

RIDGECREST REGIONAL HOSPITAL connected



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DEAR FRIENDS,

I hope you enjoyed the long, warm days of summer. During our warmest season, I couldn't help but reminisce about summers past – full of backyard barbecues, weekend getaways and lively celebrations. Because of our choices to protect one another, like getting vaccinated and social distancing when required, those summer traditions were possible once again, and we should keep those protections in mind as we head into fall. Remember, everything you can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 protects you, your loved ones and your community.

I'd like to take a moment to welcome our newest Board of Directors members. I know they'll make a great addition to our Board, and I look forward to working with them to make the future of RRH even better and brighter.

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, I'm proud to say the hospital is in a strong financial position, and I'm thankful for the entire RRH team for their continued hard work and dedication to our patients. Carrying out our promise of offering more patient-centric services, nephrology services are now available at RRH. Additionally, we've made several new equipment purchases, RRH Clinics launched with the FollowMyHealth® Patient Portal, and we continue to make plans for a new emergency department.

I hope your fall is relaxing, safe and full of joyful moments. If you're in need of care this season, you can find it close to home at RRH.

A NOTE FROM THE FOUNDATION DIRECTOR

Looking back to last year at this time, we had no idea where we would be or what our future would hold. We had visions, dreams and hopes of what 2021 would bring our way after what we faced in 2019 and 2020. From a Foundation standpoint, I would say although we were certainly met with challenges, we rose to the occasion, forged through and accomplished some great goals.

In fact, as a result of the gracious and continued support of this community and our RRH employees, I am pleased to announce that we just hit the **\$1,000,000** mark in total donations – yes, ONE MILLION. That number seems almost unimaginable, especially taking into consideration what we have all gone through as a community, starting with the earthquakes in 2019. It just goes to show that challenges only make us stronger, and together, we can do anything.

Over the past five years, these funds have been put to great use – not only has the Foundation purchased diagnostic equipment for RRH, but we have also raised and set aside \$430,000 to assist in the purchase of a hospice house and long-term care facility. We have purchased a medical transport van for the RRH Cancer Center, and we have covered all transportation fees associated with the use of the van. Recently, in January



KIMBERLY METCALF
RRH Foundation Director

of 2021, we donated \$124,000 to RRH to assist in the purchase of the new Critical Care Transport unit.

We hope to close out 2021 with a bang. We will be hosting our 5th Annual Gala. Our Women in Philanthropy team is looking forward to future events as well, which include our 4th Annual Christmas Tree Village and the Valentine Tea Party. Also, the Butterfly Boutique is up and running again.

I continue to be forever grateful to have a job I love that allows me to meet and work with some of the most gracious and caring people. If you are interested in any of our events or groups, I would love to hear from you.



JAMES A. SUER, FACHE,
President/Chief Executive Officer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

Bud Haslam
CHAIR

Dana Lyons
VICE CHAIR

Chris Ellis
SECRETARY

Don Zdeba
TREASURER

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Margie Hannon

Walter Martin

Rita Read

Jim Rizzardi

Paige Sorbo-Netzer

Cornelis Vanderhoek, MD



PHOTO ALBUM



We were honored to accept the 2021 Business of the Year Award from the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce at their 75th Annual Community Awards & Installation Luncheon earlier this month.

This award is an important tribute to our hardworking healthcare workers who have continued to provide quality care and service to our patients throughout the pandemic. Times have been difficult; however, we couldn't be more proud of our employees for their dedication and commitment to our community's health.

Thank you for choosing RRH as Business of the Year, and we look forward to continuing to be here for your health.



Congratulations to the staff at RRH on completing the Building Healthy Habits Challenge! This step challenge focused on learning how to build healthy habits that range from healthy eating to the science behind a consistent exercise regimen to daily self-care gems, and how to make these newly built habits stick.



To celebrate the last day of school at the RRH Emergency Daycare, the Liberty Ambulance team decided to fill a bag full of goodies, which they personally delivered to the children to help kick-start their summer!



The Toastmasters Curemunicators' Sponsored Blood Drive at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital with the Houchin Community Blood Bank was a success! We were proud to see that so many of our employees turned out to help save yet more lives by donating blood.



Every year, nurses, CNAs and Techs go through a Nursing Skills recertification training.

RRH has created a skills fair for common trainings across departments. It is vital all our nurses get this hands-on training.

Thank you to the nursing staff for taking the time to train our staff!



Women from the Project Linus Bakersfield, CA, chapter delivered a supply of blankets to RRH in May for us to distribute to children in our community.

Thank you, Project Linus, for bringing smiles and comfort to our children!



We recognized Healthcare Documentation Integrity Week May 16-22. Thank you to all of our documentation specialists for your hard work and dedication.

This is a critical role for our hospital, and our Medical Records department has done a wonderful job with their documentation process.

Thank you, Medical Records!

KIDNEY CARE – CLOSE TO HOME

NOW OFFERING: LOCAL NEPHROLOGY SERVICES WITH USC



We are excited to announce that RRH is collaborating with USC Nephrology, a program of Keck Medicine of USC, to offer inpatient and outpatient nephrology services for kidney care and acute inpatient dialysis treatments to the Indian Wells Valley and surrounding communities.

The nephrology services launched with acute care inpatient consulting and dialysis services on July 6, and the outpatient nephrology clinic opened the following week. The clinic is staffed by a monthly rotation of Keck Medicine nephrologists, and telehealth clinic staffing are offered on a weekly basis in between monthly in-person clinics.

“Each year, RRH transfers out approximately 70 patients who are in acute or urgent need of dialysis. By partnering with a wider network of resources, we are making healthcare more convenient and reducing the need to travel out of town,” said RRH Chief Medical Officer Susan Reynolds, MD, PhD.

The expansion of RRH’s nephrology services marks Keck Medicine’s third collaboration with the hospital. The Nephrology outpatient clinic is located in the RRH East Medical Plaza Suite 2nd Floor, currently home to USC services for urology and neurosurgery. To make an appointment for RRH nephrology services, please contact (760) 463-8930.

PHYSICIANS ON ROTATION INCLUDE:



Kenneth Hallows,
MD, PhD



Arshia Ghaffari, DO



Nuha Ibrahim, MD



May Lwin, MD



Nuria Pastor-Soler,
MD, PhD



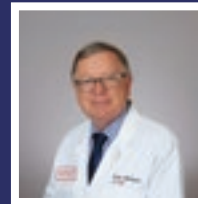
Yasir Qazi, MD



Roshan Rajani, MD



Neeraj Sharma, MD



Miroslaw Smogorzewski,
MD, PhD



Santhi Voora, MD



WHAT IS NEPHROLOGY?

Nephrology is a medical specialty which deals with diseases of the kidneys. RRH Nephrology services include hemodialysis treatments to help keep the body in balance. Dialysis is a treatment for end-stage kidney disease when the kidneys can no longer remove waste from the body or regulate its nutrients.


Ridgecrest Regional Hospital
NEPHROLOGY

in alliance with
Keck Medicine of USC
USC Nephrology

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME: USING HAND-BASED THERAPY TO EASE SYMPTOMS

If you're feeling persistent pain or numbness in your hands or wrists, you may be experiencing symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. This is a common condition that often affects individuals who perform repetitive motions, such as those who use a keyboard/mouse, tattoo artists, welders and warehouse packaging workers.

Fortunately, there are a number of therapies that can be employed before considering surgery. Ling Bing Li, occupational therapist at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, shares what carpal tunnel sufferers need to know – and what treatment options are available.

WHAT IS CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME?

Carpal tunnel is just as the name suggests – a tunnel that is created by the bones and a ligament that goes across the wrist, through which tendons and a nerve called the median nerve exist. Sometimes, the median nerve can get compressed, which leads to pain, tingling and numbness in the fingers. Typically, the symptoms affect the thumb, index finger, middle finger and the thumb side of the ring finger.

“Oftentimes, what people will find is when they just shake out their wrist, the pain goes away,” Li says. “Another major factor is when people wake up at night with wrist and hand pain; that could be a pretty big sign of carpal tunnel syndrome.”

ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE AT RISK?

Aside from performing certain motions, there are a few characteristics that put some individuals more at risk. Women are more likely to develop carpal tunnel syndrome, as well as anyone who has an anatomically narrow carpal tunnel or who has suffered a previous wrist fracture.

People who have diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis or hypothyroidism are also at increased risk for carpal tunnel syndrome. There are rare cases where women who are pregnant develop carpal tunnel syndrome. In those cases, the issue usually resolves after they give birth.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

One conservative approach is to splint the hand at night, keeping the hand and wrist in a neutral position. This prevents it from going in directions that create increased pressure at the carpal tunnel. Splints can also be worn during the day when performing repetitive motions. Li suggests icing to reduce inflammation, specific stretches and optimizing one's workstation to allow for the best posture and ergonomic stance possible.

If conservative therapy fails, carpal tunnel surgery is considered. This involves cutting apart the ligament that holds the tendons and median nerve in place.

“It's completely fine because you have other ligaments that hold things in place,” Li says. “That way, (surgeons) can relieve the pressure to the carpal tunnel and the median nerve.”

TIPS TO PREVENT (OR REDUCE) SYMPTOMS

While it's often not feasible to switch jobs in order to avoid carpal tunnel syndrome, Li says there are ways people can prevent it from developing or flaring up.

- Keep an eye on your posture/positioning at work and take breaks as needed. Try to take a break every hour to stretch out your hands and wrists.
- When performing a repetitive activity, keep your wrist in a neutral position – straight, without bending it forward or backward.
- As much as possible, try to avoid repetitive gripping and using too strong of a grip. Li recommends foam handles on tools to prevent exerting too much force.
- Use fingerless gloves to keep the hands warm when working in a cold environment.
- When working at a desk, keep the keyboard slightly lower than the elbow height, so the fingers can drop down in a relaxed position. Try not to lean your wrist against the edge of the desk.

If, despite these measures, you still experience symptoms, Li says to talk to your doctor. They can help determine if you need to see a hand specialist.

“Oftentimes, you don't even need to see a specialist; you could just use a brace,” Li says. “As long as that helps resolve the symptoms, you should be okay. If it doesn't get better, then of course you would want to see a person who is a bit more specialized in that area.”

For more information on Ridgecrest Regional Health Outpatient Rehab Services, visit RRH.org.

To listen to an in-depth conversation on this topic with Ling Li, occupational therapist at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital, follow this link: <https://radiomd.com/ridgecrest/item/44630>.



THE IMPORTANCE OF SKIN PROTECTION

*By Ali Lashgari, MD, FAAD,
Board Certified Dermatologist*

The sun is shining as intensely as ever on our fair city. The best thing anyone can do to prevent the effects of ultraviolet light on aging and sun damage is disciplined, long-term use of effective sun protection. Use of broad-spectrum sunblocks, wide brim hats, sun protective clothing and sun avoidance are all important in prevention of sun damage. However, let's be realistic; one of the reasons we live in Ridgecrest is to take advantage of outdoor activities, so sun avoidance is probably unlikely. Also, due to the very warm temperatures during the summer, wearing long sleeve shirts and pants as a means of sun protection is also improbable. So that really leaves sunblocks as the mainstay of protection against the intense ultraviolet rays we experience in our climate.

There is a myriad of sunscreens available on the market. Even a specific brand may offer a dozen different sunscreens – sport, children, sensitive skin, etc. This may make choosing a sunscreen not a straightforward process. Active ingredients in sunscreens function as either mineral or chemical UV filters that keep harmful rays from the skin. The most common sunscreens contain at least one or two chemical filters. The chemical sunscreens typically contain two or more of the following ingredients: oxybenzone, avobenzone, octisalate, octylene, octinoxate, and homosalate. The two main mineral blockers are zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. There is enough data to show that these mineral blockers, i.e. zinc or titanium, are safe and effective. However, for the chemical sunscreens,

the FDA has raised concerns about possible absorption of the active ingredients in the blood stream. Isolated studies have raised concerns over chemical sunscreens altering endocrine function, like thyroid or testosterone levels. These issues have been raised, but there is not enough data to determine safety of chemical sunscreens one way or another. The American Academy of Dermatology generally considers most chemical sunscreens safe, given that most have been used for many years without adverse sequelae. However, the FDA has recommended further studies for these chemical sunscreens. Furthermore, the chemical sunscreens have been shown to be harmful to coral reefs and have been banned in places like Key West and Hawaii.

Therefore, to combat the effects of aging, sun damage and skin cancer, the chronic, proper use of SPF 30+ zinc oxide or titanium dioxide sunblocks is recommended. These sunblocks last about two hours, and for a full day of outdoor activity, reapplication every couple of hours is encouraged. Also, although the mineral sunblocks are water resistant, reapplication after water exposure is needed. Finally, use of wide brim hats that cover the neck and ears is also highly recommended.

So, get out there and enjoy the summer, but do it safely by properly using the recommended sunblocks and/or wearing sun protective clothing like a wide brim hat.

DON'T DRY OUT!

MAKE SURE YOU DRINK ENOUGH WATER

You may wonder if you've been drinking enough water, especially when it's hot out. There's a lot of confusing advice out there about how much you really need. The truth is that most healthy bodies are very good at regulating water. Elderly people, young children and some special cases – like people taking certain medications – need to be a little more careful. Here's what you need to know.

"Water is involved in all body processes," says Dr. Jack M. Guralnik of NIH's National Institute on Aging. "You need the proper amount for all those processes to work correctly."

The body regulates how much water it keeps so it can maintain levels of the various minerals it needs to work properly. But every time you breathe out, sweat, urinate or have a bowel movement, you lose some fluid. When you lose fluid, your blood can become more concentrated. Healthy people compensate by releasing stores of water, mostly from muscles. And, of course, you get thirsty. That's your body's way of telling you it needs more water.

At a certain point, however, if you lose enough water, your body can't compensate. Eventually, you can become dehydrated, meaning that your body doesn't have enough fluid to work properly. "Basically, you're drying out," Guralnik says.

Any healthy person can become dehydrated on hot days, when you've been exercising hard or when you have a disease or condition like diarrhea, in which you can lose a lot of fluid very quickly. But dehydration is generally more of a problem in the elderly, who can have a decreased sensitivity to thirst, and very young children who can't yet tell their parents when they're thirsty.

How much water does your body need? Guralnik says you have to consider the circumstances. "If you're active on a hot day, you need more water than if you're sitting in an air-conditioned office," he explains. An average person on an average day needs about three quarts of water a day. But if you're out in the hot sun, you'll need a lot more than that.

Signs of dehydration in adults are being thirsty, urinating less often than usual, having dark-colored urine, having dry skin, feeling tired or experiencing dizziness and fainting. Signs of dehydration in babies and young children include a dry mouth and tongue, crying without tears, no wet diapers for three hours or more, a high fever and being unusually sleepy or drowsy.

If you suspect dehydration, drink small amounts of water over a period of time. Taking too much all at once can overload your stomach and make you throw up. For people exercising in the heat and losing a lot of minerals in sweat, sports drinks can be helpful. But avoid any drinks that have caffeine.

Remember: The best way to deal with dehydration is to prevent it. Make sure to drink enough water in situations where you might become dehydrated. For those caring for small children or older people with conditions that can lead to dehydration, Guralnik advises, "You need to prompt the person to drink fluids and remind them often. It's not just a one-time problem."

Source: nih.gov - NIH News in Health

DEHYDRATION: WHAT TO DO

If you suspect someone is suffering from dehydration or a heat-related illness:

- Get the person out of the sun and into a cool place.
- Offer fluids like water, fruit and vegetable juices.
- Urge the person to lie down and rest.
- Encourage the person to shower, bathe or sponge off with cool water.
- Watch for heat stroke, which is especially dangerous and requires emergency medical attention. Look for a body temperature above 104° and symptoms such as confusion, combativeness, faintness, bizarre behavior, staggering, strong rapid pulse, dry flushed skin, lack of sweating or unconsciousness.



COVID-19 VACCINATIONS:

PROTECTING CHILDREN, CONTRIBUTING TO HERD IMMUNITY



Dr. Luigi Cendana
Rural Health Pediatrics

When the COVID-19 vaccines became available, there was a collective sigh of relief among many healthcare professionals and laypersons. But, at the time, vaccination wasn't an option for younger populations. That's now changing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics recently approved the Pfizer vaccine for administration to children over 12 years of age. Moderna is seeking emergency use authorization for the same age group, but Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are approved for those 18 and up at present.

Dr. Luigi Cendana, a pediatrician at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital's Rural Health Pediatrics Clinic, discusses the importance of vaccinating younger populations.



VACCINATION EXPECTATIONS

“The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, and most importantly, very effective,” Dr. Cendana advises. “It is important for families to know that though the vaccine is being used currently, it is continuously being monitored by the CDC and FDA for adverse side effects, the most common of that being pain at the injection site, fever, headache, muscle aches and tiredness.”

Patients are asked to remain in the facility for 15 to 30 minutes after receiving the injection, so that any allergic or anaphylactic reactions are caught right away.

There have been reports of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) and pericarditis (irritation of the tissue around the heart) in some adolescents after receiving the vaccine. This situation is under continued investigation. The CDC is aware and has determined the benefits of the vaccine outweigh the risks.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VACCINATION

Children under age 10 are less likely to become infected and spread infection of COVID-19, but adolescents can spread the virus as quickly as adults. Vaccines are designed as preventative medicine that also aid in herd immunity.

“We must protect our vulnerable populations,” cautions Dr. Cendana. “And, for those individuals who cannot get the vaccines – especially those under the age of 12, infants or children less than two years of age who, if they were to get COVID-19, are more likely to be hospitalized. And of course, we must think about the pediatric populations who suffer from asthma or who are immunocompromised, who have a greater risk of complications.”

Children who have had COVID-19 should still get the vaccine, as variants of the virus have been identified. The vaccine itself cannot infect children with COVID-19.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD

COVID-19 infection presents like an upper respiratory infection. Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, abdominal pain, and muscle aches.

“There are severe consequences of COVID-19 as well, such as something called MIS-C, which is a multi-inflammatory disease in children as a result of COVID-19,” warns Dr. Cendana. “To put it in very simple terms, basically the body has such an overwhelming response to the disease that it attacks itself and has a tremendous amount of inflammation. That can cause issues.”

For children who cannot yet get the vaccine, it is important for other members of the household to be vaccinated. Mask wearing and social distancing are still important. Practice appropriate respiratory hygiene and hand washing.

“I want to let parents know that in pediatrics, the most important thing we focus on is preventative medicine, and vaccines are one of the cornerstones in our practice to ensure safety and well-being for children. If your child is able to get the COVID-19 vaccine, please do so,” urges Dr. Cendana. “It is safe and effective. It can be given concurrently with other vaccines that we currently give children. And, if you have any concerns, your pediatrician or your family medicine physician should be able to address your concerns so that you may feel comfortable in providing your child with the vaccine.”

To listen to an in-depth conversation on this topic with Dr. Luigi Cendana, a pediatrician at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital’s Rural Health Pediatrics Clinic, follow this link: www.rrh.org/podcasts.



Ridgecrest Regional Hospital
PODCAST

UPCOMING EVENTS



RRH FOUNDATION'S MILLION DOLLAR GALA

September 25

The RRH Foundation's 5th annual gourmet gala is sold out. For more information or to be added to the ticket waitlist, please call (760) 499-3855 or email the foundation at Kimberly.metcalfe@rrh.org.



4TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE VILLAGE

December 3-4

More information to follow.



2021 CHILDBIRTH CLASSES

Location

113 Sydnor St., Ridgecrest, CA

Instructed by Lorie Ochoa, RN, CCE, IBCLC.

Sign up early – limited number allowed in each session.

Call (760) 499-3032 to pre-register and for more information.

Please, no children. Face masks required.

Session VI

6:30-8:45 p.m.

Sept. 28, Sept. 30, Oct. 5, Oct. 7, Oct. 12, Oct. 19, Oct. 21

For babies due in November.

Session VII

6:30-8:45 p.m.

Oct. 26, Nov. 2, Nov. 4, Nov. 9, Nov. 16, Nov. 18, Nov. 23

For babies due in December 2021 or January 2022.

BREASTFEEDING PRESENTATION

10 a.m.-12 p.m., Friday, October 15

North Campus, North Classroom (Above Urgent Care)

Ladies-only class (no men or children). All participants are

required to wear a mask. No registration required. Free/no cost.

BREAST FRIENDS SUPPORT GROUP

For local breastfeeding women

Every Thursday

12-1 p.m.

South Education Classroom (above Urgent Care)

Must call to reserve: (760) 499-3032. Limited places available.



ONGOING GROUPS AND PROGRAMS

SILVERSNEAKERS AND GENTLE CHAIR YOGA

8 a.m.-12 p.m., Monday-Thursday

ROCK STEADY BOXING

Times vary depending on level, Monday-Thursday.
Still meeting in person

This is a non-contact, boxing-inspired exercise program for those with Parkinson's disease that focuses on balance, muscle power, hand-eye coordination and more.

TYPE 2 DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

5:30-6:30 p.m., fourth Thursday of the month

This support group is for those with Type 2 diabetes or loved ones of those with Type 2 diabetes. Learn more about diabetes and how it affects your body, learn problem-solving techniques and share day-to-day struggles.



DIABETES EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION PROGRAM™ (DEEP™)

This program is an evidence-based diabetes self-management education program for people with pre-diabetes or diabetes. For more information, call (760) 499-3825.

DIABETES EMPOWERMENT EDUCATION PROGRAM™

Held quarterly – call for details

This program is a 6-week educational and hands-on program that goes over what diabetes is and how it can potentially affect your body and empowers you to know how to make changes to prevent complications from diabetes.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

6-7 p.m., first Tuesday of the month

This group will provide educational information about loss and grief, encourage healthy coping and adapting skills and offer emotional support through mutual sharing.



ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

1-2:30 p.m., first Wednesday of the month

The Alzheimer's Association caregiver support group is conducted by trained facilitators and provides a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to develop a support system, talk through issues and ways of coping and more.

JOURNEY TO HAPPINESS SENIORS GROUP

10-11:30 a.m., every Wednesday

No-cost opportunity for seniors to come together on a journey of maintaining happiness, joy and quality of life.

JOURNEY TO HAPPINESS CAREGIVER GROUP

6-7:30 p.m., second and fourth Tuesday

This group provides a place for caregivers to talk, recharge, smile and learn.

PROGRAMS ARE BEING HELD VIRTUALLY.

To learn more and sign up for any of these programs, contact (760) 499-3825 or visit rrh.org/events-calendar.

Only
36.7%* of our
community
is fully vaccinated
against COVID-19

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**We can prevent
another surge!**

Do your part to protect
yourself and those you love.

Ask your provider




to schedule your

**COVID-19
vaccine today!**

Visit myturn.ca.gov to schedule
your appointment or ask your
healthcare provider at your next visit!

**Ridgecrest**
REGIONAL HOSPITAL

1081 N. China Lake Blvd. | Ridgecrest, CA 93555

   RRH.ORG

*July 2021 data for
zip code 93555