

Healthy Living

Hospitals are not just for medical emergencies

Hospitals play an important role in keeping people healthy. While hospitals remain the place to go when experiencing a medical emergency, these vital facilities offer much more than emergency care. The scope of services available in many hospitals is vast and can benefit people confronting medical emergencies as well as individuals hoping to live as healthy as possible. The following rundown of offerings can shed light on how beneficial it can be to look to hospitals as part of a health care regimen.

- **Vaccination:** Many people get vaccinated during wellness checkups or at local pharmacies. But some patients are forced to wait months before they can book an appointment with their primary care physicians, while others may not live close to pharmacies. In such instances, people can visit their local hospitals to determine if they provide vaccinations. Many hospitals do, and that can help circumvent months-long waiting lists at primary care offices and issues related to pharmacies.

- **Notary services:** Advance directives and power-of-attorney arrangements are important components of estate planning. When setting such

directives, it's customary if not mandatory to have such wishes notarized so there is no legal gray area upon a person's death. Many hospitals include notary services as part of their concierge care (some might include notary services under packages with different names). These are vital guest assistance services and can be particularly useful if patients encounter a medical emergency and are unsure if they have formalized their intentions regarding their estate.

- **Financial assistance:** Health care costs can be substantial, particularly for people who experience a medical emergency and find themselves facing hefty bills related to their care. Hospitals typically have trained financial assistance professionals on staff who can help patients and their families navigate the potential assistance available to them. Options can include direct assistance in finding government support, charity care, billing support, and more. Financial assistance staff may help patients and their families determine out-of-pocket costs, which is often a significant concern for people confronting a medical emergency.

- **Wellness services:** Hospitals also offer

services to people who are not confronting medical emergencies. Some facilities provide wellness services that emphasize preventive care like nutrition advice, dietary counseling and weight management support. Such offerings also may include lifestyle education that can showcase strategies people can look to

each day to get healthy and stay healthy.

- **Language interpretation:** Patients whose native tongue differs from that spoken at the hospital may be hesitant or intimidated when discussing their health and care with hospital officials. But many hospitals provide language interpretation and translation services

that can ease those concerns and ensure there is no disconnect between patients and their health care providers. These services also can be utilized by people seeking advice on preventive care and healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Peer support services:** Many hospitals also offer peer support services to patients as

well as family members. These services may include routine support groups for survivors, caregivers, and others affected by a personal or family medical issue.

Hospitals are more than just places to go when feeling unwell. The range of services available at many hospitals goes well beyond patient care.

How to navigate eating with Celiac disease

Celiac disease affects a significant number of people across the globe. According to the Celiac Disease Foundation®, roughly 80 million people worldwide have Celiac disease, which is an autoimmune disease that is triggered by the consumption of gluten.

The consequences of consuming gluten can be very unpleasant for people with Celiac disease, which underscores the importance of finding the right foods. But the prevalence of Celiac has perhaps made it easier for people to navigate the disease, and the following are some dietary tips that might make meal-

time even more manageable.

- **Seek naturally gluten-free foods.** The CDF advises individuals with Celiac to seek foods that are naturally gluten-free. Gluten is a mixture of two proteins that is present in cereal grains, especially wheat, and causes illness in people with Celiac. Fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish and seafood, dairy, beans, legumes, and nuts are naturally gluten-free.

- **Be careful with wheat grass and barley grass.** The CDF notes that wheat grass and barley grass are gluten-free, but the organization cautions that the seeds contain gluten. So if wheat grass and/or barley

grass are not harvested or processed correctly, each may contain gluten. The organization Beyond Celiac recommends people look for certified gluten-free products when shopping for wheat grass, and the same rule of thumb can apply to barley grass.

- **Recognize that grains are not necessarily off limits.** The CDF reports that there are many naturally gluten-free grains, including quinoa, rice, millet, and potato. Each of these gluten-free grains and more can be enjoyed by people with Celiac without putting their health in jeopardy. When shopping for gluten-free grains, the CDF advises shoppers to avoid purchasing grains from bulk bins due to the possibility of cross-contamination.

- **Read the ingredients list before buying something new.** While certain products qualify as gluten-free, that does not necessarily mean they are. For example, the CDF notes that corn

flakes and puffed rice cereals are not typically considered to contain gluten, but they might contain malt flavoring or extract, each of which does contain gluten. In addition, the CDF reports that avenin is a protein similar to gluten that is found in oats. Some people with Celiac have an immune reaction to avenin when consuming oats, which are generally considered to be gluten-free. So it pays to read food labels and keep a list of ingredients that contain gluten.

Consumption of gluten can be very dangerous and unpleasant for people with Celiac disease. But a careful approach to diet can ensure people with Celiac enjoy delicious foods without getting sick.



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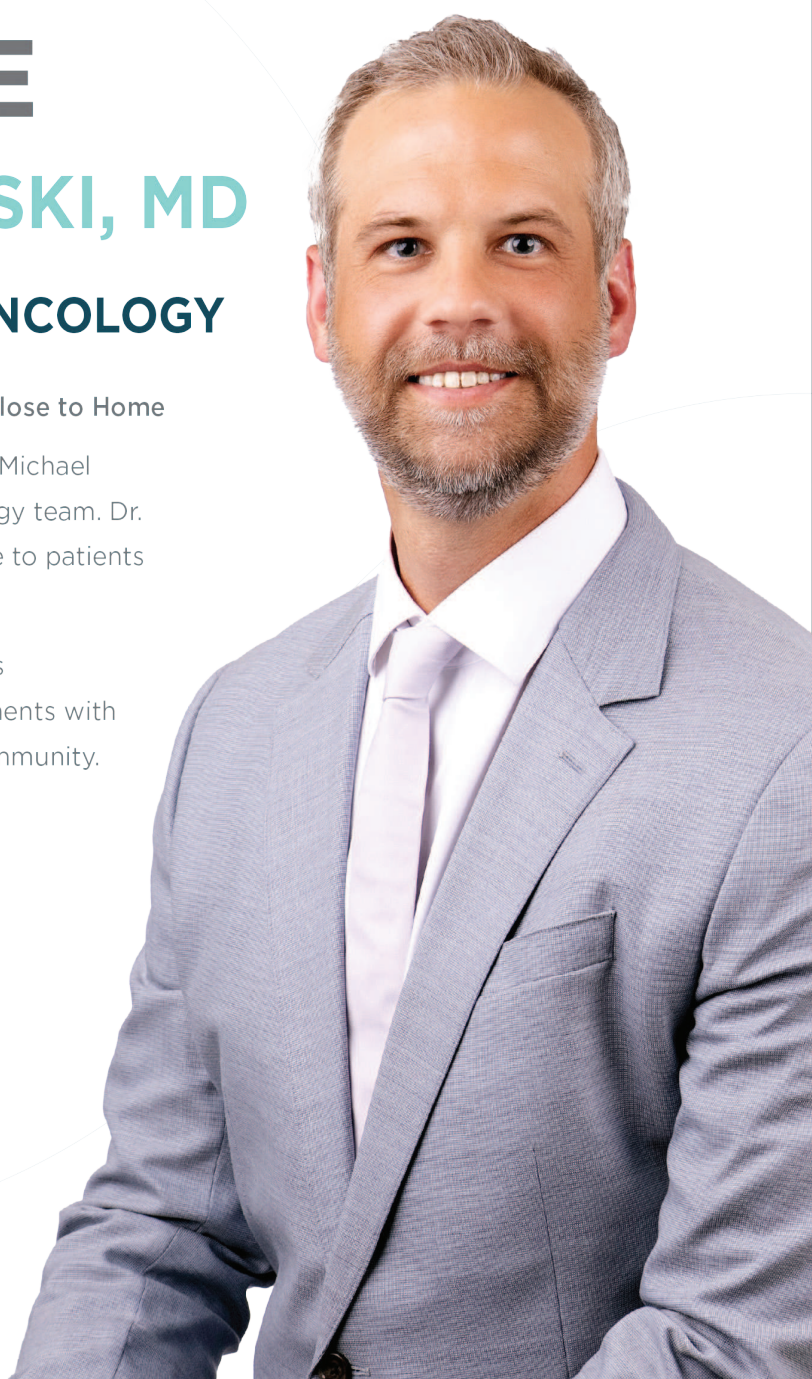
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