



HOME CARE PLUS

trusted care at home

Spring Newsletter 2014

Welcome to our Spring 2014 newsletter which as always is packed with interesting and informative articles. We have information on how exercise can help to keep you healthy and independent, section 39 funding, as well as an account of our successful client trip to the cinema and our quotes. Dr. Michael O'Brien makes his regular contribution and we introduce some new staff that have joined Home care Plus over the past while..

Michael Harty
Director



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Cinema Outing

Home Care Plus organised an outing for our clients recently to the cinema in Dun Laoghaire to see Saving Mr. Banks. We had a great turnout on the day of clients and carers. The showing was at 11am in the morning with office staff and carers making sure everybody got there on time. The showing was followed by a light lunch of soup and sandwiches nearby.

It was a great opportunity for clients to break up their normal routine and have a little bit of social interaction with other people of a similar age.

The Importance of Physical Exercise

Physical activity and exercise can help you stay healthy, energetic and independent as you get older.

Adults aged 65 and over spend on average 10 hours or more each day sitting or lying down. This makes them the most sedentary age group.

They're paying a high price for their inactivity, with higher rates of falls, obesity, heart disease and early death compared with the general population.

As you get older, it's even more important that you remain active if you want to stay healthy and maintain your independence.

If you don't stay active, all the things you've always enjoyed doing and taken for granted start to become that little bit harder.

You may struggle to pursue simple pleasures, such as playing with the grandchildren, walking to the shops, leisure activities and meeting up with friends.

You might start to get aches and pains that you never had before, and have less energy to go out. You may also be more vulnerable to falling.

This can all lead to being less able to look after yourself and do the things you enjoy.

Strong evidence

There's strong scientific evidence that people who are active have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, depression and dementia.

If you want to stay pain-free, reduce your risk of mental illness, and be able to go out and stay independent well into old age, you need to keep moving.

It's that simple. There are lots of ways you can get active, and it's not just about exercising.

"As people get older and their bodies decline in function, physical activity helps to slow that decline," says Dr Nick Cavill, a health promotion consultant. "It's important they remain active or even increase their activity as they get older."

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Most people as they get older want to keep in touch with society – their community, friends and neighbours – and being active is a way to ensure that they can keep doing that.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is anything that gets your body moving. It can include anything from walking to recreational sport.

The first thing to bear in mind as you get older is to keep moving. On a basic level, that means making sure you don't spend hours on end sitting down during the day.

This means avoiding long periods of TV viewing, computer use, driving, and sitting to read, talk or listen to music.

While some activity is better than none at all, to get the maximum health benefit, you should aim to do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week.

Aim to do something every day, preferably in bouts of 10 minutes of activity or more. The more you do, the greater the health gains.

One way of achieving your weekly physical activity target is to do 30 minutes on at least five days a week.



On at least two days a week, activities should include those that strengthen muscles and bones, such as weight training, carrying heavy loads and heavy gardening.

Examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activities include:

- walking fast
- doing water aerobics
- riding a bike on level ground or with few hills
- playing doubles tennis
- pushing a lawn mower

Daily chores such as shopping, cooking or housework don't count towards your 150 minutes because the effort isn't hard enough to raise your heart rate.

Getting started

What you do will depend on your own circumstances, but as a guiding principle you should always do activities that you enjoy.

If you're already active, you may find it useful to know that you can reap the same health benefits from 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, such as running or singles tennis.

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As a rule of thumb, 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity can give similar health benefits as 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.

Research shows that it's never too late to adopt and reap the health benefits from a more active lifestyle. For example, older adults who are active will reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke to a similar level as younger people who are active.

If you've been inactive for a while, you don't have to rush into exercising. It's important to build up activity gradually to reach recommended levels.

You will still be improving your health in the process, and you'll reduce your risk of falls and other ailments.

"The biggest benefits come to those who start from scratch," says Dr Cavill. "It's moving from a sedentary lifestyle to a moderately active one that makes the biggest difference to your health. The more you do, the greater the health benefits."

Section 39 Funding

The recent scandals regarding the CRC and other section 38 funded organisations have been sickening to hear. The fear is that there are many more revelations to come out.

All this coverage has at least served to highlight the lack of transparency and accountability with a lot of government funding and prompted calls for this to change.

While the section 38 abuses have been shocking the fact is that even more money goes through section 39 funding. Section 39 funding is funding for non-core HSE services such as home care.

From recent internal HSE audits, all the indications are that a similar misuse of funds occurs in the section 39 area. The principle areas of concern regarding section 39 funded organisations would be

- Lack of transparency around salaries of higher level executives.
- The payment of section 39 funding to organisations in advance of any service being actually provided with virtually no subsequent review to ensure that funding was spent as agreed.
- The use of section 39 funding by organisations to cross subsidise other commercial activities not intended for the funding.
- Quality and value for money being achieved through section 39 funding as opposed to through the home care package scheme

The guiding principles for the state giving funding to organisations to provide certain services should be; are services being delivered to the highest possible standard and is the state getting maximum value for money?

These aims can only be achieved if there is an open and transparent commissioning process which does not happen with section 39 funding. With the present application of section 39 funding, clients are denied choice and in a sector lacking in regulation, what better way to improve the quality of service provision than giving clients the ability to choose and change their provider if they are not happy with the service they are receiving?

This lack of transparency and accountability translates into less and poorer home care provision at a time when demand for home care services is ever increasing.

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New Staff



Tara Clarke joined us in September of last year as our new training and recruitment manager. Tara studied social studies in UCD and also worked as a carer previously with Home Care Plus and as such she has an in depth understanding of the work our carers do. Tara is charged with perhaps the most important part of our organisation, the recruitment of our carers and their subsequent training. We can be as efficient and organised in the office as we like but at the end of the day we are judged on the quality of the carers we provide and Tara is fully aware of this. Tara has a good relationship with our carers and her door is always open for a chat. She is always in good form and regularly regales us with her social escapades!

Aleksandra Ostrowska joined Home Care Plus in January 2013 and has become an integral part of our team looking after coordinating the placement of carers as well as doing invoicing and payroll. She ensures everyone is where they are supposed to be at any given time. Her background is administration and accountancy. Aleksandra brings a keen eye for detail to her work as well as having an in depth knowledge of our carers and their skillsets. She also wins the healthy lunch prize!



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Notes From A GP

THINK AHEAD

Myself and the wife were driving somewhere last week, when I heard the Johnny Cash version of the Beatles classic "In My Life".

*There are places I remember
All my life, though some have changed
Some forever not for better
Some have gone and some remain
All these places have their moments
With lovers and friends I still can recall
Some are dead and some are living
In my life I've loved them all*



I turned to my wife and said "That is the song I want played at my funeral!" Now, I have made this statement to my wife on about 5 previous occasions about which particular song I would like played at my funeral and I now worry that she won't remember which one was my latest choice, or worse still, not remember any of them, and end up playing something from "Westlife"! I've told her if she does that I will come back to haunt her.

She says that we do not need to worry about these things for the moment, as there will be plenty of time to do this in the future.

Sure, we all plan for our future. A classic example is pension planning for our retirement. But most of us are too busy living to worry about the prospect of someday dying. But as we all know, there are only two things certain in life "Death and Taxes".

Of course the illness or death of a loved one can have a devastating effect on a loved one or a family,, but this impact is worsened if family members are left wondering 'What would he have wanted?' when organising your funeral or thinking about your end of life care.

"What if you are suddenly taken ill, are involved in an accident or lose your ability to think clearly or independently? Do your closest family members or friends really know your wishes?"

Thinking and planning ahead can help to ease the sadness and pain of those that you will inevitably leave behind and the Think Ahead form can make it easy for you to capture and keep important details that may someday be needed by those closest to you.

Think Ahead is the 'flagship project' of the Forum on End of Life in Ireland which was launched in March 2009 by President McAleese.

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The think ahead form which can be downloaded from thinkahead.ie encourages people to think about what wishes they would have if they become incapacitated. Talk to people about their wishes and tell key people what you want and record this information on the thinkahead form. This form can be kept in a safe place or given to a key person who can produce it at the appropriate time.

This document has 6 sections.

- **Key information.** This section provides key information about you that can be used to inform your treatment and care in case of emergency.
- **Care preferences.** How would you like to be cared for while you are hospitalised? Are there cultural or religious preferences that you would like healthcare staff to consider in caring for you?
- **Legal.** In this section of the form you can record information regarding your legal affairs. For example your will and enduring power of attorney
- **Financial.** In order to make it easier for your family to arrange your financials affairs after your death, this section allows you to make it easier for your executors or family to arrange your affairs after your death.
- **When I die.** Here you can record your preferences in relation to what happens after you die, i.e. organ and body donation, hospital post-mortem, funeral ceremonies and burial arrangements.
- **Sharing of information.** Because of the sensitive nature of some of the information in this form, they will be sections which may be appropriate to share with some individuals but not with others.



Although it is difficult to acknowledge that ourselves and our loved ones will die, if we really care for them, we have a responsibility to ensure that we do not leave a mess behind or have family members falling out with each other. No one is a mind reader, so how can anyone be expected to know what you're true wishes are.

I strongly encourage everyone to go to the thinkahead.ie website and print out the form and spend some time thinking about your wishes before putting that information down on paper. You will feel a good deal more secure about your future and in my case "Westlife" will not be making an appearance at my funeral !

Dr. Michael O'Brien

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Pearls of Wisdom

Wisdom doesn't automatically come with old age. Nothing does – except wrinkles. It's true, some wines improve with age. But only if the grapes were good in the first place.

Abigail Van Buren (1918 - 1978)

The most important work you and I will ever do will be within the walls of our own homes.

Harold B. Lee (1899 - 1973)

Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young.

Fred Astaire



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