

Watson Clinic

A community health education magazine made possible by generous donations from Watson Clinic Foundation's supporters.

Health scene

FALL 2021

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most of your
doctor visits**

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IS IT breast cancer?

KNOW THE POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

YOU'VE probably heard or read the statistic by now: About 1 in 8 women in the U.S. will be diagnosed with breast cancer during her lifetime.

Treatments work best when breast cancer is caught early. "That's why it's important to get screened regularly for the disease if you're 40 or older," says

Dr. Elisabeth L. Dupont, a board-certified Breast Surgeon at the Watson Clinic Women's Center in Lakeland and the Medical Director of Breast Health

Services at Watson Clinic. "But it's equally as important to know the signs and symptoms of breast cancer at any age, since even younger women can—and do—get the disease."

Your provider will ask you how long and how often you've been experiencing these signs and symptoms. They'll also examine your breasts. And if necessary, they may take a sample of your blood and order tests like a mammogram, an ultrasound or a breast MRI. You may need a biopsy if results of those tests suggest something suspicious.

The thought of having breast cancer can be scary, but try to remember that other conditions can cause changes to your breasts. That's why it's always best to see your provider and get a diagnosis.

Sources: American Cancer Society; American Society of Clinical Oncology; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Cancer Institute

Be on the lookout and speak up

Any changes to the look or feel of your breasts shouldn't be ignored. Chances are, something other than cancer is the cause. It's always best to let your primary care provider know if you're having any of the following possible signs or symptoms of breast cancer:

- ✂ A lump or thickening in or near a breast or in the underarm area.
- ✂ A change in the size or shape of a breast.
- ✂ A dimple or puckering in the skin of a breast.
- ✂ A nipple that has turned inward or a sore near the nipple.
- ✂ Fluid, other than breast milk, leaking from a nipple, especially if the fluid is bloody or leaks from only one breast.
- ✂ Skin irritation or changes—such as puckering, dimpling, scaliness or new crease—anywhere on a breast, nipple or areola (the dark area of skin around the nipple).
- ✂ Dimples in a breast that look like the skin of an orange.
- ✂ Pain in a breast, especially if the pain doesn't go away.



Elisabeth L.
Dupont, MD

 Watson Clinic Breast Health Services division offers advanced mammography screening and a team of fellowship-trained breast imaging specialists. To schedule your next mammogram, call **863-680-7755, option 3.**

Safe, effective and lifesaving



FROM THE DESK OF
DR. STEVEN G. ACHINGER

Steven G. Achinger, MD, FASN

The evidence is clear: Vaccines vastly reduce the risks of hospitalization and death from the COVID-19 virus. Well over 400 million doses have already been administered across America, and close to 8 billion around the world.

Yet some still remain on the fence about the vaccine. If this includes you, here are some points to consider:

The vaccines are overwhelmingly effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death from the virus. Comparisons between vaccinated and unvaccinated hospital and ICU admissions provide perhaps the most profound evidence of this.

The side effects of the vaccines are almost always mild, and severe reactions are extraordinarily rare. These side effects might include a temporary sore arm, headache or chills. The effects of NOT receiving the vaccination, however, can be dire.

The vaccines are saving lives. From smallpox to cholera to the measles, vaccines have played the essential role in neutralizing and eradicating our most burdensome diseases. Their application in the prevention of COVID-19 hospitalization and death is no different.

They allow you to be part of the solution. As we've witnessed in recent months, new variants can lead to an unprecedented spike in hospitalizations and death among the unvaccinated in our community. Our hospitals can run out of space and compromise emergency treatments for other patients in the process. It's incumbent upon all of us to be a part of the solution to this crisis, not a part of its escalation.

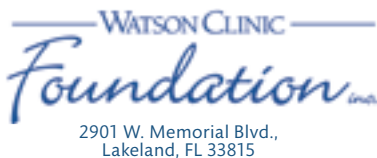
Vaccines will boost your immune response even if you've already had COVID-19. Even if you've had COVID-19 previously, the vaccine can further your level of protection against the virus many times over. Please note: If you were treated with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Watson Clinic patients can receive the vaccine free of charge by scheduling an appointment. I urge you to schedule yours by calling **863-680-7190**. Booster doses for adults are also available, as well as the two-dose vaccine for children 5 to 11 years of age.

Yours in good health,

Steven G. Achinger, MD, FASN

Watson Clinic Managing Partner



Fall 2021

President, Watson Clinic Foundation, Inc.
Galina Vugman, MD

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Feel better with these tips—and know when to see a doctor.



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WatsonClinic.com

Email us at
HealthScene@WatsonClinic.com

WATSON News



Continued excellence

After undergoing a meticulous on-site survey by a team of expert examiners, Watson Clinic has earned a highly coveted three-year reaccreditation from the Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care, Inc. (AAAHC).

The AAAHC represents the benchmark in healthcare accreditation and in advocating for the highest standards of patient care. Watson Clinic voluntarily participates in this process, because we're committed to fulfilling our own high standards. This reaccreditation signals to our community that they're receiving a level of care from Watson Clinic that's comparable to the very best the country has to offer.

The survey determined compliance in every category and didn't note any deficiencies. In fact, the Clinic achieved numerous improvements from our last survey in 2017 by enhancing our ratings from Significantly Compliant to Fully Compliant in 18 categories.

This reaccreditation is the latest in a long string of honors and accreditations that we've received across our 80-year history. You can see the rest and learn more at WatsonClinic.com/Accreditations.



More accurate, personalized knee replacements

It is estimated that as many as 600,000 knee replacement procedures are performed in the United States each year. Modern techniques and technologies have made knee replacements among the safest, most effective and most popular surgeries.

Now, the ROSA® Knee System has elevated these procedures to another level. Watson Clinic's expert orthopaedic surgeons are proud to offer this groundbreaking robotic system to ensure greater precision and a higher standard of care during surgical knee replacement procedures.

Here's how it works: Prior to the operation, the system produces a series of 3D images that meticulously trace the unique anatomy of the patient's knee. Based on these images, the physician is able to devise a more accurate and personalized surgical plan.

During the surgery, the surgeon operates the ROSA system, which acts much like a GPS in tracking the precise placement of the artificial knee. The doctor remains in complete control of the system through every step of surgery. The robotic system makes possible a greater level of precision than ever before, accounting for even the slightest movement of the leg during surgery.

Watson Clinic's team of orthopaedic surgeons—including **Dr. Obafunto Abimbola, Dr. Prashant J. Desai, Dr. Douglas Shenkman** and **Dr. Phuc Vo**—use this system with qualified patients during the surgical procedures they perform exclusively at Lakeland Regional Health Medical Center.

Need a knee replacement? Our highly trained orthopaedic surgeons can help. Call **863-680-7214** or visit **WatsonClinic.com/Ortho** to learn more.

A special designation for our specialists

The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology has granted a Focused Practice Designation in Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery to Watson Clinic Gynecologic Oncologist **Dr. Richard J. Cardosi** and Gynecologist and Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgeon **Dr. Tarek G. Garas**. Drs. Cardosi and Garas are among the first group of specialists in the entire country to receive this designation.

The Focused Practice Designation recognizes board-certified specialists who have achieved mastery in minimally invasive surgical techniques and have devoted a significant percentage of their practice to employing them.

Both Dr. Cardosi and Dr. Garas have been on the front line of minimally invasive surgical techniques and technologies for many years.

Dr. Cardosi

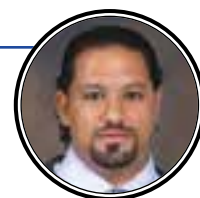
Dr. Cardosi is a Gynecologic Oncologist who provides comprehensive care from Watson Clinic Bella Vista Building at 1755 N. Florida Ave. in Lakeland. He performs a host of services and procedures, including robotic minimally invasive surgery, radical pelvic surgery, colorectal and genitourinary surgery, placement of mediports, and chemotherapy administration. He also addresses the management of side effects and potential complications.



Call **863-680-7578** to make an appointment with Dr. Cardosi.

Dr. Garas

Dr. Garas offers his services at two convenient Watson Clinic locations: the Watson Clinic Bella Vista Building at 1755 N. Florida Ave. in Lakeland and the Watson Clinic Bartow Obstetrics & Gynecology facility at 2000 Osprey Blvd., Suite 201, in Bartow. He and his team specialize in comprehensive gynecologic services for all stages of life, as well as minimally invasive gynecologic surgery, advanced robotic surgery, and the latest treatment options for pelvic organ prolapse, urinary incontinence, fecal incontinence, painful bladder syndrome and other common pelvic floor disorders.



You can make an appointment with Dr. Garas by calling **863-680-7312**.


Getting more from your mask

Your face mask can provide protection against the spread of the coronavirus. But quality matters. Here's what you should know:

- N95 and KN95 masks are the most effective at curbing the threat of aerosol transmission.
- These masks offer multiple layers of protection and are designed to fit snugly over the nose and mouth without any open edges.
- In research studies, the N95 and KN95 masks have been shown to block particles that are roughly the same diameter as the COVID-19 virus by as much as 98.4%.
- Be cautious of purchasing counterfeit N95 and KN95 masks that aren't manufactured to recommended standards. Visit [CDC.gov/Masks](https://www.cdc.gov/Masks) for a comprehensive listing of approved mask manufacturers.
- According to a recent study conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency, other types of masks offer lower rates of protection, including two-layer woven nylon masks with aluminum nose bridges (56.3%), surgical procedure masks with ear loops (38.5%) and three-layer knitted cotton masks with ear loops (26.5%).
- Greater protection may be achieved by doubling up. You can wear a cloth mask over a disposable surgical mask or two cloth masks over each other. But don't combine two disposable masks.

In addition to wearing a mask, you should continue to mitigate the spread of the virus by getting vaccinated, washing your hands thoroughly and frequently, and practicing social distancing when appropriate.



 For the latest on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination information, visit [WatsonClinic.com/Coronavirus](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/Coronavirus).



INTRODUCING

OUR NEWEST PROVIDERS



JOSEPH COFFMAN, MD
CARDIOLOGY

Medical school:

University of South Alabama College of Medicine, Mobile, AL

Residency: University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine, Tampa, FL, Internal Medicine

Fellowship: University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine, Tampa, FL, Cardiology

Board certification: Internal Medicine

Location: Watson Clinic Main

Appointments: 863-680-7490



DOMINIC E. DIPIERRO, DPM
PODIATRIC SURGERY

Medical school:

Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine, Cleveland, OH

Residency: Jewish Hospital of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, Foot and Ankle Surgery

Fellowships: Russian Ilizarov Scientific Center for Restorative Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Kurgan, Russia, External Fixation; Chicago Foot and Ankle Deformity Correction Center, Chicago, IL, Orthoplastic Limb Reconstruction and Microsurgical Peripheral Nerve Repair

Board certifications:

Podiatric Medicine, Foot Surgery, Reconstructive Rearfoot and Ankle Surgery

Location: Watson Clinic Bartow and Watson Clinic Highlands

Appointments: 863-680-7214



DAVID GRAHAM, MD
RADIATION ONCOLOGY

Medical school: St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies

Internship: Guthrie Clinic, Sayre, PA, General Surgery

Residencies: Northwestern University School of Medicine, Chicago, IL, Radiation Oncology; Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, VA, Radiation Oncology

Board certification: Radiation Oncology

Location: Watson Clinic Cancer & Research Center

Appointments: 863-603-4717



PADMA IYER, MD
RADIOLOGY- MAMMOGRAPHY

Medical school:

University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH

Residency: Temple University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA, Diagnostic Radiology

Fellowship: Georgetown University Medical Center, Washington, DC, Body Imaging

Board certification: Radiology

Location: Watson Clinic Women's Center



YELENA KOZIROVSKY, MD
RADIOLOGY- MAMMOGRAPHY

Medical school: Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Bronx, NY

Residency: NYU Langone Health, New York, NY, Internal Medicine

Fellowship: NYU Langone Health, New York, NY, Breast Imaging

Board certification: Radiology

Location: Watson Clinic Women's Center



MITCHELL KUTNER, MD
FAMILY MEDICINE

Medical school:

St. George's University, Grenada, West Indies

Residency: University of Louisville, Louisville, KY, Family Medicine

Board certification: Family Medicine

Location: Watson Clinic Main

Appointments: 863-680-7190



KEEVA CLEARY, PA
FAMILY MEDICINE

Education: University of Massachusetts

Amherst School of Public Health and Health Sciences, Amherst, MA, BS; Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Worcester, MA, MS, Physician Assistant

Membership: American Academy of Physician Assistants

Supervising physicians: Stephen G. Swengros, MD, and Brett Widick, MD

Location: Watson Clinic South

Appointments: 863-680-7190



Say hello to the latest additions to our team. Each one is now accepting appointments, except where noted. Visit WatsonClinic.com for more information.

We asked members of our medical staff to answer some common health concerns.

TAKE
THREE

Questions for the experts

Why should someone with diabetes consult a podiatrist?

One of the most severe consequences of poor diabetes management is the potential for lower extremity amputation. The risks of this and other foot-related complications can be avoided if you include a highly trained podiatrist in your care team. In fact, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association, a podiatrist can reduce the risk of lower limb amputation by 85% and the risk of hospitalization by 24%.

When left untreated, diabetes can inflict significant damage to your feet, including nerve damage, restricted blood flow, numbness, gangrene, sores, deformities and ulcers.

Oftentimes, the warning signs of foot-related diabetic complications go unnoticed. That's just one of the reasons regular appointments with a podiatrist are essential in managing the disease.

After a proper evaluation, a podiatrist can help you mitigate your risks for nerve damage and other complications. Prevention is the key to avoiding these complications, including limb amputation.



Dominic E. DiPierro, DPM, is a board-certified podiatric surgeon who treats patients from the Watson Clinic Bartow and Watson Clinic Highlands locations. Call **863-680-7214** to schedule an appointment.

How do I know if my heartburn is something more serious?

Heartburn happens—but usually not that often. If heartburn is a frequent problem for you, however, you might actually have GERD, or gastroesophageal reflux disease.

With GERD, that burning feeling in the chest and throat typically occurs two or more times a week. Over time, severe GERD may damage the esophagus, which can increase the risk of cancer. So if you have ongoing heartburn, it's important to tell your doctor.

There are treatments that can help. Your doctor may suggest lifestyle changes, avoiding triggers, quitting smoking, avoiding tight clothing that can force stomach acids upward, avoiding eating within three hours of bedtime or placing blocks under your bedposts to raise the head of your bed.

Doctors often recommend over-the-counter antacids at first. However, other medicines may be needed, such as H2 blockers for short-term relief and proton pump inhibitors for long-term relief.

In severe cases of GERD, surgery may be used to help reinforce the muscles that normally keep stomach acid where it belongs. Fortunately, these procedures are more effective and less invasive than ever before.



Scott T. Kelley, MD, is a board-certified general surgeon at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland. Call **863-680-7486** to schedule an appointment.

Can you offer tips on getting a better night's sleep?

Good sleep is vital to your health, happiness, productivity and even safety. These tips may help you sleep better:

- Go to bed and get up at the same time every day (weekends too).
- Avoid blue light from digital screens. Unplug phones, tablets and other gadgets close to bedtime.
- If you can't fall asleep after about 30 minutes, get up and do something relaxing (like reading) until you're ready to try sleeping again.
- Caffeine blocks a natural sleep chemical called adenosine. It can take eight hours for this effect to wear off after consuming caffeine.
- Go for cool, dark and quiet.
- Avoid large meals one hour before bedtime. Gotta snack? Keep it light.
- If you take frequent naps, shorten your naps to 20 minutes, take fewer naps or have them earlier in the afternoon.
- Although it may induce sleepiness, alcohol can wake you up later in the night.
- Aim for seven to nine hours of shut-eye.

If your lack of peaceful rest persists, you might have a sleep disorder. Your doctor can provide a referral to Watson Clinic's Sleep Disorders Center for a proper sleep study.



Nidal Sakka, MD, is a board-certified pulmonologist at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland. Call **863-680-7190** to schedule an appointment.



8

ways
to
make
the
most
of your
doctor visits



For more information and to schedule an appointment, call **863-680-7190** or visit **[WatsonClinic.com/PrimaryCare](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/PrimaryCare)**.

SOME OF LIFE'S most important moments take place in a doctor's office. That's because your checkups and other appointments with your provider are a time to focus on your most precious possession: your good health.

Yet doctors must see a lot of patients, and appointments can pass by more quickly than the both of you may like. So why not make the most of your valuable time together? Here are some tips that can help make your next visit a productive one:

1 Do some prep work. Before your appointment, write down your questions or concerns. That way you won't forget what you wanted to ask or talk about. For instance, if you want to discuss a new symptom you're having, think about some details in advance, such as what makes the symptom better or worse. Write your questions or concerns in a notebook, or store them in your smartphone. Just don't forget to bring your notebook or phone to your appointment!

2 Be candid. "Your doctor needs honest information to take the best care of you," says **Dr. Lilliam S. Chiques**, a board-certified Internal Medicine specialist at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland. "So it's important to open up, even if it embarrasses you. Your doctor won't be upset or shocked at your habits."

Being open and honest is important when it comes to anything that might affect your health and well-being, such as:

- Your smoking or drinking habits.
- Your sex life.
- Your emotional well-being, including feelings of depression or anxiety over stressful changes in your life like divorce or job loss.

3 If you're 65 years of age or older. Here are three topics we encourage you to discuss with your primary care doctor during your next visit, especially if you're in this age group:

- Recent incidents of falling, or difficulties with your balance
- Bladder control or urinary leakage issues
- The need to start, increase or maintain your current exercise level

4 Ask about screenings and adult vaccines. Depending on your age and other factors, it could be time to update your shots or get a potentially lifesaving cancer screening test. So if your doctor doesn't mention such things, ask what screening tests or immunizations you may need.

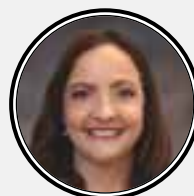
5 Speak up if something isn't clear. If you don't understand any part of your doctor's instructions or advice, don't just nod your head. Ask your doctor to explain these things until they're crystal clear. You can repeat your doctor's instructions out loud to see if you got them right. *OK, so I need to take this medicine with meals, correct?*

6 Make a medicine list and share it. "Your doctor needs to know everything you're taking—even any vitamins, herbs or over-the-counter medicines," says **Dr. Brett J. Widick**, a board-certified Family Medicine specialist at Watson Clinic South in Lakeland. "This is important because some medicines can interfere with treatments or trigger a dangerous reaction." It's a good idea to take a list of all your meds and supplements, or bag them up and take them to your appointment.

7 Bring some help. Is it hard to remember your doctor's instructions? Consider bringing a loved one or a close friend to your appointment for a second set of ears. They can take notes and help you recall things your doctor said. Another option: Ask your doctor if it's OK to record the visit.

8 Get some expert advice. A doctor appointment is a chance to get advice that could literally change your life. Do yourself a favor and take advantage of that opportunity. For instance, are you thinking of losing weight, changing your diet or quitting smoking? Ask your doctor the best ways to accomplish your goals.

Watson Clinic's primary care physicians are a part of our Family Medicine and Internal Medicine departments. Appointments are now available at six convenient locations throughout Lakeland, Bartow and Plant City.



Lilliam S.
Chiques, MD



Brett J.
Widick, MD

KEY FACTS TO KNOW

about
colorectal
cancer

Colorectal cancer is a leading cancer killer. This year alone it's expected to claim more than 51,000 lives nationwide, but it doesn't have to be so deadly. To learn how to help protect yourself from this cancer, just keep reading. You'll also learn other must-know facts about the disease, which can develop either in the colon or rectum.

1

RISK

The lifetime risk of colorectal cancer is slightly higher for men. About 1 in 22 American men is diagnosed with colorectal cancer. That compares to about 1 in 24 women.

2

SYMPTOMS

You should never ignore symptoms. Because colorectal cancer grows slowly, you could have the disease and still feel completely healthy. That's why you need to see your primary care provider (PCP) if you have any of these possible red flags of colorectal cancer:

- 🚩 A change in bowel movements, such as diarrhea, constipation or a narrowing of stool that lasts for more than a few days.
- 🚩 An urge to have a bowel movement that doesn't go away despite having one.
- 🚩 Rectal bleeding.
- 🚩 Dark stool or blood in the stool.
- 🚩 Belly pain.
- 🚩 Weakness or fatigue.
- 🚩 Unintended weight loss.

On a reassuring note: These symptoms are often triggered by something other than cancer, such as hemorrhoids or irritable bowel syndrome, but don't take the risk: Let your PCP determine the cause.



3

HOW IT STARTS

"Most colorectal cancer starts as growths called polyps," explains

Dr. Robert D. Lamport, a board-certified gastroenterologist at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland. "Not all polyps become cancerous. However, over time, some, usually ones called adenomas, can change into cancer."

4

SCREENING

Screening saves lives. It can find colorectal cancer early—before it spreads

and causes symptoms. About 9 out of 10 people with early stage colorectal cancer have long-term survival. Better yet, screening can actually prevent colorectal cancer.

That's why the American Cancer Society advises people at average risk of colorectal cancer to get screened starting at age 45. Your PCP can help determine if you need earlier screening because of your family history of colorectal cancer or because you have certain health conditions.

Watson Clinic's Gastroenterology department has highly qualified specialists, including gastroenterologists **Dr. Tammy Gebo-Seaman**, **Dr. Robert D. Lamport**, **Dr. Victor C. Nwakakwa**, **Dr. Joffre Rivera** and **Dr. Lijian Wang**.



Call **863-680-7490** to schedule an appointment.

5

CHOICES

You have screening choices. One is a colonoscopy. During this test, doctors use a thin, flexible, lighted tube to check for cancer or polyps inside the rectum and entire colon. Doctors can find most precancerous polyps during this screening test—and then remove them so that cancer can't develop. They can also remove some cancers during the test. A colonoscopy is also used as a follow-up if something unusual is found with other screening tests.

Other screening options include several types of stool tests, which you can do at home with a test kit. They either detect hidden blood in the stool that might be a sign of colorectal cancer or abnormal sections of DNA from polyps or cancer cells.

There is no single best test for every person. The right match is the one you prefer and are most likely to do.

6

HEALTHY HABITS

Healthy habits may reduce your risk of the disease.

Longtime smokers are more prone to colorectal cancer. So are people who carry extra pounds, especially around their waistline. A diet that's high in red meat (such as beef, lamb and liver) and processed meats (such as cold cuts and luncheon meats) raises colorectal cancer risk, as does being sedentary.

"That means you can help protect yourself by avoiding tobacco, eating a healthy diet, staying at (or getting to) a healthy weight and moving more," advises **Dr. Lijian Wang**, a board-certified gastroenterologist at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland.

7

RISK FACTORS

Some risk factors can't be changed. Risk increases with age. You're also more vulnerable to colorectal cancer if you have:

- Ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease.
- A history of adenomatous polyps, especially if they are large or there are many of them.
- A family history of colorectal cancer—for example, a parent, sibling or child diagnosed with the disease. In about 5% of colorectal cancer cases, an inherited gene is to blame. So be sure to discuss your family history of colorectal cancer with your PCP.

8

IT'S SURVIVABLE

More than ever, colorectal cancer is survivable. Since the 1970s, the overall mortality for colorectal cancer nationwide has fallen by 40%—a trend fueled by dramatic progress in the prevention, detection and treatment of this cancer. Those treatment advances include the increasing use of targeted therapies that attack specific genes and changes in cells that cause colon cancer. Today, there are more than 1 million survivors of colorectal cancer in the U.S.

Sources: American Cancer Society; American Society of Clinical Oncologists; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Robert D. Lamport, MD, FACP



Lijian Wang, MD, D.Sc.

Got the flu?

THESE TIPS MAY HELP

HAVING THE FLU is no fun, but most people don't need medical care. Here's what you need to know if flu strikes you.

How to treat flu at home

Flu symptoms vary. They can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, tiredness, and head and body aches.

Treat symptoms with over-the-counter medications and get plenty of rest. Flu usually goes away after a few days.

Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the help of medications like acetaminophen. Until then, you should stay away from work and school. If you must leave home for necessities or to see a doctor, wear a mask.

"To stop other people from catching the flu from you, wash your hands often," advises **Dr. Donna Asupan**, a board-certified Internal Medicine specialist at Watson

Clinic Main in Lakeland. "Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. And throw tissues away as soon as you use them."

When to see a doctor

Some factors can make complications from flu more likely. You may be at higher risk if you:

- Are over 65.
- Are pregnant.
- Live in a long-term care facility.
- Have chronic lung disease, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- Have a disorder of the blood, kidney or liver.
- Have endocrine issues, such as diabetes.


If you're high risk, call your primary care provider when you start experiencing flu symptoms. Unless you are very ill, you probably won't need to go to the emergency department.

"No matter your medical history, see a doctor right away if you have

difficulty breathing," says **Dr. Elaine Turcan**, a board-certified Family Medicine specialist at Watson Clinic South in Lakeland. "If you're having chest pain or severe muscle pain or you're not urinating, you also need medical care ASAP."

Your primary care provider may prescribe antiviral drugs to help you fight the flu virus. These prescription medications can make flu milder and shorten the time you're sick.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

 **The best flu is the one you never get. To help prevent it, you should get a flu vaccine each year. Watson Clinic makes it easy for our patients with our annual Flu Clinics. For a listing of locations and operating hours, visit [WatsonClinic.com/Flu](https://www.watsonclinic.com/Flu).**



Donna Asupan, MD



Elaine Turcan, DO



Better, more convenient care

A MAN IN HIS 70s was recently admitted into the emergency room with signs of a clot in his leg. The patient had a history of DVT, otherwise known as deep vein thrombosis, a condition that occurs when a blood clot forms in a vein deep within the body. DVTs usually occur in the legs and produce pain, swelling and discoloration of the affected region. If left untreated, the clot could travel through the body and lodge itself in the lungs, causing a potentially deadly pulmonary embolism.

Decisive action was required to ensure that the man's clot could be eliminated once and for all. Traditionally, blood thinners and clot busters are commonly prescribed to break up a clot. However, the efficacy of these medications



can be limited. The clots may be too large to disintegrate completely, which can cause the issue to reoccur over time. There's also a significant danger of excessive bleeding involved in some

medication therapies.

Fortunately for the patient in question, he was a candidate for an exciting technology called the ClotTriever® Thrombectomy System.

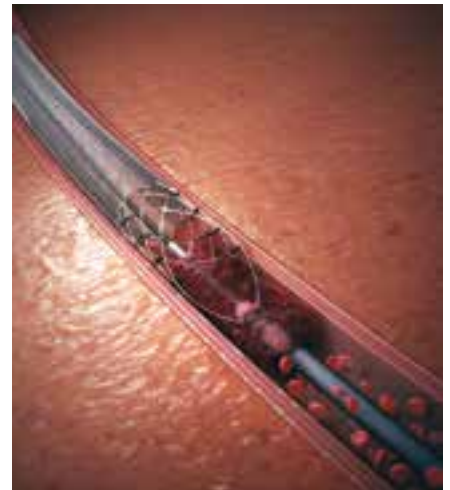
How does it work?

"The technology allows us to remove the clot in its entirety on an out-patient basis, without the need for anticoagulant medications or a stay in the ICU," reports **Dr. David M. Epstein**, a board-certified diagnostic, vascular and interventional radiologist at Watson Clinic who performs procedures from Lakeland Regional Medical Center. Dr. Epstein has offered the procedure for a couple of years, and he has noticed tremendously improved outcomes among patients.

"It eliminates the risks associated with traditional deep clot therapies, such as excessive bleeding," Dr. Epstein explains. "It can remove the clot entirely in a single session, and you can go home the same day."

The side effects of the clot, including swelling and discomfort, dissipate immediately upon removal.

The same technology works similarly in the treatment of pulmonary embolisms. When a significant clot develops in the pulmonary artery, the FlowTriever® is used to capture and remove it in a single session without the need for potentially debilitating thrombolytic medications or the burden of an ICU stay.



David M. Epstein, MD



For more information on these and other services offered by Watson Clinic's Radiology department, call 863-680-7755 or visit [WatsonClinic.com/Radiology](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/Radiology).



Saving lives with clinical trials

MANY OF THE MOST meaningful medical advances in history were the result of clinical trials, a process in which new treatments, procedures and medications are studied in a controlled manner before achieving approval for widespread use.

The Watson Clinic Center for Research has been on the cutting edge of this process since their founding in 1985. By managing a series of medically sound investigative clinical trials, the center's focus remains solely on improving patient treatment outcomes. The Watson Clinic patients who participate in study protocols can benefit from new and potentially more effective therapies. They play an essential role in making these therapies accessible for this and future generations.

Over the years, Center for Research protocols have resulted in lifesaving procedures and therapies that have been adopted worldwide.

Hope for patients with NVAF

One recent protocol might spell hope for patients suffering from specific cardiac issues. Led by Watson Clinic cardiologist **Dr. Neal G. Kavesh** alongside study co-investigators **Dr. Douglas Ebersole** and **Jami Sharik, APRN**, this study evaluates

whether a one-time WATCHMAN FLX™ procedure is equally effective as blood thinning medication as a first-line treatment for patients with non-valvular atrial fibrillation (NVAF).

Patients with NVAF are five times more likely to suffer a stroke than someone with a normal heart rhythm. In these patients, more than 90% of stroke-causing blood clots that come from the heart are formed in the left atrial appendage. The WATCHMAN FLX device is designed to reduce the risk of stroke in people with NVAF by closing off this area of the heart, while helping patients discontinue long-term use of blood thinners.

"We are pleased to participate in this important study," says Dr. Kavesh. "A positive outcome may put this device on equal footing with best-in-class drug therapy for stroke-risk reduction and offer an alternative for more patients who would otherwise face lifelong use of blood thinners and the associated risk of serious bleeding."



See how clinical trials could help you. Go to **[WatsonClinic.com/Clinical-Trials](https://www.watsonclinic.com/Clinical-Trials)** or call **863-688-6826** to learn more about our current clinical trials and the Center for Research.



Neal G. Kavesh,
MD, FACC



Douglas Ebersole,
MD, FACC



Jami Sharik, APRN

Making a difference in the fight against breast cancer



From left are Leah Grieger, BCFCF founder; Steven Achinger, MD, Chairman of the Board, Watson Clinic Foundation; and Mandy Middleton, BCFCF outreach director.

Photo courtesy of Pink Lily Photo.

A BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS

represents an arduous and uncertain journey for both the patient and their family members. A structure of support is needed to overcome the myriad of challenges associated with the disease.

The Watson Clinic Foundation has been on the forefront of this cause for many decades.

Arts in Medicine program

Housed in the Watson Clinic Cancer & Research Center at 1730 Lakeland Hills Blvd. in Lakeland, the Watson Clinic Foundation's Arts in Medicine program offers all forms of the expressive arts—including creative activities such as watercolor painting, origami and mosaics—for cancer patients, caregivers and family members. Research shows that these creative outlets reduce anxiety and create an environment that is more conducive to healing.

Recently, the program was presented with a generous grant in the amount of \$4,120 from the GiveWell Community Foundation, a charitable organization that addresses

community needs throughout Polk County. The grant was presented in response to an application submitted as part of the organization's 2021 Impact Polk competition, and it was distributed from the George W. Jenkins Fund within the GiveWell Community Foundation.

Lake Ashton golf community

For many years, members of the Lake Ashton Ladies Golf Association have generously devoted their time and talents for the benefit of breast cancer patients throughout our community.

From April 2016 to January 2021, the group has raised over \$50,000 for the Watson Clinic Foundation. Every dollar of these donations has gone to support the Foundation's breast cancer research and education efforts.

The Foundation extends its sincere appreciation to the group for the amazing impact they've had on so many lives.

Breast Cancer Foundation of Central Florida

On Oct. 22, 2021, the Foundation presented a \$100,000 check to the Breast Cancer Foundation of Central Florida (BCFCF), an organization devoted to providing resources and support to individuals and families affected by breast cancer. This is the third \$100,000 donation the Foundation has made to the BCFCF in three years.

"By easing the emotional, psychological and financial burdens faced by patients and family members following a cancer diagnosis, the BCFCF creates an environment for the patient that's free from unnecessary stress and is more conducive to healing," says Watson Clinic Foundation Chairman of the Board **Dr. Steven G. Achinger**. "Their goals fall right in line with the Foundation's mission to improve the health of our community through education, research and service, and that's why we're proud to support their efforts."



For more information and to make a contribution to the Watson Clinic Foundation, call 863-904-2656 or visit [WatsonClinic.com/WCF](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/WCF).

Reach us

Watson Clinic Locations

Bartow	863-533-7151
Bartow Obstetrics & Gynecology	863-534-2728
Bella Vista Building	863-904-6200
Cancer & Research Center	863-680-7780
Center for Rehabilitative Medicine	863-680-7700
Center for Specialized Rehabilitation	863-607-3699
Dermatology at Brandon	813-655-3680
Dermatology at Sun City Center	813-633-6121
Dermatology at Zephyrhills	813-788-7867
Health Scene	863-904-4653
Highlands	863-607-3333
MAIN	863-680-7000
North Pediatrics	863-680-7337
Plant City	813-719-2500
South	863-647-8011
Urgent Care Main	863-680-7271
Urgent Care South	863-647-4047
Watson Clinic Foundation	863-904-2656
Women's Center	863-680-7752
XpressCare Highlands	863-393-9472



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Defining the future of breast health

Scheduling your **annual mammogram** is the most effective defense against breast cancer. With our team of mammography-specific radiologists utilizing the most advanced 3D imaging technologies available, Watson Clinic has raised the bar in the detection and treatment of breast cancer in our community.

*We may be turning **80** this year, but we're just getting started.*



WATSON CLINIC LLP

For all your **Mammography** needs, call **863-680-7755, option 3** or visit WatsonClinic.com/BreastHealth.

Highlands | 2300 E. County Rd. 540A
South Lakeland

Women's Center | 1400 Lakeland Hills Blvd. – Suite A
North Lakeland