



Speaking with Grace

Our mission is to educate, coordinate, and facilitate individualized eldercare options one family at a time.

A Publication by Aging with Grace™, LLC
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Will I have a heart attack today...a stroke...a diabetic coma...a seizure? Most of us never ask this question simply because we cannot answer it. Additionally, most of us would prefer to go about our day without such worry. Asking that question, however, is an important step in moving us toward preparedness for the possibility of some unforeseen medical event.

In truth, most of us live, work, and play without a thought to the possibility of a catastrophic medical event. Imagine you are shopping alone in a place distant from your home area and you collapse with a stroke, rendering you disoriented and unable to speak. Far from home, bystanders call paramedics who take you to an unfamiliar hospital. As your treatment begins, paramedics and hospital personnel ask questions, trying to gather more information about you, but are hindered by a lack of background information. Good health care relies on gathering and using information, so the EMT's search you for identification.

What do you carry that would help paramedics and emergency personnel understand your unique medical background and help further your emergency care? How would hospital personnel learn quickly that you have a loving husband and daughter who know everything about you and who need to be with you in this circumstance? Most of us carry nothing in our wallet aside from a driver's license that would offer more than our name and address. Do you have any health problems, medications, allergies, emergency contacts, or health care directives? Most of this information is crucial to good care and unlikely to be located in our wallet or purse.

In the absence of such information, hospital personnel are required to make assumptions about you as they look for more information. Is this patient on blood thinning medication? "Unknown, so we'll have to test for that". Has this patient had a prior stroke and when did the symptoms begin? "Unknown, and since we don't know all of this we might be taking extra risk in offering certain stroke treatments". This uncertainty leads to delays in treatment, errors in treatment, and changes in treatment based on a lack of knowledge.

The solution to better preparedness for an unforeseen medical event begins with information. Carrying personal medical identification is a simple means of ensuring your emergency care is delivered more quickly and with more accuracy. Although emergency physicians and paramedics are trained to operate with a lack of information, they can deliver better and more accurate care when given the necessary

**National Health Observances
January 2010**

Cervical Health Awareness Month
www.nccc-online.org/awareness

Glaucoma Awareness Month
www.preventblindness.org

National Radon Action Month
www.epa.gov/radon

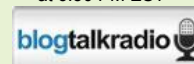
Thyroid Awareness Month
www.thyroidawareness.com

**2010 Medicare Part B
Deductible Increases**

With a \$20 increase from 2009, the Medicare Part B deductible for 2010 will be increased for the year 2010 to \$155. Medicare Part B covers eligible physician services, outpatient hospital services, certain home health services and durable medical equipment. Without supplemental insurance, you are responsible for 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for services after you meet the \$155.00 deductible.

**Aging with Grace Online
Talk Show**

Join host **Patricia Grace**
Monday evenings
at 6:30 PM EST



Medication Safety

1. Routinely checking the safety of your medications, screening for drug-drug and drug-disease interactions.
2. Alerting you and your doctor (optional) as important safety information arises for your medications.
3. Providing an easily accessible summary of your medications and conditions that you can

information.

How would I know what information to carry? Carrying any information is a good start. However, a new product on the market was designed around the above scenario and was specifically created to bridge the information gap. [The Aging with Grace Personal Health Record, powered by miCARD®](#), an information



solution designed by an emergency physician, incorporates a readable medical identification card with online storage of additional medical information, images, and advanced directives.

The [Aging with Grace Personal Health Record](#) is organized around those key pieces of information most necessary in an emergency. It is designed to be noticed in your wallet or purse and displays: emergency contacts, medical problems, surgical history, medical power of attorney, medical devices, critical medications and critical allergies. Additional information stored online includes advanced directives, EKGs, Lab test results, and personal notes for providers. Furthermore, [the Aging with Grace Personal Health Record](#) system allows physicians and personal care home staff to communicate observations or concerns to potential receiving hospitals through an online form termed miCARE notes™. To learn more about the [Aging with Grace Personal Health Record](#), please visit their website at www.agingwithgrace.net or call 800.626.9440.

Happy New Year... Got Resolutions for 2010 ???



It's that time of year again, when we commit ourselves to resolutions of weight loss, for more patience, to quit smoking, and endless others. So now, may be the right time of year to take an honest look at the elderly in your family and ask yourself the following questions.

- How involved am I in their day to day care?
- If I'm not involved, have I thanked the person who is?
- Is my involvement out of obligation or love?
- When I visit, am I spending quality time or do I rush in and out?
- Do I lose patience when asked the same question more than once?

As you make your eldercare resolutions, keep in mind a few of the old adages that can apply to everyday life with the elderly. Children learn by example...even adult children. Resolve to keep teaching through your actions with the elderly.

Do unto others...remember we will all be old some day. Resolve to treat the elderly with the respect they deserve.

Have I told you lately that I love you? No one ever gets tired of those three little words. Resolve to light up the face of an elderly person by saying them.

Other Popular New Year's Resolutions:

- Lose Weight
- Managing Debt
- Save Money
- Get a Better Job
- Get Fit
- Eat Right
- Get a Better Education
- Drink Less Alcohol
- Quit Smoking Now
- Reduce Stress Overall
- Reduce Stress at Work

and concerns that you can share with your healthcare team.

4. Helping you learn and share treatment satisfaction and side effect information within our patient community.



Visit our Caregiver Blog



Connect with others who, like you, may be facing the same eldercare issues and challenges.

Do you have a specific question you would like answered?

Visit our blog and [Ask an Expert](#)



Our Canadian Connection



[Elder Caring](#) was created to meet a growing need in the community for a coordinated, professional and interdisciplinary approach to service delivery with a focus on the health and well-being of the older person and their family.



**Patricia Grace,
National Senior Care
Examiner**

Learn the Lingo

Follow along each month to educate yourself on the definitions of terms and phrases frequently used in; eldercare, senior housing and geriatric medicine.

Respiratory Therapy: Assists patients with breathing difficulties to reduce fatigue and increase tolerance in performing daily activities.

- Take a Trip
- Volunteer to Help Others



You Might Have Thyroid Disease Without Even Knowing It

By [Mark Rosenberg, M.D.](#)

Millions of people live with thyroid disease without realizing it. If you feel tired all the time, if you feel irritable, if you feel confused or like your world has gone out of focus, thyroid disease might be the cause.

Thyroid disease can take a toll on your life in so many ways. Every person's experience is different. Some people find that they don't have the same mental clarity they used to. Others find that they are constantly fatigued. Others experience dramatic changes in weight. Some people have sleep disturbances. Some people have depression. The list goes on.

The symptoms are also easily confused with a number of other diseases. Some people with thyroid disease go years without getting proper treatment. They receive one wrong diagnosis after another. They try treatments for different diseases their doctors think they might have. But nothing seems to work. If this sounds familiar, consider thyroid disease as a possibility.

Understanding Your Thyroid

Your thyroid uses iodine and the amino acid tyrosine to make hormones that help to regulate your metabolism. Sometimes, your thyroid becomes overexcited. It produces too much thyroid hormone and kicks your metabolism into overdrive. This is called hyperthyroidism. Typically, you will begin to lose weight, you'll have trouble sleeping, and you'll feel agitated and irritable. Your heart might beat faster than usual or irregularly. You also will feel hot much of the time.

Hyperthyroidism can result from inflammation of the thyroid and may resolve itself once the thyroid heals. It can also result from chronic diseases like Graves' disease. In this case, an anti-thyroid drug is used to bring the thyroid hormones back into balance.

In other cases, the thyroid becomes exhausted and doesn't do its job as well as it needs to. Your body doesn't make enough thyroid hormone and your metabolism slows down. This is called hypothyroidism. You feel tired and weak, you have trouble focusing, and you might begin to gain weight. Hypothyroidism is considered an autoimmune disorder. For whatever reason, your body's immune system attacks the thyroid gland and disrupts its function.

Unfortunately, there is no way to restore thyroid function once it is lost. But you can manage the disease by taking a prescription thyroid hormone supplement. This process takes some trial and error to get you feeling back to normal. Too much hormone replacement can mimic hyperthyroidism. Too little won't correct your symptoms. There are both natural and synthetic versions of prescription thyroid hormones. With most patients, I see a greater benefit with the natural version, so I always try that first. Some patients do respond better to the synthetic, so if the natural doesn't work for you, don't be afraid to switch. However, give the natural version a try first.

Getting a Proper Diagnosis

If you suspect that you have thyroid disease your first step is do a temperature test. Here's what to do. Place a thermometer by your bed. In the morning, when you wake, place the thermometer bulb in your armpit. (Make sure there's not clothing between your skin and the thermometer). Wait ten minutes if you are using a mercury thermometer. For a digital thermometer, wait until it beeps. Record the temperature in a notebook. Do this every day for three weeks. After three weeks, calculate your average waking temperature. If your average waking temperature falls below the normal range of 97.8 to 98.2, you most likely have a low thyroid. If it falls above, you likely have hyperthyroidism.

Once you've done a temperature test, if it supports that you have thyroid disease, visit your doctor and request a TSH test. This test is used to determine if your thyroid is malfunctioning.

Respite Care: Scheduled short-term care provided on a temporary basis to an individual who is normally cared for by family or support groups at home.

Restorative Therapy: Therapy services that are performed with a reasonable expectation that the individual function will improve significantly in a reasonable and predictable period of time.

Skilled Nursing Care: Nursing and rehabilitative care that can be performed only by, or under the supervision of, licensed and skilled medical personnel.

Skilled Nursing Facility: A facility that is staffed with 24-hour on-site licensed professionals for the care of the frail elderly who require a high level of medical care and assistance. Also called Convalescent Care, Nursing Center and Long-Term Care Facility.)



[Click image to learn more ...](#)

Depression or dementia?

Depression can be mistaken for dementia. It's important to differentiate between them. Early treatment of depression makes for a faster and more permanent recovery. Untreated depression can lead to suicide.

What to Look for:

- Rapid mental decline
- Problems concentrating
- Language/motor skills remain normal, but may be slow
- Realizes having memory problems
- Knows date, time, location
- Slow mental decline
- Short term memory problems
- Impaired speech and motor skills
- Does not realize memory problems
- Confused and disoriented, becomes lost easily

Medical Causes of Depression

Depression can come with or be a part of certain medical problems. Before jumping to any conclusions about an elderly person being depressed, get a complete medical exam to rule out any medical issues.

Some diseases that can mimic or contribute to depression are Parkinson's MS, diabetes, thyroid disorders, viral infections and strokes, just to name a few.

Finding out that you have thyroid disease can be scary, but it's a step to regaining your life, your health, and your sense of self.

Depression can be treated

There are several treatment options available for depression. They include antidepressants, psychotherapy or counseling. Also important to remember are the benefits of regular exercise and a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.



The affordable monthly support service that provides peace of mind that in an emergency you are not alone.

- No long-term contracts
- No cost for equipment

The moderate monthly monitoring fee includes membership in the *Aging with Grace Program* for help and support with non emergency related eldercare issues.

877-260-4911

Independence and Peace of Mind for Daily Living...
24 Hours a Day ...Everyday!

*The Aging with Grace Personal Alert is powered by National Healthplan Group Network.

Aging with Grace Red Carpet Program



Aging with Grace has proudly partnered with Holiday Retirement to offer our members exclusive added discounts through The Red Carpet Program.

To take advantage of the Red Carpet Program and experience The Holiday Touch!

Call 800.626.9440



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