



# CareLINK

*A Newsletter For Caregivers*

**AUGUST 2010/  
SEPTEMBER 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~**



## Hot Weather Safety



Drinking enough water—especially in hot weather—can be difficult for the elderly, infants, and those taking certain medications, whose sense of thirst may not be sensitive. Water is involved in all body processes. We need the proper amount for those processes to work correctly.

It's a delicate balancing act, that a healthy body does automatically. People lose water through urination, sweating, bowel movements, and even breathing (think of the steam you see on a mirror when you breathe on it). Along with fluid loss, you lose salts—minerals and chemicals that your body needs to work properly. The loss of these fluids and salts can be serious, especially for older people.

When you don't take in enough water to replace what you lose, your blood becomes more concentrated. In most people, this triggers thirst, which is your body's way of telling you it needs more water. If you ignore this feeling—or if your "thirst button" isn't working properly—you can become *dehydrated*, meaning that your body doesn't have enough fluid to work properly.

### Dehydration Symptoms

Headache—the most common symptom

Cracked lips and dry skin

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

Weight loss

Low blood pressure

Dry mouth and tongue

Sunken eyes

Dark, strong smelling urine

Fast heart beat

Confusion, light-headedness



If you suspect dehydration, offer the person in your care *small amounts* of water over a period of time. Taking too much all at once can overload the stomach and cause vomiting.

- Get the person out of the sun and into a cool place.
- Offer fluids like water, or fruit and vegetable juices.
- Urge the person to lie down and rest.
- Encourage the person to shower, bathe or sponge off with cool water.

*Source: American Heart Association; Department of Health and Human Services*

**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  
[www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs](http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs)



## Dehydration Prevention

As a person ages, he feels less thirsty, so special efforts should be made to provide enough fluids. A person's fluid balance can be affected by medication, emotional stress, exercise, nourishment, general health, and the weather. Dehydration, especially in the elderly, can increase confusion and muscle weakness and cause nausea. Nausea, in turn, will prevent the person from wanting to eat, thereby causing more dehydration.



Prevent dehydration by:

- encourage intake of 6–8 cups of liquid every day (or an amount determined by the doctor).
- serve beverages at room temperature.
- Provide foods with high water content (i.e. watermelon, soups).
- avoid caffeine and alcohol, which causes frequent urination and dehydration.

Source: NIH News In Health, Department of Health and Human Services

## What is Hospice?

Hospice is a concept of medical care that delivers comfort and support to people in the final stages of a terminal illness—and to their families. Care is delivered by a team of specially trained medical professionals who focus on easing pain and managing symptoms. They provide medical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual care to the person and family. They assist the family in coping with their coming loss and their grief afterward.

Most hospice care is delivered in the home, but hospice care can also be provided in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospitals and hospice facilities. The person who is ill and the family are the core of the hospice team and are at the center of all decision making.

Although a family member or other caregiver cares for the person on a daily basis, a hospice nurse is available 24 hours a day to provide advice and make visits. Hospice services include:

- physician services
- nursing services
- medical social services
- home health aide & homemaker services
- spiritual, dietary, & other counseling
- medicine for controlling pain
- physical, occupational, speech therapy
- medical supplies and appliances
- grief counseling
- trained volunteers for companionship & respite
- bereavement (grief) services for the family (or loved ones) for up to a year after death

Hospice care is covered under Medicare Hospital Insurance (Part A), Medicaid and most private health insurance. To be eligible the person must be certified as terminally ill by his or her doctor and the hospice medical director. "Terminally ill" means having a life expectancy of six months or less if the disease runs its normal course. Hospice care is offered for two periods of 90 days, followed by an unlimited number of 60-day periods, as long as the physician recertifies that the patient is not getting better and is still terminal. A patient may leave hospice care if his or her condition improves, and reenter if the condition worsens.

## Taking Care of Yourself

Everybody gets tired, especially after a long day or when we're down with an illness. It's one thing to feel worn out when you are sick, but if you feel well otherwise but can't find your "get up and go," it may be time to get up and go to the doctor!

If you're constantly tired, you may have chronic fatigue, which is a persistent sense of constant, unexplained and relapsing exhaustion. It's similar to how you feel when you have the flu or have missed a lot of sleep. With chronic fatigue you may be unable to function at work or be productive at home, or too exhausted to manage your daily affairs.

Fatigue can be caused by depression, anxiety or a health condition such as anemia or heart disease. If you're always tired, or If you find yourself becoming easily exhausted, talk to your doctor. In most cases, medication or treatment can help correct the problem, reduce the fatigue, and restore your energy.

## The Principles of Hospice Care

Hospice has always recognized the importance of including the ill person, the family, and their loved ones in the care plan. Caregiving for someone who is dying can be demanding and it's important for *everyone* involved with a terminal illness to take proper care of his or her needs.

Hospice services can provide expert, compassionate care and make it possible for a dying person to remain at home. The earlier hospice care begins, the more it can help in providing the care needed at this time. It can also help loved ones enjoy the best quality of life as a family unit.

When a serious illness becomes life threatening, a person will go through many physical, emotional, and spiritual changes. Decisions to end medical treatment, seek hospice care, or to withdraw life support may need to be made. It's best to talk over these decisions with the physicians and family of the person in your care well before there is a health care crisis.

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### Helpful Resource



#### Hospice Foundation of America

Provides information and referral service, resources on end-of-life care, brochures on hospice, volunteering, and bereavement

(800) 854-3402 or [www.hospicefoundation.org](http://www.hospicefoundation.org)

#### Support Groups

For information on local support groups, please contact the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.

## ~Take Note~



### Asthma - Take Control:

An informative workshop learning what can trigger your asthma and the best ways to control it. This is a free workshop for people 14 years and older who have asthma.

**Date/Time:** August 11th, from 6pm - 8pm.

**Location:** Aurora Medical Center, 10400 75th Street, Kenosha, WI.

Please call 1-800-499-5736 to register for this class.



### Understanding Medicare:

The Benefit Specialist program will offer this workshop which covers a basic overview of the 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:** Wednesday, August 25th, from 2pm - 4pm.

**Location:** Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Road, Room S 10, Kenosha, WI.

**OR**

**Date/Time:** Thursday, September 16th, from 5pm - 7pm.

**Location:** South West Library, 7979 38th Avenue, Kenosha, WI.

Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 for additional information and to register as space is limited at each workshop.



### Power-Of-Attorney for Health Care:

Help is available to complete a Power-of-Attorney for Health Care form through the Kenosha County ADRC. The forms are available at no cost and there is no fee for the assistance provided.

**Date/Time:** Every Wednesday from 9am - 12pm (no appointment is needed)

**Location:** Kenosha County ADRC, 8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 500, Kenosha, WI



### Stress Management Series:

This free workshop focuses on the nature, sources and symptoms of stress and provides a holistic approach for managing stress.

**Dates/Time:** September 27, October 4 & 11, from 6pm - 7:30pm.

**Location:** Aurora Medical Center, 10400 75th Street, Kenosha, WI.

Please call 1-800-499-5736 to register for this class.

## ~Just A Thought ~

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day  
listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky,  
is hardly a waste of time.

~ John Lubbock