

UCI Medical Center

# UCI Health

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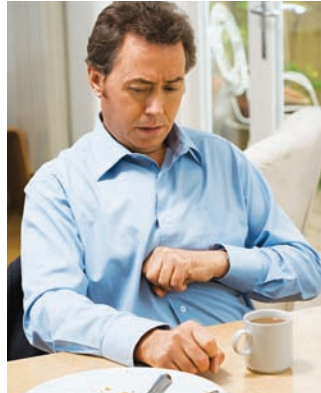
**The Sound  
of Hope**

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## The SOUND of HOPE



Imagine being unable to hear music, ringing telephones, laughter, or the sound of a loved one's voice.

**The world is a silent place for** more than 1 million Americans who are severely or profoundly deaf. But new approaches to this age-old problem are helping a growing number of people connect with the hearing world.

"Cochlear implants have come a long way since the mid-1980s when they were first approved by the Federal Drug Administration," says

**Dr. Hamid Djalilian**, a UCI Medical Center otologist-neurotologist specializing in hearing, dizziness and skull base surgery. In a person with normal hearing, cochlear hair cells in the inner

ear send electrical impulses directly to the auditory nerve. But if there's a break in this complex progression of events, deafness occurs. The cochlear implant substitutes for the faulty hair cells, bridging a critical gap.

### **New technology.**

"Current cochlear implant models stimulate the auditory nerve at higher speeds than previous versions and are equipped with up to 22 electrodes to extend the range of

frequencies heard," says Djalilian. "They also have more sophisticated hardware and software." The result: better speech recognition by cochlear implant patients—and greater ease in connecting with their environment, including the ability to use the telephone.

To be eligible for a cochlear implant, patients must be able to hear no more than 50 percent of what's said while they're wearing a powerful hearing aid. They must also undergo extensive testing and counseling. Children as young as six months and adults as old as 85 years can be considered as implant candidates if both ears are severely affected.

The implant operation consists of placing the internal portion of the device under the skin behind the ear. About the size of a quarter, it consists of a titanium disk that houses a receiver, electrode system and magnet.

The electrodes are surgically inserted into the inner ear with painstaking precision to stimulate the auditory nerve. Djalilian was the first surgeon in the United States to perform the procedure using a local anesthetic.

**Sound check.** Patients can't hear until they return several weeks later to receive the external portion of the implant. It consists of a miniature microphone, speech processor and transmitter. The microphone and speech processor look like a behind-the-ear hearing aid. The transmitter is held in place on the head by a small magnet that is attracted to the surgically implanted receiver. The microphone captures sound and sends it to the speech processor, which analyzes and digitizes the information, passing it on to the implanted transmitter.

Once the external components are activated, the implant is programmed. The words that a cochlear implant patient hears have an artificial, robot-like quality. "This is because 22 electrodes can't duplicate the complexity of 3,000 cochlear hair cells," says research director **Fan-Gang Zeng, Ph.D.**, a UCI Medical Center hearing scientist and bioengineer. Many months of intensive speech therapy are usually necessary to help patients interpret what they're hearing.

There are several other implantable hearing devices available to help deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Among them is the bone-anchored hearing aid, which is designed for patients with middle-ear hearing loss. It conveys sound directly to the inner ear through the skull bone, bypassing the middle ear. It's ideal for patients with single-sided deafness and those who can't use conventional hearing aids.

For an appointment with a UCI hearing specialist, call 714-456-7017.

**Toll free 1-877-UCI-DOCS**

# LOU GEHRIG'S DISEASE



**Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a cruel disease that often strikes people in the prime of their lives.**

**Also known as Lou Gehrig's disease,** it destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord responsible for movement. As these cells cease to function, the muscles weaken and waste away, resulting in total paralysis. There is no known cause or cure for the disease. But specialized care can make a significant difference in a patient's quality of life.

UCI Medical Center is home to a nationally recognized ALS clinic that offers comprehensive, multidisciplinary services and compassionate care to people with this devastating disease. It is one of only 37 ALS clinics in the country designated by the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). The clinic

[www.ucihealth.com](http://www.ucihealth.com)

UCI's ALS and Neuromuscular Center is one of only 37 clinics nationwide designated by the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

will move into expanded quarters later this year to become the new UCIrvine ALS and Neuromuscular Center, enabling physicians and researchers to work side by side to

improve diagnosis and treatment. The Center, to be located at the UCI Manchester Pavilion one block away from the medical center in Orange, also will provide care for patients with muscular dystrophy, myasthenia gravis and related conditions.

**Compassionate care.** "There's currently no definitive test to identify ALS," says **Dr. Tahseen Mozaffar**, a neurologist and co-director of the Center. "The diagnosis is based on the patient's symptoms and tests that rule out other diseases."

Treatments are designed to control symptoms and maintain a person's quality of life. "Riluzole is currently the only ALS medication approved by the Federal Drug Administration," says Mozaffar. "It doesn't reverse the damage done by the disease, but delays the time before patients must use ventilators." Exercise programs, special equipment and physical,

occupational and speech therapy also help ALS patients remain functional for as long as possible. For patients' convenience, physical therapists are located adjacent to the site of the future center.

But research is the real answer. This became apparent to 48-year-old Augie Nieto, who learned he had the disease in March 2005. A lifelong exercise enthusiast, Nieto is credited with starting the indoor cardiovascular fitness revolution in the late 1970s. While still in college, the Corona del Mar resident bought the rights to the world's first stationary bike. Soon after, he began selling the revolutionary exercise equipment to gyms and later established Lifecycle Inc. The company eventually became Life Fitness, the world's largest manufacturer of exercise equipment. Now a patient at UCI's ALS center, Nieto is approaching ALS with the same entrepreneurial spirit that helped him launch a worldwide fitness movement. And he's determined to help researchers discover the cause of and cure for ALS.

**Augie's Quest.** In the last year, Nieto raised more than \$4.2 million for ALS research through Augie's Quest, a program in partnership with MDA. His goal is to reach \$12 million. Funds are distributed through the MDA to support ALS centers and help promising ALS researchers. UCI's new ALS and Neuromuscular Center is being established with a grant raised through Augie's Quest/MDA Cure ALS.

"The new Center will serve to consolidate our clinical, diagnostic and clinical research functions and will allow us to develop cutting-edge translational research, building on the complementary strength of the many stellar basic science investigators on the UCI campus," says Mozaffar, who is a member of the MDA advisory committee on ALS research. "The MDA recognizes UCI doctors' expertise in dealing with the disorder and the university's record in ALS research."

For more information, visit [www.augiesquest.org](http://www.augiesquest.org) and [www.als-mda.org](http://www.als-mda.org). To learn more about UCI's ALS Center, call toll free 1-888-9ALS-UCI.

# Preventing Esophageal CANCER

**Maalox, Mylanta, Pepto-Bismol, Rolaids. They're everyday medications for 600 million Americans who have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).**

**But for many chronic heartburn sufferers,** over-the-counter antacids aren't enough. Without proper treatment, they may develop problems in the esophagus—the tube that connects the throat to the stomach.

**Barrett's esophagus.** After years of trying to cope with GERD, about 10 percent of people with the condition develop a disorder called Barrett's esophagus. This precancerous condition occurs when the esophagus develops cells similar to those in the intestine in an effort to protect itself against the constant backwash of stomach acid caused by GERD. These cellular changes increase a person's risk of developing esophageal cancer by 30- to 125-fold.

## Esophageal cancer moves very rapidly if not detected early.

Patients with Barrett's have only a 5 percent chance of developing esophageal cancer within 10 years. But this type of cancer moves very rapidly if not detected early—and Barrett's is a red flag that it may be a future threat. "Each year, there are about 10,000 new cases of adenocarcinoma, a form of esophageal cancer related exclusively to Barrett's," says **Dr. Kenneth Chang**, medical director of the H.H. Chao Comprehensive Digestive Disease Center (CDDC) at UCI Medical Center. For this reason, the early detection of Barrett's is critical.

To determine if this precancerous condition is present, CDDC specialists at UCI use an endoscope, a flexible tube equipped with a camera, to search for telltale changes in the esophagus. During the procedure, doctors remove samples of suspicious tissue. The specimens are examined under a microscope to confirm the presence of Barrett's

and to identify any precancerous tissue changes—a condition known as dysplasia.

For Barrett's patients without dysplasia, the goal is to prevent further damage by eliminating GERD. Treatments range from intensive antacid therapy to a surgical procedure called fundoplication.



"This operation strengthens the lower esophageal sphincter—the muscle between the esophagus and stomach that normally prevents stomach acid from flowing backwards to cause GERD," says **Dr. Ninh Nguyen**, a CDDC surgeon. Requiring only five tiny stitches, fundoplication is performed during a minimally invasive procedure using a laparoscope. It involves wrapping the top of the stomach around the esophagus and sewing it into place. "About 90 percent of those who undergo this procedure are free of GERD," says Nguyen. The surgery may help patients with early-stage dysplasia as well.

There are also several nonsurgical treatments to eradicate precancerous cells in the esophagus. The newest is radiofrequency ablation. This endoscopic procedure destroys precancerous cells in seconds without the need for injections or incisions. It's delivered through a balloon catheter or special "cap" developed

by Chang and others, which is mounted on the tip of the endoscope.

### **Photodynamic therapy.**

Another nonsurgical treatment is photodynamic therapy (PDT). During this procedure, the patient is injected with a light-sensitive drug called Photofrin, which targets precancerous cells. Two days later, laser light is directed through an endoscope at the wall of the esophagus. When the laser beam hits the abnormal cells harboring the drug, it destroys them by activating the Photofrin.

Doctors may also use a treatment known as endoscopic mucosal resection. It involves injecting a saline solution beneath the abnormal tissue in the esophagus. This causes a blister to form under the precancerous cells. Doctors can then shave away the abnormal layer using a special cutting wire.

For Barrett's patients with advanced dysplasia, removal of the esophagus may be the only answer. "Once people reach this stage, about half of them eventually develop invasive cancer," says Nguyen. "But with early surgery, there's a better than 95 percent cure rate." In most cases, the esophagus can be removed laparoscopically—a feat that was impossible only a short time ago. Nguyen also helped pioneer a minimally invasive technique to remove only the diseased portion of the esophagus.

For referral to a specialist in GERD and Barrett's esophagus, call 1-888-717-GIMD.

**Toll free 1-877-UCI-DOCS**

Classes are free of charge to UCI Medical Center patients and their families, UCI employees and volunteers. Exceptions are the Joslin Diabetes Center, Mind Over Mood, Balance and Mobility for Seniors, meditation, and health-care skills programs. Certain classes are also available in **Spanish & Vietnamese**. Unless otherwise indicated, all classes are located at UCI Manchester Pavilion, 200 S. Manchester Ave., Suite 840, Orange. Registration is required. Call toll free 1-877-UCI-DOCS or 1-877-824-3627 for registration and information.

## FAMILY HEALTH

### Asthma and Adults (1 Session)

Learn how to control asthma and not have it control you. Cost: \$20. Free peak flow meter. Friday, Nov 17 5-7 p.m.

### Spanish Attention and Behavior Problems (10-Session Series)

Free parenting skills classes for parents of children ages 3-5 with attention and behavior problems, offered through a joint project of UCI and Children's Hospital of Orange County. Information: 949-824-2462 or www.cuidar.net. Call for meeting dates, times and locations throughout Orange County.

### Breastfeeding (1 Session)

Includes process of milk production, how to breastfeed, avoiding potential problems and returning to work. Cost: \$20. Thursday, Nov 16 6-8:30 p.m.

### Spanish Breastfeeding (1 Session)

Tuesday, Oct 17, Dec 19 5:15-7:30 p.m. Location: UCI Family Health Center Santa Ana

### Diabetic Diet (1 Session)

Food choices, portions and how they affect diabetes. Cost: \$20. Monday, Nov 6 4-6 p.m.

### Diabetes Management Overview (1 Session)

Methods to control blood-sugar levels through diet, exercise, medication and lifestyle changes. Cost: \$20. Free glucometer. Monday, Oct 9, Dec 11 4-6 p.m.

### Spanish Diabetes Management Overview (1 Session)

Wednesday, Oct 4, Nov 1, Dec 8 6-8 p.m. Location: UCI Family Health Center Anaheim  
Wednesday, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 13 6-8 p.m. Location: UCI Manchester Pavilion

### Vietnamese Diabetes Management Overview (1 Session)

Wednesday, Oct 4, Nov 1, Dec 6 8:30-10:30 a.m. Location: UCI Manchester Pavilion

### Diabetes Management Series (4-Session Series)

Meal planning, exercise, medications, monitoring your blood sugar, and lifestyle changes to help you avoid complications. Cost: \$80. Free glucometer. Mondays, Nov 13, 20, 27, and Dec 4 4-6 p.m.



### Diabetes Special Topic (1 Session) Hemoglobin A1C – What Is It and What Does It Mean to Me?

More in-depth than the overview and series classes, this class focuses only on Hemoglobin A1C. Cost: \$10. Monday, Oct 16 4-5 p.m.

### Early Pregnancy (1 Session)

For expectant mothers and their birth partners in the first four months of pregnancy. Includes nutrition, exercise, prenatal care, warning signs and car safety. Cost: \$20. Wednesday, Nov 15 6-8 p.m.

### Balance and Mobility for Seniors: A class that helps you stay on your feet. (16-Session Series)

Designed to improve balance and mobility and reduce the risk of falls. Also focuses on flexibility, strength and endurance. Participants must be medically stable senior adults who live independently and can walk at least 200 feet safely without the use of any assistive devices. A written medical clearance is required. Prior to class, participants must schedule a 30-minute evaluation. Cost: \$80. Includes evaluation. Tuesdays and Thursdays: Evaluations: Oct 17 or 19 1-3 p.m. Classes: Oct 24-Dec 14 1-2 p.m.

### Heart-Healthy Diet (Cholesterol Awareness) (1 Session)

Learn the American Heart Association guidelines about low-fat, low-sodium and low-cholesterol diets. Cost: \$20. Tuesday, Oct 24, Dec 5 4-6 p.m.

### Hepatitis C Pretreatment Education (1 Session)

For the person who is considering or about to begin hepatitis C treatment. Includes information about hepatitis C, treatment, side effects and management and injection training. Family members and other loved ones encouraged to attend. Pre-registration required: 714-456-8764.

First Friday every month 9-10:30 a.m. Location: UCI Medical Center, Neuropsychiatric Center, Building 3, Conference Room 101

### Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) Management (1 Session)

How to control blood pressure through diet, exercise, medication, and lifestyle changes. Cost: \$20. Wednesday, Nov 8 6-8 p.m.

### Living Well With Heart Failure (1 Session)

Taught by a cardiologist. Overview of heart failure, symptoms, basic lifestyle changes to manage the condition, including diet, exercise and medications. Cost: \$20. Thursday, Nov 2 1:30-3:30 p.m.

### Maternity Tea & Tour

Learn about maternity services and tour the UCI Maternity Unit. Cost: Free to all. Thursday, Oct 26, Nov 16 1:30-3:30 p.m. Location: UCI Medical Center, Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### Meditation for Health (4-Session Series)

An introduction to the art of meditation, including a discussion of the various types and styles. No special clothing or equipment is required. Cost: \$40. Mondays, Oct 2, 9, 16 and 23 6-7 p.m.

### Meditation Intermediate/Advanced (2-Session Series)

For those who have an established meditation practice and want additional guidance. Cost: \$20. Monday, Nov 6 and 13 6-7 p.m.

### Joslin Diabetes Center Education Classes

Joslin Diabetes Center at University of California, Irvine offers two types of classes to help people learn how to successfully manage their diabetes. "Steps to Success" is a five-session, comprehensive educational program. "Diabetes Today" offers single-topic sessions that address specific issues of diabetes management. Classes are held at the Center, located at Gottschalk Medical Plaza on the UCI campus in Irvine. There is a fee and insurance pre-authorization is recommended. For a full description of the programs, registration, or to schedule an appointment with a physician, please call Joslin Diabetes Center at UCI at 949-824-8656 or visit [www.ucihealth.com/joslin](http://www.ucihealth.com/joslin).



**Joslin Diabetes Center**  
at University of California, Irvine



### Mind Over Mood

Cognitive therapy group for depression, anxiety, anger and stress-related disorders. Pre-registration required: 714-456-5902. Cost: \$40 per session, plus \$16.38 for book. Mondays beginning Sept 11 6:15-7:45 p.m. Location: UCI Medical Center, Neuropsychiatric Center, room 302

### Newborn Care (1 Session)

Normal newborn appearance, feeding, dressing, bathing, diapering, safe sleeping, and signs and symptoms of illness. Cost: \$20.

Monday, Oct 23, Dec 4 6-8:30 p.m.

### Spanish Newborn Care (1 Session)

Tuesday, Oct 24 5:15-7:30 p.m.

Location: UCI Family Health Center Santa Ana

### Lamaze Prepared Childbirth (6-Session Series)

Offered in conjunction with Santiago Canyon College Continuing Education. For expectant mothers and their birth partners beginning the 6th month of pregnancy. Topics include relaxation, Lamaze techniques, labor and birth, Caesarean delivery, medication and anesthesia. Cost: Free to all

Tuesdays, Oct 24 – Nov 28 6:30-9 p.m.

Tuesday Location: Santiago Canyon College, Orange Center

Wednesdays, Oct 25 – Nov 29 7-9:30 p.m.

Thursdays, Oct 26 – Dec 7 7-9:30 p.m.

Wed & Thurs Location: UCI Medical Center Library, Room 2105

### Spanish Prepared Childbirth (4-Session Series)

Tuesdays, Nov 21, 28, Dec 5 and 12 5:15-7:30 p.m.

Location: UCI Family Health Center Santa Ana

### Siblings (1 Session)

For children about to become big brothers and big sisters who want to learn what will happen when Mom goes to the hospital to have the baby. Cost: \$20.

Wednesday, Oct 11, Nov 8, Dec 6 4-5 p.m.

Location: UCI Medical Center 2 Tower conference room (2nd floor of main hospital)

### Stop Smoking (4-Session Series)

Stop smoking by discussing what to do before you quit and how to live life afterward. Cost: \$80. Call for dates and times.

Tuesday, Oct 10-31 Noon-2 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov 7-28 Noon-2 p.m.

### Weight Control (4-Session Series)

Identify your healthy weight and learn about meal planning, the food guide pyramid, exercise, label reading, restaurant dining, recipe modification and maintenance. Cost: \$80.

Thursday, Oct 5, 12, 19 and 26 5-7 p.m.

### Beginning Hatha Yoga (Monthly Series)

Wear loose-fitting workout clothes. Pack a cool-down sweatshirt and a yoga mat or beach towel. It's best not to eat or drink two hours prior to class. Cost: \$30 per month. Every Tuesday 5-6 p.m. Location: 200 S. Manchester Ave., basement training room

## SUPPORT GROUPS

All support groups are free and held at UCI Medical Center, 101 The City Drive South, Orange, CA, unless otherwise noted. For a complete list, please visit [www.ucihealth.com/events](http://www.ucihealth.com/events).

### Bariatric Surgery Support Group

Offers support for patients before and after laparoscopic weight-loss surgery. Information: 888-717-4463 Third Tuesday every month 6:30-8:30 p.m. Location: UCI Manchester Pavilion, 200 S. Manchester Ave., Ste. 840, classrooms B & C, Orange

### Breast Cancer Education/Support Series

Annual series for women with breast cancer provides opportunity to meet with experts. Information: 714-456-8609 Oct 4, 11, 18 and 25 2-4 p.m. Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### Burn Survivors Support Group

Information: 714-456-5304 or 714-456-8938 Third Thursday every month 6-7:30 p.m. Location: Acute Rehabilitation Unit/3-South, recreation room

### Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD)

For parents and professionals interested in learning about ADD/ADHD in children and adults. Guest speaker at every meeting. Information: 714-630-5214, 949-824-2343 or [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org) Second Wednesday every month 7-9 p.m. UCI Child Development Center, 19262 Jamboree Road, Irvine

### Epilepsy Support Group

Social and educational support group for adults with epilepsy, offered in collaboration with the Epilepsy Alliance of Orange County. Guest speaker at every meeting. Information: 714-557-0202 Third Friday every month 7-8:30 p.m. Location: UCI Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### Korean Women's Share and Care Group

Help and support for Korean-speaking women with cancer. Information: 714-456-5057 First Thursday every month 3-4:30 p.m. Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### Living with Cancer

Help for cancer patients and their loved ones. Information: 714-456-8609 Second and fourth Thursdays every month 6:30-8 p.m. Location: Breast Health Center, Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 3rd floor

### Look Good, Feel Better

Help with appearance changes during cancer treatments. Reservations: 949-261-9446, option #3 Second Monday every other month 10 a.m.-noon Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Support and education for those caring for someone with mental illness, provided by others struggling with similar issues. Information: 714-456-5843 Every Tuesday 6-7:30 p.m. Location: UCI Neuropsychiatric Center, occupational therapy room 191

### Sarcoma Education and Support Group

Formal presentation followed by separate group discussions for young adults and older adults, led by social worker. Information: 714-456-8609 Third Tuesday every month, beginning Oct 17 3-4:30 p.m. Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### Spanish Super Sibs Klub

Therapeutic workshop for children ages 8-12 with siblings who have disabilities or chronic illnesses. Information: 714-532-8778 Third Saturday every month 9:30 a.m.-noon Location: UCI Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### Spinal Cord Support Group

For those with spinal cord injuries and their families. Information: 714-456-6628 Third Monday every month, except holidays 1:30-3 p.m. Location: Acute Rehabilitation Unit/3-South, recreation room

### Support for People with Oral, Head & Neck Cancers (SPOHNC-UCI-Orange)

Information: 714-456-5235 First Monday every month 6:30-8 p.m. Location: Breast Health Center, Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 3rd floor

### Walkers and Wheelers

Therapeutic support for children with disabilities, focusing on individual strengths through group activities. Offered in conjunction with Children's Hospital of Orange County. Information: 714-532-8778 or 949-351-7799 Second and fourth Saturdays every month 2-4 p.m. Location: Classroom 2103-04, above UCI Medical Center library

### Women's Care and Share Group

Support and education for women with cancer. Information: 714-456-8609 Second and fourth Tuesday every month 10-11:30 a.m. Speaker on fourth Tuesday Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

## HEALTH CARE SKILLS

### Basic Life Support – Health Care Provider

Adult, pediatric and infant CPR, two-rescuer CPR, foreign-body airway obstruction, AED and barrier devices. Based on American Heart Association standards and guidelines for 2006. Registration: 714-456-5611 or 714-456-7291. Cost: \$72 (includes parking pass, card and book). Wednesday, Sept 27 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, Oct 25 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov 22 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, Dec 21 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Register for classes online at

[www.ucihealth.com/events](http://www.ucihealth.com/events)

Toll free 1-877-UCI-DOCS

## 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.

[www.ucihealth.com](http://www.ucihealth.com)

# 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.

# Skin Conditions and Children



**Eczema, acne, impetigo, ringworm and warts—they're among the most common skin ailments suffered by children.**

**But some pediatric patients have** skin disorders that are infinitely more challenging to treat. Large hemangiomas—bright red or bluish-gray birthmarks—are among these conditions. Caused by abnormal clusters of blood vessels, they appear most commonly on the face or neck. “Hemangiomas grow during the first year of a child’s life, and usually begin to shrink between 10 and 14 months of age—a process that can last for up to a decade,” says **Dr. Brandie Metz**, a pediatric dermatologist at UCI Medical Center. As one of only two pediatric skin specialists in Orange County, she has cared for hundreds of young patients with these potentially disfiguring growths, which can cover large areas of a child’s face.

**Treatment options.** “Treatment depends on the birthmark’s size, location, stage of growth and potential for causing physical problems, including disfigurement,” says Metz. “If the child’s well-being isn’t threatened and the hemangioma is shrinking, a wait-and-watch strategy is often best.” But Metz can often tell if there will be remnants of the hemangioma after it shrinks. “In these cases, it may be better to remove the growth instead of waiting until later,” she says.

Superficial hemangiomas often respond well to laser therapy. UCI physicians at Beckman Laser Institute’s Vascular Birthmarks and Malformations Diagnostic and Treatment Center combine lasers with split-second sprays of cryogen—a super-cooled liquid that briefly reduces the temperature of the skin to below freezing. This allows doctors to use more

intense beams of laser light so they can get optimal results without harming normal skin in the treatment area.

In some cases, hemangiomas are too deep and thick to treat with lasers. In these cases, an oral steroid may be used to shrink them. “Surgery is also an option for young patients whose growths are resistant to treatment or threatening to obstruct a vital organ,” says Metz.

## **Rare skin disorders.**

Hemangiomas are among the most common skin problems affecting children. But some youngsters suffer from dermatological disorders that are so rare only a few doctors have seen a case. This includes epidermolysis bullosa (EB), an incurable genetic skin disorder. “With this condition, the skin is so fragile that even a gentle hug can result in painful blisters, sometimes leading to disfigurement,” says Metz, who has treated more than a dozen cases of EB.

## Treating children for dermatological problems is an art and a science.

There are several forms of the disorder. “Some are caused when the threadlike fibers that anchor the outer layer of skin to the one below it are absent or

don’t function,” says Metz. “Other forms occur when there’s a lack of keratin, a fibrous protein in the top layer of skin.” Whatever the cause, the result is the same: The top layer of skin pulls away from the layer below, causing painful blistering.



The goal of EB treatment is to protect the skin against injury and related infection. Every aspect of the child’s therapy is considered, ranging from bathing and blister care to diet and dental work. “It’s an intensive effort involving a multidisciplinary team,” says Metz. In more severe forms of the disease, the child’s toes and fingers can fuse and the internal body linings can blister. In these cases, surgery may be necessary.

“Treating children for dermatological problems is an art and a science,” says Metz. “Young patients are emotionally and physically vulnerable. They need state-of-the-art treatment by specialists who are sensitive to their needs.” For more information about pediatric dermatology services at UCI Medical Center, call 1-877-UCI-DOCS.

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UCI Medical Center was recently named one of “America’s Best Hospitals” in four categories. Turn to page 6 for details.

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