Medicaid Guide Provided by Senior Planning Service - a Partner of SeniorNet

When a loved one's condition necessitates long-term care, it is only natural for myriad questions to surface. The plethora of options and venues can be duzzying, but often the biggest concern is funds.

One of the major obstacles to pursuing excellent long-term care is the prohibitive cost associated with nursing homes, assisted living and in-home care. Most average Americans, even those with sizeable retirement funds, find themselves unprepared for the staggering and often ongoing cost. Fortunately, there is help to be had, and in many scenarios Medicaid can step in and pick up the tab.

Read more...

3 Surprisingly Easy Things You Can Do to Live Longer

By David B. Agus, MD, author, "A Short Guide to a Long Life" | Healthy Living – Fri, Jan 24, 2014 5:04 PM EST

Most of us have only a general sense of what we can do to live a good, long life, and eating well, exercising, and getting a good night's sleep are the go-to, standard health tips we all know. But beyond these universal wisdoms, I believe we can all further increase our odds of an even longer and higher-quality life with few other strategies most of us rarely think about.

Read More...

Heart Health

The American Heart Association

St. Luke's Hospital, Cedar Rapids Heart Care - One of the top hospitals dealing in heart care, providng information on healthy living, heart care, and even healthy recipes for better nutrition.

Healthfinder.gov   **-** Government blogs and information from doctors on everything from nutrition to medical aids and lifestyle choices in pursuit of a healthy hears.

Stroke Prevention for Seniors

Here are the three screenings that can help you avert a stroke:

1. Stroke/carotid artery screening – ultrasound scan of the carotid arteries that checks for accumulation of fatty plaque – a primary source of strokes
2. Heart rhythm screening (atrial fibrillation) – a fast and simple test using EKG electrodes put on the arms and legs to spot the existence or lack of an abnormal heartbeat. Atrial fibrillation raises the threat of stroke five times.
3. Systolic hypertension screening - This checks for high blood pressure – a large risk factor for 30% of all adults. This screening is carried out with the PAD screening.

Plus, obtain these two supplementary screenings:

1. Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening – ultrasound scan that checks for the presence of aneurysm (enlargement) in the abdominal aorta that could cause a ruptured aorta.

2. Peripheral arterial disease screening (PAD) – checks for peripheral arterial disease (plaque accumulation) in the lower extremities. It is four to five times more probable that you will die from heart disease if you have peripheral arterial disease.

(From Life Line Screening)

Alcohol and Seniors

While alcoholism can affect everyone, it is an increasing concern for seniors.

Alcoholic drinks, imbibed in a careful and responsible way, can improve the taste of good; add to a food recipe; or celebrate a milestone in life that seniors deserve to have.

Nevertheless, seniors face different and frequently underestimated risk factors for substance abuse. These age-related factors range from life-altering incidences, such as retirement or grief, to mixing alcohol with prescription and over-the-counter drugs.

Because of these causes among others, alcoholism among seniors has turned into a “hidden epidemic”.

Alcohol and Medication

If you are a senior taking medication, it is critical to be cognizant of potential interactions with alcohol:

- Read all warning labels diligently.
- Do not mix alcohol with drugs, either prescription or over-the-counter.
- Talk to a health care professional or pharmacist about potential interactions with medication if you plan to drink alcohol.

Some questions to ask your health care professional or pharmacist about the medication are:

- What is the name of the medication?
- What is the reason for the medication?
- Will this prescription interact safely with other medications, either prescription or over-the-counter?
- What are the potential side effects of the medications?
- What foods, drinks, and dietary supplements should be avoided while taking the medication?

Prevention through Education

- If you are a senior and believe you may have a problem with drinking, asking yourself the following questions is a first step in prevention and figuring out if your need to seek professional assistance:

1. Have you ever tried to cut back your drinking?
2. Do you get irritated when people talk about your drinking habits?
3. Do you ever feel guilty about drinking?
4. Do you ever have an “eye-opener” in the morning?
5. Have you ever increased your drinking after going through a loss in your life?
6. After a few drinks, have you ever skipped a meal because you weren’t hungry?
7. Does alcohol sometimes make it difficult for you to remember parts of the day or night?
8. Has a doctor ever said they were concerned about your drinking?

Treatment

At times, seniors do not reach out for help with alcoholism because there is a stigma attached to it.

If you think you have an issue with alcoholism, please seek help through family, friends, doctors, mental health providers, religious leaders, treatment facilities, or aging agencies. Treatment will increase your physical and mental quality of life. Your life will be improved as you are able to give back to the community.

Recovery

Alcoholic seniors have been efficiently treated in age-integrated and age-specific programs. When seniors seek treatment for an alcohol problem, they have the highest recovery rate for completion of treatment.

A Message to Adult Children or Concerned Citizens

A number of signs and symptoms may indicate that a senior has an alcohol problem. These indicators can be hard to detect and are often misconstrued as signs of aging, dementia, or clinical depression – when, in fact, the person may be drinking too much or mixing alcohol with medications.

Take these signs and symptoms into account when identifying alcoholism in a senior citizen.

Signs and Symptoms

- Changes in appearance, such as yellowish or unhealthy-looking skin, yellow or bloodshot eyes, swelling, or losing weight
- Frequent headaches
- Excessive fatigue

- Frequent and inexplicable injuries
- Behavioral changes, such as neglecting personal hygiene, confusion, forgetfulness, memory loss, isolation, mood swings, and depression

Intervention

- If you are an adult child, friend, or caregiver of a Senior who is in need of help with this issue, you can help in several ways:

1. Face the problem.
2. Be direct with the person.
3. Be supportive.
4. Offer encouragement and praise.
5. Guide them to the appropriate resources for assistance.

(From *Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control*)