

# seniorclass

Baystate  Health

ADVANCING CARE. ENHANCING LIVES.



## IN THIS ISSUE

Colorectal Cancer  
Awareness Month  
page 2

Ways To Lower Your  
Blood Pressure  
page 4

Is Diabetes  
Worse In Winter?  
page 8

Better Aging:  
10 Tips For Changing  
Your Mindset  
page 10

# Virtual Events

## Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month It Can Happen To Anybody: Colorectal Cancer

Tuesday, March 22, 6-7 pm

During COVID-19 a lot of us put off the colonoscopies but early detection is key to being cancer free. Join colorectal surgeons, Dr. Holly Sheldon, and Dr. Ziad Kutayli, Baystate General Surgery, for a discussion about colon and rectum cancers, how to nip the cancers early with the latest tests, screenings and research. There will be time for questions and answers.



Holly Sheldon, MD



Ziad Kutayli, MD

## Being Diagnosed with Colon Cancer, Now What?

Thursday, March 24, 6-7 pm



Daniel Fish, MD

The test came back positive for colon cancer. But what does that mean for treatments and how is the cancer diagnosed? Join Dr. Daniel Fish, colorectal surgeon, Baystate General Surgery, for a discussion about colon and rectal cancer, the different interventions needed and the latest treatment options. There will be time for questions and answers.

## 4 BAD EXCUSES NOT TO GET YOUR COLONOSCOPY

If you ask people about getting their colonoscopies, you often get nervous laughter, a few jokes, and lots of excuses.

But make no mistake, it's a procedure you should definitely have when you turn 50. "A colonoscopy is a chance to detect cancer and precancerous polyps and to stop cancer in its tracks," says Dr. Kelly Tyler, chief of Colorectal Surgery at Baystate Medical Center. "Colon and rectal cancer is one of the most common cancers in our country, and colonoscopy is the best way to fight it right from the start."

### 4 BAD EXCUSES Not to Get Your Colonoscopy

Talk to your **primary care provider** to make an appointment

- Getting a colonoscopy HURTS!**  
No it doesn't!  
The colon doesn't have nerve endings and the medication makes you sleep through it.
- Getting a colonoscopy is EMBARRASSING!**  
You can't die from embarrassment, but you can from colon cancer. And it's preventable!
- I'd rather NOT KNOW!**  
This test can actually prevent cancer, or find it early when it's easier to treat.
- The prep tastes AWFUL!**  
It's not that bad, and the newest preps are easier to take.  
**Pro tip: drink the prep ice cold.**

## This is Neurosurgery

Wednesday, March 30, 6-7 pm



Kamal Kalia, MD

Have you heard the expression “It’s not brain surgery”? But what is it like when it is. Exploring the field of neurosurgery is compelling and complex. Join Dr. Kamal Kalia, neurosurgeon, Baystate Neurosurgery, for a discussion about what neurosurgeons do, the common issues treated and a fascinating show and tell experience in the field of neurosurgery.

## Oh, My Aching Knee!

Thursday, April 14, 6-7 pm



Colin Cooper, MD

Knee pain is a common complaint that can happen at any age but as we age arthritis, injury, or both can limit our activity when we need to keep moving. Join Dr. Colin Cooper, orthopedic surgeon, New England Orthopedic Surgeons (NEOS), for a discussion about when to know if knee pain is serious, the many treatments, and how to keep the knees pain and injury free. There will be time for questions and answers.

## The Rise of the Tick

Tuesday, April 26, 6-7 pm



Brian Sutton, MD

It’s springtime, and after a long winter we are all ready to get outside and enjoy the great weather. Unfortunately, so are ticks. Join Dr. Brian Sutton, Medical Director, Baystate Health Urgent Care, for a discussion about the many varieties of ticks, some of the myths regarding ticks, tick bites, and information about removing ticks. Included in the discussion will be the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of Lyme disease, the most common tick-associated illness. There will be time for questions and answers.

## To register

for any of the virtual events visit **BaystateHealth.org/SeniorClass** and scroll to the bottom of the page or visit **BaystateHealth.org/Events**.

### Questions?

Email [Sue.Fontaine@BaystateHealth.org](mailto:Sue.Fontaine@BaystateHealth.org) or call 413-794-5200.



Use cellphone camera, and click the pop-up

## Missed a Virtual Event?



Watch recorded events anytime at **BaystateHealth.org/SeniorClass**.

## Not a member? **Join us!**

Visit **BaystateHealth.org/SeniorClass** to receive monthly email updates and the quarterly publication. It’s Free!

Already a member and would like to receive the monthly email or need to make changes to your membership, visit **BaystateHealth.org/SeniorClass**



Susan M. Fontaine  
Loyalty Programs

Email: [sue.fontaine@baystatehealth.org](mailto:sue.fontaine@baystatehealth.org)

Baystate Medical Center  
413-794-5200

Baystate Mary Lane Outpatient Center  
413-967-2200

Baystate Franklin Medical Center  
413-773-2433

Baystate Wing Hospital  
413-967-2200

Baystate Noble Hospital  
413-794-5200

Baystate Health Senior Class is a FREE loyalty program dedicated to health and wellness. The program is open to men and women ages 55 and over.

Find us on the web at [baystatehealth.org/seniorclass](http://baystatehealth.org/seniorclass) | Like Baystate Health on Facebook

Go to [Youtube.com/baystatehealth](https://www.youtube.com/baystatehealth) to see all the latest videos | Follow us on Instagram @Baystate\_Health

Baystate Health is a leading not-for-profit health system with the charitable mission of improving the health of the people in our communities every day, with quality and compassion.



ADVANCING CARE.  
ENHANCING LIVES.



# 5 Ways To Lower Your Blood Pressure



Gina Zichittella, NP

February is American Heart Month, a time when all people can focus on their cardiovascular health. The CDC’s Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention is shining a light this year on high blood pressure, a leading risk factor for heart disease and stroke – the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States, respectively.

## WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. Arteries carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body. Your blood pressure normally rises and falls through the day.

Blood pressure is measured using two numbers. The first, called systolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart beats. The second number, called diastolic blood pressure, measures the pressure in your arteries when your heart rests between beats. For example, if the measurement reads 120 systolic and 80 diastolic, you would say, “120 over 80” or write, “120/80Hg.”

The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association consider high blood pressure to be 130 systolic or higher and 80 diastolic or higher. Your blood pressure is considered “elevated” if it is in the range of 120-129 systolic and less than 80 diastolic.

High blood pressure (also known as hypertension), can damage your arteries by making them less elastic, which decreases the flow of blood and oxygen to your heart and leads to heart disease. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevent (CDC) notes that decreased blood flow to the heart can cause:

- Chest pain, also called angina.
- Heart attack, which happens when the blood supply to your heart is blocked and heart muscle begins to die without enough oxygen. The longer the blood flow is blocked, the greater the damage to the heart.

Heart failure, a condition that means your heart can’t pump enough blood and oxygen to your other organs.

## WHY IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE A ‘SILENT KILLER’?

“We call hypertension the ‘silent killer’ because many people may have no symptoms and believe that they are healthy, when they are really at an increased risk for heart disease, heart failure and other related illnesses. And you may not have any symptoms until serious damage has been done to your internal organs including not only your heart but your brain, kidneys and eyes,” said Gina Zichittella, a certified nurse practitioner at Baystate Cardiology in Palmer.

“That’s why early detection is so important, so that you and your primary care physician can develop a plan to bring your blood pressure down. And that’s also why it is important to visit your doctor regularly and to not miss any scheduled appointments,” she added.





## HOW COMMON IS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Approximately 1 in 3 American adults (that's more than 100 million people), has high blood pressure. Only about 1 in 4 has their high blood pressure under control.

High blood pressure is more likely as you age. According to the American Heart Association, you're more likely to develop high blood pressure in your late 30s or early 40s. Nearly half of all adults with high blood pressure are women, and at age 65 and older women are more likely than men to get high blood pressure.

High blood pressure is so common in African-Americans in the U.S. that it ranks among the highest in the world – more than 40% of non-Hispanic African-American men and women have high blood pressure. For African-Americans, high blood pressure also develops earlier in life and is usually more severe.

“We have been seeing for quite a while now more younger adults and children developing high blood pressure as a result of our unhealthy lifestyles resulting in a rise in obesity,” said Zichittella.

## HOW TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Many people with high blood pressure can lower their blood pressure into a healthy range or keep their numbers in a healthy range by making lifestyle changes. Zichittella and the CDC recommend talking to your healthcare team about the following lifestyle changes to help control your blood pressure:

### 1. Exercise regularly

Get at least 150 minutes of physical activity each week (about 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week). Exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower your cholesterol and blood pressure.

### 2. Quit smoking

According to the American Heart Association and the U.S. surgeon general, your body starts to recover right away when you quit smoking. Within the first 20 minutes, your blood pressure and heart rate recover from nicotine-induced spikes. Over time, your carbon monoxide levels normalize, your circulation and lung function begins to improve, and your risk for cancer and coronary heart disease decreases.

### 3. Eat a healthy diet, including limiting sodium (salt) and alcohol

A high sodium diet can raise blood pressure and contribute to heart disease. Following the DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension – recommended by the American Heart Association and the National Institutes of Health) can lower blood pressure in just 14 days.

### 4. Keep a healthy weight

Blood pressure increases as weight increases. Doctors often look at body mass index (BMI) to figure out if you are at a healthy weight. Try the CDC BMI calculator and talk to your doctor to learn more.

### 5. Manage your stress

Stress is known to contribute to poor diet and other unhealthy habits. The link between stress and hypertension is still being studied, but we do know that stress affects our bodies and our wellbeing. When we're stressed, our bodies respond by releasing stress hormones into our blood. These hormones make our heart beat faster, which raises our blood pressure temporarily. If you have chronic stress, your body is often in “high gear” putting you in a repeated “fight or flight” response.

## WORK WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Sometimes lifestyle changes are not enough. Many people need to take medicine in addition to making lifestyle changes.

“Remember that monitoring your blood pressure with the support of your healthcare team can help lower your risk for heart disease and stroke. You can check your blood pressure at your doctor's office, at a pharmacy, or even at home,” said Zichittella.



**For more information** visit [BaystateHealth.org/Heart](http://BaystateHealth.org/Heart) or call 413-794-CARE (2273). Join us for the virtual event Heart & Soul of Heart Disease with Dr. Adam Stern and Rabbi Hahn about prevention and stress management.



Use cellphone camera, and click the pop-up

# HEART & VASCULAR

## 2022 Virtual Lecture Series

Join us for all or part of the free virtual series to learn about the latest advances in heart and vascular care. There will be time for questions and answers.



Adam Stern, MD



Rabbi Ken Hahn

**SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 6 | 12 - 1 PM**

**Adam Stern, MD** – Cardiologist

**Rabbi Ken Hahn** – Baystate Spiritual Services

### *Heart and Soul of Heart Disease*

What can be done to reduce the risk of heart disease? Join Dr. Adam Stern, cardiologist, Baystate Cardiology, for a discussion about the latest research for prevention including diet, exercise, stress reduction, blood pressure and more. The conversation continues with Rabbi Ken Hahn, Baystate Spiritual Services, about the power of spirituality in healing, and mindfulness to de-stress the heart.



Daniel Engelman, MD



Cheryl Crisafi,  
MSN, RN

**SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 13 | 12 - 1 PM**

**Daniel Engelman, MD** – Cardiac Surgeon

**Cheryl Crisafi, MSN, RN** – Nurse Coordinator

### *Today's Open Heart Surgery*

Join Dr. Daniel Engelman, cardiac surgeon, Baystate Cardiac Surgery, Professor of Surgery, UMass Chan Medical School-Baystate, and Cheryl Crisafi, Nurse Coordinator, Baystate Cardiology, for a discussion about the use of technology to improve the patient experience surrounding open heart surgery.



Sabeen Chaudry, MD

**SUNDAY | FEBRUARY 20 | 12 - 1 PM**

**Sabeen Chaudry, MD** – Cardiologist

### *Women and Heart Disease*

There is an assumption that heart disease primarily impacts men but in fact is the number one killer of women. Heart disease doesn't affect all women alike. Women face unique risks, warning signs and symptoms. Join Dr. Sabeen Chaudry, cardiologist, Baystate Heart & Vascular Program, for a discussion about the misconceptions about heart disease and heart attack symptoms in women, the impact of stress, and the many ways to stay heart healthy.

To register, visit  
[BaystateHealth.org/Heart](https://BaystateHealth.org/Heart)





# EMERGENCY, URGENT CARE, OR PRIMARY CARE – WHERE TO GO FOR HELP



## It's a common question: "Should I go to the emergency room or urgent care? Or should I see my primary care doctor?"

While emergency rooms are open 24-7 to care for the sick and injured, urgent care centers are a popular alternative for a fast and economical alternative to non-life threatening care of illnesses and injuries.

Urgent care can come at a lower co-pays for patients – often a difference as great as \$50 compared to \$200 depending on your insurance provider – and savings for the medical system as a whole. And urgent care can be faster in the sense that an emergency room sees the sickest patients first, while at an urgent care center it is usually first-come, first served. Below, we break down how to decide where to go: primary care, urgent care, or emergency?

### WHERE TO GO FOR CARE

As the region's largest healthcare system, Baystate Health has locations and services that are designed to get you the right care at the right time. With five hospitals throughout western Massachusetts and the only Level 1 trauma center in the region, Baystate Health is here to help.

#### When should you go to primary care?

As part of our ongoing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Baystate Health is increasing its use of telehealth video visits. These visits allow you to stay in the safety and comfort of your home, while providing a real-time connection (similar to FaceTime or Skype) with your healthcare provider on a mobile device, phone or computer.

Your primary care doctor knows you, your health history and may be the perfect person to may be the perfect resource tom make sure you get consistent, quality care. If you are not feeling well, call your doctor's office for guidance.

- Cough, cold, flu
- Ear infections and sore throat
- Skin problems
- Minor injuries like sprains, bumps and bruises
- Urinary tract infections

Your primary care doctor can also help you coordinate care for chronic conditions like:

- Allergies and asthma
- Arthritis
- COPD
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes and obesity
- Substance abuse

#### When should you go to the emergency room?

If the situation requires immediate medical treatment, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for:

- Severe bleeding
- Chest pains
- No pulse
- Inability to breathe
- Severe eye injuries
- Head, spinal cord or back injuries
- Broken bones
- Severe stomach pain
- Sudden change in mental state, sudden severe headache, other stroke symptoms.

#### When should you go to urgent care?

Urgent care centers are for conditions or injury that require professional care, but will not get worse if not immediately treated.

Urgent care centers should be used only when your primary care physician is not available – such as after hours, on weekends, and during holidays. At Baystate Health, you can be seen at urgent care either in person or through telehealth visits.

Illness or injuries appropriate for urgent care include:

- Colds, coughs, flu, fever, sore throat
- Asthma and upper respiratory problems
- Minor cuts or burns
- Rash, skin and eye infections
- Earaches
- Migraine headaches
- Urinary tract infections (pain or burning when urinating)
- Strains and sprains
- Stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting
- Animal bites (if not severe)



**Find the nearest urgent care location visit [BaystateHealth.org/locations](https://www.baystatehealth.org/locations)**

**Use cellphone camera, and click the pop-up**

# Is Diabetes Worse In Winter?

## Seasonal Tips for Managing Your Health



Chelsea Gordner, MD

The winter holiday season is a wonderful time to catch up with friends and family and venture out into the pristine landscape for a refreshing walk or spontaneous snowball fight. Punctuated by big meals, special treats, and, for some, a lot of toasting with seasonal nog, it can be a tricky for people with diabetes to navigate.

According to Dr. Chelsea Gordner, Director of Inpatient Diabetes at Baystate Medical Center, “With some advanced planning and preparation, you can enjoy the season without compromising your blood sugar goals or putting your health at risk. It just takes a little forethought and common sense.”

### Be a party smartie

Any holiday gathering is bound to be filled with a bounty of tempting, and often sugar-rich, foods. Gordner notes, “Nobody wants to go to a party where they can’t eat the cake. With the right planning, you can have your share of good holiday eats.”

If you are going to an event where there’s likely to be a big spread, she advises the following:

- Don’t go to hungry. Eat a healthy snack in advance to keep your appetite in check.
- Bring a dish that’s low in carbs, fats, and calories. This way, if the other options are limited, you’ll still have something to eat and enjoy.
- Check your sugars and bring your medication. If you are enjoying holiday treats, be sure to check your sugar often and keep your numbers in check.

When filling your plate at holiday meals, aim to fill half your plate with fruits and non-starchy vegetables. The other half should be a 50/50 combination, with one half being your protein and the other a combination of grains and starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, and squash).

### Raise a glass wisely (if at all)

A toast to the holidays is a time-honored tradition but for people with diabetes, it comes with risks.

Alcohol immediately raises sugar levels in your blood but it can later lower them to dangerous levels. In

addition, it can interact badly with certain diabetes medications, most notably sulfonylureas.

If you choose to drink, be smart and always eat when you drink to keep sugar levels in check. Be sure to check your sugar levels frequently when drinking and consider having a small snack before bedtime to reduce low sugar risks while you sleep.

Dr. Gordner notes, “It’s also important to choose your drink wisely. As a rule of thumb, light or low-carb beers are a better choice than wine, and wine is a better choice than liquor. Avoid sugary drinks, liqueurs or any drinks mixed with sugary sodas.”

### Stay active, stay safe

Exercise is an important part of managing diabetes. “It’s easy during winter months to just want to curl up with a warm blanket and stay put,” says Gordner, “but when you exercise regularly, your cells become more sensitive to insulin so it works more effectively.”

Dr. Gordner advise patients to do anything to keep moving. “Aim for 150 minutes a movement a week,” she says, “That includes doing chores, walking to get the mail, dancing, and, of course, exercise at home or at the gym. Check with your local library to see if they have exercise DVDs. It’s a fun and free way to try out different types of exercise in the comfort and privacy of your home.”

### **Protect Your Feet**

If you choose to exercise outdoors during the winter months, Dr. Gordner notes it's important to protect your feet. "Poor circulation from diabetes can reduce the sensitivity in your feet," she says. "It's not uncommon for diabetes patients to end up with frost bitten toes simply because they didn't realize how cold their feet had gotten."

She encourages patients to wear moisture-wicking socks in cotton or wool when venturing outdoors. In addition, always wear the proper footwear for the activity. As she says, "Sneakers in snow will not cut it. If you plan to spend extended periods of time outdoors in the winter, invest in good boots with a thick insulating sole."

When coming in from the cold, she cautions patients against warming their feet on a radiator, close to a fire, or with a heating pad. "That same lack of sensitivity that can lead to frost bite can also lead to severe burns."

In addition, be sure to examine your feet daily and keep them moisturized. Diabetes contributes to dry skin of the feet. Dry, cracked skin can lead to infection that can be hard to knock out if your circulation is poor.

### **Travel safe**

If you're traveling over the holidays or any time during the winter months, be especially careful transporting insulin and glucose test strips.

Insulin should never be stored below 36°F. For that reason, don't leave insulin your car when temperatures drop. Similarly, glucose strips should not be kept below 45°F. If you're planning to ski or outdoors for long stretches of time, keep your strips in an inside pocket where they can absorb some body heat.

### **Mind your mood**

Research shows that people with diabetes are 2 to 3 times more likely to have depression than people without diabetes. Things get even more complicated as some of the behaviors associated with depression – poor sleep habits, overeating or not eating enough, lack of focus, and withdrawing from activities and socialization – make managing diabetes difficult. And when diabetes management gets difficult, people tend to get depressed. It's a vicious cycle in which two serious conditions fuel each other.

Things get even further complicated in the winter months when daylight hours are in short supply. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a very real condition experienced by 1 in 20 people and its symptoms mirror depression in many ways.

The good news is that treatment for depression and SAD can be very effective. Speak to your doctor about treatment options including therapy, medicine, or both.

In addition, push yourself to stay active and engaged. Exercise actually produces "happy hormones" that can boost your mood. Make a point to spend time with other people. Confiding in a trusted family member or friend can be a good way to reduce stress and cope with the challenge of managing both your diabetes and depression.



### **Talk to an Endocrinologist**

If you have questions or concerns about managing your diabetes over the holidays and winter months, reach out to your doctor for advice. Learn more visit [BaystateHealth.org/service/Endocrinology](http://BaystateHealth.org/service/Endocrinology) or call Baystate Endocrinology & Diabetes at 413-794-7031.



**Use cellphone camera, and click the pop-up**

# Better Aging: 10 Tips For Changing Your Mindset



**Today, the planet is shared by nearly 8,000,000,000 people. Despite the staggering number of individuals, there's one thing we all have in common: every one of us is aging.**

**From the moment we're born to the moment we die, we all age. However, the matter of 'how well' we age is, to some extent, up to each of us.**

## **MINDSET MATTERS**

According to Dr. Catherine Sanderson, Chair of Psychology Department at Amherst College and author of *The Positive Shift: Mastering Mindset to Improve Happiness, Health, and Longevity* (and speaker at the Baystate Health Senior Class event "The Art of Aging: A Prescription for Mind and Body"), what we think and how we feel about aging can have a significant impact on how we actually age.

She notes, "The way we think about ourselves and the world around us dramatically impacts our happiness, health, how fast or slow we age, and even how long we live. In fact, people with a positive mindset about aging live on average 7.5 years longer than those without."

"Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that a simple shift of mindset can influence everything from how well you handle pain and enjoy a meal to how strongly you might or might not feel the effects of a cold and even your ability to lose weight. In the same vein, your mindset about aging influences how you actually age. If you buy into the notion that old people are forgetful and doddering, you're essentially creating a future model for how you will age. But, with the right mindset, you can change your future for the better."

While Sanderson acknowledges that exactly how mindset actually does these things isn't clear, she says, "The substantial influence it exerts on our psychological and physical health is well-established. What that means for each of us as individuals is that we have the power to improve the quality of our life as we age by improving the quality of our mindset."

## **10 STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING A POSITIVE MINDSET FOR BETTER AGING**

Sanderson says that achieving a better quality of life – and even adding a few more years to that life – doesn't have to be difficult. "There are actually a number of strategies you can adopt that can greatly improve your happiness levels, reduce anxiety, and lead to more fulfilling life experiences. Because not every strategy is a fit for everyone, I'm going to share 10 from which to choose. The more strategies you implement, the greater your chance of success at achieving a better mindset but even just implementing one can really improve your aging experience."

### **1. Change your stereotypes**

Western culture tends to focus on negative stereotypes of the elderly. However, there are numerous examples of individuals doing and achieving great things well into their 80s and 90s. Seek those out and be inspired by them.

### **2. Exercise**

Exercise is important because it stimulates brain development and neural connections which leads to a sharper mind. It's also effective at lowering levels of depression and anxiety. Exercise doesn't have to be super-structured or rigorous. Dancing in place, taking a walk, chair yoga – it all counts. Get moving and get happier.

### **3. Meditate**

Meditation is easy, inexpensive and, if you use some apps, free. More importantly, even after just a few months, meditation can strengthen neural connections and activity and lead people to be kinder and more empathetic.

### **4. Be a lifelong learner**

Engaging in new activities and ways of thinking is a great way to exercise their brain. It doesn't have to be high-level stuff to have an impact. Painting or cooking classes, attending a lecture, doing crosswords, and reading are all good ways to keep flexing your gray matter which only improves how well it works.



### 5. Find some faith

Studies show that people with religious or spiritual beliefs have higher levels of happiness and longer life expectancies than those that don't. One theory on this finding is that those who practice faith are essentially practicing a type of positive mindset. And, in many instances, are surrounded by other people who have positive mindsets which also has benefits.

### 6. Be giving

Being generous is associated with better happiness and health. People who give their time, talents, money, even blood, tend to live longer and have great self-confidence and self-esteem.

### 7. Focus on positivity

Positive thinking has been shown to increase life span, improve physical health, and lower rates of depression. While it's unclear why people who engage in positive thinking experience these benefits, one theory holds that having a positive outlook enables you to cope better with stressful situations, which reduces the negative effects of stress on the body.

### 8. Get a dog

Research shows that pets – especially dogs – can provide excellent social support, stress relief, reduce blood pressure, and other health benefits. In fact, staring into a dog's eyes has been showed to increase levels of the happy-inducing chemical oxytocin in the brain.

### 9. Spend time with positive people

Positivity is contagious. People who spend time with other positive people experience higher levels of happiness and health and increased longevity.

### 10. Build good relationships

As COVID has demonstrated for far too many of us, when we feel disconnected, we experience physical state of stress. In fact, prolonged disconnectedness can be as harmful to the body as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Find ways to connect and stay connected with others. Phone calls, virtual meetings, letter writing have all been proven to raise your spirits and improve your health.

“  
THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT OURSELVES  
AND THE WORLD AROUND US  
DRAMATICALLY IMPACTS OUR HAPPINESS,  
HEALTH, HOW FAST OR SLOW WE AGE,  
AND EVEN HOW LONG WE LIVE.

”  
– Catherine Sanderson, MD

### DON'T NEGLECT YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

Staying healthy isn't on you alone—you can get expert help. One big key to aging well is having a primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP will address you as a whole person, including your values and preferences, chronic conditions, common ailments, and life stages. And research shows that people with primary care tend to be healthier—they're more likely to have diseases caught early, their chronic conditions are managed, and they're up to date on regular check-ups.

“It is often said that one of the constant things in life is change. This has never been so true when we talk about aging,” says Dr. Albert Agomaa of Baystate Family Medicine - Northampton. Your primary care provider (PCP) is your partner in ensuring that you remain healthy and adapt to the changes. Your PCP will talk with you about screening tests that you may need (like mammograms and colonoscopies), work with you in managing your chronic medical conditions, update immunizations, and identify any assistance or tools you may need to enjoy a better quality of life.



If you need a primary care provider, visit [BaystateHealth.org/primary](https://www.baystatehealth.org/primary) of all 413-794-5412.

Use cellphone camera, and click the pop-up



A clinical trial that brings new hope. An advanced treatment that saves a life. A surgery resident starting a promising career. A warm blanket that makes a patient smile. Research that leads to a cure. Whatever your passion, you can help advance care and enhance lives at Baystate Health.

You can give the gift of health to patients by naming Baystate Health Foundation as a percentage beneficiary of your retirement assets, a bank account, life insurance or your overall estate.

By taking a few minutes to update your beneficiaries, you can create a gift that will help give patients a brighter tomorrow.

This is a simple and flexible way to create your legacy and help someone in need of health and healing.

Plus, you do not need a lawyer, you retain control of your assets, and your gift passes tax-free to Baystate Health Foundation to make a difference where it matters most.

Beneficiary designation gifts from friends like you help Baystate Health provide the lifesaving treatments, services and hope patients need to get back on their feet – today and in the future.



**To explore this option and more, please reach out to Kylie Johnson at 413-794-7789 or [Kylie.Johnson@BaystateHealth.org](mailto:Kylie.Johnson@BaystateHealth.org). All inquiries are confidential and gifts of all sizes matter.**