



December 2010

EMPOWERING CAREGIVERS

December in History:

- ◆ **December 1st, 1990-** England was connected to mainland Europe for the first time since the ice age when the Tunnel going through the English Channel was completed
- ◆ **December 7th, 1787-** Delaware became the first state to adopt the new constitution of the United States of America
- ◆ **December 10th, 1906-** President Theodore Roosevelt wins a Nobel Peace Prize and becomes the first American to win a Nobel Prize of any kind.
- ◆ **December 21st, 1937-** Snow White, the first feature length color cartoon movie with sound premiers.
- ◆ **December 25th, 1990-** The first successful trial run of what would later be known as the world wide web occurs.
- ◆ **December 30th, 1953-** The first color television for consumers is released for the price of \$1,175!

This newsletters is to help caregivers providing care for loved ones who are participating in the Family Caregiver Support Program. This newsletter will be sent monthly, to cover a variety of health and care giving topics. If you have any suggestions for topics, comments or questions about the newsletter please email us at caremanagement@ursulineseniors.org.

THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER FOCUSES ON

WINTER SAFETY

While winter may be the most wonderful time of the year, winter storms and icy weather pose a huge threat to ourselves and to the seniors we love. Using tips from the **National Weather Service** website, we can keep ourselves and others safe this winter!

BE PREPARED! BEFORE THE STORM STRIKES

At Home and Work

Primary concerns are loss of heat, power and telephone service and a shortage of supplies if storm conditions continue for more than a day.

Have available:

Flashlight and extra batteries.

Battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio and portable radio to receive emergency information. These may be your only links to the outside.

Extra food and water. Have high energy food, such as dried fruit, nuts and granola bars, and food requiring no cooking or refrigeration.

Extra medicine and baby items.

First-aid supplies.

Heating fuel. Refuel before you are empty. Fuel carriers may not reach you for days after a winter storm.

Emergency heat source: fireplace, wood stove, space heater.

- Use properly to prevent a fire.
- Ventilate properly.

Fire extinguisher, smoke alarm.

- Test smoke alarms once a month to ensure they work properly.

Make sure pets have plenty of food, water and shelter.

In Vehicles

Plan your travel and check the latest weather reports to avoid the storm!

Fully check and winterize your vehicle before the winter season begins.

Carry a WINTER STORM SURVIVAL KIT:

- Mobile phone, charger, batteries
- Blankets/sleeping bags
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Knife
- High-calorie, non-perishable food
- Extra clothing to keep dry
- Large empty can to use as emergency toilet. Tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes
- Small can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking water
- Sack of sand or cat litter for traction
- Shovel
- Windshield scraper and brush
- Tool kit
- Tow rope
- Battery booster cables
- Water container
- Compass and road maps.

Keep your gas tank near full to avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.

Avoid traveling alone.

Let someone know your timetable and primary and alternate routes.

AARP's Caregiver Stress Relieving Tricks

1. Put your physical needs first. Eat nutritious meals. Don't give in to stress-driven urges for sweets or overindulge in alcohol. Get enough shut-eye; if you have trouble sleeping at night, try napping during the day. Schedule regular medical check-ups. Find time to exercise, even if it means you have to ask someone else to provide care while you work out. If you experience symptoms of depression — extreme sadness, trouble concentrating, apathy, hopelessness, thoughts about death — talk to a medical professional.

2. Connect with friends. Isolation increases stress. Getting together regularly with friends and relatives can keep negative emotions at bay.

3. Ask for help. Make a list of things you have to do and recruit others to pitch in. Even faraway relatives and friends can manage certain tasks.

4. Call on community resources. Consider asking a geriatric care manager to coordinate all aspects of your loved one's care. Other service providers, including home health aides, homemakers and home repair services, can shoulder some of the many responsibilities of caregiving. Volunteers or staff from faith-based organizations or civic groups might visit, cook or help you with driving.

5. Take a break. You deserve it. Plus, your ailing family member might benefit from someone else's company. Think about respite care by friends, relatives or volunteers. Or try for a weekend or longer vacation by turning to a home health agency, nursing home, assisted living residence or board-and-care home; these facilities sometimes accept short-term residents. Adult day centers, which usually operate five days a week, provide care in a group setting for older people who need supervision.

6. Deal with your feelings. Bottling up your emotions takes a toll on your psyche — and even on your physical well-being. Share feelings of frustration with friends and family. Seek support from co-workers who are in a similar situation. Make an appointment with a professional counselor, or join a caregiver support group.

7. Find time to relax. Doing something you enjoy, such as reading, walking or listening to music, can recharge your batteries. Some caregivers meditate or use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or visualizing a positive place. If you're religious, you might find that prayer can be a powerful tool.

8. Get organized. Simple tools like calendars and to-do lists can help you prioritize your responsibilities. Always tackle the most important tasks first, and don't worry if you can't manage everything.

9. Just say no. Accept the fact that you simply can't do everything! Resist the urge to take on more activities, projects or financial obligations than you can handle. If someone asks you to do something that will stretch you too thin, explain honestly why you can't — and don't feel guilty.

10. Stay positive. Do your best to avoid negativity. Hold a family meeting or call an elder care mediator to resolve conflicts with siblings and other relatives. Instead of dwelling on what you can't do, pat yourself on the back for how much you are doing, and focus on the rewards of caring for someone you love.

If you are caught in a storm...

In a Vehicle

Stay in vehicle:

- You will become quickly disoriented in wind-driven snow and cold.
- Run the motor about 10 minutes each hour for heat.
- Open the window a little for fresh air to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked.

Be visible to rescuers:

- Turn on the dome light at night when running the engine.
- Tie a colored cloth, preferably red, to your antenna or door.
- After snow stops falling, raise the hood to indicate you need help.

Exercise:

- From time to time, move arms, legs, fingers and toes vigorously to keep blood circulating and to keep warm.

Inside

Stay inside:

- When using alternate heat from a fireplace, wood stove, space heater, etc., use fire safeguards and properly ventilate.

No heat:

- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors.
- Cover windows at night.
- Eat and drink. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight, warm clothing. Remove layers to avoid overheating, perspiration and subsequent chill.



Want to learn more about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias?

Want to get insight into caregiving skills and strategies?

Want to connect with others who are facing the same issues?

and...want to find this out from the comfort of your home or office?



CARE CONNECTION

A Free Teleconference for Caregivers

Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Foundation of America, Care Connection is a FREE, interactive teleconference for family caregivers and healthcare professionals. Top-notch experts present on various topics—and are eager to answer your questions.

Connecting can make all the difference.

CALL IN ON THE SECOND THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 1 P.M. (EASTERN TIME)

Simply dial (toll-free): **1-877-232-2992**

and enter Guest ID: **271004#**

For archived sessions, visit www.alzfdn.org

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May your holiday season be filled with happiness and health!



**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR**



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