

HealthLinks

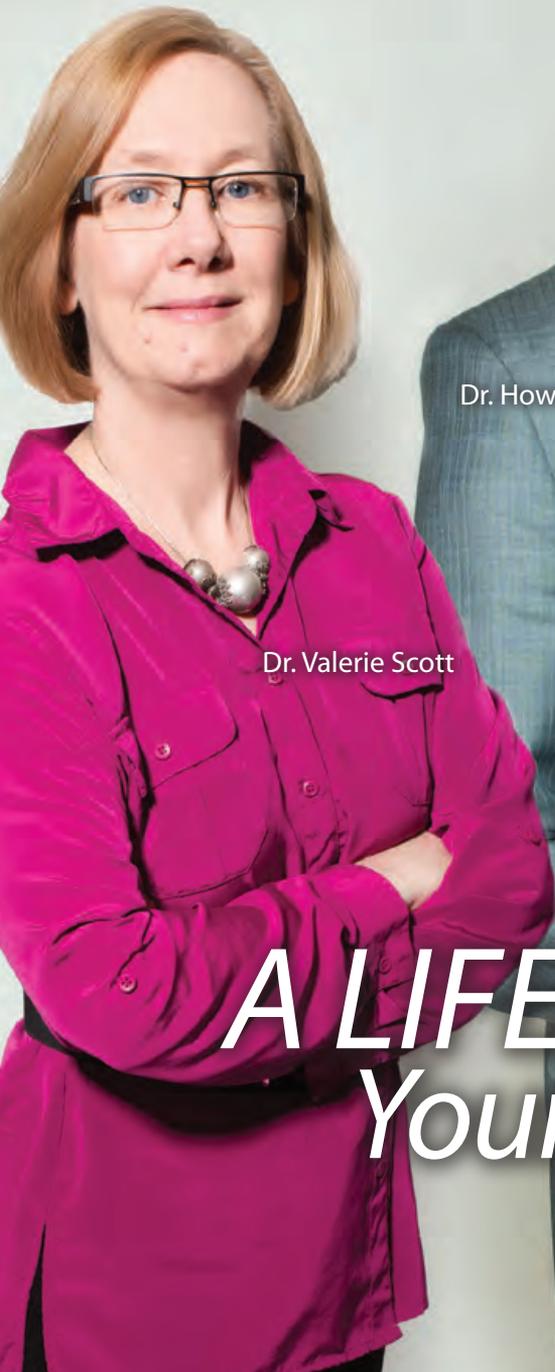
YOUR PRESCRIPTION FOR WELL-BEING

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EVERYWHERE**

Charleston's Specialists

**EIGHT DAYS
A WEEK**

Coastal Pediatric Associates



Dr. Valerie Scott



Dr. Howard Evert



Dr. Kay Durst

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Physician*

A LIFELONG FRIEND YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

THE U.S. HEALTH CARE system is a complex maze for doctors and patients alike, a complicated conglomeration of difficult-to-understand terminology and incomprehensible insurance rules and regulations that are more likely to cause a headache than to cure one.

BY STACY E. DOMINGO

Should you visit your doctor every time you or one of the kids sneezes or gets a stomach ache? Is it worth the cost of your co-payment and the time you'll miss at work just to find out you are suffering from a minor ailment that will go away on its own in a few days? Or is it better not to take any chances, to rush to your primary care physician's office every time you're not feeling quite right?

In most cases, it's better to be safe than sorry – to let your doctor tell you whether your physical problems are something to worry about. This is why it's important to have a primary care physician who can treat your symptoms and help you live a lifestyle that emphasizes prevention.

“Helping people navigate their way through the maze is a primary

care physician's job,” said Dr. Howard Evert, medical director and president of MUSC Physicians Primary Care. “A primary doctor doesn't just see you and then refer you to a specialist. A primary doctor understands day-to-day health care and will get to know you and your family, as well as any other factors that can have an impact on your health.”

Internists such as Dr. Evert deal with the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of adult diseases in areas such as cardiology, endocrinology and infectious diseases. They are particularly skilled in the management of patients with more than one medical issue, and they care for patients both

in and out of the hospital.

“Internists strictly work on individuals 16 or older,” explained Dr. Evert. “Primary care is my life. It's what I do. In the new health care system, people may be required to find a primary doctor, so finding

someone now is a good idea.”

Family doctors care for the physical, mental and emotional health of their patients and their patients' families. They are trained in all areas of medicine and can diagnose and treat a wide range of problems. When necessary, they send patients to specialists.

Dr. Kay Durst of Durst Family Medicine on Sullivan's Island treats several gen-

erations of patients within the same family, something her own relatives been doing for years.

“My grandfather, Dr. George



Durst Sr., started our practice in the early 1940s,” said Dr. Durst, who is part of East Cooper Medical Center’s physician network. “My grandfather practiced here, as did my father and I and other passionate physicians. Family practice has been around for a long time, and we are glad to see that patients are coming back around to reap the benefits of having a primary doctor.”

It’s important for a doctor to know his or her patients. Whether you are 8 or 80, having a trained, compassionate physician who knows your background and specific health concerns will go a long way toward making you feel better.

“I think the changes in the approach to health care are a breath of fresh air, with the emphasis on one doctor who knows all about you,” said Dr. Valerie Scott, who is

with Mount Pleasant Family Practice and the Roper St. Francis Physician Network. “As a doctor who previously worked in urgent care and is now a family practitioner, I know the difference. Urgent care looks at the current problem. There is a role for this, but a primary doctor will take the acute problem and apply it to the overall lifestyle.”

For example, a young girl suffers from a compromised immune system and is regularly treated by several specialists. Because her blood work is abnormal, her mother’s stress level rises. Her primary care physician, who knows the family’s history, can help the daughter and the mother as well.

And wouldn’t it be nice not to have to write down your family’s entire health history every time you visit a doctor? Your family physician knows that breast cancer or diabetes

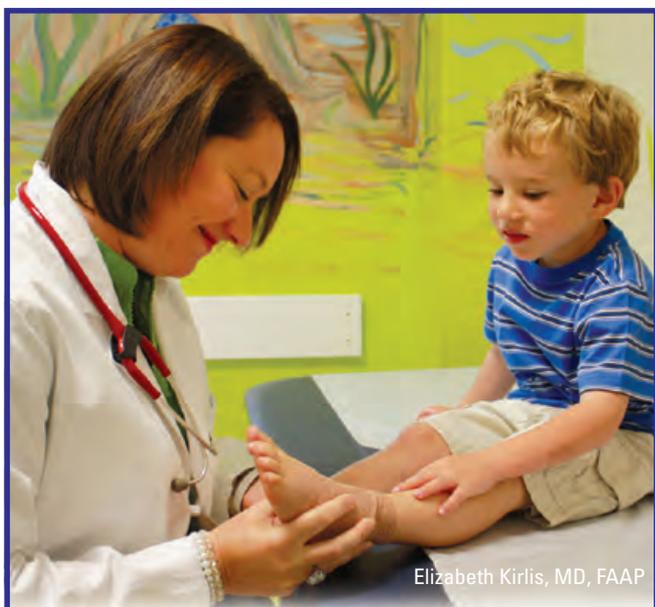
runs in your family, which means he or she will be on the lookout for the warning signs.

“There are several reasons to a patient’s advantage in having a primary care physician. Studies show people live longer and with less out-of-pocket costs. We can guide you to the proper specialist or provide treatment,” Dr. Scott explained.

Pediatricians are wonderful primary doctors for newborns to young adults and obstetricians can care for women in many ways that are important to overall health. While both fields fall into the realm of primary care, they are limited in the type of treatment they can provide.

“It is essential for men and women to have a primary doctor,” Dr. Scott added. “There are vaccines that adults need, but so many go without them. Our cars get a checkup, our children





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get a checkup and so must young and older adults. The early 20s is the best time to start with a primary doctor.”

Influenza, MMR and Hepatitis A and B are just a few of the vaccinations adults should have; your primary care doctor will make sure they are up-to-date.

In the Carolina Lowcountry, three major health care providers and their networks of primary care physicians, surgeons and specialists give patients a wide range of options for their medical care. Unfortunately, that’s not the case in rural areas, where a shortage of doctors is a major problem.

“We have people who come from all over the state, not just the tri-county area, because of a lack of physicians in their area,” Dr. Durst said. “Family doctors specialize in serving a large age group and deal with a large family dynamic. We are trained to assist in surgery as well as delivering babies. A lot of people aren’t aware of this.



We can perform suturing so you don’t have to run to an urgent care center.”

Dr. Evert, who has practiced for nearly 37 years, has seen and heard a lot over the course of his lengthy career. He realizes that it is getting more difficult for all physicians to take the time they need to treat their patients.

“It is very difficult for most to navigate through the health care system because it has become increasingly complicated. Primary care physicians are typically the



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lowest paid and have more regulatory burdens. We spend 30 percent to 45 percent of our time with patients and the rest of the time on paperwork, which is very frustrating.”

Most doctors got into medicine because they genuinely care about people and want to help solve their health problems. All doctors aren't good fits for all patients, however. It is important for patients to try to match their personality with that of their primary doctor.

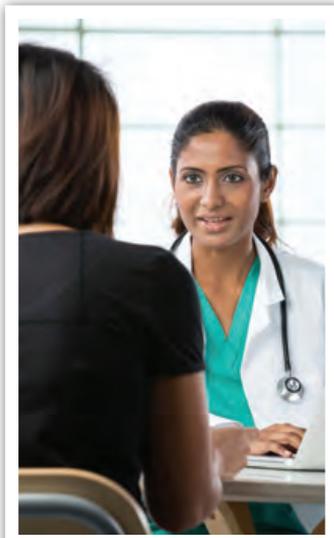
“I recommend that you search for a doctor who is board certified and adequately trained,” said Dr. Evert. “But I also think a personal connection will allow for open communication.”

Every physician interviewed for this article was emphatic about the importance of having a primary care physician.

Dr. Scott, who practiced on James Island for 10 years before moving to Mount Pleasant, suggested finding a family doctor before you face a medical emergency.

“Sometimes it can take a while to obtain that first new patient appointment. An important note for some when choosing a physician is that an internist can admit a patient to the hospital and can deal with a chronic illness. Find someone who has an interest in your disease, if that is necessary.”

Dr. Durst agreed and added that patients also should consider whether



they would be more comfortable with a male or female primary care physician.

Regardless of how old you are or how healthy you think you are, an experienced, knowledgeable family care physician will help you navigate through the complex U.S. health care system. 🩺



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Flushing Away Your Digestive Issues

Dr. Margarita Murphy

THE OLD SAYING ABOUT AN APPLE A day keeping a doctor away has been repeated plenty of times – but it when it comes to fiber in the diet, Dr. Margarita Murphy said that one apple won't even come close.

In fact, the sad truth is that most of us don't get the brow-raising 30 grams of fiber recommended per day in our diets.

"I refrain from asking my patients to do something I can't do myself," remarked Dr. Murphy. "I stay busy, with little time to prepare meals, so I recommend regular fiber supplements."

BY DENISE K. JAMES

Fiber, which is all too scarce in American culture thanks to our trend of eating processed food products, can prevent plenty of digestive issues, including hemorrhoids and colon disease.

"It is amazing how something so simple can transform your health," she added.

Dr. Murphy is the president of Gastrointestinal Surgical Specialists, LLC, located in Mount Pleasant – though she hasn't always practiced medicine on this side of the Cooper River. She was originally working in downtown Charleston but decided that Mount Pleasant is preferable because of traffic, parking and a few other reasons. She stressed her aim to be part of the Mount Pleasant and East Cooper communities, which she called "wonderful."

"I feel committed," she said. "And that means having both of my businesses here – I have a surgery center, too – plus putting my kids in Mount Pleasant schools and living here."

Dr. Murphy spends ample professional time teaching other surgeons, either in Mount Pleasant or around other parts of the world, regarding the benefits of the Sacral Nerve Stimulator. SNS, which has been available and approved by the FDA since 2012, is an amazing treatment for patients suffering from fecal incontinence, who had very few options before this treatment was developed. Prior to SNS, many who suffered did not seek help. Unfortunately, they remained homebound and downright repressed by their digestive issues.

Among the few national or international teachers of the procedure, Dr. Murphy is thrilled to be able to use SNS to help her patients.



Dr. Margarita Murphy considers working with her patients to be "an incredibly special honor."

Photo by Brian Sherman.

"It has become the gold standard for treating this condition," she said. "We went from having little or inadequate treatment options to finding a quick, almost painless procedure that is largely curative."

It's certain that patients who find themselves in Dr. Murphy's capable hands credit her care, sense of humor and trustworthiness, as well as the SNS procedure, in helping them get well. Dr. Murphy candidly discussed how she considers working with her patients to be "an incredibly special honor" and strives to make them feel like part of her family.

"My patients often arrive scared and embarrassed to be there," she

admitted. "Then I get to know them – as people, moms, dads and children. I love them, and I feel blessed to have a profession that I honestly enjoy." 🩺

For more information about SNS and Gastrointestinal Surgical Specialists, visit www.colonsurgeonsofcharleston.com or call (843) 853-7730.



The Magic of Sight

Dr. Kerry Solomon

HOW DO YOU SEE THE WORLD around you? Many of us take good vision for granted, but, if your vision is less than perfect, there is a man who may be able to help you see the world more clearly.

His patients may think it is pure magic, but Dr. Kerry Solomon is renowned here in Mount Pleasant and around the world for his groundbreaking techniques in the fields of cataract and refractive surgery. He began

BY BARBARA MILLEN PATRICK

performing cataract procedures in 1990 and quickly became a leader, learning new technologies and leading the way to more advanced methods of vision correction. In 1996, Dr. Solomon was the first physician in South Carolina to perform LASIK procedures. Many patients suffering from myopia and astigmatism were finally able to toss their glasses and contact lenses aside.

Some doctors would have been satisfied, but Dr. Solomon has continued to push the envelope, ever working on newer and more precise techniques. Everyone, from the physicians to the support staff, brings their expertise and talent together to provide good outcomes coupled with the highest standard of customer service.

“I am part of Carolina Eyecare Physicians, and we have 16 to 18 providers and about 160 people on staff,” Dr. Solomon said. “We’re the largest group in the area, possibly in South Carolina.”

Dr. Solomon clearly enjoys his life’s profession and the joy it brings to thousands of patients who experience the thrill of crystal clear vision, possibly for the first time. He

has always been attracted to technology and the potential it represents.

“Vision is very precious. I’m interested the development of different technologies,” he said. “Now, when we perform cataract surgery, we can also correct near-sightedness and astigmatism at the same time.”

Dr. Solomon understands that customer service is just as important as technology.

“We’ve worked very hard and held focus groups. We are very organized. Our average waiting time is about 15 minutes,” he said, adding that their satisfaction scores exceed 99 percent.

Because every person – indeed, every eye – is different, Dr. Solomon develops a customized plan for each patient in order to provide the best results possible.

“Our outcomes are superb,” he said.

In addition to cataract and LASIK surgeries, Dr. Solomon treats dry eye syndrome, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. He continues research in these areas in order to develop new therapies. His list of recognitions and media exposure is extensive. But he sees each person as an individual and takes the time to make them feel that theirs is the most important appointment of the day.

“It all revolves around excellent customer service,” Dr. Solomon said.

He’s pretty clear on that. 



Photo courtesy of Dr. Kerry Solomon.

Dr. Kerry Solomon began performing cataract procedures in 1990 and quickly became a leader in the field.

Dr. Kerry Solomon is the director of Carolina Eyecare Physicians. More information and online appointments are available by visiting www.DrKerrySolomon.com. Appointments are available at four locations: Mount Pleasant, West Ashley, North Charleston and Summerville.



A New Way for a New Look

Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center

PROCEDURES THAT ENHANCE WELLNESS and beauty no longer require extensive anesthesia and extended recovery times. In fact, at Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center and Lowcountry Beauty and Wellness Spa, many of these procedures are minimally invasive or even non-invasive.

“Today’s technology leads people down a different path than just a few years ago,” Board-certified Plastic Surgeon Dr. Jack Hensel explained. “For example,

BY STACY E. DOMINGO

CoolSculpting and Venus Freeze can be great alternatives for those who do not want surgery. It can be done on your lunch break, and you can go back to work. You don’t have to wear a garment and there are no incisions. There’s no cutting at all.”

He added that he can provide options for people who want to lose loose skin and wrinkles but aren’t ready to take the facelift route. Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center offers procedures such as the Madonna lift to improve your look around the eyes; Smartskin or ablative treatment for skin tightening and wrinkles; and SideLaze to treat lower face laxity or jowls. These procedures utilize a laser that often requires only local anesthesia.

Dr. Hensel’s helpful staff leads the way when a person inquires about a procedure.

“Often the patient will call, we’ll discuss over the phone what he or she is looking for and we determine the best options,” explained Marketing Manager Michele Hensel. “We are very particular when considering whether a patient is a good candidate for a procedure. We want to make sure we are choosing the right procedures for the right patients in order to provide long-term satisfaction.”

Once the initial questions are answered and the patient is qualified for a procedure, he or she visits Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center for a one-on-one meeting with Dr. Hensel and the patient coordinator.

Dr. Hensel explained the importance of board

certification. To earn this distinction, a plastic surgeon must graduate from an accredited medical school, complete at least five years of surgical training and two years of plastic surgery residency training and pass comprehensive oral and written exams. Cosmetic surgeons, on the other hand, are in many cases doctors who take a weekend course to learn how to perform a specific procedure.

Lowcountry residents obviously recognize Dr.

Hensel’s expertise. He was named the Best Plastic Surgeon in East Cooper by readers of Mount Pleasant Magazine the past two years and has earned the same honor from Charleston City Paper for six years.

“We have the best of technology, and we like to bring what is on the West coast to the East coast,” said Dr. Hensel. “It is our job to make sure a procedure is the right procedure for you.” 

To learn more about minimally invasive or non-invasive procedures available at Lowcountry Plastic Surgery Center and Lowcountry Beauty and Wellness Spa, call (843) 971-2860 or visit www.LowcountryPlasticSurgery.com or SCCellulazeandSmartLipo.com.



Photo by Ronnie Martinelli.



Go with the Flow

The Vein Center Makes Feeling Good Easier

PAIN, FATIGUE, SWELLING AND GENERAL discomfort in the lower extremities of the body are no laughing matter – and yet many people who suffer from venous disease go untreated. In fact, according to Dr. Thomas R. Wieters of The Vein Center in Mount Pleasant, out of the 30+ million affected, only about 1.9 million seek help.

“Venous disease is among the most misunderstood entities in medicine,” remarked Dr. Wieters. “Too many people have the notion that vein issues are cosmetic. But this is not simply about looking good in a pair of Bermuda shorts. There are underlying medical issues affecting the appearance.”

BY DENISE K. JAMES

If you thought that Dr. Wieters only sees older folks at The Vein Center, think again. He was swift to mention that venous issues can happen to people of any age or sex. His youngest patient was an athlete in her 20s – “Her family still keeps in touch,” he said – and his oldest patient was a 95-year-old gentleman who had just finished a game of tennis.

And what exactly can cause blood flow problems? Heredity, pregnancy and working on your feet a lot are the culprits. According to Dr. Wieters, he treats plenty of nurses, teachers, restaurant servers and those in any profession that requires standing for long periods of time. His patient base is made up of about 80 percent women and about 20 percent men.

Until recently, there were not too many options for ridding the body of these troublemaker veins. Many women wore stockings, and many people opted for a surgery called vein stripping as well. According to Dr. Wieters, the procedures that are now available at The Vein Center are “a quantum leap beyond what we had before.”

“Venous disease was commonly underdiagnosed and undertreated due to lack of interest on the part of providers and reluctance to undergo procedures on the



Photo by Brian Sherman.

Dr. Thomas R. Wieters treats plenty of nurses, teachers, restaurant servers and those in any profession that requires standing for long periods of time.

part of patients,” he said.

Another notable move in the right direction for battling venous disease is a drug newly approved by the Food and Drug Administration known as Varithena. The drug, which will be available at The Vein Center in 2014, is a less invasive method of treating some vein inefficiencies.

“It will be a technology that allows us to treat the entire system with a chemical so there’s no recovery time at all,” explained Dr. Wieters.

Dr. Wieters was careful to point out that larger veins may still need additional treatment. Still, what goes on at The Vein Center is a vast improvement over vein-stripping surgeries – think of the new catheter treatment as “rerouting” blood flow so that it travels along healthy veins, while unhealthy veins are sealed off.

And because The Vein Center treats the underlying causes of the problem known as venous inefficiency, most nationwide insurance companies cover the catheter-based procedures.

“The procedure takes about 20 to 25 minutes,” Dr. Wieters pointed out. “You essentially go home with a band aid and go to work the next day.” 🩺

To find out more about The Vein Center, visit www.TheVeinCenterCharleston.com, or call (843) 881-VEIN.



Mother's Helper

Coastal Pediatric Associates

PARENTING IS A 24-HOUR, SEVEN-DAY-A-week challenge. Little ones don't come with instruction manuals, and that means lots of questions, often after-hours or on weekends. When your baby has a fever, your toddler seems lethargic or your grade-schooler flips off a skateboard in a bad way, you can't wait until Monday morning. You want immediate help.

That is why so many families choose Coastal Pediatric Associates. Unlike traditional medical practices, the physicians, nurse practitioners and office staff at Coastal Pediatric Associates operate on your schedule. The offices – there are two, one in Mount Pleasant and another in West Ashley – are open seven days a week for well and sick visits and are on call 24 hours to answer questions and offer advice when you are worried in the wee hours. And Monday through Thursday, the offices open at 7 a.m. and don't close until 8 p.m. – 9 p.m. in West Ashley – a boon to working parents.

BY BARBARA MILLEN PATRICK

“We're the only pediatrics practice open seven days,” Dr. Elizabeth Kirlis said, adding that extended hours mean fewer unnecessary emergency room visits and more convenience. “When parents are worried, they don't want to wait until 9 a.m., so they love that we open at 7.”

As much as parents appreciate Coastal Pediatric Associates, kids might love it more. The offices and atmosphere are welcoming and child-centered. The walls are adorned with whimsical art by a local muralist, which helps children feel better.

The success of the practice is based on the caring staff,

practices, the physicians, nurse practitioners

round-the-clock access and willingness to help. And both locations are expanding and adding more doctors who like the concept. As parents themselves, they understand your concerns. All physicians are board-certified, but, beyond that, they have special interests, such as autism spectrum or childhood allergies.

In addition to their physical locations, Coastal Pediatric Associates offers a virtual “office” online with a patient portal for making appointments and requesting medication refills or copies of records, as well as health news and information for new parents. You can also meet the doctors online to learn more about their specialties. With 20 providers on staff, one is bound to be a perfect fit.



Photo Courtesy of Coastal Pediatric Associates.

The success of Coastal Pediatric Associates is based on the caring staff, round-the-clock access and willingness to help.

“We're very flexible here,” Dr. Kirlis said. “We want to fit your schedule. Parents really appreciate the convenience.”

Coastal Pediatric Associates also reaches out with its free series, “What to Expect,” a class that provides helpful information for first-time parents.

Parents have many questions through the growing years. Is that snuffle a cold or an allergy? What is

the difference? Can allergies appear suddenly?

If you don't know, call one of your new family friends at Coastal Pediatric Associates. You'll get instant relief. 

Coastal Pediatric Associates is located at 1952 Long Grove Drive, suite 202, in Mount Pleasant. For an appointment, call (843) 971-2992. The West Ashley office is located at 2051 Charlie Hall Blvd.; the phone number is (843) 573-2535. Additional information can be found at www.CoastalPediatricAssociates.com.



Healthy Feet for a Healthy Life

Coastal Podiatry, LLC

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT OUR feet should be cherished – like a sip of century-old French wine paired with notes of Bach’s piano. Perhaps that statement might have been a slight hyperbole, but the point is that without healthy feet, our quality of life surely diminishes. That’s where Drs. Rahn and Tamika Ravenell of Coastal Podiatry, LLC come in.

Lowcountry born and raised Podiatrist Dr. Rahn Ravenell was Burke High School’s valedictorian before taking his talents to Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, where he graduated magna cum laude. It was in college, while working at a shoe store, that Dr. Ravenell fell for feet.

“I was working with runners, doing gait analysis, and became deeply invested in the biomechanics of how feet work,” said Dr. Ravenell. “My eyes opened to the idea of

becoming a podiatrist.”

Since earning his doctorate at the Temple University School of Podiatric Medicine, Dr. Ravenell has been a leader and pioneer in the field of podiatry.

While at Temple, Dr. Ravenell met his wife, Tamika, who was also studying for her doctorate in Podiatric Medicine. After gaining extensive field experience, with Tamika completing her residency at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York and Rahn at DeKalb Medical in Decatur, Georgia, the Ravenells joined forces to open their own practice in Mount Pleasant in 2011.

“We really appreciate and reflect the local family feel here in Mount Pleasant,” said Dr. Rahn.

Outside of the office, the Ravenells enjoy kayaking, the vibrant Charleston food scene and Seacoast Church. 

For more information, visit www.mtpleasantfootdoc.com or call (843) 856-5337.

Coastal Podiatry is committed to providing expert diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation in a caring and compassionate manner. At Coastal Podiatry, we offer a full range of podiatric services, including specialty foot care and reconstructive surgery to help relieve pain and restore your active lifestyle.

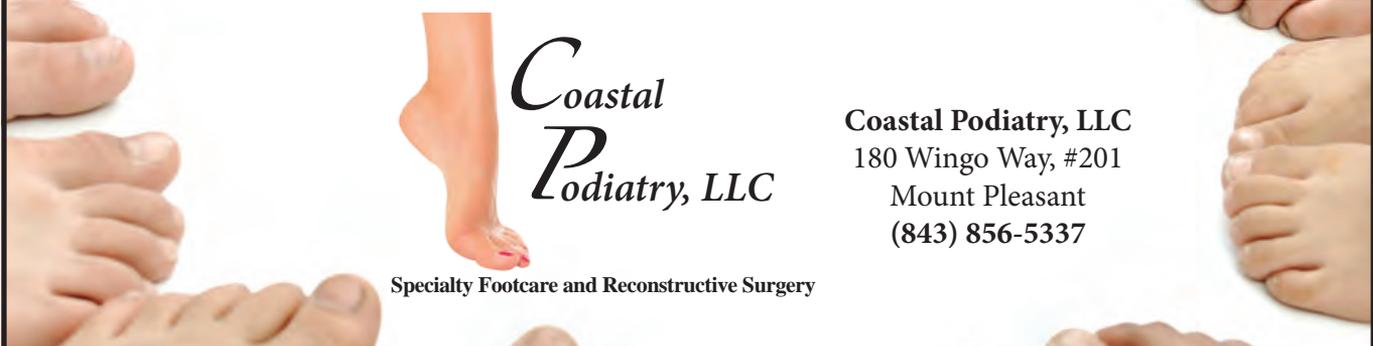




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Seeing is Believing Preferred EyeCare Center

MOST PEOPLE RELY ON SIGHT TO enhance their enjoyment of life from baby-hood well into their senior years. And Dr. Rachael Click at Preferred EyeCare Center wants to be her patients' optometrist for the long haul.

DENISE K. JAMES

According to Dr. Click, who gives "comprehensive care to all family members," she works with patients as young as 6 months old.

"We educate on yearly eye exams, specialize in bifocal contacts and aim to be part of a patient's total health care needs," she said.

If you do not currently have an optometrist, it's

useful to know that Dr. Click treats unexpected eye-related illnesses and infections so that new patients don't have to visit urgent care centers. Her hope is to form relationships with new clients and to educate them about the overall health of their eyes.

"I like to work with primary care doctors for diabetes and hypertension – many illnesses show up first in the eyes," she said. 

Contact Dr. Rachael Click by calling (843) 856-4775 or visiting www.preferredeyecarecenter.com. You can also drop by the office at 118 Park West Blvd., Suite 5, in Mount Pleasant.

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Dr. John Knepper & Sewee Family Medicine Welcome Dr. Elizabeth Whirrett

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