



Mount  
Sinai  
South  
Nassau

SPECIAL EDITION: JULY 2020

# Healthy Outlook

a health and wellness newsletter

## Don't Put Your Health on Hold


As the COVID-19 pandemic was overtaking Long Island in early March, Roderick Middleton, 26, noticed a golf ball-sized lump on his neck that gave him pause.

Mr. Middleton consulted Rajiv Datta, MD, Medical Director of Mount Sinai South Nassau's Gertrude & Louis Feil Cancer Center and Chair of Surgery, who was concerned by the size and growth of the mass but could not operate due to the coronavirus outbreak.

As the hospital returned to more normal operations in May, Dr. Datta was in the operating room removing the lump from Mr. Middleton's neck.

Fortunately, the lump was benign and he went home that day. But many people are risking their health by putting off care because of coronavirus fears, doctors say.

"We are hearing from our physicians that some patients put off seeking care during and after the COVID-19 surge for cardiac, oncology, and other medical conditions that could become more serious," said Dr. Adhi Sharma, Mount Sinai South Nassau's Chief Medical Officer and Executive Vice President for Clinical and



Rajiv Datta, MD, Medical Director of the Gertrude & Louis Feil Cancer Center and Chair of Surgery, left, removes a golf ball-sized lump from Roderick Middleton.

Photo Credit: Newsday/Jeff Basinger

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## › Don't Delay Needed Treatments

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Professional Affairs. "Those patients should not avoid care out of fear of COVID-19. They may be putting themselves more at risk by staying home and delaying needed treatment"

### Ensuring Patient Safety

The hospital has taken extraordinary measures to ensure that all its facilities, including the comprehensive network of outpatient specialized health care centers (see story, right), are deep cleaned and safe for patients and staff.

"We are adjusting to the 'new normal' and that means a hypervigilance on patient safety, cleaning procedures, and infection control to ensure patient and staff safety," said Richard J. Murphy, President and CEO of Mount Sinai South Nassau, one of the only hospitals on Long Island designated as an Infectious Diseases Society of America Antimicrobial Stewardship Center of Excellence. "Residents should not be afraid to come to the hospital, including to our Emergency Department, if they need medical care. They should not put their health on hold any longer."

All areas that once housed COVID-19 patients, including the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Units, have been terminally cleaned with EPA-approved, hospital-grade sterilization agents. Some areas are also receiving fresh coats of paint and new fixture repairs. All of this is in addition to the daily deep cleaning of the hospital.

While a small number of COVID-19 patients are still being treated at Mount Sinai South Nassau, they are housed in separate units, isolated from non-COVID-19 patients. The Emergency Department also has separate areas for patients with non-COVID-19 ailments who are seeking emergency treatment.

Patients visiting the hospital for any procedure, cancer care or infusion treatment, or surgery will be required to undergo pre-procedure COVID-19 testing within five days before the procedure at a new drive-up site in the hospital's Washington Ave., parking lot.

Hospital staff also are instructed to take all precautions, including wearing full personal protective equipment when needed, to ensure the safety of staff and patients. ■



**Environmental Services** team members scrub and sterilize the hospital.

### New Visiting Policy

Mount Sinai South Nassau is welcoming back visitors. The hospital's visitor policy follows state guidelines and allows only one healthy visitor, age 18 and older, each day for no longer than four hours, from 4 pm to 8 pm. Behavioral Health visiting is from 6 pm to 8 pm. No visitors are permitted in the hospital's Transitional Care Unit or Emergency Department at this time. Visitors are required to wear masks and undergo symptom and temperature checks.

**For more information, go to [southnassau.org/visiting](https://southnassau.org/visiting)**

## Don't Let Fear of COVID-19 Keep You From Scheduling Your Outpatient Appointment

As Mount Sinai South Nassau's outpatient medical offices ramp up health screenings, you may be wondering if it's safe to schedule an appointment. Your safety and well-being are the hospital's top priority. To that end, Mount Sinai South Nassau is following CDC guidelines to ensure social distancing and has implemented a number of initiatives to enhance patient safety in its outpatient medical practices:



- Prescreening for COVID-19 symptoms when patients schedule and confirm their appointment by phone
- Exam rooms are sanitized after each patient visit
- Face masks are required for all staff and patients. (Masks will be provided to patients who need them.)
- Digital check-ins
- Staggered appointments
- Social distancing is practiced in waiting rooms

However, if you feel uncomfortable about scheduling an in-person visit, you have the option to see your physician remotely using video telehealth technology.

**TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT, call your Mount Sinai South Nassau provider or visit [southnassau.org/affiliatedpractices](https://southnassau.org/affiliatedpractices).**

# Home Care Helps See Discharged COVID-19 Patients Through to Recovery

COVID-19 took its toll on Elizabeth Flynn, 57, of Long Beach. After 44 days of battling coronavirus and double pneumonia at Mount Sinai South Nassau, the retired real estate agent finally went home on May 8.

But the exercise enthusiast is far from ready to return to the gym. Doctors have prescribed Ms. Flynn—who came close to being placed on a ventilator—physical rehabilitation and oxygen therapy for the next month or two and will need follow-up appointments with a cardiologist and pulmonologist.

Ms. Flynn is not atypical. Many patients with COVID-19 admitted to Mount Sinai South Nassau and other hospitals require post-hospital care. Of the 274 patients released from Mount Sinai South Nassau from March 6 to May 21 who required home care, more than one-third were recovering from COVID-19, according to Nancy Helenek, RN, Administrative Director of Care Continuum, adding that many of these patients suffered with pneumonia and respiratory distress while they were in the hospital.

In mid-March, doctors admitted Deborah Rifenburg, 61, of Oceanside, a grandmother of four, to Mount Sinai South Nassau, due to complications from COVID-19. Despite lifesaving medications and oxygen, her condition took a turn for the worse and she found herself in the hospital's ICU, needing a machine to breathe. After six days, she came off the ventilator. On Monday, April 20, she went home to begin home care, the next phase of her recovery.

By the time patients are ready to go home, many still suffer with “fatigue and weakness, they get winded with



**Anthony Greco**, retired NYPD officer, goes home to Wantagh after battling COVID-19 for 61 days.



**Debbie Rifenburg** was released from Mount Sinai South Nassau on April 20, to begin home care, the next phase of her recovery.

slight exertion, and have a persistent cough,” said Aaron E. Glatt, MD, Chair of the Department of Medicine and Hospital Epidemiologist. “These symptoms resolve slowly.”

During the start of Mount Sinai South Nassau's Home Care visit with Ms. Flynn, a registered nurse instructed her in the safe use of oxygen and evaluated her for the telehealth program, which remotely checks vital signs and pulse oximetry, a device that measure oxygen levels in the blood.

“Our Home Care program offers patients recovering from coronavirus and any number of illnesses, such as stroke and heart disease, a personalized care plan and one-on-one attention.”

—Nancy Helenek, RN  
Administrative Director of Care Continuum

The data is monitored by the services' telehealth central station registered nurse who communicates with the patient's nurse and physician, as necessary, explained Ms. Helenek.

Since late April, Mount Sinai South Nassau's Home Care Services has been monitoring Ms. Rifenburg's vital signs and pulse oximetry, evaluating her breathing and providing her with twice weekly physical therapy to improve her physical stamina and mobility. So far, she has shown gains in strength and endurance, Ms. Helenek said.

“Our Home Care program offers patients recovering from coronavirus and any number of illnesses, such as stroke and heart disease, a personalized care plan and one-on-one attention,” said Ms. Helenek. “Our health care professionals help our patients recover faster in the comfort of their homes and help prevent readmission to the hospital.”

**For more information about Mount Sinai South Nassau's Home Care program, call 877-SOUTH-NASSAU (877-768-8462).**

One Healthy Way  
Oceanside, NY 11572

## For Donations

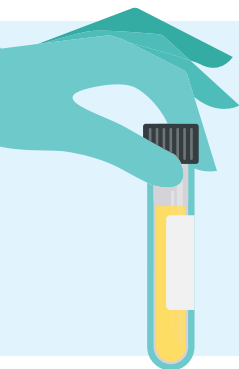
If you would like to make a monetary donation to Mount Sinai South Nassau's COVID-19 Respond Fund, go to [southnassau.org/donate](https://southnassau.org/donate)



## Antibody Screening Now Available at 10 Sites Across South Shore

You do not need a previous positive COVID-19 test to qualify for antibody testing. The presence of COVID-19 antibodies in your blood is an indication that you *probably were exposed to* the virus, even if you did not have any symptoms and that you may have some degree of immunity to the virus. A negative antibody test does not guarantee that you were not exposed.

The antibody tests administered by Mount Sinai South Nassau are authorized by the FDA and have a high degree of reliability.



If you have developed antibodies to the virus, you may be eligible to help others by donating antibody-rich plasma at the New York Blood Center. The plasma can be used to help treat COVID positive patients who are fighting the virus.

**New and existing Mount Sinai South Nassau patients** can get antibody testing at:

- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Baldwin Primary Care**  
2280 Grand Ave., Suite 208, Baldwin; 516-623-4800
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Bellmore Primary Care**  
2750 Merrick Rd., Bellmore; 516-409-2000
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Freeport Primary Care**  
155 W. Merrick Rd., Freeport; 516-379-3139
- **Mount Sinai Doctors**  
1436 Broadway, Hewlett; 516-360-2962
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Hewlett Cardiovascular**  
1420 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Hewlett; 516-374-8682
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Long Beach Cardiology and Primary Care**  
325 W. Park Ave., Long Beach; 516-432-2004
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Lynbrook Primary Care**  
185 Merrick Rd., Lynbrook; 516-887-0077
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Oceanside Primary Care**  
2965 Long Beach Rd., Oceanside; 516-593-8953
- **Mount Sinai Doctors–Oceanside Family Medicine**  
196 Merrick Rd., Oceanside; 516-255-8400

**Please call to schedule an appointment.**



### COVID-19 Viral and Antibody Testing for Long Beach

Mount Sinai South Nassau is partnering with Nassau County to offer Nassau residents COVID-19 viral and antibody testing at

**Mount Sinai South Nassau's Center for Primary Care at Long Beach,**  
761 Franklin Blvd., Long Beach.

There is no charge to the patient. Testing is available Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 9 am to 1 pm.

**Appointments are required.**

**Call 516-544-2351 for an appointment.**

**To reach Mount Sinai South Nassau 24/7, call 516-632-3000.**



The information provided in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Except where noted, models are used in photos and their appearance here is not reflective of a specific disease profile. Read Healthy Outlook online at [mountsinai.org/southnassau](https://mountsinai.org/southnassau).