

The Year of Elder Abuse Prevention *(continued)*

Emotional Abuse

- Unexplained or uncharacteristic changes in behavior, such as withdrawal from normal activities, or unexplained changes in alertness
- Caregiver isolates the elder (does not let anyone in the home or speak to the elder)
- Caregiver is verbally aggressive or demeaning, controlling, or uncaring

Elder abuse can happen to anyone and can occur anywhere-in a person's own home, in nursing homes or assisted living facilities, even in hospitals. It affects elders across all socioeconomic groups, cultures, and races. Elder women who are homebound or isolated, and individuals ages 80 and older are most at risk. The mistreatment is most often perpetrated by the individual's own family members. Common risk factors for abuse include:

- The elder is socially isolated or withdrawn
- The elder is in poor physical health
- The elder has dementia or mental health or substance abuse issues
- The perpetrator has mental health or substance abuse issues

If you suspect elder abuse, report it. Act to protect seniors by bringing suspected abuse to the attention of appropriate authorities. To report suspected abuse, contact your local adult protective services agency. In Monmouth County that agency is located at Family & Children's Service; 732-531-9191. For state reporting numbers, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



NEWSLINES

OF THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERANS SERVICES

SPRING EDITION, 2013



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The Year of Elder Abuse Prevention September 2012 to September 2013

From material published by the Administration on Aging

Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. Experts believe that for every case of elder abuse or neglect reported, as many as five cases go unreported. Unfortunately, elder abuse does happen, but everyone can act to protect seniors.

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that cause harm to a vulnerable elder. Elder abuse takes many forms, including:

- Financial exploitation
- Physical abuse
- Neglect by a caregiver or self-neglect by an older adult
- Emotional abuse

It is important to recognize the warning signs of elder abuse to help protect seniors.

Financial Exploitation

- Lack of affordable amenities and comforts in an elder's home
- Giving uncharacteristically excessive gifts or financial reimbursement for needed care and companionship
- A caregiver has control of an elder's money but fails to provide for the elder's needs
- An older adult has signed property transfers (power of attorney or will, for example) but is unable to comprehend what the transaction means



Physical Abuse

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores, or burns
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

Neglect

- Lack of basic hygiene or appropriate clothing
- Lack of food
- Lack of medical aids (e.g. glasses, walker, dentures, hearing aid, or medications)
- Person with dementia left unsupervised
- Person confined in bed is left without care
- Home lacks adequate facilities (stove, refrigerator, heating and cooling, plumbing, or electricity)
- Untreated bed sores or pressure ulcers

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ALERTS and HAPPENINGS

Alerts

- **Beware of Door to Door Contractors:** The Superstorm Sandy Fraud Task Force warns you to think twice before you do business with a home improvement contractor that shows up at your door uninvited when you did not seek out their services or initiate contact with them. Call the Task Force at 1-855-726-3939 for more information.

- **Chronic Disease Self Management Courses:** Now being offered by SCAN to help those with chronic diseases such as Diabetes, Congestive Heart Failure and COPD manage their health and wellness. For a schedule of courses contact SCAN at 732-542-1326.

Happenings

- **May is Older Americans Month: "Unleash the Power of Age"** is the theme and the county's Office on Aging will be celebrating with a Centenarian Birthday Party on May 2 and an 'Education Day' for the members of our Advisory and Coordinating Councils and the Municipal Coordinators on May 22.

- **The Senior Art Show** will be held again this year at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters from July 5 through July 31. The library is located at 125 Symmes Drive, Manalapan. Come and see what talented artists we have in Monmouth County!

CAREGIVER CORNER

The Elderly At-Risk Driver - A Caregiver's Role

A question frequently asked by caregivers is how to talk to a loved one about driving and when to suggest they give up their car. Most senior citizens are good drivers with exemplary driving records. However, medical conditions including dementia and Alzheimer's disease can make driving risky and sometimes downright dangerous. After age 75, drivers have a risk of being involved in a collision which is nearly equal to the risk of inexperienced drivers ages 16-24. The elderly impaired driver may not have any insight into their limitations and may resist giving up driving and the independence that it represents. However, surveys and focus groups of people over age 50 conducted by The Hartford Financial Services Group and MIT AgeLab found the following:

- Family conversations make a difference. 50% of respondents said they listened to and followed the advice of family members;
- Most people prefer to hear this feedback from their spouse, doctors, or adult children, rather than a law enforcement officer;
- It is best to start the conversation before driving becomes a problem;
- Accidents, close calls and changes in health



status all provide an opportunity to begin the conversation.

Some other tips that The Hartford provides are:

1. Observe and drive with the older driver;
2. Discuss your concern with the driver's doctor if you think it is warranted;
3. Investigate alternative means of transportation if the driver gives up driving; and
4. Be supportive.

Finally, if a high-risk driver refuses to stop driving, you may have to consider disabling the vehicle, filing down the car keys, speaking with the driver's doctor, or arranging for a comprehensive driving evaluation. You may refer the situation to the New

CAREGIVER CORNER (continued)

Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission's Medical Review Unit (MVC). The unit will evaluate the driver and determine if a driver's privileges should be restricted. On MVC website it states "the

ramifications of this process are serious. Please consider your actions carefully before reporting a driver for review." For more information visit www.state.nj.us/mvc/licenses/medical_review.htm.

WELLNESS

Osteoporosis: The Bone Thief *From the National Institute on Aging*

Helen grew up on a farm in the Midwest. She drank lots of milk as a child. She also walked a lot. After graduating from high school, she got married and found a job. Family and work, she said, kept her too busy to exercise. Helen went through menopause at age 47. At 76, she was enjoying retirement-traveling and working in her garden. But then she slipped on a small rug in her kitchen and broke her hip. After she recovered, Helen needed a cane to walk, and gardening was a lot harder to enjoy.

Helen has osteoporosis, but she didn't know it before she fell. Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones to the point where they break easily—most often bones in the hip, backbone (spine), and wrist. Osteoporosis is called the "silent disease" because you may not notice any changes until a bone breaks. All the while, though, your bones had been losing strength for many years.

Bone is a living tissue. To keep bones strong, your body breaks down old bone and replaces it with new bone tissue. As people enter their 40s and 50s, more bone may be broken down than is replaced. A close look at the inside of the bone shows something like a honeycomb. When you have osteoporosis, the spaces in this honeycomb grow larger. And, the bone that forms the honeycomb gets smaller. The outer shell of your bones also gets thinner. All of this makes your bones weaker.

Ten million Americans have osteoporosis. They are mostly women, but men also have this disease. White and Asian women are most likely to have osteoporosis. The risk of osteoporosis grows as you get older. At the time of menopause, women

may lose bone quickly for several years, and after that, the loss slows down but continues. In men, the loss of bone mass is slower. But, by age 65 or 70, men and women are losing bone at the same rate. If you are a woman age 65 or older or think you are at risk for osteoporosis, you can have your bones tested with a bone density test called a DXA test (dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry). This test could show that you have normal bone density or low bone mass or even osteoporosis.

How can you keep your bones strong? Eat foods that are rich in calcium and Vitamin D such as low-fat dairy foods, canned fish with soft bones such as salmon, and some dark-green leafy vegetables. Check the labels on foods like orange juice, breads, and cereals to find those with calcium added. Women need 1,200 mg (milligrams) of calcium every day, and men need 1,000 mg between ages 51 and 70 and 1,200 mg after age 70. If you think you are not getting sufficient calcium in your diet, speak with your doctor about a supplement. Vitamin D helps your body to absorb calcium. It's important to get enough Vitamin D every day; at least 600 IU if you are age 51 to 70 and 800 IU if you are over 70. Eggs, fatty fish, and cereal and milk fortified with Vitamin D, and/or 10 to 15 minutes in the sun without sunscreen at least twice a week.

Include regular weight-bearing exercise in your lifestyle. Your bones and muscles will be stronger if you are physically active. Walking, jogging, playing tennis, and dancing are examples of weight-bearing exercises. Try some strengthening and balance exercises too. They may help you avoid falls, which could cause a broken bone.