

Caregiver E-Visit

January 2018

Prevention and Wellness

Last winter was terrible for them. Jack caught a cold and then developed pneumonia. He was in the hospital for a week, and Ellen, after driving through snow and ice each day and getting precious little sleep, ended up with “walking pneumonia” herself. It was awful being sick and exhausted and cooped up. Jack has not regained his former strength. Ellen wonders how they can avoid such a predicament again. There may be some helpful hints below.

During the winter months, caregivers and those you care for are prone to infectious conditions. The weather is cold and damp; people tend to get less exercise and fresh air; fresh foods are less available; and it's difficult to drink enough water when indoor air is so dry. Stress levels soar as we deal with snow, cold and isolation. Stress hormones and neglected health habits affect a person's immune system and are advertisements for an ideal “host” to any germ! Germs are Microscopic organisms (e.g. bacteria, viruses, yeast molds and fungi.) Some live in our bodies on good terms and are helpful. But the “bad guys” cause

disease. Most germs consist of just one cell, and each one can quickly and easily create its own “siblings”! Germs have nothing to do but eat and replicate themselves day and night.

A host is the body (such as you or me) where a germ takes up residence. Tiny acts of eating and replicating take place in our bodies all the time! In healthy



circumstances, our natural defenses can conquer harmful invaders. However, when those defenses are impaired, germs invade body tissues, causing sickness.

Germs enter the human host through normal body openings and breaks in the skin. The mouth and respiratory tract are often open doors for these rascals. In their quest to find new hosts, germs have

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For more information or if you wish to make comments on this E-Visit, contact Marilyn Joyce 262-833-8764 or email marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com

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some efficient but unknowing allies: human hands; food and beverages; surfaces like appliances, counter tops or dirty laundry; and, body fluids (coughs, sneezes, saliva, elimination,); public places; and (bless their hearts,) children!

Here are some “coats of armor” for you and the person who needs your care:

Good health habits – nutritious meals, plenty of water, good rest and sleep, exercise (even one minute at a time!), and meaningful interaction with people (who aren’t sick!)

Intact Skin – our first defense against infection. Cover cracks and open sores. Prevent pressure areas on a person with compromised mobility by making sure skin surfaces are clean and dry and by changing position often to prevent pressure. Cover any open sores, and use lotion after hand washing.

Immunizations – such as those for flu, shingles, and certain types of pneumonia. These introduce the immune system to a tiny dose of certain germs, triggering the production of “designer cells” to fight those organisms. Immunization is recommended for people at high risk for infectious conditions, and that includes you and the person you care for!

Hand Hygiene - Hand hygiene is

probably the strongest armor we have, and this means effective handwashing. Use soap, scrub for at least 20 seconds (remember between fingers and under nails), and rinse well under running water. Wearing gloves during cares cuts down on the risk, but does not replace good hand washing. Assist your care partner in handwashing as well as circumstances will allow. Moist wipes and hand sanitizer are not the best options but are much better than skipping this task.

A sanitary environment - cleaned with a reliable disinfectant.

Antibiotics– Antibiotics properly prescribed and used. -When bacterial infection does occur, an antibiotic is often needed to assist the body’s defense system. It’s important to understand some particulars about an antibiotic: whether or not it should be taken with food; foods to avoid while taking it; what times of day it should be taken; and how the antibiotic, along with other precautions, can put a person on the road to recovery. There may be some bumps in that road, though. Antibiotics may deplete the digestive system of the “good bacteria” that aid normal digestion, and diarrhea may result. Probiotics help replace the “good bacteria,” and are found in over-the-counter medications and some foods e.g. yogurt with special cultures added. Ask the doctor, pharmacist, or a nutritionist what is best for you.

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Another complication is when an invading organism mutates and becomes immune to the antibiotic. This is especially a risk if the medication is not taken exactly as directed. The ill person may not get better or may take a turn for the worse. Keep your health care provider informed, so necessary changes can be made in a timely fashion.

Germs!! Too small for the human eye to see, but they can be fierce invaders!

May the FORCE provide you with defenses!



Interested in Classes offered?

- Caregiving Relationships
- Healthy Living with Diabetes
- Living Well with Chronic Conditions
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers
- Stepping On

Contact

Elizabeth at
262-833-8762

Activities of Interest

Caregiver Consultations

The Alzheimer's Association has openings for care consultations that can be held at the ADRC offices. To arrange an appointment contact Felicia at 262-833-8761.

Memory Café Share your stories and socialize with others who have worries about their memory. Third Thursday of each month 1:30—3:00 pm Old Settlers Bowling Center 1500 15th Ave,

Union Grove.

New attendees RSVP to Wendy Betley at 414-479-8800.

E-Learning available 24/7

Courses that allow individuals to learn important information on their own schedule. Especially beneficial for working caregivers or family members. All courses are free of charge and can be accessed at: <http://training.alz.org/>.

AGING AND
DISABILITY
RESOURCE CENTER
OF RACINE COUNTY

14200 Washington Ave
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Phone: 262-833-8777

Email: adrc@racinecounty.com

www.adrc.racinecounty.com

Support Groups for Family Caregivers

For caregivers who are over 60 or are caring for someone over 60 and caregivers (of any age) for people who have dementia. Contact: Marilyn Joyce, **833-8764**, or marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com

Sometimes we are able to make reminder calls to former attendees about an upcoming Support Group. However, this is not always possible. These groups nearly always happen at the scheduled time and place. If you haven't gotten a call, and you have doubts, please call 262-833-8764 or 262-833-8777. See you there!!

General Caregiver Groups

First Friday

12 Noon-1:00 pm

Caregiver Connection

Telephone Group

Call 833-8762 for call-in
Information

Jan 5 Feb 2 March 2

Second Tuesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Yorkville United Methodist
Church

17645 Old Yorkville Rd
(Just off of Highway 20, 3 miles
West of I-94)

Jan 9 Feb 13 March 13

Second Saturday

10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Atonement Lutheran Church
2915 Wright Ave, Racine

Jan 13 Feb 10 March 10

Third Wednesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Burlington Senior Center
209 N. Main St, Burlington
Eppers Room

Jan 17 Feb 21 March 21

Alzheimer's Association Support Groups:

*For families dealing with any
type of dementia*

First Thursday

10:30 am - 12 Noon

Bethania Lutheran Church
4120 Wright Ave, Racine
(Park and enter in the back of the
building)

Jan 4 Feb 1 March 1

Second Thursday

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Bethania Lutheran Church
4120 Wright Ave, Racine
(Park and enter in the back of
building)

Jan 11 Feb 8 March 8

