



HUNTINGTON
HOME CARE

The

SUMMER '07

Huntington Home Care Senior Connection

GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER



Huntington Home Care was co-founded by Larissa Stepanians. Her interest and knowledge originated while achieving her Master's degree from USC School of Gerontology.

As a former Vice President of Operations and licensed administrator at a distinguished nursing home chain, she was inspired to work more closely with seniors by establishing a leading in-homecare company.

Her vision is to provide quality assistance and services for the elderly to live safely and independently in the comfort of their own homes.

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24-hour and live-in care.

Please call for a free in-home assessment by a Geriatric Care Manager
(877) 405-6990
or
visit our website
www.HuntingtonHomeCare.com

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER '07 ISSUE

Geriatric Care Management at *Huntington Home Care*

A Geriatric Care Manager (GCM) is a health and human services expert, such as a social worker, counselor, gerontologist or nurse, with a specialized body of knowledge and experience related to aging and care issues. The Geriatric Care Manager (GCM) assists older adults and persons with disabilities in addressing issues related to their health, psychological, functional and legal/financial status.

Geriatric Care Managers have extensive knowledge about cost, quality, and availability of resources in their community. In addition, the GCM coordinates ongoing care and serves as an experienced guide and resource for families of older adults and others with chronic needs.

What can a *Huntington Home Care* Geriatric Care Manager do for you?

- Conduct care-planning assessments to identify problems and to provide solutions.
- Screen, arrange, and monitor in-home help or other services.
- Provide short- or long-term assistance for caregivers living near or far away.
- Review financial, legal, or medical issues and offer referrals to geriatric specialists.

- Provide crisis intervention.
- Act as a liaison to families at a distance, overseeing care, and quickly alerting families to problems.
- Assist with moving an older person to or from a retirement complex, assisted care home, or nursing home.
- Provide consumer education and advocacy.
- Offer counseling and support.

What are the benefits of using *Huntington Home Care's* Geriatric Care Manager?

- Personalized and compassionate service -- focusing on the individual's wants and needs.
- Accessibility -- care is typically available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Continuity of care management -- communications are coordinated between family members, doctors and other professionals, and service providers.
- Cost containment -- inappropriate placements, duplication of services, and unnecessary hospitalizations are avoided.
- Quality control -- care management services follow NAPGCM'S Standards of Practice and Pledge of Ethics.





SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

Easy Bruising: Common As You Age

Find out what causes easy bruising as you age and when you should discuss your bruises with your doctor.

Yet another bruise. You don't recall bumping into anything. But lately you've been bruising much more often than you used to. Should you be concerned?

It's common to experience easy bruising with increasing age, and most bruises go away without treatment. Still, easy bruising can sometimes be a sign of a more serious problem.

Age-related causes of easy bruising in older adults

Most bruises form when small blood vessels (capillaries) near your skin's surface are broken by the impact of a blow or injury. When this happens, blood leaks out of the vessels and initially appears as a bluish-black mark. Eventually your body reabsorbs the blood, and the mark usually disappears.

Some people—especially women—are more prone to bruising than are others. As you get older, several factors may contribute to increased bruising, including:

- **Aging capillaries.** Over time, the tissues supporting these vessels weaken, and capillary walls become more fragile and prone to rupture.

- **Thinning skin.** With age, your skin becomes thinner and loses some of the protective fatty layer that helps cushion your blood vessels against injury. Excessive exposure to the sun can affect your skin much like aging does.

Generally, the harder the blow, the larger the bruise. However, if you bruise easily, a minor bump—one you may not even notice—can result in substantial discoloration.

Medications and supplements can cause easy bruising

Blood-thinning drugs such as aspirin and warfarin (Coumadin) or medications such as clopidogrel (Plavix) reduce your blood's ability to clot.

Because of this, bleeding from capillary damage that would normally stop quickly may take longer to stop, allowing enough blood to leak out to cause a bruise.

Corticosteroids cause your skin to thin, making it easier to bruise. Don't stop taking your medications if you experience increased bruising. Talk to your doctor about your concerns and ask what you should do.

Certain dietary supplements such as fish oil, ginkgo, ginger and garlic also may increase your bruising risk, since these supplements have a blood-thinning effect.

When bruises indicate more serious problems

Bruising may also indicate something more serious, such as a blood-clotting problem or a blood disease. See your doctor if:

- You have unusually large or painful bruises, particularly if your bruises seem to develop for no known reason
- You're bruising easily and you're experiencing abnormal bleeding elsewhere, such as from your nose, gums or intestinal tract

- You have no history of bruising but suddenly experience bruises, particularly if you recently started a new medication

These signs and symptoms can indicate that you have low levels—or abnormal function—of platelets, components of blood that help it clot after an injury. To diagnose the cause of your bruising, your doctor may check your blood platelet levels or do tests that measure the ability of your blood to coagulate.

Avoiding bruises

Once a bruise has formed, not much can be done to treat it. Most disappear as your body reabsorbs the blood.

If swelling accompanies the bruising, applying a cold compress for 20 minutes at a time and elevating the affected area may help. After the swelling has gone down, a warm compress may speed removal of the blood.

To prevent minor bruising, eliminate household clutter that could cause bumps or falls. Long-sleeved shirts and pants may provide an extra layer of protection for your skin.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/easy-bruising/HQ00355>



ROTATING TOPIC:

Six Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Falling

Your odds of falling each year after age 65 are about one in three. Falls are the leading cause of injury and injury-related death among older adults. You're more likely to fall as you get older because of age-related physical changes, medical conditions, and the medications you take to treat such conditions.

Here's a look at six fall-prevention approaches that can help you avoid falls.

Step 1: Appointment with your doctor

Begin your fall-prevention plan by making an appointment with your doctor. You and your doctor can devise a fall-prevention plan. Your doctor will

want to know the following information:

- What medications are you taking?
- Have you fallen before? Write down the details, including when, where and how you fell.
- Could your health conditions cause a fall? Your doctor likely wants to know about eye and ear disorders that may increase your risk of falls.

Step 2: Keep moving

If you aren't already getting regular physical activity, consider starting a general exercise program as part of your fall-prevention plan.

(continued on page 3)

Eight Good Reasons to Use A Cell Phone

The cell phone has become an essential communications tool. However, there are many of us over the age of 60 who do not carry a cell phone. Still, consider your cell phone as your personal safety device, especially if you live alone or some distance from family members. It could be the most valuable item in your pocket when a sudden need arises, especially with pay phones less and less an option anymore. Here are eight good reasons to carry a cell phone.

Weather and Acts of Nature

Many of us live where a sudden earthquake, tornado or other natural disaster could happen without warning. A cell phone is important to either get help or let others know your location and level of safety.

Travel Safety

It's a good idea to let a family member or friend know where you are, where you are going, and when you expect to arrive. While you are away, you can designate a friend or family member to contact you if there is a problem with your home, pet, friends or family.

Traffic Problems

No matter how well we plan, there can

be traffic jams that cause us to be late for an appointment, dinner reservation, or party. A cell phone is handy way to alert your destination of your new time of arrival.

Staying in Touch

A phone makes you accessible when people want to reach you. You may think this couldn't apply to you or would be an inconvenience, but surely you have a close friend or dear family member, perhaps a grandchild, with whom you would want to talk if you knew they needed to be reassured by hearing your voice or hear your advice and life wisdom in a pinch.

Finding Your Way If Lost

This can happen to any of us: we're at an intersection without a map — is our destination a left or a right turn? With no one around to ask, a quick call to our destination will get us on our way.

Accidents Happen

When we least expect it, accidents happen. Most are minor, but as we age, even the minor ones can have major results. At those times, a cell phone is invaluable to summon police or a tow truck.

FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES



Finding Your Way If Lost

This can happen to any of us: we're at an intersection without a map — is our destination a left or a right turn? With no one around to ask, a quick call to our destination will get us on our way.

911

THE most important reason to have a cell phone is to have one with you in the event of an emergency. Soon all phones will have location-based technology that will dispatch help to you quickly when you dial 911 without you having to know your exact address.

In Case of Emergency (ICE) Numbers

Program your cell phone with one or two phone numbers that will serve as your "In Case of Emergency" numbers. In the event that you are in an accident, the emergency personnel can use your cell to locate and dial your ICE contacts. To make this possible, use ICE-1, ICE-2, etc as the name of the emergency numbers to be called.

http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/life_online/ten_reasons_for_cell_phone.html

(continued from page 2)

Step 3: Wear sensible shoes

Consider changing your footwear as part of your fall-prevention plan. High heels, floppy slippers and shoes with slick soles can make you slip, stumble and fall.

Step 4: Remove home hazards

Take a look around your house for "booby traps." Clutter can get in your way, but so can the decorative accents you add to your home. To make your home safer, you might try these tips:

- Remove boxes, newspapers, electrical cords and phone cords from walkways.
- Move coffee tables, magazine racks and plant stands from high-traffic areas.
- Secure loose rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or a slip-resistant backing.
- Repair loose, wooden floorboards and carpeting right away.

- Store clothing, dishes, food and other household necessities within easy reach.

- Immediately clean spilled liquids, grease or food.

- Use nonslip mats in your bathtub or shower.

Step 5: Light up your living space

As you get older, less light reaches the back of your eyes where you sense color and motion. So keep your home brightly lit with 100-watt bulbs or higher to avoid tripping on objects that are hard to see.

Step 6: Use assistive devices

Your doctor might recommend using a cane or walker to keep you steady. All sorts of other devices have been invented to make everyday tasks easier such as:

- Grab bars mounted inside and just

outside your shower or bathtub.

- A raised toilet seat or one with armrests to stabilize yourself.
- A plastic seat placed in your shower or tub so that you can sit. Buy a hand-held shower nozzle so that you can shower sitting down.
- Non-slip treads on bare-wood steps.

Ask your doctor for a referral to an occupational therapist who can help you devise other ways to prevent falls in your home. Some solutions are easily installed and inexpensive. Others may require more of an investment. An investment in safety and fall prevention now may give you many more years in your home.

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fall-prevention/HQ00657>



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SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

Managing the Stress of Caregiving

If you give care to a parent or elderly family member, chances are good that you also feel stressed at times. Perhaps you feel guilty because you think you aren't doing enough. Can't remember the last time you slept through the night without a call from your father? Can't bear to see what's happening to your mother, whose health has been failing for some time?

You are not alone. A study conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP found that more than half of those who provide major care for parents experience stress and strain.

When you are caring for others, taking care of yourself and your needs is like doing regular maintenance on your car. It is critical to staying in shape over time.

Managing your stress will improve your physical and mental health to benefit yourself, your loved ones, and others who depend on you.

Take Care of Your Health

- **Eat nutritious meals.** Don't give in to stress-driven urges for sweets or drink too much alcohol.

- **Get enough sleep.** If you are kept up at night, try a nap during the day to make up some sleep.

- **Exercise regularly,** even if it means finding someone else to provide care while you walk or go to exercise class.

- **Get regular medical checkups.** If you have any symptoms of depression see a doctor right away. Depression is an illness that can, and should, be treated.

Involve Others

Make a list of jobs you need help with. They could include household chores, home repair or maintenance, driving, paying bills, finding information on services you need. Maybe it's simply giving you a break by staying with Mom while you get away for awhile. Ask friends, neighbors and other family members if they could give some time to helping out.

Maintain Social Contacts

Isolation increases stress. Having fun, laughing, and focusing on something besides your problems helps you keep your emotional balance.

Get Help From Community Services and Organizations

- Consider a geriatric care manager to coordinate your parent's care. Support

could include home health aides, shopping assistants, a housekeeper, a handyman, meal services, and referral programs.

- Respite care can give you some time off.

- Adult day centers, which usually operate five days a week during business hours, provide care to older people in a group setting

Talk About It

Research suggests that keeping your feelings bottled up can harm your immune system and lead to illness. Talk to friends and family about your feelings. See a professional counselor. Join a caregiver support group to share experiences, seek and give advice, and exchange practical information.

Deal with Negative Feelings

When feeling resentful, think about how to change things. Recognize the anger-guilt-anger cycle, and stop it immediately by forgiving yourself for being angry. Hold a family meeting to resolve conflicts with relatives. And recognize your accomplishments as a caregiver instead of dwelling on your shortcomings.

http://www.aarp.org/health/staying_healthy/stress/