Digestive problems leaving you with tummy troubles? Everyone gets a stomachache once in a while, but there are actually several organs in your digestive system that can cause abdominal pain. Digestive issues can be troublesome, causing a growing number of doctor visits and hospitalizations for Americans. Although your gut is an essential part of your digestive system, it also plays an important role in your overall wellness.

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**Under Control?**
High blood pressure, or hypertension, forces your heart to work harder than normal to pump adequate amounts of blood throughout your body. Over time, this extra work causes the muscles of the heart to enlarge, which can lead to heart failure.

**Community Memorial Celebrates National Nurses Week**
Mark your calendars for a weeklong celebration at Community Memorial Hospital as we recognize the men and women who promote and support the health of our community during National Nurses Week.
GERD or gastroesophageal reflux disease, is one of the most common digestive problems. A weak muscle between the stomach and the esophagus allows stomach acid to splash upwards, causing pain in the upper stomach or lower chest. This pain is often referred to as heartburn. Community Memorial Hospital (CMH) fellowship-trained surgeon Dennis Blom, MD says, “patients who have GERD often ignore more common symptoms including chronic cough, hoarseness, asthma and sleep apnea, which can signal a more serious problem.” The Center for Heartburn and Digestive Disorders at CMH is the only center of its kind in the Mohawk Valley. For patients the center features full-scope digestive management through alignment and integration with the team of primary care providers, including pulmonology and behavioral health specialists. “Integration allows for a team-based approach where all members of the care plan are involved. This is a differentiator for our region and outcomes are better for patients”. Dr. Blom’s surgical approach is a comprehensive one beginning with a systematic foregut evaluation, meaning the doctor evaluates your digestive tract to ensure he knows the exact cause of your problem. If surgery is indicated, he performs a procedure called a nissen fundiplication, which is most often done laparoscopically meaning very small incisions. For more information visit our website at www.communitymemorial.org.

I’m writing this letter to say that I’m thankful for Dr. Dennis Blom and the Community Memorial Hospital staff. Four years ago, I was diagnosed with Crest Syndrome. I had severe heartburn and vomited daily. I saw many specialists, most of whom did not know much about Crest Syndrome. My GI doctor sent me for several tests. I failed them all. They tried botox in my esophagus. That helped for about 2-3 months. I went to Rochester and Albany to see specialists. Some said that I had scleroderma in my esophagus, but none had answers. When I heard there was a GI surgeon in Hamilton, I asked to be referred to him. Dr. Blom saw me and did another endoscopy so he could see for himself. I had a hiatal hernia. He repaired it and did a nissen fundiplication. I was on several medications to deal with reflux, which I no longer need and now take only two medications in the morning and two in the evening. My recovery has been remarkable. I had very little pain, no heartburn and no vomiting. I feel like I have my life and health back.

Thank you with sincere gratitude, Doreen Vaun
High blood pressure, or hypertension, forces your heart to work harder than normal to pump adequate amounts of blood throughout your body. Over time, this extra work causes the muscles of the heart to enlarge, which can lead to heart failure. The higher your blood pressure is and the longer it goes uncontrolled determines the effect it has on your body. In November 2017 the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology announced that the national guidelines for high blood pressure were reduced from 140/90 to 130/80 for the general population. The shift in the guidelines might mean that the prevalence of hypertension in adults would rise given the new thresholds. Community Memorial Hospital Family Medicine Physician Sunny Nelson, MD remarked on the new guidelines recently: “The new guidelines acknowledge that the changes and damage that occur in the blood vessels start as soon as your blood pressure starts to increase. Because hypertension is one of the leading causes of death and disability, recognizing it earlier helps patients prevent further increase in blood pressure and the complications that hypertension causes such as heart disease, stroke, and other vascular disease.”

**Effects of Hypertension**
Atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries, is a possible result of high blood pressure. Increased pressure on the inner walls of blood vessels causes a build-up of fat, cholesterol and other substances, which can lead to hardening of the arteries. When arteries harden, it becomes more difficult for blood to flow through them contributing to high blood pressure that can lead directly to a heart attack, stroke or heart failure. High blood pressure can also cause the arteries to weaken and bulge; forming an aneurysm that may rupture and is life threatening.

High blood pressure not only affects the arteries within the body, but it can also affect the blood vessels within the kidneys. The blood vessels within the kidneys may weaken or narrow, which disrupts their normal functioning.

The rate your body metabolizes certain substances is also affected by high blood pressure. This syndrome includes disorders such as high triglycerides, low good (HDL) cholesterol, and high insulin levels. High blood pressure exacerbates these disorders and puts you at a greater risk for developing diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

Changing your lifestyle can greatly decrease your risk for high blood pressure. Your physician may also suggest medications to help reduce high blood pressure. You have control over everything else in your life — it’s time that you control your blood pressure as well.

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**Nurse of Distinction – Susan O’Sullivan**

On March 23, Community Memorial Hospital held its annual Employee Recognition night at the Palace Theatre in Hamilton. Among special recognition is the highly anticipated Annual Nurse of Distinction award, which was presented to Susan O’Sullivan. Nominated and voted on by peers, supervisors and medical staff, Susan is described as a committed professional, ready to take care of any patient coming through the emergency room. O’Sullivan has been at Community Memorial since 2012 and has been a mentor for nursing students who have come through our hospital for their clinical experience. Some of the nominations described Susan as a nurse who “cares deeply for her patients”; she is “the first person to go out of her way to do the right thing, whether that means washing a stretcher or mopping the floor”, and is “a wonderful asset to our Community Memorial family” who is “willing to try anything new if it benefits the patient”. Diane Chase, MS RN, Senior Director of Nursing Operations added “Susan is a very skilled nurse who puts the needs of her patient above everything else. She is known for her customer service both from the patients view as well as with her peers and co-workers. Susan can be called on at any time to help out in situations that may not necessarily involve the Emergency Room, which she calls home”. Congratulations to Susan on this well-deserved honor!
SAV E THE DATE:

URGENT CARE HOURS:
Monday thru Friday // 5:30-9:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday   // 10 am- 2 pm & 3 pm – 5:30 pm
(315) 648-6411

SAV E THE DATE:

Sunday, May 20    Monday, June 18    Saturday, October 20

Register for the Next Walk with a DOC at
WALKWITHADOC.ORG/OUR-LOCATIONS/HAMILTON-NY/

Be sure to follow and like us for the latest news and updates!
WWW.COMMUNITYMEMORIAL.ORG

Mark your calendars for a weeklong celebration at Community Memorial Hospital as we recognize the men and women who promote and support the health of our community during National Nurses Week. This special week, annually beginning on May 6, which is National Nurses day, and commencing on Florence Nightingale’s birthday (May 12) provides the opportunity to recognize nurses who provide exceptional care for patients not only at the bedside, but in all settings; our family health centers, operating rooms, in patient education and administration. Did you know that Community Memorial Hospital is the ONLY hospital in the state of New York to achieve one of Healthgrades America’s 100 Best Hospitals for Joint Replacement in 2016 AND one of the 100 Best Hospitals for Overall Orthopedics? And we are the only four-star rated hospital in Central New York, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. These ratings and accolades don’t just happen. People make them happen. Nurses help make them happen. Thank you to all nurses—your profession is appreciated and admired!

Help us save paper: if you would like to receive ONLY an electronic copy of Healthy Living or if you do not want to receive future publications of Healthy Living from Community Memorial please contact Foundation@cmhhamilton.com or call 315-824-7036.

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL CELEBRATES
NATIONAL NURSES WEEK MAY 6-12