

SPRING 2025

WATSON CLINIC Health scene

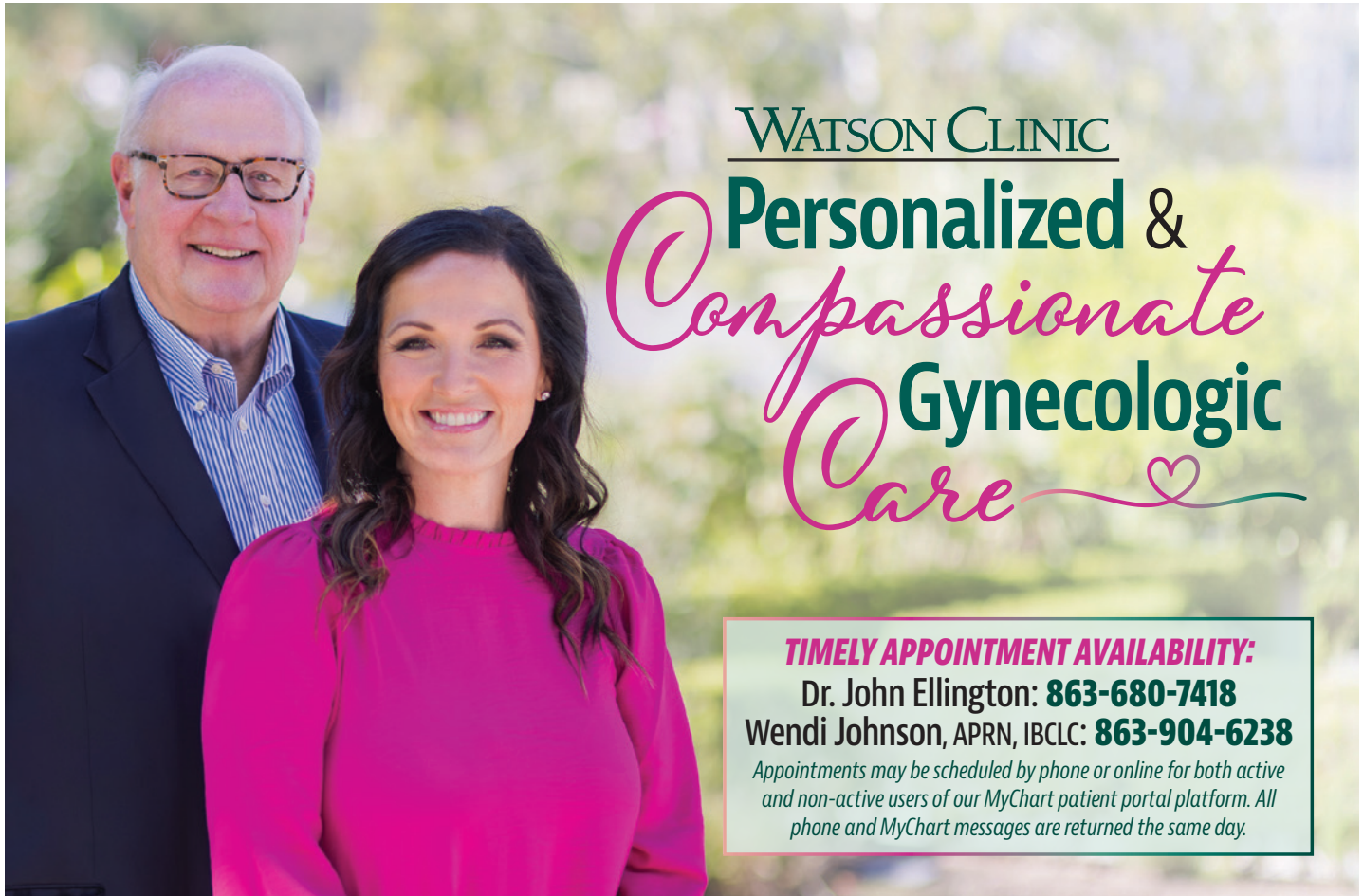
A close-up photograph of a woman with short, wavy white hair, smiling warmly. She is holding a black and white dog, possibly a pit bull mix, against her chest. The dog is looking off to the side. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and sunlight.

The women's health issue

Inside this issue

- + What to do after a breast cancer diagnosis
- + You don't have to live with incontinence

Health Scene is a community health education magazine made possible by generous donations from Watson Clinic Foundation's supporters.



WATSON CLINIC

Personalized & *Compassionate* Gynecologic *Care* 

TIMELY APPOINTMENT AVAILABILITY:

Dr. John Ellington: **863-680-7418**
 Wendi Johnson, APRN, IBCLC: **863-904-6238**

Appointments may be scheduled by phone or online for both active and non-active users of our MyChart patient portal platform. All phone and MyChart messages are returned the same day.

John R. Ellington, Jr., MD



Board-certified Gynecologist **Dr. John R. Ellington, Jr.** and his care team have served the healthcare needs of Watson Clinic patients for many years. He's proud to offer **same-day** and **next-day** appointments for urgent matters, the latest minimally invasive treatments, and a diverse roster of services customized for your specific needs.

Wendi Johnson, APRN, IBCLC



Working alongside Dr. Ellington is registered nurse practitioner **Wendi Johnson, APRN, IBCLC**, a certified Lactation Consultant specially trained in helping new and expectant mothers reach their breastfeeding goals. In addition, Ms. Johnson offers a comprehensive array of general gynecologic care, laser hair removal treatments and more.

Our office is here to take care of your needs. Areas of expertise include:

- Abnormal menstrual issues
- Abnormal pap smears
- Breast issues
- Contraceptive counseling
- Endometrial ablation
- Family planning and fertility solutions
- Female cancer screening
- Fibroids
- Hormone imbalance
- IUD
- Lactation consulting
- Laser Hair Removal
- Menopausal symptoms
- Nexplanon®
- Osteoporosis
- PMS
- Pelvic pain
- Sexual dysfunction
- Urinary incontinence
- Vaginal reconstructive surgical consultation



We Appreciate the Opportunity to Care for You!
Watson Clinic Bella Vista Building
 1755 N. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33805

FROM THE DESK OF DR. WILLIAM J. ROTH

Prioritizing women's healthcare

Watson Clinic has long recognized the stumbling blocks women may experience when seeking out the care they need. It might be the challenge of fitting it into their busy schedules as they work and care for others, a feeling that they're not truly being heard by their provider, or a perceived lack of access to the services they require.

That's why we've remained fully committed to providing diversity, access and convenience of care to women across our community. Our compassionate and attentive care teams possess expertise in obstetrics and gynecology, breast health, cancer treatment, and other departments devoted to female-specific health matters. They offer the latest detection and treatment technologies and extended appointment availability from convenient locations close to home.

Of course, most of the leading causes of death among women are not exclusive to their gender, and they include conditions like heart disease, lung cancer, stroke, lower respiratory diseases and Alzheimer's disease. Our specialists in cardiology, oncology, pulmonary, neurology and other departments are sensitive to the

oftentimes unique concerns of women in these areas of medicine as well.

Case in point: In 2007, a team led by Watson Clinic Cardiologist Dr. John G. Canto discovered the range of symptom discrepancies between men and women who experience a heart attack. Unlike men, women were more likely to report pain in the neck, jaw, and middle or upper back, shortness of breath, nausea, cough, dizziness, and indigestion, among other symptoms. Dr. Canto's study made international headlines and, in the process, empowered physician's offices and emergency rooms to become more aware of which signs to watch out for when treating their female patients.

Women's health takes center stage throughout this issue of *Health Scene*. We hope the information contained in these pages inspires women in our community to seek the preventive and chronic care services that can dramatically improve their quality of life.



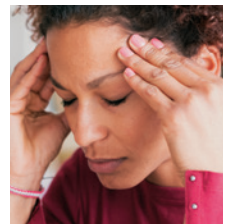
Yours in good health,
William J. Roth, MD, PhD
Watson Clinic President,
Chair and Managing Partner

A quick look inside



6

SCREENINGS
Here are six tests you should get.



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MENTAL HEALTH
Make time to take care of yourself.

Check out our website

WatsonClinic.com

Email us at HealthScene@WatsonClinic.com.



Spring 2025

HEALTH SCENE is published four times a year (this is issue 4 of 4) as a special service for the friends and neighbors of WATSON CLINIC. It is supported by generous contributions made to Watson Clinic Foundation, Inc. The Foundation's mission is to promote community wellness through education, research and service. If you wish to be added to or removed from the *Health*

Scene mailing list, please write to **HealthScene@WatsonClinic.com** or Watson Clinic's Marketing Communications and Media Relations department at 4263 S. Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL 33813, or call **863-904-4653**. We will facilitate your request before the next issue.

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Information in HEALTH SCENE comes from a wide range of medical experts. Models may be used in photos and illustrations. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your Watson Clinic healthcare provider at **863-680-7190**.

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Healthcare that steps up to the plate



Watson Clinic is proud to serve as the official medical provider for the Lakeland Flying Tigers and Detroit Tigers Florida Operations.

From spring training through the remainder of the regular season, the Tigers call upon our winning lineup of over 350 physicians and providers to address any illnesses and injuries that may arise for their players and staff members

alike, including our specialists from orthopaedic surgery, sports medicine, physical therapy, urgent care, primary care and many other departments.

Both individually and collaboratively, Watson Clinic and the Tigers are committed to helping you create more treasured memories with the people you cherish for many years to come.

Confirm your insurance coverage

Are you enrolled in Medicare or Medicare Advantage? Your coverage might have changed in the new year. To make sure your Watson Clinic physicians are still covered under your plan, you can check out the complete list of plans we honor by visiting [WatsonClinic.com/Insurance](https://www.watsonclinic.com/Insurance). If you don't see your specific plan on our list, please contact your insurance representative.



WATSON CLINIC
METABOLIC &
WEIGHT CENTER



Weight Center offers new meal replacement products

The Watson Clinic Metabolic & Weight Center is pleased to offer patients the New Direction Advanced nutritional product line.

This highly effective weight management system offers nutritionally balanced meal replacements designed to combat obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and other comorbidities.

Products include:

- Breakfast foods
- Drinks, beverages and smoothies
- Entrees and soups
- Meal replacement and protein supplement bars
- Puddings and shakes
- Snacks and desserts



Lilliam
Chiques, MD

Users reported an average of 36 pounds in weight loss within the first 12 weeks.

The Watson Clinic Metabolic & Weight Center is led by Internal Medicine specialist **Dr. Lilliam Chiques** from our Main location and offers medically sound approaches to lasting weight loss.

Call 863-680-7190 or visit [WatsonClinic.com/WeightCenter](https://www.watsonclinic.com/WeightCenter) for more information and to schedule a consultation.



Welcome

New physicians and providers

Join us in welcoming the latest additions to our team of expert providers. For more information on these and all of our highly qualified physicians and providers, visit [WatsonClinic.com/physician-search](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/physician-search).



Sasha B. Grek, MD
Anesthesiology

Education: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Internship: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, General Surgery

Residency: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, Clinical Anesthesiology

Fellowship: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, Critical Care Medicine

Board certifications: Clinical Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine

Locations: Lakeland Regional Health and Watson Clinic Surgery Center



Brittany L. Greve, APRN
Urgent Care

Education: Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL, MSN

Memberships: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

Supervising Physician: Jarett A. Gregory, DO

Location: Watson Clinic Urgent Care South



Lindsay Jenkins, APRN
Family Medicine

Education: Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL, MSN

Memberships: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

Supervising Physician: Jeremy M. Katzmann, MD

Location: Watson Clinic Highlands
Appointments: 863-680-7190



D.J. Nelson, APRN
Facial Plastic Surgery

Education: Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL, MSN

Memberships: American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

Supervising Physician: Pranay C. Patel, MD

Location: Medical Spa at Watson Clinic

Appointments: 863-904-6204

More options for women's health

With all of life's responsibilities, it can be difficult to carve out time to care for yourself. That's why Watson Clinic is making it easier than ever to get the expert women's healthcare services you need on your schedule.

Watson Clinic has welcomed two new OB-GYNs: **Dr. Faria Ahmed** and **Dr. Henna Ahsan**.

Both currently offer open appointment availability for all OB-GYN concerns from their Watson Clinic Highlands offices at 2300 E. County Road 540A in south Lakeland. Appointments may be scheduled by calling **863-680-7243**.

The department has also recruited an additional OB-GYN Hospitalist—**Dr. Heidi A. Beining**—who treats patients exclusively from Lakeland Regional Health.

Gynecologic Oncologist **Dr. Logan Blankenship** also offers open appointment availability from her office at our Bella Vista Building at 1755 N. Florida Ave.

in Lakeland. Dr. Blankenship specializes in minimally invasive robotic surgery, gynecologic malignancies and other complex gynecologic issues. Call **863-680-7578** to schedule an appointment with Dr. Blankenship, or visit [WatsonClinic.com/Blankenship](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/Blankenship) for more information.



Faria Ahmed, MD, MPH



Henna Ahsan, MD



Heidi A. Beining, DO



Logan Blankenship, MD

PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

with annual
screenings



6 IMPORTANT SCREENINGS FOR WOMEN

Women, don't let medical conditions sneak up on you. See your doctor for an annual well-woman exam, also known as a preventive health checkup. Screening tests, which play a major role in this appointment, can help catch health issues in their early, most treatable stages, before you even notice symptoms.

Here are six tests your doctor may perform or discuss with you during your visit:

Blood pressure

Checking your blood pressure can help your doctor keep tabs on your risk of stroke and heart disease.

Diabetes

Screening for type 2 diabetes and prediabetes is recommended for adults ages 35 to 70 who are overweight.

Breast cancer

Are you due for a mammogram? You should begin getting regular mammograms at age 40, or even earlier if recommended by your breast health provider.

Colon cancer

Screening can find and remove polyps—small precancerous growths—before they turn into

cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends colon cancer screening starting at age 45.

Lung cancer

Yearly lung cancer screening is recommended for people ages 50 to 80 who currently smoke or who have a history of heavy smoking.

Cervical cancer

The Pap test looks for abnormal cells in the cervix. Another screening test for cervical cancer, the human papillomavirus (HPV) test, looks for HPV, which can cause these cell changes.



Care when you need it

Watson Clinic offers over 70 Family Medicine or Internal Medicine physicians and providers who can help you stay on top of these routine screenings and much more. In addition, they can offer easy referrals to Watson Clinic's extended team of gynecologists, oncologists, gastroenterologists, breast health experts and diabetes educators when specialized care is needed. Call **863-680-7190** to schedule an appointment at any one of our six convenient locations.



Find additional women's healthcare
resources by scanning the QR code or visiting
[WatsonClinic.com/WomensHealthcare](https://www.watsonclinic.com/WomensHealthcare).



QUESTIONS FOR THE EXPERTS

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

How do I know if I have strep throat?

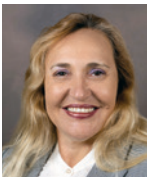
Strep throat is caused by the bacteria group *A streptococcus*. It's a generally mild disease that infects the throat and tonsils.

The condition is spread through droplets in the air. If you're exposed to someone who has strep throat, you'll typically catch it within two to five days.

Common symptoms include a sore throat, fever, pain when swallowing, white patches on the throat or tonsils, tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth, swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck, and headache. It's probably not strep throat if you have a cough, runny nose, hoarse voice or pink eye.

All strep throat cases need to be treated with antibiotics. This reduces pain, shortens the illness, prevents others from catching it, and reduces complications like rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, and ear or sinus infections.

The only way to tell if you or a loved one has strep throat is to get tested by your healthcare provider. They'll swab your throat and tonsils for a mucus sample. A rapid strep test gives results in 15 minutes, and a throat culture test (which catches more infections) takes two days.



Anid O. Phelps, MD, is a board-certified Family Medicine specialist who treats walk-in patients at Watson Clinic Urgent Care Main in Lakeland. For more information, visit [WatsonClinic.com/UrgentCare](https://www.watsonclinic.com/urgentcare).

How do I deal with spring allergies?

Seasonal allergies are typically triggered by pollen. When you are allergic to pollen, your immune system overreacts, triggering allergy symptoms. This time of year, you may start to notice symptoms such as sneezing, a runny or stuffy nose, red, watery eyes and itchy nose, eyes or mouth.

Don't let spring allergies make you miserable. A board-certified allergist can use skin or blood tests to help pinpoint your specific allergy triggers and create a treatment plan. Over-the-counter or prescription medicines, such as corticosteroid nasal sprays, decongestants or antihistamines, may help to relieve or prevent symptoms.

There are also a number of steps you can take to avoid allergy triggers. Check pollen forecasts before heading out. Try to plan your outdoor activities to avoid high pollen counts or wear a mask when you do venture outside. You may also consider keeping your windows closed when there's a lot of pollen in the air.

If other treatments and preventive steps don't work, allergy shots (allergen immunotherapy) may help. The shots help your body gradually get used to an allergen so that you may have fewer and less severe symptoms over time.



G. Weyman Price, MD, is a board-certified Allergy and Immunology specialist who treats patients at Watson Clinic South in Lakeland. Appointments may be scheduled by calling **863-647-4045**.

Why is walking considered an effective exercise?

In addition to helping you maintain a healthy weight, walking can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, stabilize your blood sugar, help you maintain balance and improve your mental health as well.

Best of all, it's an easy way to get active. People of all ages and varying levels of fitness can do it. Walks don't require special skills or pricey workout gear. All you need are comfortable shoes.



Guillermo O. Vasquez, MD, is a board-certified Internal Medicine specialist at Watson Clinic South in Lakeland. Dr. Vasquez and his team of nurse practitioners offer extended appointment availability, including Saturdays, which can be scheduled by calling **863-680-7190**.

Try these strategies to get moving:

- **Go outside.** Walking in a tree-filled neighborhood or park is good for your mental and physical health.
- **Be prepared.** If your everyday shoes aren't great for walking, keep sneakers in your car.
- **Enlist friends.** Suggest going out for a walk the next time you get together with friends.
- **Try an activity monitor.** A pedometer or a smartwatch can help you set goals and track your steps.
- **Park farther from the store.** You'll have an easier time finding a spot, and you'll get some extra steps.
- **Don't wait when you can walk.** The time you spend waiting for things is a great chance to be moving.

Coronary bypass surg



Your heart just might be the most important organ you have. Its job is to pump oxygen-rich blood to all the other organs and parts of your body.

“If the arteries that carry blood to your heart become blocked, you could be at risk for a heart attack,” says



Mark H. Mines, MD

Dr. Mark H. Mines,

an Interventional Cardiologist at Watson Clinic. “A procedure called coronary artery bypass surgery could be lifesaving.”

Blocked arteries

Over time, cholesterol and fat can build up in your arteries. This buildup is called plaque.

“It can partially or completely block your heart’s normal blood flow,” says Dr. Mines. “As a result, you could experience chest pain or a heart attack.”

A common procedure

Bypass surgery has many benefits for people with blocked arteries. This surgery:

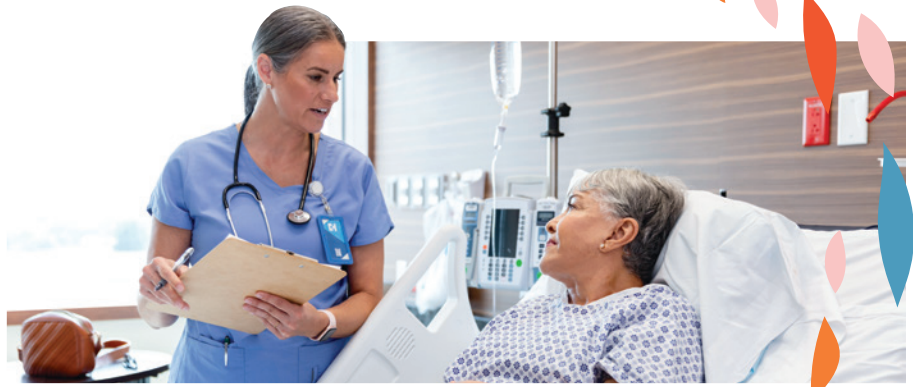
- Improves your heart’s ability to pump blood.
- Reduces your risk of a heart attack.
- Relieves chest pain.

Did you know?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States and can affect women at any age.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ery 101



- Can help you return to a normal activity level if blocked arteries have limited your activities.

There are different ways to perform a bypass surgery, but the most common is called a traditional bypass. Here's how it works:

- You will be asleep during the entire procedure.
- The surgeon will cut your chest open and separate your breastbone.
- A heart-lung bypass machine will act as your heart, pumping blood throughout your body.
- The surgeon will cut an artery or vein from another place in your body and connect it around the clogged artery. This is called a graft.
- The graft will allow blood to flow around, or bypass, the clogged artery.
- Your doctor may have to do more

than one graft, depending on the number of blocked arteries.

Recovering from your procedure

You'll need to stay in the hospital for about a week afterward. First, you will spend a few days in the intensive care unit (ICU). The ICU staff will give you fluids and medications, monitor your heart rate and blood pressure, and take blood samples.

Next, you will move to a regular hospital room. Your healthcare team will continue to watch you carefully.

You probably will be uncomfortable, but you should start walking around as soon as possible. You'll be able to eat

normally and will receive pain medicine. Day by day, you'll start to feel better.

Once your doctor sends you home, it will take another six to 12 weeks to recover completely.



Meet our cardiology team

- John G. Canto, MD, MSPH, FACC
- Gregory Joseph Coffman, MD
- Douglas G. Ebersole, MD, FACC
- George Ghareeb, DO
- Neal G. Kavesh, MD, FACC
- Mark H. Mines, MD, FACC
- Zia Rab, MD, FACC
- Danielle Delgiudice, APRN
- Holly C. Dellenger, APRN
- Barb Donley, APRN
- Allison Fojtik, MSN, APRN
- Sarah L. Hamlin, MSN, APRN
- Bertha Harley, APRN
- Makenzie Mabe, PA
- Cristyna A. Ottaiano, APRN
- Laurie Pomella, DNP, APRN
- Jami Sharik, APRN

Comprehensive heart care

Throughout its long history, Watson Clinic's Cardiology department has introduced many groundbreaking cardiac treatments, techniques and technologies to our community, including highly perceptive imaging systems and minimally invasive surgical devices.

Our renowned specialists offer a comprehensive roster of services from their office at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland:

- Anticoagulation services

- Cardiovascular prevention
- Echocardiography
- Electrophysiology
- Nuclear cardiology
- Cardiac catheterization
- Pacemaker installation and monitoring
- Treadmill and stress testing
- Surgical intervention

For more information or to schedule an appointment with a member of Watson Clinic's Cardiology team, call **863-680-7490** or visit **[WatsonClinic.com/Cardiology](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/Cardiology)**.

After a breast cancer diagnosis



If you've been diagnosed with breast cancer, you might feel overwhelmed. You can count on your care team to talk you through the details of what will happen next. Here are some things to expect as you move through diagnosis, treatment and recovery.

"You'll be connected with a team of experts who will manage your care during the entire process," says Watson Clinic Women's Center Breast Surgeon and Watson Clinic Medical Director of Breast Health

Services **Dr. Elisabeth L. Dupont.**

"These specialists, trained in specific treatments and cancer-related health issues, work together with a single goal in mind: empower your full recovery from the disease and help you thrive in its aftermath."



Elisabeth L. Dupont, MD

Some of these providers may include a:

- **Breast surgeon.** This provider specializes in treating

The best care for your breasts

Watson Clinic's Breast Health Services department encompasses three convenient locations, the latest detection and treatment technologies, a large team of highly skilled, cancer-fighting specialists, and an all-inclusive roster of services designed to help you prevail in your breast cancer journey.

Scan the QR code or visit [WatsonClinic.com/BreastHealth](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/BreastHealth) for more information.



Watson Clinic Women's Center
1400 Lakeland Hills Blvd.
Suites A & B
Lakeland, FL 33805



Watson Clinic Cancer & Research Center
1730 Lakeland Hills Blvd.
Lakeland, FL 33805



Watson Clinic Highlands
2300 E. County Road 540A
Lakeland, FL 33813



Here is a sampling of topics your doctor may discuss with you



TOPIC: Which type of breast cancer do I have?

A: Breast cancer is classified into subtypes according to which structure it originates from in the breast. It may come from the milk ducts as well as the milk glands. Where it begins does not matter as much as the overall biology of the cancer, such as the proteins it expresses, as in HER2-positive cancer. Other important receptors are estrogen and progesterone receptors. Knowing your breast cancer biology can help target your research about treatment options.

TOPIC: Which stage is my breast cancer?

A: Your cancer can be stage 0, I, II, III or IV, which indicates if your cancer has spread. Your cancer stage can help you and your healthcare provider tailor your treatment plan. Your stage may not be fully known until certain procedures or tests can be done.

TOPIC: Will I need chemotherapy?

A: To answer that question, your provider may perform a genetic test that looks at 21 different genes to evaluate the genetic makeup for a tumor and the chance of recurrence. A recurrence score ranges from 0 to 100. People with a low recurrence score may not need chemotherapy. Some cancers require chemotherapy up front before any surgery.

TOPIC: Why do you think I need this treatment?

A: The best cancer treatment plan can depend on many factors, including other health problems and your age. Concentrating on your provider's treatment reasoning can help you weigh the recommendations carefully.

TOPIC: What about these other kinds of treatment?

A: You may hear about other types of treatment, such as vitamins, herbs and special diets. Be sure to get your provider's approval if you decide to try any of them. Some may not be tested or may even be harmful. Some of these "natural" treatments interfere with standard treatments.

breast cancer through surgical means.

- **Radiation oncologist.** This provider specializes in treating breast and other forms of cancer with targeted radiation.
- **Medical oncologist.** This expert is trained to diagnose cancers and treats them using medications, which could include chemotherapy.
- **Plastic surgeon.** "This surgeon can change the way a body part looks," reports Watson Clinic Women's Center Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon **Dr. Faeza R. Kazmier.** "A plastic surgeon can reconstruct one or both breasts after cancer surgery."



Faeza R. Kazmier, MD

Types of treatment

Breast cancer treatments are broken down into two broad categories: local and systemic. Local treatments are focused on the tumor site. Examples of local treatments for breast cancer include surgery and radiation.

Systemic treatments are typically drug treatments. These medications can treat cancer almost anywhere in the body. They can be taken by mouth, injected into a muscle or put into the bloodstream. Different types of breast cancer may need different systemic treatments. These can include:

- Chemotherapy
- Hormone therapy
- Targeted drug therapy
- Immunotherapy



Did you know?

Around twice as many women have Alzheimer's disease compared to men.

Source: Alzheimer's Society

Understanding Alzheimer's disease

If you know someone with Alzheimer's, you understand how difficult it is for everyone involved. Alzheimer's doesn't just affect the person with the disease; it touches everyone close to them. Knowing the facts can help you cope.

Alzheimer's is a form of dementia, which interferes with your ability to remember things, perform daily tasks and take care of yourself. Eventually, you become completely dependent on others.

"Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia—in fact, 60% to 80% of people who develop dementia have Alzheimer's," says **Dr. Daynet Hisley**, a Neurology specialist at Watson Clinic Main.



Daynet Hisley, MD

Your risk for Alzheimer's goes up after age 65. People under age 65 can get Alzheimer's, too, but this is less common.

How to spot the signs

It can be difficult to distinguish normal aging from dementia. Many people may think that memory problems are a sign of becoming senile as we age, but this might not necessarily be the case.

"Alzheimer's dementia occurs when abnormal protein molecules build up over time in brain cells, which can cause progressive damage," says **Dr. Sundeep Bojedla**, a board-certified Neurology specialist at Watson Clinic Main. "These proteins are called beta-amyloid and tau proteins."



Sundeep Bojedla, DO

Alzheimer's symptoms may include:

- Forgetting something you just learned or dates, events or people's names.
- Repeating phrases.
- Having trouble doing routine things, such as paying bills.

- Not knowing what time, day or year it is.
- Confusion about where you are or how you got there.
- Losing things often.
- Having trouble understanding a conversation or choosing the right words.
- A decreased ability to use sound judgment, such as with money.
- Pulling away from friends, family or hobbies.
- Personality changes like irritability, confusion, anxiety, suspicion and depression.

Diagnosis and treatment

If you have a family member with signs of Alzheimer's, they should see their healthcare provider as soon as possible.

The diagnosis of Alzheimer's dementia is comprehensive and will include brain scans, blood work and cognitive testing. Interventions may include lifestyle modifications and the management of chronic conditions. Medications and targeted treatments can help boost cognition and significantly reduce the progression of the disease.

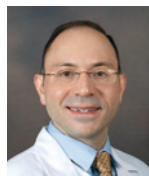
"Early intervention is important for preserving and improving quality of life," says Dr. Hisley.

Watson Clinic's Neurology department is housed at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland. Call 863-680-7300 to schedule an appointment or visit [WatsonClinic.com/Neurology](https://www.watsonclinic.com/Neurology) for more information.

Make time for yourself

From family obligations to work responsibilities, chances are you have a lot on your plate.

“But one thing you can’t afford to skip on is self-care,” says **Dr. Yahia Homsy**, a board-certified Psychiatry specialist at Watson Clinic Main in Lakeland.



Yahia Homsy, MD

Here are some of his tips on how you can be good to your body *and* your mind.

Eat healthy foods. Along with giving you energy to focus, good nutrition may help reduce your risk of some chronic conditions. One simple change is to eat vegetables and fruit every day. Other good foods include whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.

Get enough sleep. Snooze at least seven to nine hours at night. Avoid screens before bed.

Be active. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Walking is often



Watson Clinic’s team of Psychiatry specialists can help you improve your sense of well-being with compassion and expertise. Visit [WatsonClinic.com/Psychiatry](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/Psychiatry) to learn more.

ideal. But the best activities are those you enjoy and can sustain.

Try a relaxation technique.

Here’s one: When you feel stress coming on, find a quiet place to close your eyes and take several deep breaths.

Take a break. Do your best to set aside time each day (even just a few minutes) to do something you enjoy. Maybe that’s listening to music,

reading a book or spending time working on a hobby.

Reach out. Having social connections is good for our mental health. Talk with close friends and family about any stress in your life. Ask for their support.

Say thanks. Try writing down one thing you’re grateful for each day. Daily expressions of gratitude may boost your mood.

Mental health and motherhood



After giving birth, many new moms experience tiredness, worry and sadness, also known as baby blues. These feelings usually go away on their own.

“For some women, these feelings can become severe and interfere with their daily lives,” says **Dr. Taylor**

Cook, an OB-GYN specialist at Watson Clinic Highlands. “This is known as postpartum depression, which occurs in one out of eight women. Women may also experience these feelings during pregnancy.”

Symptoms of postpartum depression can include:

- Crying more than usual.
- Extreme sadness or anger.



Taylor Cook, DO

- Not feeling a connection with your baby.
- Worrying about hurting your baby.
- Having guilt or doubts about not being a good mom.

As a new mom, it can be hard to focus on yourself and your health—but it is essential to your baby’s health and well-being.

“Depression can happen to anyone,” says Dr. Cook. “You can prepare by knowing what to look for and getting help when you need it.”

Your Watson Clinic Obstetrician can help with postpartum depression and refer you to mental health providers when additional care is needed. Call 863-680-7243 to schedule an appointment.

INCONTINENCE

Replacing shame with hope

Over 50% of women will experience urinary incontinence by the time they're 60 years of age. One of the more common types of urinary incontinence—overactive bladder—is characterized by an overwhelming urgency that results in uncontrolled leakage. This common condition can hold a woman prisoner in her own life. She might feel uneasy going out, have to carry a change of clothes wherever she goes, and rely on pads or adult diapers just to get through her day and sleep throughout the night.

“The number one cause of incontinence is childbirth,” reports **Dr. Tarek Garas**, a board-certified Urogynecology and Reconstructive Pelvic Surgeon who treats patients from both the Watson Clinic Bella Vista Building and Watson Clinic Bartow Building B.



Tarek Garas, MD

Other factors that can lead to incontinence include repetitive coughing and sneezing, certain exercises, a job that requires you to lift heavy objects, or other activities that apply chronic pressure on the abdominal wall.

Common and treatable

The condition is much more common than women may think, and it shouldn't be considered a normal part of aging. A wide range of treatments are available that can help patients get their life back.

“It all starts with a nonsurgical approach, which can include Kegel exercises to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles and diet modifications that exclude foods and drinks that may overly stimulate the bladder,” Dr. Garas shares.

For many people, these and other nonsurgical steps can make the condition easier to manage and a more acceptable factor of daily life. Others who don't want to live with the condition in any capacity may opt for the latest minimally invasive surgical approach instead.

Sacral neuromodulation is a process that helps patients regain permanent control over urinary and fecal incontinence issues. A very small device and lead are implanted near the sacrum at the small of a patient's back. The device emits electrical impulses that modulate the urgency to urinate. The patient can control the intensity of these impulses based on her specific needs.

“This is one of the most fulfilling procedures I perform,” Dr. Garas says. “The improvements my patients experience are life-changing.”



Know your options



For additional insights from Dr. Garas on incontinence and the most effective therapies to treat it, tune in to Episode 7 of the Watson Clinic Health Talk podcast. Scan the QR code or visit [WatsonClinic.com/Podcast](https://www.watsonclinic.com/podcast) to listen.

To schedule a consultation with Dr. Garas, call 863-680-7243.



Living and healing together

An all-encompassing healthcare experience addresses more than just a patient's physical maladies. This is certainly true in the world of cancer care, where the stresses of diagnosis and treatment can leave patients feeling isolated and emotionally wrought. The Watson Clinic Foundation's Arts in Medicine (AIM) program works to uplift the spirit and strengthen the resolve of patients during these challenging times.

"Arts and medicine are not two things we typically think go together," said AIM program Coordinator Tiffany Van Wieren during a recent conversation on the Watson Clinic Health Talk podcast. "But since the dawn of time, we've been using the arts to heal."

From stressful to joyful

Extensive research shows that engagement in the creative arts reduces anxiety, stress and pain levels, which can in turn improve patient outcomes. The sense of community that results from shared creative activities can also

foster profound improvements in a patient's general well-being. Their focus veers from the stressful to the meditative and joyful.

"Creativity has everything to do with connection," says Van Wieren. "That connection can add years to your life."

Founded in 2008 as an extension of the Watson Clinic Foundation, the AIM program is housed on the second floor of the Watson Clinic Cancer & Research Center at 1730 Lakeland Hills Blvd. in Lakeland. The program encourages patients and their caregivers to participate in craft- and jewelry-making, painting, paper quilling, making collaborative art pieces, and a variety of other creative endeavors.

The community at large has embraced the role the arts can



play in overall health and wellness. Last year, Lakeland declared July 27th Arts & Health Day, and 21 local organizations joined AIM to accept the proclamation by providing an entire week of arts and health activities. AIM recently received a generous grant from the Polk Arts and Cultural Alliance to expand these efforts in 2025.

Share your creative spark

For more information and to learn how you can help improve the lives of cancer patients in our community, visit [WatsonClinic.com/AIM](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/AIM).

You can help

Learn how you can volunteer your time and talents to Arts in Medicine by scanning the QR code or visiting [WatsonClinic.com/AIM](https://www.WatsonClinic.com/AIM).





Sign up **Today!**



WATSON CLINIC

Mammograms *Save* Lives

An annual mammogram is your best defense against breast cancer. At Watson Clinic, our team of fellowship-trained mammographers use highly advanced imaging technologies to keep you strong and informed through every step of your breast health journey.

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