



Senior Seminars

Influenza: What Older Adults Should Know about the Flu

Join Dr. Thomas Cesario, UC Irvine infectious disease specialist, to learn about the prevention, symptoms, treatment and warning signs of complications that may result from the flu. He will also discuss the latest information on H1N1 (swine) flu. **Friday, Oct 16, 1 p.m., Newport Beach Central Library, 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach**

Urinary Incontinence

Dr. Regina Hovey, UC Irvine urologist, will answer questions about the causes, prevention and treatment of urinary incontinence. **Tuesday, Oct 20, 1 p.m., Florence Sylvester Senior Center, 23721 Moulton Parkway, Laguna Hills**

GERD

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, can lead to bleeding, difficulty swallowing, worsening of asthma, and even the development of esophageal cancer. Dr. V. R. Muthusamy, UC Irvine gastroenterologist, will discuss why we get GERD, how to treat it and who needs to be evaluated by endoscopy. **Wednesday, Nov 18, 11 a.m., Tustin Senior Center, 200 S. C St., Tustin**

Memory Loss and Aging

How can you distinguish between age-related forgetfulness and the signs of memory loss and confusion associated with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia? Dr. David Franklin, UC Irvine neuropsychologist, will discuss memory loss and aging and provide tips on keeping your brain fit and memory sharp. **Friday, Nov 20, 1 p.m., Newport Beach Central Library, 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach**

Osteoporosis

Join Dr. Simin Torabzadeh, UC Irvine geriatrician, to learn about the latest ways to prevent and manage osteoporosis, including common dietary supplements. **Wednesday, Dec 2, 11 a.m., Tustin Area Senior Center, 200 S. C St., Tustin**

Seniors: Ask the Doctor

Seniors and the Flu

An annual flu shot can go a long way to protect seniors against some of the most common viruses that make the rounds each winter. Join Dr. Sonia Sehgal, a UC Irvine SeniorHealth geriatrician, as she discusses the importance of flu immunizations for people over 50.

Q Why is it so important for seniors to get an annual flu shot?

A As people age, their immune system slowly loses the ability to fight off infection. This makes the seasonal flu particularly dangerous for older people. Not only can the flu make chronic medical problems worse, but it may also predispose seniors to life-threatening complications such as bacterial pneumonia. In fact, flu and pneumonia kill an average of 36,000 Americans annually, making this seasonal health threat the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. Ninety percent of deaths related to the flu occur in people 65 and older.

Q What's the best time to get the flu vaccine?

A In September and October—about two months before flu season hits. Flu immunizations are required annually because the strains of flu expected to be prevalent change from year to year. On the other hand, a pneumonia shot—another necessity for seniors—can be administered any time of year. A flu shot can't give you the flu because the vaccine is made up of killed viruses.

Q Will my annual flu shot protect me against the swine flu?

A Unfortunately, no. But a different vaccine is currently being prepared to immunize people against H1N1 (swine) flu. Details about its

distribution, including whether the entire U.S. population will be immunized, won't be clear until epidemiologists determine the expected spread and intensity of the disease.



Dr. Sonia Sehgal is a board-certified internist and geriatrician with special interests in healthy aging, preventive medicine and osteoporosis.

Q How can I tell the difference between a cold and the flu?

A It can be very difficult to tell the difference between a cold and the flu. Colds usually are milder and involve nasal symptoms such as stuffiness, sneezing and a runny nose. The flu, on the other hand, can involve all these symptoms, plus a high fever, muscle aches, extreme exhaustion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and cough.

Q Should I see a doctor right away if I think I have the flu?

A If you experience flu-like symptoms, call your doctor right away. Antiviral medicine can help prevent serious problems from the flu by turning a potentially severe illness into a milder one—especially if you start treatment within the first 48 hours.

Want to know more? See the health seminars listing on this page for a free lecture entitled "Influenza: What Older Adults Should Know about the Flu."