

## UCI Medical Center: One of the “Best”



### UCI Medical Center

has been named one of the nation's best hospitals for cancer, digestive disorders, gynecology and

urology by *U.S. News & World Report*. This is the sixth consecutive year UCI has been listed in the magazine's annual "America's Best Hospitals" report and the first time it has achieved national recognition for four distinct medical specialties.

The "America's Best Hospitals" issue is considered by many as a leading indicator of quality care and performance. UCI Medical Center is the only Orange County hospital listed in the report. A few highlights of the ranked specialties include:

**Cancer.** Doctors at UCI's Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center provide multidisciplinary care, lead studies and conduct clinical trials that give patients access to new treatment options before they are available elsewhere.

**Digestive Disorders.** H.H. Chao Comprehensive Digestive Disease Center provides specialized care to patients with disorders of the esophagus, stomach, colon, liver and pancreas.

**Gynecology.** The hospital's reputation in the field of gynecology is well established, having been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the 50 best hospitals for six years.

**Urology.** UCI urologists were among the first in the nation to use robotic surgery to treat prostate cancer, and its surgeons are leaders in minimally invasive surgery.

"Our rankings exemplify our ability to provide the highest quality care to our patients, and it is an honor to be recognized for our achievements," said Maureen Zehntner, UCI Medical Center's interim chief executive officer.

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# Seniors: Ask the Doctor

## Memory Loss

Most people have misplaced their keys or forgotten where they parked their car on occasion. But when should forgetfulness be considered the symptom of a greater problem? Join us as Dr. Lisa Gibbs, a geriatrician at the UCI SeniorHealth Center, discusses this topic.

### Q Is forgetfulness a normal part of aging?

**A** Contrary to popular belief, the normal aging process doesn't involve excessive memory loss. But there may be changes in how a person processes new information.

### Q Do people with dementia know their memory is failing?

**A** During the early stages of Alzheimer's and other types of dementia, patients may be aware of the memory changes that are the first symptoms of these conditions. But as the disorder progresses, they become less aware of their memory lapses. Often they'll lose interest in their problem or attribute it to another cause. At this point, it's usually family members or close friends who seek help for them.

### Q Does memory loss always indicate Alzheimer's disease?

**A** It's true that forgetfulness is a sign of Alzheimer's disease. But there are also many other types of dementia that can cause memory problems. Forgetfulness can also be a sign of depression, medication interactions, sleep problems, thyroid disorders, anxiety, silent strokes and vitamin deficiencies. With proper treatment, many of these non-dementia problems can be eliminated or controlled, improving the patient's ability to remember.

### Q How long should a person wait before having a memory assessment?

**A** When it comes to memory-loss evaluations, the sooner, the better. Prompt intervention may help slow the progression of disease and allow for treatment of coexisting conditions.

### Q What does an evaluation for memory loss involve?

**A** At the UCI SeniorHealth Center, patients are given a physical exam and memory screen. If the results show there's a need for further evaluation, the person is referred to a psychologist for a comprehensive cognitive evaluation to test attention, concentration, memory, verbal and problem-solving skills. A CT or MRI scan may be included to rule out certain conditions.

### Q Why is an early diagnosis important?

**A** Although Alzheimer's and most other dementias can't yet be cured, new medications such as donepezil (Aricept) and galantamine (Reminyl) can help to maintain memory and preserve overall function for as long as possible. An early diagnosis also allows patients to be treated for associated conditions such as depression. Caregivers also benefit because it gives them a chance to educate themselves about the disorder and prepare for the future.



Dr. Lisa Gibbs specializes in the care of older adults. Board certified in geriatrics and family medicine, she's an expert in dealing with the overlapping medical problems and chronic illnesses that often affect seniors. As a physician at the UCI SeniorHealth Center, Gibbs works with an interdisciplinary staff to improve and maintain the health, quality of life and functional ability of her patients.