Volume III, Issue 1

Home Health SENSE

a quarterly newsletter from THE MEDICAL TEAM

>>>Aging In Place<<<

The process of growing older, without having to move from a home in which you have lived for many years, is known as "aging in place." A recent AARP survey found that 80% of American seniors desire to stay in their homes for the remainder of their lives. Seniors want to age in place for many reasons, including proximity to loved ones, familiarity, convenience, a desire to maintain independence, and for safety and security.

However, with advancing age there are physical changes related to declining health and chronic diseases which may compromise a person's ability to remain living independently. There are also social changes that may negatively impact a senior's ability to live independently: isolation from family and friends, loss of peers, children living far away and a changing neighborhood.

To age in place, seniors find they may have to adapt their home to meet their new physical limitations and get outside help on an occasional or ongoing basis. Services that may be suitable can include:

- **Companionship:** A friendly visit just to talk, play a game or have a cup of tea.
- **Light household help:** Assistance with laundry, housekeeping, meal preparation and other household tasks.
- **Convalescent care:** Help after an illness or surgery.
- **Respite care:** Help at times when your family is away and unavailable.
- **Escorting:** Assistance with doctor's appointments, shopping or other errands.
- **Personal care:** Assistance with medication reminders, bathing, dressing, toileting and general grooming. ❖

Source: www.seniorresource.com

How Can Home Care Help?

You don't have to "go it alone." THE MEDICAL TEAM can provide one-on-one assistance at home to meet your needs. Whether you need companionship to brighten your day or help after an illness or surgery, we are here to help.

Inside this Issue:

THE MEDICAL TEAM®

ASK the EXPERT

Our featured expert, Bobbie Beharrie, RN-BC is Director of Personal Care Services at THE MEDICAL TEAM's Virginia branch.

Question:

When I visit my 85 year-old mother I notice that laundry is accumulating and the fridge is full of food which is past its sell by date. I worry that she is having trouble keeping up with household tasks. Since I am unable to visit her regularly what do you suggest?

Answer:

As we age, it gets harder and harder to maintain a household. Not doing so can pose health risks. For example, clutter, like laundry and other household items, can present a fall hazard. Food that is past its sell by date can cause food poisoning. In situations like yours, where family members are not able to visit on a regular basis, your mother could benefit from visits from a home health aide or homemaker for just a few hours a week to do a little housekeeping and keep an eye on things in your absence.

Question:

My 75 year-old father seems lonely but is otherwise healthy and able to remain living in his home. What can we do to lift his spirits?

Answer:

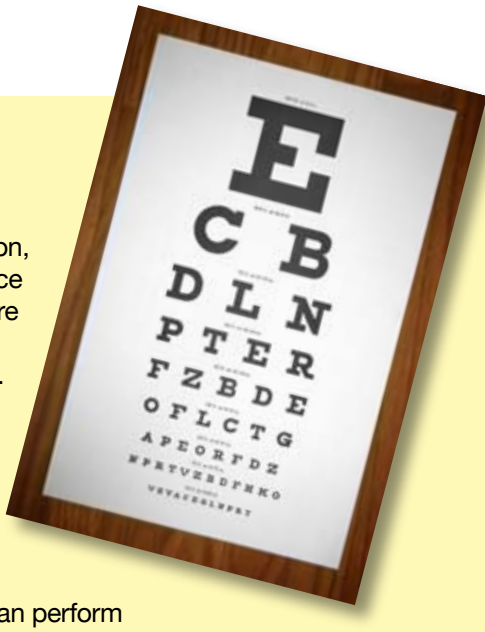
Emotional well-being is a big part of a person's overall health and well-being. With aging, it is common to go through bouts of loneliness as we adjust to changes such as loss of a long-time partner, close friends or physical capabilities. It sounds like your father might benefit from some companionship visits. One of the services home care agencies like THE MEDICAL TEAM can provide are regular visits from someone who can offer some companionship in the form of a visit to talk over a cup of tea, provide a sympathetic ear or engage with them in mentally stimulating activities like puzzles or card games. ❖

We welcome your comments.
Please send them via email to info@medteam.com

What You Need to Know About Low Vision

Low vision ranks third after arthritis and heart disease as the cause of impaired daily functioning among Americans over age 70. There are many causes of low vision such as cataracts, age-related macular degeneration and even simple errors like using the wrong glasses. Low vision is a leading cause of falls in the home, which can have serious consequences. Don't let low vision compromise your ability to live independently. Here are some things you can do.

- Visit your eye doctor at least annually for a vision check.
- Ensure your home is adequately and evenly lit. Going from bright to low lights can impair vision.
- Declutter your home to eliminate fall hazards.



If you suffer from poor vision, this does not have to reduce your quality of life. There are many ways to adapt activities to meet your needs. Favorite games such as bingo or cards and many books are available in large font. You can also listen to books on tape or compact discs.

Occupational Therapists can perform home visits to evaluate the home and the client and assist with problem solving techniques and adaptations to improve activities of daily living. ❖

Source: THE MEDICAL TEAM, "Low Vision: Helpful Tips and Resources"

THE MEDICAL TEAM is committed to providing quality home care services in private homes and senior communities. We hope the information in this newsletter offers practical information about healthcare issues affecting seniors and helps illustrate why home healthcare makes sense. ❖

Budget-Friendly Nutrition Tips

Smart food choices will help you stay healthy, manage your weight and be physically active. Feeding yourself on a budget doesn't mean you have to sacrifice a nutritious, well-balanced diet.

Have a plan: Make a shopping list and don't deviate from it; only shop once a week to cut down on spending on unneccessary items.

Dairy: Buy a large container of plain yogurt and make each serving unique by adding a little sweetener such as honey or cutting up pieces of fresh in season fruit.

Protein: Buy cheaper meat cuts such as lean beef round or minimize the portion size of meat in a soup or casserole and supplement with veggies, beans and whole grains. Also try less expensive high quality proteins such as nuts and seeds, as well as eggs.

Fruits and Vegetables: Fill your cart with the produce that is in season locally to get the most bang for your buck in the produce aisle. For example, stock up on apples in the fall. Also, you can limit waste by buying frozen vegetables which will last longer than fresh produce. When buying canned vegetables, always choose products labeled no salt added or low sodium.

Cut the junk! Evaluate how much money you are spending on items such as soda, juice, packages of cookies, crackers, prepackaged meals, and processed foods and avoid or limit these. You can replace potato chips with a 5 lb. bag of potatoes which will be healthier and save you money.

Don't waste your leftovers: Most leftovers make very tasty burritos! Simply put the leftover meat and/or veggies into a whole grain tortilla shell with a little low-fat cheese and some beans and enjoy.

Treat yourself: Frozen grapes, banana or peach slices make yummy treats when you are in the mood for something sweet. ❖

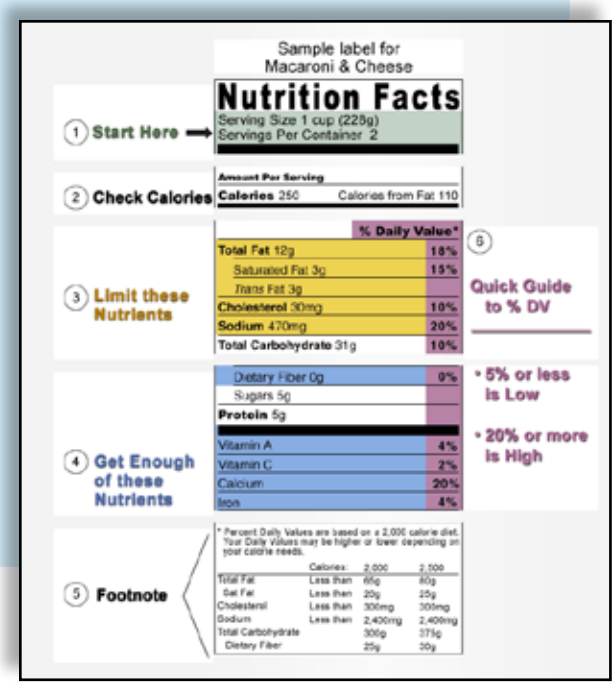
Source: THE MEDICAL TEAM, "Practical Everyday Healthy Eating Tips"

Understanding Nutrition Labels

The nutrition facts table is a label required on most packaged food. It contains product-specific information (serving size, calories, and nutrient information). The bottom part contains a footnote with Daily Values (DVs) for 2,000 and 2,500 calorie diets. This footnote provides recommended dietary information for important nutrients, including fats, sodium and fiber.

Use this guide to help you understand how to make wise choices when purchasing packaged foods. ❖

Source: Food and Drug Administration Consumer Resources, www.fda.gov



What's New at THE MEDICAL TEAM?

- In Virginia, we are partnering with a local hospital to reduce avoidable hospital readmissions of congestive heart failure patients through an innovative pilot program, which includes telemonitoring for remote vital signs monitoring. Our Louisiana branch is also implementing telemonitoring and we will be expanding these services to other locations soon.
- Our staff always goes above and beyond. Recently, our Michigan staff members came in on their day off to help residents of a client senior living facility relocate to safe off-site locations during a fire.
- Our staff participated in many charitable activities over the holidays to give back to our community. We held office-wide collections of items to benefit needy seniors, volunteered at soup kitchens and supported charitable events at our client communities.
- Job applicants can now apply online to all the company's branches through our new web-based system. Go to www.medicalteam.com/careers and then select Job Opportunities. ❖

Exercise Your Mind

Challenging yourself on a daily basis with memory and other brain games is a good way to fight brain decline.
Try these Rebus puzzles. ❖

1) CHTONGUEEEK

2) SK8
IIIIIIII

3) AGED AGED AGED

4) SMOKE

5) HERRING

6) Anything
E Anything
Anything

Answers: 1) tongue in cheek 2) skate on thin ice 3) middle-aged
4) go up in smoke 5) red herring 6) ready for anything

When Home is the Best Place to Get Better .... Bring Home THE MEDICAL TEAM

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