

# Healthwise Connection

Your link to a healthier life | Winter 2007



## A GEM of a Program

Geriatric evaluation offers  
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## How Do I Select the Right Home Care Provider?

Ask these questions:

- How long has this provider been serving the community?
- What kinds of services does this provider offer?
- What procedures does this provider have in place to handle emergencies?
- Are caregivers available 24/7?
- How are staff members selected and supervised?
- Does the provider bill directly to third-party payers?
- Is the provider accredited by a quality review organization?
- Are references available?

Source: National Association for Home Care & Hospice

## There's No Place Like Home

Whether recovering from an illness or managing a chronic condition, most of us prefer to remain where we feel most comfortable—at home

If it's time to consider home care for yourself or a loved one, Cleveland Clinic Home Care Services offers assistance in four areas:

**Home Health.** Services are available for people who are homebound but need care from a skilled nurse or therapist to recover from a medical procedure or manage a temporary change in an ongoing medical condition, such as diabetic wound care.

**Home Infusion Pharmacy.** Services are available for patients who need chemotherapy or other infusion therapies to treat medical conditions including cancer and cancer-related pain, multiple sclerosis, gastrointestinal disorders and infections.

**Home Respiratory Therapy.** Services are designed for people with emphysema, chronic bronchitis, sleep apnea and other diseases requiring specialized respiratory care, such as in-home oxygen therapy.

**Hospice Care.** Focusing on comfort rather than cure, patients can live out the remainder of their lives in their own homes. Home hospice care is intended to help patients and families prepare physically, spirituality and emotionally for the end of life.

Cleveland Clinic Home Care Services provides care in Ashtabula, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Erie, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit and Trumbull counties. It is the preferred home care provider for the network of Cleveland Clinic hospitals.

For your convenience, insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid are billed directly. Cleveland Clinic Home Care Services is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organizations (JCAHO).

### Safe at Home

While anyone may request home care services, they must be ordered by a physician. To learn more about Cleveland Clinic Home Care Services, visit [www.clevelandclinic.org/homecare](http://www.clevelandclinic.org/homecare), or call 216.444.HOME (4663) or toll-free 800.263.0403. Staff members are available 24/7 to assist you.

*“He who has health has hope; and he who has hope has everything.”*

—Thomas Carlyle



## Beat the Blues

The holidays are upon us and spring is still three calendar pages away. If you're feeling down in the dumps, it might be more than just "the blues." Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that can be brought on by the lack of daylight in the fall and winter, and you may be suffering from SAD if you experience:

- Symptoms of depression (weight gain, fatigue, irritability) during the winter for two or more years.
- No symptoms of depression during the summer.
- A drop in energy levels and/or excessive sleeping.

Source: National Mental Health Association

### Are You SAD?

If your winter is looking more like a wasteland than a wonderland, talk to your doctor. Need a physician? Visit [www.clevelandclinic.org/hwc](http://www.clevelandclinic.org/hwc) and click on "Find a Physician."

Cleveland Clinic Healthwise Connection hospitals include our downtown Cleveland campus and our network of conveniently located community hospitals: Euclid, Fairview, Hillcrest, Huron, Lakewood, Lutheran, Marymount and South Pointe hospitals, and Cleveland Clinic-affiliate Ashtabula County Medical Center.

The information contained in *Healthwise Connection* is for educational purposes only and should not be relied upon as medical advice. It is not designed to replace the independent judgment of a physician about the appropriateness or risks of a procedure for a given patient.

## Be a Successful Loser

Congratulations, you've reached your goal weight! Keep your momentum up—and the weight off—with the following tips from the American Heart Association:

- Keep a diet and exercise log. Writing down your routine will help you stick to it.
- Plan your meals in advance. You'll be less likely to stray.
- Stay active. Work out with a friend if you have difficulty staying motivated.
- Don't give up. Getting off track doesn't mean you've failed. Start again tomorrow!

## Winter-Proof Your Skin

To keep your skin properly hydrated during the dry winter months, apply moisturizer within three minutes of getting out of the shower, advises the American Academy of Dermatology.



## Brilliant Assessment

Geriatric evaluation program a real GEM for patients and families

Before Obertha Lewis set sail for a tour of the Bahamas, she and her daughter cruised into Cleveland Clinic.

“I wanted to make sure everything was fine for her to go on the ship,” daughter Helen Weeks says. “They really checked her out. They made sure she had her medicine and everything.

They couldn’t have done more. I really appreciate that.”

After an unexplained fall a few years ago, Lewis came to Cleveland Clinic to be evaluated by the hospital’s Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) team. The GEM program is designed to help older adults maximize their

abilities to care for themselves and live as independently as possible.

### Seeing the Big Picture

“We look at the total patient and provide a holistic approach to care,” says Robert Palmer, M.D., M.P.H., Head of Geriatric Medicine at Cleveland Clinic. “A geriatric assessment is very

*“We look at aspects of health that often are not explored in significant detail, but that may help to optimize a patient’s quality of life.”*

—Robert Palmer, M.D., M.P.H.

different from a routine doctor’s appointment. We look at aspects of health that often are not explored in significant detail, but that may help to optimize a patient’s quality of life.”

These aspects include a person’s ability to perform daily tasks, access to family and other caregivers, mobility and even home safety. The GEM team also performs a complete health exam, including a review of the effects (and potential side effects) of taking multiple medications.

“GEM is the great coordinator,” Dr. Palmer says. “We listen and we talk to the family. We answer questions. We work with primary care physicians and other specialists. When there are serious and complex problems, this kind of multidimensional assessment and oversight is invaluable.”

Still, Dr. Palmer says, not every older adult needs a GEM assessment.

### Recognizing the Signs

So, who might benefit from a GEM evaluation?

“For the ‘well’ elderly, which is the majority of older people, particularly between the ages of 65 and 80, a general internist or an experienced family physician can meet all of their needs,” Dr. Palmer says.

“But a GEM assessment is beneficial when transitions occur—when people begin to have difficulty with self-care, such as walking, falling or memory loss,” he says. “A GEM assessment is beneficial when families are trying to decide the most appropriate living situation for a loved one. When patients reach the point of what we call ‘frailty,’ where they are really not doing well on their own, that’s when a geriatrician should be called in to see them.”

Over the years, Cleveland Clinic has helped Lewis to remain independent by working with her to control high blood pressure, avoid unwanted weight loss, regain strength and address social issues— all to keep her feeling “shipshape.”

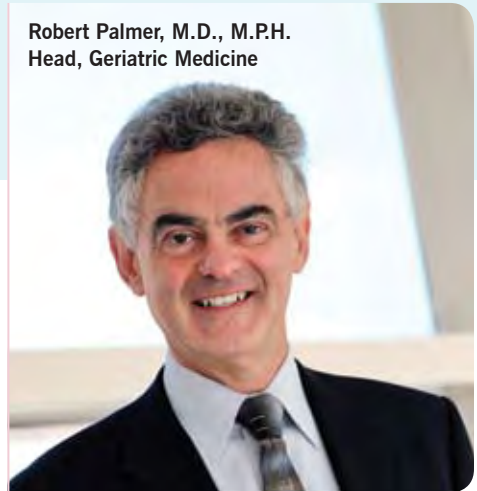
The family’s recent cruise was a present to help the Cleveland resident celebrate her 93rd birthday.

“It was wonderful,” Lewis says. “I’ve never seen water as blue as that water was. That’s something I will always remember.”

### Rock-Solid Support

To learn more about the GEM program or make an appointment with a Cleveland Clinic geriatrician, please call 216.444.5665.

Robert Palmer, M.D., M.P.H.  
Head, Geriatric Medicine



## Time for an Assessment?

A Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) assessment is advised for people experiencing any combination of the following symptoms:

- Multiple health problems
- Confusion or memory loss
- Behavioral changes (including sadness, depression or anxiety)
- Difficulty performing daily activities
- Balance and gait problems
- Muscle weakness and fatigue
- Nutritional concerns (including unexplained weight loss)
- Side effects from multiple medications (including dizziness or falls)
- Uncertainty about the ability to live independently

# Soup Up Your Diet

Slurp your way to healthier eating



If ever there were a “perfect food,” we would argue that soup is it. It’s delicious, filling and good for both body and soul.

Here are some of the reasons we love it:

**It’s low in fat.** Broth-based soups generally are lower in calories and fat than cream-based varieties. And you can skim even more fat off the top (literally) by refrigerating the soup and removing hardened fat with a spoon. For every tablespoon of fat removed, you save about 120 calories and 13 grams of fat, according to the American Dietetic Association.

**It’s rich in ... well, everything!** Our favorite thing about soup is that it can easily cover all of the basic food groups. Looking for essential vitamins and minerals? Go with vegetable. Need protein? Check out chicken noodle. Craving carbs? Try minestrone. No matter what nutrients you need, you can probably find them in a soup tureen.

**It’s easy.** Not only is soup easy to prepare (many recipes require only a single pot), it’s also easily stored. Just freeze and reheat when desired.

## Warm up your winter days with this tasty corn chowder.

### INGREDIENTS

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil                        | 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped |
| 2 Tbsp. celery, finely diced                 | 1 c. water                     |
| 2 Tbsp. onion, finely diced                  | ¼ tsp. salt                    |
| 2 Tbsp. green pepper, finely diced           | black pepper to taste          |
| 1 package (10 oz.) frozen, whole kernel corn | ¼ tsp. paprika                 |
| 1 c. potatoes, peeled and diced to ½ inch    | 2 Tbsp. flour                  |
|  | 2 c. milk, fat-free or low-fat |

### PREPARATION

1. Heat oil in medium saucepan.
2. Add celery, onion and green pepper and sauté for 2 minutes.
3. Add corn, potatoes, water, salt, pepper and paprika. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium. Cook covered about 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender.
4. Pour ½ cup of milk into a jar with a tight-fitting lid. Add flour and shake vigorously.
5. Add gradually to cooked vegetables and add remaining milk.
6. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Serve garnished with chopped fresh parsley.

### NUTRITION FACTS (serving: 1 c.)

Calories ..... 186	Cholesterol..... 5 mg	Protein ..... 7 g
Fat ..... 5 g	Sodium..... 205 mg	Carbohydrate .... 31 g
Saturated fat..... 1 g	Fiber ..... 4 g	Potassium.... 455 mg

# Back in Motion

New clinic offers help for chronic spine pain

Cleveland Clinic's Mature Spine Clinic is ready to help you take back your life.

It's a fact that people older than 60 often need specialized care to treat chronic back pain. Underlying medical conditions, mobility issues and prescription drug use may affect a person's eligibility for and response to certain treatments. In addition, orthopaedic, spine and geriatric care may be needed, as well as physical and occupational therapists, dietitians, nurses and orthotists—specialists who measure, fit and adjust leg, arm and hand braces and assistive devices.



## When to Seek Help

After a comprehensive evaluation, Cleveland Clinic's Mature Spine Clinic can create a customized treatment plan designed to minimize pain and improve mobility and function.

Although chronic back pain has many causes, Daniel Mazanec, M.D., Director of the Mature Spine Clinic, says two scenarios, in particular, should signal it's time to seek medical attention.

"If you experience pain that runs down your leg below the knee, pain that gets worse with walking, you should be evaluated fairly early on," Dr. Mazanec says. "There are a number of causes for this type of pain, but the two major ones affecting people over 60 or 65 are vascular disease—poor circulation—and spinal stenosis, a narrowing of the spinal canal that pinches the spinal nerves traveling into the legs.

"The other scenario is back pain not really involving the legs that persists for more than a month or two," Dr. Mazanec says. "If your pain is constant, if it's getting worse and, particularly, if it's disturbing your rest—if you are unable to find a comfortable sleeping position—then it's time to get help."



Daniel Mazanec, M.D.  
Director, Mature Spine Clinic

**Pain No More**  
At Cleveland Clinic's Mature Spine Clinic, we will find the source of your chronic pain and plan a course of treatment to help you get back your life. For more information or to make an appointment, please call 216.444.BACK (2225) or visit [www.clevelandclinic.org/spine](http://www.clevelandclinic.org/spine).



# Purposeful Aging

Plan for a healthy retirement, with help from new Cleveland Clinic book

For those of us in our 50s, now is the time to plan for our golden years. It's time to consider how and where we want to live, and what activities we want to pursue well into our 70s and 80s.

"You can age haphazardly and meet every age-related health and function change in crisis mode," says Robert Palmer, M.D., MPH, Head of Geriatric Medicine at Cleveland Clinic. "Or you can plan for them the way you plan financially for retirement."

Actively planning how you grow older is one of the "nine habits of highly successful agers" that Dr. Palmer shares in his new book, *Age Well! A Cleveland Clinic Guide*.

## The Sooner the Better

"Waiting until you are 65 and walking out the office door for the last time is

not the time to start planning," Dr. Palmer writes. "It should be an evolutionary process initiated in your mid- to late 50s. If you do this, by the time you sail into retirement you have charted a course for the future and found the mechanisms, strategies, trade-offs and substitutions that are going to help you get there in the best possible physical and emotional shape."

Dr. Palmer's book is a unique how-to guide that explains the aging process and shows you step-by-step how to map out a happier and healthier tomorrow for you and your loved ones.

He also provides a variety of hands-on tools—including charts, graphs and self-assessment tests—to make the biological, physiological and psychological processes of aging easier to understand.

## Sneak Preview

Topics discussed in *Age Well! A Cleveland Clinic Guide* include:

- The Biology of Aging
- Eating for Life
- The Aging Brain and Nervous System
- Making Sense of Your Senses
- Senior Sexuality
- Taking Care of the Caregiver

## Reading List

*Age Well!* is just one of the new guidebooks available from Cleveland Clinic Press. Other books include *Arthritis*, *Heart Attack* and *Getting a Good Night's Sleep*. All are written in easy-to-understand language and designed to help you take charge of your health. For more information or to order any of these titles, visit [www.clevelandclinicpress.org](http://www.clevelandclinicpress.org).



The Cleveland Clinic Foundation

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