Depression and Growing Older

By cdc.gov

Depression is a true and treatable medical condition, not a normal part of aging. However, older adults are at an increased risk for experiencing depression. If you are concerned about a loved one, offer to go with him or her to see a health care provider to be diagnosed and treated. Depression is not just having "the blues" or the emotions we feel when grieving the loss of a loved one. It is a true medical condition that is treatable, like diabetes or hypertension.

How Do I Know If It's Depression?

Someone who is depressed has feelings of sadness or anxiety that last for weeks at a time. He or she may also experience—

- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not get better, even with treatment

How Is It Different for Older Adults?

Older adults are at increased risk.

We know that about 80% of older adults have at least one chronic health condition, and 50% have two or more. Depression is more common in people who also have other illnesses (such as heart disease or cancer) or whose function becomes limited.

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Breast Cancer Awareness

From cdc.gov

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women. Getting mammograms regularly can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer. The United States Preventive Services Task Force recommends that if you are 50 to 74 years old, be sure to have a screening mammogram every two years. If you are 40 to 49 years old, talk to your doctor about when to start and how often to get a screening mammogram. Are you worried about the cost? CDC offers free or low-cost mammograms.

What are the Symptoms?

There are different symptoms of breast cancer, and some people have no symptoms at all. Symptoms can include any change in the size or the shape of the breast, pain in any area of the breast, nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood), and a new lump in the breast or underarm. If you have any signs that worry you, see your doctor right away.

How Can I Lower My Risk?

The main factors that influence your risk for breast cancer include being a woman, being older (most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older), and having changes in your breast cancer genes (BRCA1 and BRCA2). Most women who get breast cancer have no known risk factors and no history of the disease in their families. There are things you can do to help lower your breast cancer risk. The Know: BRCA tool can help you assess your risk of having changes in your BRCA genes.

Although breast cancer screening cannot prevent breast cancer, it can help find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat. Talk to your doctor about which breast cancer screening tests are right for you, and when you should have them.

Fast Facts about Breast Cancer

• Each year in the United States, more than 200,000 women get breast cancer and more than 40,000 women die from the disease.
• Men also get breast cancer, but it is not very common. Less than 1% of breast cancers occur in men.

Most breast cancers are found in women who are 50 years old or older, but breast cancer also affects younger women.

About 10% of all new cases of breast cancer in the United States are found in women younger than 45 years of age.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

https://tools.cdc.gov/medialibrary/index.aspx#/media/id/129614
There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths? With a few simple safety tips and precautions, you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.

Have a three-foot “kid-free zone” around open fires and space heaters.

Never use your oven to heat your home.

Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes and manufacturer’s instructions.

Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

Purchase and use only portable space heaters that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.

Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.

Purchase and use space heaters that have an automatic shut-off. If they tip over, they shut off.

Place space heaters on a solid, flat surface and keep them and their electrical cords away from things that can burn, high traffic areas, and doorways.

Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.

Do not plug anything else into the same circuit as the one you are using for your space heater. Doing so could result in overheating.

Inspect for cracked or damaged cords, broken plugs, or loose connections. Replace them before using the space heater.

Always use the right kind of fuel, specified by the manufacturer, for fuel burning space heaters.

Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.

Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.

Test smoke alarms at least once a month.

Replace smoke alarms every ten years.

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IT’S FLU SEASON!
Preventive Steps
from cdc.gov

Take Time to Get a Flu Vaccine

• CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
• While there are many different flu viruses, a flu vaccine protects against the viruses that research suggests will be most common.
• Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations.
• Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine by the end of October, if possible.
• CDC recommends use of injectable influenza vaccines (including inactivated influenza vaccines and recombinant influenza vaccines) during 2016-2017. The nasal spray flu vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or LAIV) should not be used during 2016-2017.
• Vaccination of high-risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
• People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high-risk people to keep from spreading flu to them.
• Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated.

Take Everyday Preventive Actions to Stop the Spread of Germs

• Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
• While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
• If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone for 24 hours without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
• Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
• Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

Take Flu Antiviral Drugs if Your Doctor Prescribes Them

• If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can be used to treat your illness.
• Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
• Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications. For people with high-risk factors treatment with an antiviral drug can mean the difference between having a milder illness versus a very serious illness that could result in a hospital stay.
• Studies show that flu antiviral drugs work best for treatment when they are started within 2 days of getting sick, but starting them later can still be helpful, especially if the sick person has a high-risk health condition or is very sick from the flu. Follow your doctor’s instructions for taking this drug.
• Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

GET MORE INFORMATION:
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/prevention.htm
Why Take a Driver Safety Course?

Because driving has changed since you first got your license, and doing so could save you money

Cars have changed. So have traffic rules, driving conditions, and the roads you travel every day. Some drivers age 50-plus have never looked back since they got their first driver's license, but even the most experienced drivers can benefit from brushing up on their driving skills.

By taking a driver safety course you'll learn the current rules of the road, defensive driving techniques and how to operate your vehicle more safely in today's increasingly challenging driving environment. You'll learn how you can manage and accommodate common age-related changes in vision, hearing and reaction time. In addition, you'll learn:

- How to minimize the effects of dangerous blind spots
- How to maintain the proper following distance behind other cars
- Safest ways to change lanes and make turns at busy intersections
- Proper use of safety belts, air bags, antilock brakes and new technology found in cars today
- Ways to monitor your own and others' driving skills and capabilities
- Effects of medications on driving
- The importance of eliminating distractions, such as eating, smoking and using a cellphone

You may be eligible to receive an insurance discount upon completing the course, so consult your insurance agent for details.

After completing the course, you will have a greater appreciation of driving challenges and a better understanding of how to avoid potential collisions and injuring yourself or others.

About the Course

The AARP Smart Driver Course, offered by AARP Driver Safety, is the nation's largest classroom and online driver safety course and is designed especially for drivers age 50 and older. Over 15 million participants have gone through AARP Driver Safety classroom and online courses, taught by more than 4,000 AARP Driver Safety volunteers. It is available nationwide in classroom and online settings, in both English and Spanish. AARP membership is not required to take the course and there are no tests to pass.

The classroom course costs only $20 for nonmembers. The cost for the online course is $24.95 for nonmembers.

How to Register

To locate a classroom course visit aarp.org/findacourse. Or call toll-free to 888-AARP-NOW (888-227-7669). To register for the online course, visit aarpdriversafety.org.

You may be eligible to receive an insurance discount upon completing the course. You'll receive a certificate of completion that can be presented to your insurance agent for a possible reduction in your auto insurance premiums.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

DID YOU KNOW?

Traffic Safety Facts
In 2012, there were 5,560 people 65 and older killed and 214,000 injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes.

Aging America
By the year 2050, the population of adults 65 and older will more than double to approximately 89 million, making up at least 20% of the total U.S. population.

WELCOMING THE KIDS ON HALLOWEEN

On Halloween the streets will be filled with ghosts and goblins, super heroes and movie legends. The American Red Cross has some safety tips people can follow to help stay safe this Halloween while enjoying the festivities.

If you are planning on welcoming Trick-or-Treaters to your home, follow these safety steps:

- Sweep leaves from your sidewalks and steps.
- Clear your porch or front yard of obstacles someone could trip over.
- Restrain your pets.
- Light the area well so the young visitors can see.
- Use extra caution if driving. The youngsters are excited and may forget to look both ways before crossing.

For more tips, visit: redcross.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Older+Drivers

Get Your Yearly Medicare Wellness Visit
by Healthfinder.gov

Be sure to schedule a yearly wellness visit with your doctor. It’s a great way to help you stay healthy.

What Happens During a Wellness Visit?

Your PCP may ask you to fill out a questionnaire called a “health risk assessment.”

During your visit, your PCP will:
- Go over your health risk assessment with you
- Ask about your medical and family history
- Measure your height and weight
- Check your blood pressure
- Ask about other doctors you see and any medicines you take
- Give advice to help you prevent disease, improve your health, and stay well.

The doctor or nurse will give you a short written plan – like a checklist – to take home with you. This plan will include the screening tests and other preventive services that you will need over the next 5 to 10 years.

Is it covered by Medicare?

Yes. Medicare Part B covers Yearly Wellness Visits if you’ve had Part B for longer than 12 months. Go to www.medicare.gov/coverage for more information.

If you have not had your Annual Wellness Visit in over a year, call your PCP today to schedule one!