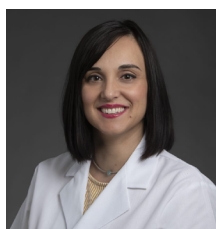


# A healthier today Rush Generations and a vital tomorrow



## → Your Health

## 6 Things To Know About Drug Interactions



Klodiana Myftari, PharmD  
Clinical pharmacist

Medications can be miraculous, but mixing them with other drugs, foods or supplements can result in unwanted side effects. Knowing about potential interactions — and how to prevent them — can keep you and your family safe.

“Interactions are very common — a lot of drugs interact with each other,” said Rush pharmacist **Klodiana Myftari, PharmD**. “Ongoing awareness and monitoring are important to make sure that interactions don’t cause harm.”

**1. Taking two medications together can change how drugs work.** For example, taking an aspirin to minimize blood clotting along with a nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory drug like ibuprofen can reduce the aspirin’s effectiveness.

**2. Some foods and beverages can affect a drug’s action.** Grapefruit juice is one example. It acts on an enzyme responsible for breaking down cholesterol-lowering drugs, which may make the drugs too strong and can cause side effects ranging from joint pain to kidney failure. Other combinations to avoid include leafy greens with blood thinners and dairy products with certain antibiotics.

**3. Medication for one condition can sometimes make another condition worse.** For instance, some antidepressants, like amitriptyline, can increase your heart rate.

**4. Certain over-the-counter medications are more likely to cause interactions.** “Some medications that most of us have in our medicine cabinets don’t combine well with prescription drugs,” Myftari says — like the common pain relievers ibuprofen and naproxen, which can affect heart medications.

**5. Vitamins and herbal supplements can interact with medications.** “Natural” supplements can interact with medications, too. Myftari warns that garlic, ginger, ginseng, ginkgo biloba and glucosamine can all interact with the blood thinner warfarin to increase your risk of bleeding.

**6. Mixing alcohol with medications can be dangerous.** Heart medications and antidepressants should never be mixed with alcohol; some combinations — such as codeine and alcohol — can cause coma or death.

Myftari shared the following tips for avoiding harmful interactions: First, don’t share prescription medications. “If a family member or friend is taking a medication that they want you try ... don’t do it,” she says. “And don’t share your prescriptions with anyone else.”

Use the same doctor and pharmacy consistently. Your biggest allies in staying healthy are primary care providers and pharmacists who know you and your medications well, Myftari says. And, she adds, whenever you’re prescribed a new medication, have your provider and pharmacist explain what it’s for and what you should expect

Carry a list of all the medications you use: prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, topical remedies, vitamins and supplements. Show the list to any medical professionals you visit, including your doctor and pharmacist, and share it with your emergency contacts. Don’t forget to update your list when you stop or start taking a medication.

## In This Issue

- 2 **Important Conversations**  
Care That Comes To You:  
Rush@Home
- 2 **What Matters**  
Educating Health Care  
Providers
- 3 **Stages**  
Manage Degenerative Disc  
Disease To Stay Pain-free
- 4 **Things to Know**  
3 Ways To Live Better  
With Vision Loss



Join us on Wednesday, April 6, for a discussion of safe medication management. See the calendar insert for details.

## Rush Generations

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

710 S. Paulina St.  
Chicago, IL 60612-3872  
[rush.edu/rushgenerations](http://rush.edu/rushgenerations)

# Care That Comes To You: Rush@Home

If you think that a health care provider making easy, convenient house calls is a thing of the past, we have some welcome news: Rush has brought house calls back. Since 2018, health care providers have been seeing people in their homes on Chicago’s West Side through the Rush@Home program.

Rush@Home is for people who have complex medical needs but are homebound or have trouble getting to a doctor’s office for care. The team of primary care physicians, certified medical assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses and social workers helps patients manage chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma and heart failure.

Appointments take place as often as needed, with a two-person care team who can provide checkups, bloodwork, medication refills and other medical services (they can even order in-home X-rays using portable equipment). They coordinate with home health agencies and any medical specialists the patient sees. And they develop close relationships with everyone in the home, including family members and other caregivers.

**Elizabeth Davis, MD**, the medical director of Rush@Home, says that the program helps patients stay healthier. In the first three years of the Rush@Home, patients made fewer trips to the emergency room, were hospitalized less often and, if hospitalized, had shorter stays than before the program. “This model of care has been shown to be effective and helpful, and that’s why we’re doing it,” says Davis.

For more information about Rush@Home, call (312) 947-HOME (4663) or visit [rush.edu/house-calls](http://rush.edu/house-calls).

## Rush@Home

---

**Rush@Home accepts all insurances that are accepted by Rush primary care providers, including Medicare. You may be eligible for care if you live in one of the following ZIP codes:**

---

Austin

**60639, 60644, 60651**

Bridgeport

**60616**

Chinatown

**60616**

Douglas

**60616**

East Garfield Park

**60612, 60624**

Forest Park

**60130, 60682**

Humboldt Park

**60622, 60624, 60647, 60651**

Lower West Side

**60608, 60616**

Near West Side

**60606, 60607, 60608, 60612, 60661**

North Lawndale

**60608, 60623, 60624**

Oak Park

**60301, 60302, 60303, 60304**

River Forest

**60305**

South Lawndale

**60623**

West Garfield Park

**60624**

West Town

**60612, 60622, 60642**



## Educating Health Care Providers

To honor the legacy of Rabbi Herman Schaalman, who changed the way people think and talk about aging, Schaalman Senior Voices aims to ensure that the voices of older adults are listened to and heard, especially in the health care setting.

The voices shared at Schaalman Senior Voices community events and through the Schaalman Senior Voices film library help us educate current and future health care professionals, as well as other community members, about aging.

When we share these voices, providers begin to understand what is most important to the patient, so they can put the patient at the center of their care. Person-centered care encourages the patient to share with their provider what is most important to them and their health — and encourages providers to listen carefully and non-judgmentally.

Schaalman Senior Voices encourages you to record a short video, 60 to 90 seconds long, that we’ll add to our collection of older adults sharing what matters most to them as they age. To record your video, visit [bit.ly/RecordMyStory](https://bit.ly/RecordMyStory).

If you have any questions about Schaalman Senior Voices or would like assistance in recording a video, please contact Danielle Kiel at (312) 942-0447. To learn more about Schaalman Senior Voices, visit [aging.rush.edu/Schaalman](http://aging.rush.edu/Schaalman).

# Manage Degenerative Disc Disease To Stay Pain-free



Gregory Lopez, MD  
Orthopedic spine  
surgeon



Matthew Colman, MD  
Orthopedic spine  
surgeon

It's a scary-sounding diagnosis — but don't panic if you learn you have degenerative disc disease. In spite of its name, it's not actually a disease, and it doesn't inevitably worsen over time.

"The normal process by which discs change as we age is simply called 'degeneration.' So everyone experiences it to some degree during their lifetime," says **Gregory Lopez, MD**, an orthopedic spine surgeon at Rush.

## When discs deteriorate

As we age, the discs between the vertebrae in our spines start to dry and shrink. In some cases, these changes lead to ruptured — or herniated — discs, instability in the spine, and/or narrowing of the spinal canal.

These issues may in turn cause symptoms, including neck or back pain, radiating pain and weakness or numbness in the arms or legs. The good news: Symptoms don't typically progress.

"A diagnosis in your 30s or 40s doesn't mean you'll be in a wheelchair by 70," says **Matthew Colman, MD**, an orthopedic spine surgeon at Rush. "In fact, with aging, the degenerative process sometimes burns out to a point where it causes less pain."

And taking steps to manage symptoms and keep your spine and back healthy can help you stay mobile and active throughout your life.

## Prevention is the best medicine

A healthy lifestyle not only improves symptoms, it can actually slow the degenerative process. That's why Lopez and Colman recommend the following:

- **Exercise.** Make aerobic activities, core strengthening and stretching part of your routine, including working with a physical therapist if your doctor recommends it. Exercise can help you control your weight and keep your spine strong and healthy.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight puts more stress on your spine. It can also keep you from being physically active.
- **Don't smoke.** In addition to increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke, lung disease and cancer, smoking cigarettes can significantly affect disc health and speed the rate of degeneration.
- **Drink more water, less alcohol.** Hydration promotes healthy discs and a healthy body, while excessive alcohol dehydrates. Heavy drinking can also lead to injury-causing falls or accidents. Stick to the recommended one alcoholic beverage daily for women, two per day for men. And take big sips of water between sips of alcohol to make your drink last longer and help prevent alcohol-related dehydration.

## Managing the pain

Along with lifestyle changes and physical therapy, your doctor may prescribe medications to minimize painful flare-ups. Some of their recommendations might include over-the-counter pain relievers (e.g., acetaminophen); or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., ibuprofen). Cortisone injections or epidural steroid injections might also help.

## When to have surgery

"Most people feel and function better once symptoms are treated by nonsurgical means and they have learned and committed to proper self-care," Lopez explains.

If your pain isn't improving or your symptoms are affecting your quality of life, however, your doctor may recommend one of the following surgical procedures:

- **Decompression**, or removal of a displaced disc or overgrown bone to free pinched nerves
- **Fusion**, or building a bone bridge to provide stability and prevent painful motion
- **Deformity correction** to address abnormal curvatures
- **Placement of implants**, such as spacers, artificial discs and nerve stimulators

"There are many ways to address the symptoms resulting from disc degeneration," Colman says. "The key is to determine what's causing your symptoms and work with a spine specialist to find the right approach for you."

Join us on Wednesday, June 1, for a discussion about managing back and neck pain. See the calendar insert for details.

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

[rush.edu/rushgenerations](http://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.

## 3 Ways To Live Better With Vision Loss

If you live in the Chicago area and are experiencing vision loss, the Blind Service Association can help. They offer a group of programs designed especially for older adults.

**Vision Connection** is a club for people over age 50 that offers opportunities for socializing and learning. Members meet up for cultural and recreational events, as well as lectures by clinicians and other professionals whose work relates to vision loss among older adults.

**Volunteer readers** can help you with tasks like reading mail, sorting pill bottles, writing correspondence and more. For more about this program, contact Marty Kummetz at **(312) 236-0808**.

**Support groups** for older adults meet regularly; participants share their experiences, meet others and get tips for daily living.

For more information, visit [blindserviceassociation.org/senior.html](http://blindserviceassociation.org/senior.html) (click on the “calendar” tab to see a full event schedule) or call **(312) 236-0808**.



A healthier today

# Rush Generations

and a vital tomorrow

## Spring 2022 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 688 127 6741#**.

### April

#### Safe Medication Use for Older Adults

**Wednesday, April 6, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

Many adults take one or more medications, but what happens if you take prescribed medications the wrong way or mix medications? At this lecture, you'll learn how to track and optimize your medication use to stay safe. A Rush pharmacist will answer your questions about prescriptions and over-the-counter medications.

#### Fraud, Scams and Elder Abuse

**Wednesday, April 20, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

When we use technology like a computer, tablet or cell phone to connect with our loved ones and friends, how do we know our information is safe? This lecture will discuss tips for staying safe and ways to identify some of the dangers that can come with connecting online.

### May

#### Stroke Education and Awareness

**Wednesday, May 4, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

Hear from Rush Stroke Center experts who will help us identify signs of stroke and learn about stroke prevention.

#### Older Americans Month Celebration

**Thursday, May 12, 1 to 2 p.m.**

Join Rush Generations and the International Music Foundation for a live event in celebration of Older Americans Month, featuring award-winning chamber music ensemble the Balourdet Quartet.

#### Managing Incontinence

**Wednesday, May 18, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

Loss of bladder control can happen more often as we age. Join us to hear ways to improve your pelvic and bladder health.

### June

#### Back and Neck Pain

**Wednesday, June 1, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

Back and neck pain can happen for many reasons — but how do you know if it's just an ache that will resolve, or if you need to see your doctor? Learn from Rush experts in back and neck pain, who will discuss common back and neck issues and ways to find relief.

#### Grief and Loss

**Wednesday, June 15, 1 to 2:30 p.m.**

Grieving is a natural response to a loss, and during the pandemic many of us have experienced significant losses. Join us for this discussion on the stages of grief, common reactions to loss, coping strategies and ways to adapt and recover.

# Classes and Workshops

These classes and workshops (except Walk With Ease) will be held virtually. 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.

## Classes

### Life Review Through Art

**Mondays, June 6 to Aug. 1**

**(no class July 4)**

**1 to 2:45 p.m.**

**\$40 for the eight-class session**

Try your hand at art-based activities that help foster well-being, social connections and sharing of lived experiences.

### Gentle Chair Yoga

**Thursdays, May 26 to July 14**

**11 a.m. to noon**

**\$40 for the eight-class session**

## Workshops

### Cáncer: Sobreviviendo y Triunfando

**Todos los viernes,**

**el 22 de abril hasta el 3 de junio**

**10 a.m. a 12:30 p.m.**

### Walk With Ease *(meets in person)*

**Garfield Park Conservatory**

300 N. Central Park Ave., Chicago

**Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays**

**April 6 to May 13**

**2 to 3:30 p.m.**

### Take Charge of Your Diabetes

**Thursdays, May 5 to June 16**

**10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

### Learning To Live Well With Chronic Pain

**Tuesdays, May 24 to July 5**

**1 to 3:30 p.m.**

### Take Charge of Your Health

**Tuesdays, May 31 to July 12**

**10 a.m. to 12:30 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. (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).

#### اُردو (Urdu)

خبردار: اگر 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).