

# VBPM Connection

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## Assisted Living – An Exciting Alternative

Many of our patients or their families are often in a quandary about what to do when it becomes difficult to live independently.

Sometimes, it just becomes unsafe to live alone. Sometimes, it's just because it's too hard to get from one end of the house to the other; or because it becomes too difficult to fix meals and eat properly or to get a bath without someone there to help.

If you or a family member find yourselves in this situation, many times the first thought is, "Oh no! I'm going to have to live in a nursing home." This is not necessarily the answer, however. An assisted living facility may serve your needs very

well.

There are a lot of misconceptions about assisted living communities. Many think they are just like long-term-care nursing facilities, but this is not the case. I had the pleasure of visiting Brighton Gardens recently and found a beautiful, home-like atmosphere, more like a fine hotel or condominium than a nursing facility. There are many quality services and activities for the residents, all of whom seemed very happy and friendly. The food and dining areas are elegant and inviting.

There are special financial advantages available to families of



Veterans, which seems to be a little-known fact.

Also, the apartments can be used for short respite periods as well as for permanent residency. Physical therapy is also usually available to assist with rehabilitation after hospitalization if necessary.

In summary, don't overlook the option of assisted living as an exciting alternative rather than continuing to struggle to live alone.

Download your copy of the newsletter from our website at [www.vbpm1.com](http://www.vbpm1.com)

## More Weight Loss Tips

Stay active. Move around. Get off the sofa during TV commercials and walk around. Park your car at the far end of the parking lot. Take the stairs when you can.

Box up half of your meal when dining out and eat that half for lunch the next day.

Drink a full 8 oz. glass of water before every meal.

Don't eat anything for 2 hours before bedtime.

Eat large helpings of low-cal vegetables and smaller amounts of potatoes and pasta.

## Dementia

Dementia is the “acquired deterioration in cognitive ability that impairs the successful performance of activities of daily living” (Harrison’s Textbook of Medicine).

There are many different kinds of dementia.

**Alzheimer’s** is just one kind, although it is the most common. Another common cause is

**vascular dementia** usually caused by multiple strokes over a period of years. The evaluation of dementia requires at least one imaging study of the brain and some blood work to be sure there is not a treatable cause, like low thyroid levels or low B12 levels. Most causes of chronic dementia are not curable unfortunately. There are medications

that may help slow the process somewhat.

Many people with **mild memory problems** are worried that they are developing dementia. Most of the time these mild problems, like forgetting where you left your keys, etc, are normal and get a little worse with age, but they are not due to dementia.

*“There are many different kinds of dementia. Alzheimer’s is just one kind...”*

## Eating a Healthy Diet

Even if you *don’t* have obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure or cholesterol problems, does that mean you can eat anything you want? That’s not a good idea because inevitably eating anything and everything will eventually lead to one of those problems in the future. In order to maintain optimum health, we **all** should try to eat a healthy, nutritious diet.

**What IS a healthy diet?** A healthy diet is one that includes all the major food groups, **balanced for proteins, carbohydrates and fats**. Aggressive avoidance of any one of these elements is not healthy in the long run. By the same token, an excess of any one of these components is not healthy either. “Everything in moderation” is still a good rule to go by.

**Sensible portion control** is also essential for managing proper weight.

**In general**, avoidance of excessive amounts of salt, monosaturated fats, sweets and fried foods balanced by increased amounts of vegetables, high fiber, fruits and whole grains would be a healthier way to go. See our nutritionist if you have any questions.

## Did You Know...?

... Most anti-inflammatory medications can cause bleeding ulcers, kidney disease and liver disease?

...Some antidepressants are useful for chronic pain?

...More than 50% of the US population will have diabetes by the year 2020 (unless we can all lose weight and develop routine exercise regimens?)

...Binge drinking

increases heart disease risk more than regular moderate drinking?

...Low magnesium levels could cause osteoporosis, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart problems?

## Fibromyalgia

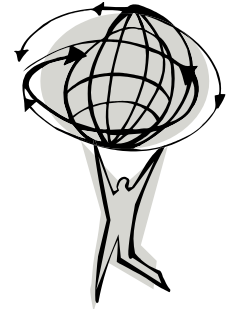
This is a somewhat mysterious disorder of muscles and soft tissues that appears to be related to a neurophysiologic abnormality where the nerve meets the muscle. It is very common and causes a lot of problems with acute and chronic pain, profound fatigue, multiple painful trigger points throughout the body and chronic

insomnia. Although it is never life-threatening, sometimes the treatments can be dangerous as doctors attempt to control the debilitating symptoms.

Fibromyalgia is often closely associated with the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome which can also be disabling by itself due to the severity of the fatigue that it causes.

Treatment of fibromyalgia often includes exercise and antidepressants because of their relaxing effect on muscles, along with agents directed toward reducing the frequency and intensity of nerve impulses.

Pain medications, muscle relaxants and sleeping pills are sometimes required as a last resort.



## Diarrhea

This is a common problem that most people have at one time or another.

Most of the time, it is very transient and related to something we've eaten that didn't agree with our digestive tracts or due to a virus. Sometimes it can occur after we have been exposed to antibiotics taken for an upper respiratory infection or

urinary infection. There are two kinds of diarrhea that can occur in this situation. One kind is just a side effect of the antibiotic. The other is an actual intestinal infection that is caused by a change in the normal bowel bacteria induced by the antibiotic. This is often referred to as C. diff because Clostridium

difficile is the name of the bacteria that causes it.

If this infection occurs, then the offending antibiotic should be stopped and treatment started with another antibiotic – either Flagyl or Vancomycin. for 2 weeks. There is a fairly high risk of recurrence which then requires longer treatment.

## Probiotics

Probiotics are prescriptions or supplements that can be used to restore the bowel bacteria back to its normal balance. These are often used along with antibiotics in order to help prevent C.diff or antibiotic-induced

diarrhea. They can help, but they are probably over-rated.

There are various types and brands available. Sometimes yogurt is helpful. Acidophilus, Align and Culturelle are other

brands. They are sometimes used for tummy aches in children or in adults with irritable bowel syndrome. Florastor is the prescription form that doctors often prescribe for the best results.

*“Probiotics... are often used along with antibiotics in order to help prevent C.diff or antibiotic-induced diarrhea”*

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Internal Medicine – The way it was meant to be practiced.



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**We're on the Web!**

[www.vbpm1.com](http://www.vbpm1.com)

Virginia Beach Premier Medical is a membership “concierge” internal medicine practice specializing in comprehensive and compassionate, individualized and personalized patient-centered care. We pride ourselves on full continuity of care – in the office, in the hospital, or even at home.

If you would like more information about our practice please call us at 757-416-6750. Ask to speak with Brittany, our office manager, or Dr. Parks or Dr. Warth. We'd be happy to talk with you anytime.



## Discount Referral Program

**Here's an incentive!**

If you are a member of our practice and if you refer someone to us who then signs up, we will give you \$200 off your next year's fee.

**Here's another plus!**

You can accumulate these referral discounts so that if you refer multiple people who then sign up, you will get \$200 off the next year's fee for each one.



*Happy Holidays!*