

Caregiver Corner

... Ideas and information for people caring for others 778-2411

Signs and Symptoms of Problems

Sometimes our bodies are trying to give us messages. The following are some guidelines that may indicate that something is wrong and we or someone we care about needs to see the doctor.

- **Muscular System** - swelling around joints; grimacing when a person moves; slow movements; bruising, shiny, red, or hot areas over a swollen joint; sensitivity to touch.
- **Skin** - color changes; swelling; texture changes; clamminess or moistness to the touch; dry, oily, white, scaly patches; changes in moles, scars, or warts; sores, wounds, lumps, or odors that are unusual.
- **Hair** - if it becomes overly oily, dry, or brittle; excessive loss; scaliness; redness of the scalp; dandruff.
- **Circulatory System** - swelling in the feet and ankles; blue or white color of nail beds, lips, feet, or hands; swelling or hard knots in the lymph nodes; changes in the pulse rate.

- **Respiratory System** - any sudden changes in breathing rate; cough that is white, yellow, has an odor, is thick, or liquid; a nose that becomes plugged or bleeds, is overly dry, or is draining; a sore throat with red or white spots; swollen tonsils; difficulty swallowing.
- **Digestive System** - a mouth or tongue that is red, swollen, or spotted; bad breath; diseased or bleeding gums; lined or coated tongue; cracks at the corner of the mouth; a bloated stomach; nausea and vomiting; refusing to eat or poor appetite; excessive thirst; bloated or cramped intestines; diarrhea, strange colored stools, pain when moving bowels.
- **Nervous System** - shaking of limbs or body; eyes that are sensitive to light, dull, teary, bloodshot, yellow, or glassy; discharge from the ears; a person is slow to react.
- **Urinary System** - if the urine is yellow, rust-colored, red, has sediment; if the person goes frequently; if the person has urgent feelings; if they have incomplete bladder drainage.
- **Reproductive System** - any vaginal discharge that is green, yellow, or white; any discharge that has a cheesy consistency or is watery; if the breasts have lumps or thickening; if the breasts have swelling or a nipple discharge; if the penis has a yellow or white discharge; if there are lumps or swelling of the testicles.

Contents:

1.	Signs and Symptoms of Problems.....	1
2.	Caregivers' Chat.....	2
3.	What Seniors and Caregivers Should Know about Poison Control.....	2
4.	Water: A Key to Good Health.....	2
5.	Tips for the Late-Blooming Handywoman to be Offered Again.....	3
6.	Online Support Group - An Alternative Option.....	3
7.	Staff Changes in Caregiver Services: A message from Judy Whiteman.....	3
8.	How to Balance a Checkbook.....	4

- **Behavior - Personality** does not change with age. If the following are occurring and they are not part of the normal personality it may indicate a problem: overly critical, irritable, withdrawn, demanding, abusive, crying, aggressive, listless, hostile, anxious, sullen, or depressed.

If you or a loved one is experiencing any of the above symptoms, please call your doctor.



Caregivers' Chat

Would you like to chat with other caregivers in a friendly, informal setting? Come and share your experiences or just sit and listen. The next **Caregivers' Chat** will be **Monday, February 5th** from 1-3 PM at the Stay Healthy Center, which is located in the Oakdale Mall near Sears.

Caregivers' Chat is a small informal discussion group for people who are concerned about an older friend or relative. The group is coordinated by Judy Bobinski, Caregiver Services Case Manager.

You are welcome to bring a snack or beverage with you and enjoy the company of other caregivers. If you have questions feel free to call Judy at 778-2411.

What Seniors and Caregivers Should Know About Poison Control

Caregivers of children are usually very aware of the need to prevent them from touching or tasting substances that may be harmful or poisonous. But did you know that caregivers of the elderly must also be vigilant about preventing older people from accidental poisoning? Part of the reason is that some older people may be memory-impaired, or their senses

may not be as acute as when they were younger. But in addition, medications-- both over-the-counter and prescription-- can be sources of poison at any age. To help people identify the dangers and know what to do in case of poisoning, the Broome County Office for Aging will host "What Seniors and Caregivers Should Know About Poison Control" on Wednesday, February 14th from 6-8 PM at the Broome County Public Library. Our speaker will be Lee Livermore, Upstate New York Poison Center Outreach Educator.

Pre-registration is requested. Light refreshments will be served. Please call Andrea Wright in Caregiver Services at 778-2411 with questions or to register.



Water: A Key to Good Health

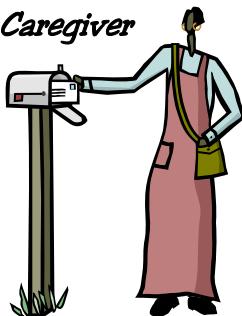
Our bodies are mostly water-- 20 percent of our bones, 70 percent of our brain, and 80 percent of our blood is water. We need plenty of fresh, clean water every day. The reason we need to drink water is because we use and lose more than 2 quarts of it every day. It needs to be replenished. Here are a few ways to keep your body and mind saturated:

- Take regular water breaks, thirsty or not. Drink glasses of water throughout the day.
- If a glass of plain water is not to your liking, you can replenish with juice, caffeine-free soda, or even a piece of fruit. Caffeine is a diuretic and will deplete water.
- If you exercise, you need even more water. Drink some before and after exercising.

Updating Mailing List

If you do not wish to receive the *Caregiver Corner* any longer, or there are any name/address changes to be made, please call Andrea Wright at 778-2411.

Note: The mailing lists for *Caregiver Corner* and for *Senior News* are separate. If you wish to change your address or cancel your subscription(s), please let the receptionist know which mailing list you are correcting. Thank you for your assistance.



Tips for the Late-Blooming Handywoman to be Offered Again

The very popular "Tips for the Late-Blooming Handywoman" course will be offered again on Thursday, March 21, 2007. The new location is the Broome West Senior Center located at 2801 Wayne Street in Endwell, New York. It will be from 12- 3:30 PM and includes Lunch. Space is limited. Pre-registration by mail is required. The registration deadline is

Thursday, March 14th. Please call Caregiver Services to inquire about registration forms, ask questions, or to be put on the list.



Office for Aging Now Offers Service for Spanish Speaking Seniors

The number of Latino elders in our community has increased in recent years, and is expected to continue to grow in the future. The Broome County Office for Aging has arranged to have a Spanish speaking interpreter available at the office on the first Thursday of each month from 1-3 PM. This service will begin on Thursday,

March 1. The office is located on the 4th floor of the Broome County Office Building, 44 Hawley Street, in Downtown Binghamton. For more information call the Senior Resource line at 778-2411.



Online Support Group - An Alternative Option

If you have access to the Internet and leaving home to attend a group meeting does not appeal to you, then please visit our online support group, *Southern Tier Caregivers Support*. This group is a message board style support group sponsored by Broome County Office for Aging Caregiver Services and is available on the Yahoo Groups network. To access it, log on to www.gobroomecounty.com/community/sccgcgroup.php. You can post messages, read messages, ask a question, or provide an answer from the comfort of your own home. If you would like, you can remain anonymous. Please check us out!



Staff Changes in Caregiver Services: A Message from Judy Whiteman, Program Coordinator for Caregiver Services

After twenty-two years with the Broome County Office for Aging, I've decided to retire. I would like to express my appreciation to all the caregivers, past and present, that I have met along the way. During the thirteen years I managed the adult day programs (now known as Yesteryears) and while coordinating Caregiver Services, your dedication, patience and sometimes superhuman endurance have been an inspiration.

Over the years here at OFA, I have traveled some of the same roads many of you have: from

having two healthy parents, to seeing my mother become caregiver for my dad for many years; and then after his death, developing chronic illnesses of her own that my siblings and I (in my case, long-distance) needed to assist her with. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to speak with you by phone and to meet many of you in person at our retreats and educational programs. I'm sure we still may run into each other, especially because at the Office for Aging, nobody seems to really leave!

Dee Dee Camp will be taking over as Program Coordinator for Caregiver Services after my official last day on February 2. As coordinator for the Aging Futures project for the past several years, she has been very familiar with caregiver issues. She also has a 79-year old mom, so caregiver concerns are also close to home for her. Welcome, Dee Dee!

Broome County Office for Aging
44 Hawley Street
PO Box 1766
Binghamton, NY 13902-1766



Your February 2007 "Caregiver Corner"

How to Balance a Checkbook

Sometimes women find themselves needing to take over the family finances for the first time. *How to Balance a Checkbook* is a 2 hour session designed to help the first time money manager. The past sessions have been well attended and future sessions will be scheduled if there is enough interest. Pre-registration is required. Please call Caregiver Services at 778-2411 if you would like to attend a session or if you have questions.

Caregiver Services and its publication, "*Caregiver Corner*" are supported by a grant from the New York State Office for the Aging