

View from the Village

July-August 2025
Vol. 3, No. 4



News & Announcements

Normal forgetting—or something more? It used to be cancer that kept us up at night, cataloging symptoms and wondering if our bodies were betraying us in some subtle way. Nowadays, it's dementia that looms large.

In "How Do We Treat Memory Loss?," a Friday Morning Speaker Series presentation on June 6, Inova cognitive/behavioral neurologist Dr. Jennifer Pauldurai was careful to distinguish between symptoms of normal brain aging and a variety of brain disorders. Memory changes can occur in the course of brain disease like dementia or a movement disorder, she explained, but they can also be related to other factors. And memory is just one part of functional cognition, which also includes decision making, communication, and attention to social cues.

"A normal functioning brain," Pauldurai said, "should be able to walk, talk, pay bills, take medications, cook, clean, and maintain a house, even if we are old."

If that begins to change—if you find that your brain is thinking a little slower, but you're compensating, you're figuring it out—you may be in a state called "mild cognitive impairment (MCI)." Your first step is a visit to your primary care physician. That may point to a cause—medications, menopause, sleep apnea, an infection, a tumor, even a head injury you had years ago. Family history is also relevant. It's a progression, Pauldurai said. "We never start with a normal brain and jump to end dementia overnight."

Further tests might include a CT or MRI, mental status evaluations, or extended neuropsychology testing. There are biopsies now that can identify Parkinson's or Lewy Body disease. Specific symptoms lead to diagnosis and treatment, Pauldurai explained, as she answered multiple questions from a clearly engaged audience.

What she suggests older adults focus on is, 'Am I having trouble maintaining my day-to-day functions?' If the answer is yes, don't Google around. Go get evaluated. There are medications that can help. Diet and exercise can help. Occupational therapy or behavioral therapy can help. Her closing advice? "Every person's quality of life is going to be different... Find something that gives you a purpose, something that gives your brain a reason to live and use it every single day... That is one of best ways to prevent dementia."



Timely Opportunities

"Familiar Touch." Playing at Cinema Arts Theatre through July 17, this award-winning, 90-minute film quietly and compassionately follows a formerly independent woman (actress Kathryn Chalfant) in her 80s, as she adjusts to life in a memory care home. Filmed in an actual California facility, with residents in some minor roles. Call 703-978-6853 for show times. Seniors pay \$7 on Wednesdays.

Young at Heart Senior Center, 4401 Sideburn Rd. Membership is free, but some events have fees. Here a few summer opportunities until Lunchtime Learning sessions resume. Stop by to sign up, or call 703-273-6090.

Friday, July 11. Summer Picnic Party, 11:30 a.m. \$10. Register by Wed., July 9.

Mondays, 4 p.m. Tech Help for Seniors. Free; call or sign up for appointment.

Day Trips. Space remains for *August 6, Burnside Farms & 2 Silos Brewing*, and *August 13, Marine Corps Museum & Mission BBQ*. Fees apply. Call or stop by for information.

Monday, August 4. Registration for September-October day trips. 8:30 walk-in for city residents; 10:30 walk-in for county residents. Trip details coming soon.

Village in the City Friday Morning Speaker Series

Sessions are suspended for the summer. Mark your calendar for these fall events:

Friday, October 3. "Spotting Scams & Staying Safe." Presentation by AARP.

Friday, November 14. "Preparing for a Health Crisis." Presentation by Heather Suri of Pathways in Aging.

Brain Health: What Caregivers Need to Know (Virtual Webinar)

Wednesday, August 20, 12:00–1:00 p.m.

Rapid developments in brain health research have helped focus efforts on slowing or preventing cognitive change through lifestyle interventions. Learn how caregivers can help maintain their own and a loved one's brain health; review specific risk factors for dementia, such as heart health, sleep, stress, and social isolation; and discuss small changes that can have an impact.

Sign up at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hscore/EReg/Registration.aspx?groupID_102

Resources

Caregiver On-Demand Video Library

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging offers a YouTube library of on-demand training videos to access and learn at your convenience. Enhance your caregiving skills, stay updated on best practices, or simply find helpful resources: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9D0cdqzRCqDUj9a3uU12hsM8ngov6ufl>

Fairfax Village in the City

Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St.; Fairfax, VA 22030

Phone: 703-385-5738 | Email: Jason.Scadron@fairfaxva.gov