

Day Haven

ADULT DAY SERVICES

A Newsletter for Caregivers Caring for Loved Ones with Alzheimer's or a Related Dementia

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Summer 2010

SUMMER FUN AND SAFETY

As we head toward the summer we want to make caregivers aware of a few things that will go far in increasing the summer fun. Before going in the sun for any length of time check with your doctor or pharmacist to be sure your loved one is not taking a medication that restricts sun exposure. Although it may be difficult to apply sunscreen to an unwilling partner, this is something that must be done. If you go to any well stocked store you will find not only lotions but also sprays that might help make the chore easier. A sunburned head is not only dangerous and painful, but can cause headaches. Have several hats handy by the front door and in the car to avoid this problem.

If your loved one still enjoys swimming, talk to your doctor about inexpensive drops to prevent swimmer's ear. Also, we cannot stress enough how important it is that your loved one is not left alone near any source of water, even a kiddie pool.

Lastly, stuffy noses and runny eyes from a summer cold or allergies can be a nuisance. Before taking over-the-counter allergy or cold medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist to ensure it is okay to take it along with prescription medications. A simple inexpensive saline nose rinse may be all that is needed to relieve nasty symptoms.

By taking these simple precautions you may avoid some very long and uncomfortable nights for both you and your loved one. We hope you enjoy your summer. And remember: Don't forget your hat!

THINGS TO DO AROUND SUFFOLK COUNTY

For the Sea Lovers:

Horton Point Lighthouse and Nautical Museum, Southold, (631) 765-5500,
www.southoldhistoricalsociety.org

This small historical lighthouse sits high on the cliffs overlooking the Long Island Sound. Picnic area available.

Huntington Harbor Lighthouse, Huntington, (631) 421-1985, www.huntingtonlighthouse.org
Call to find out tour dates.

Long Island Maritime Museum, West Sayville, (631) 447-8679, www.limaritime.org

Historical exhibits, restored boats and a turn of the century bayman's cottage. Covered picnic areas are located on the great South Bay.

For those interested in Planes, Trains and Automobiles (and more):

Brookhaven Town Volunteer Firefighters Museum, Ridge, (631) 924-8114

www.brookhavenfiremuseum.org

Restored 1889 Firehouse with firetrucks and equipment on display.

Railroad Museum of Long Island, Greenpoint (631) 477-0439 and Riverhead (631) 727-7920, www.rmli.org

Many historical rail cars on display including the first double-decker car and 1964 World's Fair mini-train.

Suffolk County Police Museum, Yaphank, (631) 852-6174.

This little museum is open for self-guided tours. Great for former crime fighters!

Aerodome Society Museum, Bayport, (631) 472-2293, www.bayportaerodome.org

Several airplane hangers housing antique planes and exhibits.

We suggest you call before heading out to visit any of these sights. Many of these locations are small and are run by volunteers. If you explain your situation, they may give you the VIP treatment. When heading out, especially in the summer, bring drinks and make a day of it by packing a picnic lunch. Sunscreen, hats and sunglasses are a must, too!

If you are concerned by the thought of taking your loved one out alone, why not arrange to meet another caregiver or a friend at your destination. Your day will be more fun with a companion who understands.

NOVEMBER 2010 IS

NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS' MONTH

Day Haven will mark Caregiver's Month with two special events for caregivers.

Save the dates!

Saturday, November 13: Our third annual Day of Renewal for Caregivers. No charge. Reservation required.

Friday, November 19: Full day training with nationally recognized dementia care trainer David Troxell, author of The Best Friends Approach to Alzheimer's Care. Small registration fee required.

For more information or to register, contact Julie at (631) 585-2020 or send an e-mail to dayhavenlongisland@yahoo.com.

ABOUT DAY HAVEN ADULT DAY SERVICES

Day Haven is a social model adult day services program providing therapeutic recreation, professional supervision and opportunities for socialization for frail older adults and those with dementia.

Visit Day Haven online at

www.dayhaven.org or call:

Port Jefferson (631) 476-9698

Ronkonkoma (631) 585-2020

Email: dayhavenlongisland@yahoo.com

EMERGENCY ROOM TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

By: Liz Fiordalisi, Day Haven Case Manager

A trip to the emergency room is often a difficult and unpleasant experience. For an individual with dementia, an emergency room visit can be especially terrifying and overwhelming. The unfamiliar surroundings, people, sounds and activities combined with the pain or discomfort of their condition may send their anxiety level through the roof! In the event of an emergency it is best to be as prepared as possible. Consider the following tips to help you prepare for the unexpected:

- Have a complete, typed up medical history prepared including any and all past operations and medical procedures (no matter how long ago!) Also include a complete and up-to-date list of all medications, supplements and/or herbs the patient is taking as well as a list of all health care professionals providing care.
- Have copies of important documents such as Health Care Proxy, Living Will, Do Not Resuscitate Order (if applicable) and insurance cards.
- Have a bag packed with emergency items just in case. Consider packing a change of clothing, toiletries, snacks, an item which may bring comfort such as a small album with family photos, change of undergarments and/or adult briefs.
- Make sure your loved one has their glasses, hearing aides, dentures and any other assistive devices. Remember the hospital is even more scary if a patient is unable to see or hear properly. Ask the hospital to make note of the fact that these devices are on site.
- Tell the triage nurse that your loved one has dementia and explain that the ER visit could cause increased symptoms and anxiety. This may help to speed up the process and/or give your patient a private room in the ER.

Often an individual with dementia is unable to articulate their symptoms or explain what they are feeling. It is important that you report any clues to the doctor that may help them figure out what is going on and make the appropriate diagnosis. Keep the following in mind:

- Report on bowel movements and urination frequency. These may signal a need to check for a urinary tract infection or bowel issues as a culprit for behavioral changes.
- Report any changes in eating habits or appetite as this may be a medical clue. For example, frequently physicians do not look for tooth abscess which can be a culprit for behavioral changes and fever in dementia patients.
- Report any unusual rashes which may be causing your loved one pain or discomfort.
- Pay attention to behavioral subtleties and report them to the ER physician no matter how silly you may think they sound. For example, if you have observed that when your husband scratches his chest it means he is having chest pain— tell the doctor!
- Share with the medical staff when your loved one was last around crowds or the grandkids as they may have been exposed to a virus or other infectious diseases.

Remember that YOU are your loved one's best and sometimes only advocate. Not all hospitals provide ER staff with training in dementia care. Many hospital employees that come in contact with you may not understand your loved one's behaviors. Do

not be afraid to explain your loved one's dementia diagnosis and related behavioral symptoms with ER staff. This may improve the quality of care you receive and make the experience a little better for your loved one and for you.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT AT DAY HAVEN

A recent survey mailed to Day Haven's caregiver support group attendees indicated that the monthly meetings offer much needed support and guidance to caregivers. Thank you to those who mailed back responses. Your comments will help to improve our services and develop new ones to meet the needs of caregivers.

Some of the comments included:

- "Everyone is encouraged to participate and share their experiences."
- "I always come away with at least one new/better way of doing one of my tasks."
- "I was made to feel comfortable from the moment I stepped in the room."
- "The group leader was a great help to me in getting through a difficult time with my husband."

A special thank you to Eleanor Rueb and Ethel Thomas, our support group leaders, for all their compassion and commitment.

Many caregivers are reluctant at first to join a support group. Most, however, realize that a support group is invaluable when it comes to coping with the challenges of caregiving. Even if you feel like you have it all under control there is always something to learn. Or maybe you can be an asset to the group by sharing your experiences and knowledge.

Day Haven also offers one-to-one support by a well trained and experienced professional. If you have questions about caregiving or available services, are facing a caregiving challenge, or just need someone to talk to, Eleanor Reilly Rueb, Day Haven's Caregiver Specialist, is available to speak to you in person or over the phone free of charge. Call (631) 585-2020. (Note that since Eleanor does much of her work off-site, you may need to leave a message to have her call you back.)

Caregiver Support Groups

free for family caregivers of those with Alzheimer's disease or related memory impairment

Ronkonkoma

Second Tuesday of every month, 6:00 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.
Light Supper Available

Last Friday of every month, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (for spouses only)

South Setauket

First Wednesday of every month, 6:30 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

Bellport

Third Wednesday of every month, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

New Group Now Forming!

Ronkonkoma Meetings

2210 Smithtown Avenue
RSVP: (631) 585-2020
Group Leader: Eleanor Rueb

South Setauket Meeting

Jefferson's Ferry (Wireless Rd. & 347)
Follow Signs to the Community Center
RSVP: (631) 476-9698
Group Leader: Ethel Thomas

Bellport Meeting

Bellport United Methodist Church
185 South Country Road, Bellport
RSVP: (631) 585-2020
Group Leader: Eleanor Rueb

Our support groups are designed to offer you emotional support and practical advice when caring for a frail loved one or someone with memory loss. On-site professional care is available during the meetings. Please call ahead if you will need care for your loved one. New members always welcome. Please call ahead to check specific dates.