



CareLINK

A Newsletter For Caregivers

**FEBRUARY 2010/
MARCH 2010**

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~

Heart Disease - #1 Killer

Heart failure can happen to anyone, but it is more common in people over 65 years of age, among men and in African Americans. There are many traits and lifestyle habits (risk factors) that increase the chance of developing it. Some of these risk factors are controlled simply by changing lifestyle habits, while others are things that cannot be changed. The best way to prevent heart failure is to **reduce the risk factors that are controllable**, such as:

High Blood Pressure - Many people with hypertension (high blood pressure) don't even know they have it, hence the nickname "the silent killer" because it usually has no specific symptoms and no early warning signs. Both you and the person in your care should have your blood pressure checked regularly.

Diabetes - People with diabetes are more than twice as likely to develop heart failure as people without diabetes. Make sure that you and the person in your care are tested for diabetes and alter your lifestyle accordingly.

Smoking & Alcohol Abuse - Cigarette smoking is a major, preventable risk factor for heart disease. The nicotine and carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke reduce the oxygen in a person's blood, so smoking robs the heart of oxygen. Second-hand smoke is just as dangerous as first-hand smoke; therefore, if you or the person in your care smoke, get help to quit. And, alcohol can also damage the cells of the heart and make it harder for the heart to pump. Therefore, people with heart failure are advised to quit drinking alcohol.

High Blood Cholesterol - A high level of total cholesterol is a major risk factor for coronary artery disease, which raises the risk of developing heart failure. Total cholesterol levels should be less than 200 mg/dL; LDL ("bad") levels (think of the L as less desirable or lousy) should be less than 100 mg/dL, while HDL (think of the H as highly desirable or healthy) should be between 40–60 mg/dL.

Physical Inactivity and Obesity - Inactivity and obesity can increase the risk of high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, stroke and heart disease. Depending on limitations, exercise may be difficult for the person in your care; nonetheless, it is very important.

Lifestyle changes may help reduce some of these risk factors, however, when lifestyle changes alone don't reduce these risk factors, ask a doctor for medical help.

**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**



February is American Heart Month

Cardiovascular disease kills more people than all cancers combined and is the No. 1 cause of death and disability in the United States. One in three American adults — a total of 73 million people — has high blood pressure, which is also called hypertension. High blood pressure increases the risk for heart disease and stroke, the first and third leading causes of death in the United States. One in every six Americans age 20 or older has high cholesterol.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

Cardiac Health Improvement & Rehabilitation Program (CHIRP)



Your doctor may encourage the person in your care to participate in a hospital's cardiac rehabilitation program. A cardiac rehabilitation program is designed to help the patient exercise safely and maintain a heart-healthy lifestyle. Most programs generally include:

- ♥ Exercise training that helps the person in your care learn how to exercise safely, strengthen their muscles and increase stamina. All exercise programs are tailored to each person's individual ability and needs.
- ♥ Education
- ♥ Changing risk factors (such as diet)

Meaningful Activities in Alzheimer's & Dementia Care

The work we do and the activities we choose for fun tell the world a lot about us. But people with Alzheimer's disease (AD) lose, little by little over time, the ability to do those things that make them who they are. Most caregivers focus on those activities the person with AD no longer should do, such as drive, work, go out alone or make important decisions. But, to help maintain good self-esteem, it is also important to help the person with AD continue to engage in meaningful activities and participate in family and community life. To do this, decide what activities he *can* do and help him adjust for abilities that are lost. **Accentuate the positive.** Activities should **make the best use of a person's remaining strengths** and skills, and be based on interests and hobbies developed over a lifetime. These include activities like going for walks or gardening, which you can still enjoy together. Meaningful activities can also reduce the risk of agitation or upsetting behaviors. A person with AD and/or dementia has difficulty planning and choosing activities. In the early stages, just a reminder or a cue may be enough to get him going, and he may be able to carry on from there. To keep activities enjoyable, follow these tips:

- **Establish a routine** that includes a balance of rest and activity.
- **Recognize limitations.** Long trips, three-act plays or a seat in the balcony far from the restroom are going to cause trouble.
- **Adjust the activity** to make it possible for him to participate. Don't tell a person with AD about an activity you have planned too far in advance, because this may cause anxiety. And, some people with AD get very upset watching violence on TV because they think it is real.



Make Activities More Fun

- Consider ways the care receiver can continue to participate in activities he enjoyed in the past: If he used to play tennis, but can no longer keep score, how about just hitting the ball back and forth? If she enjoyed cooking, why not make a meal together?
- Don't be afraid to try something new. As people age, their interests may change. In spite of their health condition or sometimes because of it, people often discover talents they may not have expressed before, such as painting, collage or even a greater sense of spirituality.
- Doing activities or chores that recall a person's work-related past can bring much happiness.
- Break an activity down into simple steps and choose an activity that can be completed in a relatively short time. The process is more important than the product.
- Be generous with praise, do not criticize or correct mistakes, although you may want to lend a hand if some aspect of the activity becomes too difficult or time-consuming.
- Don't get upset if she walks away in the middle of the project. People with Alzheimer's are easily distracted and fatigued. She may wander back and continue working, or may get involved in something else.
- Keep your sense of humor. Alzheimer's is not funny, but amusing things do happen.

Source: The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease

Taking Care

If at First You Don't Succeed, You're in Excellent Company. Julie Andrews was told she wasn't photogenic enough for film. Decca Records passed on the Beatles, saying "We don't like their sound." Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor who said he "lacked imagination." What makes some people rebound from defeats and go on to greatness while others throw in the towel? Psychologists call it an unshakable belief some people have in their ultimate success. Such people keep trying because they believe they *will* succeed. Where does such determination come from? In some cases it's inborn optimism, but it can also be acquired by mastering a task or by modeling the behavior of others who have succeeded. Avoid self-defeating assumptions. If you are fired, don't magnify the rejection and assume you'll never get another job. Don't allow a rejection to derail your dreams. Remember what Henry Ford said: "Whether you think that you can or you can't, you're usually right."

Source: April 29, 2008 Wall Street Journal



Helpful Resource

American Heart Association

(214) 373-6300 or 800-AHA-USA1 www.amhrt.org

Provides information and tools for a better understanding of heart treatment options.



~Take Note~



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, February 19th, from 2pm - 4pm.

Location: Northside Library, 1500 27th Avenue, Kenosha, WI

OR

Date/Time: Friday, March 19th, from 9am - 11am.

Location: Salem Community Library, 24615 89th Street, Salem, WI

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: Paulette Kisse, 262-595-2387

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

Cardiac Support Group

When: 4th Tuesday of each month.

Time: 10:00am

Where: United Health - Kenosha
2nd Floor - Cardiac Rehab. Classroom
6308 8th Avenue, Kenosha, WI 53143

Contact: Sally Berzinski - 656-2245

Cancer Support Group

When: 3rd Thursday of each month

Time: 12:00pm

Where: United Hospital - St. Catherine's
Joseph F. Andrea Regional Cancer Center
9555 76th Street, Pleasant Prairie, WI

Contact: Krin Kramer - 262-577-8543

~Just A Thought ~

The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook. ~ William James