



Alzheimer's and Type 2 Diabetes

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Type 2 diabetes has become a major public health concern because of its strong links to heart disease, stroke and kidney failure. Now there's another reason to keep this issue on our personal health radars: Growing evidence also connects the condition to an increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or vascular dementia.

This emerging connection is fueling interest in the possibility that drugs for Type 2 diabetes might also treat or prevent Alzheimer's. Preliminary studies of two such drugs have paved the way for additional investigation, and one large-scale clinical trial is now in progress.

One Alzheimer's Association 2006 research grant supports an effort to gain further knowledge about the relationship in a major study enrolling 8,000 volunteers. Possible explanations for the link include Type 2's impact on the brain's blood vessels; damage to brain cells from excess insulin or blood sugar; and shared biochemical processes.

Scientists know heredity plays a role in Type 2 diabetes, because it tends to run in families and affects some ethnic groups more often than others. But for many, Type 2 is strongly associated with excess weight, lack of exercise, and overeating.

But, there's good news: You can substantially lower your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes without turning your life upside down, according to a study of more than 3,000 volunteers, almost half of whom were from high-risk ethnic groups.

Results showed that overweight individuals with higher-than-normal blood sugar lowered their future risk of Type 2 diabetes an average of 58% by:

- Losing 5-7% of body weight.
- Engaging in walking or other moderate exercise 30 minutes for five days each week.
- Eating a healthy, low-fat diet.

—Source: Alzheimer's Update Winter 2007

Special Points of Interest:

- Tips for caring for a loved one suffering from dementia.
- Ways to relieve joint stress.

Laughter: Medicine for the Heart

Laughter is like a breath of fresh air that we desperately need. This seemingly simple act affects most of your body systems. Laughter strengthens the immune system by stimulating your body to increase production of immunoglobulin. It improves your heart rate and circulation by boosting the oxygen supply to your brain. Laughter controls pain by decreasing muscle tension, distracting attention, and increasing the production of endorphins, natural pain killers. Laughter is like giving yourself an internal massage as it stimulates and soothes. It truly is medicine for the heart.

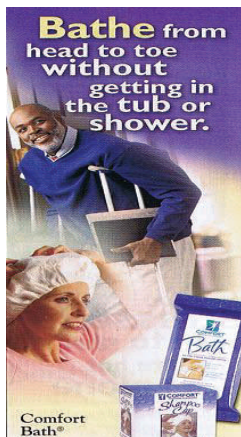
Sometimes when we feel inept, like a duck out of water, in our efforts to care for our loved one, the healthiest way to respond is to laugh at our own imperfections. We are human and at times say the wrong thing, spill soup down the front of our care receiver's shirt, or mess up at the most inopportune moment. But if we can't laugh, all we do is cry.

Listed below are some ideas for keeping your humor:

- ◆ Try keeping a journal of funny things you see, hear or read.
- ◆ Place cartoons on your refrigerator or bulletin board. They will be there when you need them.
- ◆ Avoid negative people.
- ◆ Don't put yourself down.
- ◆ Call someone today to arrange to meet a few hours to renew your spirit. It truly will be medicine for your heart.

—Source: Caregiver.com, 2/1/2007

Gear & Gadgets



Comfort Bath lets you wash without getting into the shower. Inside, eight thick, soft washcloths are soaked in a unique blend of mild, rinse-free cleansers and skin-protecting moisturizers. It leaves the skin feeling clean, refreshed and soft all day.

Just warm the entire package in your microwave. Each thick washcloth stays warm in **Comfort Bath's** insulated package.

Comfort Shampoo Cap contains rinse-free shampoo and conditioner to clean and soften hair without mess or fuss.

For a store near you, call 800.323.2220 or visit www.comfortbath.com.

Caregiver Resource/Support Meetings

Fayette County & Surrounding Area

June 5
July 3
August 7
3:00-4:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
127 North Fourth Street
Vandalia
Meets in the library

Jefferson County & Surrounding Area

June 12
July 10
August 14
3:00-4:00 p.m.

Addus Adult Day Center
108 North Third Street
Mt. Vernon
Meets in the North Room

Effingham County & Surrounding Area

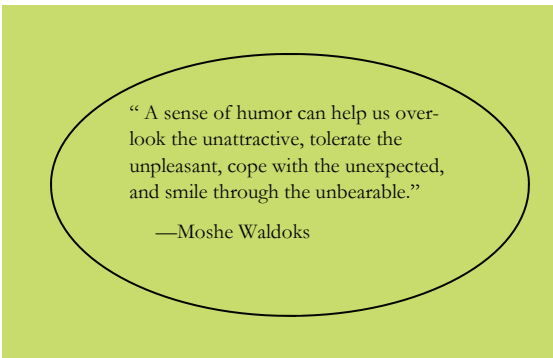
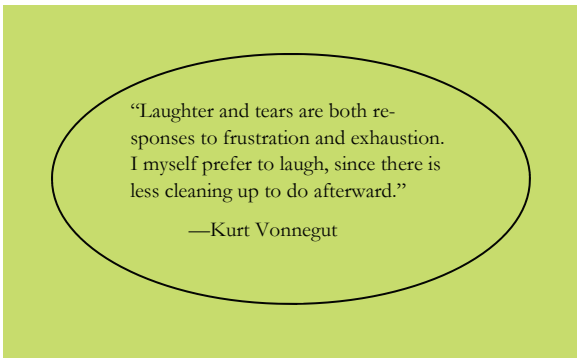
June 18
July 16
August 20
3:30-4:30 p.m.

Heartland Human Services
1200 North Fourth Street
Effingham
Meets in Room 119

Marion County & Surrounding Area

June 19
July 17
August 21
4:00-5:00 p.m.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
512 West Main Street
Salem
Meets in Church Basement



Book Review of the Month

Approximately 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease, a condition that affects the parts of the brain that control thought, memory, and language. Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease can be a challenge in several ways.

The Alzheimer's Activities Guide is designed to provide you with suggestions of daily activities to help keep the person with Alzheimer's disease active.

This guide has 3 sections. The first section includes therapeutic activities that can emotionally and physically stimulate people with Alzheimer's disease. Each activity page includes instructions on how to perform the activity, variations on the activity for different levels of ability, and a summary of specific benefits the activity offers the person with Alzheimer's. Also included are four 30-day blank calendars to help you plan 4 months of activities. Use these calendars to write in activities chosen from the guide and keep track of doctors' appointments.

In the next two sections of this guide, you'll find advice and tips about:

- Day-to-day tasks (eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, communicating, driving)
- Where to go for support and resources

If you are interested in reading **The Alzheimer's Activities Guide** contact Heartland Human Services at 217.347.7179 or toll-free 1.888.560.8805 ext. 1062.



Activities can help reconnect the person with Alzheimer's to daily life.

Nine Ways to Relieve Joint Stress

It happens to all of us: joint pain from a lifetime of lifting, bending and normal wear and tear. In addition to medication, there are certain steps you can take to relieve stress while going about your daily activities. These activities include

1. **Control your weight:** Obesity puts extra stress on weight-bearing joints, such as the back, hips, knees and feet.
2. **Be aware of body position:** Use good posture to protect your back and the joints of your legs and feet. Change position often, since staying in one position for an extended period tends to increase stiffness and pain.
3. **Conserve energy:** By allowing for rest periods during the workday and while performing any activity.
4. **Respect pain:** It's your body's way of telling you something is wrong. Don't involve yourself in an activity that puts strain on joints that are already painful or stiff.
5. **Use care:** When getting in and out of a car, chair, or tub, as well as for climbing, lifting, carrying, pulling, or pushing objects. Think before you strain.
6. **Use your strongest joints and muscles:** To reduce the stress on your smaller joints. For example, carry a purse or briefcase by its shoulder strap rather than by its handle.
7. **Distribute pressure:** To minimize stress on any single joint. Lift dishes with both of your palms rather than with our fingers, and carry heaving loads in your arms instead of with your hands.
8. **Avoid tight gripping, pinching, squeezing and twisting:** If your hands are affected by arthritis.
9. **Investigate assistive devices:** Many of these self-help products have been developed to make every day activities easier and less stressful on your joints and muscles.

Library Resource Hours

Fayette County: June 5 in Vandalia

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Evans Public Library

215 Fifth Street

Marion County: June 19 in Salem

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Bryan-Bennett Library

217 West Main Street

Effingham County: June 7 in Effingham

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Helen Matthes Library

100 Market Street

Clay County: June 26 in Flora

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Flora Public Library

216 North Main Street

Jefferson County: June 12 in Mt. Vernon

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

CE Brehm Memorial Library

100 South Seventh Street

**Phone the Caregiver
Advisor at
888.560.8805 ext.
1062 to make an
appointment at the
library.**

Tips For Caring For A Loved One Suffering From Dementia

- ◆ Create a routine as early as possible.
- ◆ Balance sensory input; do not overstimulate or understimulate.
- ◆ Use your sense of humor to help the care receiver cope with his or her memory loss.
- ◆ Over the course of the illness, the care receiver's ability to cope with stress decreases. Make the environment simple and supportive.
- ◆ Encourage but do not force the patient to do things for himself or herself. You will need to do more as the care receiver's abilities decrease.
- ◆ Reality orientation is useful, as it reminds the care receiver about themselves, their past, and their environment.
- ◆ Keep artwork, photos, and furniture of the care receiver's former home, to recreate a feeling of familiarity.
- ◆ Seek outside assistance when necessary.

Heartland Human Services

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We're on the Web!

www.heartlandhs.org

Announcements

3rd Annual Family Health & Safe-T Expo featuring "Speaking of Women's Health"

June 23, 2007

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wal-Mart in Vandalia, IL

Open House~Heritage Woods of Mt. Vernon

July 15, 2007

1033 South 42nd Street, Mt. Vernon, IL

5th Annual Spa for the Caregiver's Spirit

September 13, 2007

Mt. Vernon, IL

Look for more details in next month's edition of *Caregiver Headlines*