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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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BATHROOM PART I

As dementia progresses many people can present with resistive behaviors during care, especially showering. Books have been written on this subject. Per the Alzheimer's Association the water droplets can appear as black daggers coming down. Visual changes occur with dementia and for someone who is confused, they are unable to see the water droplets for what they are—water. It can look scary.

For someone who does not like to take a shower consider a sponge bath; each day another part of the body is washed.

There are ways to make the washing experience more positive. Before going into the shower, run the hot water and make the room feel like a sauna; nice and warm. Have towels and soap ready. If someone feels warm they are more willing to

undress. Another idea is to play music in the bathroom. Not just any music but music that is their favorite. If it's jazz play their favorite composers. Consider playing music with words that can be sung. This distracts the person.

Never rush anyone - and explain step by step using simple words; "it's hot in here let's take off your shirt".

When stepping into the shower turn someone around so they do not face the shower head.

For some people who do not like to get undressed, allow them to wear a large T-shirt. Apply soap to the T-shirt and rub the shirt.

Start at the feet and go up rather than the face going down. This gives the person time to adjust to being washed rather than having someone come at them with a

washcloth.

Some women do well holding a doll (that can get wet in a shower), and with a wash cloth they wash the doll and can be unaware that they are getting washed.

For men give them a squeegee and ask them to help you clean the shower. They can use the squeegee while getting washed.

Put together pictures of the family in a water resistant book. Bring that into the shower and use it as a conversation piece.

It is also important to make contact and connect with the senior. Before the shower have a connection by asking the senior a question. For men it can be do you like baseball and then—**Part 2**

BATHROOM—PART 2

ask about a favorite team, player etc. Some women may enjoy that conversation but if not then ask about travel or their family. If someone has traveled begin talking about places in that city or other places they have traveled. This connects the senior to the aide and can help establish a better relationship as well as distracting the Senior.

For techniques in trying to get someone into the bathroom to take a shower telling them it's time to take a shower does not work. Instead, if there is flexibility in the day wait until they are in the bathroom on the toilet. Ask if the senior took a shower in the morning or at night years earlier. Keeping up the same habits are important.

If someone is in a facility have the hairdresser wash their hair weekly if they do not like getting it wet or going under the shower. Sometimes that is the issue.

If possible paint the bathroom yellow. It is a color that increases feelings of happiness. People with dementia tend to wander into yellow rooms and stay there longer.

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](#)'



Certified Members:

Aging Life Care Association

UPDATES AND INFORMATION

Effective March 1, 2018 anyone with Mass Health as their primary insurance; and is under the age of 65, and does not have another primary insurance, and requires skilled care for rehab, and must go to a skilled rehab facility, will need prior approval from Mass Health.

To ensure continuity of care, anyone under 65 must sign up for an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) or Managed Care Organization (MCO) plan. As of March 1st there will be a choice of 3 new Accountable Care Organization plans and 2 Managed Care Organization plans. Each has their own network of providers including behavioral health providers. Prior approvals will be needed for certain medical treatments including rehab.

For anyone 65 and over who has Medicare as their primary insurance and Mass Health, they will

not be affected by this change.

In the Metro West area (MA) there is a respite program for caregivers. The Metro West Health Foundation provided a grant for this program however voluntary donations of \$15 are appreciated as it does help defer costs not covered by the grant. The daybreak program is three days a week at three different locations. The locations are 11:30-2:30 Tuesday in the Northborough Senior Center, Wednesdays in the Marlboro Center and Thursdays in the Hudson Senior Center. Lunch is included. Anyone can attend one, two or all three programs each week. There is professional staff, healthy lunch and engaging activities there for people with dementia who require some supervision. If you are interested in finding out more, contact Lisa Bazarian Gardener at 978-568-9638.

There is a program called Senior Care Options programs (SCOs) through Tufts Health Plan, United Health Care, Senior Whole Health and Commonwealth Care Alliance that can provide help in the home similar to the Frail Elder Program.

Talk with an Elder Law Attorney about these programs to determine which one is best.

Studies have shown that exercise is important for anyone with Parkinsons disease. It can help balance, gait, cognition, and depression. Inquire in your local area to see if there are exercise classes specific to Parkinsons disease. The Framingham YMCA offers such a class. Staff members that teach the class are trained in the disease. And the benefit is meeting others—a mini support group exercising together.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My mother wants to stay in her home and I would like to help her do that. She has very little income and virtually no savings. Are there any state programs that can help my mother now that she needs care?

A: In MA there is program called Frail Elder Waiver (FEW) that is through Mass Health. It is a program for seniors that have less than \$2,205 per month and less than \$2,000 in assets (not counting the home), and need hands on help with at least 3/4 ADL needs; bathing, grooming, dressing, ambulating, eating, transfers, toileting, and help with medications. An Elder Law Attorney and or your mother's local aging service access point (ASAP) can assist. The ASAP runs the program. Contact your mother's local Senior Center and they can give you information on which ASAP to contact. The pro-

gram was designed for seniors who want to stay in their home, who require care, and have limited resources.

Q: My father was diagnosed a few years ago with early onset dementia. The memory loss seems to be moving more quickly; I see changes in his memory every few months. Is this normal with early onset?

A: Typically early onset tends to progress quicker than the other types of dementia. It is important to have plans in place for your father; what is the plan when he needs help with care, who is going to take over and manage his finances, etc.? This is the time to discuss with your father what he wants so his wishes can be honored. This is also the time to meet with an Elder Law Attorney to review all legal

documents. The Health Care Proxy will be important going forward. If the family needs assistance with a plan then contact a Geriatric Care Manager/Aging Life Care Professional to discuss options available now and in the future for your father.

Q: My mother is 92 years old and still sharp. She insists it is due to doing exercises outside of the house and keeping her mind sharp. Is this true?

A: Studies have shown that exercise is important. Cardio exercises elevate the heart rate which increases blood flow to your brain and body and can reduce the risk of dementia. . Walking, yoga, gardening, walking the dog, are all good exercises. However people who do exercise can still come down with dementia.