

Rush Generations

A healthier today
and a vital tomorrow



→ “I recently turned 65 and I want to be careful about COVID.”
—Vijay Kumar,
vaccinated at Rush in late January

→ Your Health

The COVID-19 Vaccine: What You Need to Know

As we've learned more about the COVID-19 virus, it has become clear that older adults are at high risk for severe illness. “Advanced age is a very strong risk factor for a negative outcome after COVID-19 infection, including hospitalization, disability and death,” says geriatrician **Magdalena Bednarczyk, MD**, medical director of the Rush Center for Excellence in Aging.

That's why older adults are among the first to receive COVID-19 vaccines. Rush University Medical Center is aligning its vaccine distribution with City of Chicago guidelines, which you can read on the city website at chicago.gov/covidvax.

Q. When can I get vaccinated?

A. If you're 65 or older, you're eligible to be vaccinated now during Phase 1b of vaccine distribution. People 64 and younger with underlying medical conditions will be eligible during Phase 1c, likely to begin in late March, and everyone 16 and older will be eligible in Phase 2, likely in late May.

Q. What are the vaccine types? Is one better than the other?

A. The two vaccines currently available (Pfizer and Moderna) have shown similar effectiveness in clinical trials; the one you'll receive will depend on what's being offered in your area. “When my patients and family members ask me which vaccine is the best, my answer is that the best vaccine is the one that's available to you at that given moment,” said Bednarczyk.

Q. Does the vaccine have side effects?

A. Common side effects — soreness at the injection site, fever, muscle pain, fatigue and headache — are typically mild, resolve within 24 to 48 hours and occur more in younger adults than older adults. But the benefits outweigh any potential side effects, Bednarczyk says: “The risk of severe illness, chronic disability, continued social isolation or death is much more dangerous to older adults than the very small possibility of a serious adverse reaction to the vaccine.”

Q. How do I know I can trust the vaccine?

A. Having concerns about the vaccine is understandable. But tens of thousands of volunteers, including people of diverse backgrounds and those with health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, received the vaccines during clinical trials. The results of the trials are reviewed by the vaccine makers, independent experts and the FDA.

In This Issue

2 Important Conversations

Urinary Incontinence:
Don't Suffer in Silence

2 What Matters

Faith and Science Meet
at Rush

3 Stages

Find Relief from Back
and Neck Pain

4 Things to Know

Six Signs of Stroke

5 Calendar

6 Classes and Workshops

Q. How can I sign up to be vaccinated?

A. If you're a Rush patient, when you're eligible you'll get a phone call, email, text or MyChart message with instructions for making an appointment. If you don't have a doctor at Rush, check rush.edu/vaccine for information about how to schedule; if you don't have internet access, you can call **(888) 352-7874**.

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

Urinary Incontinence: Don't Suffer in Silence



Sarah Adelstein, MD
Urologist

Some people don't mention incontinence to their primary care doctor because they're embarrassed, or because they assume surgery is the only option, Adelstein says. "Even doctors don't bring it up enough! A lot of people suffer in silence."

Adelstein stresses that incontinence is not an inevitable part of aging. "It's true that age can contribute, but that doesn't mean it's normal or we shouldn't do anything about it. It's a quality of life issue, and there's a whole range of proven treatments we can use to address it."

A wide range of treatment options

A number of conditions can cause urinary incontinence. In both men and women, potential causes include urinary tract infections; constipation; consuming too much water, caffeine or spicy foods; or a growth in the bladder. Neurological disorders such as stroke, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis can also affect communication between the brain and bladder.

In women, other causes can include weakened pelvic muscles after giving birth. And in men, an enlarged prostate or a prostate affected by surgery can be to blame.

Figuring out the cause and exploring solutions begins with a referral to a urologist from your primary care provider. Your urologist will start by taking a thorough medical history. They might also order a urine test and other diagnostics, like a scan to see whether your bladder empties completely, or a cystoscopy,

which uses a small camera to examine the inside of your bladder.

You'll likely get help that makes a real difference on your very first visit, such as advice on dietary changes, making sure your blood sugar is under control and, if you're a smoker, evidence-based help to quit.

Depending on your diagnosis, possible treatments could include the following:

- Pelvic physical therapy with a physical therapist who specializes in pelvic floor strengthening
- A pessary, or silicone ring that fits inside the vagina and supports the urethra
- Neuromodulation, an electrical nerve stimulation therapy that prevents the bladder from contracting too frequently (overactive bladder)
- Botox injections to relax the muscles that cause overactive bladder
- Slings surgically inserted around the urethra to help support it

Medications are also available to relax the bladder, although Adelstein prefers to try other options first.

"Every person is different, so every solution is unique," says Adelstein. "It's so rewarding when people can finally live life without being ruled by their bladder."

Join us on Wednesday, June 9, for a lecture on incontinence and aging; see calendar insert for details.



Faith and Science Meet at Rush

In late January, Rush University Medical Center held a special event during which Chicago-area faith leaders from many denominations received the COVID-19 vaccine, along with vaccine information to share with their communities.

Pastor Steve Epting, Hope Community Church, Austin:

"I believe we should all do our part in eradicating COVID-19. We've made every effort to stay physically distant and to wear masks — and now it's time to receive the vaccine."

Pastor Emma Lozano,

Lincoln United Methodist Church, Pilsen:

"Dios ha respondido a nuestras oraciones. Ha llegado la medicina. Es hora de vacunarse. No estaremos seguros hasta que todos estemos vacunados." *Translation: "God has answered our prayers — the medicine has arrived. Time for all of us to take the vaccine. We're not safe until we are all vaccinated."*

Rabbi Max Weiss, Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion:

"It is the responsibility of all faithful people to protect and support the community they are a part of."

Have you gotten the COVID-19 vaccine?

Do you plan to? Share your story with us: Why is getting vaccinated important to you? Visit

aging.rush.edu/schaalman/collaborate-and-connect/

to record a 60-second video. If you'd like help getting started, call Jasmine Chandy at **(312) 942-6995** for step-by-step instructions.

Find Relief from Back and Neck Pain



Hong Wu, MD

**Physical medicine and
rehabilitation specialist**

As we age, the discs in our back and neck start to dry and shrink. These changes can lead to ruptured — or herniated — discs, instability in the spine or narrowing of the spinal canal, all of which can cause pain. “Strains and sprains are also common whether you use your back a lot, or you don’t use it at all,” Wu says: if you do heavy physical work or if you’re sedentary, you may feel it in your back and neck. Other risk factors include smoking, being overweight or having a family history of back or neck issues.

When to see a doctor

If you have osteoporosis or a history of cancer, or if you’re immunocompromised, Wu recommends seeing your primary care doctor about back or neck pain that lasts more than a couple of days. Other reasons to see your doctor quickly: if you notice bowel or bladder changes, have arm or leg weakness or tingling, or have difficulty walking. And, of course, if you have back or neck pain after a fall or an accident, see your doctor to make sure you don’t have a fracture.

If you think your pain is due to a sprain or strain, try over-the-counter pain medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen — but only if you aren’t taking



Join us on Wednesday, Apr. 7, for a discussion of common back and neck issues and how to relieve associated pain; see calendar insert for details.

Your back and neck form an intricate system of nerves, muscles, tendons, ligaments, blood vessels and joints — and when one part of the system is out of alignment, you might feel pain that can range from mild to debilitating. **Hong Wu, MD**, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist at Rush, says that back pain is the most common reason people see their doctors, and that our odds of having back or neck pain increase after age 45.

other medications that could interact with them. Ice packs or a heating pad can also help; apply ice or heat for no more than 10 to 20 minutes at a time. Resting is okay for a day or two, but activity is better for your back than rest, so try taking regular short walks. And if your pain doesn’t go away after a couple of weeks, see your doctor.

Effective, non-invasive treatments

“Most people don’t need surgery for back and neck pain, even if the pain is persistent,” Wu says. With the right therapeutic approach, most people’s pain will resolve within a year.

- Physical therapy can teach you how to stand, sit and move in a way that protects your back and neck. Your therapist will customize a program of exercises that will ease your pain and build your flexibility, strength and balance to help prevent you from re-injuring your back or neck.
- Injections help control pain and inflammation. For example, trigger point injections are similar to those used for knee joint pain, with a mixture of medications that relieve pain and relax tight muscles. If your pain is caused by a pinched nerve or sciatica, a steroid injection can reduce inflammation around the nerve. “These are in-office procedures that can bring a lot of relief without the risks of surgery,” Wu says.



Tips for keeping pain at bay

The best way to deal with back or neck pain is to prevent it from taking hold in the first place, Wu says, offering a few of her top tips.

- When you’re seated, always use back support, such as a lumbar roll or pillow.
- Learn how to protect your back. “For example, if you drop your keys, your instinct is just to bend over and grab them, right? What you should do is bend your knees first, then lean down,” says Wu.
- Make movement a regular part of your day, including stretches and strengthening exercises.



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.

Six Signs of Stroke

Every second lost during a stroke equals brain cells lost. If you or a loved one has sudden onset of stroke symptoms, remember to **BE FAST**:

Balance. Can the person sit upright? Can they walk in a straight line?

Eyes. Does the person complain of blurry, double or loss of vision?

Face drooping. Ask the person to smile. Is one side of the smile drooping?

Arm weakness or numbness, particularly on one side of the body. Ask the person to lift both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

Speech that is slurred or difficult to understand. Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence. Do the words come out clearly?

Time to call 911. If the person shows any of these signs, call 911 immediately.

Learn more about how to prevent, spot and respond to stroke on Wednesday, May 5; see calendar insert for details.

Spring 2021 Free Health and Aging Events

All Rush Generations spring events will be held virtually. You can view the following lectures online, or listen on your phone.

For updates on Rush Generations programs, sign up for our emails at bit.ly/RushGenerations.



April

Back & Neck Pain

Wednesday, April 7

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Many of us have noticed that we're feeling increased back and neck pain while staying home in quarantine. Come hear from experts at Rush as they describe common back and neck issues, their causes and ways to relieve the pain.

Skin Health

Wednesday, April 21

1 to 2:30pm

Join us for a lecture where we'll learn the best strategies for keeping our skin healthy as we age. Rush dermatologists will discuss overall skin health as well as specific skin issues such as alopecia, eczema and psoriasis.

May

Stroke Education & Awareness

Wednesday, May 5

1 to 2:30 p.m.

Experts from the Stroke Center at Rush will share risks for stroke, prevention measures, symptoms and how to safely respond in an emergency.

Safety Concerns for Older Adults: Fraud, Scams, & Elder Abuse

Wednesday, May 19

1 to 2:30 pm

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, technology has connected us to services, information and to one another — but the more we use it, the more safety-conscious we need to be. Join us for a lecture that will provide tips for identifying danger online and staying safe.

June

Incontinence As We Age

Wednesday, June 9

1 to 2:30 pm

It's not always a comfortable subject to talk about, but urinary incontinence can become an issue as we age. Come learn about some of the causes of incontinence and ways to improve pelvic health and wellness.

Liver Health

Wednesday, June 23

1 to 2:30 pm

The liver is a key part of the digestive system — in fact, everything we eat or drink passes through the liver. This lecture will feature information on the anatomy of the liver, common liver problems and tips for keeping your liver in good shape.



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#.

Classes and Workshops

Our spring classes and workshops will be held virtually. To participate, 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 Zoom but would like to join a self-guided version of this quarter's "Take Charge" workshops with a weekly conference call check-in, please call Padraic Stanley at (312) 942-2089.

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

Classes

Chair Strength

Mondays, Mar. 22 to May 10
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
\$40 for the eight-class session

Gentle Chair Yoga

Thursdays, Mar. 25 to May 13
11 a.m. to noon
\$40 for the eight-class session

Art for Emotional Wellness

Thursdays, Apr. 1 to Apr. 22
1 to 2:30 p.m.

Chair Strength

Mondays, May 24 to July 19
(no class on 5/31)
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
\$40 for the eight-class session

Gentle Chair Yoga

Thursdays, May 27 to July 15
11 a.m. to noon
\$40 for the eight-class session

Workshops

Take Charge of Your Diabetes

Fridays, Apr. 9 to May 21
9:30 a.m. to noon

Learning to Live Well with Chronic Pain

Mondays, Apr. 12 to May 24
3 to 5:30 p.m.

Take Charge of Your Health

Tuesdays, Apr. 27 to June 8
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Take Charge of Your Health

Wednesdays, June 16 to July 28
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 مجانية. 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 (телефайп: 1-312-563-2987).

ગુજરાતી (Gujarati)

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

ଓଡ଼ିଆ (Urdu)

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

हिन्दी (Hindi)

ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिन्दी 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).