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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



INFO@ELDERCARESERVICES.COM
WWW.ELDERCARESERVICES.COM
"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

DECEMBER 2017
A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES
TEL: 508-879-7008

HOLIDAY STRESS

Holiday time is an extremely stressful time of year. So much to do and sometimes not much time to get it done.

This is also the time of year when many people they are shopping for gifts for other people, cooking for family events, trying to meet the needs of elders, their children and their spouse.

During this festive yet busy time of year it is very important to find time for yourself. Try to carve out time for you to do something relaxing; for some people it can be reading, going to the movies, out with friends, talking to friends etc. What ever it is, it is important to find time for yourself.

Studies show when you find time for yourself and your stress level is low it reduces your risk of disease or even the common

cold. When you are not stressed you think clearer, are able to complete tasks easier, and are happier with yourself and others. This affects your relationship with your spouse, children, friends, and other family members.

Some seniors feel stress even if they spend the day in their home with food and helpers. Their worries can be: who will be in to help me, what if they do not show, what if I fall, what will happen if I get sick, etc. Many seniors think about their past life and they miss being active and miss being able to be independent. The worries of every day may not look stressful but they can cause someone stress.

Ask your relative if they feel stressed or worried about the future. Then discuss it to find a solution. For example if someone

worries about getting sick and dying then ask your relative what are their wishes. By talking about wishes maybe you can reduce their stress and worries for a change in their health in the future.

The end of a year is a time to reflect back and wonder what the future holds. For seniors who are homebound or who have a chronic disease, understand that holidays in and of themselves can cause stress or sadness.

Not only is it important for the caregiver to find time for themselves but it is also important for the person requiring care find ways to de-stress.

We wish our readers a very happy holiday season and a healthy new year!

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a certified aging 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 have over 35 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat. Look for our monthly column in the Metro West News '[Senior Questions and Answers](#)'

CHANGES TO MEDICARE CARDS

Beginning in April 2018 through April 2019 Medicare will be sending out new Medicare ID cards without your Social Security number on it. Each beneficiary will receive a new card with a number called 'Medicare Beneficiary Identifier or MBI'. The purpose of the change is to reduce fraud and identity theft. In addition it is hoped that health care and financial information will be protected. The federal govern-

ment is aware of the need to remove Social Security numbers from Medicare cards. No longer will Social Security numbers be easy to find.

It will be important to give the new number to all physicians, labs, and others that bill Medicare. All who bill Medicare are becoming educated on the new billing system. If a bill does come from a hospital or other medical setting after you receive your

new card, contact the billing office to make sure they have your new Medicare Beneficiary Identification. If they do not have the new MBI they cannot bill Medicare.

When there are big changes like this with Medicare there will be some initial glitches.

As a consumer read your Medicare 'this is not a bill' to check what was billed to your insurance co. for accuracy.



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LAST MINUTE HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

This is always a difficult time—what do I buy my relative that is homebound, living outside the home, or who has everything?

Some suggestions for people who still like to write thank you notes or send birthday/anniversary cards is to purchase a box of cards and enclose a roll or two of stamps.

If someone is always cold a blanket that can be plugged in for warmth is a good idea. Just make sure the blanket has an automatic shut off and is large enough to cover someone but small enough not to trip over it when standing.

Make a family collage and have someone with memory loss label the people.

Purchase a new scarf, hat, and gloves. Going outside to a doctor's appointment the new items can keep someone nice and warm.

If someone likes to read then a gift card to Barnes and Noble or a magazine subscription. For seniors that navigate the computer purchase an Amazon gift card.

Purchase a 'family history' book. This will allow someone to record family history. If your relative will not take the time to record family history then consider spending time with your relative to ask the questions and you do the recording. This can be a valuable time together where you can learn more about the family. This can also be done on line. Check out this website: http://seniors.lovetoknow.com/Gift_Ideas_for_the_Elderly

A calendar with picture of the family and family's' events. This too can be done on line. It takes time to get the pictures so starting early will guarantee this will be done by the holidays.

Hire a professional photographer to come to the house to take pictures

of the entire family.

Consider purchasing new clothing. The clothing washed in an industrial very hot machine and very hot dryer does not last very long.

The Alzheimer's Association has information on their website at: https://www.alz.org/living_with_alzheimers_holiday_gift_guide.asp

They have ideas for early, middle, and late stage dementia.

Lavender scent helps to reduce anxiety. Lavender body lotion is another idea. Music can be beneficial, consider purchasing CD's of your relative's favorite artist. Some people enjoy watching old movies or watch sports events from years past. Purchase these to watch at home.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My father is an alarmist. He is 98 years old. With every minor health ailment he begins to per-severate and focus on his health issue. I believe he thinks he will never ever get better and this will be the cause of his death. I receive multiple calls through the day even with a minor cold. I try to be supportive but it is impossible to reason with my father. Any suggestions?

A: This is truly not easy. Everyone worries about dying but his focus appears to be at an extreme. You can talk with his primary care physician about your father's concerns. If it is financially possible consider hiring help in the house either during the day or night especially when there is heightened fear. Or if your father is in an Assisted Living talk with the staff to make more frequent visits. Sometimes redirection by

something soothing like music can be helpful. Continue to be supportive, assist, and help.

Q: My mother is a hoarder. I am just unable to clean her house any more. Each time I visit I see more and more clutter. What can I do to help with this situation? My mother does not see the mess in her house.

A: It is not easy to stop someone who is a hoarder. They have to want to throw out items. There are some psychiatrists and clinical therapists trained in this field who may be able to help. In the mind of the hoarder—everything is important and everything may be needed at some later point. Also they put a high value on what they have; this is worth a lot of money. Sometimes medications help with talking with someone. You may

want to remind your mother that if a stretcher needs to come into the house for an emergency and cannot get into the living area that they are mandated reporters who will file a report with the state and you may not be able to return home. Then try going through one item at a time and maybe putting paper in boxes and organizing what is in the house. You may also want to hire a professional to sit with your mother and go through each item to decide what to keep and what to throw out or what to give away. This process will take months and months. Again, your mother needs to agree to want to make changes.

Open enrollment to make changes to health insurance ends December 7th. Go to www.medicare.gov to research options and compare plans.