

A healthier today Rush Generations and a vital tomorrow



→ Your Health

Above: Lisa Stempel, MD, director of breast imaging

Get Back on Track With Health Screenings

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that paying close attention to your health has never been more important. One of the best ways to protect your health is to get back on track with screenings for breast cancer, colon cancer and lung cancer, if you've delayed them during the last couple of years.

Breast cancer screening: A lifelong healthy habit

"Breast screening is the best way to detect breast cancer in its earliest stages, when it is most curable," says **Lisa Stempel, MD**, director of breast imaging at RUSH.

Stempel recommends that women have annual mammograms throughout their lives, as long as other health issues don't make screening burdensome. Limiting screenings to every other year puts women at risk for more advanced breast cancers that are harder to treat.

"There is no upper age limit at which mammographic screening is no longer beneficial," Stempel says. "If you're in relatively good health with five years of life expectancy, you should continue getting your annual screening mammogram. We see active and healthy 90-year-old women for screening mammography."

Who needs to be screened

- Women age 40 and above

Colon cancer screening: Don't postpone

Early detection is key when it comes to colon cancer: When caught early, there can be a better than 90% chance for a cure. Ask your provider about the best screening method for you; if you get a colonoscopy, the gastroenterologist can remove polyps that could develop into colon cancer down the road.

Who needs to be screened

- Black men and women age 45 and above
- Anyone with a family history of colon cancer
- Everyone else age 50 and above

Lung cancer screening: Crucial if you fit the criteria

Although lung cancer screening isn't as common as colonoscopies or mammograms, it's equally important in terms of detecting early-stage cancers. A simple, low-dose CT scan of the lungs has been proven to reduce lung cancer deaths.

"The program helps us catch lung cancer at an early stage when it's easier to treat, and even curable in some cases," says **Jennifer Earvolino, MD**, a primary care physician at RUSH University Medical Center.

"I've had multiple patients diagnosed through this screening mechanism; they all had early-stage lung cancer and only needed surgery," she says. "I'm happy to report these patients are in remission and are doing fine."

Get screened if all of the following apply

- You're between the ages of age 50 and 80
- You're a current smoker or have quit within the last 15 years
- You have a "20 pack-year" history of smoking, calculated by multiplying the number of packs smoked per day times the number of years you've smoked. For example: One pack a day for 20 years OR two packs a day for 10 years
- You have no new signs or symptoms of lung cancer, such as a new cough that will not go away or recent unexplained weight loss

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Join us on Wednesday, Oct. 5, for a discussion of breast cancer and on Wednesday, Nov. 2, for a discussion of lung cancer. See the calendar insert for details.

Rush Generations

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

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rush.edu/rushgenerations

Fighting the Winter Blues



Joyce Corsica, PhD
Clinical psychologist

Chicago winters can be brutal. While the holiday season can provide distractions from the snow and freezing temperatures, the gloomy days often drag on well into the new year. The winter months can be particularly bad for those with the winter blues or seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

About 14% of Americans report feeling down in the wintertime, while 6% wrestle with full-blown SAD, a recurrent type of depression associated with the change in seasons. It typically starts in the fall and persists through the winter months.

As the gloom continues and the cold and snow persist, it's a good time to learn how to manage your winter mood. You may be experiencing SAD if you're feeling down and your mood starts to invade all aspects of your life, including work and relationships.

"SAD can be debilitating for some people," says **Joyce Corsica, PhD**, a clinical psychologist at RUSH. "And if you're suffering from it, it's important to get help."

Symptoms of SAD include general sadness and a lack of energy, as well as difficulty sleeping, feeling less social, feeling hopeless and having suicidal thoughts.

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, talk to your primary care provider or a psychologist right away. They may discuss some of the following treatment options with you.

- **Sunlight:** It's important to get outside whenever the sun is out during these darker days. Exposing yourself to natural light will help boost serotonin production and your overall mood.
- **Light therapy:** Light therapy mimics sunlight using white fluorescent bulbs. It can be particularly helpful in regulating the release of melatonin, which increases when the sun goes down.

- **Exercise:** Research consistently shows a strong exercise-mental health connection, particularly for those with depression and anxiety. Moderate exercise of at least 30 minutes most days of the week may provide the biggest mood boost.
- **Psychotherapy:** A study in the American Journal of Psychiatry suggests that cognitive-behavioral therapy can be an even more effective long-term treatment for SAD than light therapy.
- **Medication:** If more conservative treatments don't provide adequate relief, you may need antidepressants. While you may be able to taper off the medication as you head into spring, it's important to talk to your prescribing doctor before making any changes to your medication or dosage.

Lifestyle changes can also go a long way toward boosting your mood. Going to sleep and waking up at the same time every day can help, and so can eating at the same time each day.

Finally, making plans with friends and family and staying social is vital. And while it may seem hard to get out during the winter months, making sure you continue to do things that you love is critical to your health and happiness.

Join us on Wednesday, Dec. 21, for a discussion about coping with holiday highs and lows. See the calendar insert for details.

Become a RUSH Generations Ambassador to Share What Matters

When we ask older adults what matters most to them, the feeling of connection and contribution that comes from volunteering is often high on the list.

Volunteer help is essential to keeping RUSH Generations running — so if you enjoy the program and would like to share it with others, you're invited to become a RUSH Generations Ambassador.

Ambassadors help the RUSH team with administrative tasks, such as data entry and distributing materials. Some ambassadors also earn a small stipend for representing RUSH Generations at health fairs around the Chicago area, where they promote programs, register people for upcoming events and sign up new RUSH Generations members.

If you'd like to become an ambassador, the first step is to be certified as a RUSH University Medical Center volunteer through the Office of Volunteer Services. Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Lashone Brown at **(800) 757-0202** for more information or to sign up.

If you're already a RUSH Generations ambassador, or if you do other volunteer work that's meaningful to you, we'd love to hear about your experiences. You can record a short video of yourself by visiting bit.ly/RecordMyStory or pointing your smartphone camera at the code below. And if you'd like to see videos of others sharing what matters most to them as they age, visit aging.rush.edu/Schaalman.



Stop Diabetes in Its Tracks



Amy Folker, NP
Diabetes educator

A diagnosis of prediabetes can be a wake-up call, especially if you didn't know you were at risk. But that wake-up call doesn't have to be cause for alarm.

Having prediabetes — blood sugar or A1C levels that are elevated but not up to diabetes level — means you have a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. With the right support and lifestyle habits, however, you can stop the disease in its tracks. And there are a lot of compelling reasons to do so.

“Having Type 2 diabetes can affect nearly all the systems in your body,” says **Amy Folker, NP**, a diabetes educator at RUSH Oak Park Hospital. It can lead to kidney disease, heart disease, stroke, blindness and neuropathy (numbness, tingling or pain), among other conditions.

To help people with prediabetes avoid these risks, Folker heads up a free, 12-month education and support program called Project Lifestyle Change. It's based on principles anyone can live by to keep their blood sugar levels under control.

1. Eat well.

Folker says that building healthy eating habits — eating lots of fruit and vegetables and choosing the right proteins, carbohydrates and fats — is fundamental to avoiding diabetes.

For example, simple carbohydrates, like french fries and white bread, aren't good for blood sugar levels. Complex carbohydrates like whole grains are better choices. Lean proteins like chicken breast and beans are essential. And avoiding unhealthy fats, like those in butter or most fried foods, is a must. Healthy fats are found in olive oil, fish, nuts and seafood.

2. Get moving.

Exercise lowers glucose in the bloodstream. It also lessens your body's resistance to insulin, which can help prevent diabetes. Folker suggests 150 minutes of exercise per week — it can be anything from vigorous running to leisurely walking.

Even if you aren't able to do 150 minutes, any physical activity, even just walking around your home, walking your dog or doing housework, can help keep your blood sugar at normal levels. One way to make it fun is to find activities that don't feel like exercise — for instance, skating, dancing, riding a bike or gardening. If you've never exercised before, it's important to talk to your doctor before starting any type of exercise.

3. Sleep well.

Sleeping less than six hours per night can put you at elevated risk for developing diabetes, since higher blood sugar levels are more frequent in those who get less sleep.

Consistency is key to establishing healthy sleep habits. For starters, try going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. Limit your intake of caffeine, nicotine or alcohol in the evenings, keep daytime naps short, and use your bedroom only for sleeping, not watching TV or scrolling through your phone.

4. Seek support.

Taking action against prediabetes means setting personal goals and making lifestyle changes, but you don't have to go it alone. Family and friends can provide support and be a positive reinforcement. For example, you can ask someone to be your exercise buddy to help you stay motivated and accountable.

5. Play the long game.

It's all about being in control of your health. “Prediabetes is an opportunity to make positive, lasting lifestyle changes,” Folker says. “Taking control isn't a quick fix — it's about problem solving and changing things to improve your health.”

Join us on Wednesday, Nov. 16, for a diabetes presentation and discussion. 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.

5 Common Eye Conditions

Jonathan Rubenstein, MD, chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at RUSH University Medical Center, shares suggestions about how to handle some common eye symptoms.

Try at-home treatment if you have:

- **Irritated, burning or dry eyes.** Rubenstein suggests maintaining good eye hygiene, such as washing your face with a gentle cleanser twice a day, and using artificial tears.
- **Red eyes.** Sometimes your eyes can become red or bloodshot because of allergies or a viral infection. Try over-the-counter decongestants or artificial tears.

See an ophthalmologist if you have:

- **Spots or flashes in vision.** Floaters can appear as small specks or circles; flashes can look like lightning or camera flashes. They can be an early sign of retinal detachment.
- **Blurry vision.** The leading cause of blurry vision is cataracts, which are routinely treated with outpatient surgery. Another possibility is macular degeneration, which causes loss of central vision.
- **Peripheral vision problems.** Changes in what you can see out of the corners of your eyes could be an early sign of glaucoma, which Rubenstein calls a “sneaky disease.” He recommends regular exams to assess the pressure in your eye and optic nerve.

Join us on Wednesday, Dec. 7, for a lecture on vision health. See the calendar insert for details.

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Fall 2022 Free Health and Wellness Events

The following lectures will focus on healthy aging and 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.



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 389 910 8992#**.

October

What to Know About Breast Cancer

Wednesday, Oct. 5, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

You know it when you start seeing the pink ribbons each year: October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. At this lecture, you'll learn the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and the importance of regular screenings — all key to early detection and successful treatment.

Medicare 101

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Just in time for the upcoming enrollment period, we'll share the latest updates on Medicare health insurance and prescription drug insurance. Whether you're new to Medicare or you want to be sure you're getting the most out of the program, join us to learn about your benefits.

November

What to Know About Lung Cancer

Wednesday, Nov. 2, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Every year, more than 2 million people worldwide are diagnosed with lung cancer. This Lung Cancer Awareness Month lecture focuses on common signs and symptoms of the disease, ways to reduce your risk and new advances in treatment.

Diabetes 101

Wednesday, Nov. 16, 1 to 2 p.m.

Diabetes is a chronic condition that can have a big impact on your day-to-day life. Join us to learn more about diabetes, how to prevent it and how to manage it if you or someone you love has been diagnosed.

December

Vision Health

Wednesday, Dec. 7, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Many of us experience significant vision changes as we age. After this lecture, you'll be able to recognize the difference between normal changes and those that need intervention, how to find resources to help with vision impairments and ways to maintain independence if you're experiencing vision loss.

Holiday Highs and Lows

Wednesday, Dec. 21, 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

Most of the following (except A Matter of Balance) will be held virtually. To inquire about other in-person workshops, please call **(800) 757-0202**.

To participate in virtual sessions, you'll need access to the Zoom app through a computer, tablet or smartphone with a webcam. To reserve your place and receive a Zoom link to your event, please call **(800) 757-0202** and be ready to provide a valid phone number and email address.

If you don't have access to this technology but would like to join a self-guided version of the workshop with a weekly conference call check-in, please call **(800) 757-0202**.

For updates from RUSH Generations, sign up for our emails at bit.ly/RushGenerations.

Class

Embracing Aging

Thursdays, Oct. 17 to Dec. 5
1 to 2 p.m.
\$40 for the eight-class session

Workshops

Cancer: Thriving and Surviving

Tuesdays, Oct. 4 to Nov. 15
12:30 to 3 p.m.

Vivir una Vida Mejor con el Dolor Crónico

Todos los jueves, el 6 de octubre hasta el 17 de noviembre
1 a 3:30 p.m.

Take Charge of Your Health

Tuesdays, Oct. 25 to Dec. 6
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

A Matter of Balance (meets in person)

Mondays and Wednesdays
Nov. 21 to Dec. 14
2:30 to 4:30 p.m.
 Center for Life and Learning
 Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago
 Please call (800) 757-0202 to register.

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)

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繁體中文 (Chinese)

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한국어 (Korean)

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Tagalog

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العربية (Arabic)

ملاحظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية متاحة لك مجانًا. 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)

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

وُردُ (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)

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हिंदी (Hindi)

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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).