

A healthier today RUSH Generations and a vital tomorrow



Your Health

What Your Pharmacist Wants You to Know About Medication Safety



Kirk Dennis, PharmD
RUSH Pharmacist

As we age, the number of prescription and over-the-counter medications we use tends to go up: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that more than 20% of American adults age 40 to 79 use five or more prescription drugs.

The more medications you take, the more prone you can be to drug interactions, errors or other issues that can quickly become serious. “Between 10 and 20% of hospital admissions are related to problems with medication,” says **Kirk Dennis, PharmD**, a pharmacist at RUSH. Dennis talks with people every day about how to manage their medications safely, and shared his list of the top five things everyone should know.

1. Carry a list of your current medications. Because providers need to know what you’re already taking before they evaluate you or prescribe anything new, “you should always have a document with you that lists all your medications — including supplements and over-the-counter drugs — along with their dosages and how often you take them,” Dennis says. If you have a smart phone, you can keep your list

updated in a notes app or take a photo of your written list.

- 2. Use the same pharmacy for all your prescriptions.** Seeing multiple specialists can mean juggling multiple prescriptions. “If all of your medications are at a single pharmacy, we can make one phone call to get any information we need,” Dennis explained. “Different providers might want to send prescriptions to different pharmacies, but let them know up front that you have a preferred pharmacy.”
- 3. Your pharmacist is there to help.** Dennis tells the story of a friend who recently started taking a medication whose label said “take four tablets daily” — but she didn’t know if she was supposed to take them together or throughout the day. “Nobody told her that she should take all four at once in the morning,” he said, so she asked her pharmacist for instructions. “Labels can be super confusing sometimes, and your pharmacist is a great resource,” Dennis says.
- 4. Take medication as directed, for as long as you’re supposed to.** “We often hear people say, ‘Well, I felt better, so I stopped taking my medication,’ for everything from blood pressure medication to antibiotics,” Dennis said. “Don’t stop taking a medication without talking to your provider first.” And, he added, don’t crush pills or open capsules unless your pharmacist okays it; doing so can affect medication’s effectiveness and safety.
- 5. Don’t ever take anyone else’s medication.** If you’re having back pain after gardening, don’t reach for your spouse’s prescription pain medication. “It can be tempting to just take whatever’s in the house, but you always need to be evaluated by a provider before you start any medication,” Dennis says. If you need help with the cost of your medication, ask your pharmacist about discount programs or financial assistance provided by drug manufacturers.

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Join us on April 24 for a discussion on medication safety. [See the calendar insert for details.](#)

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

710 S. Paulina St.
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The Lowdown on Low T Therapy



Laurence Levine, MD
Urologist

In men, testosterone is much more than a sex hormone. “Almost every organ and tissue in a man’s body has testosterone receptors,” says **Laurence Levine, MD**, a urologist at RUSH. “Testosterone plays a vital role in the proper functioning of your bones, muscles, brain, liver and everything in between,” from sexual function to mood to the production of energy-rich red blood cells.

That outsized role means that as testosterone levels decline naturally with age, low testosterone (low T) can cause a number of symptoms, including:

- Erectile dysfunction and low sex drive
- Fatigue
- Decrease in muscle mass and strength
- Depressed mood and trouble concentrating

If you’re experiencing symptoms, Levine says that there are a number of treatment options available — but also points out that despite what pharmaceutical ads may be telling you, low T therapy isn’t a magic bullet or appropriate for everyone.

Check your levels and discuss your options

Normal testosterone levels fall between 300 and 1,000 nanograms per deciliter (ng/dL). A urologist or other specialist in men’s health can measure your levels with a blood test.

If your test results are:

- **Below 300, with symptoms:** Discuss options with your provider. They’ll go over potential benefits and risks with you, and may recommend therapy, such as oral medication, topical gel, injections or pellets implanted under the skin.
- **Below 300, with few (or no) symptoms:** Your provider may opt for watchful waiting, regularly monitoring your levels and asking about your symptoms.

Is testosterone therapy safe?

Long-term testosterone use does carry some documented risks, including blood clots and strokes, sleep apnea and irritability.

And while most health care professionals agree that more research is needed on the long-term effects of testosterone therapy, recent studies have produced some interesting findings.

For example, one common misconception is that testosterone therapy can cause prostate cancer, but studies have found it does not. (However, Levine warns that it can stimulate tumor growth in men who already have prostate cancer.) Other studies have found that men with diabetes who were on testosterone therapy were able to better manage the condition. “It is *not* a treatment for diabetes, but it can certainly help regulate glucose and metabolism,” Levine says.

Bottom line: Testosterone therapy may not be appropriate if you’re just feeling run down, but if you’re experiencing significant symptoms, work with your provider to decide whether it’s right for you.

Join us on June 26 for a roundtable discussion on men’s health. See the [calendar insert for details.](#)



Managing Stress With Mindfulness

Do you ever feel like your mind just can’t relax? Is it a challenge to balance your priorities when everything seems to crowd in at once? Prolonged stress has been shown to have a negative effect on your mind and body — and it can definitely interfere with your ability to focus on what matters most to you.

Research shows that one very effective tool for managing stress is mindfulness. Mindfulness means letting go of worries and cultivating patience, non-judgment and acceptance.

You can easily incorporate mindfulness activities into many of your daily routines. These include breathing meditations, making a list of things you’re grateful for, taking a nature walk, and the “five senses” exercise that you can do anytime to help you calm down and focus:

- Take a few deep breaths to begin.
- Look around and notice five things you can **see**.
- Then notice four things you can **touch**.
- Listen for three things you can **hear**.
- Identify two things you can **smell**.
- Finally, focus on one thing you can **taste** — a piece of chocolate, your morning coffee, a cracker.

If you’re interested in decreasing your stress and finding better balance in your life, watch our upcoming calendar listings for the next RUSH Generations Mindfulness 101 class. In the meantime, visit aging.rush.edu/rush-generations/videos/ for some short videos of easy-to-learn mindfulness techniques.

Protect Yourself From Skin Cancer



David C. Reid, MD
Dermatologist

You're headed out the door, running through your mental checklist: Keys. Phone. Wallet. Sunscreen? If sunscreen isn't on your list, it should be. It helps prevent skin cancer, the most common type of cancer. Most cases can be prevented or treated when caught early.

Know the risks

The risk of skin cancer is predominantly tied to four factors:

- 1. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or tanning beds.** "People who work outside or engage in outdoor activities need to be especially careful," says RUSH dermatologist **David C. Reid, MD**.
- 2. Having fair skin, which increases your risk of sunburns and sun damage.** "It's less about your ethnicity and more about how fair your skin is," Reid says. "However, it's important to remember that people of all skin types are at risk for developing skin cancer and should see a dermatologist for new or concerning lesions."
- 3. A family or personal history of skin cancer.** "There are some genetic conditions that can increase your risk of skin cancer," Reid says. "Also, people with a first-degree family member with a history of melanoma are at a higher risk."
- 4. A lot of moles.** "People who have more than 50 to 100 moles on their bodies are at a higher risk of melanoma," Reid says. "If you have a new or changing mole or a spot that doesn't look like anything else on your body, talk to your doctor."

Check with your dermatologist or primary care provider if your moles have any of these characteristics, often referred to as the ABCs of melanoma:

Asymmetry, with one side of the mole different from the other

Borders that are irregular or uneven

Color, if the mole has more than two colors

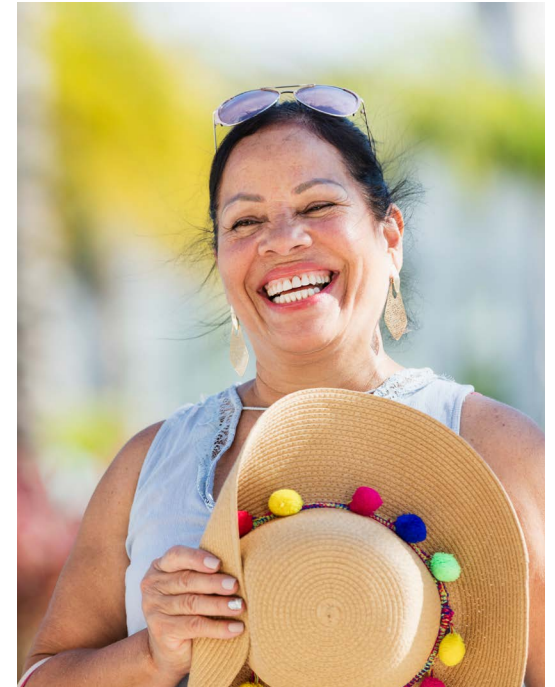
Diameter of more than 1/4 inch

Evolution, meaning that the mole is changing in size, color or other characteristics

Take sun-protective steps

Protecting yourself from skin cancer means adopting healthy sun habits, including the following:

- Avoid peak UV radiation by spending time outdoors before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m. While out, pick a shady spot or bring a beach umbrella.
- Put on a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and choose dark colors over light ones. If you're going to be in the water, wear a rash guard (an athletic shirt or bodysuit that provides UV protection even when wet).
- Don't forget sunglasses — they help prevent eyelid skin cancers — and apply lip balm with SPF 30 to protect your lips.
- Choose a sunscreen with SPF 30 or above and apply it generously, using enough to fill a shot glass. When reading labels, look for the words "broad spectrum" or zinc oxide and titanium dioxide on the ingredients list. And don't forget to apply sunscreen to your ears, scalp and tops of your feet, where skin cancers often appear.



- While you're outside, reapply sunscreen every two hours; more often if you get wet or sweaty. If a sunscreen claims to be "water-resistant," check the label to see how long the protection lasts.

Get a skin exam

Skin cancer can develop at any age, according to Reid. Your dermatologist can recommend how frequently you need skin exams based on your personal risk factors.

At your appointments, your dermatologist may monitor your skin with dermoscopy, a non-invasive exam using a handheld magnifier that allows providers to look beneath the surface of the skin to determine if a lesion is concerning. Dermatologists also recommend monthly self-exams, if you're at particularly high risk.

Join us on May 8 for a discussion on skin health awareness. See the calendar insert for details.

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(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.

3 Facts About Type 2 Diabetes and the Latino Community

Type 2 diabetes is sharply on the rise in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — and this serious health condition has a disproportionate impact on people of Latino ethnicity. Latino adults are 70% more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than non-Latino white adults.

- 1. More than half of Latino adults develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes** — and are more likely to develop the condition at a younger age than U.S. adults overall.
- 2. Heritage makes a difference:** People with Puerto Rican or Mexican backgrounds are about twice as likely to have Type 2 diabetes as someone whose background is South American.

- 3. Over time, high blood sugar from diabetes can cause serious health problems.** Latino people have higher rates of diabetes complications like kidney failure and vision loss.

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, your primary care provider can work with you on a plan to control it — and you can take advantage of RUSH Generations programs like *Tomando Control de su Diabetes*. Call **(800) 757-0202** for information about when the next session begins.

Join us on April 10 for a discussion on the health of Latino communities. [See the calendar insert for details.](#)

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Spring 2024 Free Health and Aging Events

The following lectures will be held virtually. You can view them online or listen to them via phone. Lectures typically last about one hour. For updates on RUSH Generations programs, sign up for our emails at bit.ly/RushGenerations.



To join these lectures online,

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

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#**.

April

Recognizing Alcohol and Substance Misuse Wednesday, April 3, 1 p.m.

Join us to hear providers from RUSH's Addiction Medicine Clinic share insight on alcohol and substance misuse: Who might be at risk, when treatment might be necessary and what services are offered at RUSH.

Salud De La Comunidad Latina Wednesday, April 10, 1 p.m.

Existen ciertas condiciones de salud que tienen un mayor impacto en la comunidad Latina. Acompáñanos a aprender de proveedores de RUSH quienes brindarán información sobre estos problemas médicos, cómo prevenirlos y las maneras en que cambios al estilo de vida y medicinas pueden ayudar a tratar estas condiciones de manera efectiva.

Medication Safety Wednesday, April 24, 1 p.m.

In this Schaalman Senior Voices/RUSH Generations lecture, you'll learn the best ways to track your medications, which medications require extra caution when taken by older adults and more.

May

Skin Health Awareness Wednesday, May 8, 1 p.m.

Ultraviolet radiation from the sun can cause damage to skin at any age, but many older adults have more vulnerable skin. Come learn from dermatology experts about protecting your skin when you're outdoors, and other ways to keep your skin healthy.

From Isolation to Inspiration Thursday, May 23, 11 a.m.

RUSH Generations and the RUSH Center for Excellence in Aging welcome **Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH**, for the 2024 Schaalman Senior Voices Thought Leader Lecture. Nobel, author of *Project UnLonely: Healing Our Crisis of Disconnection*, will explore the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation among older adults and discuss how the arts can engage, inspire, empower and connect us.

June

Aging With Pride Wednesday, June 12, 1 p.m.

What does it mean to age with pride? RUSH providers and community partners will lead this discussion of issues that LGBTQ+ older adults may face in finding appropriate health care, housing and supportive services. We'll also discuss how to be an ally to LGBTQ+ older adults.

Men's Health Roundtable Wednesday, June 26, 1 p.m.

What potential health issues do men need to keep in mind as they age? Join us for an important conversation about preventive care and screenings, along with self-care tips that can help improve overall well-being.

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.

Classes

Gentle Chair Yoga (Zoom)

Thursdays, April 11 to May 16

11 a.m. to noon

\$30 for the six-class session

Embracing Aging (Zoom)

Mondays, May 13 to June 24

1 to 2 p.m.

(no class May 27)

\$30 for the six-class session

Workshops

Fit and Strong

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays,

April 1 to May 29 (no class May 27)

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 438

Chicago, IL 60612

Cancer: Thriving and Surviving

Wednesdays, April 10 to May 15

9:30 a.m. to noon

Rubschlager Building

1520 W. Harrison St., 4th Floor

Multipurpose Room

Chicago, IL 60607

Take Charge of Your Health

Tuesdays, April 2 to May 7

9:30 a.m. to noon

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316

Chicago, IL 60612

Take Charge of Your Health

Tuesdays, June 4 to July 9

9:30 a.m. to noon

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316

Chicago, IL 60612

A Matter of Balance

Thursdays, April 18 to June 6

10 a.m. to noon

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center

710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316

Chicago, IL 60612

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall

Prevention (Zoom)

Wednesdays and Fridays,

June 5 to July 26

11 a.m. to noon

Bingocize

Tuesdays and Thursdays,

April 25 to July 9, 1 to 2 p.m.

(no class July 4)

Armour Academic Center

600 S. Paulina St.

(call [\(800\) 757-0202](tel:8007570202) for room number)

Learning to Live Well

With Chronic Pain (Zoom)

Tuesdays, June 18 to July 30

3 to 5:30 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 مجاناً. اتصل بالرقم 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).

اُردُو (Urdu)

خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال کریں 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

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).