



ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES

PAIN MANGEMENT

Pain is very common with seniors. The pain can be related to arthritis, cancer, or chronic medical issues. It is important to share with the primary care physician the location of the pain, the intensity, and duration.

Medications may help to manage pain but there are also other alternatives to be considered. There are situations when hydrotherapy work well; hydroculator provides a dry heat, massage, yoga exercises and even Reiki. Reiki is a Japanese technique for relaxation and stress reduction and is administered by the use of hands. It is important to find someone who is

trained in Reiki.

Some people try herbs to reduce the pain but it is important to discuss the use of herbs with the physician because some herbs can interact with certain prescriptions.

Pain affects the ability to function on a daily basis. It can affect mood, appetite, depression, can decrease social outings, and even memory. There are specialized centers called Pain Centers that focus on pain.

It is important to have the pain level controlled. When pain is controlled there is a higher quality of life.

SPRING IS COMING

This is a good time to review financial and legal documents. Arrange to meet with the attorney, financial planner, and accountant for a complete review. Laws have changed and some documents may need to be updated. Once that is completed then update family members or the person who is responsible with any and all changes.

If documents have not been completed, then this is a good time to start that process. It is not easy putting everything in order but it is important. The person who could be responsible for decisions must have this information.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a geriatric care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitner LCSW, C-SWCM. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team is able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case. Families can consult with either of us. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Community Services, Home Care, Assisted Living, and Nursing Homes. Linda and Debbie each have over 30 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us today if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat. Look for our monthly column in the Metro West News called 'Senior Q & A'

DYSPHAGIA

Dysphagia can be described as problems with the swallowing process. When there are swallowing problems it affects the ability to eat, nutritional intake, less enjoyment in eating, dehydration, loss of appetite, and the risk of food entering the air-

way which can lead to an aspiration pneumonia.

Some people feel that they have a lump in their throat that causes difficulty swallowing and other people may have thick mucus that interferes with swallowing.

Speak with the primary care physician. Testing can be done to determine the cause.

A Speech Therapist can evaluate and provide techniques to allow an individual to safely swallow their foods.

Member of:

The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

"Helping you help your loved ones"

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. My mother died from Alzheimer's disease.

Both are not following the same pattern, is this normal? I thought I was prepared but my father's memory loss is not like my mother's.

A: Alzheimer's disease does not follow a rule book. It presents in many ways and it is different for each person. There are some familiar patterns; short and long term memory loss and safety issues. You have more knowledge because of the loss of your mother and this will help you through this journey. However it may progress differently than your mother's Alzheimer's disease.

Q: My sister and I disagree on what is best for my mother. I feel she needs to move out of the house and into an Assisted Living and my sis-

ter feels my mother should stay in her house with help. What should we do?

A: If your mother is competent to make decisions it should be her decision. If your mother is unable to make the decision and the physician has put the health care proxy into affect then that person is the decision maker. Hiring help at home allows someone to stay in their home. Assisted Livings offer a social model for seniors and in many situations are what is the best plan. A Geriatric Care Manager can provide an objective assessment at just this situation to help everyone make the right decision.

Q: My mother is in a Nursing Home and her room has been changed without me being in-

formed. I am her health care agent and I visit my mother at least four times per week. Does the Nursing Home have the right to move my mother from room to room without informing me?

A: In Massachusetts the Nursing Home should be calling you for permission for each room change. A change of room can also mean a change of nursing stations which is like a new move and starting all over. You do have the right to refuse a room change. Speak with the Social Worker at the facility and if you are not satisfied then go to the Administrator. You also have the right to speak with the Ombudsman (a state representative that comes into the home regularly to hear complaints). The name and telephone number of the ombudsman should be located for families to see.