



Welcome to the Sentara Quality Care Network (or SQCN, pronounced "sequin")

You are receiving this because your doctor or provider is in the SQCN network. They have chosen to come together to offer you seamless healthcare.

This month we are looking at these important topics:

- Alzheimer's and other dementias
- Medication safety
- Migraines and other headaches
- Males and anxiety
- Pride Month

You have access to customizable, no-cost services. Find them [here](#). You can contact us at SQCN@sentara.com to get started. We look forward to serving you!

It's Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month

Which of the following are true?

- Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.
- People younger than 65 can get an early onset of Alzheimer's dementia

- Almost everyone with dementia has at least one other chronic condition
- Nearly 50% of caregivers are helping someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia

You can find the answer in the article below.

Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementias: Questions to Ask

More than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. The people who live with Alzheimer's are not the only people affected. Having a friend or loved one with Alzheimer's or a form of dementia can be devastating.

Alzheimer's disease kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined. **Unfortunately, all the above statements are true.**

Here are some questions that both patients and caregivers can ask providers:

- What are some common signs that might indicate a need to be tested for dementia?
- What kind of testing will evaluate if my concerns are related to dementia?
- What clinical trials or medications might be used to help treat dementia?
- What are the benefits of getting tested early?
- What might change in my life if I am diagnosed with dementia?
- Where can I find out more about resources that support people living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia?

If you are the caregiver, do not forget to get some support. Download our ["Care for the Caregiver" tip sheet](#) to learn more.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain/roadmap.htm>

Ask Your Pharmacist: Medication Safety Tips

If you're taking one or several medications, here are five tips to make sure your prescriptions are safe and current.

1. Keep an updated medication list. Ask your doctor for a new list with every medication change. Your medication list should consist of:

- Prescribed medication name
- Over the counter medications
- How to take each medication
- The dose of each medication
- Why you take each medication
- The prescriber and pharmacy used

2. Check the expiration date of each medication before you take them.

If your medicine is expired, do not use it.

- Expired medication may not work as intended or it can cause unwanted side effects or harmful reactions.

- Dispose of all unneeded medication. Watch this [2-minute video](#) for more information on how to safely get rid of it.



3. Be aware of side effects. Ask your doctor or pharmacy about any potential side effects when starting a new medication.

- Inform your doctor and pharmacy when you decide to start a new over-the-counter medication to avoid drug interactions.
- If you experience any unwanted side effects from a medication, be sure to tell your doctor.

4. Keep medications stored in a dry, cool, safe place away from humidity and out of children's reach. Some recommended places are high dressers, kitchen cabinet, closet shelf, or storage box. Also:

- Bathroom cabinets are not recommended due to heat and moisture risk.
- If you have any questions about proper storage, please ask your pharmacy or doctor.

5. Take medications as prescribed.

- Avoid skipping doses or stopping medication without contacting your doctor first, even if you feel better or feel the medication is not working for you.
- If there are concerns about side effects, contact your pharmacy or doctor.
- Avoid taking medication not prescribed to you. Taking other people's medication can put you at risk of side effects or harmful reactions.

Ask questions during your doctor's appointment and/or at the pharmacy for clarity on how to take or use your medication. Call if you get home and need more information.

Prepare for your next refill a week before you need it. This helps to avoid running out of medication due to many reasons like the pharmacy being out of stock or unplanned transportation concerns.

Download our [tip sheet on medication safety](#).

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/4-medication-safety-tips-older-adults>

Care Corner: Diabetes and Medications

Diabetes is a condition that may include medications. It's important to take them as directed in addition to your other prescriptions. Here are [some tips](#) for getting the most benefit from your medications.

If you are interested in diabetes self-management services, contact us at SQCN@sentara.com.

Diabetes and Medications

A Message on Behalf of Your Primary Care Team

Diabetes is a condition that may require medications. It's important to take them as directed in addition to your current prescriptions. To keep track of the medications for you and your primary care team, do the following:

1. **Have a list of all your current medications; and/or**
2. **Take a photo of each medication label and keep it on your phone.**
3. **Do not forget over-the-counter vitamins and pain relievers.**

Your primary care team is working specially trained registered nurse care managers and care coordinators. Together, they can help you understand and manage your diabetes.

Tips to maintain your medications:

- ✓ Keep well-hydrated with 4-6 large glasses of water throughout the day.
- ✓ Eat small portions at meals to avoid an upset stomach.
- ✓ Take your medications at the same time daily, along with other daily tasks like brushing teeth.
- ✓ Use a pill container and refill on the same day each week.
- ✓ Keep a calendar and set a pill reminder, if needed.
- ✓ If you are traveling, bring enough medication plus some extra. Take it in your carry-on bag when flying.
- ✓ Some medications may increase your risk of yeast infections or UTIs especially if your glucose levels are higher. Staying well-hydrated and cleaning well after urinating can decrease your risk.

Your diabetes care manager can work with you on the above and more. Mention if:

- You have problems taking your medications or with side effects.
- You have a life change like pregnancy.
- You are having trouble paying for your medications.

Contact our care management team to get started with diabetes self-management services at SQCN@sentara.com.

Source: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/4-medication-safety-tips-older-adults>. Accessed 9 May 2023.

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Migraines and Headaches: When to Treat, When to Seek Help

Most people have headaches. It's one of the ways our body tells us something is wrong. Tension headache is the most common. While the causes of tension headache are not fully understood, tightening muscles in the neck or jaw likely contribute. Lack of sleep, poor nutrition, too much stress, or using alcohol can also play a role.

What is a migraine?

A migraine is a specific type of headache that reoccurs and causes moderate to severe pain. Your doctor may make the diagnosis of migraine based on symptoms like nausea, vomiting or a sensitivity to bright light or loud noises. Migraines can last for several hours or more than a day. About 12% of people get migraines, and often have a family history. It's more common in females.

What are other common headache types?

Cluster headaches include many episodes, from one headache every other day to up to eight headaches in one day. It's usually a sharp, stabbing pain on one side of the head that lasts less than three hours. There may also be congestion, anxiety, or restlessness.

A sinus headache may occur after an upper respiratory viral infection or cold. Along with pain and pressure in the face, you may feel tired, stuffy and have discolored mucus.

Headaches and children

Headaches are common in kids. They can be caused by:

- Emotional issues and conflict
- School stress
- Changes in weather
- Not getting enough to eat or drink, or sleep

If a headache occurs after a head injury and/or along with sleepiness, fever, or rash, contact your doctor right away.

When do you seek treatment or help at home?

If you're experiencing headaches that seem new or different, such as more often, contact your primary care team first. Your doctor knows your health history and medications and is best able to help you make decisions about care.

See the graphic on the right for what may be an emergency. Also, find some home treatments when experiencing common headaches.

Go to the Emergency Room if you have headache and:

- It's the worst headache of your life
- A head injury
- A stiff neck and/or fever
- Confusion, loss of consciousness, or seizures
- New limb weakness, trouble walking or visual changes

How can I feel better at home?

Some things you can do to prevent headaches:

- **Make lifestyle changes** including getting enough sleep, exercise, hydration, and nutrition.
- Relax with yoga or meditation. **Take a stress break** from the news, family issues, or work/school.
- **Be aware of common triggers** like weather changes, pollen, hormones, new medications, or bright lights. Know if a headache is a side effect of a medical issue.
- **Take over the counter or prescribed pain relievers** as recommended by your doctor.
- **Keep a headache diary.** Include what day and time the headache starts and ends. Note a suspected trigger—for example, caffeine or stress—if there is one. If you have another symptom like nausea or vomiting, list that too. Track what helps it go away.

Source: <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/migraine>

Men's Health: The Stigma of Mental Health

Boys and men are often taught to be strong and self-reliant. This produces a stigma for males—more than females—to ask for help.

This can cause disparities with:

- Learning difficulties and behavioral problems in school
- Increased risk of violent crimes but also being the victim of a violent crime
- Diagnosis more often of conduct disorders than depression
- Being 4 times more likely to die of suicide than females

It's important to encourage boys and men to ask for help. You can start with your primary care team and discuss symptoms.

Source: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/men-and-mental-health>

It's Pride Month!

June is the month where we celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. Here are some simple ways to be inclusive.

Gender identity is how a person identifies themselves: male, female, blend of both, and neither. A few more terms:

- **Nonbinary.** A person who does not identify only as a man or a woman, one could identify as both, somewhere in between and neither.
- **Personal Pronouns.** How a person wants to be called (she/her, he/him, and they/them).
- **Sex Assigned at Birth.** Sex (male, female, intersex) determined by doctor or midwife when a child is born.
- **Sexual Orientation.** The emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.
- **Transgender.** When a personal sense of gender does not match gender assigned at birth.

As with any friend, loved one, or new acquaintance, start with empathy. Using the correct terminology is a show of respect and understanding. Here is a [tip sheet](#) to help you learn more.

Source: <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/science-health-public-trust/perspectives/science-health-public-trust/tips-communicating-lgbtqi-communities>

Cooling Assistance Program

If you or a loved one need help keeping cool this summer, consider the Energy Assistance program. Applicants can request assistance with:

- Purchase of a window unit.
- Help with their electric bill.
- Repairs to existing equipment.
- Paying the electric bill.

Applications are accepted between June 15-August 15. Get more information from the [Virginia Department of Social Services Energy Assistance program](#).

Questions? Contact the SQCN Team:

757-455-7330 | SQCN@sentara.com

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