



# Grandparents Corner

April 2014

## *“Personal Relationship Changes”*

As a grandparent who becomes responsible for a grandchild, you might notice that your relationships with friends and family are not as they were before. People who were always there for you may begin to drift away for different reasons. Friends may not understand the amount of time and energy needed to care for a child. Your adult children may be upset with their sibling for not caring for their child and wish that you spent more time with their children. Now, when you need emotional support, you may no longer be able to count on them.

You can become so busy and overwhelmed with the demands and added responsibility of a child that you do not have the time you once did to spend with friends and family. You may find that you are missing your friends and family members, and you may wish that your own situation was different. It is often difficult to manage these uncomfortable feelings, so you may withdraw from the situation, say nothing, or become defensive.

Some things to remember when you are disappointed with the lack of support from your friends and family and want to discuss it with them:

- Think ahead about what you want to say
- Be clear and specific about what you want
- Speak without blaming the other person
- Listen with an open mind and try to find common interests
- Rehearse your conversation with a friend who understands

Because you don't have as much time, it may not seem worth the effort to work toward close relationships with family members and friends; however, the support you receive from positive relationships is very helpful for coping with stressful situations. Working to improve relationships with them is worth the energy it takes.

Some ways to strengthen your relationships include the following:

- Acknowledge your feelings when you are not supported and talk to the person to solve the problem. If you know it will lead to further misunderstanding, you may find it beneficial to limit your contact with them.
- Use positive self-talk. Repeating your negative feelings over and over often increases the intensity of the feelings and makes it difficult to have a calm conversation.
- Learn to ask for what you need.
- Forgive others who are unsupportive. Try to understand why they behave as they do. Do not accept negative behavior.
- Spend more time with people who support you and less time with those people who are not supportive.

*Source: University of Illinois Extension: Parenting Again*

*One in three women over the age of 45 experience episodes of leaking urine involuntarily. One in two women over age 65 are affected by overactive bladder or recurrent symptoms of urgency and frequency, a portion of whom don't reach the toilet before losing urine. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.*

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1. *Incontinence is a problem that involves the leakage of urine or feces over which the person has no control. T F*
2. *A precise diagnosis for incontinence must be made in order to develop an effective treatment plan. T F*
3. *There are no medications available for bladder control. T F*
4. *A urologist specializes in male and female urinary disorders, as well as the male reproductive system. T F*
5. *Alcohol, coffee, spicy foods, and citrus foods do not irritate the bladder and increase the need to urinate. T F*
6. *It is important to keep the skin dry and clean because urine on the skin can cause pressure sores and infection. T F*
7. *Incontinence in Alzheimer's may be caused by confusion in finding the bathroom, inability to get there on time, or a urinary tract infection. T F*
8. *Fever and chills along with foul-smelling urine may be signs of a urinary tract infection. T F*
9. *Incontinence increases the risk of falls because of the rush to the bathroom to avoid leaking urine. T F*
10. *Ideally, the person in your care should go to the bathroom every five hours. T F*

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F