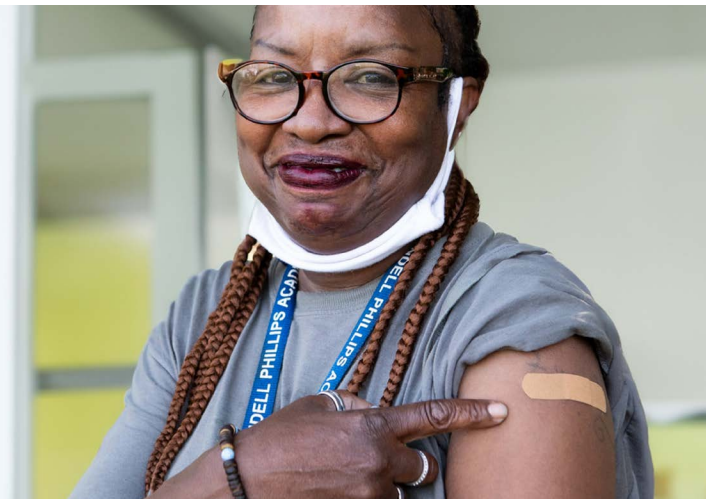
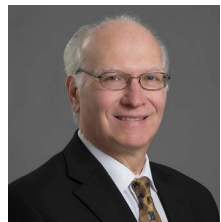


# A healthier today RUSH Generations and a vital tomorrow



## Your Health

### COVID-19: Staying Safe



**John Segreti, MD**  
Medical director, Infection Control and Prevention

Remember the precautions you took during the early days of the pandemic? Many of us donned masks and gloves, wiped our groceries down when we brought them inside and finally paid attention to how much we were washing our hands.

As doctors and scientists came to understand COVID-19, their recommendations for safety changed. But with cooler weather and more time indoors on the way, it's time to consider what safety measures we should keep taking.

**John Segreti, MD**, epidemiologist and medical director of Infection Control and Prevention at RUSH, has some advice.

#### Keep washing your hands

Just as we should have been washing our hands frequently and thoroughly before the pandemic, we should continue to do so now. "Wash your hands more rather than less," Segreti says. "And as far as how long? The CDC recommends 20 seconds."

If you're in a hurry and can't spare 20 seconds to get your hands clean, you can use alcohol or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer instead. It's faster and just as effective against germs.

#### Be sensible about social distancing

Social distancing became the norm during the height of the pandemic. For people who aren't at high risk for serious infections, social distancing may not continue to be as important. But if you're at high risk, you may want to keep your personal space whenever possible.

People who are at risk and can't social distance should continue to carry a mask. "If you're at high risk, if you're indoors and in a poorly ventilated, crowded area, you should be wearing a mask," Segreti says. "The better the mask, the better the protection."

#### Assess your risk

People who are immunocompromised, or live with someone who is, need to take extra care because of the higher risk of serious illness and complications.

"You should discuss it with your physician," Segreti says. "Someone who's immunosuppressed, like those who've had a recent stem cell transplant or solid organ transplant, should continue to take significant precautions."

Some of the things at-risk people should do are the same as before the pandemic. "Avoid undercooked meats and eggs, unpasteurized dairy products, that sort of thing," Segreti says. "These are things we were recommending even before COVID-19."

#### Talk to your provider about vaccines

Last spring, the FDA authorized a second dose of COVID-19 vaccines targeting the Omicron variant for older adults and immunosuppressed people. The yearly flu vaccine and the new vaccine for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are important, too. Talk to your primary care provider about the vaccinations that are right for you.

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Join us on Nov. 29 for a discussion on COVID-19, flu and colds. See the calendar insert for details.

#### RUSH Generations

Brought to you by the Department of Social Work and Community Health

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center  
710 S. Paulina St.  
Chicago, IL 60612-3872  
rush.edu/rushgenerations

# Caring for Caregivers

## Staying Independent

More than one in five adults in America cares for a family member, friend or neighbor — and more than 60% of them do so while working.

Among them is **Gina Lowell, MD**, a general pediatrician at RUSH University Medical Center and director of community health for the Department of Pediatrics. Lowell works with families every day, supporting parents in their relationships with their children.

Despite her expertise in family relationships, Lowell found her own experience caring for her 88-year-old mother challenging. She also didn't always view herself as a caregiver. "There's a feeling that there's something not entirely right about being a decision-maker for your parent," she says, "and I think that was at the heart of what was most troubling to me."

### A systematic, person-centered approach

Seeking help navigating her shifting relationship with her mother, Lowell reached out to **Ellen L. Carbonell, LCSW**, assistant professor in the Department of Social Work and consultant for caregiver programs at RUSH University Medical Center. Carbonell connected Lowell to the Caring for Caregivers program at RUSH.

Developed at RUSH with funding from the RRF Foundation for Aging, the program supports family and friends providing care for adults age 60 and older. The program offers support — including physical and emotional health assessments — to ensure that caregivers are ready, willing and able to perform caregiving tasks.



Gina Lowell, MD  
Pediatrician



Ellen L. Carbonell, LCSW  
Caregiver programs consultant

The program also includes sessions with a licensed clinical social worker to develop a care plan that meets the needs of the care recipient, while protecting and enhancing caregivers' health and well-being.

Preliminary data shows significant reductions in symptoms of depression, anxiety and burden for caregivers. Those being cared for benefit as well, with preliminary findings showing fewer visits to the emergency room, fewer hospitalizations and shorter stays.

### Navigating the challenges of caretaking

"I could not have handled all the ups and downs that come with life with the grace that I've been able to were it not for this program and my coaching sessions with Ellen," Lowell says. "She gave me the language I needed to talk with my mom and contextualize the emotions we were experiencing. I could listen to her better. I could hear her better."

**Join us on Nov. 15 for a discussion on caring for caregivers; see the calendar insert for details.**

To learn more about the Caring for Caregivers program, email [caregivers@rush.edu](mailto:caregivers@rush.edu).

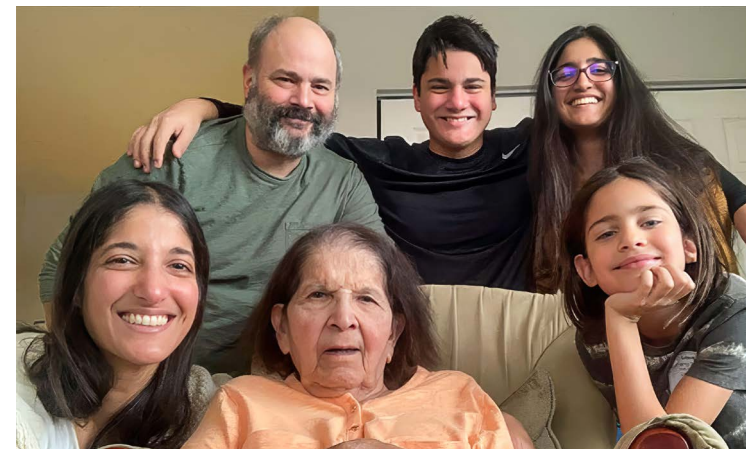
Volunteering has been shown to provide a double benefit to older adults. It both strengthens a sense of purpose in life and helps alleviate loneliness. In partnership with RUSH Generations, RUSH University offers a unique volunteer opportunity: Older adult volunteers work with health professions students to help create health systems that focus on providing high-quality care for older adults.

In the Community Health Mentor program, older adults with chronic health conditions meet via telehealth with students in the university's "Interprofessional Patient-Centered Teams" class. They help educate the students about what matters most to older adults in seeking health care. In return, the students work with the volunteers to make personalized wellness goals and action plans.

Ahrianna Mitchell-Sodipe took the class on her way to earning a master's degree in clinical nutrition in 2023. "As future health care providers, our main role and goal is to be an advocate for our patients, especially our aging population," she says.

"The first step in being an advocate is to listen: Listen to the stories that our patients are telling us, listening to their goals, understanding what matters most to them, and ... understanding that they know themselves more than we ever will."

If you'd like information about becoming a community health mentor, please contact Hannah Weitzman at [Hannah.Weitzman@rush.edu](mailto:Hannah.Weitzman@rush.edu).



# Addressing Chronic Hearing Loss



Michael Hefferly, PhD  
Audiologist

Even though hearing loss is one of the most prevalent chronic conditions for people 65 and older, less than 20% seek help for it, says **Michael Hefferly, PhD**, a RUSH audiologist.

One reason: lack of awareness. “There’s a misconception that hearing loss means you need a hearing aid,” Hefferly says. And not everyone feels ready to get a hearing aid the moment they notice a problem.

But ignoring the problem can lead to disengagement from conversations and activities, which can dramatically affect your quality of life, he says. It can also seriously affect your health, increasing your risk of depression, dementia and longer hospital stays.

Your primary care provider can help arrange an appointment for a comprehensive hearing evaluation with an audiologist. Audiologists assess the degree to which hearing loss is causing hearing problems and how these problems affect overall function and quality of life. Because communication is a shared activity, audiologists also assess how hearing problems impact family and friends.

## Strategies for success

To improve your ability to hear important speech sounds, your audiologist may recommend amplification through the use of a hearing aid or an assistive listening device (e.g., TV and phone amplifiers), or both.

However, it’s important to recognize that the right solution depends not just on your hearing loss but on your unique set of communication needs.

With your care team and loved ones, you might decide that you want amplification most of the time or only some of the time (for example, if you don’t eat out, then technology to improve hearing at restaurants is not necessary).

Or, you and your loved ones may find that better listening strategies are enough.

## How to listen better after hearing loss

“Listening is what you’re really trying to do,” Hefferly says. “And sound is just one of several tools we use to listen.” The others include facial expressions, lip movements, gestures and contextual knowledge.

Although the use of a hearing aid or an assistive listening device can be an important step toward improving hearing, it’s not the only change that can make a difference.

Hefferly offers the following advice to help listeners gain a better understanding of speech:

- Try to understand the context of the conversation, not every word or sound.
- Watch the speaker’s lips, facial expressions and gestures while they speak.
- Position yourself to get a full view of the face, not just the profile, so you can see the speaker’s lips and facial expressions. Nonverbal cues can be helpful.
- Consider formal lip-reading instruction.
- Ensure that your vision is adequate — with or without glasses.
- Use a quiet room to talk. Reduce background noise by turning off the television or turning it down, closing a door or window, etc.



- In public places, ask for any assistive listening devices that might be available. Movie theaters and playhouses often have devices that will amplify the performers’ voices.
- Explain your needs. Describe to others what helps you best to understand.
- Be honest when you don’t understand. If you only pretend to understand, speakers may think you are not interested in what they are saying.
- If possible, choose round tables in restaurants, meetings or other group settings. They offer the best view of the whole group.
- Avoid important conversations and complicated topics when you’re fatigued or stressed, which can make listening more difficult.
- Before meetings or events, familiarize yourself with the agenda; this will make it easier to pick up on contextual clues.

**Join us on Dec. 6 for a discussion on hearing and vision loss. See the calendar insert for details.**

## RUSH Generations

A healthier today and a vital tomorrow

[rush.edu/rushgenerations](https://rush.edu/rushgenerations)

(800) 757-0202



PLEASE NOTE: All physicians featured in this publication are on the medical staff of RUSH. Some of the physicians are in private practice and, as independent practitioners, are not employees or agents of RUSH. RUSH is an academic health system comprising RUSH University Medical Center, RUSH Copley Medical Center and RUSH Oak Park Hospital.

# Four Facts About Restless Leg Syndrome

Restless leg syndrome is a sleep disorder that causes an overwhelming urge to move your legs and makes it difficult to get comfortable enough to fall asleep.

1. Most people develop restless leg syndrome after age 45, although it can occur at any age. Women are nearly twice as likely as men to develop it, and it commonly runs in families.
2. Causes include iron deficiency, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, pregnancy and medications. Aggravating factors include prolonged sitting, caffeine and alcohol (especially wine).

3. Your doctor may order blood tests, including measuring iron levels. A sleep study may help ensure that you don't have obstructive sleep apnea or other disorders that could be disrupting your sleep.
4. Treatment is based on the type and severity of your symptoms. Lifestyle changes like getting regular exercise and avoiding alcohol and caffeine may help; there are also medications that aid in controlling the urge to move. A board-certified sleep medicine physician can help.

**Join us on Oct. 18 for a discussion on sleep and aging.  
See the calendar insert for details.**

A healthier today  
**RUSH Generations**  
and a vital tomorrow

## Fall 2023 Free Health and Aging Events

The following lectures will be held virtually. You can view them online or listen to them via phone.

For updates on RUSH Generations programs, sign up for our emails at [bit.ly/RushGenerations](https://bit.ly/RushGenerations).



### To join these lectures online,

visit the RUSH Generations YouTube page at the time of the event:

[cutt.ly/RushGenYouTube](https://cutt.ly/RushGenYouTube).



### To dial in via phone (audio only):

Call **(312) 626-6799** at the time of the event and enter meeting ID **413 655 0125#**.

### October

#### Chronic Pain Management

Wednesday, Oct. 4

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Is chronic pain interfering with your daily life and the activities you enjoy? Come hear from experts in pain management, who will discuss pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments for various chronic pain issues.

#### Sleep and Aging

Wednesday, Oct. 18

1 to 2:30 p.m.

As we age, it's common for our sleep patterns to change. Join us as we take a closer look at the relationship between aging and sleep, discuss common sleep issues and review sleep tips for older adults.

### November

#### Caregiving 101

Wednesday, Nov. 15

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Are you a caregiver who's finding it a challenge to take care of yourself while you care for someone else? We'll share tips to maintain personal well-being and help you be better able to care for your loved ones. Resources at RUSH will be featured, including the Caring for Caregivers Program.

#### COVID-19, Flu and Cold Health

Wednesday, Nov. 29

1 to 2:30 p.m.

As we enter cold and flu season, join us to learn about the important differences between COVID-19, the flu and the common cold. We'll also discuss how to prevent getting sick, how to treat mild symptoms and when it's necessary to seek medical attention.

### December

#### Hearing and Vision Loss

Wednesday, Dec. 6

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Many of us experience significant changes in vision and hearing as we age. This lecture will cover ways to maintain independence, recognize when you need to see your health care provider, and resources to support anyone with impaired vision or hearing.

#### Holiday Highs and Lows

Wednesday, Dec. 20

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Our annual holiday discussion is an important touchpoint for many RUSH Generations members. Join us in a festive activity while also discussing ways to recognize and manage the lows that sometimes come with the holiday season.

# Classes and Workshops

These classes and workshops are a mix of Zoom and in-person events.

**To participate in Zoom events**, you'll need internet access and the Zoom app on a computer, tablet or smartphone with a webcam. Please call **(800) 757-0202** and be ready to provide a valid phone number and email address so we can send you a Zoom link. If you don't have access to Zoom but would like to join a self-guided version of a workshop with a weekly conference call check-in, please call **(800) 757-0202**.

**To participate in in-person events**, pre-registration is required. Please call **(800) 757-0202** to reserve your spot.

For updates from RUSH Generations, sign up for our emails at [bit.ly/RushGenerations](https://bit.ly/RushGenerations).

## Classes

### Gentle Chair Yoga (Zoom)

Thursdays, Sept. 28 - Nov. 16

11 a.m. to noon

\$40 for the 8-class session

### Embracing Aging (Zoom)

Mondays, Oct. 23 - Dec. 11

1 to 2 p.m.

\$40 for the 8-class session

## Workshops

### A Matter of Balance

Wednesdays and Fridays,

Oct. 4 - Oct. 27

1 to 3 p.m.

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316

Chicago, IL 60612

### Fit & Strong!

Mondays, Wednesdays, and

Fridays, Oct. 23 - Dec. 15

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Armour Academic Center

600 S. Paulina St., Suite 1096

Chicago, IL 60612

### Tomando Control de su Diabetes (Zoom)

Todos los jueves, el 5 de octubre

hasta el 16 de noviembre

1 a 3:30 p.m.

### Take Charge of Your Health

Wednesdays, Oct. 18 - Nov. 29

(no class Nov. 22)

9:30 am. to noon

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316

Chicago, IL 60612

### Cancer: Thriving and Surviving (Zoom)

Tuesdays, Oct. 31 - Dec. 12

1 to 3:30 p.m.

**Both RUSH University Medical Center and RUSH Oak Park Hospital comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.**

#### Español (Spanish)

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### Polski (Polish)

UWAGA: jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### 繁體中文 (Chinese)

注意: 如果您使用繁體中文, 您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987)

#### 한국어 (Korean)

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987)번으로 전화해 주십시오.

#### Tagalog

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### العربية (Arabic)

ملاحظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية متاحة لك مجانًا. اتصل بالرقم 1-312-563-2987. 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### Русский (Russian)

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните по телефону 1-312-563-2987 (телетайп: 1-312-563-2987).

#### ગુજરાતી (Gujarati)

સૂચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### وئردو (Urdu)

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#### Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### Italiano (Italian)

ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### हिंदी (Hindi)

ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987) पर कॉल करें।

#### Français (French)

ATTENTION: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1-312-563-2987 (ATS: 1-312-563-2987).

#### λληνικά (Greek)

ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

#### Deutsch (German)

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

