

# Rush Generations

A healthier today  
and a vital tomorrow



→ Your Health

## 6 Ways To Keep Your Kidneys Healthy



In the United States, approximately 37 million adults are estimated to have chronic kidney disease (CKD), the National Kidney Foundation says — and just 10% of them know they have it.

Vasil Peev, MD  
Nephrologist

Your kidneys filter waste from the blood. Untreated CKD allows toxins to build up in the body; this can lead to other health problems like heart disease, stroke and end-stage renal disease, which requires dialysis or a kidney transplant.

The key, doctors say, is to catch CKD early. “In many instances, there is treatment available for kidney disease but in only a few instances, unfortunately, is there a cure,” says **Vasil Peev, MD**, a nephrologist at Rush. He offers six tips for keeping your kidneys healthy:

**1. Know your risk factors.** Symptoms of CKD aren’t always noticeable, so it’s important to know whether you’re at risk. Risk factors include diabetes, obesity,

high blood pressure, heart disease and being age 60 or older. Peev recommends annual physicals with your primary care provider, who can order lab tests that detect kidney disease in its early stages.

### 2. Maintain a healthy diet and weight.

“A kidney-healthy diet is low in sodium and carbohydrates, and includes lots of fruits and vegetables,” Peev says. Following this diet reduces the chances of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Exercising for 30 minutes and drinking eight glasses of water a day are also key.

### 3. Watch your diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

“Diabetes is vastly driven by obesity, which can cause high blood pressure and cholesterol,” Peev says. And a study by the National Kidney Foundation found that people with high cholesterol are twice as likely to develop CKD.

### 4. Don’t overuse over-the-counter drugs.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), including ibuprofen and aspirin, “contain certain toxins that affect our kidneys’ ability to filter them,” Peev says. The National Kidney Foundation recommends limiting the use of these over-the-counter drugs to no more than 10 days for pain relief or three days for reducing a fever.

**5. Limit your alcohol intake.** Drinking too much alcohol — more than three drinks per day for women and four for men — can harm many parts of the body, including the kidneys. “One or two drinks every now and then tend not to have any serious effects,” Peev says. “But it’s important to remember that drinking in moderation is key.”

**6. Quit smoking.** Smoking tobacco slows blood flow to important organs, and can make medications used to treat high blood pressure less effective. A study found that participants who followed a smoking cessation program saw less of a decline in their kidney function when compared to active smokers. When you’re ready, your primary care provider can refer you to a program.

### In This Issue

#### 2 Important Conversations

Can Stress Cause a Heart Attack?

#### 2 What Matters

Setting Goals

#### 3 Stages

Make the Right Choices To Maintain Cognitive Health

#### 4 Things to Know

3 Tips for a Healthier Diet in the New Year

#### 5 Calendar

#### 6 Classes and Workshops



Join us on March 9 for a discussion of kidney health. See the calendar insert for details.

### Rush Generations

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# Can Stress Cause a Heart Attack?



Rami Doukky, MD  
Cardiologist

If you've been feeling stressed, or you're watching a loved one struggle, it's probably time to assess how stress is having an impact on your life. Some of the effects — like insomnia, digestive problems and muscle tension — are obvious, but what about the silent effects of stress?

## What stress does to your body

When faced with a stressful situation — such as rush-hour traffic or babysitting an ornery grandchild — our bodies release hormones, including cortisol and adrenaline, that help us react to the situation. These hormones increase heart rate and blood pressure, supplying the body with a burst of energy and strength. This creates a “fight or flight” reaction that helps you defend yourself or flee when you’re in actual danger. When the stressful scenario passes, the body’s relaxation response kicks in and hormone levels return to normal.

## Stress and heart health

“In a person with a healthy cardiovascular system, the surge from stress shouldn’t be a problem,” says **Rami Doukky, MD**, a cardiologist at Rush. However, if you have underlying heart disease, the sudden increase in blood pressure and heart rate could contribute to events leading to a heart attack. For example, in people with cholesterol buildup in their arteries, or atherosclerosis, the increase could cause plaque to rupture and block blood flow, which could result in a heart attack. The hormone surge can also expose people with existing heart disease to the risk of an irregular heartbeat, or an arrhythmia.

“There is no solid evidence that stress can directly cause a heart attack,” Doukky says. “However, chronic stress — the kind of stress that’s due to ongoing situations like a bad relationship or difficult job — can lead to risk factors that affect heart health.”

Chronic stress has been linked to overeating, poor sleep habits and tobacco and alcohol use. All of those factors can contribute to high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

For older adults, who are already at a higher risk for heart disease because of progressive atherosclerosis associated with aging, stress may increase the chance of developing heart disease, Doukky says.

## Decompression is key

Since stress is often unavoidable, it’s best to offset it. “Exercise is a great way to relieve stress because it can decrease the production of stress hormones and increase production of endorphins, which can help elevate mood,” Doukky says. “Swimming, biking or simply walking around the neighborhood can make a difference.” Meditation may also help, as it’s been shown to reduce blood pressure. And if stress-related weight gain, alcohol use or smoking threaten wellness, Doukky says, it might help to see a psychologist or psychiatrist.

So, the next time a loved one warns you of the dangers of stress, recognize that there’s a basis for their concerns. Although an immediate heart attack is unlikely, the ways you handle your stress can either put your heart at risk or keep stress at bay.

**Join us on Feb. 2 for a discussion of heart health. [See the calendar insert for details.](#)**

# What Matters Most to You in the New Year?

Starting a new year by setting goals can help you identify what matters most to you. You might think about creating goals such as building and maintaining relationships, working on your personal growth and development, participating in activities and hobbies that bring you joy and managing your health.

A goal should be based on your values and on the things that are most important to you. It should be realistic and include what you specifically want to achieve or do. It’s important to have flexible goals that can evolve over time, so you can adapt them to changes in your health and well-being.

Schaalman Senior Voices would love to hear about your goals for 2022. If you’re interested in sharing your goals or resolutions — or just your words of wisdom — we encourage you to record a video about them, and about what matters most to you in the new year.

Please visit [bit.ly/RecordMyStory](http://bit.ly/RecordMyStory) or point your smartphone at the code below to record a video and share your thoughts.



# Make the Right Choices To Maintain Cognitive Health



Raj C. Shah, MD  
Geriatrician

Although some risk factors, like age and family history, are beyond your control, increasing evidence indicates that you aren't helpless against conditions affecting cognition, such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease or stroke. Research shows there are things you can do to maintain good cognitive health as you age — and they're as simple as making the right lifestyle choices.

Cognitive health is the ability to clearly think, learn and remember — and it's a key part of overall health and well-being. **Raj C. Shah, MD**, a member of the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center team, recommends five lifestyle choices that have the most evidence for supporting brain health: physical exercise, cognitive exercise, nutrition, socialization and having a purpose in life.

**Move your body:** Physical exercise — including moderately vigorous, aerobic activity — is recommended for 30 minutes at least five times a week. It increases heart rate, which pumps more oxygen to the brain. It helps the body to release a number of hormones, all of which help to provide a

nourishing environment for the growth of brain cells. Other immediate effects include decreasing your reaction time and boosting your mood.

Long-term effects may include increasing brain cells' volume, long-term memory and attention function; increasing neurotransmitters and mood elevators; and protecting against cognitive decline and degenerative diseases associated with aging, such as cardiovascular disease.

**Flex your brain:** Cognitive exercise is important to keep the pathways in the brain active. Make learning a lifelong goal. Take a class on a subject you've never studied before. Learn a new language or skill. Challenge your brain daily through work, puzzles or games.

**Eat your way to a healthy brain:** Nutrition is key. According to **Deborah Brunelle, RN**, manager of Rush Copley Medical Center's neuroscience services, we should choose foods rich in vitamins and healthy fats.

Great choices include the following:

- Fatty or oily fish (sardines, salmon and trout contain Omega-3, which helps build nerve cells essential to learning and memory)
- Turmeric, a spice that may improve memory and helps new brain cells grow
- Broccoli
- Blueberries, which may help improve communication between the brain cells and delay short-term memory loss
- Pumpkin seeds
- Green tea
- Eggs
- Oranges
- Nuts, which help improve heart health and are linked to a healthy brain
- Dark chocolate, which is both a mood and memory booster

**Get involved and socialize:** Join a fitness center, book club or another group that shares your interests. It's important to feel part of a group and to get out of your house: Go out for daily walks, meet friends for coffee or invite them to the movies.

**Have a purpose for your life:** While work and family can provide a sense of purpose, so can volunteering, setting and achieving new goals, and mastering new skills.

Do yourself and your brain a favor by incorporating these healthy recommendations into your daily life.

**Join us on Jan. 5 for a session about making and keeping effective New Year's resolutions. See the calendar insert for details.**

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Rush is an academic health system comprising Rush University Medical Center, Rush Copley Medical Center and Rush Oak Park Hospital.

## 3 Tips for A Healthier Diet in the New Year

Many of us commit (or re-commit) to healthier eating habits at the start of a new year: Christine Sharp, RDN, a clinical dietitian at Rush University Medical Center, shared a few ideas.

### 1. Don't fear fat.

Low-fat and fat-free foods are often high in sugar, while moderate portions of even saturated fats like butter don't increase the risk of heart disease as once thought.

### 2. Choose good-mood foods.

A recent study showed that a diet made up mostly of vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts can decrease your chances of depression, while foods like processed meats and sugar-heavy treats contribute to depression.

### 3. Remember that there are no no-nos.

If you forbid yourself to eat a brownie, next thing you know you'll be eating the whole pan because you feel deprived and can't think about anything else," Sharp says. All foods can fit into a healthy lifestyle if you follow good portion-control habits and make sure your overall diet is well balanced.

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## Winter 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#.

### January

#### Making a New Year's Resolution

**Wednesday, Jan. 5**  
**1 to 2:30 p.m.**

It's a great time to set a new goal. Join us for a lecture discussing ways to begin the new year with a resolution. In addition to strategies for making long-lasting changes to improve your health, we'll share exercise and nutrition tips, plus ways to reduce stress and improve emotional health.

#### Honoring the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**Wednesday, Jan. 12**  
**11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Rush Generations and the Office of Community Health Equity and Engagement will host our annual MLK event. We'll talk with community leaders about racial justice, equity and how we can each continue to "be the new King," as we reflect on the last year.

### February

#### Heart Health

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

Come hear from experts in the field of cardiology as they discuss common heart issues that can appear as we age. You'll get insight into ways to prevent heart disease and lead a heart-healthy life, plus tips for improving your quality of life if you're living with a heart condition.

#### Loneliness and Isolation

**Wednesday, Feb. 16**  
**1 to 2:30 p.m.**

You don't have to deal with this on your own: Please join us for a discussion on loneliness and isolation in older adults and caregivers. Rush providers will share information about the resources available to you and how they can help during this challenging time.

### March

#### Kidney Health

**Wednesday, March 9**  
**1 to 2:30 p.m.**

In observation of World Kidney Day, Rush Generations wants to help you keep your kidneys healthy. We'll discuss ways to keep your kidneys functioning well as you age, and talk about screenings that can help you monitor your kidney health.

#### Nutrition

**Wednesday, March 23**  
**1 to 2:30 p.m.**

This lecture on nutrition and healthy eating is part of National Nutrition Month. Come learn about ways to incorporate healthy eating into your everyday life, improve your eating habits and reach your nutrition goals through programs at Rush and in the community.

# Classes and Workshops

Winter classes and workshops (except Walk With Ease) will be held virtually. To participate, you'll need access to the Zoom app through a computer, tablet or smartphone with a webcam and internet. 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

### Gentle Chair Yoga

**Thursdays, Jan. 20 to March 10**  
**11 a.m. to noon**  
**\$40 for the eight-class session**

### Gentle Chair Yoga

**Thursdays, March 24 to May 12**  
**11 a.m. to noon**  
**\$40 for the eight-class session**

## Workshops

If you don't have Zoom or internet access but are interested in joining a self-guided version of these workshops with a weekly conference call check-in, please call Padraic Stanley at **(312) 942-2089**.

### A Matter of Balance

**Tuesdays and Thursdays,**  
**Jan. 11 to Feb. 8, 10 a.m. to noon**

### Tomando Control de su Salud (Take Charge of Your Health)

**Todos los jueves, del 13 de enero**  
**al 24 de febrero, de 10 a.m. a 12:30 p.m.**

### Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

**Mondays and Wednesdays,**  
**Jan. 19 to March 16, 11 a.m. to noon**

### Take Charge of Your Health

**Mondays, Jan. 31 to March 14**  
**10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

### Cancer: Thriving and Surviving

**Fridays, Feb. 4 to March 18**  
**10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

### Learning To Live Well With Chronic Pain

**Thursdays, March 10 to April 21**  
**1 to 3:30 p.m.**

### Walk With Ease (meets in person)

**Garfield Park Conservatory**  
**Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays,**  
**Feb. 16 to March 25, 2 to 3:30 p.m.**

Space is limited. Call (312) 942-2089 to register.

### Take Charge of Your Health

**Mondays, March 28 to May 9**  
**1 to 3:30 p.m.**

### Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention

**Mondays and Wednesdays,**  
**March 30 to May 25, 11 a.m. to noon**

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)

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 인어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987) 번으로 전화해 주십시오.

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### العربية (Arabic)

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### 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).

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### 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).

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### 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).



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