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CONNECTIONS

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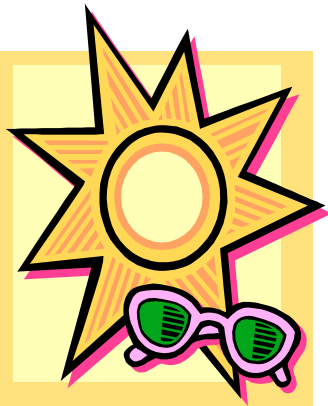
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**Have a Safe &
Healthy
Summer**

CARING FOR ELDERLY PARENTS

Caring for elderly parents can bring families together, but there are some realities that may be unpleasant to face or difficult to accept. You can't afford to ignore them, however, because they can provide a realistic basis for your actions and decisions. For example:

* **Your parents may never come around to your way of thinking.** If you try to impose your will over theirs, your parents may: (a) stop talking with you, (b) become even more stubborn, (c) comply grudgingly but undermine your efforts, or (d) surrender and become dependent on you. Find a compromise and accept an outcome that falls short of your wishes.

* **Your parents have the right to make their own decisions.** Contrary to popular belief, you never become your "parents' parent." Even when you become a caregiver, you are your parents' helper. Although you may have to make decisions for them, you will always remain their child. If their judgment is impaired, you will have to act in their best interest.

* **Even if you can't agree, something good may come from simply talking.** If a discussion with your parents serves no purpose other than to clarify each other's wishes and concerns, your time was well spent. For example, you think your mother

should give up her apartment, but she insists that she can still manage on her own. Your mother knows that you're concerned about her, and you know you can try again.

* **Not being clear about what you want can lead to decisions no one wants.** The failure to discuss matters with each other and get things out in the open can lead to bad decisions. If your mother moves in with you because she thinks that's what *you* want, and you ask her to move in because you think that's what *she* wants, you may end up with a solution that makes neither of you happy.

* **Sometimes you can do little or nothing to help.** Witnessing a parent's becoming frail or struggling with illness makes you want to do something to help. But insisting that he or she take vitamins, for example, may just create the illusion that you're helping. Try to remember that patience, companionship and caring are more valuable than hasty actions designed to relieve your own anxiety.

* **Today's solution may be out of date tomorrow.** As your parents' needs change and they become more frail, solutions that worked once must be reevaluated. For example, you may have to arrange for more help and, eventually, you may find that your parents can no longer remain safely at home.

By J. A. Hardo, Ph.D.
and C. R. Rothman, Ph.D.

CONNECTIONS

New information about “risky drinking”

We associate alcohol problems with heavy drinking, but “risky” alcohol use is much more common than alcoholism, says Richard Saitz, M.D., of the clinical Addiction Research and Education Unit at the Boston University Medical Center.

Dr. Saitz defines risky drinking as more than seven drinks a week or three drinks per occasion for women and adults over 65. These amounts exceed the level considered healthy for cholesterol. “You’re not a bad person for drinking that amount,” he says, “but you’re putting yourself at risk.” (The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines one drink as a 12-ounce beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits.)

The risks for women are greater than for men. Because women generally weigh less, the same amount of alcohol becomes more concentrated. Studies also show that women break down alcohol more slowly than men, so more of it gets into the bloodstream. Thus, they develop alcohol-related liver and stomach problems at a faster rate than men - and at lower levels of consumption.

For both men and women, more than half of the health consequences of alcohol occur at the level of risky or problem use, says Dr. Saitz. Here’s how to lessen your chances of risky drinking:

- X Do not drink alcohol every day.
- X Avoid making a glass of wine or other alcoholic drinks a nightly ritual.
- X If you drink socially, limit yourself to one or two drinks. Alternate with nonalcoholic beverages.
- X Do not consume more than three alcoholic drinks on a single occasion.
- X If you have tried to cut back on your alcohol consumption and can’t seem to, seek counselling.

*Adapted from the Weill Medical
College of Cornell University
Food & Fitness Advisor*

EFAP/North’s Member Organizations

AIDS Committee of North Bay & Area

Au Chateau Home for the Aged

Caisse Populaire North Bay Limitee

Callander Bay Dental Centre

Calvin Presbyterian Church

Canadian Mental Health Association

City of North Bay

Columbia Forest Products

Community Living Mattawa

Community Living West Nipissing

District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board

Dynatec

Fairvern Nursing Home

Family Resource Centre

Giant Tiger/Scott’s Discount

Lindsay Weld Children Centre for Children

Mattawa General Hospital

Municipality of Callander

Municipality of West Nipissing

Muskoka-East Parry Sound Health Services

Nipissing Community Legal Clinic

Nipissing District Housing Corporation

Nipissing First Nation

Near North Community Care Access Centre

North Bay General Hospital

North Bay Hydro Distribution Ltd.

North Bay Police Service

North Bay Public Library

The YMCA of North Bay and District

Temagami Ambulance Service

Tembec (Mattawa and Huntsville)

Town of Parry Sound

Victorian Order of Nurses

West Nipissing General Hospital
