

## Letter from the President



Dear KelseyCare Advantage Members,

Welcome the latest edition of House Call, our exclusive member newsletter. This issue offers some great tips on staying healthy and getting the most out of your KelseyCare Advantage benefits.

If you are new to KelseyCare Advantage, you may be wondering how to make a smooth transition from your previous healthcare providers to your KelseyCare Advantage network providers, particularly if you are currently undergoing medical treatment. We'll share information on how we can help you make a seamless and worry-free transition.

This issue also offers helpful information on managing your diabetes, dealing with bladder control issues, and eating well to live a longer and healthier life.

If you have any questions about KelseyCare Advantage, please call our Concierge Service at 713-442-9540. Our trained staff can offer you personalized assistance in resolving a wide range of questions and issues.

In good health,

Marnie Matheny  
President, KelseyCare Advantage

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Important Plan Information

8900 Lakes at 610 Drive | Houston, Texas 77054

# KelseyCare Advantage

# KelseyCare Advantage House Call

May 2011

## Living Better and Longer with Diabetes

Did you know that people with diabetes may have a higher chance of dying prematurely? A study published in the March 2011 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine found that, on average, a person with diabetes will die six years sooner than a person without the disease. The study also indicated that people with diabetes are at a higher risk for getting certain cancers. So, the message for people with diabetes is this: controlling your blood sugar isn't just a way to stay healthy; it may help you live longer, too!

### Knowing Your Numbers

"People with diabetes have problems producing and/or using insulin, which is the hormone that helps convert blood sugar, called glucose, into fuel to feed cells," says Donnie Aga, M.D., Chief of Internal Medicine at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. "As a result, cells throughout the body cannot get enough energy to function properly, which can damage the body's tissues and organs."

### Taking Control

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to control your glucose. Below are three of the most important

things you can do to minimize the harmful effects of diabetes.

**Eating right.** "Proper eating habits are absolutely critical for anyone with diabetes," explains Dr. Aga. "Although it's necessary for you to eat carbohydrates (foods with starch or sugar) for daily energy, you should closely monitor how many carbohydrates you eat, and choose complex carbohydrates whenever possible. Fruits and vegetables, as well as low-fat protein and dairy products, are also essential ingredients for a healthy diet."

**Exercising more.** Regular exercise can help you control your glucose level by:

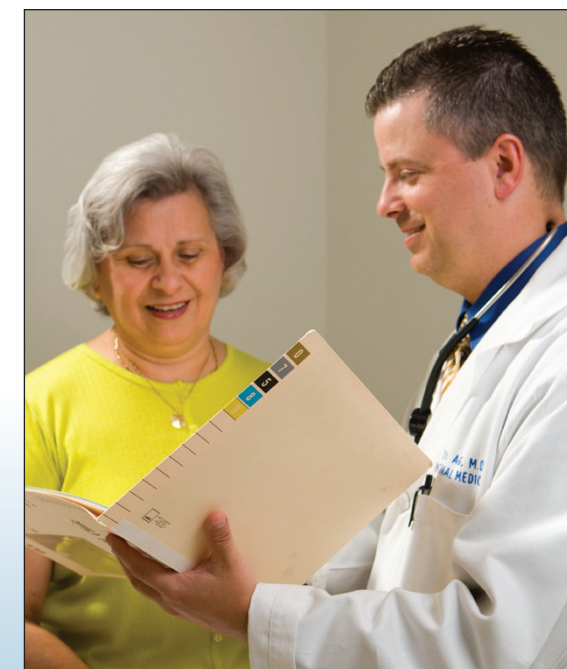
- improving how your body uses insulin;
- burning excess fat, which improves your sensitivity to insulin;
- improving unhealthy cholesterol levels;
- improving circulation; and
- reducing stress.

"Even moderate exercise—such as brisk walking—for 20-30 minutes a day can be beneficial," says Dr. Aga. "However, be sure to tell your doctor about your exercise

regimen, especially if you engage in strenuous exercise."

**Taking medicines as prescribed.** Many people with diabetes do not require medications to keep their glucose under control. However, if your doctor has you on insulin or another prescription drug, make sure you understand exactly when and how to take it, and follow your doctor's instructions precisely.

"Diabetes should be taken seriously," says Dr. Aga. "However, with proper actions, you can often control diabetes, instead of diabetes controlling you."



## New Member Reminder: Transitioning Your Care to KelseyCare Advantage

Changing healthcare providers can be confusing. However, if you are new to KelseyCare Advantage, we will make every effort to make your transition as easy as possible. If you are currently undergoing medical treatment from a health care provider who is not in the KelseyCare Advantage network, please contact Member Services, particularly if you:

- have had surgery in the last 90 days,
- are currently undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment,
- are having physical therapy,
- are receiving home health services, or
- have durable medical equipment, such as a wheelchair, oxygen tank or home bed.

In these cases, you should submit a Transition of Care request form. To do this, you can either:

1. Download a "Transition of Care Request Form" online at [www.kelseycareadvantage.com](http://www.kelseycareadvantage.com) OR
2. Call KelseyCare Advantage at 713-442-CARE or 1-866-535-8343 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-302-9336), between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Once you have contacted us, your situation will be reviewed by a nurse. Within seven business days, we will mail you either an approval or denial letter informing you of the outcome of your transition of care request.

**Questions? Call KelseyCare Advantage at 713-442-CARE or 1-866-535-8343 (TTY/TDD: 1-866-302-9336), between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.**



## Physician Focus: Dr. Jia-Yen Chi



Jia-Yen Chi, M.D. recently moved his practice to the Clear Lake Medical Center.

Dr. Chi is a dermatologist who joined Kelsey-Seybold Clinic

on September 15, 2008. He is certified by the American Board of Dermatology Center, and he is fluent in English, Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese and Spanish. Dr. Chi earned his medical degree from State University of New York (SUNY) Upstate Medical School in 1975, and he completed his internship and residency at Cleveland Clinic, where he specialized in Dermatology.

"Patient satisfaction is very important to me," says Dr. Chi. "My goal is to understand the individual needs of each patient and provide the information needed to identify the best treatment."

Dr. Chi's areas of clinical interests include Medical Dermatology and

non-cosmetic dermatologic surgery. He is also a clinical instructor in Dermatology at Baylor College of Medicine, and his primary hospital affiliation is with St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital.

When he's not caring for patients, Dr. Chi enjoys spending time with his family, traveling and studying opera. His love for opera motivated him to become a question contributor for "Metropolitan Opera Quiz," a radio broadcast in New York City.

If you would like to schedule an appointment with Dr. Chi, please call 713-442-0000, or go online to [www.kelsey-seybold.com](http://www.kelsey-seybold.com), and click on "Make An Appointment."

## Healthy Diet Improves Quality and Length of Life for Seniors

Since you've retired, it may be tempting to indulge yourself. You've worked hard your whole life, so why not have a second piece of pie or that yummy, fatty cheese? Although an occasional treat isn't harmful, there is growing evidence that seniors have a higher quality of life if their diet is rich in low-fat dairy products, fruit, whole grains, poultry, fish, and vegetables.



### The Research

A recent study from the University of Maryland looked at 2,582 people between the ages of 70 to 79, and tied their eating habits to their quality of life over a 10-year period. The participants were categorized into six dietary groups, three of which were "Healthy Foods," "High-Fat Dairy Products," and "Sweets & Desserts." The Healthy Foods cluster included people with a high intake of low-fat dairy

products, fruit, whole grains, poultry, fish, and vegetables.

"Both the High-Fat Dairy Products and Sweets & Desserts clusters had 1.4-times higher risk of death than the Healthy Foods cluster," explain the authors of the study. "The Healthy Foods cluster also had more years of healthy life."

### The Impact

"These conclusions are not surprising, because there are important reasons to eat healthy as you age," says Dr. Patrick Carter, Chief of Family Medicine at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. "As you age, your body's metabolism slows down, and physical activities may be more difficult. Also, some nutrients are more difficult for your body to absorb."

Age is also a risk factor for several diseases such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, hypertension, and diabetes. "However, these diseases respond to improved nutrition," says Dr. Carter. "If you have these diseases, a healthy diet can help reduce the harmful effects. If you don't have these diseases, a healthy diet can help reduce your chances of getting them."

### The Plan

If you think you need to revamp your eating habits, here are a few tips from the National Institute on Aging to get you started.

- Eat many different colors and types of vegetables and fruits.
- Make sure at least half of your grains are whole grains.
- Eat only small amounts of solid

fats, oils, and foods high in sugars.

- Limit saturated fat (found mostly in foods that come from animals) or trans fats (found in foods like margarines, shortening, cookies, and crackers).

Also, don't forget your best resource on your health—your primary care physician. "Symptoms of poor nutrition in seniors might be subtle or might be mistaken for other health problems," explains Dr. Carter. "Regular checkups and a good conversation with your doctor can go long way to keep you healthy to enjoy many more years of retirement."

If you would like to schedule an appointment with a Kelsey-Seybold Clinic dietician, please call 713-442-0000.

### Important Phone Numbers to Remember

**KelseyCare Advantage Concierge: 713-442-9540**

For personalized assistance with physician selection, benefits issues, billing questions

To speak with a **pharmacist** on the KelseyCare Advantage team, please call **713-442-4820**.

The pharmacy team can review all of your medications and help you identify cost savings opportunities.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline  
**713-442-9595**

# Improving Bladder Control

Many women experience bladder control issues, such as an increased frequency in urination, increased urgency to urinate, or urinary incontinence. However, you don't have to suffer. There are many treatments that may improve bladder control, often without medications or surgery.

## Tracking the Input

Certain foods, beverages and medications can influence how much and how often you feel the urge to urinate, and so can the amount of fluid you take in every day.



First, consider how much water you drink. "Drinking too much water, of course, causes frequent urination," says Christopher Chon, M.D., a urologist at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic. "But not drinking enough

water can also be a problem. Highly concentrated urine can irritate your bladder, and increase the urgency and frequency you need to go. Alcoholic or caffeinated beverages, as well as medications—such as high blood pressure medications, diuretics, antidepressants, heart medications, muscle relaxants and sedatives—can also cause these problems."

Dr. Chon recommends keeping a journal of everything that is consumed (food, beverages, and medications, etc.), in addition to notes about bathroom trips.

"You may see a pattern," explains Dr. Chon. "For example, if the urge to go gets worse after morning coffee or afternoon tea, eliminate caffeine for a week and see if that helps. If nothing works, see your doctor and take your journal, as it may be helpful in finding the problem."

## Training the Output

Sometimes urge and frequency problems can be made worse if you have incontinence issues. Many women empty their bladders frequently to avoid these accidents. However, this can lead to a "weak" bladder that doesn't do a good job of holding urine.

The good news is that your bladder can be trained to hold more urine. "Begin by urinating once an hour," says Dr. Chon. "The next week, increase that time to an hour

and fifteen minutes, and so on. Gradually, your bladder will be able to hold more, decreasing the urgency and frequency you need to go."

## Exercising to Stay Strong

Urinary incontinence can be caused in part by weak pelvic floor muscles. Strengthening these muscles can help reduce the incidence of urinary incontinence.

"You can strengthen your pelvic floor muscles by doing Kegel exercises," explains Dr. Chon. "Like other muscles in your body, they can get stronger. If you aren't sure how to do Kegel exercises, your doctor can help. There is also some evidence that regular, moderate exercise—such as brisk walking, biking or swimming—can also help reduce incontinence problems, so don't neglect this healthy habit."

Bladder control problems can be upsetting. But don't let embarrassment prevent you from addressing it with your doctor. In addition to these recommendations, there are other treatments available that can help improve bladder control and your quality of life.

## Tips to Try:

- Keep a journal of your water intake and watch for patterns.
- Talk to your doctor about exercise and other solutions that might be right for you.

# My Kelsey Online: A Convenient, Secure Timesaver

Using a secure Internet portal, Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's MyKelseyOnline gives you a convenient tool for scheduling appointments online, sending secure messages to your doctor's office and more!

For your health care to be effective, communication between you and your physicians is key. Using MyKelseyOnline, you can send secure messages to your physician's nurse support staff and receive a response within 24 hours on a weekday.

## Web-Based Communication with Your Kelsey-Seybold Physician

As a Kelsey-Seybold patient, you can visit [www.MyKelseyOnline.com](http://www.MyKelseyOnline.com) to sign up for the patient portal. Once you create a unique ID and password, you can log in to:

- Send secure electronic messages to your primary care and specialty care physician's office staff
- Directly schedule appointments with your primary care physician
- Request appointments with Kelsey-Seybold specialists
- View past and upcoming appointments

- Cancel appointments
- View your immunization records
- Update personal, demographic and insurance information

The secure portal also includes a link to refill prescriptions at your Kelsey Pharmacy.


## Sign Up Today

It's easy to sign up for MyKelseyOnline. Just log on to [www.MyKelseyOnline.com](http://www.MyKelseyOnline.com) and follow the instructions. It is secure, easy to use, and comes at no cost to you. MyKelseyOnline keeps you

connected with Your Doctors for Life.

**Have questions?** Just call the helpful professionals at the MyKelseyOnline Help Line at 713-442-6565, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or e-mail [MyKelseyOnlineSupport@kelsey-seybold.com](mailto:MyKelseyOnlineSupport@kelsey-seybold.com).

*Note: While MyKelseyOnline facilitates convenient communication between patients and physicians, it should not be used for urgent health care issues. In such cases, a patient should call his or her physician's office or 9-1-1.*



## A Friendly Reminder... Always continue to pay your monthly Medicare Part B premium!

This premium is what you pay directly to Medicare to have Part B coverage, and you need it to stay enrolled in KelseyCare Advantage.

If you have questions about your Part B premium, please call us at 713-442-CARE (2273) or toll-free at 1-866-535-8343. TTY/TDD users should call 1-866-302-9336.