

# SENIOR CARE CONNECTIONS

Winter 2009

Home Instead  
SENIOR CARE  
*To us, it's personal.*



## Beat the Break

### Home Instead Senior Care launches new FREE guide on osteoporosis and fall prevention

Osteoporosis is the most prevalent bone disease in the world with over 300,000 sufferers in Ireland alone. Most people do not even know they have osteoporosis until they break a bone, which is why it is often called a "silent disease." Only 15% of people with osteoporosis are actually diagnosed, leaving a staggering 85% of people with osteoporosis undiagnosed.

To help give this silent disease a voice and generate awareness about osteoporosis, Home Instead Senior Care has launched a new booklet, "Beat the Break: A Guide on Osteoporosis and Fall Prevention".

The booklet will tell you everything you need to know about osteoporosis- what it is, how it can be prevented and how it can be

treated. It also focuses on fall prevention as those with osteoporosis are more susceptible to breaking a bone from a slip or fall.

"Our new booklet aims to generate awareness of osteoporosis and to strengthen the bone knowledge of Ireland's seniors. At Home Instead Senior Care we hope people will be encouraged to take the steps necessary to maintain healthy bones and live a healthier life", said Ed Murphy, Chief Executive of Home Instead Senior Care



A free copy of "Beat the Break: A Guide on Osteoporosis and Fall Prevention" is available from any of the 17 Home Instead Senior Care offices in Ireland or by calling 1890 930 013.

#### See Inside for:

- Winter safety tips for seniors
- A fall prevention checklist
- Expert advice on caring with people with delirium
- Details of new office opening in Midlands
- Home safety tips for seniors
- New Year wishes from Home Instead Senior Care

## Home Instead Senior Care announces CAREGiver of the Year

Ann-Marie Shortt from Bray, Co Wicklow, has been announced as the Home Instead Senior Care CAREGiver of the Year 2009. She was presented with her award by Roger Baumgart, Chief Executive of Home Instead Senior Care USA and Ed Murphy, Chief Executive of Home Instead Senior Care Ireland.

Ann-Marie has been described as "a gem amongst CAREGivers" by her employer, Seamus Murphy, Managing Director of Home Instead Senior Care in Bray, Co Wicklow. What makes Ann-Marie so special is that she makes a point of really getting to know her clients, exploring new ways to interact with them and getting them involved in activities which expand their interests. But it is not only her clients that she cares for. As one family member put it: "We felt that she was caring not only for my father but also looking after the needs of the entire family".

One client's testimonial refers to Ann-Marie as being "outstanding". Another says: "Ann-Marie's sunny disposition, good humour and extreme kindness and relaxed disposition at all times and in all circumstances make it a joy to be in her company."

Congratulating Ann-Marie on her big win, Seamus Murphy of Home Instead Senior Care in Bray said: "I would like to express my sincere congratulations to Anne-Marie on this great accolade and I am delighted that she has been recognised for her role as an outstanding CAREGiver. She truly makes a difference in the lives of those she cares for and I feel she sets a terrific example for Home Instead CAREGivers throughout the world".



Pictured from left to right: Ed Murphy, Chief Executive of Home Instead Senior Care in Ireland, Roger Baumgart, Chief Executive of Home Instead Senior Care in the USA and Ann-Marie Shortt, Ireland's 2009 CAREGiver of the Year.

*To us, it's personal* <sup>SM</sup>

# Winter Safety Tips for Seniors

*Hypothermia, frostbite and falls are among the winter-related dangers older adults face and it is important that seniors, and those who care for them, take precautions at this time of year.*

**Older adults are more susceptible to hypothermia and dangerously low body temperature because they produce less body heat than younger people. Here are some pointers to help seniors keep safe and warm this winter:**

- Stay indoors when it is very cold outside, especially if it is also very windy.
- If you have to go outside, do not stay out in the cold or the wind for very long.
- Wear a hat and gloves when out in the cold and always cover your mouth and nose with a scarf.
- Stay dry as wet clothing chills your body quickly.
- Go indoors if you start shivering -- it is a warning sign that you are losing body heat.

**Falls are another danger for older adults during winter. To lower the risk of falls:**

- Do not walk on icy or snowy footpaths.
- Wear boots with non-skid soles.
- If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn out and loses its grip. An ice pick-like attachment that fits onto the end of the cane can help keep you from slipping.
- Ensure steps and walkways are shovelled free of snow outside so you have a clear and safe entrance to the home.



## Your Fall Prevention Checklist

*This checklist will help you take the steps to make your home a safer place to live:*

- Are pathways and footpaths outside the home even and free from cracks?
- Are the walkways free from clutter?
- Are rugs and carpets secured with non-skid tape?
- Are there hand rails or grab bars beside the stairs or in the bathroom next to the toilet and bath?
- Are non skid mats placed in the bath tub?
- Is the kitchen floor free from liquid, grease or any other slippery substance?
- Have wheels been removed from all items of furniture?
- Do you use a nightlight to keep the bedroom lit at night time?
- Do you have light switches placed at each end of the stairway?
- Are steps visible?



If you checked no to any of these boxes please use the space below to record what needs to be done to make your home safer.

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# Caring for People with Delirium

Delirium is a sudden, fluctuating, and usually reversible disturbance of mental function. It is more common in older people, particularly those residing in long term care and those who have been hospitalised. Research suggests delirium affects between 15-50% of older hospitalised patients. However, it is a temporary condition and if the cause is identified and treated quickly, it can usually be cured.



Joanne Flood

## Signs and symptoms of delirium include:

- An acute or sudden onset of confusion in someone. This may have developed over a few hours or a few days. In some cases it can develop over a couple of weeks.
- The confusion may fluctuate over the course of a 24 hour period. For example, the person may be subdued early in the morning, become more agitated in the evening time and may stay awake in this agitated state over the course of the night.
- People may experience hallucinations, seeing things or people that are not there. Some people develop paranoia or a false sense of reality.
- An inability to focus with little or no attention span, accompanied by severe mood swings.

## Those who may be a high risk for delirium include:

- Those over the age of 65.
- Those suffering from a urinary tract infection (UTI) or a respiratory tract infection (RTI).
- Those diagnosed with dementia.
- Anyone who has recently had an operation or a recent hospital admission.
- Those with a history of alcohol excess.

## The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) criteria for a diagnosis of delirium include:

- Disturbance of consciousness such as reduced clarity of awareness of the environment and reduced ability to pay attention.
- A change in cognition such as disorientation that is not due to a case of pre-existing, established or evolving dementia.
- The disturbance develops over a short period of time (usually hours to days) and tends to fluctuate during the course of the day.
- There is evidence from the history, physical examination or laboratory findings that the disturbance is caused by the direct physiological consequences of a general medical condition or drug use.

These criteria help to differentiate delirium from dementia or help identify delirium superimposed on a pre-existing dementia. Delirium superimposed on dementia is often very difficult to identify and can go left untreated as both conditions cause confusion. To distinguish between the two, physicians need to pay particular attention to the onset and duration, and what the persons baseline or previous level of confusion or cognitive impairment was. Lastly, it is important to treat any serious worsening of confusion in a person with dementia as delirium until proven otherwise.

## References:

- 1: Forsyth, D. et al (2005)
- 2: NICE Delirium Final Scope (2008)
- 3: Irving, K. et al (2006)
- 4: DSM IV

Joanne Flood is the Community Education and Development Officer with Home Instead Senior Care in Belfield. Joanne is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse with 10 years experience in dementia care in Acute Care Settings, Liaison Psychiatry, Gerontological Nursing, Long Term Care Settings and more recently working in the community as a Dementia Nurse Specialist within Psychiatry of Old Age in North County Dublin. Joanne has completed a PG Dip in Gerontological Nursing and an MSc in Mental Health of Older People. Joanne is currently undertaking a PhD in Community Dementia Care in Dublin City University.

# New Home Instead Senior Care Office Opens in the Midlands

Home Instead Senior Care recently opened its sixteenth office in Westmeath. The new office is independently owned and operated by Paul and Teresa O'Reilly and will provide home care services to Counties Westmeath, Offaly and Longford.

Teresa has a background in nursing and has worked in various hospitals in Ireland including Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Mullingar Maternity Hospital and Tallaght University Hospital. Prior to this Teresa worked in nursing in London for ten years and qualified as a midwife with Whipps Cross Hospital London.

Paul originally hails from Bettystown, Co. Meath but has been living in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath for the last twenty years. He is an engineer and a founding director of ORS Consulting Engineering, one of Ireland's largest multinational engineering firms with offices in Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Hungary.

Prior to setting up ORS, Paul worked in London and Saudi Arabia for four years. He is a former president of the Mullingar Chamber of Commerce and member of the Board of Chambers of Commerce Ireland CCI. Paul is currently the Vice President of the Midlands Gateway Chamber.

Commenting on the new franchise opening in Westmeath, Teresa O'Reilly said: "Paul and I are delighted to have opened a Home Instead Senior Care office in Westmeath. Now more older people in the midlands can avail of at home care from a trusted source. Paul and I know the area very well and are passionate about senior care so our clients will benefit from a combination of real local knowledge and top quality care".

"Home Instead Senior Care's mission is to be Ireland's trusted source of home care for seniors allowing them to continue to be independent and live in their home for longer than otherwise possible. We fully embrace this concept and understand how



important home care is in the lives of our loved ones. We are greatly looking forward to our new venture and being able to offer such a worthwhile home care service to the communities of Westmeath, Offaly and Longford", continued Teresa.

To contact Teresa and Paul in their Westmeath office please call: 044 938 5260.

## New Year Wishes

May peace fill all the empty spaces around you  
And in you, may contentment  
answer all your wishes.  
May comfort be yours, warm  
and soft like a sigh.  
And may the coming year  
show you that every day  
is really a first day, a new year.  
Let abundance be your constant companion,  
so that you have much to share.  
May mirth be near you always,  
like a lamp shining brightly  
on the many paths you travel.  
May you be true love.

Author Unknown

## Keep Seniors Safe

With an increase of over 25% in burglaries throughout the country and recent assaults against the elderly, Home Instead Senior Care encourages Ireland's seniors to stay safe and to take heed of the following steps to make their home more secure:

- **Keep front and back doors locked** at all times, even if you are at home. Windows should also be locked.
- **Do not open the door to strangers.** If a repair or sales person arrives to the home do not let them in without calling their company to verify their identity.
- **Keep your house lit at night.** This shows signs of life and activity, a darkened home night after night gives burglars the illusion that the house is vacant.
- **Do not leave a spare key outdoors.** Do not hide your key outside under a doormat, a flowerpot or any place that may be easily uncovered by a burglar.
- **Call the Gardai** if you come home and find a door or window opened. Do not enter the house if there are signs of forced entry.

## Senior Moments

"Youth is a disease from which we all recover." *Dorothy Fulheim*

"Old age isn't so bad when you consider the alternative." *Maurice Chevalier*

"The more sand has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it." *Jean Paul*

**Home Instead Senior Care office opening in Kildare, January 2010.**

Dublin 2,4,6,8 01 716 3555	Dublin 6W,10,12,14,16 & West Dublin 01 424 1945	Dublin 18 & South County Dublin 01 206 8022	Dublin 1,3,5,7,13,15 01 853 5048	Dublin 9,11,17 & N. Co. Dublin 01 895 0010	Co. Galway 091 384 160	Co. Cork 021 500 2190	Co. Meath 046 943 1100	Co. Wexford 053 918 4042	Co. Offaly 044 938 5260
Co. Wicklow 01 276 8122	Co. Donegal 074 911 3050	Co. Kerry 066 719 3350	Co. Tipperary 0504 911 00	Co. Limerick 061 462 070	Co. Waterford 051 333 966	Co. Louth 041 980 9830	Co. Westmeath 044 938 5260	Co. Kildare 045 484 623	Co. Longford 044 938 5260