



Health story tips and questions: Call 352-753-1119 ext. 5374

HealthExtra

Autism Diagnosis Often Takes Longer for Girls, C4

Tech Neck: Chronic neck pain can be caused by poor posture while using technology. C7

Research: A new study has found that intense sugar cravings could be linked to loneliness. C8

America's Healthiest Hometown

Our community medical partners are committed to making The Villages a pre-eminent home to quality health care, longevity and enhanced quality of life for seniors. It is a mission crafted through innovative primary care practices, cutting-edge technology, and a nationally renowned hospital system and research university. Here is a roundup of health and medical happenings this week, compiled by Daily Sun Senior Writer Taylor Strickland.

From Local Health Staff

There is good news for brain health, said Kari Walker, population health specialist for The Villages Health. "Exercise increases neuroplasticity in the brain," Walker said. "If the overall health of our brain is largely dependent on the health of the blood vessels, that means we have a lot of control through diet and exercise." Research is starting to show that certain exercises stimulate different parts of the brain. For instance, the temporal lobe plays a major role in memory and can be stimulated by learning new skills, aerobic exercise or word games.

From Local Health Researchers

Thanks to AI, UF Health researchers have found a new method of using MRIs to investigate signs of brain aging. Each year of added brain age is predictive of a 6% increase in the risk of death, said associate professor Yenisel Cruz-Almeida, the study's senior author. The researchers trained an AI model to create high-resolution MRIs from clinical scans, which was previously only possible using expensive research-grade brain scanners. Cruz-Almeida said she hopes doctors will one day use MRIs to monitor brain health as easily as general practitioners use blood tests to monitor cholesterol.

At The Villages Health Learning Center

The Villages Dementia Care Coordination Program, led by dementia care specialist Melissa Denham, is hosting a free Dementia Resource Expo from 8 a.m. to noon Friday at the Wildwood Community Center. Residents can learn more about the many local resources available for those living with dementia, their loved ones and caregivers. More than 40 vendors from throughout the region will be available to discuss their various programs and services with guests. To register and learn more, go to thevillageshealth.com/events or call 352-674-8949 for registration help or questions.

The Villages Health

The Villages Health opened its doors in 2012 with the goal of putting the focus back on patients. It includes seven primary, and two specialty, care centers in the community.

LOCAL EVENTS

BOOST YOUR HEALTH I.Q.

1

Regular blood donation can lower blood pressure and reduce risk for heart attacks, according to Columbia University Irving Medical Center. If a donor's hemoglobin is high, donating helps lower blood viscosity, which is associated with the formation of blood clots, heart attacks and stroke.

2

The Prostate Cancer Education and Support Group in The Villages will host Dr. Mark Scholz via prerecorded video from 7-8 p.m. May 1 at Laurel Manor Recreation to discuss prostate-specific membrane antigens and those newly diagnosed with prostate cancer. All are welcome to attend.

3

Roughly 80% of breast cancers are estrogen-receptor positive, according to the National Institutes of Health. ER-positive tumors are more likely to respond to hormone therapy than ER-negative tumors. Doctors can test for hormone receptors to determine the best treatment methods.

Join a Clinical Study: Opportunities to participate in health care research in The Villages include Charter Research (charterresearch.com/open-studies), the UF Health Precision Research Center (tinyurl.com/UFVillagesResearch), and K2 Medical Research (craigcurtismd.com).

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Measles Cases on the Rise

A rising number of measles cases in the U.S. this year is raising concerns over a comeback of a disease that was declared eliminated in this country 24 years ago. Falling vaccination rates and a rise in cases are raising questions for older adults who got a measles vaccine a long time ago or maybe aren't sure if they ever got vaccinated. Here's what you need to know:

WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

People born before 1957 are nearly always immune. The vaccine was made available in 1963, but in the decade before that virtually every child got measles by 15, making them immune. The CDC considers people born before 1957 to be protected from measles.

125

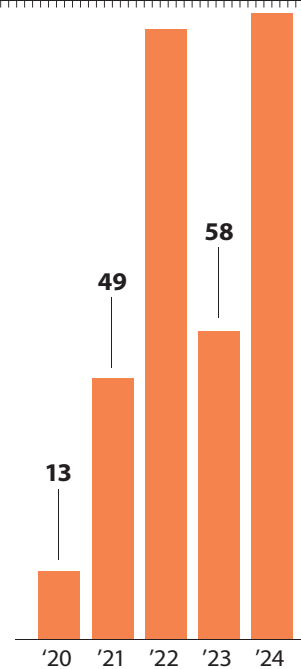
The number of measles cases in the U.S. so far in 2024, with 18 states reporting at least one.

THE VACCINE

Measles vaccines first became available in 1963. Laws requiring a vaccine before attending school rolled out slowly so not all children were vaccinated. Initially there were two vaccines: a live version and a "killed" version, which was not considered effective.

ANOTHER DOSE?

Some who got the vaccine in the '60s may have gotten a dose of the killed vaccine and should consider an updated shot. The CDC said one dose of live vaccine is adequate unless you're high risk. If you got the standard two doses, you should be protected.



PREVENTING ANOTHER OUTBREAK

Measles was officially considered eliminated from the U.S. in 2000. 2019 saw nearly 1,300 cases, the most since its elimination. Current numbers may seem low in comparison, but it's important to remember measles is serious and can lead to severe complications.