



River Park Hospital



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COPEs  
304.526.9111

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# Aging *focus*

ADDRESSING THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF AGING INDIVIDUALS, EDUCATING FAMILIES OF THE LIFE SPAN PROCESS AND PROMOTING INTEGRITY, DIGNITY, AND RESPECT.

Geriatrics is the branch of medicine that focuses on health promotion and the prevention and treatment of disease and disability in later life. The term itself can be distinguished from gerontology, which is the study of the aging process itself. The term comes from the Greek "geron" meaning "old man" and "iatros" meaning "healer", and was proposed in 1909 by Dr. Ignatz Leo Nascher. It is

## Signs of Dementia

### Dementia Defined

- Illness in the brain that effects a persons ability to remember, learn and communicate
- May change a person moods and personality
- A person with dementia may not be aware of the changes
- 5-8% of Individuals 65 are demented
- 25% - 50% of Individuals 85 are demented
- Currently there are no medications that can stop or reverse the illness

- Mood changes
- Personality changes
- May experience feelings of paranoia
- Problems inhibiting inappropriate behaviors
- Difficulty with personal care
- Loss of initiative
- Withdraw for social activities

### Benefits of Early Detection

- Knowledge of patients ability to handle their own health decisions
- More treatment options
- Ability to rule out other medical reasons for symptoms
- Identify possible problems of the patients self care
- Allows patient to have time to make treatment choices
- May gain more benefits from treatments
- Permits patient to be able to participate in planning for their future

### Signs of Dementia

- Memory loss of recent events
- Difficulty performing familiar task
- Problems with communications
- Trouble recognizing familiar people
- Poor or impaired judgment
- Difficulty with abstract thinking and complicated task
- May become loss or disoriented in familiar places
- Places item in inappropriate places



### Customer Feedback

"The professional, kind, caring and compassionate manner you showed during the care of my mother will always be remembered. You are truly a treasured staff."



Dr. Anthony Park,  
Board Certified in Geriatrics  
Medical Director of Senior  
Care Services at RPH

### DOCTORS TIP: You are the expert.

As the older person's caregiver, you are an expert when it comes to that person. Therefore, you are in the best position to find meaning in the behavior. Sometimes people act strangely because they can't do what they are expected to do. This can happen when there is too much or too little stimulation from noise, people, or competing demands. Sometimes these behaviors are caused by medical problems. It is therefore important to discuss these behaviors with the doctor or nurse. However, sometimes these behaviors can be the first or only sign of a physical illness, especially infection. Here is an example: Loretta's mother, who has Alzheimer's disease, keeps going into the bathroom every 15 minutes but does not always pass urine. Loretta assumes that her mother "forgets" why she is in the bathroom, but reports the behavior to her doctor anyway. A urine test reveals a bladder infection. After an antibiotic treatment, the behavior is improved.



## Medical Power of Attorney or HealthCare Surrogate

### What is the difference?

The main difference between a medical power of attorney and a healthcare surrogate is that you appoint a medical power of attorney representative to make healthcare decisions for you when you become unable to make them for yourself. You can specify what healthcare decisions your medical power of attorney can make.

A healthcare surrogate, on the other hand, is someone who is appointed to

make healthcare decisions for you when you become unable to make them for yourself. You have no say in who becomes your healthcare surrogate. You can avoid having a healthcare surrogate appointed if you have appointed a medical power of attorney representative and that representative is still willing and able to serve. The type of decisions that may be made by a health care surrogate is any decision to give, withhold or withdraw informed consent to

"You have no say who becomes your health-care surrogate."

any type of health care, including but not limited to, medical and surgical treatments, life-prolonging interventions, psychiatric treatment, nursing care, hospitalization, treatment in a nursing home, home health care and organ donation. The physician who is attending to you or the advance practice nurse working with the physician who is attending you will select the person to serve as your healthcare surrogate.

Next issue: Rules your health care surrogate must follow.

### Most Widely Used Medications For Dementia

- Aricept
- Razadyne
- Exelon
- Namenda

## RPH COPEs Community Outreach Psychiatric Evaluation Services

Our highly trained and knowledgeable staff of registered professional nurses are available 24 hours a day everyday of the year to schedule assessments or to take your referrals.  
Call us at  
1-800-621-COPE

"May God bless you."

"You were so great with our mother."

### Customer Feedback



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