



CANCARE HEALTH SERVICES NEWS

FALL 2006

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Every three months I visit with some of our clients to be sure I hear directly from you what we are doing well and also what we could do better I am very proud of our dedicated team of healthcare professionals who never fail to provide service despite the heat waves and snow storms. In my recent visits many of you were very complimentary about our team. On our visits we also do a safety assessment to be sure there are no risks for falls or other issues which could cause harm to you or our caregivers. A number of you were having problems with your medication schedules. You can ask your pharmacist to package the medications in user friendly packs so you don't forget to take the right medications at the right time.



I was also pleased to see many of you had family members or friends who were assisting you with daily chores. We are also part of your support network and want you to feel free to contact your coordinator, area supervisor, our director of client services or me if you have any concerns or questions.

Eric Paul, President, ext.2234

PANDEMIC FLU PREPAREDNESS

We shared with you some time ago that CanCare has a Pandemic Flu Plan which was developed to be implemented in conjunction with the CCAC's plan, Toronto and Hamilton's Plan as well as the provincial and Canadian plans. Remember to continue to read your newsletter for information related to pandemic flu. In this issue, we'd like to share a few tips on how you and your family can be personally prepared for a pandemic flu:

- Get immunized with the up-to-date influenza vaccine
- Maintain good health habits at all times; maintain a healthy immune system
- Maintain good hand hygiene all the time, e.g. Wash hands before eating or preparing food, after touching potentially contaminated items, etc
- Stay home when you are sick
- Follow safe, hygienic practices at home or in public, e.g. Clean/disinfect surfaces in your environment such as commonly used items like the telephone or computer
- Cover nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing preferably with a tissue, or cough into your arm/elbow if no tissue available
- Have a plan to have essential supplies at home in the event of a pandemic, e.g. stock up on water, tissue, medications and food
- Educate family members in personal hygiene especially children
- Use personal protective equipment when providing direct care to a sick person once a pandemic is declared



We will continue to provide you with more information and education related to a potential or actual pandemic flu. **Remember, to always read your newsletters to receive the most up to date information.**

WELLNESS TIP

You can prevent a heart attack EVERYDAY or hope to be lucky enough to find a defibrillator in an emergency. Why take the risk?

If you have spent anytime in a major airport or shopping mall over the past year, you've probably noticed signs pointing to automated external defibrillators, placed strategically to assist patients and caregivers in the event of a sudden heart attack.

While it is likely that these devices have saved a few lives, consuming foods rich in omega-3 fats is likely to be a thousand-fold more effective intervention for preventing sudden death.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to see signs in the airport pointing to fish oil to prevent heart disease and cancer?

If you really want to improve your health, try creating a healthier balance of omega-3 fats to omega-6 fats (found in most vegetable oils) in your diet. The ideal ratio should be closer to 1:1 than the typical Western diet, which is far too dangerously toward omega-6 fats at a 1:20 ratio.

When omega-6 fats predominate your diet, this encourages the production of inflammation in your body. You can shift this by consuming omega-3 fats, which actually promote the production of substances that fight inflammation.

Since so many diseases have now been linked to chronic inflammation, this really is one of the most important nutrition concerns to get right.

In fact many scientists believe that one major reason for today's high incidence of heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, premature aging, and some forms of cancer is this profound imbalance between our intake of omega-6 and omega-3 fats.

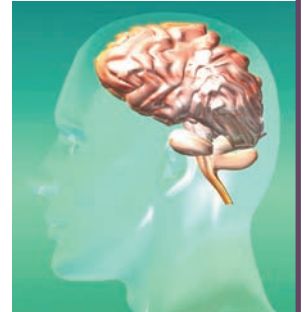
Omega 3s are also absolutely necessary for your brain to function optimally. Your brain is more than 60 percent structural fat, just as your muscles are made of protein and your bones are made of calcium. But it's not just any fat that your brains are made of, the majority of it is omega-3 fats.



Over 2,000 scientific studies have demonstrated the wide range of problems associated with omega-3 deficiencies, including:

Depression
Cancer
Arthritis

Memory Problems
Heart Disease
Diabetes



That's why omega-3s not only protect your heart, but can also help you beat prostate cancer and improve your mental health.

Your best source for omega-3 fatty acids is one of the most safe and natural: Taking a high-quality fish oil in liquid or capsule form daily. Omega 3s are sold in all major drugstores, supermarkets, Costco and health food stores. Be sure to buy only omega-3 products, not ones containing omega-3 and omega-6.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING US TO USE YOUR PHONE!

Thank you to all of you, our clients for helping our telephony system be a success. By allowing our PSW to use your phone at the beginning and end of each visit we are able to ensure your safety, the employees' safety and are able to monitor the service you receive. **THANK YOU!!!**

FALLS PREVENTION PROGRAM

UPDATE ON OUR PROGRESS

CanCare has now been monitoring and analyzing our client falls for over six months; since November, 2005. In summary, many of our clients have fallen more than once and we have been able to intervene and help these clients to reduce falls, for example we have had some clients assessed for new walkers or wheelchairs and have educated some clients on how to prevent falls. Unfortunately we have had some clients admitted to the hospital due to a fall. ***One of the goals of our falls prevention program is to prevent falls and therefore hospital admissions, allowing our clients to live a healthy life in their home where they want to be.***

Here are some statistics for you:

Approximately 6% of our clients have had at least one fall (about 100 clients)
From these clients 18% of them (20 clients) had more than one fall over the past six months.

Most falls (almost 90%) occurred when CanCare staff was NOT present.

Over 35% of the falls resulted in injury.

5% or 5 clients were admitted to the hospital related to falls.

This means for every 20 clients that fell, one was admitted to the hospital, we want to prevent this for our clients and will continue with our falls prevention program to help improve client safety!!!



We have analyzed the falls our clients have had, below are some reasons for the falls and some ways to prevent such falls:

Many clients fell related to being dizzy or losing their balance. These are both issues that should be checked by your doctor to see if you can find and eliminate the cause of the dizziness or improve the loss of balance. For example, it may be related to medications (see below for more information about medications) or doing some regular exercise could improve your balance.

Some clients fell getting out of their bathtub or off their toilet. Remember to use grab bars if you have them, or have your washroom assessed for safety equipment that you might be able to use, like grab bars or a raised toilet seat, etc. Call our office if you feel you require this assessment.

A couple of our clients fell out of bed. These clients were assessed for bed rails. If you have fallen out of bed. These clients were assessed for bed rails. If you have fallen out of bed, this could be an option to help you.

Some clients were using old equipment or homemade equipment. It is important to ensure your equipment is safe and in good working order, and appropriate for you, e.g. a walker that is the right height for you.

Remember to use your equipment appropriately. For example, if you stop your walker, use the brakes before stepping away or leaning or sitting on it.

Some clients fell due to clutter in the home and items on the floor. Look around your home and eliminate any potential hazards.



*Please feel free to contact our office with any concerns or questions you might have about falls. We will provide you with more information and another update on how our clients and program are doing early in 2007. Tips and information, for example a falls risk assessment and more checklist will continue in **every** newsletter.*

Cont...

FALL PREVENTION PROGRAM (CONT.)

Did you know that your medications could contribute to a fall, use the following checklist to help ensure your safety:

Are all your medications in clearly labeled bottles?

Are they stored in a cool dry area?

Are medications discarded after the expiry date?

Are you only taking medication that is specifically prescribed for you?.

Certain drugs and multiple medications can increase the risk of falling. Have you checked with your physician or pharmacist lately about having your medications evaluated and to see if they are compatible with one another?

FOODBORNE ILLNESS

Why are seniors more susceptible?

Everyone's health is different, including his or her ability to fight off disease. But immune systems weaken as we age. In addition, stomach acid also decreases as we get older – and stomach acid plays an important role in reducing the number of bacteria in our intestinal tracts – and the risk of illness.



Plus underlying illnesses such as diabetes, some cancer treatments, and kidney disease may increase a person's risk of foodborne illness.

Recognizing Foodborne Illness:

It can be difficult for people to recognize when harmful bacteria in food have made them sick. For instance, it's hard to tell if food is unsafe, because you can't see, smell or taste the bacteria it may contain.

Sometimes people think their foodborne illness was caused by their last meal. In fact, there is a wide range of time between eating food with harmful bacteria and the onset of illness. Usually foodborne bacteria take 1 to 3 days to cause illness. But you could become sick anytime from 20 minutes to 6 weeks after eating some foods with dangerous bacteria. It depends on a variety of factors, including the type of bacteria in the food.

Sometimes foodborne illness is confused with other types of illness. If you get foodborne illness, you might be sick to your stomach, vomit, or have diarrhea. Or, symptoms could be flu-like with a fever and headache, and body aches. The best thing to do is check with your doctor. And if you become ill after eating out, also call your local health department so they can investigate.

Foodborne illness can be dangerous, but is often easy to prevent by following the basic rules:

CLEAN, SEPARATE, COOK & CHILL

Wash hands before and after handling food and surfaces (cutting boards, counter tops) often. Throw out worn cutting boards.

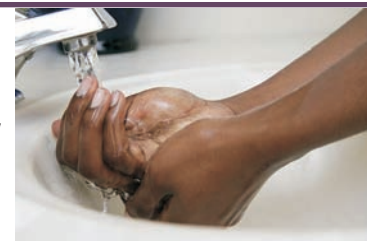
Don't cross-contaminate. Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood in your grocery cart and in the refrigerator. Use different cutting boards for each.

Cook to proper temperatures. Use a meat thermometer to measure internal temperature of food. When microwaving food ensure there are no cold spots in the food where bacteria can survive.

Food left out at room temperature can cause bacteria to double every 20 minutes. Refrigerate or freeze perishables and prepared food and leftovers within 2 hours.

HAND WASHING

Our hands are used in almost every task and they easily pick up microbes/germs from a person, place or thing. Our hands can transmit these microbes/germs to another person, place or thing. If you touch your eyes, nose or mouth with contaminated hands, you can also transmit microbes/germs into your own body. Because your hands are contaminated very easily, you need to wash them properly frequently.



Hand washing with soap is the easiest and most important way to prevent the spread of an infection. Cleaning hands with alcohol sanitizers is also an option if you do not have access to soap and water. Hand washing causes dry skin, so apply hand lotion after you wash your hands.

The staff at CanCare Health services are taught proper hand washing techniques and they have the responsibility to wash their hands when they get to your home before they start servicing you. Our staff also have annual training on hand washing and infection control. This procedure is reinforced at our bi-monthly staff team meetings.

Sandra Bryce, Director of Client Services, ext. 2235

3 YEAR ACCREDITATION ONCE AGAIN GRANTED

TO CANCARE!!!



As many of you are aware CanCare went through its third accreditation survey in April, 2006. The Canadian Council on Health services Accreditation has once again granted CanCare with accreditation status until our next survey in 2009. This confirms CanCare's commitment to ensuring high quality services for our clients. Thank you to all of our clients who participated in the accreditation process by phone interview and client visits!!!

CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY STANDARDS FOR OUR CLIENTS

Consistency and continuity for our clients is a top priority at CanCare. We want to ensure that you receive good, quality care from all of your visits. In order to ensure consistent care we educate all PSWs beginning with the same full day orientation program and continuing with our PSW team meeting every two months.

We also monitor our consistency rates and have standards we try to achieve. These standards were established in conjunction with Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) and other service provider agencies.

These are the standards we strive to achieve at least 90% of the time

If you have 1 visit per week we try to have no more than 2 PSWs visit you in a three month period.

If you have 2 or 3 visits/week, we try to have no more than 4 PSWs visit you in a three month period.

If you have more than 3 visits per week we try to have no more than 6 or 7 PSWs visit you in a three month period.

How does CanCare measure up to these standards? Currently we are meeting these standards 87% of the time. We hope to meet or surpass our target of 90% in the near future as we continue to monitor our results and implement actions to improve.