



Grandparents Corner

June 2016

Safe Swimming

We all know the health benefits of swimming. This activity can increase our physical strength and endurance all while having fun. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, swimming can decrease our risk for chronic disease or improve symptoms for those already experiencing a chronic illness. This favorite summer activity can also improve our mental health, decrease anxiety, and allow families and friends to connect. Older adults can experience improvement of their bone health and quality of life. With all these benefits to swimming, one should also be aware of some of the hazards that swimming can present, especially for children.

One danger in the water includes contaminants that can be swallowed. These can be anything from germs, such as Shigella, E. coli, or Crypto, to man-made chemicals in the water. These can lead to recreational water illnesses (RWIs) that can include infections, diarrhea, rash, stinging eyes, swimmer's ear, and others. It is important to continuously filtrate and disinfect the water to reduce the risk of obtaining an RWI. If you suspect you may have obtained an illness, stay out of the water until you are no longer experiencing symptoms. You should also stay hydrated and seek medical assistance if symptoms do not go away, worsen, or if think you may be dehydrated.

Drowning is also a cause for concern with regard to swimming, especially to the young. Children aged 14 or younger account for one in five deaths due to drowning. The very young are particularly at risk, with drownings being the second leading cause of death in the 1-4 age range. Some risk factors that may increase the risk of drowning include lack of supervision, inadequate ability to swim, or not having barriers around a pool to prevent young from falling in. If you have a home pool or plan to visit the local community pool, it is important to be aware of these and the other risks associated with drowning.

While swimming has an abundance of health benefits, you can keep yourself and your children safe by being aware of the dangers this pastime can pose. Follow precautions before swimming to prevent or manage any recreational water illnesses. Swimming lessons can be a fun and educational experience for both you and your child, and will go a long way in preventing drownings. Don't forget these tips for safe swimming and have fun.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety

You may find it difficult to imagine that the words “abuse” and “neglect” could be used to describe the way you treat the person in your care—whether they are a relative, friend, or client. Most caregivers do their best to care for clients or relatives, but abuse and neglect do happen. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. *Spouses make up a large percentage of elder abusers. T F*
2. *Abusers, such as adult children, often are dependent on their victims for financial assistance, housing, and other forms of support because of personal problems, such as mental illness and alcohol or drug abuse. T F*
3. *Many victims of elder abuse believe that they are at fault for the abuse and feel ashamed and embarrassed. T F*
4. *The goal of protective services is to increase the senior’s ability to live independently in the home as long as possible, to reduce their dependence on one caregiver, and to reduce the likelihood of abuse, neglect or exploitation reoccurring. T F*
5. *Self-neglect is not one of the most frequently reported concerns brought to adult protective services. T F*
6. *If self-neglect problems are severe enough, a guardian may be appointed. T F*
7. *The Grandparent Scam is when a person posing as the senior’s grandchild will ask for money to solve some financial problem. T F*
8. *Antidepressant medication is the number one drug associated with falls in the elderly. T F*
9. *Seniors with dementia are thought to be at greater risk of abuse and neglect than those of the general elderly population. T F*
10. *Self-neglect is not paired with declining health, isolation, Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, or drug and alcohol dependency. T F*

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