

Rush Generations

A HEALTHIER TODAY
AND A VITAL TOMORROW

RUSH UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER

WINTER
/ 2012

→ YOUR HEALTH



It's All Relative



Catherine Park, MD
Internist

While the risk for disease can be inherited, not every generation has to share the same outcome if family members know their family's health history. But do your children and grandchildren know their health history? Do they know *your* health history?

Knowledge Is Power

"Knowing family history helps patients take their own health issues more seriously and gives doctors insights about how to provide optimal care," says Catherine Park, MD, an internist at Rush University Medical Center.

But, according to the U.S. Surgeon General, only one-third of Americans have written it down and shared their family histories, even though they know it's important. This is troubling, considering that many

life-threatening diseases — such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes — run in families.

Equipped with family histories, doctors can zero in on preventive strategies (e.g., diet and exercise) and order appropriate screening tests, such as colonoscopies for early detection of colon cancer. For some, genetic testing and counseling may be recommended. For example, several cancer programs at Rush offer genetic testing and counseling, including the Sandra Rosenberg Registry for Hereditary and Familial Colon Cancer and the Rush Inherited Susceptibility to Cancer Program for ovarian and breast cancers.

So do your family a favor and put your health history in writing.

What to Track

Your health history and that of your parents and siblings are usually the most relevant to your children and grandchildren. If relatives are no longer living and their medical records are unavailable, connect with other family members to help fill in the blanks. Record not only health problems, such as high blood pressure and any rare diseases, but also the age at which these troubles began. "If a family member had a heart attack at age 45, this increases a person's risk far more than if that family member had a heart attack at 70," Park says.

The most important aspect of this project: sharing it with your family. Pass it out at the next family dinner or send an email. Whatever your delivery method, remember to send updates when new health conditions are diagnosed, because family histories have the potential to change with each doctor's visit.

For helpful tools on gathering your family history, visit www.rush.edu/rushgenerations.

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→ Learn more about family history and other colorectal cancer risk factors. Come to a free event at Rush on Thursday, March 22. Call (888) 352-RUSH (7874) for more information.

Rush Generations

Brought to you by Rush Older Adult Programs

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ROBYN'S CORNER

Dear Rush Generations members and friends:

It is a very exciting time for Rush Generations and the Rush community. As many of you know, the new Rush hospital, the Tower, opened this month. It was the culmination of many long years of planning, preparation and construction. The result is a truly beautiful facility designed entirely from a patient care perspective.

From the gorgeous Edward A. Brennan entry pavilion — with its unique terrarium and comfortable seating — to the universal design standards that make finding one's way around the hospital easy for everyone, the new hospital makes the patient and visitor experience as pleasant as possible.

One of the hospital's most exciting features is the new resource center, which is centrally located on the fourth floor of the Tower across from the elevators. The center, which will be staffed by a full-time social worker, will feature Rush Generations services and resources among other valuable tools.

If you're in the neighborhood, please stop by the resource center!

Sincerely,

Robyn L. Golden, LCSW
Director, Older Adult Programs
Rush University Medical Center

STAGES

New Hospital Reaches Final Stages: Open Doors for All



Eugene Thonar, PhD, understands the importance of accessibility. Thonar, 66, a professor of biochemistry, orthopedic surgery and internal medicine at Rush, relies on a scooter to get around due to a condition called ankylosing spondylitis, which causes the joints in his neck, back and hips to fuse together.

Rush built its new hospital, the Tower, with the needs of Thonar and other people with disabilities in mind. In fact, optimizing the patient experience was one of the guiding principles used to design the Tower, which opened this month after reaching its final stages of completion. And that's why Rush created an entire task force, which included Thonar, to ensure accessibility was a central part of the design process. "I'm really excited about what we have done," Thonar says. "I think people are really going to like it."

The result is a leading-edge hospital loaded with helpful features that promote an unrestricted environment for all patients. Handrails are abundant throughout areas where patients travel, as well as in all patient bathrooms. Braille signage throughout the Medical

Center helps people find their way to locations such as elevators, which provide voice information about floor locations.

The restrooms in all the acute care rooms were also designed to make it easier for patients in wheelchairs. Doors open both ways, allowing room for the wheelchair to be maneuvered. In addition, all sinks and toilets are at heights approved by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

In many instances, the hospital even exceeds ADA requirements. For instance, there are even more accessible parking locations than the ADA's recommended number.

Planner's Perspective

As for Thonar, he's most excited about the new MRI machines, which can accommodate patients with unique curvatures. Until now, the shape of Thonar's body made it impossible for him to get a high-quality MRI. "This will not only help people like me, but all people with conditions that make it difficult for them to fit into or maneuver within standard spaces."



TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

→ PHILANTHROPY AT RUSH

Managing a Chronic Condition

In this column, we feature Rush Generations members, caregivers and health professionals at Rush weighing in on a subject related to aging. Below they share perspectives on the challenges of managing diabetes, a chronic health condition.

An Older Adult's Experience

I've been married for 45 years, and my wife and I have supported each other through sickness and health. Five years ago, I began having heart problems and was diagnosed with diabetes. After recovering from a diabetic coma, I knew I needed to make a change and take my diabetes more seriously. I just wasn't sure how to make those changes and have them stick.

— Jim

A Caregiver's View

I knew something was wrong with how we were managing our health when my husband went into a diabetic coma, but helping Jim manage his chronic condition has been challenging. Having diabetes means that you have to alter your entire lifestyle, and sometimes the information about the condition isn't fully explained. I wanted to be more educated about my husband's condition and involved in his medical care. I knew we had to get on the right road.

— Caroline

[Working Together]

Getting — and staying — on track can be difficult for many couples in these situations. That's why tapping into other resources is often a good idea, as is doing it together. For Caroline and Jim, help came when they enrolled in the Take Charge of Your Diabetes workshop at Rush to learn more about diabetes and how to manage it. Together, they learned about using tools like healthy meal planning, exercise as part of their daily regimen and setting weekly health goals. Caroline now knows the value of counting carbohydrates, and Jim is now more proactive about exercising, eating smaller meals and monitoring his sugar levels. Caroline's lifestyle changed right along with her husband's through improved eating habits. Bottom line: Don't be afraid to ask for help. The benefits can be life-saving for both of you. — Dana Bright, LSW, manager of health promotion

Have you considered making a bequest provision to Rush?

Making a charitable bequest is an easy, straightforward way to leave a lasting legacy to ensure a promising future for Rush and Rush Generations.

Designating a portion of your assets to Rush or Rush Generations via a provision in your will or living trust has no affect on the availability of assets during your lifetime. Your charitable contribution has the additional benefit of reducing your taxable estate, and you can modify your bequest at any time if your circumstances change. All those who notify us that they have included Rush or the Rush Generations program in their estate plans are invited to join the Rush Heritage Society.

For more information about making a bequest to Rush or Rush Generations or to notify us of a provision for Rush or Rush Generations in your will, contact Tim Larson at (312) 942-9284 or timothy_larson@rush.edu.

→ Quiet Surroundings

Accessibility wasn't the only consideration in the Tower's inclusive design. "Noise — which can trigger confusion in people with mental illness and dementia — was also a factor," says Anthony Perry, MD, clinical transformation officer. A wireless phone system allows doctors, nurses and other hospital caregivers to communicate directly via mobile phones, reducing the need for overhead paging and ringing telephones.

→ Now is the best time to be more proactive about your health. The Chronic Disease Self-Management and Diabetes Self-Management workshops give you all the tools you need to manage your chronic conditions. Call (800) 757-0202 for more information.

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(800) 757-0202

www.rush.edu/rushgenerations



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PLEASE NOTE: All physicians featured in this publication are on the medical staff of Rush University Medical Center. Some of the physicians are in private practice and, as independent practitioners, are not employees or agents of Rush University Medical Center.

→ NEWSFLASH

The Affordable Care Act and Medicare Improvements

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare benefits will have some improvements over the next several years. In 2011, Medicare started or improved coverage of several preventive services, including a variety of screenings, provider visits and education sessions — some with no co-payment as long as the provider accepts Medicare. For example, you pay nothing for a yearly wellness visit during which you and your doctor discuss your personal and family medical history, your health risk factors and what to do about them, as well as review your current prescriptions and providers, and schedule appropriate preventive screenings. Nutrition counseling for diabetes and counseling to help stop smoking are also no-cost benefits. Many screenings are also available.

Didn't take advantage of these benefits last year? Well, start the year right and find out how you can get the most of these improvements. Check out the booklet "Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services" at www.medicare.gov or call the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) at (800) 548-9034.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RUSH'S NEW HOSPITAL

- 1 | Called the Tower, the hospital has a unique butterfly shape that was inspired by caregivers who were intent on creating space where they could provide the very best care.
- 2 | The hospital has only single-bed patient rooms, each of which includes a special family zone with a recliner and a sleeper sofa.
- 3 | Special care was taken with air quality to reduce the potential of infection. Specially pressurized rooms protect patients at increased risk of infections, such as those fighting cancer.
- 4 | The hospital's interventional platform places surgical, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures — as well as advanced technologies — in one location.
- 5 | The new state-of-the-art emergency center provides an unprecedented level of readiness for large-scale health and every day emergencies.