



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DEPRESSION

Some people have the mistaken idea that it is normal for older people to feel depressed. Most older people feel satisfied with their lives. A depressed person may have any of these symptoms:

- Sadness that lasts for a long time
- Sleep problems—sleeping too much or too little
- No longer enjoys activities they once enjoyed
- Weight loss or not feeling hungry
- Feeling down
- Problems concentrating and decision making
- Physical complaints, such as arthritis pain or headaches that have gotten worse
- Counseling and medication are two main treatments for depression.



If you are feeling depressed, talk to your doctor.

In addition to treatment, there are other things that depressed people can do that may help them start feeling better.

- Exercising
- Improving their diet
- Getting enough sleep
- Cutting back on caffeine and alcohol

To our valued members,

The mission of ADVANTAGE is to ... *“Provide managed care solutions to improve outcomes, keep costs low and improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.”*

In this newsletter we share information with you regarding health and wellness. ADVANTAGE continues to change and grow. We want you to know that service to you remains our most precious goal.

Please take a moment to read this newsletter. It has a wealth of information on how you can improve your health.

As always, we at ADVANTAGE are rising above the service you expect!

Sincerely,
Vicki Perry, CEO
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SPRING/ SUMMER 2010

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WELLNESS ADVANTAGE YOUR MEMBER NEWSLETTER

SPRING IS IN THE AIR...

Spring is here! So, get involved in activities and hobbies outside your home that you enjoy! Remember 'safety first', before starting any physical activities; be sure to talk to your doctor. Here are some examples of social activities that you might like:



- Gardening at a community park
- Taking a water aerobics class at an indoor or outdoor pool
- Joining a senior center
- Volunteering at a library or hospital
- Playing cards and games with friends
- Visiting family and other relatives
- Taking a group exercise class
- Getting a part-time job
- Taking a cooking class

- Traveling with a group of older adults
- Walking outdoors with friends

Everyone has different limits to the amount of time he or she can spend on social activities. What is perfect for one person might be too much for another. Remember: participating in activities you enjoy should be fun, not stressful.

AN IMPORTANT SCREENING FOR YOUR EYESIGHT

People over age 65 need an eye exam every year. Having a yearly eye exam helps find problems early. A common eye condition among older adults is Glaucoma.

- Glaucoma causes pressure in the eye, that can
- Damage the eye nerves, that can
- Cause loss of your eyesight or
- Even blindness



The following health conditions make chances of getting Glaucoma greater:

- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
- Having a family member with glaucoma

If you are African American, you have an even higher risk.

Make an appointment for this year's eye exam. Talk with your eye doctor about the importance of eye screenings.



KEEPING YOUR BONES STRONG

Osteoporosis is a disease that makes the bones weak. They can become so weak that they break. The bones that break the most are bones in the hip, backbone and wrist.

Who has it?

Millions of Americans have the disease. White and Asian women are more likely to have osteoporosis. Other women at risk are those who have:

- A family history of broken bones
- A small body frame
- Not enough calcium in their diet

Can My Bones Be Tested?

Yes, there is a bone density test to find out how solid your bones are.

How Can I Keep My Bones Strong?

- Calcium– Helps to build strong bones. Eat low-fat dairy foods, canned fish and dark-green leafy vegetables.
- Vitamin D– Helps absorb calcium.
- Exercise– Great way to keep bones strong.

“Osteoporosis is a disease that makes the bones weak. Millions of Americans have the disease.”

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Does any of this sound familiar?

- I have trouble chewing
- Food just doesn't taste the same
- It's too much trouble to cook just for me
- I'm just not hungry

Making healthy food choices is a smart thing to do—no matter what your age is.

Tips to get you started:

- Eat many different colors and types of vegetables and fruits
- Make sure at least half of your grains are whole grains
- Eat small amounts of solid fats, oils and food high in sugar. Limit saturated fat (found in foods that come from animals) or trans fat (found in foods like cookies)

“Making healthy food choices is a smart thing to do—no matter what your age is.”

SPRING CLEANING THE SAFE WAY

In the spring, people like to clean their homes. It's a great thing to do! It's important to be safe while cleaning, especially avoiding falls and poisoning, these are two of the top causes of home injury. Carry loads you can see over, and keep a hand free to hold railings. Put things away so people won't trip on them. Tuck away electrical cords out of walkways. Follow safety recommendations when using harsh products, such as wearing gloves or masks. If you need to climb to clean something use a ladder, and make sure someone is there with you.



HOW CAN I AVOID FALLING?



As we age, our bones tend to weaken. When bones are weak, a simple fall can cause a broken bone. This can mean a trip to the hospital and maybe surgery. It might also mean being laid up for a long time, especially in the case of a hip fracture. It is important to prevent falls. Some things you can do are:

- Make sure you can see and hear well
- Use your glasses or a hearing aid if needed

- Be sure to ask your doctor if any of the drugs you are taking can make you dizzy
- Use a cane or walker if your walking is unsteady
- Wear rubber-soled and low-heeled shoes
- Keep your rooms well lit
- Keep the floor free of clutter
- Make sure rugs in your house are firmly attached to the floor, or do not use them
- Take the home safety questionnaire included with this issue

WAYS TO BOOST YOUR MIND

One of the best ways to stay sharp is to exercise your brain. Here is a sample of activities that will boost your mind.

- **Grab a video-game joystick.** Wii and Nintendo DS offer many brain teaser games.
- **Ballroom dance like the stars.** Dancing is a brain-power activity.
- **Join a book club.** Reading a good book will cut down on boredom.
- **Play a board game.** Choose Risk, Pictionary, Scrabble or Boggle.
- **Take your dog or yourself for a walk.** Walking just for 20 minutes a day can lower blood sugar. It helps blood flow to the brain, so you can think more clearly.

“Walking just for 20 minutes a day can lower your blood sugar. It helps blood flow to the brain, so you can think more clearly.”

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Did you know that daily exercise helps you stay healthy? Exercise is good for all ages.



Exercising:

- Keeps your mind sharp and alert
- Reduces stress and depression
- Can prevent diseases
- Keeps you strong
- Can help with arthritis, heart problems and diabetes

Not getting enough exercise may lead to:

- Loss of strength
- More doctor visits
- More use of medicines
- There are many types of exercise such as walking, swimming and golfing
- Ask your doctor about the right exercise for you