

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SPRING 2005



Euclid
Hillcrest
Huron
South Pointe

When Is an Assessment Necessary?

Older adults in need of a comprehensive assessment could be experiencing any combination of the following:

- multiple health problems
- confusion, memory loss or behavior changes
- sadness or depression
- difficulty performing daily living activities
- nutritional concerns, such as a change in eating habits or unexplained weight loss
- problems resulting from taking multiple medications
- difficulty coping with life's changes
- uncertainty regarding living arrangements or home maintenance

The assessment will provide you with:

- a clear understanding of the patient's problems
- an assessment of the patient's care needs
- a comprehensive plan for continuity of care and help with decisions
- referrals to all appropriate services
- communication with, and a report sent to, the patient's physicians



Bridging the GAP

If you're confused, the Geriatric Assessment Program can help

At first you notice subtle changes. A loved one starts behaving differently. He or she might seem sad, confused or more forgetful. The individual may even be apathetic about activities he or she once enjoyed.

Is it depression, dementia, Alzheimer's or another illness? Or is it just a natural part of the aging process? Without knowing what the problem is, it's hard to know how to help.

One Family's Story

Savonia Calloway was in this very predicament. Her father, Willie Smalls Jr., a 78-year-old Glenville resident, was becoming frailer and starting to ramble when he spoke. Calloway and other family members were at a loss for what to do. Finally, they sought professional help.

"I wanted to go to Euclid Hospital because I like the people there," says

(continued on Page 4)

Need a physician? Call Medline for a referral
at 440/312-4533 or 800/621-0004.

Preventing Colon Cancer

Have you had a colonoscopy lately to screen for colon cancer? More than 90 percent of people with colorectal cancer are diagnosed after age 50. Yet despite this statistic, less than half of American seniors get tested for the disease.

Fortunately, the death rate for colon cancer has been decreasing for the past 15 years because of early diagnosis and improved treatments. But with nearly 147,000 new cases of colorectal cancer last year, the disease is still one of the most prevalent forms of cancer. To reduce your risk for this disease, be sure to:

Eat smart. Limit your intake of foods high in fat, and include plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods in your diet.

Exercise regularly. The American Cancer Society recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days a week. For busy days, try fitting in three 10-minute bursts of activity throughout the day.

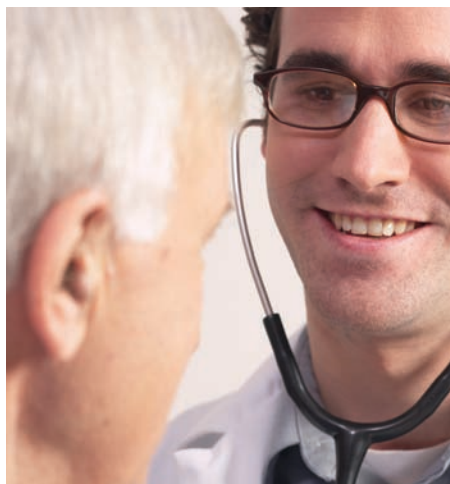
Get screened. Beginning at age 50 (or earlier if you're at high risk), have a fecal occult blood test every year and a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years. If an abnormality is found, a colonoscopy should be done. ●

Sources: National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society



Catch Cancer Early

Take time to schedule your screenings today. They could save your life. To locate a Cleveland Clinic Health System physician, log on to www.cchspo.com/phys_dir/, or call your local Cleveland Clinic Health System hospital.



Living with Epilepsy

Adults over age 55 who are living with epilepsy, as well as their caregivers, may be interested in a new information and support series. Every Tuesday, beginning January 25 and continuing through October 18, the Living Well with Epilepsy program will discuss topics such as medications, safety, resources, surgical options and more. Participants

can register for any or all of these free sessions. Most meetings will be held at the Fairview Hospital Wellness Center in Rocky River and are presented by the Fairview/Lutheran Foundation and the Epilepsy Association.

To register for this free program, call **216/579-1330** or **800/653-4300**, or e-mail info@epilepsyinfo.org. ●

As a member of Senior Circle Plus, you have access to many benefits, including health screenings. Call **866/YES-CCHS (937-2247)** for details, or view individual hospital calendars on our Web site at www.cchs.net/seniorcircle/privileges.

Contents Under Pressure

Keys to controlling high blood pressure

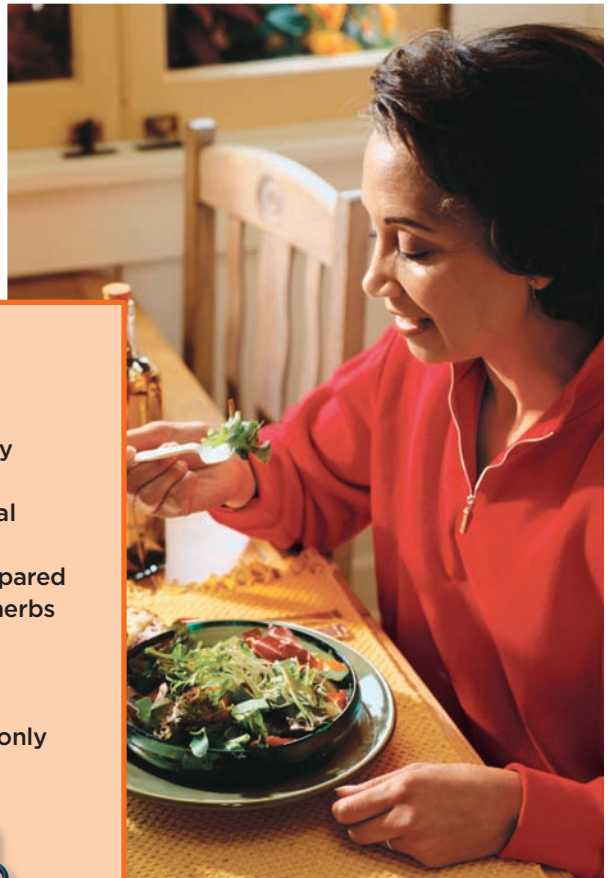
Hypertension, also known as high blood pressure, has nothing to do with being nervous, tense or hyperactive. You might be a peaceful, relaxed person and still have the condition.

Consider This

According to the American Heart Association, one in four U.S. adults has high blood pressure. But nearly one-third of these people are unaware they have it because there

Fortunately, the risk for these conditions can be reduced or prevented if high blood pressure is treated and controlled early. Clinical trials show that by lowering blood pressure (BP) to acceptable levels, you can reduce your risk for a stroke by 35 percent to 40 percent, a heart attack by 20 percent to 25 percent, and heart failure by more than 50 percent.

Americans, middle-aged and elderly adults, heavy drinkers and those who are overweight. Consult your doctor to determine how often your BP should be checked.



Keep It Under Control

While there isn't a cure for high blood pressure, consider making these lifestyle changes to achieve and maintain a healthy blood pressure:

- Maintain a healthy weight and manage stress through physical activity and a heart-healthy diet.
- Decrease sodium (salt) intake by reading package labels of prepared food. Taste food first before reaching for the salt shaker, and try herbs and spices as healthy alternatives to salt.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Quit smoking.
- Discuss BP medications with your doctor. They should be used only as a last resort, when lifestyle changes are not enough.

How's Your Pressure?

Normal blood pressure: Less than 120/80

Pre-hypertension: 120/80 to 139/89

High blood pressure: 140/90 or higher

Source: American Heart Association



are no symptoms. In addition, the cause of high blood pressure is unknown in about 90 percent to 95 percent of cases. Often referred to as "the silent killer," it's a major risk factor for stroke, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure and blindness.

Taming High Blood Pressure

The first step in prevention is to have your BP checked every two years, or more often based on your most recent reading, past readings and risk factors, such as a history of diabetes or heart disease. The condition is most prevalent in African

If high blood pressure is discovered, you and your physician will determine the best treatment for you, from lifestyle modifications to medication. It's also possible that you might have "white-coat hypertension," which means your blood pressure rises when you're at the doctor's office. Your doctor might prescribe home monitoring, helping you to measure and log your true BP levels over a specified period of time. ●

Tell Us!

Do you have a story to share about an experience or staff member at one of our hospitals? Write to *Senior Circle Plus* at Hillcrest Medical Building 1, 6803 Mayfield Rd., #500, Mayfield Heights, OH 44124.

(continued from Page 1)

Calloway. “They’re concerned about their patients and provide excellent care. I know this because I was a patient there myself.”

Calloway sought help from the hospital’s Geriatric Assessment Program (GAP), which includes a multidisciplinary team of geriatric health specialists that thoroughly evaluates an older patient’s physical, psychosocial and functional status. Based on this assessment, the team determines an individualized plan for care suited to the patient’s needs.

“We met with a doctor, social worker and nurse practitioner,” says Calloway. “They were very thorough. Anything we needed to know, they explained to us in detail. They also gave us a complete report.”

“Now we know my father has dementia, and we know how to help him.”

Adjusting to Aging

GAP’s goal is to help seniors and their families learn to cope with and adjust to the physical and mental



Theodore Suh, M.D., Ph.D.,
a Cleveland Clinic physician
and medical director of
the Geriatric Assessment
Program at Euclid Hospital

changes that often accompany the aging process. Throughout the entire assessment process, professionals—including a gerontologist, nurse practitioner and social worker—offer guidance, education and support.

All members of the team have advanced training and expertise in treat-

ing the health problems of older adults, and they may be assisted by other specialists.

“Our multidisciplinary approach is a significant benefit for patients because it gives them the opportunity to be evaluated and assessed by a number of different specialists,” says Theodore Suh, M.D., Ph.D., a Cleveland Clinic physician and medical director of GAP. “We have a great team that works well together, and we share the same goal of improving the quality of life of our patients.”

“I enjoy working with our patients and families,” Suh adds. “Oftentimes, we refer them to valuable community services they weren’t aware of. It’s also satisfying to work with patients’

general practitioners, with whom we’re in close communication.”

In addition to being referred by general practitioners, patients may be referred by other Cleveland Clinic Health System hospitals, including Hillcrest, Huron and South Pointe. GAP also accepts referrals from families and community health care providers, including local offices on aging and senior centers.

Fees for the geriatric assessment program are covered by Medicare. ●



For details about the Geriatric Assessment Program or to schedule an appointment, call **216/692-8876**.