

CareLINK

A Newsletter For Caregivers

**DECEMBER 2011 /
JANUARY 2012**

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:

adrc.kenoshacounty.org

Sponsored & Published By The Aging & Disability Resource Center of Kenosha County.

Reducing Holiday Stress

Here come the Holidays! Family gatherings, parties, concerts, shopping, presents, decorations, greeting cards and the list goes on. Many people look forward to the hustle and bustle, reconnecting with family and friends and the snowy magic of the holiday season. Others, however, look to this season as a time of stress, chaos and sadness.

People who have experienced health changes due to stroke, Alzheimer's, or other medical conditions may feel a great deal of loss during the holidays. Those who are caring for these loved ones may also feel additional stress and sadness during the holidays. It may be difficult to keep up holiday traditions with the added caregiving responsibilities. And changes in physical health and behavior might also leave the caregiver uncertain about the usual parties and gatherings.

If you are someone who is experiencing anxiety over the upcoming holiday season it is important to realize that these feelings are normal. Here are some ideas to help reduce stress this holiday.

- **Ask for help.** Involve family members or friends in cooking, baking, decorating, shopping or sending cards. And remember that some things can be left undone!
- **Change your expectations.** You may not be able to do everything you've always done. Focus on what you will do *this* year.
- **Prepare family and friends before getting together.** Let them know how their loved one has changed due to their disease or condition.
- **Offer suggestions about gifts.** Give friends and family ideas of useful gifts they can purchase for their loved one such as music CD's, photo albums, comfortable clothing.
- **Keep the needs of your loved one in mind.** Perhaps an afternoon with a few family members looking at old photos and reminiscing would be more appropriate than going to a large family event.
- **Be good to yourself.** Be aware that the holidays can be stressful and prioritize time for yourself. A lunch out with friends, trip to the beauty parlor/spa or movie theater. When you are feeling relaxed and healthy your loved one will also be more content.

May everyone enjoy a stress-free holiday season filled with love, joy and good memories!

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



When you need answers...
262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008
and
www.adrc.kenoshacounty.org



Caregiver Burnout Checklist

Ask yourself the following questions and circle your answer honestly:

- Yes No What are your expectations realistic? Are you expecting the person you are caring for to always be pleasant because of all the time and concern you put into his care?
- Yes No Do you wish the person would show gratitude?
- Yes No When expected help does not come through, do you get disappointed and try to do everything yourself?
- Yes No Are you feeling tired, isolated, helpless, angry, resentful, or guilty?
- Yes No Are you physically ill yourself and not going to the doctor or following the doctor's instructions.
- Yes No Have you stopped making time for yourself, to refuel and nourish your own interests and friendships?
- Yes No Are you using destructive ways of coping, such as alcohol, overeating, or misusing drugs?
- Yes No Do you want to scream at the person you are caring for?
- Yes No Are you afraid you may hurt the person you are caring for?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, it is recommended that you seek professional help.



Staying Healthy

Simple hand washing can cut down on the number of people who get sick each cold and flu season. Here are some tips:

Hand Towels Versus Air Dryers: Since most people don't keep their hands under air dryers long enough to get them dry, using paper towels is a better way to keep germs at bay.


Hidden Germs: Keep clean the things your hands touch most. Flu and cold viruses can survive for hours, even days, so use disinfectant wipes on keyboards, phones and door knobs.

Soaps: Antibacterial soap does not work any better than regular soap. The key to good hand washing is to do it often, well, and long enough (at least 20 seconds)!

When to Wash: Wash hands after using the restroom, before eating, and every time you sneeze, cough, or blow your nose.

Sanitizers: Keep instant hand sanitizers, disinfectant sprays, and disinfectant wipes within easy reach. Look for products containing the natural ingredient *thymol*, which can kill 99.99% of germs.





File of Life

The File of Life is a voluntary program to help local first responders quickly obtain important health information that could help save your life.

The File of Life is a refrigerator magnet with an attached red plastic pocket to hold your vital health and emergency information.

Please contact the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 to request your File of Life.

We Want To Hear Your Thoughts...

Enclosed is a short survey on CareLINK. Please complete and mail to the ADRC. Or, you may call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or, go online to:

adrc.kenoshacounty.org

We strive to provide you with the information you are wanting and needing. Please let us know how we are doing.

~Thank you!

Risk Of Falls Increases With:

Vision problems
Muscle weakness
Balance problems
Difficulty walking
Memory problems
Some Medications



What You Can Do

1. Have a falls risk assessment and review your medications with your physician.
2. Engage in regular physical activity such as walking, Tai Chi, other balance and mobility exercises.
3. Assess your home for safety from falls; reduce clutter, improve lighting, install handrails, grab bars.
4. Maintain a healthy diet including a calcium-rich diet; drink plenty of fluids.
5. Get a list of local falls prevention and physical activity resources from the ADRC by calling 262-605-6646 or visit its website at: adrc.kenoshacounty.org.

~Just A Thought ~

To be aware of a single shortcoming in oneself is more useful than to be aware of a thousand in someone else.

~The Dalai Lama

NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT

FROM **ACT** TO **ACTION**

Because of the National Alzheimer's Project Act, the federal government is undertaking a historic effort to create a

comprehensive strategy to overcome the Alzheimer's disease crisis.

But officials creating the National Alzheimer's Plan need to hear from people like you!

The Alzheimer's Association will submit all comments received through this web site to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services so that they know what you want to see in a National Alzheimer's Plan.

Your insights, opinions and suggestions matter. If you take a moment to provide input, the Alzheimer's Association commits to making your voice heard.

Please share the greatest challenge, frustration or concern you have about Alzheimer's that you want the National Alzheimer's Plan to address:

<http://napa.alz.org/share-your-feedback>

~Take Note~



Flu Shots:

Don't forget to get your flu shot. Below are a few agencies that are offering flu clinics. Please call them for information as to dates, times, location and cost:

- Your Doctor's office.
- Kenosha County Division of Health, 262-605-6700 or 1-800-472-8008.
- KVNA, 262-656-8400.
- Your local pharmacy.



Power-Of-Arrowney for Health Care:

Help is available to complete a Power-Of-Arrowney 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.



Bariatric Surgery Informational Meeting

An informational session where health professionals will discuss all the options, complications, risks and benefits, and patient's eligibility in regards to bariatric surgery. Patients, family, significant others, support people and all others are welcome.

To receive further information and to register, please call (262) 654-7002.

Date/Time: December 5, 2011 or January 2, 2012, from 6:30pm—8:30pm.

Location: Kenosha Medical Center Campus, 6308 Eighth Avenue, Kenosha.



Helpful Resources

Support Groups

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



Caregiver's Website

Provides information and resources for family and professional caregivers.
www.caregiver.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

An online source for credible health information.
www.cdc.gov