

Employee Enhancement Newsletter

Helpful Resources from your Employee Assistance Program

October 2015

Page 1

Sharing Alzheimer's Diagnosis: Tips for Caregivers



If you're caring for a loved one who's been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, you might wonder whether and how to tell loved ones and friends. If your loved one wants you to share the diagnosis, how will you do it? How will family and friends react? Will they know how to interact with your loved one? Consider these caregiving tips for sharing an Alzheimer's diagnosis.

Getting started

The period immediately after a loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease can be stressful and frightening. You and your loved one might be struggling to come to terms with the diagnosis. Your loved one might not want to let other people know about the diagnosis out of fear that others will become uncomfortable around him or her. You might feel torn between wanting to respect your loved one's privacy and feeling the need to talk to someone about the diagnosis and how your role as caregiver will change.

If possible, discuss with your loved one how he or she wants to handle the situation and get his or her permission before sharing the information. Ideally, you'll explore the subject while your loved one is still able to express his or her wishes. If your loved one isn't able to make decisions for himself or herself, ask his or her legal decision maker how your loved one would want the information disclosed and to whom. If you're the legal decision maker and don't know your loved one's wishes, act in his or her best interests.

If you're feeling anxious about sharing the diagnosis, keep in mind that those who are close to your loved one might already have a sense that something is wrong. If you're afraid that your family won't understand or that informing others about your loved one's diagnosis will be a burden on them, consider the alternative. Keeping the diagnosis a secret could be draining for you. The sooner you tell family and friends, the sooner they can begin giving you and your loved one much-needed support.

Online Seminar Reminder

Know the 10 Signs

When:

October 20, 2015

Where:

www.deeroaks.com

Webinar Times (CST):

11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

AND

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM





Sharing Alzheimer's Diagnosis: Tips for Caregivers *continued...*

What to say

When telling family and friends about a loved one's Alzheimer's diagnosis, consider:

- ***Explaining the disease and its effects.*** Make sure your family and friends understand that Alzheimer's is a disease in which brain cells degenerate and die, causing a steady decline in memory and mental function. It isn't something your loved one can control. Explain the symptoms your loved one is likely to experience and how the disease might progress. Learning about Alzheimer's might help family and friends feel more comfortable around your loved one, as well as prepare for the future.
- ***Sharing resources.*** Provide educational material from organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association. Let family and friends know about any local support groups.
- ***Asking for help.*** Tell family and friends how they can help your loved one — and you. Give specific examples, such as taking your loved one to doctor's appointments or picking up groceries.

If you're explaining a loved one's Alzheimer's diagnosis to a child, consider his or her age and relationship to your loved one to determine how much information to share. You might say, "Grandma has a sickness in her brain that's causing her to forget names." Try to answer any questions simply and honestly and listen to the child's concerns. Explain that feelings of sadness or anger are normal and that he or she didn't cause the disease. Consider explaining what changes a child might expect to see in his or her loved one — such as not being recognized — and how this might affect the rest of the family.

Helping family and friends know how to act

Once you share your loved one's diagnosis, explain what your loved one can still do and how much he or she understands. If necessary, you might offer suggestions about how family and friends can interact with your loved one, such as by briefly reintroducing themselves and avoiding correcting your loved one if he or she forgets something.

A young child might look to your example to know how to act around a person who has Alzheimer's. Show that it's okay to talk to your loved one and enjoy normal activities with him or her, such as listening to music or reading stories. Older children might have a harder time accepting the changes Alzheimer's can cause and might feel uncomfortable spending time with a loved one who has Alzheimer's. Avoid forcing the issue. Instead, talk openly and honestly about the child's concerns and feelings.

Keep in mind that some family and friends might have trouble handling the diagnosis. They might feel uncomfortable around your loved one or drift out of your loved one's life, despite your best attempts to help them feel comfortable.

Telling family and friends about a loved one's Alzheimer's diagnosis can be difficult. Being honest and providing information about Alzheimer's disease can go a long way toward helping others understand the situation.

https://www.advantageengagement.com/p_content_detail.php?id_element=001&search_term=alzheimer&id_cr=58381

7 Quick and Easy Breakfast Tips



A healthy breakfast is a must for kids. Skip it and your kids will be playing nutritional catch-up for the rest of the day, said Carole L. Adler, a dietitian at the Food and Drug Administration.

When kids skip breakfast, they don't get what they need to be at their best. "Growing bodies and developing brains need regular, healthy meals," she said. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, studies show that school

children who eat breakfast perform better in the classroom.

As with other meals, it's a good idea for your kids (and you) to eat a healthy balance of fruits and vegetables, proteins, grains, and dairy—not just for breakfast but throughout the day.

Here are Adler's 7 quick and easy breakfast tips to ensure your children start their day off right.

1. Breakfast doesn't have to mean traditional breakfast foods. Anything goes. Even last night's leftovers.
2. Give kids foods they like. Put veggies on that left-over whole-grain pizza. Or make muffins with zucchini and carrots and spread with peanut butter with a glass of milk. Mix sugary cereal with a healthier nutrient-packed brand.
3. Make healthy trade-offs. Nutritional balance is key. Not enough vegetables in the morning meal? Prepare extra carrot, celery, and broccoli sticks with a hummus dip as an afternoon snack.
4. Take growth and activity levels into account. Adler says that having a breakfast that contains protein, fat, and carbohydrates helps children feel full and stay focused until lunch. Protein choices might include an egg, some nuts, a slice of deli meat or cheese, or a container of yogurt.
5. Don't take, "Mom, I don't have time for breakfast" as an excuse. Make sure your kids grab a piece of fruit on the way out the door, and hand them a bag of nut-and-fruit trail mix or a whole-wheat tortilla spread with peanut butter or almond butter and a carton of milk.
6. Prep the night before. Morning is a busy time for everyone—you included. So take ten minutes to think ahead and prep for breakfast the night before. Chop up fruit to layer in a yogurt parfait or add to cereal. Cut up vegetables for an omelet. Mix up muffin or whole-grain waffle batter, cover, and put in the fridge.
7. Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient statement when you shop

Health-e headlines™

Desk snacks

People who have snacks in or on the desk reported weighing 15.4 pounds more than those who don't. Use an opaque candy dish with a lid and store candy in a drawer where it's less visible and accessible, advises Cornell University researcher, Dr. Brian Wansink, author of Slim by Design.

Health-e headlines™

My big fat substitute

Swap out higher fat items in your diet for a healthier, monounsaturated fat such as avocado. Try using avocado cubes in salad (instead of cheese) or spread avocado on bread (instead of butter), suggest the doctors at UT Southwestern Medical Center. Avocados are not low-cal, but half of one contains about 7 grams of healthier fat, potassium, and fiber.

Health-e headlines™

An EAP Reminder

Life Can Be Hectic. The EAP Can Help You Find Your Balance.

Deer Oaks, your EAP, is always available to you and your household members.

If you are struggling with children, finances, or just want some practical advice on health or the mind-body connection, contact Deer Oaks by calling the Helpline.

Counselors are available 24/7 to provide you with immediate care.



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES



Clinician's Corner..

Monthly Advice from the Deer Oaks Clinical Team

Mental Illness Awareness

October 4th through October 10th is National Mental Illness Awareness week, started by one of the nation's leading resources for mental health, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). In honor of this important spotlight, we are sharing two of our most frequently asked questions about mental health.

1) What's the difference between anxiety and stress?

Stress is a natural, biological and emotional human response to a stressor. In our earliest days as humans, stressors included finding food, shelter, and staying out of harm. Nowadays, those stressors still remain, but we have added thousands of potential stressors, from things as small as a traffic jam to as large as health issues, relationships, and financial difficulties. Keep in mind, not all stressors are bad (i.e., retirement, getting married, having children) but nonetheless, all stressors do cause the same reaction. For many of us, it's a general feeling of tension in both our minds and bodies. We may lose sleep, lose sight of healthy eating, feel irritable, and in general feel much more distracted. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a pervasive pattern of worry that may or may not have a specific trigger or stressor. People with anxiety tend to worry about worst-case scenarios often and are unable to control this worry. They also can have specific anxieties such as fear of heights, enclosed spaces, medical procedures, and/or suffer from panic attacks, which is a brief set of severe physical and emotional symptoms of anxiety. Whereas people with stress are often able to function on a day-to-day basis, people with anxiety often find themselves unable to fulfill daily duties at work or at home.

2) Am I depressed, or just in a period of having the blues?

There are so many life events that justifiably lead to periods of sadness. For example divorce, not getting a promotion, finding out about illness (for ourselves or family members and close friends), loss of family members, friends, or pets, and major life events such as retirement, mid-life, and the empty nest period can often cause a sense of sadness. This is completely normal – we are hard-wired to feel sad and down during these types of events. However, people with depression will experience significant drops in mood, usually described as feeling empty, sad, or hopeless for weeks if not months at a time. The sadness becomes so pervasive that people stop engaging in hobbies that they used to enjoy, withdraw, and may even have thoughts about death and dying. These bouts of depression may come without any triggers at all, and cause significant impairments in one's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

If you or a family member has been increasingly concerned that your mood or anxiety has started to interfere with your ability to feel happy, talk to a professional. Call us toll free, 24/7, or check out our online resources to learn more.

Visit us at www.deeroaks.com for more information.

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Choosing What Credit Card to Get



DEER OAKS EAP SERVICES

There are many different credit card options out there from affinity cards to rewards cards. When choosing a credit card, the most important thing is to know exactly how you plan to use it. The perfect credit card for someone who maintains a balance is probably the wrong card for someone who pays his or her balance off every single month. Once you know how you'll use your card, you should compare some of the features of various credit cards to see which one will suit your financial needs. Remember, when you agree to the terms of a credit card, you are entering into a legally binding document. The following are some things to consider when choosing which credit card to obtain:

Annual percentage rate (APR)

The APR measures the cost of credit on an annual basis and may be the easiest way to compare costs among credit cards. Usually, the lower the APR, the less you'll be charged for credit. The APR includes the interest rate and other costs, such as service charges or loan fees. If you expect to pay back less than the full amount you charge each month, you'll have to pay finance charges on the unpaid balance. In this case, choose a card with a low APR.

Annual fees

Many companies charge an annual fee, no matter how much or how little you use your card. If you intend to pay your credit card bills in full each month, you won't have to pay monthly finance charges, so a card with a low or no annual fee will be more important to you than one with a low APR.

Grace period

A grace period allows you to avoid finance charges if you pay your bill before its due date. Some credit cards have no grace period and begin to impose finance charges the day you charge an item. Other cards offer grace periods from 21 to 30 days. Cards with longer grace periods can save you money if you pay all of your charges each month.

Method for computing the balance

Because finance charges are based on your balance, it is important to know how your balance is calculated. One of the most common types of finance charge is the average daily balance. To calculate your average daily balance, the creditor adds each daily balance together and then divides by the number of days in the month. Some issuers include new purchases in their calculations; others do not. While most creditors calculate your balance based on one month's average daily balance, others base your charges on the average daily balance for two billing cycles. Other possible methods include the previous balance method (based on the amount owed at the end of the previous billing cycle) and the adjusted balance method (where they subtract payments before calculating the finance charge).

Transaction fees

Many cards assess fees when you use your card in certain ways. For example, transaction fees are common for cash advances and wire transfers. Some cards also charge fees for purchasing theater tickets over the phone, buying lottery tickets, or charging casino gaming chips.

Late fees

If you make a late or partial payment, most, (if not all) creditors will charge you a fee. Fees often range depending on your balance; the higher the balance, the higher the fee. Late fees typically range from \$20 to \$40. Since fees are so high, consider setting up automatic bill payments to help you to avoid making late payments.

Over-the-limit fees

It pays to pay attention to your balance. Fees for charging over your limit can add up quickly. If you must charge past your current limit, call your credit card company and ask them to raise your limit. Just remember that an increased limit is not a license to spend.

Credit card rewards

If you pay your card off on time every month, you may find that a rewards card will work well for you. If you do choose a rewards card, remember to choose a card that offers rewards you will actually use.

Finally, remember that not everyone qualifies for every card; this is true even if you receive a "preapproved" offer in the mail. Preapproved offers are still contingent on you meeting the creditor's qualifications.

About Money Management International

Money Management International (MMI) is a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, providing confidential financial guidance, financial education, counseling and debt management assistance to consumers since 1958. MMI helps consumers trim their expenses, develop a spending plan and repay debts. Counseling is available by appointment in branch offices and 24/7 by telephone and Internet. Services are available in English or Spanish. To learn more, call 800.432.7310 or visit www.MoneyManagement.org.