

Caregiver focus

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CAREGIVER THROUGH INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Provided to you by **Coastline Elderly Services, Inc. and the Family Caregiver Support Program**

SPRING 2009



Areas Served by the Family Caregiver Support Program
(Southeastern Massachusetts)

Acushnet • Dartmouth • Fairhaven • Gosnold • Marion
Mattapoisett • New Bedford • Rochester

For more information on the Family Caregiver Support Program, please call
Coastline Elderly Services, Inc. @ 508-999-6400

Coping With The Hospitalization Of Your Loved One

Excerpts taken from an article by Deidre A. Grab



As a Caregiver, one of the most stressful things you may experience is the hospitalization of your loved one, especially if the hospitalization is in an intensive care unit. Your stresses will be different than the person who is admitted after a sudden event like a heart attack or car accident.

Keep a list of your loved one's medications and allergies handy at all times

- Include the name of the medication, the dosage, the number of doses taken daily and the times at which they are taken.
- Make multiple copies to provide to the hospital staff.

Try to be patient

- The first few hours of being admitted to the hospital or transferred to a new unit in the hospital are stressful for everyone.
- The nurses and doctors need time to assess your loved one and to get to know him/her.
- Frequently, a number of activities must be performed in rapid succession. Medical staff can certainly benefit from information you can provide, but try to do it when they are ready.
- They may not be able to give you information about your loved one's condition until they have completed their initial assessments and a thorough examination.

Use this time as respite

- Your loved one is going to need you a lot more when s/he is discharged from the hospital and you will both be better off if you are rested.
- Don't feel guilty about leaving the hospital. Unless your loved one's condition is extremely critical, you should not have to stay at the hospital twenty-four hours a day. Your loved one is in good hands. Let the hospital caregivers take over for awhile while you get some rest.

Source: www.caregiver.com/articles/general/cope_with_hospitalization.htm

What are some things you can do to help an Alzheimer's patient maintain mental acuity as long as possible?



Alzheimer's care has become more "strengths-based" in recent years, reflecting a change in how health-care practitioners look at the families and the person with Alzheimer's. In other words, determine what the person can do and what skills they have retained, and then give them tasks to encourage the types of activities that will keep those skills as sharp as possible for as long as they can. As a very simple example, if the person still has the ability to fold clothes, encourage them to assist you in this area instead of taking this "job" away from them. Empower the person with Alzheimer's to do the things they can do.

Source: www.alzinfo.org/newsletter/july172006.html

Staying Independent And Safe

There are many ways to support older adults who wish to continue living independently in the comfort and security of their own homes. Whether you turn to community based services or enlist friends and family to help out, be creative. Here are some ideas.

- Contact your local ASAP/AAA to inquire about the services available for your loved one.
- Cell phones are now available with big numbers, bright screens and extra-loud sound. They're easy to use in emergencies, with service as low as \$10 month.
- Install light sensors, to automatically illuminate the basement and paths around the house.
- Put grab bars and non-slip surfaces in the tub and shower. Inspect the rest of the home to see if changes are needed for easier access or movement such as ramps or special adaptive doorknobs.
- Ask your loved one where he or she needs help most. Make a list of these tasks and ask family, friends or neighbors if they can help out with anything on the list.
- Alzheimer's or dementia? GPS navigation devices are available. They affix to a loved one's clothing so that law enforcement personnel can track and locate them in the event they wander.
- Inspect the home for safety hazards. Check railings, smoke detectors, and potentially slippery surfaces. Remove tripping hazards such as small rugs.
- If your loved one lives alone, consider a personal emergency response system. The device can be worn around the neck or wrist.

Source: *"Helping an Older Adult Stay Independent"*, Journeyworks Publishing

Fall Prevention for the Caregiver

April 8, 2009 from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.

1646 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA

For additional information or to arrange respite care or transportation, please call 508-999-6400 or [CLICK HERE](#) to send us an email.



WHAT IS PRECYCLING?

Precycling is trying to reduce waste by “pre-thinking” our purchases. While recycling is, of course, a positive thing, it still requires energy to transport the materials, melt them down and then re-manufacture items. Precycling tries to avoid the amount of stuff that gets chucked into landfills and the recycling bin to begin with. Here are some tips:

- Buy in bulk, avoid purchasing individually wrapped items.
- Take hangers back to the drycleaners.
- Look for the energy star when purchasing new appliances.
- Use energy efficient light bulbs.
- Use rechargeable batteries.
- Hang your wet laundry on a clothesline whenever possible.
- Subscribe to your local online newspaper instead of receiving home delivery.
- Buy liquids in concentrated form (juice, laundry detergent, etc...)
- Don't throw away printer paper that's only printed on one side. You can use the blank side to test print a new project.
- Use biodegradable eating utensils for picnics and barbecues.
- Use the least hazardous cleaning products.
- Pass on Styrofoam. It takes approximately 500 years to completely disintegrate.
- Use manual tools when possible (Example: Use a broom or rake instead of a leaf blower).
- Avoid individual or single use items (foil baking pans, disposable razors, plastic cutlery, etc...)



Make it a challenge to precycle for a month. Note the significant reduction in your volume of non-recyclable trash. Odds are, you'll adopt Precycling as part of your day-to-day routine.

DID YOU KNOW?

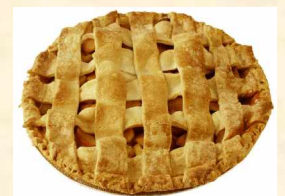


Some medications can increase sensitivity to the sun. Some examples are tetracycline antibiotics, sulfonamides such as Bactrim, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and even some cosmetics that contain alpha hydroxyl acids can increase sensitivity. A good rule is to check with your pharmacist or physician. (Source: www.caregivernorth.com)

You can also contact Sharon Labonte, RN who provides Medication Management at Southcoast Hospital Group Home Care, 508-984-0240. Medication Management is funded through Title III of the Older American's act and is sponsored by Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.

Fairhaven COA Bake Sale

The Friends of the Fairhaven Council on Aging are sponsoring a Bake Sale at Shaw's Supermarket in Fairhaven on Saturday, April 25th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Baked goods can be dropped off at the Fairhaven Senior Center before 3:00 p.m. on Friday the 24th or at Shaw's before 8:00 a.m. on the 25th.



Fairhaven COA web site: http://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/Pages/FairhavenMA_COA/index

Calling All Book Lovers!



The Fairhaven Council on Aging and the Millicent Library are teaming up to provide seniors with books. If there are any Fairhaven elders who would like a library book brought to their home, please contact Phyllis at 508-979-4029. Fairhaven COA web site: http://www.fairhaven-ma.gov/Pages/FairhavenMA_COA/index

Mattapoisett COA's Friendly Visitor Program

The Mattapoisett Council on Aging currently has an able-bodied group of volunteer Friendly Visitors who have been CORI'd, and are eagerly waiting to be paired with local home-bound seniors who would welcome a weekly visit from them. If you, or someone you know, are interested in receiving a visit from one of these volunteers, please call Ben Martin at 508-758-4110.



Mattapoisett COA web site: http://www.mattapoisett.net/Pages/MattapoisettMA_COA/index

CAREGIVER FACTS

- 50% of all direct care in the U.S. is given for free by families.
- The average unpaid family caregiver is 60 years old.
- 63% of elderly needing long-term care rely exclusively on family and friends.
- Over 40% of family caregivers provide some type of "nursing care" for their loved ones, such as giving medications, changing bandages, managing machinery and monitoring vital signs.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/livingold/cost/caregiving.html>

HELPFUL LINKS

Strength for Caring – A Place for Caregivers: www.strengthforcaring.com

Encouragement and wisdom for those who provide care: www.thoughtful-caregiver.com

Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org

Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): www.medicare.gov

Children of Aging Parents (CAPS): www.caps4caregivers.org

Elder Law Attorney and Certified Financial Planner: www.naela.org (national) or www.manaela.org (Massachusetts)

National Hospice Foundation: www.hospiceinfo.org

Parkinson's Disease Foundation: www.pdf.org

The Wellness Interactive Network: www.stayhealthy.com



The Family Caregiver Support Program is sponsored by:
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Everyone is provided with the opportunity to make voluntary and confidential donations.
No elder will be denied services if he or she chooses not to voluntarily donate.
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