Diabetes-Symptoms and Causes

The next Stroke Club Meeting is Tuesday March 15th, at 7:00 p.m. at New Hope United Methodist Church at 4525 Beaver Ave., Des Moines. The church is accessible and air-conditioned.

This month our speaker will be Donna Starck, RD, LD, CDE.

The focus of Donna’s career as a dietitian has been diabetes education. Her career path has included positions in both hospital and clinic settings. Volunteer work in diabetes has offered a variety of enriching experiences which have included helping coordinate diabetes support groups, attending diabetes camp, and participating in diabetes fundraising events. Donna attended Iowa State University and is a registered, licensed dietitian as well as a Certified Diabetes Educator. She is currently employed at the Diabetes Education Center at UnityPoint Health – Des Moines

If you or someone you know has diabetes you will want to join us to learn the latest information about living with Diabetes. For those of you who may not have diabetes, Donna will have valuable information to help in decreasing your risk factors.

People who have diabetes are two to four times more likely to have a stroke than people who do not have diabetes. They also tend to develop heart disease or have strokes at an earlier age than people without diabetes.

Knowing this, it’s important to understand the connection between diabetes and stroke, recognize the risk factors and take steps to stay healthy.

Again plan to join us at the March Stroke club meeting and go home with great information!

As a reminder if you have something special you would like to see in the newsletter please don’t hesitate to let me know. My phone # is 515-241-8139, my email address is sue.toaleknapp@unitypoint.org

Thanks, your Newsletter Editor, Sue Toale Knapp.

Need a Lift

Need a ride to Stroke Club Meeting?

Call Amy Johnson at 263-5166 to arrange a ride.

Please call her rather than the person who may be your “usual driver”. This will allow Amy to know how to plan for rides and drivers. If you are afraid you will forget to call, do it now!! Please call no later than 9:00am the day before the meeting and preferably the Friday before the Tuesday meeting. This will allow Amy enough time to schedule a ride for you.

You will receive a call before the meeting regarding who will pick you up the night of meeting. We have several volunteers who are willing to provide you a ride to Stroke Club.
Smart Ways to Stress Less

Laughing, socializing, exercising, meditating—these are all fun, accessible ways to soften the effects of stress on your brain. Get started with one of these strategies today, and you’ll be happier and more relaxed.

LOOK INWARD.
Spend a few quiet minutes every day meditating or practicing mindfulness; this will help ease anxiety and lower stress hormones. To learn more about meditation, watch a guided meditation with Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield, PhD, at http://bit.ly/Kornfield-med. For more information about mindfulness, visit umassmed.edu/cfm or read Jon-Kabat Zinn’s Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness. For online (and sometimes free) courses on mindfulness, visit palousemindfulness.com.

GET MOVING.
Try to be physically active for at least 20 to 30 minutes each day, says Ronald Petersen, MD, PhD, director of the Mayo Clinic Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center and the Mayo Clinic Study of Aging. Choose an activity you enjoy, such as walking, jogging, dancing, swimming, practicing yoga, biking, kickboxing, aerobics, or doing tai chi. Anything that gets you moving vigorously will help reduce stress—but check in with your physician before starting any exercise program.

BINGE ON BIG BANG THEORY RERUNS.
Anything that makes you laugh makes you feel good—and some evidence even suggests that laughter can deactivate stress hormones.

TUNE IN TO MELLOW MUSIC.
Music has a powerful effect on the brain, and can induce the release of calming hormones, thereby reducing stress, says Mark Gudesblatt, MD, a neurologist at South Shore Neurologic Associates in Patchogue, NY, and a member of the American Academy of Neurology.

STRENGTHEN FRIENDSHIPS.
There is strong evidence that being socially active boosts cognitive ability, says Gary Small, MD, a professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and director of the UCLA Longevity Center. “Interacting with other people also helps us avoid feelings of loneliness, which may protect the brain, since associating with others appears to decrease the risk of Alzheimer’s disease, even if you like being alone.” For example, a UCLA study found that chronically lonely people have higher levels of inflammatory cells, which can cause brain cell damage and neurodegeneration. “The good news is that becoming and staying socially engaged may reduce your risk for dementia by as much as 60 percent,” says Dr. Small.

(This is a portion of an article titled: Calm Your Mind: Stress can wreak havoc on the brain, especially if you have a neurologic condition. Learn how to manage it and lessen its negative effects) From Neurology Now magazine April/May 2015. www.neurologynow.com

Aphasia Group

The Aphasia group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month from 12:30-1:30p.m.

The group meets at Mercy Riverside, which is located to 501 SW 7th St. Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309. Sue Fagg, Speech Language Pathologist for Mercy Medical Center is the group leader. Interested persons can call Sue at 515-643-9818 for more information or directions to the facility.
10 Things Healthy People Do Before Bed - Sweet dreams.

By: Lindsay Holmes
Healthy Living Editor, The Huffington Post

Want better well-being? Try sleeping your way there.

Healthy people know that logging Zs is a vital part of their wellness routine, so they prioritize it accordingly. Below are a few bedtime tricks you can steal from them so you can wake up well-rested and ready to tackle the day.

1. Shower.
Body temperature is crucial in regulating sleep, according to sleep scientists. Showering at night could help aid in that process. The warm water has a powering-down effect so-to-speak, helping you feel relaxed as you crawl in between the sheets as well as improve your sleep quality.

2. Meditate.
Calm your mind with a few moments of meditation. The practice has numerous health benefits, including better sleep. Try reciting a few mantras before drifting off to sleep tonight and you'll reap the benefits tomorrow.

Having a hard time drifting off? Write it out. Research shows writing something that’s stressing you out and physically throwing it away can help clear your mind. Not only that, journaling has numerous mind-boosting powers. Experts even recommend it as a way to help you sleep.

4. Drink water.
Alcohol isn’t conducive to a good night’s rest. While a nightcap may make you drift off faster at first, research shows it actually disrupts your sleep throughout the course of the night. Try swapping that glass of wine for a glass of water. You’ll wake up hydrated and with a better night’s sleep under your belt.

5. Brush those teeth.
The American Dental Association recommends that you brush your teeth twice a day. If you don’t, plaque and bacteria can build up pretty fast, making your breath foul and putting your mouth health in jeopardy. Yuck.

6. Work out.
Sweat for your sleep. Not only does moving your feet help your health and attitude, research shows that exercise can help you get a better night’s rest.

7. Ditch the devices.
Screens are a bedroom no-no. What seems like a harmless bedtime habit is actually wreaking havoc on your rest. Studies show the blue light emitted from our phones, laptops and TVs can disrupt our sleep cycles. Even a few minutes of scrolling through Instagram may be harmful. If you depend on your device to wake you up, try leaving your phone out of the bedroom and using a regular alarm clock instead.

8. Eat smart.
Old tales have you believe that eating before bed is bad for you, but it’s all about how you snack. In fact, some foods before bed may even help regulate your blood sugar and prep you to catch those Zs. Got the late night munchies? Try nibbling on some kiwi. Research suggests the fruit may help boost your sleep quality.

Experts stress that sleeping with your pet may disrupt your sleep, but emerging research shows that Fido or Fluffy may help your shuteye. It comes down to what type of sleeper you are. If you tend to wake up easily, it may be best to keep your furry friend out of your way. The point is to make your bed a haven for sleep, whatever that may be.

10. Crawl in at a reasonable hour.
The National Sleep Foundation recommends getting seven to nine hours of sleep per night, so what time you hit the hay certainly matters. If you want to get a good night’s rest, try going to bed at a time that’s going to optimize your amount of sleep.

Ultimately, prioritizing those Zs doesn’t have to be difficult -- and the benefits outweigh the preparation. You’ll thank yourself in the morning.

Reference: www.huffingtonpost.com
Caregiver CORNER

Beware of Burnout

Overstressed caregivers are vulnerable to depression and other health problems. Protect yourself with these tips.

Recognize red flags.
“If you start yelling at the person you’re caring for, or worse, become neglectful or abusive, that’s a clear sign the plan needs to change immediately,” says Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD, a clinical psychologist, family therapist, and author of The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers.

Another red flag: You start resenting your caregiving duties, like having to travel across town multiple times a day, says clinical psychologist Sara Qualls, PhD, a professor of psychology at the University of Colorado and author of six books on mental health and aging. Don’t feel ashamed by it, she advises. Instead, recognize it as a sign that you are overwhelmed and may need help.

Ask for help earlier.
If you’re feeling more negative than positive about your situation, it’s time to reach out for more support, says Dr. Qualls. Wait too long and you’ll have no breathing room to think about getting help. That’s what happened to Maggie Schold, the longtime caregiver for her younger brother, who has primary progressive multiple sclerosis. Once she got overwhelmed, it stressed her out to imagine hiring help. “Waiting to ask for help until there’s an emergency, or you’re at the point where you’re thinking, ‘There’s no way I’m going to get through this day and get everything done,’ makes it that much harder,” says Schold.

Start small.
Dr. Qualls suggests reaching out to a care manager (you can find one at http://eldercare.gov) who can be hired at an hourly rate to assess your situation and let you know what services are available to you.

Listen to loved ones.
“If family members or friends express concern about how you are coping, hear them out,” says Dr. Jacobs. They may have perspective on your situation that you can’t see. Of course, there’s a difference between showing concern and offering unsolicited advice. “Most people are fixers, and they want to give advice,” says Veronica Evans, who cares for her husband, who has dementia. The bottom line: Try to keep an open mind and not shrug off someone’s doubts if, in your gut, you suspect those doubts might be valid.

Join a support group.
“It’s so important to have conversations with people in similar circumstances. It helps normalize your own experience and reactions so you don’t feel guilty about your emotions,” says Dr. Jacobs.

Talk to a Medicare counselor.
The Medicare counseling program is a great resource for free, unbiased advice about your insurance benefits, options, and rights, Schold says. “Professionals know how to navigate these waters, and once they take over, that frees you up to deal with your emotions.”

Find a program in your state at http://shipnpr.acl.gov.

Consider talk therapy.
If you’re struggling with anxiety or depression, talk to your primary care doctor, says Dr. Jacobs. “Your physician can refer you to a mental health professional who can provide more intensive support and treatment than a support group or telephone counseling,” he says. A therapist can help you cope with feelings of guilt or sadness and, if possible, help you reduce your caregiving demands.

(this is portion of an article titled: Help for the Caring: Not all caregivers want an extra hand, even when they really need it. Here’s how to accept assistance—and handle the ambivalent emotions that may arise.) From Neurology Now magazine October/November 2015. www.neurologynow.com
Drink Coffee for a longer Life

Can’t start your day without a cup of joe? You’re in luck. People who drank three to five cups of regular or decaf coffee per day had a 15% lower chance of death from diabetes and heart disease than those who didn’t sip java, according to a recent Harvard study.

Coffee contains certain compounds that may reduce insulin resistance and inflammation – yet what you put in your mug matters. Black coffee is best, but if that’s too harsh, add a pinch of cinnamon for extra flavor.

Reference: Woman’s Day Magazine  March 2016

TWO LITTLE BOYS

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two were always getting into trouble and their parents could be assured that if any mischief occurred in their town their two young sons were in some way involved.

The parents were at their wits end as to what to do about their sons’ behavior. The mother had heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past, so she asked her husband if he thought they should send the boys to speak with the clergyman.

The husband said, ‘We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper!’ The clergyman agreed to speak with the boys, but asked to see them individually. The 8 year old went to meet with him first. The clergyman sat the boy down and asked him sternly, ‘Where is God?’

The boy made no response, so the clergyman repeated the question in an even sterner tone, ‘Where is God?’ Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy’s face, ‘WHERE IS GOD?’

At that the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home, slamming himself in the closet. His older brother followed him into the closet and asked what had happened. The younger brother replied, ‘We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it.’
Managing Prescription Costs

Most stroke survivors leave the hospital with several prescriptions. The cost of these can be a significant blow to any budget. Below are some resources that may help.

Typically, these types of programs require:

- Doctor’s consent
- Proof of your financial status
- Proof that you are uninsured or have no drug benefit coverage.

Find out if you’re eligible for a Pharmacy Assistance Program (PAP)

Most pharmaceutical companies offer prescription assistance programs for patients. The programs provide free or low-cost drugs to uninsured people who can’t afford their medication. Most brand name drugs are included in the programs.

Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA)

A clearinghouse for more than 475 public and private assistance programs, including nearly 200 offered by pharmaceutical companies. The programs help qualifying patients without prescription drug coverage get the medicines they need.

The PPA website is a portal through which you can enroll in programs that allow you to get your medications free or nearly free. For more information, call 1-888-477-2669 or visit pparx.org.

RX ASSIST

Rx Assist has a directory of assistance programs. You can also get a drug discount card that provides 10 - 40 percent savings for many generic and brand name medications. They list programs that help with medication co-pays and those that provide free and low-cost healthcare and information for Medicare Part D beneficiaries.

NeedyMeds.org

NeedyMeds has a searchable list of diagnosis-based assistance programs with descriptions and contact information.

They recently launched a first-of-its-kind program with Rx Outreach that helps patients buy generic medication if they’re unable to afford it. Called the Generic Assistance Program (GAP), it will offer nearly 20 generic medications at no cost to eligible people. These drugs are essential to many people’s health. They have a helpline for this program in English and Spanish: 1-888-203-7687.

They also have a list of state-sponsored programs and offer a prescription drug discount card. They offer monthly webinars explaining their many patient assistance resources. Their general helpline is 1-800-503-6897.

OTHER WAYS TO CUT COSTS

- Talk to your doctor. Before switching to generic drugs or less expensive brand name prescription drugs, discuss your concerns about costs with your doctor. This is not always the case, but sometimes your doctor may be able to give you free samples of medications until you can enroll in an assistance program.

- Compare costs at your local pharmacies. Many pharmacies list their prices for commonly prescribed drugs online, or you can call local pharmacies to request prices for your medications.

- GoodRx.com helps you find the best price on prescription drugs. Different pharmacies can have extremely different pricing. The GoodRx website and apps for smartphones and tablets allow you to enter your medication and dosage and find the best deal on your specific prescription. They also provide pharmacy coupons, manufacturer discounts, generics, comparable drug choices and savings tips all in one place. All free to the consumer.

Continued on page 7
**MEDICARE PART D**
If you are a U.S. citizen age 65 or older and qualify to collect Social Security benefits then you should be eligible for Medicare. Medicare prescription drug coverage, commonly called Part D, covers brand name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies in your area. Everyone enrolled in Medicare is eligible, regardless of income, health status or current prescription expenses.

**EXTRA HELP**
The Extra Help program helps eligible Medicare recipients pay for some or most of their prescription drugs. The level of assistance depends on your situation; for instance, if you’re enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid or receive SSI, the program offers a discount card.

But keep in mind that you can’t use a discount card and Part D coverage at the same time. If you’re enrolled in Part D, it’s better to use your discount card only during your plan’s deductible and coverage gap periods (known as “the doughnut hole”). Your co-pays count toward Part D’s out-of-pocket limit ($4,550 in 2014). But any drugs received through Patient Assistance Programs don’t count toward your out-of-pocket costs.

**SAFETY NET PROVIDERS**
Pharmacies in some government-funded hospitals and community health clinics provide medication at low cost and charge you based on your income. Some of these pharmacies waive co-pays for Part D drugs if you ask for assistance.

**STATE PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**
Some states have PAPs to help pay for prescriptions. Many of these programs coordinate with Medicare Part D regarding co-pays and out-of-pocket costs. See a list of State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs at Medicare.gov.

Download the American Stroke Association’s free Finances After Stroke Guide for more helpful information.


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**A REMINDER OF WHAT YOU WILL FIND AT STROKE CLUB:**

- Friendly people, like you, who have survived a stroke
- Care providers of stroke survivors: wives, husbands, sons, daughters
- Rehabilitation professionals: PT’s, OT’s, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers, Recreational Therapists, Nurses and Rehab Administrators
- A large lending library of books, videotapes and home therapy materials
- Great Door Prizes!!

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**Online Support Group**

For those of you looking for an online support group here is a website for you: http://www.strokenetwork.org/.

It is a very active group. You have to join like a listserv and you post a question or issue and the group will email you back suggestions. Everyone in the group has survived a stroke and has great ideas they are willing to share.
St. Patrick’s Day Facts & Trivia

• In Ireland, St. Patrick’s Day is a religious holiday similar to Christmas and Easter.
• Erin go Bragh translates to “Ireland forever.”
• The very first St. Patrick’s Day parade was not in Ireland. It was in Boston in 1737.
• The largest parade in the United States, held since 1762, is in New York City, and draws more than one million spectators each year.
• Over 100 US cities hold a parade every year. Some of the other biggest St. Patrick’s Day parades are in Chicago, Illinois and Savannah, Georgia.
• In 1948 President Truman became the first president to attend a St. Patrick’s Day parade.
• The city of Chicago goes so far to celebrate that they dye their river green.
• Green is associated with Saint Patrick’s Day because it is the color of spring, of Ireland, and of the shamrock.

WHO WAS ST. PATRICK?

The truth is, much of his life is a mystery. One of the most famous legends of St. Patrick describes how he banished all snakes from the Emerald Isle into the ocean and they drowned. Philip M. Freeman, an expert in Celtic and classical studies at Washington University in St. Louis claims in his book, “St. Patrick of Ireland,” that this legend is false.

What is known about St. Patrick is that he was born in England to wealthy parents near the end of the 4th century. At age 15, he was kidnapped by Irish pirates from his parents’ estate in the Roman province of Britain, and sold into slavery in Ireland, where he spent six years in captivity, according to Freeman. After his escape, Patrick wrote in a letter of an “angel” speaking to him in a dream, telling him to become a missionary in Ireland, according to History.com.

After combing through two of Patrick’s letters, Freeman confirms that Patrick attended training to become a priest in Ireland and was eventually made a bishop. He converted many of the Irish people from paganism to Christianity. St. Patrick is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D., and many villagers across Ireland mourned his death on this day. From that, grew a celebration.

Reference: news/discovery.com