

A healthier today RUSH Generations and a vital tomorrow



→ Your Health

Stay Steady: Strategies for Fall Prevention



Padraic Stanley,
MSW, LCSW
Rush Social Work and
Community Health

Tripping over a rug or slipping on a wet kitchen floor is something that could happen anytime, and the consequences can be serious: Falls are the leading cause of injury for older adults in the United States.

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that every year, 25% of adults age 65 and older experience a fall.
- One fall in five causes a serious injury, like a broken bone or head trauma.
- More than 800,000 older adults end up hospitalized each year for injuries suffered in a fall.

While falls are fairly common among older adults, it's a myth that falling is an inevitable part of aging, said **Padraic Stanley, MSW, LCSW**, program manager for health promotion programs in the Rush University Medical Center Department of Social Work and Community Health.

“A lot of people just assume that they’re going to experience falls as they age, and that there’s nothing they can do about it,” Stanley said. “In reality, falls are controllable and preventable.”

Where to start

Get an assessment. Your first step to protect yourself from falls should be a thorough assessment by your primary care provider, who can help you identify issues that might contribute to fall risks. For example, some medications can cause drowsiness or dizziness. Foot pain or arthritis can cause gait changes that lead to tripping. And vision problems can make it difficult to see tripping hazards.

Create a safer environment at home. Most falls happen at home. To fix hazards that you encounter every day, you can take steps like making sure lighting in your home is strong enough to illuminate where you’re walking, clearing floors of clutter and securing throw rugs, and installing grab bars in tubs and next to toilets.

Build your balance — and your confidence. People with lower-body weakness and balance difficulties are at the highest risk for falls, so classes designed to address those issues can help. And feeling empowered to prevent falls is an important factor in staying socially and physically active. RUSH Generations regularly offers virtual and in-person workshops for building strength and balance, boosting confidence and protecting yourself if you fall. Check our quarterly calendar for info.

Be honest with your providers and loved ones. Falling can be a tough topic to talk about. The CDC says that fewer than half of those who fall tell their doctors about it, for reasons such as feeling embarrassed or being fearful of losing their independence.

“A lot of older adults think that if they tell their doctor or family member about a fall, people will think that they can’t take care of themselves anymore,” Stanley said. “But by not talking about your fall, you’re missing out on the opportunity to find out what caused it and prevent future falls.”

In This Issue

- 2 **Important Conversations**
Spiritual Care Can Positively Affect Health
- 2 **What Matters**
Cultivating Connections
- 3 **Stages**
What to Know About Using Telehealth
- 4 **Things to Know**
4 Tips for Maximizing Your Medicare Benefits



Join us on Sept. 4 for a discussion on preventing falls. See [the calendar insert](#) for details.

RUSH Generations

Brought to you by the Department of Social Work and Community Health

710 S. Paulina St.
Chicago, IL 60612-3872
rush.edu/rushgenerations

Spiritual Care Can Positively Affect Health



George Fitchett,
DMin, PhD
Department of Religion,
Health and Human Values

The relationship between faith and health has been a decades-long field of study for **George Fitchett, DMin, PhD**, professor in the departments of Religion, Health and Human Values and Family and Preventive Medicine at Rush University Medical Center. A founder of the national “Transforming Chaplaincy” project housed at RUSH, he focuses on bringing evidence-based practice to spiritual care.

Fitchett is also a pioneering researcher into the effectiveness of spiritual care in health care settings, and a co-author of a 2022 study showing evidence that a patient’s spiritual life can positively affect their health and experience with serious illness. The study employed a panel of experts in spirituality and health care to evaluate how spirituality helped patients cope with serious illness, as well as the association of spirituality with health outcomes in healthy people.

Among its findings: While spirituality is important to most patients with serious illness, their spiritual needs are often unaddressed. Those who received spiritual care with their medical care had better end-of-life outcomes, while those who did not receive such care had a poorer quality of life.

“There’s a strong body of evidence about the importance of religion and spirituality, particularly for patients with serious illness,” Fitchett said. “The rigor of the systematic review was really breathtaking.”

Integrating spiritual care with health care

Based on the study’s evidence, the panel created recommendations around spiritual care for people with serious illnesses as well as for people who are healthy.

For those with serious illnesses, the panel recommended folding spiritual care into their overall plan of care; including specialty practitioners of spiritual care (e.g., hospital

chaplains) into patient care; and making spiritual care education part of health professionals’ training.

“Spiritual care needs to be routinely incorporated into care for serious illness, and spiritual care specialists should be part of the care for patients for serious illness,” Fitchett said. “We’ve never seen recommendations like that before in the health care research sphere.”

Healthy people can benefit from the integration of spiritual care with their health care, too. To improve health outcomes, the study panel recommended that health care institutions add patient-centered, evidence-based approaches centered on the health benefits of participating in a religious or spiritual community — and that they increase health professionals’ awareness of the evidence that patients’ participation in such communities improves health.

Fitchett noted the importance of future research focusing on specific religions and ethnic groups, as well as working to develop effective interventions for integrating spiritual care into health care practice.

“Fine-tuning our understanding of the religious and spiritual issues that our patients with serious illness may be facing will be incredibly important,” he said. “I think that may be a scenario for continued research.”

Join us on July 17 for a discussion on spiritual wellness and aging. See the calendar insert for details.



Cultivating Connections

Loneliness can have a negative impact on both mental and physical health, while staying connected to others has been shown to boost mood, improve cognitive function and contribute to an overall sense of well-being. To make and sustain healthy connections, consider some of the following tips:

- Take care of yourself. Exercise, eat well, get enough sleep and take time for activities you enjoy.
- Find a regular volunteer opportunity that you love, or join a cause in your community.
- Schedule time every day to stay in touch with family, friends and neighbors, either in person or on the phone.
- Use communication technology — video chat, a smart speaker, text messaging — to connect with loved ones who don’t live nearby.
- If you’re an animal lover, consider adopting a pet.
- Wondering where to meet new friends? Check the calendars at your public library, senior center or community center and pick some upcoming events to attend.

If you’ve found your own ways to stay connected, we’d love to hear them! You can record a short video of yourself by visiting bit.ly/RecordMyStory or pointing your smartphone camera at the code below. And if you’d like to see videos of others sharing what matters most to them as they age, visit aging.rush.edu/Schaalman.



What to Know About Using Telehealth



Jill Marcus, MD
Primary care physician



Lisa Ravindra, MD
Primary care physician

“Telehealth” became a familiar word during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has become an essential part of health care that helps improve access while offering patients and providers convenience and flexibility. We talked with **Jill Marcus, MD**, a primary care physician at Rush Lincoln Park, and **Lisa Ravindra, MD**, a primary care physician at Rush River North, to highlight some things people might not know about telehealth.

Ravindra uses telehealth for both new and established patients and says it’s particularly useful to discuss mental health concerns and the need for preventive health screenings. Marcus uses telehealth for established patients who need follow-up care, and for patients who have mobility issues. Both say it’s a great supplement to in-person care.

Telehealth is more than just video visits.

Most people think of video visits when they hear telehealth, but it can be much more than that. Telehealth can be asynchronous (not real-time) or synchronous (real-time and interactive). The types of telehealth you use depend on your needs and what you want to get out of your telehealth encounter.

Asynchronous telehealth refers to communication with a provider through a website or mobile app — for example, exchanging MyChart messages with your provider. RUSH offers on-demand E-Visits, for which you fill out a questionnaire about your health issue and receive guidance from a provider within an hour. Asynchronous telehealth also includes remote monitoring, using tools like wearable heart rate monitors or blood pressure machines that transmit data to your care team.

Synchronous telehealth, also called real-time interactive telehealth, refers to a live encounter between a patient and a health care provider over video, telephone or live chat. This might be a scheduled video visit with your primary care provider, or an on-demand visit if a new issue comes up. Ravindra appreciates that telehealth

visits are convenient for both her and her patients. “Most of the time I can address a health concern during a telehealth visit, without needing an additional in-person appointment,” she said. “Additionally, sometimes patients aren’t sure what medications or supplements they’re taking, and if we’re on a video visit, they can easily check. Patients are becoming increasingly comfortable with doing things at home — work, school and meetings, for example — so it makes sense that medical care should also be offered at home.”

You don’t need super high-tech equipment for telehealth.

You might think you need special equipment to use telehealth. Actually, the opposite is true. The key component for telehealth success is something most of us have access to — a computer, a tablet or a smartphone. It’s important to make sure you’re set up in a quiet area where you can talk freely with your provider, that you’re online with a strong Wi-Fi signal and that your device is fully charged. You might want to use earbuds or headphones to block out background noise.

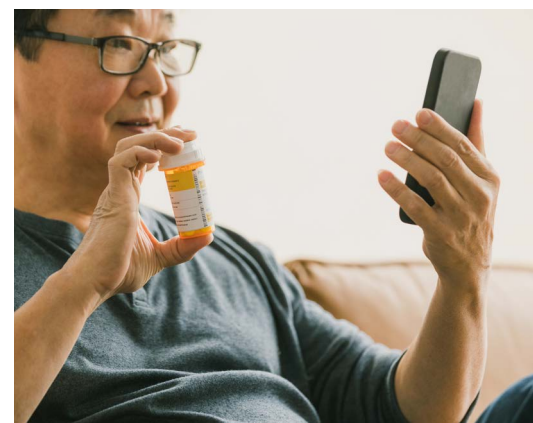
Telehealth is for everyone.

According to NRC Health (the National Research Corporation), telehealth usage has nearly tripled since 2018. As a new way for patients and providers to have face-to-face contact (albeit through a screen), telehealth

can help establish or sustain a trusting relationship. “So much of medicine is about building patient-provider trust, and though a face-to-face encounter is one way to do that, I use telehealth for several clinical scenarios with many of my established patients,” Marcus said.

Ravindra notes that telehealth helps increase access to care and can also strengthen the patient-provider relationship. “Telehealth saves patients both time and money — if they can get care from home, they don’t need to take time off work, arrange child care or contend with transportation if the weather happens to be bad,” Ravindra said. “I appreciate that video visits may also allow me to see a part of a patient’s life that I wouldn’t have seen if they were in the office. It helps to increase that personal connection.”

Join us on Aug. 7 for a discussion on technology and telehealth. See the calendar insert for details.



RUSH Generations

A healthier today and a vital tomorrow

rush.edu/rushgenerations

(800) 757-0202



PLEASE NOTE: All physicians featured in this publication are on the medical staff of RUSH. Some of the physicians are in private practice and, as independent practitioners, are not employees or agents of RUSH. RUSH is an academic health system comprising RUSH University Medical Center, RUSH Copley Medical Center and RUSH Oak Park Hospital.

4 Tips for Maximizing Your Medicare Benefits

If you want to get the most out of your Medicare plan, try the following tips for understanding your coverage and using all the benefits for which you're eligible.

- 1. Create a secure account on Medicare.gov.** The website is a one-stop shop where you can print a copy of your Medicare card, see your claims and monthly statements, and input your prescriptions to make it easier to comparison shop for prescription drug plans.
- 2. Authorize a contact person** — your spouse, another family member or a caregiver — who can help you navigate claims, billing and any other questions you have about Medicare.

- 3. Check Medicare.gov** to see if you qualify for programs that can help lower your Medicare costs. These programs, offered by individual states, can help pay your Part A, Part B and Part D premiums and find Medicare-approved health plans that will save you money.

- 4. Schedule your free “Welcome to Medicare” visit** with your primary care provider. This comprehensive visit starts with a review of your health history and includes some basic tests and screenings as well as a written plan that lets you know what additional screenings, vaccinations and other preventive services your provider recommends.

Join us on Sept. 25 for a Medicare 101 discussion.
[See the calendar insert for details.](#)

A healthier today
RUSH Generations
and a vital tomorrow

Summer 2024 Free Health and Aging Events

The following lectures will be held virtually. You can view them online or listen to them via phone. Lectures typically last about one hour. For updates on RUSH Generations programs, sign up for our emails at bit.ly/RushGenerations.



To join these lectures online,

visit the RUSH Generations YouTube page at the time of the event:

cutt.ly/RushGenYouTube.



To dial in via phone (audio only):

Call **(312) 626-6799** at the time of the event and enter **meeting ID 413 655 0125#**.

July

Spiritual Wellness and Aging **Wednesday, July 17, 1 p.m.**

How can fostering spiritual wellness enhance our journeys into aging? RUSH providers will discuss the impact of spirituality on mental and physical well-being. You'll leave with insights and tools — from mindfulness practices to gratitude reflections — that can help you cultivate a deeper sense of purpose, peace and resilience.

Summer Safety **Wednesday, July 24, 1 p.m.**

As we age, many of us experience changes in our bodies' ability to adapt to heat and sun exposure. Join us to learn strategies for staying safe and injury-free during the summer, including water safety recommendations, hydration tips, advice on outdoor activities and awareness of common potential hazards.

August

Staying Connected: Technology and Telehealth **Wednesday, Aug. 7, 1 p.m.**

What's the difference between telehealth and telemedicine? Do you need special technology to take part? RUSH providers who use this technology will discuss different types of digital health tools, including telemedicine visits and apps that track your health, and how you can access health care services from the comfort of your home.

Immunizations for Older Adults **Wednesday, Aug. 21, 1 p.m.**

From flu and RSV shots to shingles and COVID-19 vaccines, hear from experts about which immunizations are recommended for older adults, how vaccines work, why they are crucial later in life and considerations for communicating with your health care team about vaccinations.

September

Falls Prevention Awareness **Wednesday, Sept. 4, 1 p.m.**

Falls are the No. 1 reason for emergency room visits and hospitalization for older adults. In this special National Falls Awareness Month program from Schaalman Senior Voices and RUSH Generations, experts will share ways to prevent falls, practical strategies to reduce fall risks and tips to improve balance and strength through exercise.

Medicare 101 **Wednesday, Sept. 25, 1 p.m.**

Just in time for the upcoming enrollment period, we'll give you the latest updates on Medicare health insurance and prescription drug insurance. Whether you're new to Medicare or you want to be sure you're getting the most out of the program, join us to learn about your benefits.

Classes and Workshops

These classes and workshops are a mix of Zoom and in-person events.

To participate in Zoom events, you'll need internet access and the Zoom app on a computer, tablet or smartphone with a webcam. Please call **(800) 757-0202** and be ready to provide a valid phone number and email address so we can send you a Zoom link. If you don't have access to Zoom but would like to join a self-guided version of a workshop with a weekly conference call check-in, please call **(800) 757-0202**.

To participate in in-person events, pre-registration is required. Please call **(800) 757-0202** to reserve your spot. For updates from RUSH Generations, sign up for our emails at bit.ly/RushGenerations.

Walk With Ease

Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays
July 10 to Aug. 16, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Garfield Park Conservatory
300 N. Central Park Ave.
Chicago, IL 60624

Take Charge of Your Diabetes

Fridays, July 26 to Sept. 6
10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center
710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316
Chicago, IL 60612

Take Charge of Your Health

Tuesdays, Aug. 6 to Sept. 10
1 to 3:30 p.m.

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center
710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316
Chicago, IL 60612

Learning to Live Well with Chronic Pain: Toolkit Workshop (via phone)

Wednesdays, Aug. 7 to Sept. 11
10 to 11 a.m.

Call (800) 757-0202 to register and get conference call instructions.

Mindfulness 101 (in person)

Thursdays, Aug. 8 to Aug. 29
1:30 to 3 p.m.

\$20 for the four-class session
Rush Tower
1620 W. Harrison St.,
Conference Room 351
Chicago, IL 60612

A Matter of Balance

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
Aug. 13 to Sept. 5, 10 a.m. to noon

Johnston R. Bowman Health Center
710 S. Paulina St., Suite 316
Chicago, IL 60612

Bingozize

Tuesdays and Thursdays,
Sept. 12 to Nov. 19, 11 a.m. to noon

Armour Academic Center
600 S. Paulina St., suite TBD
Chicago, IL 60612

Fit & Strong!

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
Sept. 18 to Nov. 13, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

Rush Fitness Center,
711 S. Paulina St.
Chicago, IL 60612

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention (Zoom)

Wednesdays and Fridays,
Sept. 25 to Nov. 15, 11 a.m. to noon

Both Rush University Medical Center and Rush Oak Park Hospital comply with applicable federal civil rights laws and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Español (Spanish)

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

Polski (Polish)

UWAGA: jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Zadzwoń pod numer 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

繁體中文 (Chinese)

注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987)

.한국어 (Korean)

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987)번으로 전화해 주십시오.

Tagalog

PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, maaari kang gumamit ng mga serbisyo ng tulong sa wika nang walang bayad. Tumawag sa 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

العربية (Arabic)

ملاحظة: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية متاحة لك مجاناً. اتصل بالرقم 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

Русский (Russian)

ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русском языке, то вам доступны бесплатные услуги перевода. Звоните по телефону 1-312-563-2987 (телетайп: 1-312-563-2987).

ગુજરાતી (Gujarati)

સૂચના: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો, તો નિ:શુલ્ક ભાષા સહાય સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. ફોન કરો 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

وُردُا (Urdu)

خبردار: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کو زبان کی مدد کی خدمات مفت میں دستیاب ہیں۔ کال کریں 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987)۔

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)

CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

Italiano (Italian)

ATTENZIONE: In caso la lingua parlata sia l'italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Chiamare il numero 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

हिंदी (Hindi)

ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं तो आपके लिए मुफ्त में भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध हैं। 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987) पर कॉल करें।

Français (French)

ATTENTION: Si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le 1-312-563-2987 (ATS: 1-312-563-2987).

λληνικά (Greek)

ΠΡΟΣΟΧΗ: Αν μιλάτε ελληνικά, στη διάθεσή σας βρίσκονται υπηρεσίες γλωσσικής υποστήριξης, οι οποίες παρέχονται δωρεάν. Καλέστε 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

Deutsch (German)

ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlos sprachliche Hilfsdienstleistungen zur Verfügung. Rufnummer: 1-312-563-2987 (TTY: 1-312-563-2987).

