

Local News

# SUMMIT BY MORRISON AND THE MORRISON ASSISTED LIVING AND SKILLED NURSING CARE

## A healthy conversation: Questions seniors need to ask



BY CHAD DINGMAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our bodies are continually changing as we age and our medical needs change as well. That's why it is critical to maintain regular communication with a primary care physician.

Don't be afraid to ask for your doctor's advice

and expertise. What seems like a small thing could actually be a precursor to something more serious. Or, your doctor may reassure you that what you are experiencing is perfectly normal.

Here are eight questions you can ask your provider:

I am noticing changes, should I be concerned? If you have noticed recent changes in appetite, weight, memory, vision or balance, let your doctor know. Stay in tune with any changes in your body such as skin discoloration, lack of energy or change in sleep patterns.

Joint pain, swelling, tenderness, redness or stiffness should be reported. Don't let things go unattended.

This condition runs in my family, what should I do? Genetics play a huge role in preventative healthcare. For example, if there is a family history of diabetes, ask if you should be tested.

Do I need to see a specialist? Ask your doctor if seeing a specialist should be the next step to address a specific problem. Your primary care physician is the best resource for finding a specialist who will fit your needs.

What blood tests do I need? Work with your primary care doctor to keep your blood tests up to date. Always request an explanation of the results and a copy for your records.

Am I eligible for any cancer screenings? Do you have a family history of cancer? Preventative cancer screenings such as colonoscopies (recommended to be first scheduled when you turn 50) and mammograms are important for staying on top of your health.

Am I at risk for diabetes? Type 2, or late onset diabetes, is common in

adults over the age of 60. If you have already been diagnosed, have a family history of diabetes, or have been identified as "pre-diabetic," talk with your doctor about treatment plans.

Am I at risk for osteoporosis? Ask your doctor about your bone density, Vitamin D and Calcium levels. Bone tissue degenerates with age, causing frail bones and making falls more serious. Osteoporosis is more common among older women, but also occurs in men.

What are early signs of dementia and Alzheimer's? Knowing

the early signs impacts treatment and planning options. You and your family members should watch for signs of memory loss, changes in personality or depression.

If you don't have a primary care physician, the New Hampshire Servicelink Community Resource Directory ([www.servicelink.nh.gov](http://www.servicelink.nh.gov), 866-634-9412) is a resource.

So, grab a pad of paper to jot down your questions and your doctor's answers. You will be on your way to having meaningful conversations that could help guide you down a healthier path.

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# Summer safety tips provided by LRH

LITTLETON — Summer is here! Many of us will spend a lot of time in our great outdoors. But... this also means we need to pay extra attention to family safety. While relaxing, injuries are not the first thing on our minds.

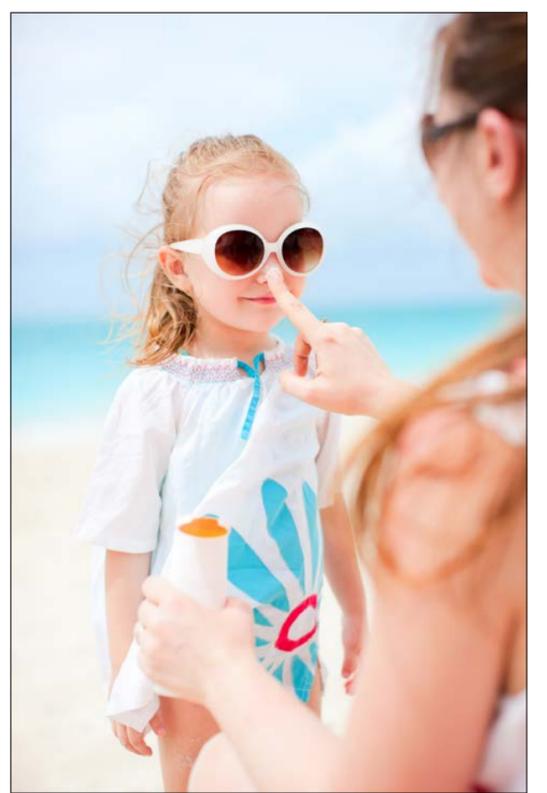
To quote Dr. Patel, pediatrician at Littleton Regional Healthcare's North Country Pediatrics Practice, "We want you and your families to get outside as much

as possible during the summer. But we also want you to plan ahead to be safe."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) points out that drowning is a leading cause of injury death in children ages one to 14. Each day, three children die from drowning. To protect kids from drowning, the CDC urges parents to learn life-saving skills. These include

basic swimming, floating and CPR. Fencing off backyard pools with self-closing/latching gates is a must. All young children need life jackets when near water. And young children must be supervised at all times when near any type of water—even the bathtub.

The CDC also cites burns and scalding as leading causes of injury to children. Each day, emergency rooms treat



more than 300 children between ages 19 and younger for burn-related injuries. Knowing how to prevent these accidents is easy. And when cooking outdoors, always be sure an adult stays right by the grille. Same for a campfire. An adult must be in charge. If you have a hose which you hook up to a sprinkler, always let the water run for a few minutes before you join it to the hose. The hot summer sun can heat the water in the hose to temps far above the air temperature—high enough to scald. To learn more

about family safety, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/safekid/>.

We must also do our best to prevent mosquito bites. These insects can spread viruses and other diseases. Different mosquitoes spread different diseases, and they bite at different times of the day. The CDC advises using an insect repellent registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These are proven safe, even for pregnant and breastfeeding women. To find the right one, go to <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents>.



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