Communicating With Your Care Team

There is an old saying that “Nothing is so simple that it cannot be misunderstood.” In the context of helping to provide the best care for a loved one, it may seem like nothing is simple – and the potential for misunderstandings is great. This article focuses on communication tips for family caregivers, communication both with your loved one and the care team of medical professionals that support his healthcare needs.

Communicating With Your Loved One

Many family caregivers also serve as the spokesperson and advocate for their loved one. In order to do this effectively, of course, you need to communicate effectively with your loved one. This means not only sending messages but also receiving them in the way they are intended. Understanding as well as being understood.

Family caregivers often face major challenges in communicating effectively with their loved one. Physical limitations in speaking resulting from stroke, cancer and other conditions are one type of cause. Cultural differences such as nuanced meanings of
words are another. Emotional conditions such as depression and grief can also interfere.

If you’re experiencing these communication challenges, try to focus more on the nonverbal aspects of communicating with your loved one. What is he saying with his eyes, with his touch, with his nods and with his attention?

Communicating With The Medical Care Team

You probably accompany your loved one to most doctor appointments. Two heads are often better than one when it comes to absorbing and retaining everything the doctor says. Because you are with your loved one regularly, the care team may ask you to serve as their “eyes and ears” for details of your loved one’s condition. You may want to take written notes during the appointment to help you remember everything. Don’t hesitate to ask the care team to repeat and clarify anything you don’t understand. Say back to them what you understand so they can confirm it.

Ideally, you will see many of the same care team members regularly and come to know them. As you build trust in one another, it will be easier to bring up issues that concern you.

Some caregivers assume too much responsibility for communicating for their loved one. Be sensitive to your loved one’s ability and desire to be understood, even when he may have trouble expressing this in words. If he feels that his needs are not being understood or just ignored, he may lose hope and optimism.

Good communication is critical for quality caregiving. You may serve a key role in understanding, and being understood by, your loved one and his care team.

Resources

Holiday Shopping Tips

The holiday shopping season seems to start earlier every year. Competition from online businesses is forcing brick and mortar retailers to open earlier and earlier. Long before holiday dinner has been reduced to leftovers, shoppers will be looking for bargains.

Serious bargain hunters get excited about all the sales the day around the winter holidays. To make the most of the big day, hardcore shoppers sort through advertisements and go online to compare prices. They plan to hit stores for time-specific sales and map out routes to cut down on time wasted in...
traffic or looking for a parking spot. And then there is everybody else. Many avoid the chaos by shopping early or online. Others get caught up in the moment, joining the spending frenzy with no plan or shopping list.

While shopping smart is important every month, the stakes are especially high after November. Starting your holiday shopping early helps. But with a little forethought, even procrastinators can benefit from these shopping tips.

Develop a spending plan for the holidays. Economic conditions are improving, but piling up a lot of holiday debt is never a good idea. Know how much money you can reasonably afford to spend. To avoid financial problems in 2015, limit your spending to the cash you set aside for the season.

Your holiday spending plan is not just about the gifts you plan to buy. Remember to include parties, greeting cards, charitable giving, clothes to wear to holiday functions, and other things that make your holiday season joyful.

Be creative. Belt-tightening is in, wasteful spending is out. Remember, it is the thought that counts. Homemade gifts, whether food, clothing, or crafts, may be appreciated at the local big box store. Gifts of time for baby-sitting, car-washing or house-cleaning may also be well-received.

Think carefully about each and every purchase. At the store, keep your spending plan and shopping list in hand. Avoid deciding on an item in the spur of the moment. Take your time. Think about your needs and your spending limits.

Use ads to plan your purchases. Compare offerings from different stores to find the best values. Once you decide on a particular item, compare features, quality, prices, charges for installation, delivery, and service. Sometimes the cost to use and maintain an item makes selecting a more expensive model the cheaper option.

Conserve gasoline. Avoid running from store to store. Instead, use the phone and Internet to find information. Particularly for gifts you need to send out of town, ordering the desired item for direct shipment to the recipient is often cheaper than paying to ship it yourself.

Shop online to locate special or unique gifts. Use a secure browser, shop with companies you know, and keep your
passwords creative and private. Pay particular attention to shipping charges. Be sure to print out and keep records of your purchases.

Wait for last minute price cuts for items that are not in short supply. Retailers will roll out holiday items earlier than ever this year. Sales may also start earlier as retailers clear out merchandise. That means plenty of bargains, but you will need to shop carefully to find them. The best deals may come late in the season.

Examine factory seconds and irregulars carefully. These items have flaws or imperfections. Find the flaw and decide if it will make a difference. Look in your newspaper classified ads for items too. Buying person-to-person often saves money.

Expect to pay a fair and reasonable price for goods and services. Bargains that sound too good to be true are usually just that. Read labels, seals, tags, and instruction booklets. Ask questions.

Get the facts before you buy. Find out what is promised, who stands behind the promises and what you must do to benefit from any warranty. Return a purchase that is damaged, did not provide reasonable wear or otherwise live up to the guarantee.

Overspending can ruin the holidays and the months that follow. Plan ahead and stick to your plan. Spending only as much as you can afford will make the holidays better for you and your family— even if they do not receive everything they wanted.

Health Holiday Shopping Tips
Do you want to prevent gaining weight over the holidays? Here’s how:

1. List the amounts of all that you eat and drink before you consume them. Do this in a small notebook or with a free app for your smart phone. This is the best way to control your calorie intake.
2. Plan your daily physical activity before you plan the rest of your day. Try to exercise first thing so nothing else gets in the way. Divide the recommended 30-60 minutes into 10-minute segments throughout the day. Sitting too much is unhealthy.
3. Drink water all day long. You may think you are hungry when you are really thirsty.
4. Remove tempting high calorie foods from your home and work place. Do not carry money for the vending machine.
5. At holiday parties, survey the food before you dig in. Only take small
servings of what you really want –NOT everything. Then sit away from the food so you do not take more.

6. If you drink alcohol, switch to tonic or seltzer water with lemon or lime after the first drink of wine, beer or liquor.

7. Never skip meals before a party. To prevent overeating, snack on some fruit or other food with 100 calories or less about an hour before.

8. Use a 7-inch, or at most a 9-inch, plate for all your meals. Also switch to a smaller bowl, cup and glass. This will trick your mind into thinking you are eating more.

9. Learn to estimate portions. A baseball equals one cup, while a deck of cards equals 4 ounces or ½ cup. The baseball is one serving of milk or yogurt or a piece of fresh fruit. The deck of cards equals one serving of pasta, vegetable, cut-up or canned fruit or meat, fish or poultry.

10. Begin a meal with a salad with low calorie dressing or a broth-based soup to fill you up. Then during the meal, eat high fiber foods like vegetables, fruits or whole grains to make you feel satisfied with fewer calories.

11. At your own party, substitute low fat or non-fat ingredients in your recipes. Also cut the butter, margarine or oil in the recipes by one-fourth to one-third. Try this before you plan to serve the dish to be sure it works. Don’t tell your family or friends! They probably won’t know the difference.

12. Have storage containers, foil and plastic wraps out to send party leftovers home with your guests.

13. Before you eat out, choose the healthier food you plan to order from the restaurant website. Do this when you are not hungry. Then in the restaurant, don’t look at the menu again. If possible, order before anyone else so you don’t change your mind.

14. If a serving is large, share it. You can also ask that a take-home box be brought when the food is served to save some for later.

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Turkey-Taco Salad
Here is A Good Way To Use That Leftover Turkey

1/4 cup frozen corn
2 cups shredded Romaine lettuce
3 ounces shredded leftover turkey breast meat
(about the size of a deck of cards)
1/4 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup grape tomatoes, halved
6 low sodium blue corn tortilla chips, broken up
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons Balsamic vinegar
1 packet sugar substitute
Add Mrs. DASH™ Extra Spicy Seasoning Mix or *Anisa’s Secrets Salt-Free Chili Spice™ to taste

1 serving
1. Thaw frozen corn in a colander under running water. Drain well.
2. Place lettuce on plate.
3. Top with layer of turkey, corn, beans, tomatoes and tortilla chips.
4. Evenly sprinkle with olive oil, vinegar, sugar substitute and seasoning.

*Anisa’s Chili Spice™ is available online at Anisa’s Secrets at http://www.anisasecretsspices.com/ It is a versatile seasoning that can be used in a variety of recipes.

Nutrition Analysis
Calories: 472
Carbohydrate: 41 g
Protein: 33 g
Fat: 20 g
Cholesterol: 60 mg
Sodium: 213 mg
Dietary Fiber: 8 g

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