

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SUMMER 2005

Pain Be Gone!

Finding relief from chronic pain

Not long ago, chronic pain was considered a symptom that a patient should endure, and it often went undertreated. Today, however, we know that chronic pain must be treated as a disease in itself, not just a symptom.

Finding Relief

A 2001 study by the American Pain Society found that more than four out of every 10 people with moderate to severe chronic pain were not getting adequate relief, saying that their pain was out of control. In a survey of 805 people, researchers discovered a population of sufferers who were not getting the care experts recommend—half of the study group had been in pain for more than five years and had switched physicians more than once.

Pain relief is available for a variety of conditions, including:

- abdominal pain
- back and neck pain
- joint and muscular pain
- pain associated with cancer, central or peripheral nervous system problems, multiple sclerosis or HIV



- pain secondary to impaired peripheral circulation
- pelvic pain

Our pain management specialists offer a full range of treatment techniques to alleviate chronic pain. Led by anesthesiologists who are board-certified in pain management, the Cleveland Clinic pain management team includes but is not limited to rehabilitation specialists, neurosurgeons, orthopaedists, experts in spine and back care, psychiatrists and psychologists, and social services. It's estimated that fewer than half of all American hospitals offer

pain management services at this comprehensive level.

Get Back to Enjoying a Pain-Free Life

If you're suffering from chronic pain, contact us at **216/444-PAIN (7246)** or **800/392-3353**. To find a physician for pain management or any other need, call Medline at **440/312-4533** or **800/621-0004**.



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Bon Voyage!



Planning to travel to an exotic destination this year? Whether you're taking a cruise or long flight, here's how to have a healthy and enjoyable vacation.

- **Pack smart.** Remember to pack all your medications in your carry-on bag, and don't forget over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine and an antibacterial hand sanitizer. Know what your insurance will cover overseas, too.

- **Get vaccinated.** Find out what vaccinations you might need for your destination by visiting the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention's (CDC) Web site, www.cdc.gov, and clicking on "Travelers' Health."

- **Stretch regularly.** Deep-vein thrombosis is a life-threatening condition that can occur when a blood clot forms in the leg or hip, then breaks free and travels to your heart or lungs. If you'll be sitting for extended periods of time, exercise your lower leg muscles and avoid sitting with your legs crossed.

- **Boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it.** The CDC recommends that you only eat thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have

peeled yourself, and only drink water or carbonated drinks in bottles or cans. Avoid ice cubes. ●

Familiarize yourself with travel health warnings before you travel. Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention online at www.cdc.gov/travel/destinat.htm.

Helping Others, Helping Yourself

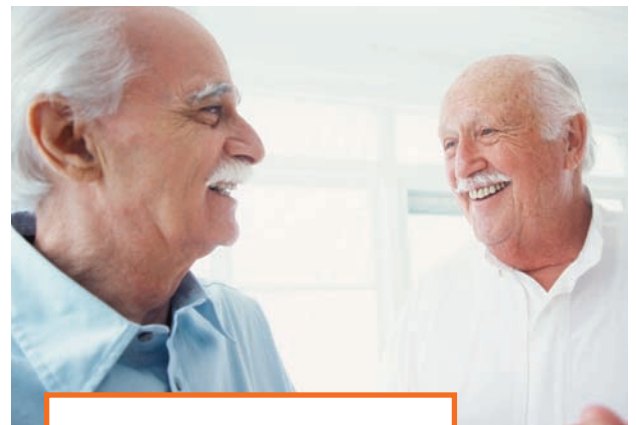
Helping others can be as beneficial for the volunteer as for the recipient. While volunteering boosts feelings of self-worth and accomplishment, studies have shown that it might also increase longevity.

According to the U.S. Administration on Aging, 15 million people—that's about one-third of Americans who volunteer—are older adults. Seniors make ideal volunteers since they have the experience, wisdom and time to help with many activities. So rather than stay home, keep active by helping those in need. Ask

yourself how much time you can realistically donate, which causes are important to you and what skills you can offer.

In addition to hospitals, libraries, museums and local parks, consider the following volunteer opportunities:

- adult homes and nursing facilities
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters



To volunteer at a Cleveland Clinic Health System hospital, call the CCHS hospital near you or log on to www.cchs.net.

- Meals on Wheels
- neighborhood watch programs

You can

also check out senior organizations, such as the National Retiree Volunteer Coalition, AARP and Senior Corps, for additional opportunities. ●



Make the Most of These Years

Join your Senior Circle Plus (SCP) friends on day trips and other social events. To learn more about your benefits as an SCP member, call **866/YES-CCHS (937-2247)**, or view individual hospital calendars on the Web at **www.cchs.net/seniorcircle/privileges**.

Me, Myself and I

Rediscover yourself and make these years golden

Adjusting after a spouse has passed away or children have moved is a challenge that many seniors never thought they would face. But living alone doesn't have to mean being lonely. There are many positive steps you can take to live a happy and fulfilling life on your own.

Make friends. Stay in touch with your friends and family, join a religious organization or visit your local senior center regularly. By keeping a busy social calendar, you will always have something to look forward to—and someone else looking out for you.

Keep healthy. Make sure not only to eat balanced meals, but also to make them meaningful. Invite a friend over for dinner, go to your favorite restaurant or take in the sunset while dining on your patio.

Be sure to visit your doctor regularly and exercise daily, too. According to the National Institutes of Health, regular exercise—even something as simple as taking a walk—helps people with osteoarthritis improve their joint health and reduce pain and disability. Exercise will also help reduce your risk for heart disease and other conditions. Talk with your doctor about an exercise routine that's right for you.

Stay safe. Examine the design of your home with injury prevention in mind. Does the bathroom shower have grab bars? Are there electrical cords or clutter in walkways that might cause you to fall? Visit the AARP online at **www.aarp.org/life/homedesign** for home design checklists. And if you're worried

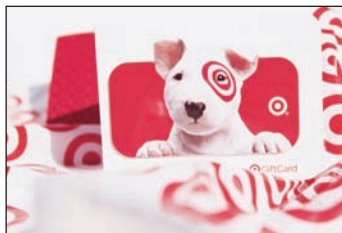
about being injured at home when you're alone, consider installing a personal alarm system in your home that includes a call button you can wear.

Motivate yourself. Rediscover your youthful ambition and go for it. Start painting a masterpiece, write the story of your life to pass down to your children and grandchildren, or become a volunteer or foster grandparent. And keep your mind sharp by continuing to learn new things. Here are some options to consider:

- take an evening class
- learn a new language
- join a book club
- visit local museums
- attend concerts
- travel to new places

You'll find that it is possible to celebrate your senior years and live a fulfilling life. ●

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Someone to Lean On

Facing age-related challenges with better treatments

As we age, new challenges—from our mental and physical health to the loss of loved ones—are around every corner. We fear the onset of Alzheimer’s disease, the general loss of memory, stroke and heart disease.

“Plus, there is the loss of meaning we had for ourselves,” adds Upma Dhingra, M.D., a geriatric psychiatrist at Euclid Hospital. “We were accustomed to getting paid for work and buying what we wanted. But as seniors, we have reduced financial

resources. All of these challenges can affect our self-esteem and cause depression.”

Polishing Up Your Golden Years

By being proactive, senior citizens can often meet and overcome these challenges. If seniors or their loved ones notice changes in their physical or mental health, an assessment should be sought through a hospital or physician, Dhingra says. An assessment will help determine what type of medical or behavioral treatment should be prescribed. Individualized treatment plans enable



Upma Dhingra, M.D., and a diverse group of health care professionals assist seniors in coping with changes brought on by age.

seniors to continue to live active and productive lives.

“There are many new, safer medications available to seniors these days to help them lead better-quality lives,” Dhingra says. “Help is available if they seek it.” ●

You’re not alone. If you or a loved one is experiencing depression or other mental or behavioral health issues, help is available. Euclid, Hillcrest, Huron and South Pointe hospitals operate a 24-hour help line for those in need. To talk with an expert, call **216/761-7990**.