, rapid pulse



## How to Respond

**STOP ALL ACTIVITY AND REST.** If you're outdoors, find a shady spot or go indoors, ideally in air conditioning. If you're in a hot room, move into a cooler one.

**SLOWLY SIP** water or a sports drink with electrolytes.

**SPLASH COLD WATER** on your face or use wet, cool cloths.

**TAKE A COOL SHOWER OR BATH,** if it's accessible.

**WAIT** at least 24 to 48 hours before exercising.

**SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY** if your symptoms don't resolve.



## STRONGER TEENS Inside & Out



For tweens and teens, the feeling of not fitting in can be distressing. It can cause depression, social anxiety and low self-esteem, which may stop them from trying activities they might otherwise enjoy, like sports.

F.I.T. Club (Fun, Inclusive, Teen-Centered Training), created by CentraState child/adolescent psychiatrist **Ankur Desai, MD**, is designed to change that. The program helps adolescents ages 12 to 18 boost their self-esteem, self-efficacy and social interaction by learning healthy coping strategies through exercise and education – all while improving their fitness levels. Participants exercise twice a week in a small-group setting at CentraState Fitness & Wellness Center, free from pressure or judgment. The program runs for two months, is repeatable and does not require a fitness center membership.

"We focus on creating a supportive environment where adolescents can have fun, feel included and fall in love with fitness, a natural mood booster," says Dr. Desai.

The program's workouts combine cardiovascular exercise, plyometrics (jump training), medicine ball exercises and speed/agility training. Parents have been happy to see positive changes in their children, noting improvements in confidence, leadership and social skills.

By keeping groups small, F.I.T. Club ensures that each participant receives personalized attention, making exercise accessible, enjoyable and empowering.

[centrastatefitness.com/fit-club](https://centrastatefitness.com/fit-club) ☎ 732.845.9400, ext. 4412

# LIVE LIFE WELL<sup>SM</sup> Ways to Wellness

## MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH

### Preparing for Your Newborn

Access more than 50 informative videos on what to expect during pregnancy, childbirth preparation, infant care, breastfeeding and more.

\$52

Register at [centrastate.com/prenatal](https://centrastate.com/prenatal)



## KIDS' HEALTH

### Girls Grow Up

A parent-daughter class that discusses the changes that accompany puberty.

September 26

6-7:30 pm

Child: \$25

Parent: FREE

## CHRONIC CONDITION MANAGEMENT

### Take Control of Your Health

Learn how to set individual goals and make a weekly action plan to improve chronic disease self-management.

Meets on Thursdays

Sept. 19-Oct. 24

4:30-7 pm

6 weekly classes | FREE

### Outpatient Diabetes Management

Take control of diabetes with the help of certified diabetes care and education specialists. Includes group classes and individual support. A prescription is required.

Call 732-294-2574 for details

## NUTRITION & WEIGHT LOSS

### Nutrition Consultation

Meet with a registered dietitian for an individualized approach to disease management or weight loss. A prescription is required.

Call for details

### Weigh of Life

CentraState health coaches lead you down the path to a healthier weight with this evidence-based program. Includes 20 on-demand lessons on diet and movement.

20 lessons | \$105

Register at

[centrastate.com/healthy-weight](https://centrastate.com/healthy-weight)



### Bariatric Pre-op Education

Get ready for weight loss surgery with this virtual session available on-demand.

FREE

Register at

[centrastate.com/bariatric-preop](https://centrastate.com/bariatric-preop)

### Is Weight Loss Surgery Right for You?

Get answers to your questions about surgical weight loss from CentraState's fellowship-trained bariatric surgeons in this on-demand virtual program.

FREE

Register at

[centrastate.com/weight-loss-surgery](https://centrastate.com/weight-loss-surgery)



## BODY, MIND & MOVEMENT

### Safe Chair Yoga

Enjoy seated and supported standing yoga classes focused on breathing techniques and gentle stretching.

Meets on Wednesdays

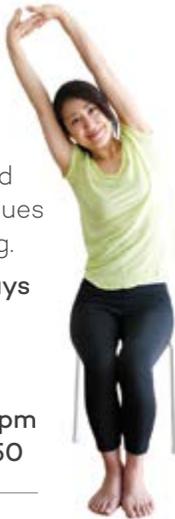
Aug. 7-21 & Sept. 4

Sept. 11-25 & Oct. 9

Oct. 16-30 & Nov. 6

11 am-12 pm or 1-2 pm

4 weekly classes | \$50



### A Matter of Balance

Learn practical strategies for fall prevention and increase activity by improving balance, flexibility and strength.

Meets on Tuesdays

Aug. 20-Oct. 8

1-3 pm

8 weekly classes | \$60

### Go with the Flow: Tai Chi for Better Balance

Enjoy a low-impact mind-body experience that helps reduce stress and promote well-being.

Meets on Thursdays

Sept. 5-26, Oct. 10-31 and

Nov. 7-14

10 weekly classes | \$75

All classes are in person at the Star and Barry Tobias Health Awareness Center unless noted 



To register or learn more:

 [centrastate.com/events](https://centrastate.com/events)

 732-308-0570

## CPR

### Heartsaver CPR with AED for Adult/Child



Includes performing CPR on adults and children, helping a choking victim and using an AED. Receive a 2-year AHA certification card.

Visit our online calendar for dates  
\$80

### BLS Healthcare Provider CPR

Certification course for healthcare professionals. Written and practical skills required. Receive a 2-year AHA certification card.

Visit our online calendar for dates  
Full class: \$105 | Renewal: \$95

### CPR for Family and Friends

Know how to save the life of an adult, child or infant. Learn CPR and how to help a choking victim in this non-certification course.

Visit our online calendar for dates  
\$30 per person | \$45 per couple

## HEALTH LECTURES

### Colorectal Lecture & Take-Home Screening Kit

Colorectal cancer is preventable when detected early. Attend this important lecture and receive a take-home colorectal cancer screening kit.

Aug. 22 or Nov. 21 | 5-6 pm  
\$15 (non-refundable)

### Prostate Lecture

Learn more about prostate cancer, warning signs and treatment options, and find out if a prostate cancer screening is right for you.

Sept. 26 | 5-6 pm  
\$15 (non-refundable)

## SCREENINGS

### Head, Neck & Thyroid Screening

Check for multiple cancers at once with this examination of the head, face, mouth and neck.

Oct. 24 | 5-7 pm  
\$15 (non-refundable)  
Karen Olbis Radiation Oncology Center

### Move It, Don't Lose It Screening

Learn your risk for falls with this 30-minute balance, mobility and posture screening. We'll share test scores and program recommendations based on your findings.

Thursdays by appointment;  
call 732-637-6364  
\$15



### Bone Density Screening

A heel test will identify low bone density (osteopenia) or osteoporosis.

Second Friday of the month by appointment  
\$25

### A1C and Blood Pressure Screening

Learn if you have high blood pressure or are at risk for diabetes. A1C measures average blood sugar levels of the past 3 months to detect prediabetes and diabetes. For those who do not have a diabetes diagnosis.

Second Friday of the month by appointment  
\$25

### Lipid Profile

Find out your total cholesterol, HDL, LDL and triglyceride numbers and how to manage your health.

Second Friday of the month by appointment  
\$30



### Metabolic Analysis

This simple analysis calculates your daily calorie burn – the first step toward effective weight management.

Call for appointment  
\$45

## HEAL

### Helping Everyone Adjust to Loss

The loss of a loved one can be overwhelming. HEAL provides resources and support to help adults cope and adjust in a compassionate, non-judgmental space among people experiencing similar loss. Facilitated by a licensed social worker, this support group is held in person on the first and third Tuesday of each month.

Call 732-294-2821 to learn more.



Read more stories at [👉 centrastate.com/blog](https://www.centrastate.com/blog).  
Subscribe to our free health e-newsletter at [👉 centrastate.com/enews](https://www.centrastate.com/enews).

# NURSING QUALITY Shines Brightly

In addition to earning Magnet® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center four times – an accomplishment that less than 2% of hospitals nationwide have attained – CentraState recently achieved two additional honors attesting to nursing excellence.

## BEACON AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

CentraState earned the Silver-level Beacon Award for its Critical Care and Step-Down units from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN), an organization that shapes progressive critical care nursing practice. For patients and their families, this national three-year award signifies exceptional care that puts patients first.

The Beacon Award recognizes caregivers who successfully improve patient outcomes and align practices with AACN's Healthy Work Environment Standards. The silver level demonstrates an effective approach to policies and procedures related to leadership, staffing and staff engagement, communication and knowledge, evidence-based practice and outcome measurement.

## NURSE RESIDENCY PROGRAM ACCREDITATION

CentraState is the first hospital in New Jersey to achieve five-year entry-to-practice nurse residency program accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), meaning that it complies with rigorous standards and follows effective educational practices. CentraState's 12-month RN Residency Program helps nursing graduates transition to the hospital environment and provide high-level care through professional education, simulation laboratory skills and structured mentorship.

