

goldenlife

When Mysterious Pain Overtakes Life: Cheryl's Journey into an Abyss and Out

Pressing the gas pedal while driving was excruciating. Bending over? Impossible. Climbing the stairs at a Mariners game? Whoa. Last winter during Cheryl's snowbird stay in California, she developed so much pain in her lower back and numbness in her leg that even unloading the dishwasher and vacuuming were insurmountable chores. Massage provided only temporary, minor relief. A trip to an emergency room for severe pain netted an x-ray that hinted at an old disc injury and a referral to an orthopedic physician. After months of tests, a growing stack of inconclusive results and injections in her back that what appeared to be a sciatic nerve problem, Cheryl was no closer to relieving her debilitating pain.

Cheryl sat on the edge of her bed to swing her legs to ease the pain and numbness that woke her periodically during the night—she was exhausted and frequently in tears. "Mentally, the pain just wears you down," says Cheryl. "My butt felt like it was on fire and the numbness was everywhere in my legs." Cheryl returned to Washington state needing wheelchair assistance at the airport.

A Weak Pulse Provides a Helpful Clue

Upon her return, she followed up with an orthopedic physician who noticed a weak pulse in her foot and ordered a Doppler ultra sound to test her vascular system. After nearly nine months of frustration, this test, which included an injectable dye component, revealed vascular blockage. Cheryl was diagnosed with peripheral arterial disease (PAD) and was referred to Valley's Vascular Surgery Clinic and vascular surgeon, **Sherene Shalhub, MD**.

Vascular Surgeon Provides Options

Cheryl appreciated Dr. Shalhub's honest and clear explanation of her treatment options, leaving the decision entirely up to Cheryl. While the blockages were not life threatening, much could be cleared through surgery and would likely relieve some of her pain. Or Cheryl could try a walking program to encourage building collateral circulation as a more moderate approach to pain relief. Cheryl briefly tried the walking program, then opted for surgery because the pain was too much. Cheryl thought at the time, "I've got to do something because this is not living. I'm an invalid."

A Life Reclaimed

Now a month after surgery, Cheryl is walking comfortably around the block and back to enjoying time with her 10 year old granddaughter. The two are anticipating their annual school shopping trip. While Cheryl has a bit of lingering tingling and numbness, she is hopeful it will diminish and says it doesn't slow her down. "I can't say enough about the people at Valley Medical Center and Dr. Shalhub, who is a wonderful doctor and person. My experience was great. It's only been a month and I have my life back," Cheryl says with a smile.

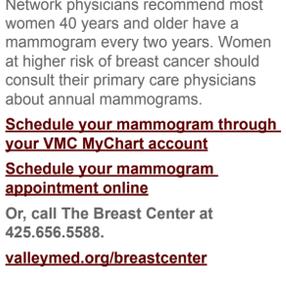
Suffering from leg pain or numbness and you're not sure why? Be sure to talk to your doctor. Looking for a doctor? [Visit valleymed.org](http://www.valleymed.org)

Summer 2014



▶ RESOURCES

Take Charge of Your Health: Schedule Your Mammogram if You're Due



The Valley Medical Center Clinic Network physicians recommend most women 40 years and older have a mammogram every two years. Women at higher risk of breast cancer should consult their primary care physicians about annual mammograms.

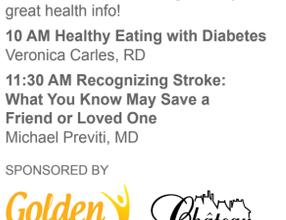
[Schedule your mammogram through your VMC MyChart account](#)

[Schedule your mammogram appointment online](#)

Or, call The Breast Center at 425.656.5588.

valleymed.org/breastcenter

Join Us for Goldencare's Annual Senior Health Fair



FREE!

Friday, September 5

9 AM – 1 PM

Medical Arts Center

4033 Talbot Road S, Renton

This **FREE** event includes 30 senior services booths, health screenings, refreshments, doc talks, giveaways and great health info!

10 AM Healthy Eating with Diabetes

Veronica Carles, RD

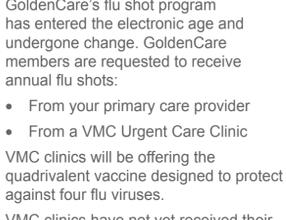
11:30 AM Recognizing Stroke: What You Know May Save a Friend or Loved One

Michael Previti, MD

SPONSORED BY



Thinking About Downsizing?



Wednesday, September 10

Moving to a smaller home may seem daunting after years of accumulation. Get tips from three downsizing professionals and words of wisdom from several residents of Chateau at Valley Center, who share their recent, real-life experiences and offer a guided tour of Renton's active senior community. Registration and lunch are free.

Downsizing Presentation & Resident Panel

10:30 AM – Noon

Medical Arts Center Auditorium

4033 Talbot Road S, Renton

Free Luncheon & Resident-Led Tours

Noon – 2 PM

[Register today](#)

SPONSORED BY



Flu Shot Program Change for 2014: More Options for You

GoldenCare's flu shot program has entered the electronic age and undergone change. GoldenCare members are requested to receive annual flu shots:

- From your primary care provider
- From a VMC Urgent Care Clinic

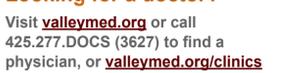
VMC clinics will be offering the quadrivalent vaccine designed to protect against four flu viruses.

VMC clinics have not yet received their supply of vaccine. We will notify you via email when they are ready to administer flu shots. See [VMC Urgent Care locations](#).

Why the change?

Valley Medical Center and its Clinic Network have transitioned to 100% electronic health records (EHR) which better track our patients' overall health and the care they receive. Your flu shot is an integral part of your annual primary care and needs to become part of your EHR. It is our intention that this new vaccination system will also be more convenient—closer to your home and at a time that works for you. If you go beyond the VMC system for your flu shot, please let your primary care provider know you have received your vaccination so it may be entered into your record.

Get Ready for Medicare Open Enrollment October 15 – December 7: GoldenCare Introduces a New, Free Resource to Help you Make Your Medicare Selection



The insurance specialists from Seniors Choice Medicare Solutions can provide you guidance on:

- Understanding eligibility for Medicare Part B
- Understanding the difference between Medicare Supplement plans and Medicare Advantage Plans
- Choosing a Medicare Part D Prescription Plan
- Matching up Medicare plans to your specific needs, preferences and budget with careful attention to which Medicare plans are accepted by your healthcare providers

There is never a fee for any service offered by Seniors Choice Medicare Solutions. Your call will direct you to one of our licensed insurance agent/brokers. If you choose to buy products through them, they are paid directly by the plan you choose. Call 800.556.9392 for expert help or visit onlymedicareolutions.com.

Looking for a doctor?

Visit valleymed.org or call 425.277.DOCS (3627) to find a physician, or valleymed.org/clinics for a clinic list.

Stroke Club

Share Your Experiences, Make Supportive Friends, Learn New Skills

The Stroke Club is a support group designed for stroke survivors, their family members and caregivers. Each session includes guest speakers, support materials, opportunities for discussion and socialization. Topics are tentative and may change based upon group need and facilitator availability.

The group meets the last Tuesday of the month at VMC's Medical Arts Center. [View the 2014 Stroke Club schedule](#) with meeting specifics, including dates, topics, time and location.

For more information, call Rehabilitation Services at 425.228.3440, ext 5665 or visit valleymed.org/rehab.

Cardiac Rehab

Cardiac Rehab offers EKG-monitored programs for people with cardiac issues. Covered by many insurance companies. Call 425.228.3440, ext 4991 to register.

Cancer Lifeline

Extensive resources include support groups, classes and exercise programs. For details, visit cancerlifeline.org or call 1.800.255.5505.

▶ HEALTHY & DELICIOUS



Enlightened Salmon Cakes with Avocado Sauce

Ingredients

- 1 pound salmon
- 2 egg whites
- 1/3 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 1/3 cup finely chopped green onions
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons bread crumbs

Directions

With knife or food processor, finely chop salmon. Mix with all other ingredients. Form into eight patties. Refrigerate for an hour. Spray a nonstick pan with cooking spray or an olive oil mister. Heat to medium high and carefully place salmon cakes in pan. Let cook for five minutes undisturbed so crust forms. Turn carefully and cook for another five minutes. Serve with a swirl of avocado sauce.

Serves four

Each serving of two salmon cakes contains about 247 calories, 26 g protein, 8 g fat, 5 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, and 131 mg sodium.

Avocado Sauce

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup avocado, mashed
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Directions

Mix all ingredients and refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serves four

Each serving contains about 88 calories, 1 g protein, 8 g fat, 4 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, and 15 mg sodium

▶ GOLDENCARE WEBSITE

▶ PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS

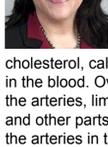
Back Issues of *Golden Life* Are Available Online.

[Click here](#) to view back issues.

If This is Your First Time Receiving Golden Life

Welcome to all of our new GoldenCare members! *Golden Life* is our quarterly e-newsletter, keeping you current with what's going on that may interest you.

Peripheral Arterial Disease—Symptoms May be Apparent (or Not)



Sherene Shalhub, MD
Vascular Surgeon

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is caused by atherosclerosis, the process of plaque building up in the arteries which carry blood to your head, organs and limbs. Plaque is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium, fibrous tissue and other substances in the blood. Over time, plaque can harden and narrow the arteries, limiting the flow of blood to your organs and other parts of your body. While PAD usually affects the arteries in the legs, it can also affect those carrying blood from your heart to your head, arms, kidneys and stomach.

What are the symptoms of PAD?

As in Cheryl's case, blocked blood flow from PAD may cause:

- Discomfort or pain in one or both legs when walking or climbing stairs which goes away with rest (remember not to ignore leg pain—it's not necessarily just a symptom of aging)
- Cramping, tightness or heaviness in the affected leg, buttocks, thighs, calves and feet

It may also cause:

- Weak or absent pulses in the legs or feet
- Sores or wounds on the toes, feet or legs that heal slowly, poorly, or not at all
- A pale or bluish color to the skin
- A lower temperature in one leg compared to the other leg
- Poor nail growth on the toes and decreased hair growth on the legs
- Erectile dysfunction, especially among men who have diabetes

If you have any of these symptoms, please talk to your doctor.

Even if you don't have signs or symptoms, ask your doctor if you should get checked for PAD if:

- You're age 70 or older
- Aged 50 or older and have a history of smoking or diabetes

Why it's important to diagnose PAD

In addition to causing pain, PAD increases your risk of infection in the affected limbs, coronary heart disease (CHD), heart attack, stroke and transient ischemic attack (mini-stroke). If you have CHD, you have a 1 in 3 chance of having blocked leg arteries. PAD treatment may slow or stop disease progress and reduce the risk of complications. Treatments include lifestyle changes, medicines and surgery or procedures.

What causes PAD?

Risk factors for atherosclerosis include:

- Smoking
- High cholesterol levels in the blood
- High blood pressure
- Obesity
- Having a family history of heart or vascular disease

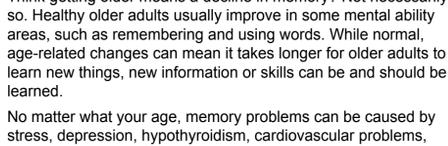
The best ways to prevent PAD

- **If you smoke, quit.** Smoking is the main risk factor for PAD. Your risk of PAD increases four times if you smoke or have a history of smoking. Talk with your doctor about programs and products that can help you quit smoking. The Health Topics [Smoking and Your Heart](#) article and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's (NHLBI's) ["Your Guide to a Healthy Heart"](#) both include information about how to quit smoking.
- **Avoid secondhand smoke.**
- **Follow a healthy diet.** Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. A healthy diet also includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products. A healthy diet is low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, salt and added sugar.

Have concerns about any of the symptoms of PAD? Talk to your primary care physician. Looking for a primary care physician? [Visit valleymed.org](http://www.valleymed.org)

Concerned about your vascular health? Visit valleymed.org/vascular or call the Vascular Surgery Clinic at 425.656.5568.

What Causes Memory Problems? Age is Not Always to Blame



Think getting older means a decline in memory? Not necessarily so. Healthy older adults usually improve in some mental ability areas, such as remembering and using words. While normal, age-related changes can mean it takes longer for older adults to learn new things, new information or skills can be and should be learned.

No matter what your age, memory problems can be caused by stress, depression, hypothyroidism, cardiovascular problems, diabetes and a range of other illnesses. Some drugs, including certain heart medications, antidepressants, antiepileptics, and even cold remedies, also may hurt your memory.

Anything that depresses the system—alcohol, benzodiazepines, any kind of tranquilizer, any kind of sleeping pill—will depress the memory system.

When you begin any new drug or change dosage, keep an eye on your reactions. Even drugs not known to disrupt memory may affect yours. Drug interactions also may contribute to memory problems.

If you are concerned that you or someone you love has a memory problem, talk to your primary care provider. He or she may be able to diagnose the problem, or refer you to a qualified specialist in neurology.

[Find a primary care provider or neurologist](http://www.valleymed.org/neuroscience)

valleymed.org/neuroscience

Give Yourself a Boost: Five Steps to Better Memory



You've met her before. You can even remember where. But her name? It eludes you, taunting you, just out of reach. While aging can make it harder to remember some things, by focusing on your potential and continuing to exercise your mind, you may be able to boost your memory power. Get started with these strategies:

1. Take on new challenges

Studies show that when researchers put adult mice and rats in a more stimulating environment, their brain structure changes in ways that enhance cell communication. That improves the animals' ability to learn and recall new behaviors. Similar stimulation may also help humans. Doing more of one thing is not as helpful as taking on new learning activities. So, if you are good at crossword puzzles, for example, continue to do them, but add an additional mental challenge, such as learning a new language or computer skill.

2. Control stress

Studies show that anxiety hampers your memory. Our response to stress releases hormones known as glucocorticoids, which, in excess, can lead to damaged brain cells. As you age, it's best to have a plan for life's stressors. Stressful experiences, such as grief or moving, may limit your ability to store and recall information. While stress can't always be avoided, having some control over it is less of a burden to your body and mind. For example, if you're troubled by financial problems, develop a detailed plan to reduce your expenses and debt.

3. Make the effort

Multiple methods of jogging your memory are available. Try some of them and see what works best for you. Some examples: "to do" lists, Post-it notes, alarm sets, calendars, pictures and leaving items, such as keys, in the same place every day.

4. Use memory tricks

These techniques can help you recall things:

- Visualization. Seeing a picture of a person may remind you of his or her name. You can be proactive and review the name before you enter into a situation where you will actually see the person.
- Association. Connect things you're learning with something you already know. For example, if you are traveling to someone's house, try to associate who lives there with the name of the street. Example: Tommy "Pleasant Street" Jones.
- Organization. By keeping your important items—keys, glasses, and wallet—in one place, you always know where to find them. When writing your grocery list, group items by category.

5. Stay fit

Cardiovascular health is important to your memory because it allows the heart to effectively pump blood with nutrients and oxygen into the brain. Congestive heart failure and long-term untreated high blood pressure have been shown to hurt memory. To fuel your body and brain, eat healthy foods. Talk with your primary care provider about the right diet and exercise plan for you. Consider joining a fitness program for motivation and socialization, both which are proven to stimulate your brain. While you're implementing these strategies, focus on your capabilities and don't get discouraged.

Although studies have shown an association between these steps and a reduced risk for cognitive decline, the National Institutes of Health says that researchers still aren't sure whether these factors can actually prevent cognitive decline or other diseases that affect cognition, such as Alzheimer's disease.

5 Foods to Supercharge your Brain

While you should strive for a varied, well balanced diet to get a wide range of nutrients, these foods are worthy of incorporating in to your diet frequently for their brain health benefits.



Blueberries help protect the brain from oxidative stress. Try a cup of fresh or frozen blueberries daily.



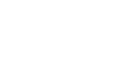
Wild salmon, and other oily fish like sardines and herring, are rich in omega-3 essential fatty acids which are necessary for brain function. Eat a 4 ounce serving two to three times a week.



Nuts and seeds offer good sources of vitamin E, which may provide some protection against age-related cognitive decline. Eat one ounce of nuts, seeds or nut butters per day.



Avocados contain monounsaturated fat aiding in healthy blood flow, which means a healthier brain. Eat ¼ to ½ avocado daily.



Whole grains such as oatmeal, whole grain breads and brown rice also contribute to cardiovascular health, including good blood flow to the brain.