



ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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THE HOLIDAY SEASON

For seniors with memory loss it is important to keep the holidays simple and maintain the routine of other days. Memory loss affects the ability to adapt to new environments. Any change in routine can cause an increase in anxiety and worry. The purpose of the holiday season is for the family to be together. If you notice your relative showing signs of worry or asking the same question again and again then it is important to reduce the stress your relative is feeling. This can be done by going into a quieter room and spending one on one time with your family member, playing music, rubbing a hand or a back, or

even driving your relative back to their home.

Memory loss affects the ability to interpret situations appropriately. Some seniors with memory loss present with agitation or hallucinations, or aggression or suspiciousness. The behaviors indicate that the senior may be feeling frustrated but unable to verbally express their thoughts.

Include your relative in the holiday season but watch for signs that indicate your relative has had enough of the holiday. Sometimes there are only behavioral signs not verbal ones.

KEEPING SHARP

Studies indicate that keeping sharp helps to maintain the brain. Some ways to keep the brain sharp are to play games, complete cross puzzles or other puzzles, garden, try memory exercises, read, write, and stay curious. Consider taking a course to learn something new.

Socialization is also an important role. Studies indicate that staying socially active is a key role. Ongoing contact with other people is important. Humor is also important in keeping the brain healthy. Humor can reduce blood pressure, lower stress, and reduce tension.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a geriatric care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, and Debbie Gitner LCSW. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team are able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case. Clients can call either one of us as we always work as a team. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care possible. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Home Care, Assisted Living, and or 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 Savvy.'

WANDERING

According to the Alzheimer's Association more than 60% of seniors with dementia will wander. Some signs of wandering include repetitive movements, moving items such as pots back and forth, acting anxious or nervous in shopping

areas, difficulty finding familiar places such as the bathroom, and looking to "go home" even when in they're home. To keep someone safe in their home place dead bolts out of reach of the senior, take away keys to the car, have a care taker stay

with the senior, and contact the Alzheimer's Association for the Safe Return Program. With winter approaching a senior who wanders away from their home is at high risk of injury or death due to the cold weather.



Member of:
The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

"Helping you help your loved ones"

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: I am in the process of obtaining legal guardianship for my aunt. The attorney involved informed me of some changes in the law. Can you expand on that?

A: Effective July 2009 the legal guardianship process has changed. It is complicated but one of the major changes in this law is that the named legal guardian must complete a care plan annually. Major decisions need to be brought to the court, and guardianships are not always for both financial and medical decisions. Continue to speak with the attorney involved. Additional information can be found on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts web site.

Q: My mother is having more difficulty with balancing her check book, she is more suspicious of others, and I have noticed a change

in her personality. Should I be concerned?

A: Talk with your mother and prior to your mother's next physician's appointment send a fax to the physician alerting the physician to the changes. According to the Alzheimer's Association the ten warning signs of Alzheimer's disease are: "Memory loss that disrupts daily life, challenges in planning or solving problems, difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, work or leisure, confusion with time or place, trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships, new problems with words or speaking or writing, misplacing things and loosening the ability to retrace steps, decreased or poor judgment, withdrawal from work or social activities, and changes in mood and personality." The

Alzheimer's Association has a detailed web site with information about the disease.

Q: What is the last stage of Alzheimer's disease? My father has stopped eating and he did not want a feeding tube. Is my father in the last stage of the disease?

A: The last stage of the disease is when an individual requires care with eating, dressing, grooming, and incontinence care. Also, individuals require assistance with walking or many seniors no longer walk. The inability to smile because muscles grow rigid; for example the ability to hold up their own head and speech can be unrecognizable. Many times words may be expressed but the words are uttered. The individual may lose the ability to focus or make eye contact. Often times seniors stop eating at the end of the disease.