

CareLINK

A Newsletter For Caregivers

FEBRUARY 2009/
MARCH 2009

A Caregivers Newsletter that is published every other month for those who care for a loved-one, no matter the health situation. Enclosed we hope you find helpful information that you can use!

CareLINK can also be found at:

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS/Divisions/Aging>

~Sponsored & Published By The Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center~

Vision Loss and Eye Care — Eyeing the Future

A diagnosis of vision loss causes shock, grief, anger and depression. These feelings may be temporary or last for years. Loss of vision means losing the ability to drive, which is the loss of independence. Over time, most people with vision loss become more confident about living with reduced sight. This confidence will increase if they participate in rehabilitation training. They will begin to trust their new skills and feel better about the future.

Nearly 3.5 million Americans over 40 have some degree of vision loss, most commonly from age-related conditions. Some decline in vision is common in most people as they age. The first signs are typically that it becomes more difficult to read small print or to get around in dim lighting. Common eye conditions in people over 50 include::

Macular Degeneration – This disease is characterized by vision loss in the center of eye; blurred vision; straight lines looking wavy and needing more light to see.

Glaucoma – The leading cause of blindness in the United States. Characterized by gradual loss of peripheral (side) vision; difficulty driving at night; loss of contrast. It is important to get treatment for early symptoms to prevent total blindness.

Cataracts – Causes clouding of a normally clear lens of the eye. Its symptoms are hazy vision; difficulty driving at night; double vision; trouble distinguishing colors; sensitivity to glare. Through surgery, cataracts can be removed and the lens of the eye replaced by a plastic lens.

Diabetic Retinopathy – Typically occurs in people with advanced diabetes, and is caused by leaking blood vessels. Its symptoms are blurred or changing vision; difficulty reading; floaters that affect either central or peripheral vision. Estimates are that 25 % of people with diabetes have some diabetic retinopathy, but few people develop severe vision problems. The best prevention is maintaining stable blood sugar levels.

A doctor should be seen immediately if a person has any acute or prolonged episodes like blurred vision, flashes of light, blind spots or any other symptom that affects vision.

Source: Centers for Disease Control; www.cdc.gov



Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center
8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 500
Kenosha, WI 53143

When you need answers...
262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008
TTY (for Hearing Impaired) 262-605-6663
and, www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS

Different Strokes For Different Folks



Each year, about 60,000 more women than men have a stroke. Strokes can differ in their *presentation*. Some can present with sudden, yet very subtle changes in speech, coordination or strength. The person suffering this type of stroke may not even realize the change is occurring. This is why some people never seek medical care. Others may note something is “different,” but the symptoms are mild and attributed to “a bad day” or another problem. Other attacks are much more obvious and may present with a sudden weakness or inability to move one side of the body. Other signs and symptoms may include the sudden progressive loss of vision in one eye, like a “curtain coming down,” sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body, sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding, sudden changes in walking, balance or coordination or the onset of an unusual headache.



Emergency Tips

- Keep 911 posted on all phones; cue it as a speed dial.
- Find out if your community has a certified stroke medical center (www.strokecenters.org).
- Keep a “ready pack” of information, including insurance, physician’s name and contact information, medication list, past medical problems and allergies. Keep this information updated. Also include in your ready pack:
 - Contact information for other family to be notified
 - Power Of Attorney of Health Care document if applicable
 - Copy of the person’s living will/ advance directives, if applicable
- Know the signs and symptoms of brain attack and don’t hesitate.

FAST – The Cincinnati Stroke Scale



Without prompt care, 50% of stroke victims will have subsequent dependency in some activities of daily living, and 10% will require total care. Here’s a tool to help you remember what to look for, so you can call emergency assistance.

Facial droop: Look at the smile; have person show his teeth. Does the face look lopsided? If the face droops on one side, this could be a brain attack.

Arm weakness: This could be subtle. The person could drop things, be unable to hold arms extended in front without one arm “drifting” down. In more severe cases, there may be inability to move the arm at all.

Speech: Have the person repeat “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.” The speech should be clear. If slurred, garbled or abnormal in any way, or if the person is unable to speak at all, this could be a brain attack.

Time: Note the time the changes started. This is very important when determining what emergency treatment is given at the hospital.

Think FAST, Act FAST



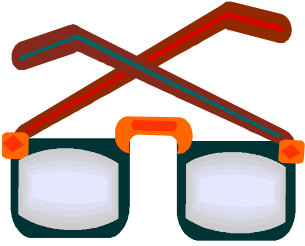
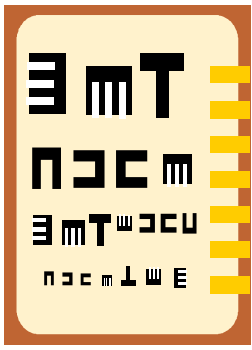
Helpful Websites

The American Stroke Association

www.StrokeAssociation.org
Stroke Family "Warmline"
1-888-4-Stroke (478-7653)

National Eye Institute

(301) 496-5248
www.nei.nih.gov



Did You Know?

It is common to have vision problems as we age. To help prevent these problems from developing, here are some suggestions:

- Keep blood sugar under control.
- Have regular eye exams.
- Protect eyes from bright sunlight with sunhats and dark glasses (UV block).
- Quit smoking.
- Eat a wide variety of fruit and vegetables each day, especially produce with deep colors. A wide range of foods protect the eyes. Leafy greens such as spinach, kale and chard, and dark-colored fruits such as blueberries or blackberries (either fresh or frozen) contain antioxidants that help protect vision.



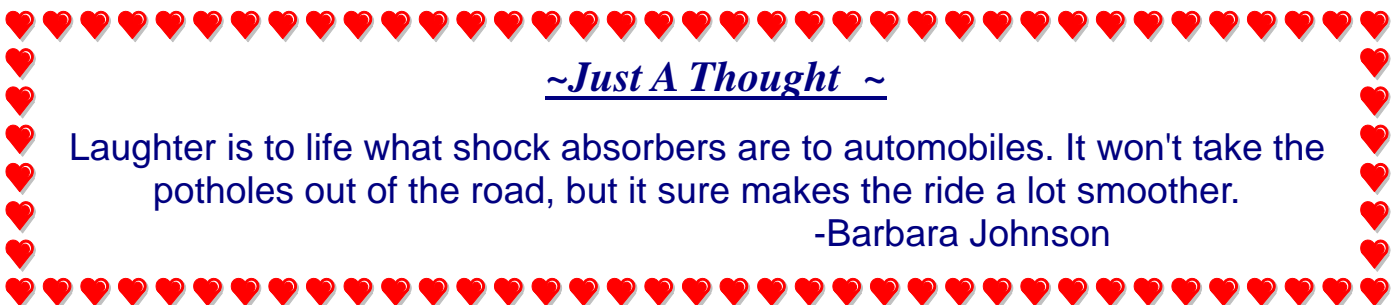
Thank You for your comments and suggestions in how to improve CareLINK!
We have incorporated them and hope you find this issue of CareLINK as well as future issues even better.

FINANCES AND HEALTH

Recently, Northwestern Mutual commissioned a study addressing the financial and physical health of women. It showed that women who take control of their finances are healthier and happier. Being proactive in managing finances meant improved health, happiness, optimism and confidence. The study also reported several smart financial habits that these happy and healthy people practice. They included getting guidance from professionals, having a financial plan, creating short and long-term goals, making a commitment to action, and staying grounded in reality. Money matters are a primary cause of stress. During these times of financial turmoil, it's more important than ever to maintain healthy eating and sleeping habits because they help reduce stress. Healthy financial and lifestyle habits can make a difference in these troubled financial times. For more information on the study, check out the website at:

www.sevenfinancialhabits.com

Source: StrongWomen Newsletter; <http://www.StrongWomen.com>; www.BeWell.com



~Just A Thought ~

Laughter is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles. It won't take the potholes out of the road, but it sure makes the ride a lot smoother.

-Barbara Johnson

~Take Note~



Caring for Aging Loved Ones Series

A 4 week session, but you can attend one or all four sessions.

Dates: Feb. 2nd: Getting Started, Feb. 9th: Memory Concerns, Feb. 16th: An Evening Dedicated to the Caregiver, Feb. 23rd: Sorting It All Out.

Time: 5:30pm - 8:30pm

Location: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 4340 Six Mile Road, Racine, WI

For questions and to register, please call 1-800-499-5736.



Understanding Medicare 2009

This workshop offers a basic overview of original Medicare, as well as other health insurance and prescription drug coverage options.

Dates/Times & Locations: Feb. 25th, from 9am - 11am, at Kenosha County Job Center.
8600 Sheridan Rd., Kenosha, WI in Room S10.

March 25th, from 2pm - 4pm, at Aurora Medical Center
10400 75th Street, Kenosha, WI in Room E.

Reservations are required for seating and hand-outs. Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.



Pacemakers For The Brain: Treating Parkinson's Disease, Tremors and Dystonia

Neurosciences Physicians from the Medical College of Wisconsin will discuss deep brain stimulation, a new treatment option that may help you regain control of your life.

Date/Time: March 25th, from 6pm - 7:30pm

Location: Kenosha Medical Center Campus, 6308 8th Avenue, Kenosha WI in Conference Rooms A & B.

To register, please call 1-800-272-3666.

Local Support Groups

Here are a few of the many local area support groups. For information on other support groups, please contact the Aging & Disability Resource Center at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.

Cardiac Support Group –

When: 4th Tuesday of each month

Time: 10:00am

Where: United Hospital – Kenosha Campus
2nd Floor – Cardiac Rehab Classroom
6308 8th Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53143

Contact: Sally Berzinski - 656-2245

Diabetes Support Group –

When: 1st Tues. every month

Time: 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Where: United Hospital - KMH Campus
Community Education Room

Contact: Marian Hinder - 652-7124

Epilepsy Support Group –

When: 2nd Thursday of each month.

Time: 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Where: YMCA—Callahan Family Branch
7101 53rd Street, Kenosha, WI 53144

Contact: Mehwish Aqueel - 262-344-4092

Stroke Support Group

When: 4th Monday of each month

Time: 10:00am - 11:30am

Where: Aurora Medical Center
1st Floor Family Room
10400 75th Street, Kenosha, WI 53142

Contact: 1-800-499-5736 for more information.