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Keeping Your Home Organized

There's nothing quite like that feeling of admiring your time, when everything's in its place. It's the inundation of stuff that clutters our homes and gives us a feeling of being out of control. Here are some suggestions offered by www.OrganizedHome.com to help you control the clutter.

Establish a routine for entering the house. Set up a designated area of your home where everyone can place their things. You'll need a place for keys, coats, shoes, handbags and backpacks. Here's the important part...force everyone to use them!

If you have school age kids at home, establish a basket or bin system for important homework papers and school news. Sort through backpacks and decide which pieces of work and information are worthy of the system and which will be sent to the recycle bin.

We also recommend a home filing system for mail. Sort through the mail the same way you do backpacks. File only bills and papers concerning pending home issues.

Set up "safe harbors", places that are allowed to contain stuff that strays. A basket in a corner of the family room can be used for newspapers, magazines or catalogs not yet ready for the recycle bin. Baskets can also be used for stray games or toys. It's even okay to house a safe harbor in your bedroom. Part of making the transition from work to home is the luxury of tossing your work clothes aside. Set up a chair or corner of the closet where it's okay to do so, just de-clutter once a day.

For sports equipment that gets used several times a week, consider a box in the trunk of the car or back of the van that's used to transport your athletes.

Lastly, keep a handle on the new items that enter your home. When bringing home a new vase, shirt, kitchen utensil or tool, part with an old one. You may start to think twice about whether you really need the new things if it means parting with old favorites.

November is National Alzheimer's Month

Alzheimer's Disease is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain that results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior. It is the most common form of dementia and affects 4+ million Americans. It is not a normal part of the aging process and is not limited to elders. Its course can run from 2 to 20 years and is the fourth leading cause of death among adults in the United States.

Symptoms include gradual memory loss, decline in one's ability to perform routine tasks, impairment in judgment, personality changes, disorientation, and loss of the ability to communicate. The symptoms come on gradually and progress at different rates for different individuals.

The causes for this disease are not known at this time. Currently there is much scientific research in progress that will bring us closer to unlocking this mystery and open up doors to new treatments.

There is presently no one test that can be done to diagnose Alzheimer's. Other conditions that may cause dementia first must be ruled out. This is called a "differential diagnosis". Through careful testing, reversible causes of dementia can be detected, and, if diagnosed in a timely manner, can be reversed. Unfortunately, Alzheimer's can only be confirmed upon examination of brain tissue after death.

While Alzheimer's Disease treatments are limited, caregivers can structure the environment and their interaction with the person they care for to create an effective treatment plan. Good planning, knowledge of the disease process and developing a good support network can ease the burdens the disease forces on individuals and family members. There are some medications that can treat anxiety and agitation.

This disease is now recognized all over the world and many agencies now have Alzheimer specialists to guide caregivers on their journey.

What New Parents Should Know About RSV

Respiratory Syncytial Virus or RSV is the most common respiratory virus in infants and young children. It infects virtually all infants by the age of two years. In most infants, the virus causes symptoms resembling those of the common cold. In infants born prematurely and/or with chronic lung disease, RSV can cause a

severe or even life-threatening disease. Each year, RSV disease results in over 125,000 hospitalizations, and about 2% of these infants die.

RSV is highly contagious. Each year, up to 50% of infants are infected. Transmission occurs by touching an infected person, and then rubbing your own eyes, nose, or mouth. The infection can also be spread through the air, by coughing and sneezing. RSV can survive for 4–7 hours on surfaces such as cribs and countertops. Transmission may be prevented by standard infection control practices, such as washing your hands with antibacterial soap for 10–20 seconds.

Here are some things you can do to help prevent the spread of RSV to the babies in your life:

Wash your hands for 10 seconds with anti-bacterial soap and water as hot as you can tolerate it. When coming home from work or school.

Change your clothes before holding the baby.

Do your best to stay healthy. If you come down with a cold or a fever try to keep contact with the baby at a minimum— easier said than done for new mothers.

Do not take the baby out to crowded areas like shopping centers if possible.

Do not smoke or allow smoking around your baby.

If your infant is in childcare **discuss RSV with his/her caretaker(s).**

RSV symptoms resemble the common cold. They include fever and runny nose but may also include coughing, difficulty breathing, rapid breathing or wheezing. Because the disease progresses very quickly, if your baby develops any of these symptoms call your pediatrician or family healthcare professional.

Visit the RSV Prevention Information Center at www.rsvprotection.com for statistics and detailed information on the disease.

Financial Planning for Older Family Members

Depending on the capabilities of your older relative, caregivers or other family members may need to help manage money matters. The first step in financial planning for an older relative is to determine financial needs and goals. What are the priorities? Day to day spending? Growth of current assets? Estimating what will be needed to replace earnings?

A personal financial statement is a good place to begin this process. It will help you determine what your relative's financial priorities should be:

- ◆ Make a list of fixed sources of income (i.e. Social Security pensions).
- ◆ List all assets (bank accounts, stocks, life insurance, real estate, etc.). Note current value and income if any.
- ◆ Reevaluate assets and move to higher interest paying accounts, if you can.
- ◆ Be sure to know the latest IRS rules for Individual, Retirement Accounts, Keoghs, 401 K's and profit sharing plans to avoid costly penalties.
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with powers of attorney and advance medical directives (health care proxy, living will, etc.).
- ◆ Learn all you can about long-term care insurance and be aware of any coverage your older relatives may already have.

From here, make a list of expenses. Matching the two lists can point you in the right direction. Although we cannot always predict financial needs, becoming familiar with the finances and planning ahead will help gain *and maintain* financial stability.

Critical Child Safety for Halloween: Preventing Dog Bites

October, with the tradition of Halloween and visiting many neighborhood houses, is an important time of year to revisit this critical issue. About 15 people a year die from dog bites. Hundreds of thousands more are injured. A startling 57% of the victims are 10 years old or younger.

The breeds most commonly associated with dog-related fatalities are Pit Bulls, Rottweilers, and Shepherds. Prevention goes a long way—parents and children can follow these guidelines:

Tips for children:

- ◆ Never go near a dog you don't know or a dog that is tied up.
- ◆ If a dog you don't know comes toward you don't run away and scream; the dog might think you are playing and run after you—and maybe jump on you.
- ◆ Just stay still and calm; the dog probably just wants to sniff you.
- ◆ If a dog knocks you over, curl up in a ball and stay still.
- ◆ Never play with a dog unless the dog's owner is nearby and says it's okay.
- ◆ If you have an adult's permission to pet a dog, let the dog see you and sniff you first.
- ◆ Never tease a dog.
- ◆ If you see a stray dog or a dog that is acting strangely, tell an adult right away.
- ◆ Don't stare into the eyes of a dog that you don't know; in dog language, that's being aggressive.
- ◆ Don't disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- ◆ Beware of dogs while riding your bike or skating.

Tips for parents:

- ◆ Teach children basic safety around dogs and review these ideas regularly.

- ◆ Research breeds and their characteristics before you choose a dog – aggressive dogs are not appropriate for families with children.
- ◆ Never leave infants or young children alone with any dog.

Halloween Safety

Remember, with a costume on, your child will be looking and smelling very different to all your favorite neighborhood pooches, so be sure to review the tips for preventing dog bites with your trick-or-treaters prior to Halloween night!

FallPak 2003 – Science Gets Fizzy

The woods rustle with the sound of falling leaves and the days grow shorter. The longer summer evenings will soon be memories. Autumn has arrived and that means the Family Resource and Referral Program Fall Activity Pak is available! Set in calendar format, the Pak includes a cornucopia of fall recipes and harvest crafts.

This season, the hands-on learning “fun” science book, “Fizz, Bubbles, & Flash” is a part of the Pak. This book will help you discover what we have in common with computer chips, pizza dough, and table salt! Find out why broccoli has an odor, why soda makes a penny shine, and what makes a smoke detector work. So don’t delay, contact our friendly Care Consultants and order your fantastic Fall Pak today! (Available now until Oct. 31st, 2003).

To receive a Fall Pak, please call **1-800-809-4996** or access the program online at www.uawdcx.org click on “**Work-Life**” and “**Family Resource & Referral**”.