

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

WINTER 2005

Giving Back

Volunteers offer invaluable service

At Hillcrest Hospital, a retired NASA engineer delivers mail, while a former Illuminating Co. executive volunteers in another area. At Euclid Hospital, a 96-year-old works in the mailroom and a teenager assists with exercise classes. Volunteers come from all ages and walks of life.

A Valuable Asset

"Our volunteers are absolutely critical to the hospital," says Jeanette Velez, volunteer coordinator at Huron Hospital. "They help with clerical work, serve as greeters, work booths at health fairs and perform numerous other functions." Even more impressive, the average volunteer age is 82.

At South Pointe Hospital, approximately 160 volunteers work in about 30 departments, according to Anna Henretta, volunteer coordinator. "Those who are happiest are those who have sought and found ways to serve others through their volunteer work at the hospital," she says.

One such helper is Ann Hook, 93, who was Senior Volunteer of the Year in 2003. Hook has logged a total of 560 volunteer hours at South Pointe.



Helping Others, Helping Yourself

"I volunteer because it's a good thing to do," says Lenore Krantz, Huron Hospital's gift shop manager. "This job is a big commitment, but it's well worth it."

Krantz has donated 12,000 hours of her time to the hospital over the past 30 years. "She's outgoing, capable and has a great heart," says Jeanette Velez, volunteer coordinator.

A former East Clevelander, Krantz has four sons who were born at Huron. As teenagers, two of them volunteered at the hospital. Their experiences as volunteers stimulated an interest in medicine that led to their current careers as physicians.

"She has an unselfish desire to help others and serve the community," Henretta says.

Making a Difference

"People who volunteer want to give back," says Hillcrest Hospital volunteer coordinator Pat Garlak. "Many of them have had a family member here who received good care. Others are retired, have time on their hands and want to do something helpful."

"It's amazing how our volunteers just give and give," says Joyce Heuer, coordinator of about 180 volunteers at Euclid Hospital. "They get back as much as—or even more than—they give. Volunteer work is fulfilling because it makes people feel needed and useful."

Ready, Set, Volunteer!

Hospitals are always looking for more people to join their volunteer

teams. If you're interested in sharing your time and skills as a volunteer, call the hospital nearest you for details. (See numbers listed below.) ●

Euclid Hospital—**216/692-8880**
Hillcrest Hospital—**440/312-4631**
Huron Hospital—**216/761-7775**
South Pointe Hospital—**216/491-6242**



Euclid
Hillcrest
Huron
South Pointe

For a calendar of events and activities, call 440/312-8336.



Reduce Your Risk for Diabetes

More than 18 percent of people age 60 and older have type 2 diabetes. And while age is a risk factor, it's not the only one. Fortunately, a number of other risk factors are controllable. Here's what you can do to protect yourself from diabetes:

Lose weight. Being overweight is closely associated with diabetes. Just a 5 percent to 10 percent reduction in weight can greatly reduce your risk.

Eat right. Maintain a well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Don't deprive yourself of your favorite treats; just enjoy them in moderation.

Exercise. Get moving 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Try walking briskly around the block or climbing the stairs several times.

Get screened. It may be seven to 10 years before you notice the symptoms of type 2 diabetes, but that doesn't mean it's not there. Have your blood glucose levels checked regularly, at least every three years, or more often if you're at high risk.

Source: American Diabetes Association ●

Schedule your blood

glucose test with your physician, or visit cchs.net and click on "Health Programs & Screenings" for a list of free diabetes screenings and diabetes education programs offered at your local Cleveland Clinic hospital.

Home Sweet Home

Moving a loved one to a nursing home can be a difficult decision, not to mention stressful when searching for the right facility.

Here are some things to consider when looking for a nursing home:

Medical needs. Ask your loved one's doctor to recommend a facility that would be best suited for his or her needs. Consider what types of services are offered and what the staff-to-patient ratio is.

Location. Choose a facility that is centrally located so that family and friends can make frequent visits.

Atmosphere. Visit the home several times, both planned and unannounced, to get a feel for its culture. Ask yourself: Are the residents treated well? Are appealing activities available? Is the food appetizing?



Cost. Ask what the costs are and get the numbers in writing. Consider how much of the costs, if any, will be paid by Medicare or Medicaid and whether the remaining portion is affordable.

Asking the right questions can help you find the perfect home for your loved one. Visit medicare.gov/nursing/overview.asp for a nursing home checklist to help you compare facilities in your area. ●

Need a Physician?

Use the numbers below to help you find a physician.

The Cleveland Clinic

The Appointment Center:
216/444-2273 or
800/223-2272, ext. 42273

Euclid, Hillcrest, Huron and South Pointe Hospitals

Medline Physician Referral:
440/312-4533 or
800/621-0004

Fairview, Lakewood and Lutheran Hospitals

Medline Physician Referral:
216/363-2300 or toll-free
866/733-6363

Marymount Hospital

MED-MATCH Physician Referral: 216/581-WELL (9355)

For an online listing of Cleveland Clinic Health System physicians, go to cchspo/phys_dir.

Finding Dr. Right

Don't trust your health to just anyone

It's OK to look in the phone book for a restaurant or a mechanic, but when it comes to your health, not just any doctor will do. Since your physician will be entrusted with your health and will listen to your most intimate problems, finding the right one is crucial to your well-being.

First things first: Start searching for a physician while you're healthy. That way, if you become ill, you won't be pressured to find someone quickly with whom you may not feel comfortable.

To begin your search for Dr. Right, ask family and friends for recommendations. If you're new to the area, ask your previous doctor for a referral or consult your new neighbors. A local pharmacist may be able to help, too—she may be able to offer you good insight into a doctor's bedside manner and care philosophy.

Once you find some doctors you'd like to consider, follow these tips from the AARP for choosing the one that's best for you:

Get approval. There's nothing worse than finding the perfect doctor and then discovering he's not included on your insurance plan's provider list. Eliminate any doctors that don't accept your coverage.

Availability. Find out which doctors are accepting new patients. Ask about their availability. How

far in advance must you schedule an appointment?

Vital statistics.

How convenient is the doctor's office? Consider the location, hours, parking availability and if it accommodates any special needs you may have.

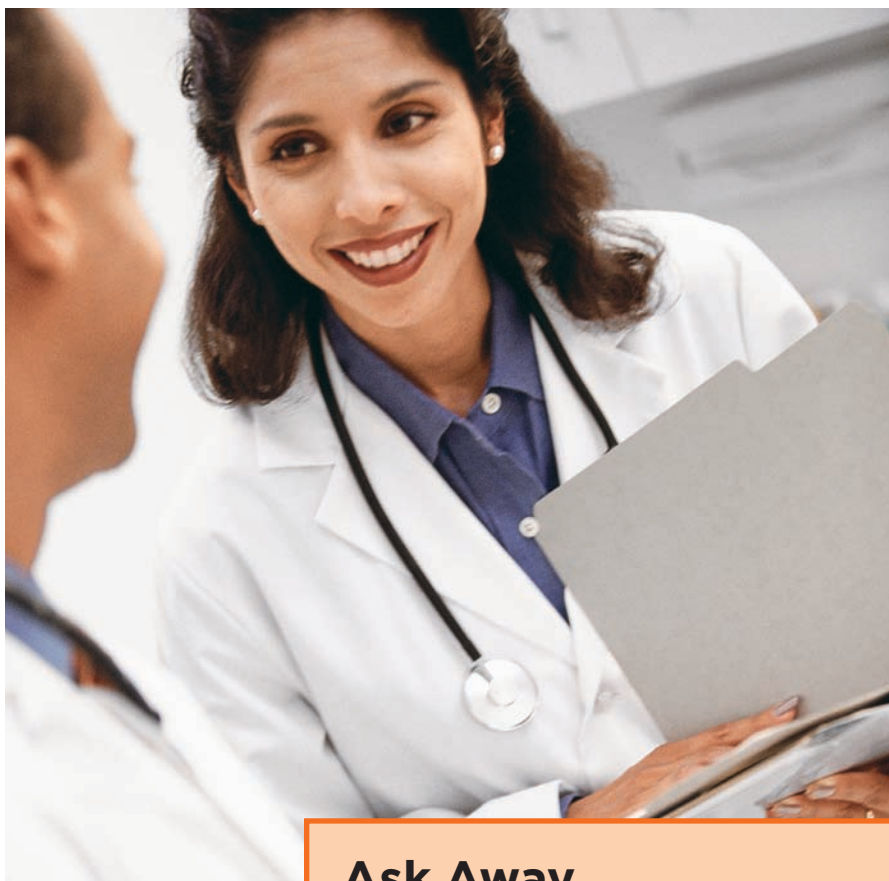
Ask the board.

Contact your state health department or the medical review board to determine if there have been any complaints filed against the doctor. If there have been, you'll want to learn the details of the complaints.

Talk to the doc. Schedule an appointment to interview the physician in person or over the phone. This will allow you to ask specific questions about his practice and techniques,

and help you decide whether or not you'd like to become a patient.

While choosing the right doctor is important to your health, don't stress over the decision. If you decide you're not comfortable with your choice, feel free to look for a different physician. Just remember to keep your medical history up to date and have your records transferred with you. ●



Ask Away

Even the best doctors can't read minds. That's why it's important for you to ask questions about your health. To get started, try these:

- What is my condition? What's the cause?
- Do I need tests? Why?
- What are the possible treatments? How effective are they?
- Will I need to go on medication? What are the side effects?

If you have difficulty understanding your doctor, take a friend or family member to the appointment with you. For additional tips on communicating with your physician, visit aarp.org and click on "Health and Wellness," then "Checkups and Prevention."



Correction: The “Expose Yourself to Art” class participant pictured in the fall 2004 issue of *Senior Circle Plus* is Jeanette Langford. We apologize for the error.

Don't Worry, Be Happy

Discover how to boost your mood

Don't let the cold, gray winter months get you down. Start the year with a positive attitude and take control of your life.

According to Upma Dhingra, M.D., director of geriatric psychiatry at Euclid Hospital, happy people don't beat themselves up with negative internal dialogue. “If you're having negative thoughts, it's important to change your mind-set,” she says. “You have to catch negative self-talk and practice saying positive things. Focus on what you can do, as opposed to what you think you can't.”

Experts recommend that people fill their lives with experiences that meet four basic emotional needs:

- **Autonomy**—a feeling that your activities are self-chosen
- **Competence**—the feeling that you're good at something
- **Relatedness**—a sense of connecting with others



- **Self-esteem**—having a sense of self-worth

People also can experience happiness through religion. For many, faith offers a support community and a sense of meaning in life. But remember, you can be spiritual and still have a lousy day. So start doing the things that make you happy, and start enjoying life.

If you're experiencing more than the blues, it may be time to seek help. Call Medline at **440/312-4533** or **800/621-0004**. ●

Mood Makeovers

If you're feeling gloomy, try these uplifting tips:

- 1. Get moving.** Countless studies show that exercise can help lift your mood. Exercise releases endorphins, the feel-good hormones, as well as serotonin, a natural antidepressant.
- 2. Act happy.** By smiling, you'll send signals to your brain that can actually alter your mood.
- 3. Be good to yourself.** Treat yourself to a long bath, a nice dinner or a good movie. You deserve it.
- 4. Get some sleep.** Sleep deprivation may be causing your sour mood.
- 5. Seek professional help.** If you're persistently sad, fatigued, disinterested in favorite activities, or having trouble sleeping or concentrating, you may be suffering from depression and may need professional help.