

Senior Sense

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Your Health

Seeing a Specialist

Most of us at some time see a specialist for medical care. Your health insurance may require a referral from your primary care doctor to do this. Ideally the specialist will have your medical records from your doctor when you arrive. However, be sure that the specialist knows all the important facts about your case. You may be asked questions you have answered before. Do not be surprised or irritated by this. The doctor and the staff may just want to be sure they understand your medical history. Giving complete answers will help the doctor to make a good diagnosis and offer the best treatment. If you don't feel up to answering these questions, take along someone who knows your

medical condition well so they can help.

During the visit, feel free to ask

- What is your diagnosis.
- What treatments are recommended.

If you do not understand what the specialist is saying, ask questions. Also ask for written material to read. If you

"Specialist visits are just that – special."

still have concerns or questions later, call

your primary doctor to clarify things.

Ask the specialist to send information about your visit to your primary doctor. Your primary doctor wants to keep track of all your medical care. The next time you see your primary doctor, report on how well the treatment the specialist prescribed is working. Often the



specialist will only see you once or twice, but will then expect your primary doctor to handle your long-term treatment.

Specialist visits are just that – special. Make the most of them by describing your symptoms and past treatments for your condition as thoroughly as possible.

Strawberry-Rhubarb Cobbler

This recipe for strawberry-rhubarb cobbler uses whole wheat flour and oil instead of all white flour and shortening or butter in the dough. These changes increase the fiber and decrease the trans fat content of the recipe. If you need to cut the sugar, substitute an artificial sweetener equal to ½ cup sugar in the filling. Keep the sugar in the dough to maintain the desired texture.

Makes 6 servings

For the Biscuit Topper:

½ cup whole wheat flour
 ½ cup all purpose flour
 2 tablespoons sugar
 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
 2 tablespoons canola oil
 1 egg, slightly beaten or 1/4 cup low cholesterol egg substitute
 ¼ cup non-fat milk

For the Filling:

2 cups fresh or frozen rhubarb, cut into 1-inch pieces
 2 cups fresh or frozen sliced strawberries, no sugar added
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 1 tablespoon water
 1 tablespoon light margarine, melted

To Make Biscuit Topping:

1. Combine the flours, 2 tablespoons of sugar, and baking powder in medium bowl.
2. Add the canola oil and cut with pastry cutter until flour mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
3. Mix the egg and milk together and pour into dough mixture all at once. Stir until dry ingredients are just moistened. Set aside.

To Make Filling:

1. Combine sugar with rhubarb and strawberries in a medium sauce pan.
2. Mix the cornstarch with the water and margarine to make a paste. Stir into the fruit.
3. Bring to a boil stirring constantly. Cook and stir for one minute or until thickened.

To Assemble Cobbler:

1. Pour filling into 8-inch round cake pan.



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2. Drop 6 mounds of the biscuit topper onto the filling.
3. Bake in pre-heated 400 degrees oven for 20-25 minutes or until biscuit is brown and filling is bubbly.
4. Cool slightly before serving topped with a little plain non-fat yogurt.

Nutrition Information with sugar and regular whole egg:

Calories: 311

Carbohydrate: 61 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fat: 6 grams

Saturated Fat: 0.07 grams

Cholesterol: 35 milligrams

Sodium: 96 milligrams

Fiber: 3 grams

Nutrition Information with sugar substitute and low cholesterol egg substitute:

Calories: 174

Carbohydrate: 30 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fat: 5 grams

Saturated Fat: Less than .5 grams

Cholesterol: Less than 0.5 mg

Sodium: 104 milligrams

Fiber: 3 grams

Your Resources

Opt Out: Put A Stop To Unsolicited Mail, Email, And Telemarketing

A typical visit to the mailbox: power bill, credit card bill, letter from a dear friend

credit card offer, pre-qualified home equity loan offer, and a sweepstakes offer. Usually we know we will receive notices that we owe someone money (our bills) and also a little junk. If you are somewhat concerned or just annoyed by the amount of offers you receive, you can eliminate much of the extra in your mailbox and even reduce your email volume and telephone calls.

Pre-screened or pre-qualified offers of credit are based on information from your credit report. To get your information, creditors search the credit bureau databases for names and addresses of consumers that meet their qualifications or criteria. This results in credit card, loan, and even insurance offers in the mail and even email. If you decide you do not want to receive these offers, you have two opt-out options: a five-year opt out or a permanent one. For either option, you can call toll-free 1-888-5-OPTOUT. (1-888-5-678687)

This is a service operated by the three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. It takes your information out of the available database creditors use to get information. In addition, you may contact the credit bureaus directly.



Equifax, Inc.
Options
PO Box 740123
Atlanta, GA 30374-0123

Experian
Consumer Opt-Out
701 Experian Parkway
Allen, TX 75013

TransUnion
Name Removal Option
PO Box 505
Woodlyn, PA 19094

The Direct Marketing Association (DMA) maintains a service that lets you opt-out of direct mail marketing from many national companies for a five-year period. When you register with the DMA, your name is included on a delete file that is made available to direct-mail marketers. Unfortunately, this only covers mail from companies that are registered with DMA, but it can help to reduce the junk in your mailbox. To register for the service free-of-charge, send a letter with your name, address and signature to:

Direct Marketing Association
Mail Preference Service
PO Box 643
Carmel, NY 10512

You can also register online at www.the-dma.org/consumers/offmailinglist.html,

but there is a \$5 charge for online registration. With modern technology, the mailbox is not the only place where you may receive junk or unsolicited offers. More frequently, email and telemarketing are used to solicit consumers. The CAN-

SPAM Act (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act) of

“You can eliminate much of the extra in your mailbox and even reduce your email volumn...”

2003 establishes requirements for those who send commercial emails. It requires that email give recipients an opt-out method included in each email message. Once the company receives an opt-out request, the law allows ten business days for the emails to cease. You can opt out of emails from DMA members through their e-mail preference service (e-MPS) by visiting http://www.dmaconsumers.org/optoutform_emps.shtml and it remains effective for two years.

The National Do Not Call Registry covers unsolicited telephone calls. This is a free service provided to reduce telemarketing calls. To register, call 1-888-382-1222 from the phone number you want to register or visit www.donotcall.gov.



Your Relationships

Building Relationships With In-Home Care Helpers

Silas and Ginny had been married more than 50 years and had made a wonderful life together. In recent years, however, Ginny's abilities to take care of things around the house had grown more limited. Cooking and laundry were particular challenges. Silas did more and more of what he could, but he was getting older too. They wanted to stay in their home and community as long as possible, so they decided to hire a helper to come into their home daily.

In-home helpers can provide a whole range of services, from basic housekeeping all the way to help with complex medical care. Some work only a few hours a week and others provide care around the clock. Even though they are paid as an employee, because they work right in the home, they often become friends and confidants as well. A good relationship with a hired caregiver is a vital part of enhancing the quality of in-home care and your loved one's well-being. How can you grow comfortable with a new paid helper while also being clear about her

“A good relationship with a hired caregiver is a vital part of enhancing the quality of in-home care and your loved one's well-being.”

expectations? If you have limited experience in training and supervising people, it is natural to feel some anxiety about establishing a good working relationship with the new care helper and about making some mistakes in communication and cooperation with her. Here are some steps for establishing effective, friendly working relationships with in-home care providers.

Step 1. Orientation: Before the first day of work, consider inviting the helper into your home for a cup of coffee. This may help get things off to a good start building relationships between family caregivers, a care receiver, and the new worker through a face-to-face meeting. This orientation could

also happen on the first day of work. Showing the layout of the home will provide the helper with the chance to learn where essential things are kept and how to operate needed appliances for in-home care. Clearly describe your and your loved one's task expectations, routines, and preferences. Provide a contact list and information for handling emergency events, give clear instructions for needed appliances, and suggest tips



for creating a good relationship with your loved one.

Step 2. Training or Coaching a New In-Home Helper: It takes some time for the new in-home helper to adjust and perform tasks in the way that you and your loved one want. Remember that not everyone folds the sheets or washes the dishes the same way! Through your training and coaching, the new helper will understand what you and your loved one need and expect from her. In addition, this will form the foundation of developing a good working relationship with the helper. Here is the five-step process for training a new helper to do an in-home care task.

- Tell the helper how to do the task. If you want a task done in a certain way, explain why. For instance, if your loved one wants the bath towels folded a certain way, tell the helper that this helps him or her maintain a sense of control and order over what might feel like an unmanageable situation. The helper should do things the way you want them done.
- Show the worker how to do the task. For example, Silas demonstrates how to cook two

poached eggs which Ginny likes for breakfast. “Ginny likes two poached eggs for breakfast. She won’t eat scrambled or fried eggs. She likes her eggs poached a certain way. When I do it, I start with about 2 inches of water in this frying pan. Then, I...” It is a good idea to write down step-by-step instructions for the helper.

- Have the helper perform the task while you observe. Tactfully give feedback, and coach the helper when it seems needed.
- Praise progress. Notice and acknowledge even modest gains in skills.
Give the helper a chance to ask questions. A person is more likely to feel comfortable asking questions in an open, nonthreatening atmosphere.

Step 3. Supervising In-Home Help: For a better cooperation between the helper and you, try to talk regularly with the helper about her performance and possible ways to improve. The following positive communication skills will help you communicate effectively and cooperate with the helper.



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- Offer meaningful praise. Give the helper feedback on tasks done well. Praise immediately and be specific. For example: “I appreciate the special effort you made to find Mother’s favorite sweater instead of substituting the one in the drawer that she doesn’t like as well. Thank you.”
- Handle problems constructively. Although correcting substandard work can be awkward, give feedback as soon as possible. For example: “I noticed today that Mom’s pill bottles were out on the table. Remember that it is important to keep them in the cabinet. Do you understand?” State exactly what was done incorrectly and offer suggestions for improvement. Keep criticism brief, give specific instructions, and demonstrate the way you want a task done. Use a calm, matter-of-fact tone of voice. Try to be objective and show confidence that the work will improve.
- Listen to the helper. Communication between you and the helper means that you and she discuss concerns and changes and make plans together. Therefore, it is important for you to listen to her opinions, feelings, and suggestions. Try to understand her perceptions and point of view. Seeking feedback is a positive and effective way to prevent and reduce problems. During talks with the helper, if her remarks concern you, it may be a good idea to take some time to think them over before responding.
- Be sensitive to slipping performance. It is not uncommon for helpers to do excellent work early on, only to begin cutting corners over time. It is your responsibility to set the standards of help that you expect. If you see the quality of work slipping significantly, don’t let it continue without discussing it with the helper.

The collaboration with an in-home helper doesn’t always come easily. Open communication and mutual respect are helpful for establishing an effective working relationship. In a good teamwork climate, you will develop the knowledge and confidence necessary to provide quality care to your loved ones at home. You don’t need to feel alone in struggling with caregiving issues and negative emotions.

Adapted from Pacific Northwest Extension, “Hiring and working successfully with in-home care providers.”



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Dear Friend,

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Cooperative Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians. Please contact your local Cooperative Extension office for more information on these and related topics.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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Learning for Life

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CHFD-E -95

November, 2009

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