

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~

Yikes, More Super Bugs! — Swine Flu (H1N1), *C. diff* & MRSA

Here is information on the three very contagious “Super Bugs”, that every caregiver should be aware of. The Swine flu, also called **H1N1**, is a new strain of influenza first noticed in humans in April 2009. The virus spreads from person to person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. The H1N1 virus spreads when infected people cough or sneeze and infected droplets get on their hands, other surfaces, or are dispersed into the air.

To stay healthy:

- **Avoid close contact** with people who appear unwell.
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with disposable tissues when coughing and sneezing. Cough into your elbow if you don't have tissues.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose or mouth.

The nasty superbug *Clostridium difficile* (commonly called *C. diff*) causes severe diarrhea. To avoid getting a *C. diff* infection, disinfect your bathroom with a bleach solution and vigorously wash your hands with soap and water. Using a bleach solution to clean the rooms of infected persons is also important, because *C. diff* forms hardy spores that aren't killed by some cleaners.

And, **methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*** (MRSA) lives in the human nose. But following a bout of influenza, these bugs can slide down into the lungs to cause pneumonia. They can also spread from nose to hand to skin, where they may cause boils, abscesses, or serious infections of the skin and underlying tissues. MRSA can invade the bloodstream to cause life-threatening infections. Protect yourself, your family, and the person in your care by washing your hands regularly; alcohol-based rubs are best for MRSA. Don't share personal items like razors or towels. Avoid direct contact with infected people.

Refer to page 2, for good cleaning techniques that will reduce the chance of infection in the home.

Source: World Health Organization, www.who.int; Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov; www.health.harvard.edu/men

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 262-605-6663
and, www.co.kenosha.wi.us/DHS

Caregiver Cleaning Tips

Hand-washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection or germs.

- ▶ Use bottle-dispensed hand soap.
- ▶ If the person in your care has an infection, use antimicrobial soap.
- ▶ Rub your hands for at least 30 seconds to produce lots of lather. Do this away from running water, so that the lather is not immediately washed away.
- ▶ Use a nailbrush; keep nails trimmed. Do not wear artificial fingernails or extenders if caregiver duties include direct contact with people at high risk for infection.
- ▶ Wash front and back of hands, between fingers, and at least 2 inches up your wrists.
- ▶ Repeat the process.
- ▶ Dry your hands on a clean towel or a paper towel.



The frequent use of alcohol-based hand rub immediately following hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap may increase the frequency of dermatitis (red or itchy skin).

When disposing of body fluids, please keep these tips in mind:

- ▶ Wear disposable gloves (recommended for handling all body fluids).
- ▶ Flush liquid and solid waste down the toilet.
- ▶ Place used dressings and disposable (throwaway) pads in a sturdy plastic bag, tie securely, and place in a sealed container for collection.



TIP: If urine is highly concentrated due to a bladder infection or dehydration, do not use bleach. The combination of ammonia in the urine and bleach can cause toxic fumes.

Did You Know?

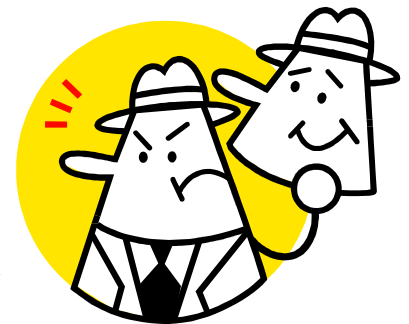


Living alone increases odds of developing dementia and the risk is three times higher among those who are divorced or widowed. These findings show that social factors play an important role in brain health and indicate that support for individuals who have lost a partner might be important for preventive health care. Unmarried people can boost their social involvement by taking part in community, cultural and sporting activities.

Source: HealthDay News

Taking Care

Is your automatic response to daily events negative? Try to change your habits to see the positive in every situation. Instead of being stressed and feeling, “I don’t have time for this!” look at the situation in a new light and say, “I do have five minutes to take care of this.” If you sense yourself always reacting with a “This is a disaster!” attitude take small steps to change your thinking to “What is the gift in this situation?”



Your Holiday Routine



As caregiver for an older adult, pressure from family and friends to continue with traditional holiday celebrations can add to your stress. Be realistic. Think about what you and your loved one *need*, not what others expect of you. The activity and festivities of the holidays pose special challenges for families coping with Alzheimer's disease. To someone with Alzheimer's, the change in routine can be especially disruptive. Take steps at holiday time to minimize stress and simplify. A tree with blinking lights, music, and unfamiliar decorations can be disorienting for someone with memory loss and confusion.



Traveling With a Person With Dementia

Even someone with *early* dementia shouldn't travel alone. Here are some helpful tips:

- Don't rush the person in security lines. Some airports offer family-friendly lanes.
- Schedule flights early in the day, when the person may be in the best spirits and you're less likely to be marooned overnight in case of bad weather or other delays.
- Your carry-on should also contain everything the person would need if luggage is lost or a flight is delayed overnight: medications, pajamas, toiletry items, change of clothing, medical contact information, and legal papers (power of attorney, insurance).
- Pack snacks and provide water, since dehydration is a risk for seniors.
- Use the bathroom just before the flight.
- Bring something (ball, cards) for the person to do with his hands.
- Carry a blanket and small pillow for comfort.



Source: *Caring.com*



Helpful Resources



Alzheimer's Association of SE WI Chapter

<http://www.alz.org/sewi/>

1-800-272-3900

Offers information, advocacy, and support groups relating to Alzheimer's Disease as well as other types of dementia.

Kenosha County Division Health Department

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/Divisions/Health/index.php>

262-605-6700 or 1-800-472-8008

For the most current information on H1N1 clinics plus other community clinics and services offered.

~Take Note~

Comparing Medicare Part D Plans:

The Elder Benefit Specialist program is offering workshops to help you learn more about Medicare Part D plans and how to compare these plans. Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008, for dates, times, locations and to make your reservation. Limited seating is available.

Understanding Medicare 2010:

The Benefit Specialist program will offer this workshop which will offer a basic overview of Original Medicare, as well as other health and prescription drug coverage options. You will learn how to read and understand a Medicare Summary notice and how to file an appeal. It also covers other helpful benefits you may be eligible for.

Date/Time: Friday, January 22nd, from 10am - 12pm.

Location: United Health - Kenosha Campus, Community Education Room.

Due to limited seating, reservations are required. Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 to reserve your spot.

Local Support Groups

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

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Groups

*Respite is provided during each meeting below. Please register 1 week prior for respite.

When: 2nd Tuesday of each month

Time: 7pm—8:30pm

Where: Kenosha Area Family & Aging
7730 Sheridan Road, Kenosha

Contact: Becky Banks, 262-658-4125

AND/OR

When: 3rd Monday of each month

Time: 7pm—8:30pm

Where: Westosha Community Center
Hwy C., Bristol, WI

Contact: Kathy Hinks, 262-605-6646

Diabetes Support Group

When: 1st Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:30pm—7:30pm

Where: United Hospital—KMH Campus
Community Education Room

Contact: Marianne Hinder, 652-7124

Epilepsy Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of each month

Time: 6pm—7pm

Where: YMCA-Callahan Family Branch
7101 52nd Street, Kenosha

Contact: Mehwish Aqueel, 262-995-0016

~Just A Thought ~

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

~William Arthur Ward