

# Why Dr. Sanjay Gupta is coming to Charlotte

By Michael J. Solender

PUBLISHED IN: HEALTH & FAMILY

Dr. Sanjay Gupta is best known for his work with the CNN television news network, where he serves as chief medical correspondent.

On Wednesday, he'll take part in a public forum in Charlotte being hosted by Queens University.

Gupta, 43, is an assistant professor of neurosurgery and a practicing trauma neurosurgeon at Emory University's Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta.

Since joining CNN in 2001 as part of the team reporting on events surrounding 9/11, Gupta has become a high-profile media figure on health, the medical arena, and a broad range of health-related issues. In addition to his regular TV reporting, Gupta hosts the weekend medical affairs program "House Call with Dr. Sanjay Gupta."

In a conversation with the Observer, he shared his thoughts on a variety of health issues.

## **Q. What is the message you want to share with your Charlotte audience?**

I live at the intersection of medicine and media. I want to provide some background on why we cover certain stories, how stories are selected that we cover and the impact that these stories have on the people that see them. I'm very interested in the effects or impact stories have on people and how we might be able to measure that. Whether it is a wellness piece or something about a war zone and people hear messages on television, how likely are they to act upon what they've seen and heard, and why do certain stories resonate with people?

## **Q. You'll be visiting the Levine Cancer Institute on your visit to Charlotte; what are your expectations?**

The idea that 30 percent of cancer patients nationally get the wrong diagnosis, the wrong treatment and subpar outcomes as a result of care that is (not recognized as best practice) is obviously troubling. They have invited me to visit and observe the practices they've put in place that address these type of statistics. Levine is employing everything from online counseling sessions to looking at the genomics of tumors. This is absolutely where we should be headed nationally. I'm curious to learn more.

## • Want to go?

The Learning Society of Queens presents Dr. Sanjay Gupta.

**When:** 7 p.m. Wednesday.

**Where:** Knight Theater at Levine Center for the Arts.

**Tickets:** Available at the door: \$45.

**More information:** <http://www.queens.edu/News-and-Information/Dr-Sanjay-Gupta.html>

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**Q. Why do Americans struggle so much with obesity?**

The health illiteracy rate in our country is higher than people realize. There is no single answer. It is beyond eat less, exercise more – that is not a bad message; it is just not complete. Not all calories are the same, for example, and this has meaning for weight loss. Not all exercise has equal benefit either. Intense exercise in the morning, for example, and getting your heart rate over a certain level can actually be damaging as opposed to beneficial.

**Q. What are the biggest misconceptions about American medicine today?**

We've done such a good job at some things – heart research and cancer for example, and childhood leukemia, which used to lead to imminent fatality; today survival rates of some forms are up into the 90th percentile. In some ways I think people can think they can live careless lifestyles (regarding diet, exercise, risky sexual behavior) and count on medicine to reverse or take care of these things. It just doesn't work that way.

By 2020 it is estimated that over half the country will be pre-diabetic or diabetic. The health care system will not be able to handle the surge of patients.

**Q. What do we need to get better at regarding our own health care?**

With medicine and health, many people seem so willing to hand off the decision-making to others. You learn more about your schools and your supermarkets than your hospitals. Many don't research hospital emergency rooms in their community in advance of ever having to make that visit. People may not know capability of facilities in their community. It really comes down to being engaged.

**Q. What are some good online sources that you feel comfortable recommending?**

There is good information found online. EverydayHealth.com, [www.everydayhealth.com/](http://www.everydayhealth.com/), MayoClinic.com, [www.mayoclinic.com/](http://www.mayoclinic.com/), and CNN/Health.com, [www.cnn.com/HEALTH/](http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/) are good examples.

One caution I offer, however, is that people often go searching for information that will validate their own opinion. Given the vast array of information out there, they'll likely find that, and the information may contradict what they are told by their doctor. It could be good information, but it may not be. I really suggest caution.



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