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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES
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HEART MONTH

The American Heart Association was established in NYC in 1924. It is a non-profit organization that is now located in Dallas, Texas.

The organization publishes standards on life support. The goal is to provide educational information to reduce deaths caused by stroke and cardiovascular disease.

Heart disease is an overall term used to describe several problems such as irregular heartbeat, cardiomyopathy, heart attack, atrial fibrillation, heart murmurs, etc.

Every year 1 in four deaths are caused by heart disease.

Some people have chest pain or upset stomach, or pains in their arm but other people have what is called a 'silent heart attack'. Often times it is seen on an MRI

or EKG that there was a heart attack on a routine exam.

For people who have silent heart attacks their complaint is usually non-specific; a case of the flu, or they feel they strained a muscle in their chest, or upper back pain or indigestion. It is easy to ignore these symptoms.

Many people have felt feeling tired and not able to participate in their usual activities. This is because when there is a heart attack blood flow to the heart is reduced and it puts extra stress on the muscles that make you feel exhausted.

A heart attack is when one or more arteries that supply blood to the heart become blocked. It could be blocked due to cholesterol in the arteries or other substances.

It is important to have cholesterol tested per MD suggestions. There is good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. If necessary see a cardiologist.

With seniors who have multiple health problems any symptoms can be minimized or excused for something else.

Talk with the physician about your relative's risks, ask if a baby aspirin should be taken daily, bring in healthy food such as fruits and vegetables.

Add vegetables to the top of pizzas, place fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator so that when the door opens they are seen.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a certified aging care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitter 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](#)'

HEART MONTH—CONTINUED

It is okay to eat the same vegetables and fruits—it is not variety but quantity that counts.

Add blueberries or strawberries to pancakes. Add fruit to jello.

Go through the food store and purchase different vegetables and fruit to try. Consider snacking on dried fruit. Instead of a

salad, try raw vegetables in salad dressing as a snack during the day. Not everyone wants a salad at night.

Exercise is most important. Go for walks to the mall, to a museum, or down the corridor in an apartment building. When the weather is nice go for a walk in a park or even around the block. Park the car further away from the

entrance.

Contact the Senior Center for their exercise classes. Some Senior Centers offer chair yoga that is very good for people with arthritis and who are unable to bend. Some local YMCA's offer exercise for seniors or exercise for someone with Parkinson's disease.



Certified Members:

Aging Life Care Association

DEMENTIA - LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

Over the next decade it is expected that Mass will see a 25% increase in the number of people with dementia. The current cost is approximately \$259 billion dollars a year.

According to the Alzheimer's Association at least 50% of Americans with Alzheimer's disease are not diagnosed. There is legislation in MA that would require physicians, physician assistants, registered nurses and licensed nurse Practitioners to receive information on dementia as part of their continuing medical education programs for renewal of their license.

Per statistics by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, MA has the sixth highest rate of hospital readmissions for patients with dementia. There is a discussion that hospitals will need to improve the caregiver and patient

experience in the acute care setting. In some states the ER has dedicated rooms for people diagnosed with dementia. Staff is trained on the disease. The area is quieter, the patients are seen quicker (it is difficult to sit for a long period of time on a gurney), food is brought in (if MD clears it), the bays are a soothing color etc. All of this helps provide calmness to someone with dementia.

There is also legislation in MA that would provide more protection for anyone with dementia. This population is at higher risk of being exploited financially and physically and emotionally. There is legislation to train elder protective social workers who will be looking more closely for neglect.

The above has been passed by The House in MA and is now in the Senate for review.

The goal in MA is to improve treatment, increase diagnostic rates, and provide

options for people who have Alzheimer's disease. With more education for the medical staff there will be increased awareness of the disease. This gives families the ability to plan. Services can be brought in sooner to help seniors living with dementia.

On the federal level on January 22, 2018 President Trump signed into legislation the passage of RAISE; recognize, assist, include, support, and engage family caregivers act.

This legislation directs HHS to create a Family Caregiving Advisory Council. This new law will help develop a national strategy to provide education and training, supports, long-term services, and financial stability to caregivers. This is strongly supported by the Alzheimer's Association.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My step-mother and I did not get along. I tolerated her because my father was happy. My father recently passed away and I want nothing to do with my step-mother. She has children that do not talk with her. Can I reach out to them and tell them that my father died and now they need to take over?

A: You can reach out to them and maybe they will step in to help. If there has been distance between your step-mother and her children there has to be a reason. There may be long standing anger or other issues that you are not aware of. If they do not choose to step in then bring an Aging Life Care Professional/Geriatric Care Manager to assess and discuss the options you have. There are attorneys and other professionals that will become health care agents and take over that role.

Q: My father recently moved into an Assisted Living facility. He is not happy. Between myself and my siblings we are over there all day into the early evening. Now we find our mother will not go out to activities or meet people. We moved her to the Assisted Living to reduce our burden but now it feels like it is more. Any suggestions?

A: Speak to the staff for their input and ask them how your mother does when you are not there. There is something called 'situational depression' which occurs when someone has had a major life event change that is overpowering. For your mother she feels she has lost control and she finds it difficult to problem solve (how to get out of the Assisted Living). In some situations antidepressants are needed.

Q: My mother and her sister are extremely close. Recently they both moved into the same Nursing Home and share a room. My worry is if one sister passes how the other sister will cope?

A: It is always good to plan ahead as much as you can. With the two of them that close the loss of either of them will affect the other. I am sure both of them have thought about life without each other and maybe one day in conversation you can bring it up to your mother. Ask her if she's thought about what life would be like without her sister. You can do some anticipatory grieving. In many Nursing Homes there is a psych team that can visit with the surviving sister. Also the Social Worker at the Nursing Home can help. It will not be easy for either of them (or for you) but lots of hugs and loves go a long way.