



## Transformations

**For months, the construction** site for UCI Medical Center's new university hospital has been only barely visible to people driving past on city streets and the Santa Ana Freeway. But in the next few months, large uprights of steel will emerge from the subterranean foundation, making a bold visual announcement that the new hospital is indeed on the rise.

Starting in April, the steel beams will be set into place and the structural skeleton of the new university hospital will begin to take shape. A total of 5,500 tons (11 million pounds) of steel will be used to build the seven-story tower. Already, 19,000 cubic yards of concrete have been poured into the huge pit at the site of the new university hospital to form the foundation.

The new university hospital is being built on the north side of the existing medical center, which remains fully functional during construction.

The \$371 million new university hospital is expected to open its doors in early 2009, offering the most modern, patient-friendly features and the latest in medical technology to support patient care, research and education.

For more information about UCI Medical Center's new university hospital, please visit [www.ucihealth.com/newhospital](http://www.ucihealth.com/newhospital). UCI thanks patients and visitors for their understanding during this time of transformation.

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

# Seniors: Ask the Doctor

## Health Assessments

**For many people, the aging process is fraught with physical, mental and emotional challenges. But a comprehensive approach to these problems, coupled with the care of experts specializing in older patients, can make a difference. UCI's Health Assessment Program for Seniors (HAPS) provides comprehensive exams for people over 55. UCI geriatrician Dr. Sonia Sehgal offers details about this special program.**

### Q Who can benefit from HAPS?

**A** A HAPS assessment is especially helpful for older people with several chronic health problems requiring multiple medications. It's also beneficial for those who have suffered a notable physical or mental decline in recent months. Additionally, adult children may want a parent assessed to ensure they can still live independently.

### Q What does a HAPS assessment include?

**A** An in-depth physical exam, memory assessment, psychological and social profile, evaluation of the patient's living situation, and post-evaluation conference with the patient and family members. Since drug interactions and dosage issues can affect a person's mental and physical function, an assessment of the patient's medication regimen is an important part of a HAPS evaluation.

### Q Who conducts the assessment?

**A** A team of geriatricians, neurologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, social workers, dietitians and others. These experts work together to unravel the patient's interconnected health problems and formulate a set of recommendations.

### Q What happens during the post-exam conference?

**A** A HAPS geriatrician meets with the patient and family to review test results and treatment

recommendations. Part of the discussion may focus on the appropriateness of the patient's current living arrangements, including suggestions for care. For follow-up treatment, patients may be referred back to a family doctor, followed by HAPS program specialists, or cared for by both.

### Q How does the HAPS program differ from seeing a general practitioner?

**A** HAPS team members specialize in geriatrics, making them experts in the medical, psychological and social issues faced by older people. They use a highly collaborative approach, working together to identify the patient's problems and sorting out how they relate to one another. On the other hand, general practitioners work with all age groups and may not have a global understanding of the health care issues affecting older people. They may also refer patients to several specialists, which may result in less coordinated care.

### Q When should you be concerned about an older relative?

**A** Depression, memory loss, pain and incontinence are not normal parts of aging and should be evaluated for medical causes. Other red flags are unintentional weight loss, a reduced appetite, confusion, listlessness and difficulty performing daily activities. A HAPS professional can distinguish between normal age-related changes and those caused by medications or disease. To request a HAPS assessment, call 1-877-427-7824.



An integral member of the HAPS team, Dr. Sonia Sehgal is a board-certified internist and geriatrician. She will speak on travel medicine at the Jewish Community Center of Orange County, 1 Federation Way, Irvine, on Wednesday, April 26, at 11:30 a.m.