



The MASE Monthly Newsletter

June 2017



Winners of Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The Holiday Season

With Summer holidays just around the corner, remember any change to your cared for's routine can agitate and confuse them. Carers can also feel more and more anxious, frustrated, and lonely when away from their home environment. Think ahead before your holiday and take things that you know will occupy your cared for. They will know they are in a strange environment, so please go well prepared! Keep a list of their medication with you, just in case! This is your holiday too.... so please try to make the most of your time away - relax when you can and enjoy your break, because you thoroughly deserve it.



The Silver line 0800 4 70 80 90



It's true to say that if you make something simple enough for everyone to use, then they will. Creating the "Silver Line for older people" is a simple concept – a free 24 hour helpline, available every day and night of the year, where you can ask about services in your area, talk in confidence, get some friendly advice or quite simply have a chat.

For people who would appreciate a regular call from the same person every week there are Silver Line Friends who are volunteers and share our belief that a simple connection with another human being can make a difference.

As one caller told his Silver Line friend "when I get off the phone, I feel like I belong to the human race". More than half of all 75 year olds in the UK live alone and one in ten suffers "intense" loneliness but is reluctant to ask for help. In a poll conducted to mark the national launch of The Silver Line, 9 out of 10 older people told researchers that "a chat on the phone" is the most helpful solution when they feel lonely but 1 in 4 older people say they rarely have anyone to chat to on the phone.

The incidence of loneliness and isolation among older people is not just shocking because it makes them so unhappy, it has a hugely detrimental effect on their health, increasing the risk of heart disease and causing depression. Figures from the Department of Health indicate it is as dangerous as obesity or smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Socially isolated and lonely adults are also more likely to undergo early admission into residential care or hospital.

The Silver Line has been operating as a national service for two years and has received more than 100,000 calls. So the simple idea is having a transformational effect on the lives of thousands of older people and a huge and unmet need has been revealed. There is no other helpline for older people in the UK, available 24/7, free and confidential, and offering information, friendship and advice, linking older people to local groups and services, and supporting those who are suffering abuse and neglect.

Five tips to overcome the stigma associated with Alzheimer's

The following tips are based on the advice and experience of current and former people in the early stage of the disease who help raise awareness about the disease.

- 1. Be open and direct.** Engage others in discussions about Alzheimer's disease and the need for prevention, better treatment and hopefully an eventual cure.
- 2. Communicate the facts.** Sharing accurate information is key to dispelling misconceptions about the disease. Whether a pamphlet or a link to online content, offer information to help people better understand Alzheimer's disease.
- 3. Seek support and stay connected.** It is important to stay engaged in meaningful relationships and activities. Whether family, friends or a support group, the networking is critical.
- 4. Don't be discouraged.** Denial of the disease by others is not reflection of you. If people think that Alzheimer's disease is normal aging, see it as an education opportunity.
- 5. Be a part of the solution.** Advocate for yourself and millions of others by speaking out and raising awareness.

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Alzheimer's Society Dementia Helpline 0300 222 1122 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Why keeping your loved one hydrated is so important

For many, the long-awaited summer months bring to mind family picnics, cool drinks on the lawn, and lazy afternoons at the beach. But, as temperatures soar, warm weather activities can increase the risk for another staple of summer: dehydration. Not getting enough fluids, especially when it is hot outside, can pose serious health problems for anyone, but older adults are at particular risk for dehydration.



Why Seniors Are at Risk

There are a few reasons why older adults are more susceptible to fluid imbalances. With age, our body's ability to conserve water is reduced. This can make it more difficult to adapt to things like fluctuating temperatures. Additionally, the sense of thirst diminishes with age. By the time someone actually *feels* thirsty, essential fluids could already be extremely low.

Certain medical conditions and medications can affect a senior's ability to retain fluids. Individuals with dementia may forget to eat and drink, and in more advanced stages may have difficulty swallowing. Drugs like diuretics, antihistamines, laxatives, antipsychotics and corticosteroids can cause frequent urination that depletes water and electrolytes. Furthermore, seniors who experience incontinence often purposely refuse or limit fluids in order to avoid accidents.

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

As a Carer, it's important to be mindful of the signs and symptoms and to communicate with a doctor or health professional if you notice red flags that could indicate complications from fluid loss.

Picking up on the more subtle, early signs that a senior needs to up their fluid intake is crucial. Keep in mind that thirst is not usually a helpful indicator, because a person who feels thirsty may already be dehydrated. Initial signs to look for include headache, constipation, muscle cramps, dry mouth and tongue, and sleepiness or lethargy. Urine color is another helpful indicator and should be clear or light yellow for someone who is properly hydrated.

If severe dehydration goes unchecked, it can be very serious for your cared for. Be mindful of the following signs of severe dehydration:

- Little or no urination
- Dry skin that stays folded when pinched
- Low blood pressure
- Weak pulse
- Dark or amber-colored urine
- Irritability, dizziness, or confusion
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Cold hands and feet

Preventing Dehydration

For most of us, drinking plenty of fluids and eating foods with high water content is a great way to keep our bodies properly hydrated in warmer weather. Most adults need about 64 ounces of fluid every day, but that amount increases with heat and humidity and can change based on various medications and health conditions.

A good rule of thumb is to try balancing fluid intake with output. If your cared for is sweating or urinating more frequently, then their fluid intake should become more frequent as well. If a loved one is suffering from an illness that causes fever, diarrhea or vomiting, carefully monitoring fluid intake is crucial. Keep in mind that you can become dehydrated in cold weather, too!

Ways to Increase Fluid Intake

If your cared for refuses to drink plain water, there are plenty of modifications and alternatives available. Try using water enhancers, opting for pre-flavored waters, serving a half water half juice mixture, or fruit-infused water.

How you serve beverages can have an effect on a cared for's willingness and ability to drink them. Experimenting with different serving temperatures may make beverages more appealing. Individual preferences vary regarding the palatability of different temperatures. Serving a drink at the desired temperature will increase the likelihood it will be consumed.

If you have a computer please take a look at our website which covers all MASE activities: www.themasegroup.com

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