

# healthkeys®

Winter 2013/14

## At a loss for words

by Angela Menghraj, Contributing Editor

It can happen to the most loquacious, the most eloquent of us. Even President Obama searched for words when giving a speech. Due to a staff oversight, he didn't have the prepared speech in front of him. The President smiled and waited for staff to bring him the missing piece. This done, he began speaking.

We have no trouble talking about a good book or movie. Yet some human exchanges leave you with wings flapping like a frightened bird whose vocal chords have lost their sound. "I am at a loss for words." You have been taken by surprise. What can you do when this happens? Sometimes nothing. If the other person is in the throes of strong emotion directed at you, the best thing to do is breathe deeply and listen, knowing the fury is temporary. When feelings subside, it helps to suggest returning at a later time to talk about the issue. "I would like to respond to you right now, but I don't have the words." Why you lose words might not be immediately

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**2** Health news you can use

**3** The benefits of hospice

**7** Understanding shoulder injuries



## Sleep to your heart's content

**Few things feel as good as a restful night's sleep.** The restorative power of sleep can help you wake up feeling refreshed and aid in keeping a healthy heart, say cardiologists.

To get all the benefits of shuteye, aim for six to eight hours a night. Getting less could lead to increases in blood pressure and stress hormones, weight gain and lowered glucose tolerance, all of which increase the risk of coronary artery disease.

If you snore, you may have sleep apnea, which can also affect your heart.

If you aren't getting enough sleep or have symptoms of a sleep disorder (such as sleepiness during the day), talk with your doctor. He or she may recommend undergoing a sleep test.

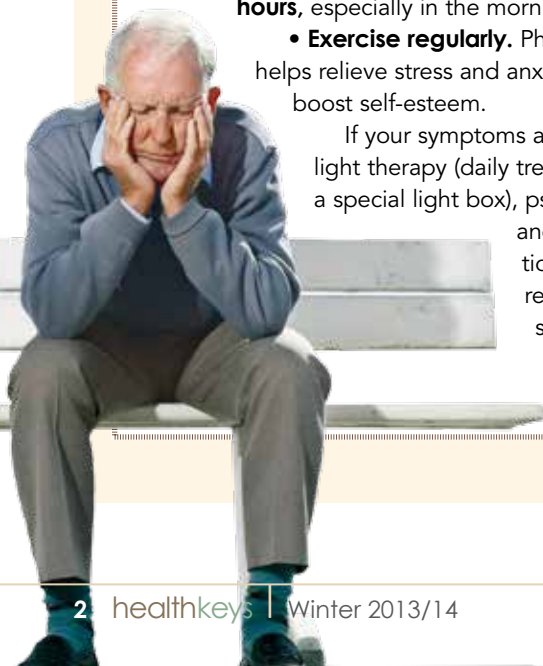


## Be glad: Beat SAD

**If your mood becomes depressed every year when winter weather arrives, you may have SAD, or seasonal affective disorder.** In some people, the season's limited daylight triggers symptoms that can range from mild to severe. Simple steps may help alleviate mild to moderate symptoms:

- **Increase your exposure to light.** Open blinds and sit close to bright windows at home, work or school.
- **Spend time outside during daylight hours,** especially in the morning.
- **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity helps relieve stress and anxiety and can boost self-esteem.

If your symptoms are severe, light therapy (daily treatment with a special light box), psychotherapy and/or medication may help relieve your symptoms. See your doctor.



## Keep dry skin at bay

**For some people, the arrival of winter means itchy, dry skin.** These tips from the American Academy of Dermatology can help you prevent dry skin, year-round.

- **Use warm water**—not hot—for bathing and washing hands. Hot water removes natural skin oils more quickly.

- **Limit bathing time.** A five- to 10-minute bath or shower adds moisture to the skin. A prolonged soak can leave your skin less hydrated than before you started.

- **Use a gentle cleanser.** Choose a mild, fragrance-free soap or soap substitute that moisturizes. Avoid antibacterial, perfumed and deodorant soaps.

- **Moisturize immediately after bathing.** To lock in moisture, apply a moisturizer while the skin is still damp.





# How hospice care can help

## Understanding palliative care

If given a choice, most of us would probably choose to spend our final days in comfortable surroundings with those closest to us. For those nearing the end of a terminal illness, hospice care offers a welcome, comforting alternative. By allowing patients to receive pain management and symptom control among family and friends, hospice care can help create a more positive and dignified end-of-life experience.

Hospice care is unique in the medical world. Most medical specialties focus on improving health, but hospice care embraces the natural end to life and focuses on bringing comfort during those final days. It does not aim to prolong life or accelerate death. Rather, hospice care allows those with a prognosis of

six months or less to live to spend their final days living life to the fullest rather than pursuing curative treatment.

### HOW IT WORKS

The first step in receiving hospice care is to obtain a doctor's referral. A hospice care provider will then meet with the patient and evaluate his or her needs. The patient, his or her loved ones and a multidisciplinary hospice care team (usually made up of physicians, nurses, health aides, social workers, spiritual caregivers, therapists and volunteers) work together to create a personalized plan for care.

Hospice patients may be treated in a variety of environments: at home, an assisted living facility or a skilled nursing facility, for example. Having


hospice at home means nurses will serve as a liaison with the rest of the care team, who are available to you around the clock. Hospice services generally include:

- physician services
- home visits by nurses
- home health aides who can assist with needs such as dressing and bathing
- pain control and symptom management
- social work and counseling services
- medical equipment and supplies
- support for caregivers and family members

### WHAT TO LOOK FOR

To find a hospice program, start by asking trusted health care providers or friends and family for recommendations. You can also search and compare local services through the National Hospice Foundation at [www.nationalhospicefoundation.org](http://www.nationalhospicefoundation.org) or the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization at [www.nhpc.org](http://www.nhpc.org).

Once you've narrowed your search, consider asking the following questions:

- What services are provided?
- How soon can services begin?
- How will care providers keep the patient comfortable and control pain?
- What is the patient-to-caregiver ratio?
- How frequent are home visits on average?
- How are after-hours questions and concerns handled?
- Will the patient see the same caregivers over time?
- Is the program accredited by The Joint Commission or other recognized accrediting body? 

# 5 diagnostic tests: A closer look



Today's diagnostic tests offer health care professionals a detailed view inside the body, helping them to find problems (or no problems!) and make appropriate treatment decisions. This means that far fewer patients have to undergo potentially invasive exploratory surgery. Below are five common types of diagnostic imaging, at a glance.

Test	How it works	Common purposes	What to expect
X-ray	Low-dose radiation is used to record images on film.	Check for tooth cavities, broken bones, problems in the lungs or abdomen and more.	An X-ray normally only takes a few seconds, and is painless and easy. You may need several X-rays to view different angles.
Ultrasound	Sound waves bounce off tissues and are converted into electrical signals that a computer transforms into an image. No radiation is used.	Monitor pregnancies, check for heart problems, detect gallstones and check for cysts, tumors or inflammation.	Usually, the technician puts thick gel on the area to be studied and moves a hand-held device called a transducer over the area.
Computer tomography (CT)	An X-ray tube and sensors rotate around the body. The sensors send data to a computer to create cross-sectional images.	Detect and provide information about tissues and structures throughout the body that aren't as visible on a regular X-ray.	You will be asked to lie still on a motorized table that moves through a tube-shaped scanner. You may be given a dye ahead of time to help the images appear more clearly.
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	Magnetic fields, radio waves and a specialized computer are used to capture images of bones and soft tissues. No radiation is used.	Identify problems in joints or soft tissues, such as the brain, muscles and liver. An MRI may be an option for people who shouldn't be exposed to the dye or radiation of a CT scan.	You will be asked to remove any metal. Then, similar to a CT scan, you will lie motionless on a table that slides into a tube-shaped scanner. Unlike a CT scan, which normally takes a few minutes, an MRI can take 20 to 90 minutes.
Positron emission tomography (PET) scan	A small dose of radioactive substance accumulates in the area of the body being studied. A camera detects how the body uses it and sends images to a computer to create 3-D images.	Check heart function, determine the location and possible spread of cancer and examine brain activity to help diagnose seizures or memory disorders.	You'll likely be given an injection of the substance; sometimes it is swallowed or inhaled. It may take 30 to 90 minutes to reach the desired area of the body. Then you'll be asked to lie still on a motorized table that moves through a tube-shaped scanner.



## At a loss for words

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obvious. It could be you heard “shut up” when you tried to express yourself as a child when things got heated. Or it could be you’re afraid if you begin to talk, the truth will come out, not to be retrieved. So time can work in your favor.

If this is a particularly difficult conversation with a boss or an adult child, preparation might give a boost to your confidence. Write it down. Author Isabel Allende encourages writers experiencing a block to “show up, show up, show up.” When stopped by fear or discomfort, you can rehearse what you want to say in your mind. And then “show up”! When blocked by fear, spoken words, as with written, can break through; they “show up” when you need them. So what you initially experienced as loss becomes a relationship gain.

This being said, we probably have had those times when a friend is fired up about a particular subject. Be it politics, religion or a life episode that brings back painful memories. As she speaks she becomes more and more excited. What can you say? Not a word; listen. The venting eventually subsides and you tell her you understand how hard this has been for her. Then quietly she says, “Thanks for being here, sorry you had to hear this.” Introduce a neutral topic. Be happy your loss of words paid off in this instance and your advice, quietly given, may just have saved a friendship. HK

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# Quick quiz

Test your health savvy

When it comes to your health, the more you know the better. Test your knowledge by answering true or false below.

**1** After age 30, you tend to start losing all of the following, except:

- A. lean tissue
- B. water
- C. fat
- D. bone mass

**2** Symptoms of a moderate to severe allergic reaction include all of the following, except:

- A. difficulty breathing
- B. wheezing
- C. diarrhea
- D. seizure

**3** What type of exercises can help prevent falls, which is a major concern for older people?

- A. balance exercises
- B. running
- C. aerobic exercises
- D. flag football

**4** Severe anemia can lead to:

- A. diabetes
- B. heart attacks
- C. cancer
- D. obesity

**5** Parkinson's disease most often starts developing after age:

- A. 35
- B. 40
- C. 50
- D. 70

ANSWERS: 1. C, 2. D, 3. A, 4. B, 5. C

# 6 secrets to feeling young at heart

Age is just a number when you're young at heart.

This is a great motto to live by, but staying young at heart, both physically and emotionally, often takes some effort. Here are some great ideas to stay feeling young at heart no matter your age.

**1 Walk.** Walking is great for your heart—and it's easy to squeeze into your daily routine. In the morning it is a good way to ease into your day and prepare yourself for what's ahead. Walking after meals may have the added benefit of helping control blood sugar spikes after you eat.

**2 Get outdoors.** Fresh air and sunshine are good for the body and spirit. Just 10 minutes in the sun can help ensure healthy levels of vitamin D, which has many


potential health benefits including protection from high blood pressure.

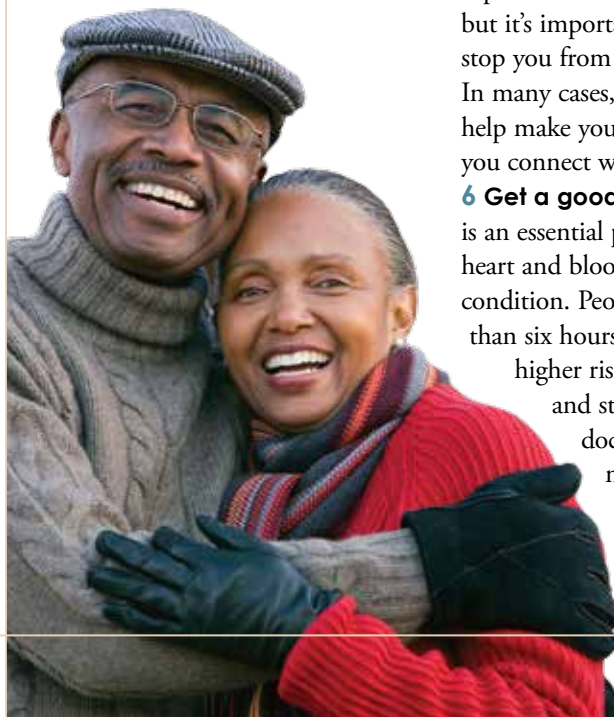
**3 Eat heart-healthy foods.** Your diet is likely the greatest influence on your heart health. Stick to foods low in sodium and high in fiber like fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Also, limit saturated and trans fats commonly found in fatty meats, fried foods and cookies.

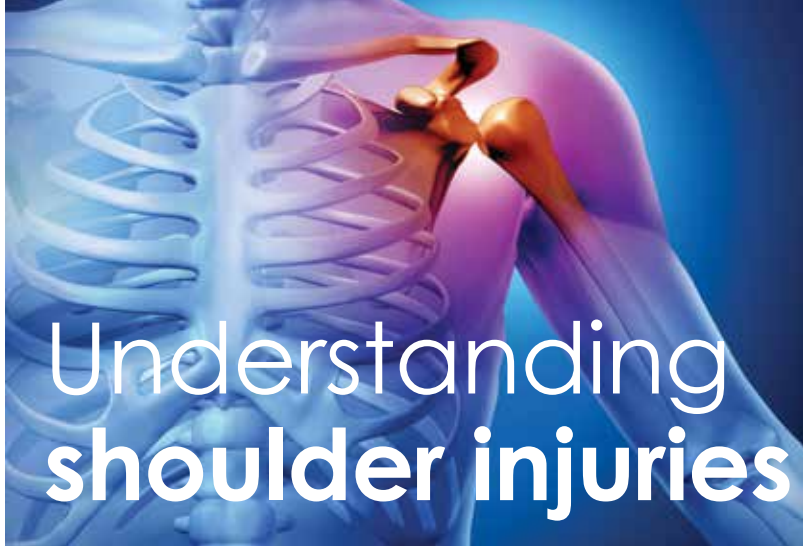
**4 Connect with others and let them know you care.** Spending time with others can give you a lift. Whether it's helping a friend through a difficult time, or planning a game night with family or friends, connecting with others is rewarding to your emotional health.

**5 Try out new technology.** New technology can be intimidating or frustrating until you learn the ropes. These feelings are normal but it's important not to let them stop you from trying new things. In many cases, new technology can help make your life easier and help you connect with others.

**6 Get a good night's rest.** Sleep is an essential part of keeping your heart and blood vessels in good condition. People who sleep less than six hours a night are at

higher risk for heart attacks and stroke. Talk to your doctor if you think you may be suffering from a sleep disorder. 





# Understanding shoulder injuries

**S**houlder injuries can happen to anyone, not just athletes. They can happen while you're washing your car, fixing something in your house or playing catch with your grandchildren. Understanding the different kinds of shoulder injuries and knowing the symptoms can help you prevent serious shoulder trouble.

## HOW IT WORKS

Your shoulder is made up of three bones: the collarbone (clavicle), the shoulder blade (scapula) and the upper arm bone (humerus). Although your shoulder is the most movable joint in your body, it's susceptible to injury because the ball of the upper arm bone is larger than the shoulder socket that holds it. According to the National Institutes of Health, common shoulder injuries include:

- dislocations
- fractures
- frozen shoulder
- separations
- sprains
- tendinitis
- torn rotator cuffs

Treating a shoulder injury right away is important to preventing long-term shoulder problems, such as arthritis. Many shoulder injuries are caused by the breakdown of soft tissues. Overuse can cause the tissue to break down faster as people

get older, hence why athletes and people who perform manual labor regularly have an increased risk of shoulder injuries.

## RECOGNIZING INJURIES

Shoulder injuries can affect nearly everyone—men, women and children. The National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases lists numerous symptoms that may indicate a shoulder injury, including:

- bruising or swelling
- loss of range of motion
- weakness or pain and tenderness in your shoulder, especially when reaching overhead, reaching behind your back, lifting, pulling or sleeping on the shoulder

Certain injuries, such as dislocation, can result in complete immobility of the shoulder.

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, it's important to see an orthopedic specialist right away. Common treatments for shoulder injuries include rest, icing the shoulder three to four times a day, wearing a sling to keep the shoulder in place and exercising to improve range of motion and strengthen muscles.

Some injuries, such as a severe rotator cuff tear, may require surgery. Your doctor will conduct a physical exam and take X-rays to determine the proper treatment. HK



# Health

## dollars & sense

*Want to cut medical expenses without compromising your health? Try the following tips to help keep your costs in check.*

## Choosing where to retire

**D**o you want to relocate—perhaps to enjoy a warmer climate, be closer to loved ones or just have a fresh start for your golden years? Here are a few key items to research before you start packing:


**Cost of living.** It's crucial that your new location fit your budget, especially when you're on a fixed income. Will you buy a home or rent? How does the price of gas and food compare to where you live now? Is public transportation an option, or will you need to drive a lot?

**Taxes.** Some states offer breaks to retirees, such as excluding Social Security retirement benefits from state income taxes. Look up the general state tax, sales tax, property taxes, personal income tax and retirement income tax of the places you are considering. Taxes and deductions vary from state to state.

**Weather.** If you've been dreaming of ditching snow for a warmer climate, are you certain you won't miss the seasons? Will the "dry heat" of the desert feel oppressive for months on end? Try to visit the destination in question at different times of the year to make sure the weather will be acceptable year-round.

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Institute For Older Adults

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# The Institute for Older Adults

by Angela Menghraj, Contributing Editor

Retirement can be a wonderful time to do all the things we never get around to doing when we're working. Oddly enough, retirees often are in a quandary when faced with time of their own. Being bored isn't an option; it's a challenge.

Since its origin in 1875, Isabella has always demonstrated a keen interest in community service and outreach. In 1994, the late Edward J. McFadden, CEO of Isabella, established the Institute for Older Adults to give area residents opportunities to be involved in activities that address physical, mental and emotional health. Age alone doesn't define abilities and needs, and the programming of the Institute reflects this thinking.

The Institute serves as the umbrella organization for community programs that promote health and wellness. Members of the 50+ Club, one of the programs, have a variety

of activities from which to choose. Walking through the grounds in the early morning, one can observe participants in the very popular "Walking Works Wonders" exercises under the guidance of coach Nick Bdera.

In October, the annual Health Fair attracted more than 200 visitors. Participants availed themselves of blood pressure, glucose, depression and anxiety, podiatric and peripheral arterial disease screenings. Along with these services, information about finances, transportation, volunteering and diabetes from the more than 50 local agencies and hospitals attending the fair provided an abundance of useful materials.

The workshops and seminars offered periodically are another source of valuable information. In December, a seminar focused on coping with cancer was presented by Marlena Vega, PhD, herself a cancer



In October, Isabella's annual Health Fair attracted more than 200 visitors.

survivor. According to the Institute's coordinator, Marilyn Pacheco, who arranges the various presentations, Dr. Vega provided motivating hope to displace the anxiety that can accompany a cancer diagnosis. Similar health topics of general interest are offered.

Connecting with people is an important offering of the Institute for Older Adults. Whether it be an outing to the Poconos, an educational conference or the bi-weekly support group, getting together with other people fills the need for positive social interaction from which we all benefit.

For more information about Isabella's programs, call Marilyn Pacheco at **212-342-9224!** 