NorthernComfort

NEWS FROM COMFORT KEEPERS

Spring 2010 • Serving Families in Northwest Michigan • www.ComfortKeepers.com/office-615

The Normal Aging Process

A common question asked in the elder care industry is, "What's considered normal aging and what should I be worried about?" To start, look at the most common signs of aging – the senses, memory, weight loss and urination.

Senses

As people get older, they begin to experience problems with their vision, hearing, taste and smell. Difficulty reading small print, some gradual hearing loss, fewer taste buds on the tongue and a reduced sense of smell are all very normal signs of aging and some of the earliest noticed. Be aware if any new, significant changes in the senses occur and contact the appropriate medical professional.

Memory

The number of brain cells decreases with age, which can lead to slower reflexes, changes in sleep patterns and some memory loss. Short-term memory is especially affected. It's common for elderly people to forget information like names, dates and telephone numbers. There is cause for worry when forgetfulness is combined with confusion. Visit www.alz.org for a list of the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease.

Weight Loss

Seniors begin to lose weight as they age, especially after the age of 75. This is usually due to a combination of factors occurring in the digestive system. The body produces less saliva, making the mouth drier and causing difficulty swallowing. The esophagus also becomes less active so it takes longer for swallowed food to reach the stomach. In the stomach, less digestive juices are produced, and the intestinal muscles become weaker. These changes can all lead to loss of appetite, indigestion and constipation. Any extreme or painful occurrences of these symptoms should be reported to the doctor.

Urination

With age, the bladder gets smaller and weaker. It holds less urine for a shorter period of time, meaning bathroom visits become more frequent among the elderly. It's also more difficult for the kidneys to filter waste materials out of the blood, which can cause toxic chemicals to build up in the body. Note that incontinence is not a normal part of aging and may be the result of an infection, disease or side effect of medication. Any issues with incontinence or blood in the urine should be reported to the doctor immediately.

Knowing the signs of normal aging is the first step to caring for an elderly parent, grandparent or friend, and can help identify when a more serious problem might exist. Visit ComfortKeepers.com for information and articles regarding healthy, normal aging.

New Website!

From Leslie and Russ

With the help of CK Franchising, Inc., we've launched a new website! Visit www.ComfortKeepers.com/office-615 to view our local page and get the latest information on caring for aging parents. Enjoy new features like the Family Education Center, Online Assessment Guide and downloadable materials on a range of health and caregiving topics. We're very excited to have this new tool available for both clients and caregivers. Let us know what you think by emailing traversecitymi@comfortkeepers.com.

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Each Comfort Keepers office is independently owned and operated.

2010 Census Begins

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is - how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? BBB offers the following advice:

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

No matter what they ask, you really only need to tell them how many people live at your address.

Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by email, so be on the lookout for email scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

For more advice on avoiding identity theft and fraud, visit www.BBB.org.

MEET OUR STAFF

Comfort Keepers

Introducing Judi Maloney!

Judi is our new Client Care Coordinator. She works with each client and his/her family to establish needs, create a service plan and to keep abreast of changes in their condition and environment. You might recognize Judi as the host of *The Faith Group* on Up North 2. She's very involved in the Northern Michigan community and we're honored to have her as part of our team. Welcome Judi!

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a loss of brain function that occurs with certain diseases. It affects memory, thinking, language, judgment and behavior.

Dementia symptoms include difficulty with many areas of mental function and it first appears as forgetfulness. Mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is the stage between normal forgetfulness due to aging and the development of dementia. Symptoms of MCI include:

- Forgetting recent events or conversations
- Difficulty performing more than one task at a time
- Difficulty solving problems
- Taking longer to perform more difficult mental activities

The key to spotting dementia early on is to notice when information that should be known is forgotten, like if a person forgets the name of a common fruit or household item, or if they get lost driving on familiar routes. A flat mood and loss of interest in hobbies are also red flags.

If you suspect a loved one of developing dementia, visit your doctor immediately. While there is no cure for dementia, there are treatments to help reduce the symptoms.

Visit www.alz.org to learn about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's disease and get additional information on caring for dementia.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Comfort Keepers is proud to sponsor these upcoming community events:

Fri., May 7 — **Traverse City Senior Center's Spelling Bee at Twin Lakes Park.** *Contact 231.922.4911 to register a team of 3.*

Wed., May 19 — **Bay Area Senior Advocates presents Ideas for Life Senior Expo 2010. Over 100 exhibitors featuring products and services for seniors.** *Visit tcseniorexpo.org for more info.*

Thurs., June 3 — **Parkinson's Summer Forum featuring Dr. Stanley Fahn, M.D., Scientific Director of the Parkinson's Disease Foundation and Chairperson of the Parkinson's Community Research Advisory Council of the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson Research.** *Contact Grand Traverse Area Parkinson's Support Group at 231.947.1946 for more info.*

Rasheda Ali to Visit TC

Rasheda Ali is an internationally known author and speaker who was inspired to write her book, *I'll Hold Your Hand So You Won't Fall – A Child's Guide to Parkinson's Disease*, by watching the interaction between her children and her father, Muhammad Ali, who suffers from Parkinson's Disease. She'll be presenting at the Grand Traverse Area Parkinson's Support Group Summer Forum and 25th Anniversary Celebration on June 3. Ms. Ali will also speak to students and parents at Eastern Elementary School and to attendees at an evening event that day.

We hope you'll join Comfort Keepers as we welcome Rasheda and raise awareness of Parkinson's Disease in our region.

For more information, call Comfort Keepers at 231.929.9044.

Did You Know?

That the percent of older people living alone in developing countries is usually much lower than in developed countries.

Senior Resources

ATXchange.org
A free Michigan classified ad website to help people with disabilities get the tools they need. Find what you need… sell or donate what you don't.

Grand Traverse Area Parkinson's Support Group
The group assists families living with Parkinson's Disease through support groups, information, educational programs and emergency assistance programs. For more information and a meeting schedule, visit www.gt-parkinsonsgroup.org.

From the Office Staff

New Office and Saturday Office Hours

We're thrilled to be in our new office and we especially love our new training center. We're also now open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. At Comfort Keepers, we make it a priority to continuously improve our Interactive Caregiving techniques and keep up-to-date on the best way to work with clients who have special needs. The people we hire to care for our clients are the reason for our success!

810 S. Garfield Ave., Suite A
Traverse City, MI 49686

KEEP YOUR EDGE!
yahoo.com/games

Winter/Spring Anniversaries

NAME	ANNIVERSARY
Cheryl B.	1 Year
Mary B.	1 Year
Ruth B.	3 Years
Connie B.	1 Year
Nancy C.	3 Years
Jim F.	1 Year
Natalie H.	1 Year
Janelle K.	2 Years
Charlene M.	1 Year
Diana M.	3 Years
Andrew R.	2 Years
Samantha S.	1 Year
Lorraine S.	1 Year
Pat S.	1 Year
Winnie U.	3 Years
Lori V.	3 Years

Comfort Keepers®

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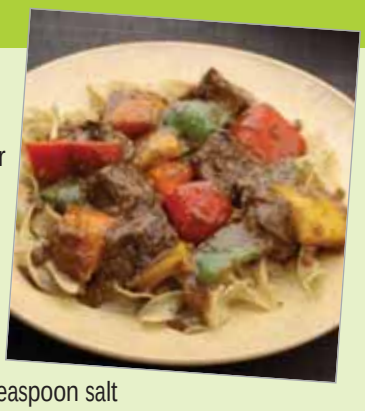
Newsletter Inside!

Fennel-Crusted Sirloin Tips with Bell Peppers

This light, low-fat meal tastes rich while producing anti-aging benefits. Serve with egg noodles and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil for a healthy dose of monounsaturated fat.



Ingredients:

- 8 ounces sirloin steak, trimmed of fat and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 teaspoon fennel seed, roughly chopped or coarsely ground in a spice mill
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 3/4 cup reduced-sodium beef broth, divided
- 1/4 cup dry red wine
- 2 bell peppers, cut into 1-inch squares
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

Rub steak with fennel seed and 1/4 teaspoon salt, turning to coat on all sides. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the steak in a single layer and cook, turning once, until browned on the outside and still pink in the middle, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate and cover with foil to keep warm.

Add garlic to the pan and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add 1/2 cup broth and wine, scraping up any browned bits with a wooden spoon. Add bell peppers, the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper; bring to a simmer. Cover, reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook until the peppers are tender-crisp, 4 to 6 minutes.

Whisk the remaining 1/4 cup broth and flour in a small bowl. Add to the pepper mixture, increase heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Return the steak to the pan. Adjust heat to maintain a slow simmer and cook, turning the meat once, about 2 minutes for medium-rare.

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If you'd like to be removed from our newsletter mailing list, please call 866.929.9044