

Caring Matters

Breaking the Fear of Falling

By: Eric Fredrickson



It is difficult, but not impossible, to break "the fear of falling". Key to improving the situation is to maintain and, if possible, improve your overall fitness. Without having confidence in your physical condition, it is difficult to overcome the fear of falling. But remember that it's never too late to improve your fitness level, even if you are not very physically fit at the outset. There is every reason to be hopeful at any age and in any physical condition that you can improve things and thereby decrease your risk of falling.

Stories about people who have suffered serious injury from a fall or have allowed themselves to become very frail through lack of exercise and yet have become energized and active again. One of these stories appeared in the health section of the *New York Times* several years ago. (cont on page2)

In This Issue

The Fear of Falling — practical advice for seniors and others — it's never too late to improve your physical health.

Useful tips on covering the costs of home care and an interesting new study demonstrating a relationship between Alzheimer's and weight loss.

Answer the 10 questions for senior drivers on page 2 — the warning signs. Drink up and stay healthy — try cranberry juice.

How to care for your feet and some interesting pointers on the prevention of heartburn.

Covering Home Care Costs



Gena, 78, who had recently become a widow, lived in central Toronto and was worried about covering her home maintenance costs and realty tax costs on an ongoing basis. Janet, 86, had been widowed for eleven years

and had some health issues that meant she required home care assistance to allow her to continue to live independently in her own home.

Neither Gena nor Janet wanted to touch the income producing investments that provided the fixed income from which they had planned to live on for the rest of their lives.

Gena and Janet were both surprised at the level of equity they had in their home as their mortgages had been paid off years ago. To raise the additional income they required, they turned to a reverse mortgage from the Canadian Home Income Plan (CHIP), a wholly owned subsidiary of Home Equity Income Trust.

The average age of someone applying for a reverse mortgage is approximately 72 years. (cont page 4)

Director's Message



Susan Sainsbury, RN

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Susan Sainsbury to our care team at Living Assistance Services.


Susan, a Registered Nurse, will assume the position of Director of Care and will be located in our offices at 3183A Yonge Street effective April 1, 2007.

She has 27 years of experience as a Registered Nurse and an ongoing interest in senior care. We fully anticipate our clients and care recipients will be the beneficiaries of her general nursing knowledge and understanding of gerontology, nursing/retirement homes and hospitals.

In addition to assisting our clients navigate the health care system, Ms. Sainsbury will be available for senior assessments, consultations and periodic home visits. She is a personable and extremely gifted nurse and we are most fortunate to have her expertise as a value-added resource for our clients and care recipients.

Should you wish a consultation with Susan, do not hesitate to contact her at Living Assistance Services 416-483-0070.




David Porter, CSA

Breaking the Fear of Falling (continued from page 1)

Alice was a frail, 93 year old woman who hadn't been out of her bed for four years. She often said, "I'm really just waiting to die".

Her niece Bev arrived unannounced one day to check up on her because Bev hadn't heard from her in a long time. Bev was appalled at Alice's condition. As Bev had a background in physiotherapy, she decided to try some restorative activities.

Bev began by having her aunt bend her legs for three or four minutes while lying in bed, three or four times a day. After a few weeks of this activity, Bev got Alice to sit up on the edge of the bed and start moving her legs slowly up and down in a marching motion. Bev also managed to get Alice to lift small cans of soup with each hand on a regular basis.

After a month or so, Bev helped her aunt to stand and try a short walk across the room to the far wall and back again. This continued for several months until, to Bev's delight, Alice managed to walk unaided down the stairs holding tightly to the railing. After several weeks of watching Alice going up and down the stairs unaided, Bev had to go back to her job.

Bev visited again six months later to find Alice a changed woman. She was happier and not talking about dying any more. In fact, she was going shopping for food, and asked her niece if there was anything she wanted from the nearby store.

Was this magic? No, but it seemed like it. The fact of the matter is that the human body and brain can regain physical vigor and acuity through appropriate activity at any age, no matter what their condition. Unfortunately, we don't all have a wonderful niece like Bev, but you can do the things that Alice did to start your voyage back to health and vitality.

Regular and appropriate physical activity is the "magic" that can help you restore your body to an improved physical condition; in turn it will stimulate your brain and restore your confidence and desire to live a more active and productive life.

If you would like a copy of Eric Fredrickson's hand book "It's No Fun Falling" please contact Eric at:
efredrikson@mave.com
or call 416-920-2270

Did You Know...



The queen of bees: The queen bee really is the king of the honeycomb. She lives an average of six years while the worker bee hangs on for just six months and the drone only lasts eight weeks.

Modern man: Mark Twain thought himself a modern man. He hurried to buy a Remington typewriter, becoming one of the first to own the new invention. In later life, he traded it for a \$12.00 saddle.



Unique stripes: Each zebra has its own unique stripe pattern, just like human fingerprints. Zebras are so attracted to stripes that they'll go and stand next to a wall painted with stripes.

Source: Guelph Community Newspaper

Senior Drivers: The Warning Signs

Here are 10 questions you can ask your parents to see if they are driving safely:

1. Have you noticed a change in your driving skills?
2. Do other honk or show signs of irritation?
3. Have you lost confidence in your driving ability, leading you to drive less often?
4. Have you ever become lost when driving?
5. Have you ever forgotten where you are going?
6. Do you think you are a safe driver?
7. Have you had any car accidents in the past year?
8. Any minor fender benders with other cars in parking lots?
9. Have you had any traffic tickets recently?
10. Have others criticized your driving or refused to drive with you?

If your parent(s) answers "yes" to a few of the above questions, then a referral to a physician may be appropriate. For more information visit:

www.candrive.ca

"You know you're getting old when the candles cost more than the cake."

Bob Hope



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Prevention: Heartburn



Heartburn is most often caused by the reflux of stomach content into the oesophagus, which has no natural protection against stomach acid.

This condition is called "gastroesophageal reflux disease" or GERD.

GERD is caused by the poor functioning of the esophageal sphincter, a protective valve-like structure that opens to let food pass into the stomach and closes to stop it from coming back up. Reflux indicates that the sphincter has reopened.

In many cases, mild GERD can be controlled with a few lifestyle changes:

- Eating sensibly and slowly.
- Limiting intake of alcohol, tomatoes, onions, citrus fruits, spearmint and peppermint.

- Refraining from eating four hours before going to bed and refraining from lying down after eating.
- Not restricting the midriff with tight clothing.
- Quitting smoking.
- Maintaining a healthy diet.

Your pharmacist can recommend medication to provide relief from occasional discomfort, and for more serious cases, your doctor can prescribe medication to reduce the quantity of acid produced in the stomach.

With so many remedies available for this condition there is no need to suffer unnecessarily. If heartburn is affecting your quality of life consult your doctor.



Source: College of Physicians of Canada & Blue Cross Health Bulletin

Weight loss predicts Alzheimer's



A fourteen year study in the US has confirmed the belief that

weight loss precedes Alzheimer's disease (AD) rather than being a consequence of patients being unable or unwilling to eat.

In a longitudinal study of memory and aging, researchers at Washington University, St. Louis, researchers recorded weight change in 449 volunteers (192 men and 257 women), who were cognitively healthy at baseline. One hundred and twenty five people went on to develop Alzheimer's type dementia, and 324 remained cognitively healthy.

Those without dementia lost 0.65 pounds per year over the entire study period (January 1991 to March 2005).

Weight loss was the same in the AD group until one year before the diagnosis of illness when the rate of loss doubled. Participants in the AD group also weighed an average of 8.2 pounds less at baseline.

American scientists are also hoping that AD could one day be detected by a quick and simple skin test rather than extensive psychiatric assessment. Based on the idea that cognitive impairment has been found to correlate with changes in the body's inflammatory signals, researchers tested tissue samples taken from people who had died of known causes, including AD, and found a significant change in the inflammatory enzyme called MAP Kinase Erk 1/2 in AD patients. The test also distinguishes AD from other diseases such as Parkinson's, Multi-Infarct Dementia and Huntington's Chorea.

Source: Nursing Older People, Oct 2006, Vol 18, No 9

Drink Up!



We often hear that the body consists of 75% water. This is true... for babies. By age 25, this level drops to 62%; by age 70, it is only around 53%.

And while the body's need for water increases, the feeling of thirst decreases especially after age 60.

Water is essential for normal functioning. Dehydration (excessive loss of water) can lead to neurological, cardiovascular and kidney problems. It is the frequent cause of acute renal failure, where an otherwise healthy kidney stops working due to an insufficient supply of blood. The only remedy in such cases is emergency medical attention, and if this is not received in time, the consequences can be serious.

Our bodies need 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid per day. Don't wait until you are thirsty, drink small but regular quantities of fluids, such as fruit or vegetables juices, tea, coffee, soups, and bouillons.

Keep a water jug and a glass close at hand.

Source: Blue Cross Health Bulletin

Health Care

Fast Facts!



- One out of every three seniors in Canada falls each year.
- Falls are the leading cause of injury and hospitalization among Canadian seniors.
- In a recent study, 70% of seniors who had experienced a fall admitted they now avoid physical activities because they fear falling.

Source: Lifeline "Connections"

Covering Home Care Costs (continued from pg 1)

Typically, they use a reverse mortgage need to do so to finance home care or travel, or provide their children with financial assistance.

Reverse mortgages, which have higher interest rates, should not be used as a short-term solution. For example, if seniors expect that their home will be sold in the near future to facilitate a move into a nursing home, a reverse mortgage is not recommended as these often have prepayment penalties within the first three years.

The maximum amount on a reverse mortgage is \$500,000, and the minimum is \$20,000. There is no repayment until the house is sold or death. You can never owe more than the fair market value of the house at the time the loan is repaid. The interest on a reverse mortgage is cumulative and includes all the cash advances plus all the interest on

them. However, reverse mortgage holders have the option of paying down some or all of the interest annually.

According to CHIP's website, most homeowners have money left over when the reverse mortgage is repaid. On average, 50% of the equity in their home remains after it is sold.

CHIP considers itself the leading national provider of reverse mortgages, which are available through most major financial institutions and mortgage brokers.

It has provided about 11,000 reverse mortgages valued at roughly \$700 million since 1986.

Source: Excerpts from the Toronto Sun & www.chip.ca

Foot Care

Have You Been Ignoring Your Feet?

They carry us around, they support us and yet we mistreat them. Below are a few tips to help keep your feet healthy.



- **Clean and dry your feet:** Soak your feet in lukewarm soapy water (use a mild soap) for no longer than 10 minutes every day. If necessary, file the calluses with a wet pumice stone.
- **Keep the skin well moisturized:** Apply a good fragrance-free moisturizer to the entire foot but avoid the area between the toes.
- **Groom your toenails properly:** Don't cut them too short. Use a nail nipper and follow the shape of the nail. Avoid using nail

clippers as they could cause injury. File the surface of irregular nails.

- **Wear comfortable shoes:** Choose your shoes carefully. Your feet must be properly supported without being squeezed and you should be able to wiggle your toes easily. Try on both shoes and walk around the store before buying them. Wear a clean pair of socks everyday.
- **Give your feet proper care:** Contact your local Community Care Access Centre if you need help taking care of your feet.

Source: Blue Cross Health Bulletin

“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but is made in the small ones.”

Phillips Brooks

Continence Care



Love that Cranberry Juice!

Cranberry juice can help prevent urinary infections, attacks of cystitis, and the formation of bladder/kidney stones. It may also help to reduce or stop bladder pain or stop catheters from blocking.

Cranberries are rich in citric, malic, quinic and other acids. They also contain flavonoids, anthocyanins, ellagic acid, and vitamin C. Because of their tannin content, the berries possess a natural astringency.

Before drinking cranberry juice, check with your physician to make sure it won't react with any medications and watch the sugar content.

Source: Solutions Magazine & www.vegetarian-nutrition.info/herbs/cranberry.php

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