

HOUSE CALL

KelseyCare Advantage

March 2021

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

We know that many of our members have questions about when you will begin receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Although we have requested the vaccine from the State of Texas, and will continue to do so, ultimately it is the State's decision where the vaccine is distributed.

Currently, the State of Texas has decided to send the vaccine to major vaccination hubs around the City of Houston to vaccinate as many people at one time as possible.



We have been and will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to secure the vaccine.

We know the wait is frustrating, but we ask for your patience as we work to get this situation resolved. We also encourage you to take advantage of any community opportunities to get vaccinated, until we can proceed with vaccinations at our Clinic locations.

When we can move forward with vaccinations, we will contact you via phone, text, and your MyKelseyOnline account. For the latest information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, check www.Kelsey-Seybold.com. There, you will see updates on how much vaccine we have received for both the week and in total.

Again, we thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time.



POP HEALTH

Kelsey-Seybold Clinic has an innovative program named **Population Health** where a team of providers visit patients at home to give them the care that they need.

Through an advanced automated process using Kelsey-Seybold Clinic's electronic medical records, patients are identified as being a candidate for the program. Most of the patients in the program have a chronic disease such as heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, hypertension, diabetes, dementia, and arthritis. Many of the patients admitted to the program are considered to be non-compliant, high-risk, have had two or more ER visits within a 60-day period, or three or more hospital admissions within a year.

For the first visit a nurse practitioner and a medical assistant or a licensed vocational nurse will visit the home and do a full evaluation of the patient. Afterwards, a team consisting of a licensed vocational nurse, dietitian, social worker, and a pharmacist will meet weekly to discuss how to best serve that patient in their home.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

Often, it's not that patients don't want to go to their doctor visits, dialysis, or eat what they should ... instead, there may be a barrier getting in the way such as a lack of transportation to appointments or a lack of education regarding diet. In the case of one patient who kept going to the hospital with a narrowing of the esophagus, which was a choking hazard, a dietician and a nurse practitioner were able to assess the food in his home and work with him on what he could eat with his condition.

THE FUTURE

Since the program began in 2019 it has grown from 2,131 visits to 13,742 visits in 2020. Denise Jonathan, PharmD, Director, Pharmacy Health Plan Services & Population Health thinks there would have been more visits in 2020 if not for the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 GrandPads will be added to the program, which are simplified video calling tablets. Dr. Jonathan said, "These GrandPads are devices we can get in front of patients and use to connect with them and meet their needs."

The Population Health program is designed to help very sick patients who might not otherwise be able to make it to one of the Clinics, get the care and support they need. The program is not open to all KelseyCare Advantage members. If you qualify, you will be invited by the Population Health team and we encourage you to participate!



HOW TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION

As with most functions of the human body, our vision starts to deteriorate with age. It's not uncommon that middle-aged people need corrective lenses when they previously never did. Reading glasses or bifocals become necessary to work at the computer or read a book.

But age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a separate, more serious condition that can cause severe vision loss. Untreated AMD is the leading cause of permanent vision loss in Americans over 50 years of age.

“The macula is the central, most sensitive part of the retina and is responsible for providing sharp, central vision. AMD is a disease that deteriorates the macula and leaves the sufferer with only peripheral vision. They can no longer see straight ahead and struggle to perform everyday activities like driving a car, watching TV, working on a computer, and identifying faces,” said Salman Rahman, M.D., an ophthalmologist at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic who cares for patients at Kelsey-Seybold's Berthelsen Main Campus, The Woodlands Clinic, and Clear Lake Clinic. His clinical interests include medical and surgical treatment of retinal diseases, including diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, retinal vascular disease, retinal detachment, macular holes, and epiretinal membranes.

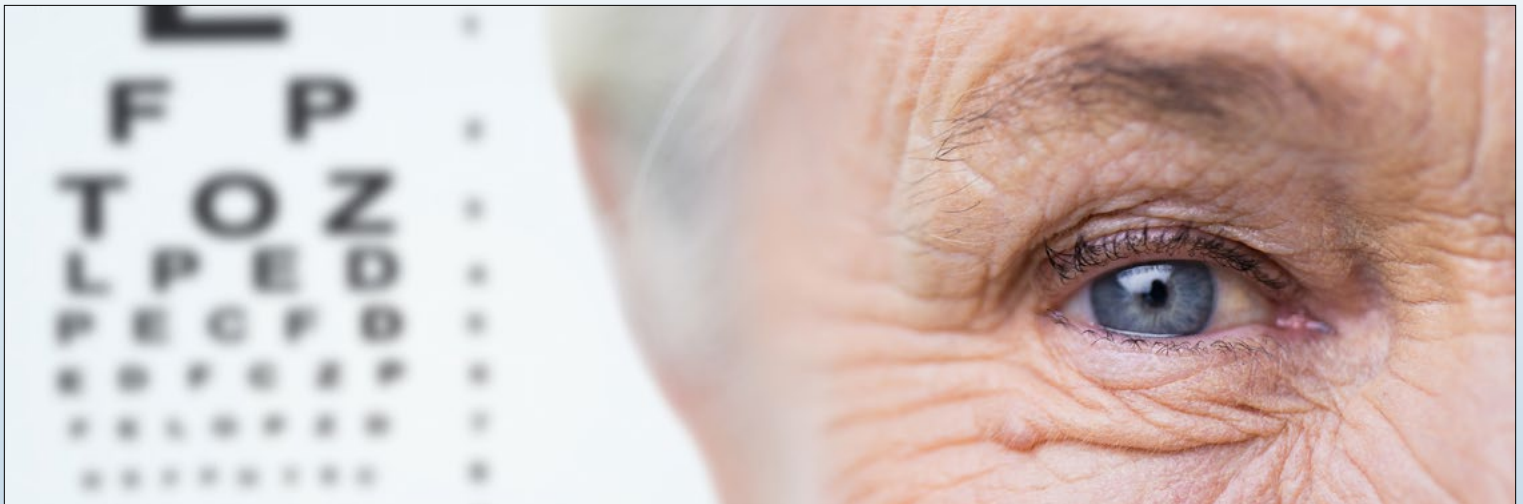
Since gradual vision loss is normal as we age, many times the warning signs of AMD go unnoticed. But in some cases, AMD can occur with no warning, causing sudden vision loss in one or both eyes.

MACULAR DEGENERATION RISK FACTORS

“Since macular degeneration is associated with aging, the most obvious risk factor is being over 50 years of age. But another significant risk factor could be family history. There is research suggesting that AMD can be associated with certain genetic mutations,” Dr. Rahman said.

Additionally, the following factors may contribute to the development of AMD:

- **RACE** - Caucasians appear to be at a higher risk than other races.
- **GENDER** - While AMD can develop in both men and women, women tend to develop AMD at an earlier age than men.
- **OBESITY** - Studies suggest that AMD patients who are overweight are twice as likely to have a severe or advanced form of the disorder.
- **CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE** - There is evidence that having a heart condition may increase the risk of developing AMD.
- **SMOKING** - Studies also suggest that smoking can double one's risk of developing AMD.





TYPES AND SYMPTOMS OF MACULAR DEGENERATION

There are two types of age-related macular degeneration — dry and wet — with dry macular degeneration accounting for 90% of all AMD cases.

“Dry macular degeneration has three stages: mild, intermediate, and advanced. In the mild stage, the macula slowly begins to accumulate yellowish deposits called drusen. Drusen may go unnoticed or may cause mild to moderate distortion. In the intermediate and advanced stages, additional drusen accumulate with associated atrophy, or loss of tissue leading to further distortion or vision loss,” Dr. Rahman explained.

“Wet macular degeneration is an advanced form of AMD that occurs when abnormal blood vessels form under the macula and leak blood and other fluid. This causes severe blurring and distortion of the central vision. Those who develop wet macular degeneration typically experience dry macular degeneration first. With early detection and prevention, however, severe vision loss from wet AMD can, in many cases, be avoided,” he said.

Symptoms of AMD typically develop gradually in one or both eyes and may include:

- Distorted vision with straight lines appearing wavy or bent
- Dark patches or blurry spots in your field of vision
- Printed words appearing more blurry
- Difficulty recognizing or distinguishing faces

MACULAR DEGENERATION PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

There is currently no cure for age-related macular degeneration, but there are ways to decrease the risk of progression when detected early.

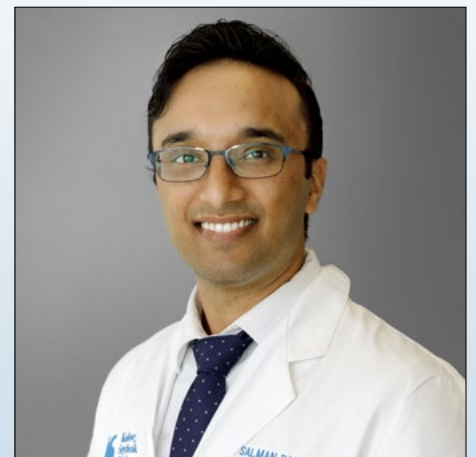
To help reduce your risk of developing age-related macular degeneration, Dr. Rahman recommends that you:

- Quit smoking
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Eat a diet rich in dark, leafy vegetables, vitamins C, E, and zinc
- Manage any medical conditions that increase your risk of ADM, such as cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure

The best treatment for AMD is early detection because you can begin taking the above measures to slow vision loss.

Those who are diagnosed with AMD may benefit from working with a low vision rehabilitation specialist or occupational therapist who can suggest ways to adapt to changing vision.

If you or someone you know is experiencing vision loss and is concerned about age-related macular degeneration, the physicians at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic can help with regular eye exams and vision screenings, as well as expert advice on how to reduce your risk. Call 713-442-0427 to make appointment.



Kelsey-Seybold Clinic Ophthalmologist,
Dr. Salman Rahman

MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

Eat right, feel better and age well

Feeling sluggish, drowsy, or down can be your body's way of telling you to eat more nutrient-rich foods. Good nutrition is important to healthy aging, and National Nutrition Month in March is the perfect time to develop some good habits. Our bodies and nutritional needs change as we age, making it more important to make healthy choices at every meal. Celebrate National Nutrition Month by educating yourself on healthy aging, and by adopting lifestyle choices that can make you feel better inside and out.

BENEFITS OF GOOD NUTRITION

Potassium, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and fiber are micronutrients that become more important with age, contributing to immune function, brain health and disease prevention. Eating a nutrient-rich diet can also improve your quality of life by helping you feel better overall.¹ Need more reasons?

- Increased energy levels
- More restful and restorative sleep
- Enhanced cognitive function
- Improved muscle mass and bone density

Eating well and staying active can help you stay strong and healthy so you can keep doing the things you love to do.

3 STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY TO CREATE HEALTHY NEW HABITS

Learning healthy ways to manage your nutrition, exercise and stress can help you feel better and improve your quality of life. Your SilverSneakers® benefit from KelseyCare Advantage is a great resource you can access from the comfort of home. From virtual fitness classes and nutrition workshops to health-related articles and recipes, SilverSneakers makes it easy to make your health and wellness a priority.

- 1 Enroll in a “Nutrition As We Age” virtual wellness workshop at [SilverSneakers.com/Live](https://www.silversneakers.com/live).
- 2 Access hundreds of nutrition videos and workouts from home at [SilverSneakers.com/OnDemand](https://www.silversneakers.com/ondemand).
- 3 Get recipes and read all about nutrition on the SilverSneakers blog, [SilverSneakers.com/blog](https://www.silversneakers.com/blog).

Visit [SilverSneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com) or call 1-888-423-4632 (TTY: 711), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. ET to learn more. **Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.**

Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/browse-by-audience/view-all-audiences/adults/older-adults>, Accessed 11/25/2020

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SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Allergy season is just around the corner. If you experience symptoms such as sneezing, congestion or runny nose around the same time every year, the cause may be seasonal allergies. Here are things you can do at home to keep your allergy symptoms at bay.

- Limit contact with animals that trigger allergies
- Remove pet hair and dander from living areas
- Get an air purifier with a HEPA filter
- Clean and change sheets and blankets often
- Avoid opening windows when pollen counts are high
- Remain indoors when pollen counts are high
- Avoid tobacco smoke or smoking in the home
- Repair indoor leaks and optimize venting to help reduce risk of mold

If your symptoms don't improve, speak to your doctor to see if further evaluation is needed. Several types of over-the-counter (OTC) medications can help ease allergy symptoms. It's always best to speak to your doctor before taking OTC medications to make sure they're appropriate for you.

Types of over-the-counter allergy medications:

- Antihistamines help relieve sneezing, itching, runny nose, and watery eyes.
 - Examples are: loratadine (CLARITIN), fexofenadine (ALLEGRA) and ketotifen eye drops (ZADITOR).
- Decongestants can provide temporary relief from congestion. These may not be appropriate if you have other conditions such as high blood pressure. Again, speak to your doctor regarding if these are right for you. Limit use of nasal decongestants to no more than three days because they can worsen symptoms.
 - Examples are pseudoephedrine (SUDAFED) and oxymetazoline nasal spray (AFRIN).
- Saline nasal sprays are saltwater solutions that can help soften mucus, causing it to drain more easily.
- Steroid nasal sprays are used to decrease nasal inflammation and congestion.
 - An example is fluticasone propionate (FLONASE).

Below is a list of some allergy medications that can be purchased using the KelseyCare Advantage OTC benefit. Please visit [kelseycareadvantage.com](https://www.kelseycareadvantage.com) to view the full OTC catalog.

- Allergy relief nasal spray (comparable to FLONASE)
- Cetirizine (comparable to ZYRTEC)
- Fexofenadine (comparable to ALLEGRA)
- Loratadine (comparable to CLARITIN)
- Saline nasal spray (comparable to OCEAN NASAL SPRAY)
- Allergy and Itch Relief Eye Drops (comparable to ZADITOR)

Have a happy, healthy Spring!



GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

WHAT IS GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER?

Do you feel worried and anxious a lot? It can be hard to know if it's just a normal part of life, or something more serious.

Generalized anxiety disorder occurs when you feel worried and stressed about many everyday events and activities. Often the things you are worried about are small or not important. This type of worry disrupts your life most days. Everyone gets worried or anxious sometimes. But people with generalized anxiety disorder experience more than normal everyday worries.

Many people who have generalized anxiety disorder have physical symptoms, such as headaches or being tired all the time. Most people who have it have felt nervous or anxious as long as they can remember and just didn't know the reason. Women are twice as likely as men to have the problem.

People with generalized anxiety disorder may also have depression or other anxiety illnesses.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

The cause of generalized anxiety disorder is not known. Some studies show that it might be genetic. Some problems such as hyperthyroidism can cause generalized anxiety symptoms.

Some medicines can cause worry and stress or make your stress worse. Be sure to talk with your doctor about any medicines you are taking. Also, too much caffeine can also increase anxiety.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

People who have generalized anxiety disorder get worried and stressed about many things almost every day. They have a hard time controlling their worry and often worry about money, family, health, or work. You might also have physical symptoms, such as:

- Feeling tired or irritable, or having a hard time concentrating.
- Having headaches or muscle aches.
- Feeling like you can't relax, or being startled easily.
- Having problems falling or staying asleep.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

To find out if you have this problem, your Kelsey-Seybold Clinic physician will ask questions about your symptoms and how long you have had them. Your physician will also do a physical exam, ask questions about your medical history, and ask questions about medicines you are taking. This information helps them find out whether you have any other condition.

To be diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, you must have more worry and stress than normal. You must feel worried and stressed about many things almost every day and these feelings must last for at least six months. You will also have some physical symptoms. The worry, stress, and physical symptoms might make it hard for you to do normal daily activities.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

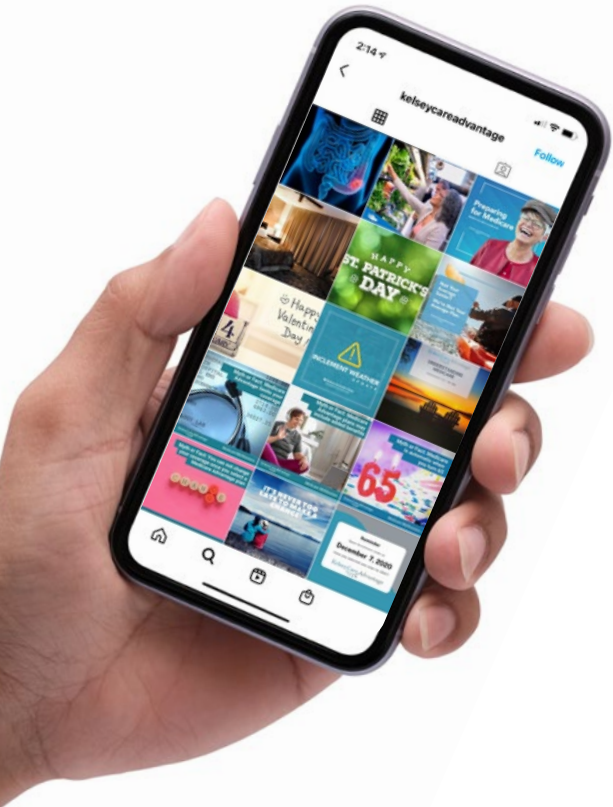
Generalized anxiety disorder is treated with medicines and/or therapy. The two kinds of therapy that are used to treat generalized anxiety disorder are called applied relaxation therapy and cognitive-behavioral therapy.

In applied relaxation therapy, your therapist might ask you to imagine a calming situation to help you relax. In cognitive-behavioral therapy, your therapist will help you learn how to recognize and replace thoughts that make you feel stressed and worried.

Your physician may also use medication to treat your anxiety. Medicines work better for some people than for others. Be sure to talk with your doctor about how the medicine is working for you. Sometimes you might need to try more than one type of medicine before you find one that works best for you.

Unfortunately, many people don't seek treatment for anxiety disorders. You may not seek treatment because you think the symptoms are not bad enough or that you can work things out on your own, but getting treatment is important. Talk to your Kelsey-Seybold Clinic physician if you are concerned you might have this disorder so that they can make a diagnosis and help you get any treatment that you may need.

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



Don't forget to stay social with us ... If you haven't already then please connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram! On our social media sites, you'll see a variety of health and life-style features, KelseyCare Advantage plan updates, and you can see Kelsey-Seybold Clinic updates such as clinic closures or changes to hours of operation, due to bad weather.

- See what's new with Silver Sneakers, which is included in your KelseyCare Advantage plan
- See cutting edge health and fitness information and share it with your friends and family
- Contact us with questions that you have about the plan

We hope to connect with you soon!



Important Plan Information

11511 Shadow Creek Parkway | Pearland, TX 77584

KelseyCare Advantage