

March

2024



# SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

*Treating you better...for life.*

## The Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center at Saint Peter's University Hospital Earns Reaccreditation



The Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center at Saint Peter's University Hospital has been reaccredited through 2026 by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC). The state-of-the-art Birth Center is New Jersey's first birth center to be located on the grounds of a hospital and is the location of Saint Peter's midwifery practice, where prenatal office visits, birthing classes, and the actual birthing experience take place. The Birth Center has proudly delivered 228 babies since its opening in November 2019.

**The Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center at Saint Peter's is designed for women who are looking for a more physiologic childbirth experience under the care of certified nurse-midwives. A variety of nonpharmaceutical pain management options are offered including hydrotherapy, aromatherapy and nerve stimulation. It is also equipped with various tools including birth balls, peanut balls, and birth stools to facilitate a variety of different position options in labor.**

The 4,100 square foot Birth Center includes two birthing suites which look and feel more like a home than a delivery room. Each birthing suite has a queen bed, spa-size tub, and shower, plus space to accommodate family and other support individuals. The Birth Center also includes a reception area, exam rooms, a lounge, dining area, and kitchenette. Women also have access to a private garden if they want to walk outside during labor.

"We offer a comfortable setting for our patients and focus on patient-centered care that is grounded in shared decision-making," said Katelyn Rasmus, CNM, MSN, RNC-OB, CEFM, midwifery clinical director at Saint Peter's. "The reaccreditation of the Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center is a testament to the high-quality care we provide through our midwifery practice."



Women interested in establishing care with Saint Peter's certified nurse-midwives should reach out to the Birth Center after they receive a positive pregnancy test.

"We encourage women who are expecting to call our office so we can arrange an appointment between eight and 10 weeks," Rasmus said. "We do understand that some women may start their care elsewhere and then later decide they would prefer to birth with us in the Birth Center. For these patients, we ask them to contact us as soon as possible."

Before scheduling a visit, the team at the Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center will review the records of transferring patients from their current provider to ensure that they are a suitable candidate.

"We take a personalized approach at Saint Peter's. Every expectant mother's risk is evaluated during their prenatal appointments and communicated with them consistently throughout the duration of their pregnancy. We want to ensure a positive and safe experience for our patients," said Pamela Harmon, DNP, MSN, RNC-NIC, director of the Women and Children's Division at Saint Peter's University Hospital and administrative director of the Mary V. O'Shea Birth Center.



Central to the experience is the mother's birth plan. Throughout the pregnancy, expectant mothers document their personal preferences and wishes for how the labor should progress — everything from designating support individuals in attendance to labor expectations and preferences for medical intervention, should the need arise.

To enhance quality of care, Saint Peter's has launched TeamBirth. It includes a discussion between the expecting mother and her birth team, reviewing the protocols to be followed throughout the birthing process — one that aligns with her hopes, desires and concerns.

"TeamBirth is a structured method to foster better communication between laboring mothers and the clinical care team caring for them, whether you are giving birth in our Birth Center or in the Labor and Delivery unit of our hospital," said Harmon. "This model prioritizes person-centered care, trusting relationships, transparency, and informed decision-making. The goal is for expecting mothers to feel heard and supported making their own right choices for themselves, their neonates, and their families. Having a conversation at every intervention offered throughout care and supporting the patient's informed consent or refusal ensures that everyone is on the same page about her wishes and risks throughout the pregnancy and delivery."



Stock Photo. Posed by model.

**To learn more or to make an appointment, visit [saintpetershcs.com/midwiferyservices](https://saintpetershcs.com/midwiferyservices) or call 732.339.7879.**



# MENOPAUSE: WHAT'S NORMAL AND NOT NORMAL?

Menopause is the ending of menstruation, a natural biological phase in a woman's life that marks the end of her reproductive years. It typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, but some women may enter menopause earlier or later.

Menopause occurs due to a decline in the production of reproductive hormones, particularly estrogen and progesterone. As a result, women experience physical and emotional changes during this period.

The transition into menopause often begins with a period called perimenopause, a phase characterized by hormonal fluctuations and changes in menstrual patterns. During perimenopause, which can last for several years, it is normal for women to experience:

- Irregular periods
- Hot flashes
- Night sweats
- Mood swings
- Vaginal dryness
- Difficulty losing weight



"Once a woman has gone 12 consecutive months without menstruating, she is considered to have reached menopause. However, it's essential to recognize that menopause is more than just the absence of menstruation; it represents a significant hormonal shift that can impact various aspects of a woman's physical and emotional health," said Maureen Cernadas, MD, FACOG, gynecologic surgeon at Brunswick Hills OB-GYN/Axia Women's Health in East Brunswick. Dr. Cernadas currently serves as president of the Medical Staff at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

### MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS

Irregular periods

Hot flashes

Night sweats

Central illustration of a woman in a purple top.

Mood swings

Vaginal dryness

Difficulty losing weight

While experiencing symptoms during menopause is common and often manageable, certain signs may warrant medical attention:

- Severe hot flashes that interfere with daily activities or sleep
  - Persistent mood changes affecting daily life
  - Concerns about bone health or osteoporosis
  - Heart health issues
  - Significant memory problems or cognitive changes
  - Vaginal dryness and pain
- ★ Vaginal bleeding or spotting after menopause warrants immediate medical attention

Understanding what is normal during menopause and when to seek medical help is crucial for effectively managing this transition, says Dr. Cernadas. To schedule a women's health appointment with Saint Peter's, visit [SPPANJ.com](https://www.sppanj.com) or [saintpetershcs.com/womenshealthcenter](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/womenshealthcenter).

## Community Calendar

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit [saintpetershcs.com/events](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/events). Most programs are FREE unless noted; please call for information.

### Cancer Support

- Bone Marrow Transplant**  
For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant  
Call for information: 732.235.8522
- Breast Cancer**  
Call for information: 732.235.7011
- Gynecologic Cancer**  
In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central NJ  
Call for information: 732.235.6792
- Living with Cancer**  
Call for information: 732.235.7557

### Diabetes Education\*

- For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.
- Diabetes Self-Management Education\***  
Call for information: 732.339.7630
  - Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education\***  
Call for information: 732.339.7630
  - Prevent T2 Program**  
Call for information and registration: 732.339.7772

### Parent Education

- Some parenting classes are being held online. Register at [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation). Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579.
- Baby Care Birth Center Class**  
(for moms under midwifery care)
  - Breastfeeding Class**
  - Grandparents Class**
  - Hypnobirthing**
  - Marvelous Multiples New Daddy Class**
  - Prenatal Yoga/Exercise Class**
  - Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes**
  - Sibling Class**
  - Spinning Babies**

### Parent Support

- Registration is required. Visit [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation) or call 732.745.8579.
- Breastfeeding Support Group**  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: March 5 • 1 pm
  - New Moms Support Group "Life Will Never Be The Same"**  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: March 5 • 12 pm

### Support Groups

- Bariatric Nutrition Support**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: March 14 • 6 – 7 pm  
Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information
- Bereavement**  
Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565
- Craniofacial Teen Girls**  
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113
- MyGoal Autism Family**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month  
Next meeting: March 10 • 3 pm  
Call 877.886.9462 or email [info@mygoalautism.org](mailto:info@mygoalautism.org) for virtual meeting information
- SHARE**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: March 21 • 7 – 9 pm  
Call 732.745.8522 or email [imariano@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:imariano@saintpetersuh.com) for Zoom link
- Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support**  
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8653

### Saint Peter's Virtual Urgent Care

- Monday – Friday  
5 to 10 p.m.
- Saturday & Sunday  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- [saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare)

SAINT PETER'S FOUNDATION

## Save the Date

SAINT PETER'S GALA  
MAY 11, 2024

COMMUNITY GOLF OUTING  
JUNE 17, 2024

PRESIDENT'S GOLF CLASSIC  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

## COVID-19 Vaccines

For age eligibility and clinic locations and dates, visit [saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine)

**Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit [saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician](https://www.saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician).**  
**Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at [BookMySPDoc.com](https://www.BookMySPDoc.com)**  
This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.

## SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

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