

Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER

September 2018



[Find a Practitioner](#) [Find a Location](#) [Visit smgarizona.com](#)

We are excited to introduce the first issue of GOOD HEALTH — Summit Medical Group Arizona’s patient e-newsletter! Through this monthly communication, we hope to keep you up-to-date on all the latest health care topics, newsworthy information on our providers, and developments at our medical practice. The launch of this e-newsletter is an important step toward helping us stay better connected with you.

Am I Taking Too Many Medications?

By Prineet Tung, MD

Here’s something you may not know: taking more than five medications is called polypharmacy. While each medication may be necessary, and the benefits outweigh the risk of not taking them, it’s still important to be aware of the symptoms that can occur from polypharmacy. [learn more...](#)

Losing Weight Could Lower Your Risk for Endometrial Cancer

It’s never too late to benefit from dropping excess pounds. In a recent, large study, losing weight was linked to a lower risk for endometrial cancer in postmenopausal women older than age 50. The average age of diagnosis for this cancer is 60.

[learn more...](#)

Ease Low Back Pain with Drug-Free Options

The next time you go to your doctor for low back pain, don’t be surprised to leave with a “prescription” for a massage or yoga instead of pain pills. New guidelines from the American College of Physicians recommend trying drug-free strategies first.

[learn more...](#)

Teen Depression and Suicide

With the many physical, emotional, and social changes that accompany the teenage stage of life, it’s not unusual for adolescents to feel down or display signs of anger and discontent. [learn more...](#)

Dr. Chen-Yang Extends Services to Second Location

We are excited to announce that Summit Medical Group Arizona (SMGAZ) internal medicine physician, [Vicky Chen-Yang](#), currently on staff at Thunderbird Internal Medicine SMGAZ in Glendale, Arizona, will be offering her services at 14418 W. Meeker Boulevard, Suite B110 in Sun City West every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Dr. Chen-Yang has practiced in the Valley since 2005 and with Thunderbird Internal Medicine since 2016. She will be joining the company of [Dr. Daniel Kessler](#), a geriatrics and internal medicine specialist who started the practice at the Sun City West office back in 1998 prior to joining SMGAZ. Dr. Kessler has been practicing medicine for 40 years and currently focuses on care to patients 65 and older. Together, Dr. Chen-Yang and Dr. Kessler are committed to delivering patient satisfaction and high-quality health care to all their patients.

Dr. Chen-Yang is now accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment or for more information, call 602-938-6960. For Dr. Kessler, please call 623-584-9500.



Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER



[Back to main page](#)

[Find a Practitioner](#)

[Find a Location](#)

[Visit smgarizona.com](#)

Am I Taking Too Many Medications?

By [Prineet Tung, MD](#), board-certified internist with Thunderbird Internal Medicine Summit Medical Group Arizona

Here's something you may not know: taking more than five medications is called polypharmacy. While each medication may be necessary, and the benefits outweigh the risk of not taking them, it's still important to be aware of the symptoms that can occur from polypharmacy. The symptoms of simultaneous drug usage can easily be confused with symptoms of normal aging or another disease, which oftentimes results in additional drugs being prescribed as treatment.

Medications can improve the lives of people who suffer from chronic conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, cancer, mental illness and chronic pain. However, taking too many prescription medications can increase the risk of side effects, negative interactions, the need for hospitalization, and additional incurred cost.

The symptoms of drug interactions can include:

- Tiredness, sleepiness or decreased alertness
- Loss of appetite
- Constipation, diarrhea or incontinence
- Confusion (all or some of time)
- Falls and fractures
- Depression or lack of interest in usual activities
- Weakness
- Tremor
- Hallucinations - seeing or hearing things
- Anxiety or excitability
- Feeling dizzy
- Decreased sexual behavior
- Skin rashes
- Memory problems

Older adults are more sensitive to medications because of changes in liver and kidney function as they age. In many cases, drugs for seniors should be prescribed at a reduced dose. The more medications used, the greater the chance of negative drug interactions. Prescription medications may cause dizziness and loss of balance, leading to falls or fractures and hospitalization, as well as cognitive and memory problems. Bad drug reactions can start even if you have been taking a drug for a long time. Your doctor depends on you to notify them of any issues or concerns and to initiate a discussion about discontinuing use of some of these drugs. However, do not stop any medication without first consulting with your physician.

An effective way to minimize risk of drug interaction issues is to get all your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. When you go to one pharmacy, your pharmacist will remain aware of all the medications you take. It's up to you or your caretaker/family to keep track of the prescriptions you are taking. Remember -- your medication list is unlikely to be available to all health professionals online and electronic medical records systems rarely "talk" to one another.

Reminders:

- Never take a prescription drug that was prescribed to someone else
- Do not discontinue a medication without discussing it with your doctor
- Talk with your doctor to determine if a drug has outlived its utility
- Maintain and keep with you an updated list of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs vitamins and supplements taken
- Share your updated medication list with your primary care and specialists at each visit



Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER



[Back to main page](#)

[Find a Practitioner](#)

[Find a Location](#)

[Visit smgarizona.com](#)

Losing Weight Could Lower Your Risk for Endometrial Cancer

It's never too late to benefit from dropping excess pounds. In a recent, large study, losing weight was linked to a lower risk for endometrial cancer in postmenopausal women older than age 50. The average age of diagnosis for this cancer is 60.

Endometrial cancer, which affects the lining of the uterus, is the most common gynecologic cancer in women in the U.S. Of all cancers that strike women, it's also the one most strongly associated with obesity.

In the study, the benefit of weight loss was greatest for older women who started out obese. Those who intentionally lost at least 5 percent of their body weight saw their endometrial cancer risk decrease by 56 percent.



First Study to Focus on Postmenopausal Women

The study included more than 36,000 postmenopausal women. Researchers recorded their weights at the outset and again three years later. If women had lost weight, researchers asked whether they had done so on purpose. That's important, because losing weight without trying could have been a sign they were already ill.

Researchers then tracked the women for an average of 11 years to find out who developed endometrial cancer. Even a small intentional weight loss—as little as 10 pounds for a 200-pound woman—was linked to a lower risk. In contrast, women who gained 10 or more pounds had a 26 percent higher risk of getting endometrial cancer.

Take Charge of Your Weight to Reduce Your Risk

To manage your weight, make a commitment to healthy eating and regular physical activity. Talk with your SMGAZ doctor about setting weight-loss goals.

For tips on reaching and maintaining a healthy weight to reduce your cancer risk, visit cancer.org/healthy/eat-healthy-get-active.html.

Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER



[Back to main page](#)

[Find a Practitioner](#)

[Find a Location](#)

[Visit smgarizona.com](#)

Ease Low Back Pain with Drug-Free Options

The next time you go to your doctor for low back pain, don't be surprised to leave with a "prescription" for a massage or yoga instead of pain pills. New guidelines from the American College of Physicians recommend trying drug-free strategies first.

The guidelines say you should start with the safest treatment options—and that means nondrug approaches. They have a lower risk for side effects than medications.

Work with your doctor to find the best pain-control strategy for you. Studies show that these approaches can ease some types of low back pain:

- Heat wraps
- Exercise
- Acupuncture
- Mindfulness strategies

Although the evidence is weaker, other approaches may also be helpful, including:

- Massage
- Tai chi
- Yoga
- Spinal manipulation (by a health professional)

If drug-free approaches don't bring enough relief, talk with your doctor. Medication options include ibuprofen and muscle relaxants.

Opioid pain relievers have serious risks, including side effects and addiction. The guidelines say they should be considered only as a last resort.

Relax for Pain Relief

Progressive relaxation is another approach that may be helpful. Want to give it a try? Follow along with the video at <https://theacpa.org/Relaxation-Guide>.



Drug Free Pain Management Month

Prescription opioid abuse has become a serious problem over the years, much of it stemming from the rampant prescribing of painkillers for lower back, neck and other musculoskeletal pain management. At SMGAZ, we are doing all we can to raise awareness of this issue and promote other safe and effective non-pharmacologic options to relieve chronic pain. Your SMGAZ doctor can help chronic pain patients cope with their pain through special, non-invasive techniques that directly address the source.

Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER



[Back to main page](#)

[Find a Practitioner](#)

[Find a Location](#)

[Visit smgarizona.com](#)

Teen Depression and Suicide

With the many physical, emotional, and social changes that accompany the teenage stage of life, it's not unusual for adolescents to feel down or display signs of anger and discontent. Mild demonstrations of these behaviors may simply be typical teenage conduct, but when a teen's mood disrupts their ability to function on a day-to-day basis, it may be an indication of a serious emotional or mental disorder that requires special attention. Distinguishing between typical teenage problems and symptoms of mental illness is not always easy, but parents should be aware of significant emotional and behavioral changes in their child that may warn of depression.

Depression in teens can be associated with stressors such as academic pressure, or social isolation due to bullying or recent loss. Emotional changes may include crying spells, expression of hopelessness, irritability, or loss of interest in friends or activities.

Behavioral changes may include insomnia or sleeping too much, changes in appetite, neglected appearance, and isolation. Depression is a treatable mental disorder, but it first must be recognized.



How can you give your child the support needed at this critical time?

It helps to learn the differences between age-appropriate adolescent behavior and a troubled response that could warn of a treatable problem such as depression or an eating disorder. Answers to these questions can help you identify symptoms of mental or emotional problems and seek treatment.

Q: What can I do to help prevent mental health problems in my teen?

A: Establish and maintain an open, loving relationship. That's the most important step you can take to support your child through the tumultuous years ahead. Positive reinforcement will help your teen feel good about themselves, so offer praise along with correction.

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry offers these suggestions for parents:

- Establish a relationship that includes trust, honesty, and respect.
- Allow teens to express age-appropriate independence.
- Encourage your children to talk with you when they're struggling, confused, or stressed.

Q: What are the warning signs of mental health problems?

A: It's not unusual for teens to feel stressed or unhappy at times. However, a serious mental disorder, such as depression, can harm teens' relationships, disrupt their ability to function at home or school, and even lead to suicide. Learning to recognize such a problem is important for their wellbeing.

These signs and symptoms need attention:

- Agitation
- Gaining or losing weight

Good Health

A FREE MONTHLY HEALTH e-NEWSLETTER

[Back to main page](#)



[Find a Practitioner](#) [Find a Location](#) [Visit smgarizona.com](#)

- Trouble in school, including an unexpected drop in grades
- Signs of depression, such as excessive isolation
- Lack of motivation or interest in people or activities
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Destructive behaviors
- Substance abuse

According to the American Psychological Association, 90% of teen suicides are associated with a mental health or substance abuse condition. Risk factors for suicide include talking about dying, recent loss, changes in personality or behavior; changes in sleep or eating habits; expression of self-hatred, guilt, or shame; behavior that is self-harming or erratic; impulsive or aggressive tendencies; exposures to others who have died by suicide or local clusters of suicide.

Keep an eye on the amount of time they spend on social media, as well. While there are potential benefits to social networking sites, teens on these platforms are at risk of being cyberbullied and experiencing other online aggression. In addition, some studies suggest that frequent social media use may be linked to depression and other mental health problems. If you believe your child may be struggling with a serious problem or mental health disorder, ask him or her about it. Ignoring the problem won't make it go away, and it could put your teen at risk.

You should also talk with your teen's doctor. He or she can provide an initial medical assessment and, if necessary, refer you to appropriate mental health professionals for counseling and treatment.

Q: What treatments help teens?

A: Depending on the disorder and its severity, your child may be treated successfully with one or more psychotherapies or a combination of medication and psychotherapy. Here are some effective therapies:

- Cognitive behavior therapy aims to help teens replace harmful thought patterns with positive feelings.
- Family therapy helps parents, teens, and siblings function more positively.
- Group therapy brings several teens together with a therapist to promote positive interactions and increase understanding of mental illness.

Teens experiment with different hairstyles, clothing, friends, and activities that define their personality. Supporting your kids through these years can be a challenge. Make sure they know that you love them, and you're open to helping them solve any problem that comes along.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-8255 or text 741741.

Our expert team of pediatric doctors, physician assistants (PAs), and medical staff offer physical examinations and vaccinations as well as social, developmental, and behavioral assessments for consistent children's health care. Please contact us if you have any concerns. [Click here](#) to connect with one of our pediatricians.

World Suicide Prevention Day – September 10th

Teen suicide rates are on the rise and our LGBT youth (despite forward strides) are even more likely than other teens to attempt suicide. They also have an increased risk of being bullied or assaulted. If you believe that your teenage child may be dealing with these issues, start a calm, honest dialog. Let your child know that he or she is loved and supported. Then listen attentively to your child's concerns. For resources focused on preventing suicide, go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org and click on "LGBTQ+."