NEW KNEES KEPT GABE IN THE LINEUP
We’re Here for You — Now and Always

During the COVID–19 pandemic, our doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, paramedics, pharmacists, environmental service workers, and everyone in the health care industry has been doing everything in their power to help you stay safe and get well. They are the everyday heroes on the frontlines of this pandemic battle. Even during this unprecedented situation, their hard work and commitment allow us to continue to serve you with the high-quality care you have come to know and expect from UPMC.

On behalf of our entire northcentral Pennsylvania UPMC family, we extend a special thank you to all the communities we serve for your thoughtfulness for our employees. You are the reason we chose careers in health care, and your gratitude and kindness give us strength and energy during these difficult times.

Finally, your diligence in washing your hands, wearing masks, and social distancing have helped us flatten the curve and slow the spread of this virus in our region. We are prepared and ready to serve and we promise that no matter what, we will always be here for you!

Steve Johnson, President, UPMC in the Susquehanna region
This year will be the one we remember for being home while we physically distanced ourselves so we could stay healthy and virus free. We can use the extra time we have from not running between activities and commitments to improve ourselves: organize our lives, focus on neglected areas of our houses, and tidy up our health.

Decluttering your life and prioritizing your health can make a huge impact on your mental health and personal daily habits that impact your physical health. This time at home is your chance to re-evaluate your daily habits and learn to put your health higher on your priority list.

Here are seven tips to help you put your health first:

1. Get outside. Even though you need to be mindful of staying six feet away from people, you can still get outside and get some fresh air. As the weather gets warmer, you should get outside for a walk, or sit on a bench with a view and enjoy nature. Studies have shown that exposure to greenspace and the outdoors can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and type II diabetes. Challenge yourself to a plant-based meal each week.

2. Learn to cook healthy meals as a family. Research shows people who eat home-cooked meals regularly tend to be happier and healthier. Home-cooked meals also tend to contain less sugar and processed ingredients than takeout, which can result in higher energy levels and better mental health.

3. Make exercise a habit. Adding exercise to your daily or weekly routine can have benefits far beyond physical fitness. Exercise is known to improve mood and decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. Not only does it help you burn calories, but it can also be good for building muscles and strong bones.

4. Plant a vegetable garden. Even if you don’t have a yard, consider starting a patio garden or even an indoor herb garden on a windowsill. Gardening is a natural stress reliever, and by eating the vegetables you grow, you consume essential nutrients that promote better health. It can even help you save money on groceries.

5. Unplug your WiFi for set hours every day. In 2020, everyone has easy access to screen-time. Whether it is social media, news sites, shows, or games, we are more connected than ever. Make it a habit to unplug the WiFi for two-to-four hours every day.

6. Set regular bedtimes and wake times. It is important for everyone to get seven-to-nine hours of sleep every day. Working from home and no school can seem like great reasons to stay up late, but it’s important to keep your body a regular sleep cycle.

7. Take vitamins regularly. It is hard to get all the vitamins and nutrients we need through diet. Vitamins and supplements are not a shortcut to better health but combined with eating right and regular exercise you can ensure your body is getting the nutrients it needs. You don’t need to purchase the whole vitamin aisle; one multivitamin can contain a balance of the vitamins and nutrients you need.

If you need encouragement or have questions on how to live a healthier life, talk to your primary care provider. Our team is here for you and your family 24/7 with around-the-clock nurse telephone support, same-day and walk-in appointments, and convenient evening and weekend hours for new and existing patients. Learn more at UPMCSusquehanna.org/PrimaryCare.
What to Expect When You Return for Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many aspects of our lives, including the way we receive health care. People in communities across the nation are forgoing medically necessary care leading to unnecessary suffering and worsening health conditions. It’s normal to feel anxious about returning to a medical office or hospital or leaving your home. However, it should not prevent you from receiving the essential health care you need.

During this pandemic, doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists, paramedics, pharmacists, environmental service workers, and everyone in the health care industry has been doing everything in their power to help you stay safe and get well, as well as ensure their own safety. As providers look forward to restarting in-person care, it’s important to know what you can expect when you return to the hospital or physician office.

What to Expect

UPMC is taking extraordinary precautions to maintain the safety of our patients, providers, and staff during this challenging time. Hospitals and medical office providers and staff continue to take the necessary steps to reduce the risk of infection and to make sure the facilities are safe for you and your loved ones. All patients, providers, and staff are screened upon entry; patients, providers, and staff are required to wear masks, our facilities are sanitized throughout the day, and we continue to limit visitors to our facilities.

Before your next scheduled visit, your provider’s office will call to confirm your appointment. During this phone call, you will be asked some screening questions regarding your potential exposure to COVID-19 as well as receive information to help you navigate your visit with minimal inconvenience, including updated visitor restrictions, instructions on how to check-in from your vehicle, parking information including the location of entrances where valet parking is available, and what screening you can expect upon entering the facility.

What You Can Do

In addition to understanding and following the instructions provided to you from your provider’s office, UPMC asks that you also observe the following guidelines:

• If you are experiencing a fever, shortness of breath, or cough, call your provider for guidance before leaving your house. These are common symptoms of COVID-19.
• Arrive on-time and call to check in before entering the facility. This allows our office staff ask screening questions to determine your COVID-19 exposure risk, prepare for your visit, and provide you with any last-minute instructions or updates.
• If you’re going to a hospital for your office visit, you will be asked screening questions upon entering the facility to determine your COVID-19 exposure risk and have your temperature taken.
• Please wear an appropriate mask to your appointment. If you do not have one, you will be provided a mask when you arrive.
• Follow social distancing guidelines in all public areas. Waiting rooms and other areas throughout the facilities have been modified to safely accommodate patients.
• Remember to practice good hand hygiene, cover your cough and sneeze, and avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth.
• Before leaving your appointment, discuss your follow-up care plan with your provider. You may be offered a virtual follow-up appointment.

UPMC Has Been and Will Always Be Here for You

UPMC is prepared and ready to serve you. Our hospitals, outpatient facilities, and physician offices are safe and fully prepared to provide the essential care you need. We are fortunate to have some of the most respected infectious disease experts in the country advising how to safely provide care. They have shown resilience and creativity leading the transformation of health care brought on by this pandemic and they continue to push innovation to make health care better and more accessible to all.

If you have questions or concerns about returning to the hospital or medical office, please contact your provider. When you’re ready to return for care, UPMC is here for you.
As the vice president of marketing for the Williamsport Crosscutters minor league baseball team, Gabe Sinicropi, Jr. spends a lot of time on his feet. Arthritis in his knee was making it more and more difficult for him to stay on his feet for very long.

“It all started when I tore the cartilage in my left knee,” said Gabe.

Upon the recommendation of his doctor, Patrick Carey, DO, Gabe started with non-surgical methods to keep him moving in hopes of delaying a knee replacement until at least age 50. With over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication and injections, he was able to keep up with the hectic pace of his job and the on-field activities with the Crosscutters.

Eventually, the injections stopped working. By then, even his right knee was painful.

Ready for Relief

“I kept putting off surgery,” remembers Gabe. “With baseball season, I only have a few months each year when surgery and recovery are convenient. My goal was to have a knee replacement at 50, but then a few more years passed. I kept saying—next year.”

During the 2017 baseball season, at age 53, Gabe couldn’t take the pain any longer. He couldn’t walk around the stadium like he once did. At every home game he serves as the game host and the emcee, so he is on the field, in the stands, and talking to all the fans and sponsors. By the time he decided to have the surgery, he could barely mow his own lawn.

“I started to simply live with it and act like it was normal—but it wasn’t,” remembers Gabe.

“I took my time making the decision to have the bilateral knee replacement surgery,” he said. “I knew I didn’t want to be in the same situation with the other knee as soon as surgery was over.”

Bilateral Knee Replacement

Bilateral knee replacement isn’t for everyone and is only recommended for people who are already active and don’t have any underlying health conditions.

“When the time I checked in at the hospital until the time I finished physical therapy, I knew what to expect at every juncture,” said Gabe. “The staff at UPMC’s Joint Center went over everything—it made it much easier.”

Gabe started physical therapy and occupational therapy immediately after surgery. During group therapy in the hospital, Gabe was motivated when he heard the stories of patients getting ready to go home.

“You get to know people in therapy, so to see them progress and go home is emotional. I felt like we were in it together,” remembers Gabe. “I also can’t say enough about my inpatient physical therapist, Rhonda Foster. She kept me going and pushed me just far enough each day.”

Getting Stronger

After being discharged from the hospital, he could move around his house and get himself in and out of bed, but he knew he had a lot of work ahead of him. Gabe immediately started outpatient physical therapy a few days a week for 12 weeks at UPMC Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation - Little River Plaza in Williamsport.

“It wasn’t easy, but the weeks flew by,” said Gabe. “My therapist, Steve, made me feel comfortable. I wasn’t embarrassed when I had trouble doing something, and each week I could feel the difference.”

Gabe knows bilateral knee replacement isn’t an option for everyone, but he is glad he chose to do both knees at the same time.

“When my competitive athletic days are long behind me, I came through it with flying colors,” said Gabe. “If you are considering having bilateral knee replacement, I would encourage you to do it.”

UPMC Williamsport’s orthopaedic team is proud to hold The Joint Commission’s prestigious Advanced Total Knee and Hip Replacement Certification, making us only one of eight hospitals in the state recognized for their commitment to quality, safety, and patient care. For more information, visit UPMCSusquehanna.org/Ortho.
Prevent Blood Clots

Stay-at-home orders have meant long hours in front of a computer at an unfamiliar desk as you work from home or homeschool your kids. Then, you retreat to the couch to hide from the news only to binge-watch an entire Netflix series without getting up.

All of these things can put you at risk of developing a blood clot. Blood clots cause 100,000 to 300,000 deaths every year, and according to the National Blood Clot Alliance, one American dies of a blood clot every six minutes.

A blood clot in a large vein, usually in your leg, is called a deep vein thrombosis (DVT). When a blood clot like this forms, it can partly or completely block the flow of blood through the vein. A DVT can move or break off and travel to the lungs. A blood clot in the lung is called a pulmonary embolism (PE), and can cause death and requires immediate medical attention.

The simple act of getting up and moving around and walking every hour can help you avoid a DVT. When you sit for a long period of time, the blood flow to your legs slows down, which can make it easier for a clot to form.

Symptoms of a Blood Clot

Many people that form a DVT never notice any symptoms. Symptoms include:

- Swelling of your leg or arm
- Pain or tenderness not caused by an injury
- Skin that is warm to the touch, with swelling or pain
- Redness of the skin, with swelling or pain

A PE can be fatal and immediate treatment is necessary if you have difficulty breathing, chest pain that worsens with a deep breath, cough blood, or a faster than normal or irregular heartbeat. Seek immediate attention if you experience these signs or symptoms.

Preventing Blood Clots

The good news—blood clots can be prevented and treated if you understand your risk factors and get treatment quickly. Risk factors include:

- Advanced age
- Birth control methods that contain estrogen or hormone therapy
- Cancer and cancer treatments
- Chronic diseases such as heart and lung conditions, or diabetes
- Family history of blood clots
- Hospitalization for illness or surgery
- Obesity
- Smoking

Simple lifestyle modifications can help reduce your risk. Some simple tips to keep your blood flowing include:

- Take short walk breaks as often as you can.
- Try chair exercises.
- Make time for play.
The Doctor Will See You Now...Online

Social distancing has changed the way we view many routine tasks, like shopping for groceries or going to the post office. But, it doesn’t mean you have to cancel your scheduled doctor’s appointment. UPMC in the Susquehanna region is offering online video visit services as a more efficient, safer way to provide patients with the care they need while limiting the spread of COVID-19. All you need for an online video visit is an Internet connection and a connected device.

During an online video visit, the patient will receive diagnosis and care from one of UPMC’s specially trained medical providers. The patient and provider will be able to see and communicate with each other. The provider evaluates symptoms and performs a visual examination. After diagnosing the patient’s condition, the provider offers treatment recommendations. If necessary, the provider can send prescriptions to a pharmacy, as well as order tests to be performed at a lab.

Over 160 providers across over 30 service lines, ranging from primary to specialty care, offering virtual appointments in the Susquehanna region.

If you have an appointment scheduled with your UPMC primary care provider or specialist, or if you need to schedule a new appointment, call your provider’s office to ensure a video visit is an option. Prepare for your video visit the same as you would for any doctor’s appointment. Be on time, and have a list of questions ready. Dress comfortably in loose fitting clothes in case an examination is necessary.

When You Should Use a Virtual Visit

- Orthopedic hand specialist counseling for carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, arthritis, and tendinitis
- ENT visit for sleep apnea or chronic sinusitis
- Pediatric visit for breastfeeding, childhood development, or learning issues
- OB/GYN visit for birth control, menopause, or preconception
- Chronic care visit for asthma, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, or sleep apnea
- Podiatry visit for foot, heel, or ankle pain
- Prescription refills
- Cold, sore throat, and flu
- Pink eye
- Allergies and sinus infections
- Urinary tract and yeast infections
- General aches and pains in your joints and muscles
- Minor injuries

CONNECT WITH US. Call your provider to discuss your telemedicine options.
HELP THE HELPERS

They keep our fridges stocked, our streets safe, our lights on, and our hospitals and pharmacies running.

But sometimes the helpers need help.

We're seeing friends and neighbors offering to drop off their groceries, walk their dog, or cook them a healthy meal.

Or just picking up the phone and saying “thanks.”

We can all help the helpers.

After all, we couldn't keep going without them.

UPMCSusquehanna.org/HelptheHelpers