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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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TEL: 508-879-7008

THE COLD WEATHER

Older adults can lose body heat faster than when they were younger and therefore can experience hypothermia more quickly.

Hypothermia occurs when the body drops below 95 degrees. This can cause many healthy people to develop problems such as kidney problems, liver problems or even cause a heart attack.

Some people do not know they are experiencing hypothermia. One older adult was shivering in her house wearing a short sleeve shirt and was speaking slowly and having trouble walking. This older adult did not know she was in trouble.

Many older people should keep their house at 68 degrees or warmer. If someone is worried about the cost of heat then close doors to rooms that are not be-

ing used. Put a rolled towel in front of doors not being used; for example if the older adult only enters the house from the front door and never uses the back door place the towel there to avoid drafts.

People should wear socks and slippers and place extra covers on at night. Wear a hat when outside.

It is also important to eat well. Body fat helps to keep our bodies warm. This is not the time to diet or cut down on good nutritious food.

Do not drink alcoholic beverages as they can cause the body to lose heat.

Some illnesses can make it harder to stay warm; diabetes, thyroid problems, Parkinson's disease, memory loss and arthritis.

Some prescription and over the counter medications can affect body heat. It is important to talk with the primary care physician about all medicines, inquiring if any medications can affect body heat.

Some signs of hypothermia include puffy or swollen face, pale skin, cold feet and/or hands, shivering, slower than normal speech or slurring words, confusion or anger.

If there is an older adult in the home and they are concerned about the cost of heat; contact the heating company and electric company to notify them that a senior is in the home. Services cannot be stopped due to lack of payment. Call the MA Attorney General to find out more about the rights of seniors.

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](#)'

THE NEW TAX LAW AND SENIORS

Under the new tax law "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" seniors will be able to take the standard deduction of \$12,000 for single filers, \$18,000 for head of households, and \$24,000 for joint filers who are married.

What was able to stay in the law is the additional deduction for filers who are 65 and over or blind. For those people, they can claim an additional \$1,300 when they file their 2018 taxes.

For a married couple both over 65 that can lower their taxable income by an extra \$2,600.

Single filers who are blind or over 65 years of age are eligible for \$1,600 additional deduction on top of the \$12,000 standard deduction with this new tax law.

The medical expense deduction survived with an enhancement. The medical expenses in excess of 7.5% of adjusted gross income can be deducted. In 2017

medical expenses in excess of 10% of adjusted gross income was deductible.

The deduction for a home equity loan interest now disappears.

Many personal exemptions have also disappeared.

Contact your accountant to discuss the new laws to better prepare and make changes for the 2018 tax year.



Certified Members:

Aging Life Care Association

NOW THAT IT IS AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

It is now January 2018 and the rush and the hustle of the holidays is behind us. That is all good.

Now is the time to think about the present and future for your aging relative.

This is a good time of year to pull out the legal documents and review them; the Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy being two very important documents.

If there are trusts and other documents consider having them reviewed by an Elder Law Attorney. Laws change and sometimes the documents need to be updated to stay current.

Review the finances to know what changes may be needed to keep aging family members afloat, or is this the time to consider other options because finances are being reduced quickly.

This is also a good time of year to walk around an aging relative's home and think about making updates; maybe a ramp to the home, installing bars in the shower, picking up scatter rugs, adding a generator to the house, contacting the electric company to let them know a senior is living in the house and the utilities cannot be shut down, checking that the furnace is working, etc.

For seniors managing their own finances, if it's possible try to look at the checkbook to make sure bills are being paid on time and checks are being written correctly.

Open the refrigerator to see if there is a lot of expired food. Check to see if there are meals or enough food in the house. Some seniors worried about the cost of heat cut down on food and spend less at the grocery store. Peapod or other home delivery food system is great this time of year.

On a nice day if your aging relative is

still driving go for a ride with them letting them drive. Watch how they accelerate and stop. Do you feel safe in the car? If the answer is no then future driving needs to be addressed (not an easy topic).

Ask your aging relative when the last time the brakes in the car were serviced, the last oil change etc. Are the tires in good shape? All of This is very important for keeping a safe car running reliably.

Walk around the house to see if the house is being dusted and cleaned. It does take more time to clean the house as one ages and maybe this is the time to hire a cleaning service.

This is the time of year to look closely on how things are going.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My mother and my aunt moved into a Nursing Home together. They share the same room. My aunt has accepted life in the Nursing Home but my mother continues to be angry, blames me for putting her there, and complains to the staff about me. She can be very negative. When I visit I feel the staff is listening to my mother's complaints about me and now they will not listen when I make a comment or ask a question. Why is the staff unable to see that my mother splits people and is negative. She complains to me about the staff.

A: Sadly your comment above has happened to other family members. The staff at the facility see their role as advocate, sympathizer and caregivers. As a result they often side with the person in the facility because they feel they know what is

best for their patients and they align themselves and believe what is being told to them by their patients. Instead of staying neutral the staff takes sides often with the senior. Talk to the Social Worker, who should be neutral and be able to see the negativity from your mother. Meet with the Social Worker regularly to give her updates on comments your mother has made to you. She can present your side and concerns to the staff.

Q: My father just passed away. He was sick for awhile and I saw him just about daily. During the last few months it was non-stop visits, conversations with the doctor's, the hospice team, etc. My father died in a Nursing Home. I knew he would pass away but it is much harder than I expected. Any advice on how to manage the loss and sadness?

A: We are very sorry for your loss. Losing a parent is one of the hardest life experiences. Hospice should offer support by phone for the next 13 months. There may be some support groups for you to join—they can be very beneficial as you meet other people who are going through what you are going through. Another option is to find a clinical Social Worker (contact your insurance company to see who is on their contracted list) and make an appointment.

Everyone grieves differently. If the loss is affecting your groove, your ability to function, to focus, to enjoy your hobbies then it is time to seek professional advice.