

Geriatricians – What are they and what do they do?

A Geriatrician is a physician that specializes in the care of older adults. These physicians, who are trained in Internal Medicine or Family Practice, have taken and passed an exam that demonstrates specific knowledge relating to the treatment differences between young and older adults (in the case of Family Practitioners also between infants, children, adolescents and pregnant women). Physicians that become Geriatricians can put this information to use in an office practice, in nursing home care or as consultants.

As consultants, Geriatricians often work as part of a team seeing the frail elderly, those people losing the ability to care for themselves with multiple problems and medications. The Geriatrician provides a patient overview to organize care among various specialists (case managers, psychologists, pharmacists, therapists and others) to address the environmental, medical, social and psychological needs of the patient. The goal of the Geriatrician is to improve and maintain the individuals ability to have a full and safe life by staying active and not be a burden on others by maintaining their "activities of daily living", which include bathing, dressing, cooking, cleaning, going to the bathroom, etc.

For information regarding Lee Memorial Health System's Geriatric Consultation Program, please call 239/335-7593.

Lee Memorial Health System's Geriatric Consultation Program

The Older Adult Services Geriatric Consultation Program, under Lee Memorial Health System, specializes in providing patients with an overview of their condition to organize care among various specialists (case managers, psychologists, pharmacists, therapists and others) to address the environmental, medical, social and psychological needs of the patient. The Geriatrician on staff, Dr. Raab, will take time to sit and discuss each patient's situation with the patient and their family. After the evaluation is completed, time is again taken to answer any questions or concerns the patient or family member may have about the recommendations and suggestions for care.

When coming to the clinic for an evaluation, patients bring their spouse (or child, relative, in-law, life partner, etc.) who is familiar with the patient's condition. In preparation for the first visit, a medical history form will be sent to the patient to fill out and bring with him or her. Patients should also arrange to have copies of their medical records available for review. During the first visit, the patient and spouse will meet with the case manager, nurse and Geriatrician. Concerns are discussed and the patient's history and medical records are reviewed. This is then followed by a physical exam. While the patient is having their exam the case manager reviews the environmental and social situation with the spouse. After the physical exam, the patient is sent for testing to further evaluate and clarify their condition. This process takes about 2 - 3 hours. At that point, a second half-hour appointment is arranged to review the findings and outline a treatment plan. A copy of the treatment plan is reviewed and given to the family. The detailed results of the evaluation including the physical exam, copies of the lab tests and a copy of the final recommendations are sent to the patient's primary care provider. Armed with their copy of the recommendations the patient and family can better work with their primary care doctor to implement and keep the recommendations on track.

For more information, please contact Lee Memorial Health System's Geriatric Consultation Program at 239/335-7593.