

# UCI Health

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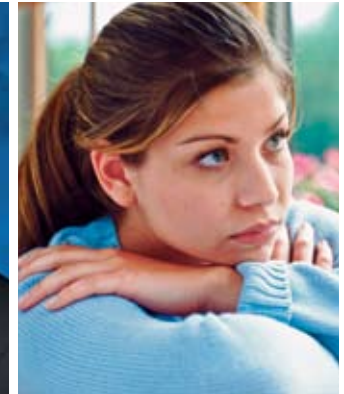
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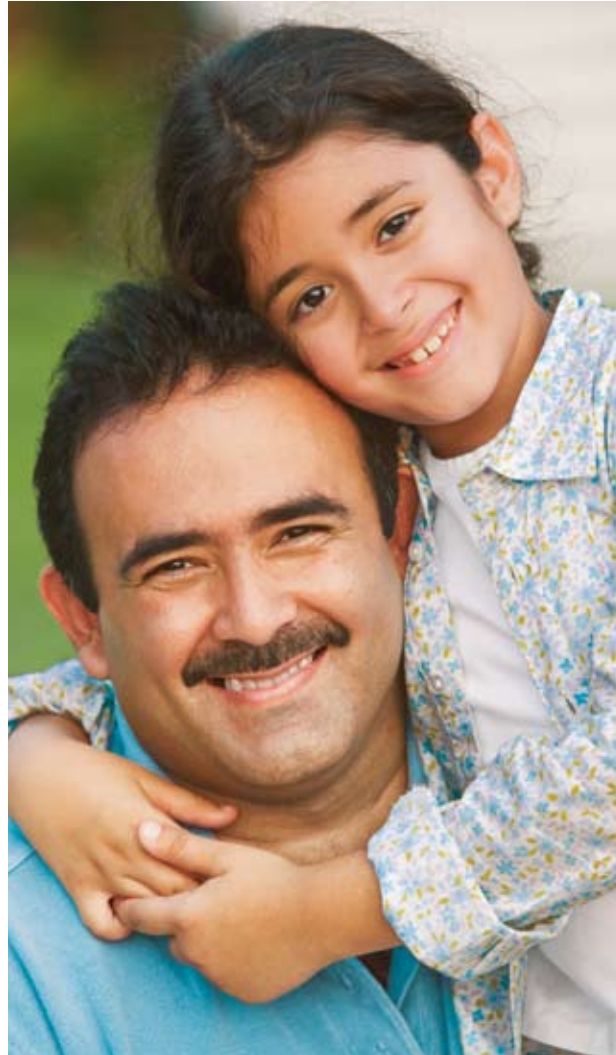
## DIABETES UPDATE

### A “smart” insulin pump that takes the guesswork out of diabetes management?

**A medication that can enhance** the body’s own ability to control blood-sugar levels? Yes—and these breakthroughs are only two of many innovative approaches used by specialists at Joslin Diabetes Center at University of California, Irvine. The center is the only diabetes treatment and research facility in California affiliated with the internationally acclaimed Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston.

“Insulin pumps were first introduced in the mid-1980s,” explains says **Dr. Ping Wang**, medical director of Joslin Diabetes Center at UC Irvine. “But now, in addition to freeing patients from manually administering their shots, these devices can help calculate the amount of insulin needed. They also can protect against the dangers of excessively high or low blood-sugar levels when used in conjunction with new glucose sensing devices.”

**No more shots.** The new-generation pumps are attached to the body by a slender tube through which a pre-programmed amount of insulin is automatically administered. They allow people with diabetes to live more flexible lives—especially when paired with a small device that lets them customize their insulin intake. Meal delayed? Just press a button to reduce the basal rate—the small amount of insulin that’s dispensed 24 hours a day to keep blood-sugar levels under control between meals and overnight. Birthday celebration? Just press another button to increase the bolus—the larger amount of insulin that’s given at one time to act on meals or snacks. Not sure of how much insulin to take after a holiday dinner? Just use



### New pumps, monitors and medications offer people with diabetes more options.

the built-in bolus calculator to automatically compute the correct dosage. “The device even helps determine the amount of insulin still active in the body, reducing the risk of low blood-sugar reactions,” says Wang.

One new-generation pump includes an integrated continuous glucose monitor (CGM). Newly approved, the CGM is composed of a sensor inserted under the

skin, which is connected to a wireless transmitter. The device sends the patient’s average glucose level to a handheld receiver every five minutes. Patients can view their current glucose levels at any time on the CGM’s screen. In case of dangerously high or low blood sugar, the device sounds an alarm, allowing the person to take corrective action. “The CGM gives patients a greater awareness of their blood-glucose levels, making it easier for them to manage the disease,” says Wang.

**New medications.** The new insulin pumps and CGMs are still being perfected and may not fit the needs of every patient with diabetes. But several companies are currently developing the next generation of these devices. Patients should consult with their physicians to determine whether this equipment is appropriate for them.

The new insulin pump systems and CGMs are used primarily for people with type 1 diabetes—those whose pancreas no longer produces enough insulin. But there are also promising developments for patients with type 2 diabetes—those with reduced pancreas function who are resistant to the insulin their body produces. “A new class of medications improves the body’s own capacity to lower blood sugar,” says **Dr. Yung-in Choi**, director of adult diabetes services at Joslin Diabetes Center at UC Irvine. One drug called Januvia (sitagliptin) is inactive until patients eat and their blood-sugar levels rise, so it doesn’t cause hypoglycemia. Another drug known as Byetta (exenatide) lowers blood glucose and causes moderate weight loss. “These drugs provide an entirely new way to control type 2 diabetes,” says Choi. When added to the remarkable advances in pumps and monitors, these breakthroughs mean a new day for many people with diabetes. For referral to a Joslin-affiliated diabetes specialist, call 949.824.8656.

# STAYING IN TOUCH

Easy, fast and efficient. That's what UC Irvine Healthcare patients are saying about an enhanced online service called **Managing Your Health Care**.

**The innovative program lets** patients request appointments, check lab results, ask for prescription refills and communicate with their doctors—all by logging on to [www.ucihealth.com](http://www.ucihealth.com).

Streamlined and secure, Managing Your Health Care puts patients in the driver's seat. Instead of having to call or visit their doctor's office to ask routine questions, make non-urgent requests, or clarify details from a previous appointment, they can connect directly with their physician through privacy-protected e-mail. Patients may also send e-questions to their doctor's staff about insurance coverage, billing and related matters.

**Good-bye, telephone tag.** Provided by RelayHealth of Emeryville, CA, the new program is a time-saver for patients. Not only does it eliminate telephone tag, but makes waiting by the phone for return calls from physicians a thing of the past. "Managing Your Health Care is great for busy patients, with doctors responding to questions online within 24 hours," says **Cindy Winner, R.N.**, chief ambulatory care officer for UC Irvine Healthcare. Secure technology guarantees that privacy is protected. Unlike regular e-mail, messages don't travel across the Internet and exist only on a secure server.

"Good communication between patients and their doctors is essential," says **Dr. Andrew Reikes**, an internist and endocrinologist at Gottschalk Medical Plaza on the UC Irvine campus. He uses Managing Your Health Care to answer patients' routine



questions and arrange for prescription refills. "I find the new system especially helpful when patients are making medication or lifestyle changes. They can e-mail me information about their blood pressure or glucose levels directly and in their own words, and do so quickly and conveniently. For me, this streamlines and improves doctor-patient communication and is an important benefit of the new service."

**Easy access.** Of course, e-communication will never replace a doctor's exam or a detailed discussion about a health issue—and face-to-face meetings are still necessary. But Managing Your Health Care is an easy way to stay connected between appointments.

"The use of electronic messaging has grown enormously over the past five years," says Winner. "Currently, nearly 70 percent of Americans communicate by e-mail. Surveys show that

90 percent of people with access to the Internet would like to communicate with their physicians online."

**Fast and efficient.** To gain access to the system, UC Irvine Healthcare patients can register by going to [www.ucihealth.com](http://www.ucihealth.com) and selecting the "Managing Your Health Care" link. In compliance with California law, only those who have been treated by their chosen physician are accepted. Others will be offered appointments to establish care. Patients may also register at their UC Irvine Healthcare doctor's office.

Once enrolled in the program, patients can make arrangements for appointments 24 hours a day, seven days a week. After communicating the desired time and date, they receive an immediate response by phone or e-mail—whichever is preferred. Prescription refills are just as easy. "The new system prevents inaccuracies, which helps avoid errors," says Winner. Through Managing Your Health Care, prescriptions can be sent to virtually any pharmacy in the United States or directly to the patient. And e-mails from physicians can be read at a patient's convenience and retrieved later when needed.

**Managing Your Health Care makes it easy for patients to communicate with their doctors.**

Winner points out that Managing Your Health Care should not be used for questions or appointments related to urgent health issues. "Anyone experiencing heart attack or stroke symptoms should call 911 without delay," she says. But for everyday medical matters, the new online system has proven very popular among patients. "UC Irvine Healthcare is committed to offering the best possible customer service," says Winner. "Managing Your Health Care is helping us meet that goal."

# PELVIC ORGAN PROLAPSE

**It's a problem most women never discuss, even when the symptoms interfere with their work, intimate relationships or ability to travel.**

**Pelvic floor prolapse occurs when** the network of muscles and ligaments supporting the female pelvic organs weakens and sags. As a result, the vagina, bladder, uterus or rectum can slip out of position, sometimes protruding into or outside of the vagina. Symptoms range from urine leakage and bowel problems to discomfort during intercourse, difficulty emptying the bladder, and pressure or pain in the pelvic area and lower back. The condition sometimes develops in women who have had hysterectomies, with the top portion of the vagina falling into the vaginal opening.

“Many women don't mention prolapse-related symptoms to their doctors because they're embarrassed or believe these problems are a normal part of aging,” says **Dr. Regina Hovey**, a urologist with University of California, Irvine Healthcare. “But in some cases, physical therapy and support devices can make the situation more tolerable. In others, however, surgery may be the best option.” Hovey was among the first physicians in Southern California to use the da Vinci robotic surgical system to restore support to pelvic organs. In Orange County, she is among the few physicians—the others are UC Irvine specialists in urogynecology and gynecologic oncology—offering this approach.

**A new treatment approach.** Depending on the type of prolapse and the organs involved, Hovey employs various surgical strategies. But the goal is always the same: to restore the organs to their original position. This is sometimes done by securing them to ligaments or bones. Another option is to reinforce or replace weakened tissue with mesh made from biomolecules or synthetic products, creating a support to shore up drooping organs. “Some of the

new materials function as a bioactive framework, encouraging the development of strong, healthy tissue that's capable of supporting the prolapsed organs,” says Hovey.

Because the female pelvis is so complex, it takes a great deal of skill and experience to do this type of surgery. Today, there are several different methods of surgical repair, including procedures that access prolapsed organs through the abdomen, the vagina, or both. But the introduction of the da Vinci robotic surgical system has revolutionized the treatment of uterine and vaginal prolapse—and the urinary incontinence that often accompanies it.

## Robotic surgery has revolutionized the treatment of uterine and vaginal prolapse.

“The machine allows surgeons to operate with unprecedented accuracy and precision,” says Hovey. Much like laparoscopic surgery, an older method of doing minimally invasive procedures, the da Vinci method requires a few small abdominal incisions through which a miniature video camera and tiny surgical instruments are inserted.

**Mini-maneuvers.** But that's where the similarities end. During surgery, the physician sits at a console several feet away from the patient, manipulating two joystick-like grippers, which control the surgical instruments, camera and robotic arms. The technology scales down each movement of the surgeon into a mini-maneuver by surgical instruments in the patient. This makes the robotic system ideal for working in spaces such as the female pelvis. Furthermore, the robot's “hands” are perfectly steady and can rotate 360 degrees, allowing doctors to operate on difficult-to-access areas. The machine's “eyes” are also much sharper than a

human's, with the camera magnifying the surgical field up to 15 times. This enables the physician to see defects in pelvic muscles, ligaments and connective tissue more clearly than ever before—and to place stitches more precisely than other surgical methods allow. Because incisions are only one-half inch compared with six inches for conventional surgery, the da Vinci approach typically results in less blood



loss, reduced pain and shorter hospital stays. For referral to a physician specializing in pelvic organ prolapse or female urinary incontinence, call 714.456.7005.

**Toll free 877.UCI.DOCS**

# the Education Connection

Classes are free of charge to University California, Irvine Healthcare patients and their families, UC Irvine employees and volunteers. Exceptions are the Joslin Diabetes Center, Balance and Mobility for Seniors, meditation, and Health Care Skills programs. Certain programs are also available in **Spanish**. Unless otherwise indicated, all classes are located at UC Irvine Manchester Pavilion, 200 S. Manchester Ave., Suite 840, Orange. Registration is required. Call toll free 877.UCI.DOCS or 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, Feb 15 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 UC Irvine 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.

### 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 Fridays

Evaluations: Jan 8 or 11 1-3 p.m.

Class sessions: Jan 15 – Mar 7 1-2 p.m.

### Breastfeeding (1 Session)

Includes process of milk production, how to breastfeed, avoiding potential problems and returning to work. Cost: \$20.

Thursday, Jan 10 6-8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb 6, Mar 5 6-8:30 p.m.

### Spanish Breastfeeding (1 Session)

Monday, Jan 28, Mar 24 5:15-7:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine Family Health Center Santa Ana

### Diabetic Diet (1 Session)

Food choices, portions and how they affect diabetes. Cost: \$20.

Monday, Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 3 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, Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 10 4-6 p.m.



### Spanish Diabetes Management Overview (1 Session)

Wednesday, Jan 2, 23, Feb 6, 27, Mar 5, 26 6-8:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine Family Health Center Anaheim

Wednesday, Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12 6-8:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine Manchester Pavilion

### 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, Jan 16, Mar 19 6-8 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, Feb 26 4-6 p.m.

### Hepatitis C Pre-Treatment Education (1 Session)

For the person who is considering or about to begin hepatitis C treatment. Includes information about hepatitis C, treatment, management of side effects and injection training. Family members and other support persons are encouraged to attend. Pre-registration required: 714.456.8764

First Friday every month 9-10:30 a.m.

Location: UC Irvine Medical Center, Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

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

How to control blood pressure through diet, exercise, medication and lifestyle changes. Cost: \$20.

Please call 877.UCI.DOCS for date and time

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

Overview of heart failure, symptoms and basic lifestyle changes to manage the condition, including diet, exercise and medications. Cost: \$20.

Monday, Feb 25 1:30-3:30 p.m.

### Maternity Tea & Tour

Learn about maternity services and tour the UC Irvine Maternity Unit. Cost: Free to all.

Thursday, Jan 24, Feb 28, Mar 27 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine 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, Mar 3 – 24 6-7 p.m.

### Newborn Care (1 Session)

Infant feeding, dressing, bathing, diapering, normal newborn appearance and signs and symptoms of illness. Cost: \$20.

Please call 877.UCI.DOCS for date and time

### Spanish Newborn Care (1 Session)

Monday, Mar 31 5:15-7:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine 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, surgical delivery, medication and anesthesia. Cost: Free to all.

Tuesdays, Feb 26 – Apr 1 7-9:30 p.m.

Tuesday class location: Santiago Canyon College Orange Center

Wednesdays, Feb 27 – Apr 2 7-9:30 p.m.

Thursdays, Feb 28 – Apr 3 7-9:30 p.m.

Wed & Thurs Location: UC Irvine Medical Center Library, room 2105

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

Mondays, Feb 25 – Mar 17 5:15-7:30 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine 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, Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12 4-5 p.m.

Location: UC Irvine 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 smoking and how to live life afterward. Cost: \$80.

Mondays, Jan 7 – 28 10 a.m.-noon

Wednesdays, Feb 6 – 27 Noon-2 p.m.

Mondays, Mar 3 – 24 10 a.m.-noon

### 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. Please call for dates and times.

### 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.



## SUPPORT GROUPS

All support groups are free and held at UC Irvine 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).

### Art for the Soul

Creative techniques to foster better health while coping with cancer. No art experience required. Information: 714.456.5235  
Third Thursday every month 10 a.m.-noon  
Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1st floor resource center

### Bariatric Surgery Support Group

Offers support for patients before and after laparoscopic weight-loss surgery. Information: 888.717.4463 or 714.456.6185  
Third Tuesday every month 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Location: UC Irvine Manchester Pavilion, 200 S. Manchester Ave., 2nd floor, rooms 210 & 211, Orange

### Burn Survivors Support Group

Information: 714.456.5641  
Thursdays, Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 20 Noon -1 p.m.  
Location: Occupational therapy room 3513

### 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: 949.UCI.ADHD (949.824.2343) or [www.uci.edu/chadd.shtml](http://www.uci.edu/chadd.shtml). No RSVP necessary.  
Wednesdays, Jan 9, Feb 13, Mar 12, Apr 9 7-9 p.m.  
Location: UC Irvine 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 most meetings. Information: 714.557.0202  
Third Friday every month 7-8:30 p.m.  
Location: Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Support Group

Education and support for pre-dialysis, dialysis, pre-transplant and post-transplant patients, family members and friends. Information: 714.456.8342  
Fourth Wednesday every month 4-5:30 p.m.  
Location: Medical library, 2nd floor, room 2105

### 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. Information: 714.456.8609  
Mondays, Jan 14, Mar 10 10 a.m.-noon  
Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### Pacemaker and Defibrillator Support Group

For patients and families to learn about pacemakers and defibrillators. Information and reservations: Carmen Quiroz, 714.456.7918  
Wednesday, Jan 16 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Location: Medical library, 2nd floor, room 2107

### Sarcoma Education and Support Group

Formal presentation followed by separate group discussions for young adults and older adults, led by a social worker. Information: 714.456.8609  
Third Tuesday every month 3-4:30 p.m.  
Location: Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, 4th floor conference room

### Spinal Cord Support Group

For those with spinal cord injuries and their friends and families. Information: 714.456.6628  
Third Monday every month, except holidays Noon-1 p.m.  
Location: Neuropsychiatric Center, Acute Rehabilitation Unit, room 135

### Stroke Support Group

Information about treatment options and news in stroke, plus support and social interaction for stroke survivors, their families, friends and caregivers. Information: 866.STROKE3  
Thursdays, Jan 10, Feb 14, Mar 13, Apr 10 Noon-1:30 p.m.  
Location: Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### 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: Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### 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

### Survivors Support Group

Support for teens facing the challenges of illness. Information: 714.456.2295  
Wednesdays, Jan 23, Feb 27, Mar 26, Apr 23 4:30-6 p.m.  
Location: Neuropsychiatric Center, conference room 101

### Trigeminal Neuralgia Association Support Group

Information, education and support for patients and their families living with TN and related facial pain conditions. Guest speaker at every meeting. Information: 714.962.2369  
Second Saturday every other month, Jan 12, Mar 8 1-3 p.m.  
Location: Medical library, 2nd floor, room 2107

### Women's Share and Care 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. Registration: 714.456.7291  
Cost: \$74 (includes parking pass, card and book)  
Wednesday, Feb 27 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Wednesday, Mar 26 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Wednesday, Apr 23 8:30 a.m.-2 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 UC Irvine campus. There is a fee and insurance pre-authorization is recommended. For a full description of the programs, registration, or to schedule an appointment, please call Joslin Diabetes Center at UC Irvine at 949.824.8656 or visit [www.ucihealth.com/joslin](http://www.ucihealth.com/joslin).

 **Joslin Diabetes Center**  
at UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA • IRVINE



## Senior Seminars

For the latest information about senior seminars, call toll free 877.456.3770 or visit [www.ucihealth.com](http://www.ucihealth.com). All seminars are free.

### Macular Degeneration

Join Dr. Baruch Kuppermann, UC Irvine ophthalmologist, as he discusses macular degeneration and emerging treatments to prevent or reverse the disease. **Friday, Jan 11, 1 p.m., Oasis Senior Center, 800 Marguerite Ave., Corona del Mar**

### Back Pain: Prevention and Treatment

Join interventional spine physician Dr. Justin Hata as he discusses the causes of back pain, how to prevent it, nonsurgical treatment options, and when to consider surgery. **Wednesday, Jan 16, 10:30 a.m., Merage Jewish Community Center, 1 Federation Way, Irvine**

### Coping with Life's Challenges

Aging successfully is more than living a long life. Join UC Irvine psychiatrist Dr. Sameh Elsanadi as he provides practical advice on how you can maximize your health and well-being to live a vibrant and satisfying life. **Wednesday, Feb 20, 10:30 a.m., Merage Jewish Community Center, 1 Federation Way, Irvine**

### Heart Failure: Causes and Treatments

Heart failure is the leading cause of hospitalization in older people. Join Dr. Dawn Lombardo, UC Irvine cardiologist and director of the UC Irvine Heart Failure Program, as she discusses the causes, symptoms and treatment of this condition. **Tuesday, Feb 26, 1 p.m., Florence Sylvester Senior Center, 23721 Moulton Pkwy., Laguna Hills**

### Back Pain: Is There Hope?

Join Dr. Nitin Bhatia, UC Irvine orthopedic surgeon and co-director of the Comprehensive Spine Program, as he discusses the many causes of back pain and the treatments that can provide relief. **Thursday, Feb 28, 11 a.m., Brea Senior Center, 500 S. Sievers Ave., Brea**

### Balance, Tremors & Parkinson's Disease

The symptoms of movement disorders often include tremor and balance problems. Join Dr. Neal Hermanowicz, UC Irvine neurologist, as he discusses Parkinson's, treatment options and the effects of tremor on balance, movement and coordination. **Tuesday, Mar 18, 1 p.m., Florence Sylvester Senior Center, 23721 Moulton Pkwy., Laguna Hills**

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

# Seniors: Ask the Doctor

## Understanding Atherosclerosis

**As people grow older, most develop some degree of atherosclerosis or “hardening of the arteries” from cholesterol deposits and other factors. But this condition can often be treated or even prevented. Join Dr. Pranav Patel, a cardiologist with University of California, Irvine Healthcare, as he discusses this topic.**

### Q What is atherosclerosis?

**A** It's a process that slowly clogs arteries—the blood vessels that carry oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. Normally, these vessels are strong and flexible, so blood moves through them easily. But as people age, a fatty buildup called plaque can narrow or block the arteries. The result is reduced blood flow to the heart, brain, other vital organs and tissues.

### Q What causes plaque to form?

**A** High blood pressure, high cholesterol, poorly controlled diabetes or smoking can damage the lining of an artery. Over time, plaque accumulates at the site of the injury, narrowing the blood vessel. Sometimes a blood clot forms when this material cracks or tears, further constricting the artery or blocking it completely.

### Q Can people tell when they have atherosclerosis?

**A** Symptoms often don't appear until blood vessels are severely clogged. For many people, the first sign of atherosclerosis may be a heart attack, stroke, peripheral artery disease (PAD) or kidney disease. Heart attacks occur when one or more of the heart's arteries are blocked, often by a blood clot. Certain types of strokes or transient ischemic attacks (TIAs) result when vessels in the neck or brain are clogged. PAD develops when cholesterol deposits narrow blood vessels in the legs, causing pain when a person walks. And high blood pressure together with poor kidney function can sometimes occur when the renal arteries become constricted due to fatty buildup.

### Q How is atherosclerosis diagnosed?

**A** High blood pressure and cholesterol are always red flags for atherosclerosis. Doctors can sometimes detect the condition in the legs, kidneys and neck using a stethoscope. Unfortunately, this isn't possible with coronary artery disease so doctors use electrocardiograms, cardiac stress tests and angiograms to arrive at a definitive diagnosis. Screenings such as the ankle/brachial index test for PAD are also valuable tools. Atherosclerosis in one area of the body usually indicates the condition is also present elsewhere.



**Dr. Pranav Patel, an interventional cardiologist, is an expert in nonsurgical, catheter-based ways to treat diseased arteries.**

### Q Can hardening of the arteries be prevented?

**A** In many cases, a healthy, low-fat diet can help prevent or slow plaque buildup—no matter how old a person is. Other lifestyle factors include controlling blood sugar, exercising regularly,

maintaining a normal weight and not smoking. In addition, some patients take medications to lower their LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and blood pressure.

### Q What if lifestyle changes and medications don't help?

**A** Balloon angioplasty and stenting may be one answer. This involves using a balloon-tipped catheter to open narrowed or blocked blood vessels. Stents—tiny metal scaffolds—are then inserted to prop open the artery. The procedure is generally safe and effective—but the goal should be to prevent atherosclerosis in the first place.

# Teenagers and EPILEPSY

**Epilepsy can develop at any time in a person's life. But almost three-quarters of new cases each year involve teenagers.**

**About 70 percent of young patients** react favorably to medication, which enables them to control their seizures and live normal lives. But for the remaining 30 percent, life can become a series of seizures, with some teens suffering up to 100 epileptic attacks each month.



“Even if a teenager has only one seizure per week, the condition can interfere with the teen's ability to become independent,” says **Dr. Devin K. Binder**, surgical director of the UC Irvine Comprehensive Epilepsy Program. “Uncontrolled seizures can prevent young people from having access to important opportunities such as living independently, driving, getting a job and dating. These experiences help people grow intellectually, socially and emotionally.”

**Targeting seizures.** During a seizure, uncontrolled waves of electrical activity surge across the brain, causing symptoms ranging from staring spells to unconsciousness accompanied by

convulsions. “There are many types of epileptic seizures, but they can be grouped into two broad categories: partial and generalized,” says Binder. “Partial seizures involve abnormal electrical activity in only one part of the brain. Generalized seizures affect the entire brain. To be effective, treatment must address the specific type of seizure the patient suffers and the location in the brain from which it originates.”

**The gold standard.** Considered the gold standard for diagnosing epilepsy, continuous video EEG monitoring yields this information—and more.

Available only at epilepsy centers, the test entails digitally recording the patient's brain waves and making a video record of his or her behavior during seizures. “By correlating brain activity with the way the patient acts during these episodes, we can gain an understanding of where the patient's

seizures originate in the brain,” says **Dr. Howard Kim**, clinical program director of the UC Irvine Comprehensive Epilepsy Program. To confirm these findings, epilepsy specialists may order other tests, including high-resolution MRI scans to screen for brain abnormalities such as tumors that can cause seizures. When the results are compiled, a clear picture emerges of the best treatment options for the patient, complete with information about how effective and safe surgery would be.

“Operating on the brain to cure epilepsy may seem like an extreme solution, but it's statistically less risky than uncontrolled seizures,” says Binder. “Intractable epilepsy can lead to serious injuries. Recent studies

consistently show that patients with uncontrolled epilepsy have a higher mortality rate than non-epileptic people in the same age category.”

To qualify for the procedure, patients must have seizures that persist despite drug therapy. Additionally, the electrical activity that triggers the seizures must be focused in a small part of the brain rather than diffused. “Improved diagnostic methods have made it possible to identify even the smallest areas of brain tissue responsible for generating seizures,” says Binder. “At the same time, advanced surgical and brain mapping techniques now allow epilepsy teams to remove portions of the brain that were virtually inaccessible a few years ago, while preserving the patient's intellectual functions.”

Up to 70 percent of patients who have epilepsy surgery become seizure-free after the operation.

Depending on the type of epilepsy, about 60 to 70 percent of patients who undergo surgery are able to become seizure-free after the operation. “Many young people are able to function independently for the first time in their lives, allowing them to go away to college, develop a social life, drive and work,” says Binder. “Restored independence and self-confidence in seizure-free patients is a wonderful thing to see.”

On Saturday, Jan. 26, 2008, the UC Irvine Comprehensive Epilepsy Program will host a free symposium entitled “Epilepsy: Tailoring Therapy to the Individual.” Health care providers, family members and caregivers who want to expand and update their knowledge of the medical and surgical management of epilepsy are invited. For information, call 714.456.3707. To make an appointment with a UC Irvine Healthcare epilepsy specialist, call 714.457.6203.



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