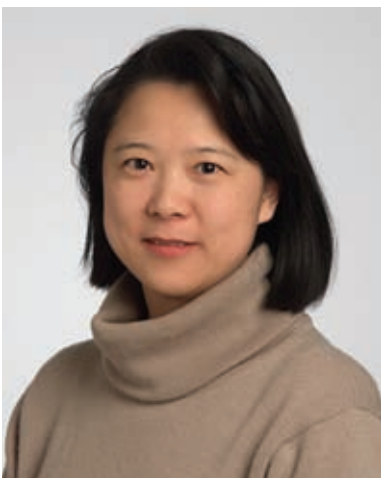




Rick Gemma, D.O., is a board-certified general surgeon at South Pointe Hospital. He has offices at South Pointe Hospital and in Sagamore Hills.



Hong Shen, M.D., specializes in pain management and practices at Hillcrest Hospital.

# Caring for Your Health

## Physician experts answer some common health questions

### **Rick Gemma, D.O.** **General Surgeon** **South Pointe Hospital**

**Q: My doctor recommended laparoscopic colon surgery. What is it?**

**A:** Each year, more than 600,000 surgical procedures are performed in the United States to treat a number of colon diseases. Although surgery is not always a cure, it is often the best way to stop the spread of disease and alleviate pain and discomfort.

Patients undergoing colon surgery often face a long and difficult recovery because the traditional “open” procedures are highly invasive. Surgery results in an average hospital stay of a week or more and usually six weeks of recovery.

A newer technique known as minimally invasive laparoscopic colon surgery allows surgeons to perform many common colon procedures through small incisions. Depending on the type of procedure, patients may leave the hospital in a few days and return to normal activities more quickly than patients recovering from open surgery.

Results may vary depending upon the type of procedure and

patient’s overall condition. Common advantages are:

- ◆ Less postoperative pain
- ◆ May shorten hospital stay
- ◆ May result in a faster return to a solid-food diet
- ◆ May result in a quicker return of bowel function
- ◆ Quicker return to normal activity
- ◆ Improved cosmetic results

### **Hong Shen, M.D.** **Pain Management** **Hillcrest Hospital**

**Q: I’ve had chronic pain in my back for a couple years. I’ve tried medications, physical therapy and even surgery, but nothing helps. What can I do?**

**A:** You may be a prime candidate for acupuncture, which is a technique of inserting and manipulating special needles into specific points on the body. I have had amazing results with acupuncture in patients who have not been able to find pain relief any other way.

The procedure usually takes about a half-hour and is performed in the doctor’s office. The sterile, single-use needles are hair-thin, and most people feel either no or minimal

## **Need an Appointment?**

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pain as the needles are inserted. Some people are energized by the treatment; others feel relaxed.

It is important to seek acupuncture treatment from a qualified acupuncture practitioner. In my case, I graduated from the Helms Medical Institute (HMI) in California, which has trained 85 percent of the physicians who practice acupuncture in the United States. According to the 2002 National Health Interview Survey, an estimated 8.2 million American adults have tried acupuncture.

In addition to relieving pain, acupuncture may reduce nausea and vomiting after surgery and chemotherapy, and may be useful for patients suffering from arthritis, fibromyalgia, headache, carpal tunnel syndrome and many other conditions.

**Jeffrey Lautman, M.D.**  
**Nephrology**  
**Euclid Hospital**

**Q: I was just diagnosed with kidney disease and have no energy whatsoever. I also want to delay having to go on dialysis. What can I do?**

**A:** Your case is not unusual. One out of every nine Americans has chronic kidney disease (CKD), and another 20 million people are at increased risk. Through early detection and treatment, we can often keep the disease from worsening. Left untreated, CKD can ultimately lead to kidney failure, in which case dialysis or a kidney transplant is necessary to maintain life.

When I first see patients, they come to me dragging because kidney failure results in anemia, which brings about fatigue. Within two months, they're back on their feet with renewed energy, thanks to the care they receive at the Chronic Kidney Disease Clinic here at Euclid Hospital. Our goal at the clinic is to give patients a better quality of life, while helping them control their

disease, stay off dialysis longer and avoid hospitalization.

During a patient's first outpatient visit to the clinic, our multidisciplinary staff conducts a complete assessment and writes a plan of care.

By carefully monitoring and educating our patients, the clinic has had great success in improving their quality of life. We hope that CKD patients enroll in the clinic before they become acutely ill. If we see them early on, we can protect them from getting sicker.

**Keyvan Ravakhah, M.D.**  
**Internal Medicine**  
**Huron Hospital**

**Q: My mother has osteoporosis. What are my chances of getting it, and can I prevent it?**

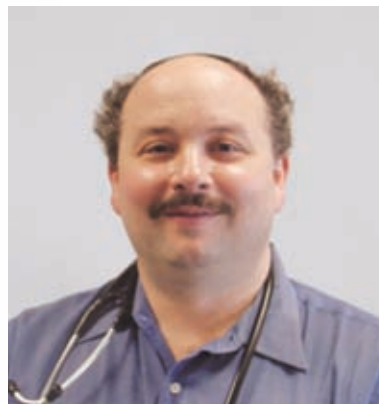
**A:** Osteoporosis is a bone disease in which bone mineral density (BMD) is lost. This condition leads to fragile bones that are at risk of being fractured. A silent disease, osteoporosis can progress painlessly and not become apparent until a person breaks a bone.

To diagnose osteoporosis, you should have a BMD test, an accurate, painless and noninvasive way to measure your bone mass and determine if you need medication to help maintain your BMD.

Women are four times as likely as men to develop osteoporosis. Other risk factors for developing osteoporosis include:

- ◆ Age—people 50 and older (especially post-menopausal women) are more likely to develop the disease.
- ◆ Body frame—being small and thin predisposes a person to osteoporosis.
- ◆ Family history of osteoporosis.
- ◆ Certain medications.
- ◆ Race—White or Asian women are more prone to the disease.
- ◆ A diagnosis of osteopenia, which is low bone mass.

Because there is no cure for osteoporosis, prevention is important.



Jeffrey Lautman, M.D., specializes in nephrology and practices at Euclid Hospital.



Keyvan Ravakhah, M.D., specializes in internal medicine and practices at Huron Hospital, where he is chairman of the department of medicine.

Preventive steps include:

- ◆ Getting enough calcium (between 1,000 and 1,300 mg daily) and vitamin D, which enables your body to absorb calcium.
- ◆ Maintaining a consistent weight-bearing exercise program.
- ◆ Avoiding tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption.
- ◆ Seeking professional medical guidance.
- ◆ Having a bone density test.
- ◆ Taking medication, if prescribed by your physician. ■