



# Health Beat

Smart Medicine | For Our Patients | For Our Community



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# Thank you, Marilyn Carp!

**M**arilyn Carp, chairwoman of the Maryland General Hospital (MGH) Board of Directors, has been a major supporter of the hospital for the past 15 years. She recently retired as president of AEGON after 30 years. To recognize her leadership and service to the company and community, her co-workers at AEGON made a generous donation to MGH and the boardroom was named in her honor.

As chairwoman of the board for the past five years, Carp led the hospital's first fundraising effort. Under her leadership, MGH reached its goal of raising \$6 million, including a \$500,000 lead gift from AEGON. The money raised supported the hospital's Core Facilities Replacement project. The project brought new, state-of-the-art facilities and technology to MGH to provide patients with great care in a comfortable, modern setting.



Robert A. Chrencik, University of Maryland Medical System president and CEO, and Sylvia Smith Johnson, Maryland General Hospital president and CEO, congratulate Marilyn Carp (center).

“All of us at Maryland General are extremely grateful for Marilyn’s generous contributions of time, talent and energy over the years,” says Sylvia Smith Johnson, MGH president and CEO. “We sincerely appreciate her continued direction and support as we strive to make the hospital the very best it can be.”

## MGH has lowest complication rate in the state!

Maryland General Hospital (MGH) achieved the lowest hospital complication rate in the state of Maryland for fiscal year 2010, according to the Maryland Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC).

Complications are medical conditions that are unexpected and are unlikely to be caused by a patient’s illness. The complication rate is taken from a list of 64 potentially preventable complications (PPC) adapted by Maryland’s HSCRC. PPCs are not present when the patient is first admitted to the hospital and can be caused during their hospitalization. Examples of PPCs include urinary tract infections, septicemia (infection in the blood) and stroke.

Maryland General’s No. 1 ranking in this area means that the hospital’s results are better than the overall average in the state of Maryland and better than all other Maryland hospitals.

“Maryland General is committed to providing safe and effective quality care for our patients,” says Sylvia Smith Johnson, MGH president and CEO. “This impressive state-wide ranking is simply one more example of that commitment. Our physicians, nursing and other clinical staff members are to be congratulated for helping Maryland General achieve the lowest hospital complication rate in the state for fiscal year 2010.”

## New name, same great care

Maryland General Hospital and the University of Maryland Medical System recently announced that the Joslin Diabetes Center

has changed its name to the University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at Maryland General Hospital.

This name change reflects the many service enhancements that have occurred in recent years. Our clinical services, education and self care are focused on giving you the tools you need to live a full, healthy life.

Patients will continue to receive the same high-quality diabetes and endocrinology care, see the same responsive staff, and experience the same dedication to excellence they have come to rely on, now from the University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at Maryland General Hospital. For more information, call **443-552-2960**.



# Get connected

## A primary doctor can help you stay healthy

**F**riends. Family. Neighbors. We all have relationships we value.

It's a good idea to make one of them the relationship between you and your physician. In fact, a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* shows that a strong patient-physician connection leads to better-quality care.

Primary care physicians are the leaders of your health care team and know your medical history and the health issues you face. They can provide the full range of care, including:

- ▶ Preventive care, like checkups, flu shots and other immunizations
- ▶ Care for minor illnesses and injuries
- ▶ Health screenings to catch common problems early
- ▶ Ongoing management of chronic health issues, such as heart disease, diabetes and asthma

And when more specialized care is needed, your primary care physician works with other types of doctors to coordinate your health care.

“Research has found that patients who had a primary care physician were more likely to receive recommended care and health screenings than those who didn't see a specific doctor regularly,” says Elizabeth Halloran, MD, one of the physicians in the Linden Medical Group's Bolton Hill practice.

The American Academy of Family Physicians reports that people who have a primary provider tend to enjoy better health and have lower total health care costs than people who don't routinely see a doctor.



### Finding a doctor

Are you looking for a primary care physician? Primary care is conveniently located at two Linden Medical Group locations, one in Bolton Hill (410-225-8855) and one at Armory Place (410-225-8800).



Call for information or to schedule an appointment.

**Make a connection.** Aim to have a doctor who:



- ▶ Knows and understands your medical history, including your risk factors for health problems
- ▶ Is aware of which medications you use and is familiar with them
- ▶ Schedules you for regular checkups and screenings
- ▶ Can refer you to other medical specialists as necessary
- ▶ Is easy to talk to about your health, even about sensitive topics



## What we have to offer

Primary care physicians help patients maintain overall health by focusing on preventive care as well as treating common illnesses, minor injuries, and aches and pains and performing routine health exams.


### Linden Medical Group Primary Care

- ▶ **Armory Place**  
827 Linden Ave.  
 Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-225-8800
- ▶ **Bolton Hill**  
1501 W. Mount Royal Ave.  
 Baltimore, MD 21217  
410-225-8855

### Linden Medical Group Specialty Care

When you need a specialist, your primary care provider will work with other Maryland General Hospital physicians to coordinate all of your health care. For referrals, call 410-225-8400.

### Community Health Education Center

- ▶ Free blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes and prostate screenings
  - ▶ Free pregnancy tests
-  Call 410-225-2000.

# We're here when you need us



**T**here is no good time for a medical emergency. But if you suddenly become ill or are injured, the emergency department (ED) at Maryland General Hospital is here to take care of you.

Maryland General's ED provides care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. From the physicians, nurses and other staff who are specially trained or board-certified in emergency medicine to our state-of-the-art equipment and medical technology, the ED at Maryland General provides emergency medical care to more than 30,000 patients each year.

If you or a family member has a serious or life-threatening condition, call 911 for an ambulance or immediately go to the nearest

emergency department.

Examples of emergencies include:

- ▶ Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- ▶ Chest pain
- ▶ Symptoms of stroke, including dizziness, weakness on one side or slurred speech
- ▶ Uncontrollable bleeding
- ▶ Sudden or severe pain
- ▶ Severe vomiting
- ▶ Poisoning
- ▶ Confusion or loss of consciousness, especially after a head injury
- ▶ Seizure
- ▶ Broken bones
- ▶ Serious accidents that occur in a vehicle, at home or work
- ▶ Head or neck injury
- ▶ Drug overdose

“It’s good to know the warning signs of an emergency, like having trouble talking or breathing, but if you’re not sure and you think something is wrong, it’s better to use caution and go to the ED right away,” says Louissette Vega, MD, assistant chief of emergency services at Maryland General.

**What to expect.** When you arrive at the Maryland General ED, you are welcomed by a member of the ED registration staff and asked to provide some basic information about yourself, which will alert the triage nurse that you are waiting to be seen.

After registration, a triage nurse will ask questions about your current symptoms and medical problems in order to prioritize your

# Is it really an emergency?

## Getting the best care in the right place

When you or a family member is sick or injured, you want to receive medical care and feel better as quickly as possible. Knowing where to go for care is important.

**The emergency department.** An emergency department (ED) is the best place for people who need immediate medical care for a serious illness or injury. In a true emergency, the ED can be a lifesaver, but it's not the best place to go for less serious problems or routine medical care.

"When patients use the ED for nonemergencies, it can delay seriously ill and injured patients from being treated as quickly as possible," says Carlos McCormack, director of emergency services at Maryland General Hospital (MGH). "It

also makes the wait longer for patients who have conditions that are not as serious."

**Urgent care at MGH.** When you arrive at the ED at Maryland General, a nurse will determine the severity of your condition. If your illness or injury is minor but still requires prompt care, the nurse can shorten your visit by sending you to our Urgent Care area.

Maryland General's Urgent Care area is open weekdays from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. and from noon to 8 p.m. on weekends.

Keep in mind that urgent care is not a substitute for emergency care or having your own doctor.

### When to see your primary care physician.

Your primary care physician is the doctor who provides routine health exams and basic care for common illnesses, minor injuries, and aches and pains.

Visit:	For:
<b>Emergency department</b>	Serious and life-threatening illnesses and injuries
<b>Urgent care at MGH</b>	An injury or illness that requires immediate care but is not serious enough to warrant a visit to an emergency room
<b>Primary care provider</b>	Routine health exams or an injury or illness that is not life-threatening, but still may need immediate care

### If you do not have a primary care provider, call one of these Linden Medical Group locations:

▶ **Armory Place**  
827 Linden Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
**410-225-8800**

▶ **Bolton Hill**  
1501 W. Mount Royal Ave.  
Baltimore, MD 21217  
**410-225-8855**



condition. The triage nurse's task is to ensure that patients with the most urgent medical conditions are seen promptly.

Very serious cases are seen immediately by a physician. Urgent cases are next, followed by non-urgent cases. If your condition is considered less serious, you may have to wait. While waiting, if you

start to feel worse, you should let the triage nurse know.

Once a physician has seen you, you may be admitted to the hospital or discharged. If you are discharged, the doctor will give you instructions for how to continue your care at home. You may receive instructions about medicine and symptoms or restrictions for

things like activity or diet. Plans will be put in place for follow-up visits with a physician.

The ED at Maryland General committed to providing the highest-quality emergency medical care. Our doors are always open.

For more information about emergency services at Maryland General, call **410-225-8100**.





# To your

# good health

Simple things help make healthy aging possible

**H**ave you noticed that the numbers in the phone book seem to be getting smaller? Do you find it harder to get down on your knees to look under the bed—and to get up again?

There's no question that age brings changes to our lives.

Physically, for example, stiffening joints can make it harder to get around. And many people find that their short-term memory just isn't what it used to be. Often, difficult personal situations, such as the death of a spouse, can add to the negative changes.

But age can bring positive changes too. One survey found that many older people say they have

less stress and more time for family, interests and hobbies than they used to. In fact, the vast majority of older people report they are satisfied with their lives.

"To a great extent, what older age will be like for you depends on how you live now and how you cope with the changes that come your way," says Karen Cousins-Brown, MD, a physician from the acute care for the elderly (ACE) unit at Maryland General. "You may not be able to turn back time, but you can move in a direction that may make getting older easier and more pleasant."

Here are a few pointers:

- ▶ **Decide to have an active mind and body.** Remember the adage, "use it or lose it."
  - ▶ **Choose to be involved.** Isolation can contribute to depression and other health problems. So keep connected to family and friends.
  - ▶ **Choose a healthy lifestyle.** Eat well, maintain a healthy weight, get enough rest, don't smoke, do what you can to stay safe and see your doctor regularly.
  - ▶ **Relish your leisure time.** Too much stress can contribute to a host of health problems.
  - ▶ **Practice healthy ways to cope.** Believe in yourself, and remember: You can handle whatever comes your way.
- Maryland General Hospital provides comprehensive health care for seniors. For information about outpatient care, call the Linden Medical Group Bolton Hill practice at **410-225-8855**. For inpatient care in our ACE unit, call our referral line at **410-225-8400**.



## Allergies

# 'Tis the season for sneezing

Spring is in the air—and so are the pollen and mold spores that can trigger seasonal allergies.

Symptoms—such as sneezing, watery eyes and stuffy noses—can start in the spring and last throughout the summer and fall.

Tree pollens tend to make trouble in early spring, while weed pollens are bothersome in late summer.

If seasonal sneezing and

sniffing is a problem for you, medical help is available, but a good place to start is by trying to avoid things that trigger your allergies.

Consider these tips from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology:

- ▶ Close windows and doors to keep out pollen and mold, and use air conditioning.
- ▶ Try staying indoors when pollen counts are high and on dry, windy days when pollen is usually worse. You can get pollen and mold counts for many areas at [www.aaaai.org/nab](http://www.aaaai.org/nab).
- ▶ Don't mow grass or rake leaves. These chores can stir up allergens. If you must do them yourself, wear a pollen mask.
- ▶ Don't hang laundry outside, where it may collect pollen or mold.



# Home safe home

Your home should be a haven of peace and safety. There are many factors and events that can contribute to injuries in the home. Here are some things to keep in mind:

## Entrance and exterior areas:

- Are walkways and stairs well-lit?
- Are steps nonslip and in good repair?
- Are outdoor stairs and walkways free from cracks and holes?
- Are handrails sturdy and secure?

## Interior living areas:

- Are areas in your home well-lit?
- Do you have handrails on both sides of the stairways?
- Do stairs have even surfaces free of metal strips or rubber?
- Do you have any throw rugs without nonskid backing? If so, get rid of them!
- Do you have low furniture or cords that are in the way that could cause a fall?
- Are telephones accessible in areas where you spend the most time?
- Do you have strong chairs with armrests to help in getting up and down when sitting?

## The kitchen:

- Do you have a nonslip surface or mat at the sink in case water spills on the floor?
- Do you use a timer to remind you when food is cooking?

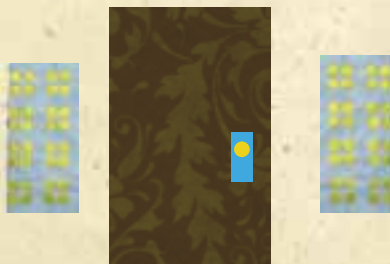
- Do you turn the pot handles to the back or center of the stove?
- Do you have an extinguisher that you know how to use and is in easy reach?
- Do you have important phone numbers, such as the poison control center number, posted on your refrigerator?

## The bathroom:

- Does your tub or shower have non-skid surfaces?
- If you need them, do you have secure grab bars in a location that is useful?
- Can you get on and off the toilet safely?

## The bedroom:

- Do you have night-lights or bedside lamps for nighttime bathroom trips?
- Is your path to the bathroom clear?
- Is your bed at a safe height to get in and out of?
- Are your closet shelves within easy reach?



## Consider your family

Some family members need special attention for home safety. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to being injured in their own homes. Some of these injuries are caused by physical changes, which can be part of the aging process. Other times, it is just an issue of safety judgment by those of all ages.

- ▶ A decreased sense of touch may cause someone to have bath water that is too hot and cause burns and scalds. If you are older or caring for an older adult, double-check the temperature of the bath water temperature.
- ▶ Limited vision can cause problems with taking medications, walking safely and daily self care. Caregivers are recommended to keep this in mind each day.

**Many accidents in the home are preventable by following these simple tips to make your home safe. Remember: If you are in trouble, don't call your family members first and don't wait. Call 911!**

The Rehabilitation Center at Maryland General Hospital can provide additional information about home safety. Don't hesitate to call us at 410-225-8357.

Because we care | Community calendar of classes and events



**Maryland General Hospital offers a variety of health screenings and educational classes at the hospital and at locations throughout the community.**

**free Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Diabetes and Prostate Screenings**  
Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Community Health Education Center (CHEC), 821 N. Eutaw St., Suite 107**

CHEC also provides free screenings at health fairs and community-sponsored events throughout Baltimore. Call **410-225-2000** for dates, times and locations.

**free Pregnancy Tests**  
Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
**Community Health Education Center (CHEC), 821 N. Eutaw St., Suite 107**  
Call **410-225-2000**.

**free Eye Screening Program**

Screenings for glaucoma, diabetic eye disease, cataracts, retinal diseases and diseases of the eyelids. Ages 55 and older. Call **410-225-8223** for dates, times and locations.

**free Vascular Screenings**

Call **443-552-2900** for dates, times and locations.

**free Prenatal and Childbirth Classes**

**Maryland General Hospital, 827 Linden Ave.** Taught by our nurse-midwives. Call **410-225-8991** for dates and times and to register.

**free Great Expectations**

Share your great expectations with us. Learn about your journey into motherhood, tour our Obstetrics Center, meet our staff and learn why Maryland General Hospital is the place to have your baby. Refreshments and a baby shower gift are included. Call **410-225-2000** for dates, times and locations.

**Diabetes Education**  
**University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at Maryland General Hospital**

Learning about diabetes is the first step in managing it. The Diabetes Education Program offers individual counseling and group education to people with diabetes about:

- ▶ Making healthier food choices
- ▶ Individual meal planning
- ▶ Knowing how your medications work
- ▶ Understanding your blood sugar (blood glucose) numbers
- ▶ Learning about proper foot, dental and eye care
- ▶ Managing sick days with diabetes

For more information, call The University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at **Maryland General Hospital at 443-552-2960**.

**Finding a doctor is easy!**

Looking for a primary care physician or a specialist? Maryland General Hospital is your community hospital. We care about you and your family. Our extensive network of physicians offers expert medical care in more than 30 specialties.

Call the Maryland General Physician Referral Service at **410-225-8400**, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also visit

 [www.marylandgeneral.org](http://www.marylandgeneral.org) and click on "Find a Doctor."

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