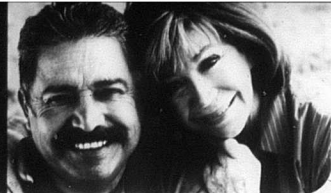


To a LONG and HEALTHY life



MEETING THE HEALTH CHALLENGES OF SENIORS



Daniel Malinin, MD
Family Medicine

As the saying goes, "Growing old is not for sissies." There's no getting around the fact that our bodies change as we grow older. The aging process for senior adults can bring with it a number of potential medical problems. And with more of us living longer than ever before, Americans must confront these challenges for longer periods of time. Experts generally agree that the most common health problems for seniors can be grouped into six major categories.

1) Cardiovascular Disease

The greatest factor for increased cardiovascular disease is age. People older than 65 are much more likely to have a heart attack, stroke or coronary heart disease. Indeed, heart disease and stroke account for 40 percent of all deaths ages 65 to 74 and 60 percent of all deaths after the age of 85.

2) Osteoporosis

The risk of osteoporosis, a disease characterized by bone loss, increases with age. Women are particularly vulnerable to the disease, which can lead to bone fractures.

3) Dementia

Dementia is the word physicians use for the loss or impairment of mental powers. Dementia is not a normal part of growing older. Many people who live to an old age do not experience significant memory problems or other symptoms of dementia. The symptoms of dementia can be caused by many different diseases. For example, vascular dementia occurs when there is a series of tiny, sometimes imperceptible strokes in the brain that affect its capacity for memory and intellectual function. Alzheimer's disease is the most frequent cause of irreversible dementia.

4) Depression

One of the most overlooked medical conditions in senior adults is depression. The causes can be many and complex: the loss of purpose in work or career; being isolated from family and friends; or feeling less independent because of debilitating medical conditions. People with serious illnesses can also become depressed, overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness.

5) Sleep Disorders

Did you know undiagnosed and/or untreated sleep apnea is a hidden cause of high blood pressure? Or that sometimes the symptoms of sleep apnea are misdiagnosed as depression? Sleep apnea disrupts sleep to varying degrees for an estimated one in four people over age 60. In this disorder, breathing stops for brief periods of time over and over again during sleep. There are many effective treatments for this disorder, but when left untreated, it puts people at greater risk for heart attack and stroke.

6) Cancer

Cancer affects all ages, but its likelihood increases as we grow older. Indeed, 67 percent of cancer deaths occur in people older than 65.

New For Some Good News!

So how do you meet these health challenges as you grow older? The good news is that you have the power to live a longer and healthier life, and that it's never too late to start. There are two basic strategies you can use to improve both your health and your longevity.

Practice Early Detection – Modern medicine provides a number of ways to detect diseases in their early stages, when the opportunity for successful treatment is much higher. It starts with an annual physical check-ups with your primary care physician. During the physical, your physician will check your blood pressure and cholesterol level as well as your mental state, memory and alertness. A routine test can be ordered to check for bone-thinning osteoporosis. There are a number of screenings available to detect cancer. For breast cancer, women should have an annual physical exam and a mammogram (x-ray of the breast). Cervical cancer can be checked with a PAP test, and PSA testing can check for prostate cancer. For colorectal cancer, talk to your physician about having a colonoscopy.

Live A Healthy Lifestyle – Scientists have determined that a combination of lack of exercise and a poor diet is the second leading cause of death, exceeded only by smoking. Eating a balanced diet, keeping your mind and your body active, and having regular physical check-ups all contribute to a long and healthy life. And who doesn't want that!



Can you recognize the warning signs of a stroke? It could save your life, especially if you are 55 or older. Stroke is the #3 cause of death in the United States and one of the leading causes of serious long-term disability in senior adults. For every decade after the age of 55, the risk of stroke doubles. Indeed, more than two-thirds of all strokes occur after the age of 65.

A stroke occurs when there is a problem with the blood supply to the brain. A blood clot blocking an artery can cause a stroke as can a bursting of the wall of the artery. Within minutes, the nerve cells in that area of the brain are damaged, and the part of the body controlled by those cells cannot function properly.

The symptoms happen suddenly, and time is critical. Treatment for a stroke can be very effective, but in most cases, medical care must be administered within the first three hours after the symptoms appear.

One of the best ways to prevent a stroke is to have a regular medical checkup with your primary care physician, who can check for heart disease, diabetes and other disorders that affect your blood vessels. By working closely with your doctor, you can develop a specific plan that will help you control your blood pressure and cholesterol through a combination of diet and exercise or medication.

WARNING SIGNS OF A STROKE:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on just one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble talking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden dizziness, loss of balance and coordination
- Sudden severe headache

GALLBLADDER DISEASE



Karl Schulstad, MD
General Surgery

Have you ever experienced a steady, sometimes severe pain in your abdomen, perhaps with bloating, nausea or vomiting? If you have these symptoms, you need for your doctor to determine if you have gallbladder disease. Here's Dr. Karl Schulstad, a General Surgeon with Bourbon Community Hospital, to tell us more.

Who develops gallbladder problems?

People who seem more likely to have gallbladder attacks include:

- Women, often in their 40s
- Women who are or have recently been pregnant
- Men and women who are overweight
- People who eat large amounts of dairy products, animal fats and fried foods
- Parents, siblings and children of people with gallbladder problems

How will my doctor know if I have gallbladder disease?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms, health problems and any risk factors that may point to a gallbladder problem, and conduct a physical exam. Your doctor will likely order a few blood tests, and a sonogram of your gallbladder to look for gallstones.

What are the treatment options?

The most common treatment is removal of the gallbladder through a tiny incision near the navel. Medications are sometimes used to dissolve gallstones, but are usually reserved for those patients who have complicating health problems and can't safely undergo surgery.

How successful is gallbladder surgery?

Gallbladder removal is one of the most successful kinds of surgery. Once it has been removed, your body should adapt quickly, allowing you to return to your normal lifestyle and diet in a few weeks.

