

UCLA Longevity Center Newsletter

Fall 2025

Director's Message

Greetings to Longevity Center members, old and new. The Longevity Center had a productive year, thanks to our supporters, collaborating colleagues, and our fabulous team! We offered our healthy aging programs, expanded collaborations with UCLA researchers and offered a broad range of webinar topics. Didiana Huezo joined our team in January of 2025 and now she and Olivia Ballesteros coordinate Longevity Center programs and contribute to creative projects. Others work behind the scenes to bring you webinars and manage our infrastructure. I am lucky to have such a wonderful team. We are all grateful for YOU and your support of the Center.

Linda Ercoli, PhD

About the Center

The Longevity Center offers educational programs to people 55 and older, empowering them to live better, longer lives. The cornerstone of this work is a range of programs for promoting cognitive and general well-being. The **Memory Training** course teaches about memory function, and research-backed techniques that can help compensate for mild, age-related memory challenges. **Brain Boot Camp** is a healthy lifestyle mini course about the pillars of cognitive health: diet, exercise, stress reduction, socialization, sleep, and cognitive exercises. The **Senior Scholars** program enables adults to audit UCLA undergraduate courses, choosing from over 200 in person and online classes. The **Senior Resource Directory** lists UCLA campus resources and activities for mature adults. **Bi-monthly Webinars** address a range of topics on wellness, brain health, mental health, medical advances, and longevity. Join our mailing list to receive **bi-weekly emails** on upcoming events and aging and memory **research** opportunities.

Updates

Meet Stephanie Leal, PhD.



Dr. Leal is a new partner of the Longevity Center. Dr. Stephanie Leal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Integrative Biology & Physiology and the Department of Psychology at UCLA, and [Director of the Neuroscience of Memory, Mood, & Aging Laboratory](#). Her research interests focus on the neurobiological mechanisms underlying memory and how these change in aging and disease states. She develops and utilizes sensitive cognitive tasks, advanced neuroimaging techniques, and translates these methods to study cognitive aging and impairment. Her goal is to understand the factors that influence memory to restore the system to normal function in disorders of mood and memory.

Dietary Survey and Cooking for Longevity

Based on 155 responses to our Dietary Habits survey, the Longevity Center partnered with Chef Julia Rhoton, Director of the [UCLA Teaching Kitchen](#), on a new webinar “**Cooking for Longevity**”. The survey revealed that respondents’ preferred foods included fish, chicken, eggs, vegetables, and pasta and stir fry dishes. We created a “cook-a-long” with Chef Julia webinar featuring how to prepare a salmon, orzo pasta and broccoli dish. *Email us with your ideas for another Cooking for Longevity webinar:* longevity@mednet.ucla.edu.

New Pilot Program: Dementia Insights

In the spring of 2026, the Longevity Center will pilot “**Dementia Insights**” a short course focusing on what people newly diagnosed with dementia need to know. Topics will include Understanding Your Diagnosis, Resources and Support, Living Your Best Life, and Planning for the Future. Stay tuned for more information.

Website Redesign

The Longevity Center will launch a redesigned website in spring 2026. You can still find us at our usual address: <https://teams.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/contact-ucla-longevity-center>

Hearing Loss and Memory

Recent studies indicate that people with hearing loss who do not use hearing aids have higher risk for dementia. Conversely, wearing hearing aids may reduce dementia risk.

The reasons for this association are not entirely clear, but hypotheses include: (1) brain pathology due to Alzheimer disease or vascular disease affects both brain auditory centers and memory centers, (2) The brain's struggle to process information results in tissue changes or atrophy in auditory and memory areas, (3) People with hearing loss become socially isolated, which is a risk factor for dementia. Hearing loss exacerbates cognitive problems in people with dementia.

In any event, people with hearing loss miss information, they may be embarrassed about their hearing loss and feel frustrated and isolated.

Who should receive a hearing test?

Experts advise that people with even mild hearing loss seek a hearing evaluation. Loved ones may be the first to notice your hearing changes. If you experience sudden hearing loss, see your doctor.

What are obstacles to having hearing aids?

Finances, embarrassment, or physical discomfort.

What are options for hearing aids?

An audiologist will test hearing and provide fitted prescription hearing aids (Cost \$2000 to \$7000 per device). People with severe hearing loss will need prescription hearing aids. Hearing aids are now available without a prescription over the counter—these are for mild to moderate hearing loss. The FDA approved Apple Air Pods (Pro 2 or Pro 3 and a compatible iPhone or iPad running iOS 18 or later) for mild to moderate hearing loss. Hearing amplifiers, sometimes called pocket talkers, are helpful, as are wireless headphones for television. People who are not helped by hearing aids may qualify for surgical implants. **Does insurance cover new or refurbished hearing aids?** Original Medicare parts A and B-- no coverage; Some Medicare Advantage plans and the Veterans Administration offer benefits. For adults, Medicaid coverage varies by state and eligibility is subject to change. Charitable organizations, like Help America Hear, the Miracle Ear Foundation, and local chapters of Lions Club International may provide new or refurbished hearing aids for eligible applicants.

For more information see this [interview](#) with UCLA otolaryngologist Andrew McCall MD.

Dementia risk and hearing:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaotolaryngology/fullarticle/2813302>

In Loving Memory

Mary Hutchinson

Allan Tarlow

Doris Wong Tang

Gratitude

Thank you to the following donors for supporting our programming and promoting healthy longevity through lifelong learning and social connection. You make our programming possible.

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The UCLA Longevity Center appreciates all who participate in our programs, donate and follow us. We are here because of you and for you. We wish you all a happy holiday season and look forward to bringing you more lifelong learning opportunities in 2026.

How To Find Us: Website: <https://teams.semel.ucla.edu/longevity/contact-ucla-longevity-center> for information about upcoming classes and webinars, and research.

Email: longevity@mednet.ucla.edu .

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