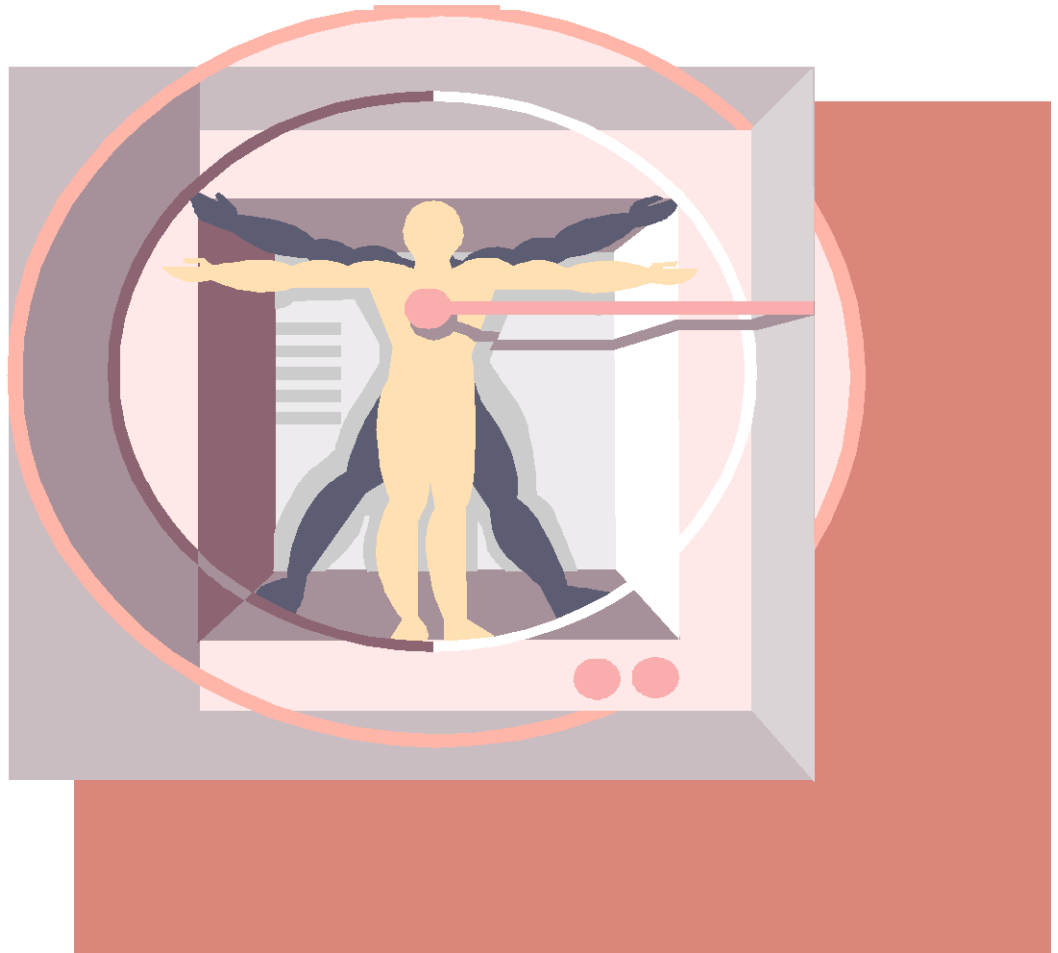


Health

Part 2 of 2



Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

This is a progressive and irreversible condition where the person has difficulty breathing due to a problem in the lungs or bronchi. Asthma, Chronic Bronchitis and Pulmonary Emphysema are examples of COPD. The most common cause is smoking.



Caregiving Tips:

- Avoid perfume
- Ask about cleaning product odors, like bleach
- Encourage nutrition and small frequent meals
- Allow plenty of time for activities
- Plan for frequent rest periods
- Understand that the consumer will have good days and bad days

Cardiovascular Disease (heart disease)

This is any disease that affects the heart or blood vessels in the body. This is the leading cause of death in our country and many people may need care because of this condition.

Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarct or MI) occurs when there is a stoppage of blood to the heart muscle itself; either by a clot or a clogging of an artery feeding the heart muscle itself. This causes heart tissue to die and gives the consumer chest pain (ANGINA). Depending on what part of the heart is affected, heart attack can cause the heart to stop beating.

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) occurs when the heart muscle does not pump efficiently and fluid backs up in the lungs and/or lower legs. This can cause shortness of breath and/or swollen ankles and legs. A person with CHF needs to follow his medical regime and reduce the salt in their diet.

Caregiving Tips:

- Track consumer's weight and document.
- Support the consumer in choosing a lower salt diet, if a doctor has ordered.
- Assist the consumer in conserving their energy as they do their daily activities.
- Be aware if the consumer has or uses nitroglycerin tablets (NTG) and/or aspirin.
- Encourage the consumer to keep all medical appointments.



Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

CAD is hardening of the arteries (arteriosclerosis) or forming plaques in the blood vessels (atherosclerosis) that narrows the space for blood to go through. This is a condition that occurs over time and requires medical assessment and treatment.

Hypertension (High Blood Pressure) is called the “silent killer” because the signs are not readily visible. High blood pressure damages body systems over time and can cause very serious disease.



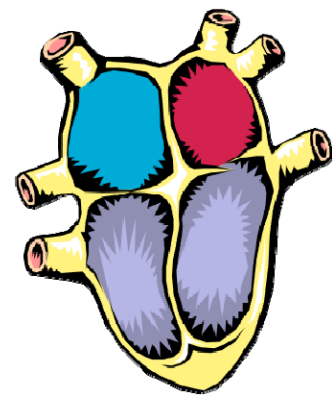
Caregiving Tips:

- Support the consumer in reducing their dietary salt intake per doctor, eliminating caffeine and nicotine, exercising moderately, reducing fatty foods, reducing stress, getting their blood pressure checked regularly and taking prescribed medications.
- Support the consumer in maintaining their ideal body weight.

The following are possible symptoms of a heart attack.

In an emergency, call 911:

- Sudden, severe pain in the chest, maybe going down the left arm or up to the jaw. Often described as crushing, pressure, or tightness
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Agitation or anxiety
- Skin may be pale or grayish, cool and clammy
- Weak and irregular pulse



**NOTE: Not all signs are present all of the time.
Women and men may present differently.**

Cancer is a general term used to describe many types of malignant tumors or cells. Malignant cells are ones that grow and invade healthy tissue. Malignant cells can also spread throughout the body.

Cancer is often treated in one of three ways:

1. Surgery: the tumor and/or abnormal cells are removed from the body.
2. Chemotherapy: medications are given that kill the cancer cells. These medications have many side effects and can harm the healthy cells as well.
3. Radiation: a beam that is aimed at the tumor. The radiation kills the tumor cells but also can harm healthy cells.



Caregiving tips:

How the caregiver supports and assists a consumer with cancer will depend on how the cancer or the treatment is affecting the consumer's ability to function.

- Generally, good nutrition is very important, so a caregiver should make sure that the consumer gets enough calories, fluids and protein.
- Comfort measures to decrease pain are also important.
- Be sensitive to the consumer's physical and emotional state.

The American Cancer Society's 7 Warning Signs of Cancer

1. Change in bowel or bladder habits
2. A sore that does not heal
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge from a body opening
4. A thickening or lump in the breast or elsewhere
5. Persistent indigestion or difficulty swallowing
6. An obvious change in a wart or mole
7. Persistent hoarseness or a nagging cough

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic disease of the pancreas. In diabetes, the pancreas does not produce any or enough of a hormone called insulin. Without insulin, the body cannot properly use sugar to fuel the body's cells. As a result sugar (glucose) builds up in the bloodstream.

Diabetes is a very serious health problem and can cause damage to vital organs if it is not treated properly.

Type One or Insulin Dependent Diabetes means the person must use insulin every day and follow a special diet. This type of diabetes usually starts in childhood. The causes of Type I are largely unknown but may include heredity, stress, injury, or illness.

Type Two or Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes usually occurs in people over the age of 40 who are overweight and have poor eating habits. Other causes are heredity and stress. Type II is generally less severe than Type I. About 90 percent of people who have diabetes have Type II.

People with Type II diabetes often can manage their disease for a while with a modified diet, regular blood tests, exercise, and oral prescription medication. As the disease progresses, they may need to use insulin or a combination of oral and injectable treatments.

The goals of treatment for either type of diabetes are the same:

- Consistent blood sugar levels
- Good control of blood sugar in order to avoid long and short-range problems
- Weight control/overall awareness of nutritional intake
- Avoid complications of diabetes like eye disease or kidney disease
- Avoid saturated fats and cholesterol that can contribute to cardiovascular problems that are a frequent complication of diabetes

Caregiving tips:

The consumer with diabetes can do many things to keep their disease under control and decrease the other complications that might occur. You as the caregiver can support the consumer by knowing and understanding some of these things.



- Meals should be eaten regularly, and in a moderate amount. Meals should not be skipped after taking insulin.
- A dietitian can often help design an appropriate diet based on what a person likes and dislikes. A dietitian can also advise a consumer on how to modify their diet when they are sick.
- Pay very close attention to skin condition, especially the legs and feet. It is best to avoid clothing that restricts circulation, like socks with tight elastic or garters or poorly fitting shoes.
- Be aware that physical activity influences blood sugar.
- When doing new or unusual physical activity, have the consumer carry a form of fast-acting sugar.
- Medic Alert Diabetes bracelet or necklace could get help quicker for the consumer in an emergency if they were not able to speak for themselves.
- Low blood sugar can be a very dangerous emergency situation. The consumer should have a plan in place for what to do when their blood sugar gets too low.
- Monitor blood regularly.
- Help the consumer inspect their feet daily.

Dementia and Alzheimer's

Dementia refers to a general loss of intellectual functions (i.e., memory, reasoning, concentration, attention, abstract ability, and reduced language function), plus personality changes (though not always disorientation).

Whether related to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's Disease, or another medical condition, dementia comes on gradually and has no known cure. The condition progresses through several stages:

- The person may experience loss of memory, insight and judgment, personality changes, mental confusion, language disturbances, and severe disorientation.
- The person may eventually become incontinent, wander, and have behavioral changes.
- The person will eventually become totally dependent on others.

The beginning of Alzheimer's disease is subtle. It can begin at any age but there is a higher frequency of getting the disease as persons age into their 80's and 90's. Persons who get the disease at a younger age (in their 50's and 60's) experience a more rapid decline. Average time that someone lives with the disease is 7 to 8 years, although 3 to 15 years can be considered normal course.



Caregiving Tips:

- Install alarms on doors and windows.
- Be aware that some individuals with dementia have super physical strength. Their physical strength is apparent when they grab onto a railing or the caregivers arm.
- Speak in short and simple sentences.
- Caregivers need to give constant gentle reminders to those suffering with dementia to help them stay focused.
- Caregivers need to be patient when working with someone with dementia.

Mental Illness

Mental illness is a disease that affects the mind just like physical diseases affect the body. Mental illnesses have signs and symptoms, affect the body's ability to function, and are treatable. There are over 100 types of mental illness.

Mental illness may be caused by physical problems such as a chemical imbalance, a physical problem in the brain, or the cause may be unknown. Medications are often very helpful. Remember that the behaviors of a person with mental illness may be caused by the illness.

Be sure to look at specific behaviors, not the diagnosis. Some types of mental illness are phobias, depression, paranoia, abnormal thinking (schizophrenia), or bipolar disease (formerly called manic-depressive disorder).

Basic classes of mental illness include:

1. Schizophrenic disorders
2. Mood (affective) disorders
3. Personality disorders

Schizophrenic disorders

Schizophrenia is a serious, usually chronic mental disorder that affects the person's ability to think and communicate clearly, make decisions, and understand reality. A person with schizophrenia may have several combinations of symptoms and have different symptoms at different times.

Thought Disorders

The diminished ability to think clearly and logically. Often language is disconnected and nonsensical and makes it difficult for the person to participate in conversations. Common signs include:

- Delusions - when the person may believe that he/ she is being conspired against or that others hear his/her thoughts. Delusions may cause bizarre behavior.
- Hallucinations are when something is heard, seen, or felt only by that person. Voices may warn him/ her of danger or tell him/her what to do. He/she may hear several voices carrying on a conversation.
- Withdrawal from interaction with others
- Flat affect - lack of emotional expression
- Apathy

Although schizophrenia cannot be cured it can usually be controlled. Some people with schizophrenia will consume large amounts of caffeine and cigarettes (sometimes up to 7-8 packs a day). The IHSS Social Worker can help you work with the person if this is a problem. The risk of suicide is high for this group.

Mood Disorders

Mood Disorders are disturbances in mood. The two basic mood disorders are depression and bipolar illness.

Depression is a "low mood." A depressed person may show a loss of interest in usual activities or have changes in appetite, and sleep patterns. The person may show feelings of despair, worthlessness, and suicidal thinking. The symptoms of depression may be very similar to those of dementia at times. Depression is considered chronic or clinical after three months of symptoms.

Behavioral Changes:

- Crying, tearfulness, or inability to cry
- Social withdrawal
- Psychomotor retardation
- Agitation
- Suicide attempt

Cognitive (mental process of knowing, thinking, learning, and judging) changes:

- Negative self-concept/feeling inadequate
- Negative expectations for the future
- Self-blame
- Indecisiveness
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Decline in attention/concentration
- Memory loss
- Constricted or “tunneled” thinking

Emotional Changes:

- Sadness
- Guilt
- Anxiety
- Anger

Physical Changes:

- Sleep disturbances
- Eating disturbance
- Constipation
- Weight loss or weight gain
- Pain, unexplained origin
- Vague physical complaints

Treatment:

Depression is one of the most treatable of mental disorders. Some people can be completely cured. The treatments used include medication and psychotherapy.

Bipolar (manic-depressive illness)

This disorder causes periods of mania (greatly elated moods or excited states) as well as periods of depression. This condition requires long-term medication management.

Personality Disorders

A personality disorder exists when a person's usual patterns of thinking, behaving, perceiving, and feeling are inflexible and maladaptive.

Personality disorders are characterized by a rigid, inflexible behavior, and difficulty adapting that impairs a person's ability to get along with others and function in society.

Some types of personality disorders are: obsessive-compulsive, anti-social, narcissistic, histrionic, avoidant, dependent, and borderline. Some disorders benefit from medications.



Caregiving Tips for helping consumers with mental illness:

- Be compassionate and empathetic.
- Caregivers should avoid taking behaviors or attitudes personally when working with someone suffering from a mental illness.
- Caregivers should acknowledge their consumer's frustration with empathy.

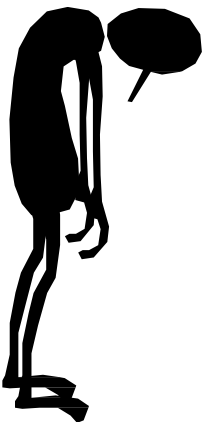
Depression

19 million people are affected with a Depressive Disorder yearly. A Depressive Disorder sufferer's thoughts, mood, body, sleeping and eating habits may all be affected. The manner in which individuals think and feel about themselves, may also be impacted by a Depressive Disorder. Depressive illness, many times, interferes with a person's ability to function normally, which in turn not only can cause the individual to suffer, but also has a great impact on the person's loved ones.

It is important to remember that an individual who suffers from a Depressive Disorder needs treatment. A person cannot be expected to snap their fingers, and the depression will instantly disappear.

Older adults have a 50 percent higher suicide rate than young adults, or the nation in general. Of the older adult population, white males, 85 years and above have the highest rate of suicide.

An individual who has suicidal thoughts, or a family member who suspects a loved one is contemplating suicide, could contact the primary doctor, mental health professional, the emergency room, or the local suicide prevention hotline.



The Sacramento County Suicide Prevention (Crisis Services Program) can be reached 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (916) 368-3111.

Recognizing Signs of Depression & Possible Suicide

- **Talking about dying** — any mention of dying, disappearing, jumping, shooting oneself, or other types of self-harm.
- **Recent loss** — through death, divorce, separation, broken relationship, loss of job, money, status, self-confidence, self-esteem, loss of religious faith, loss of interest in friends, sex, hobbies, and/or activities previously enjoyed.
- **Change in personality** — sad, withdrawn, irritable, anxious, tired, indecisive, apathetic.
- **Change in behavior** — can't concentrate on school, work, and/or routine tasks.
- **Change in sleep patterns** — insomnia, often with early waking or oversleeping, nightmares.
- **Change in eating habits** — loss of appetite and weight, or overeating.
- **Diminished sexual interest** — impotence, menstrual abnormalities (often missed periods).
- **Fear of losing control** — going crazy, harming self or others.
- **Low self esteem** — feeling worthless, shame, overwhelming guilt, self-hatred, "everyone would be better off without me."
- **No hope for the future** — believing things will never get better; that nothing will ever change.

Courtesy of San Francisco Suicide Prevention- www.sfsuicide.org

Suicide Prevention: Myth or Fact

People who talk about suicide don't do it — suicide happens without warning...

MYTH: Although suicide can be an impulsive act, it is often thought out and communicated to others, but people ignore the clues.

Talking about suicide may give someone the idea...

MYTH: Raising the question of suicide without shock or disapproval shows that you are taking the person seriously and responding to their pain.

Suicide rates are higher for people of low income...

MYTH: Suicide shows little prejudice to economic status. It is representative proportionally among all levels of society.

More men commit suicide than women...

FACT: Although women attempt suicide twice as often as men, men commit suicide twice as often as women.

Most suicidal people are undecided about living or dying, and they gamble with death, leaving it to others to save them...

FACT: Suicidal people are often undecided about living or dying right up to the last minute; many gamble that others will save them.

Once a person is suicidal, he/she is suicidal forever...

MYTH: People who want to kill themselves will not always feel suicidal or constantly be at a high risk for suicide. They feel that way until the crisis period passes.

Most suicides are caused by a single dramatic and traumatic event...

MYTH: Precipitating factors may trigger a suicidal decision; but more typically the deeply troubled person has suffered long periods of unhappiness, depression, lack of self respect, has lost the ability to cope with their life and has no hope for the future.

There is no genetic predisposition to suicide...

FACT: There is no genetic predisposition to suicide - it does not "run in the family."

Improvement following a serious personal crisis or serious depression means that the risk of suicide is over...

MYTH: The risk of suicide may be the greatest as the depression lifts. The suicidal person may have new energy to carry out their suicide plan.

It's unhelpful to talk about suicide to a person who is depressed...

MYTH: Depressed persons need emotional support and empathy; encouraging them to talk about their suicidal feelings can be therapeutic as a first step.

Courtesy of San Francisco Suicide Prevention - www.sfsuicide.org

Epilepsy is a disease characterized by seizures. A seizure is a sudden increase in the electrical activity in one portion of the brain. The seizure can occur in one area with specific and localized symptoms or it may spread to the entire brain, resulting in loss of consciousness and the body shaking. This sudden discharge of electrical activity can have several causes, ranging from epilepsy to head injury. There are many types of seizures. They can be mild or severe. Medication use is helpful.



Caregiver Tips:

- Do not put anything in the consumer's mouth during a seizure.
- If possible, roll consumer on his/her side to minimize danger in the event of vomiting.
- Do not give anything to eat or drink.
- Support the consumer in consistent medical care, including taking their medications as prescribed.
- Keep a record of seizures - time, date, how long they last and how the consumer is after the seizure.
- Dial 911 (unless the consumer's doctor has provided other instructions).

Dysphagia

Dysphagia is a condition where a consumer has difficulty chewing and swallowing foods. Dysphagia is usually the result of a stroke or another neurological condition like Lou Gehrig's disease, multiple sclerosis or Parkinson's disease. Sometimes consumers with developmental disabilities have trouble swallowing as well. A consumer with dysphagia needs their food prepared in a way that they do not choke or aspirate and are able to keep the food in their mouth.

When feeding a consumer with dysphagia, remember these points:



Caregiving Tips:

- Have the consumer sitting as straight as possible. Take special care when feeding individuals who are not alert and responsive.
- Make sure the consumer's head is forward and his/her chin is down.
- Never feed a consumer who is lying down.
- Sit level with the consumer, eye to eye. This will keep consumer from having to look up or down to receive their food, possibly causing them to lose the food from their mouth or to choke on a bite.
- Watch for pocketing of food (storing in the cheek). If this happens, remove the pocketed food and have consumer slow down.
- Feed the consumer slowly. Don't rush. Be certain to make eating a pleasant experience. Don't talk to others; speak to the consumer you are helping to eat.
- You may need to prompt the swallowing process with statements like "chew thoroughly," "swallow twice," "hold your breath while you swallow," and "clear your throat."

Solid foods are most appropriate; these are foods that stick together. Some examples are:

- Egg dishes like soufflés or quiches
- Casseroles
- Meat, egg or tuna salad
- Canned fruits
- Soft cheeses like cottage or cream cheese
- Moist soft meats (may need grinding or pureeing)
- Custards and puddings
- Cheesecake, pies, cakes (may need to soak with milk)
- Hot cereals
- Most vegetables in sauces or casseroles
- Gelatin

Solid foods that are problematic for some consumers include those, which fall apart such as:

- Dry bread; crackers
- Chips and nuts
- Thin, pureed applesauce
- Plain rice
- Thin, hot cereal
- Plain ground meats that break into chunks when chewed
- Cooked peas or corn

Other solid foods which can be a problem include very bulky or sticky foods difficult to swallow, for example:

- Fresh white bread
- Peanut butter
- Plain mashed potatoes
- Banana
- Bran cereals
- Chunks of plain meats
- Raw vegetables and some fruits

Liquids are most difficult if they are thin, like water or apple juice. Some individuals need liquids thickened to be able to use them. Use a starch-based rather than a gum or fiber based thickener so the consumer is able to break the thickener down during the digestive process. Some liquids are naturally a little thicker and may be easier to swallow:

- Vegetable juice, frozen juices, pureed fruits
- Nectars, puddings
- Ensure Plus; Sustacal HC; Nutren 2.0, or other supplements
- Cream soups
- Milkshakes, eggnog, yogurt
- Liquids that are spoon-thick
- Ice cream or sherbet

Each consumer will need to be evaluated by an occupational therapist or a speech therapist to determine what they can and cannot handle. Commercial thickeners are very helpful because they can be added until the food holds its shape. Other thickeners include:

- Instant mashed potato powder, infant rice cereal
- Cornstarch (must be cooked), non-fat dry milk powder
- Fruit and vegetable flakes