

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

November 2012

October Meeting Highlights

Thirty-three people attended our October meeting, including 2 new individuals. Fred Craver offered the blessing for the group.

The Cravers also brought some wonderful cupcakes for dessert this month. Thanks so much. The Hayzletts have volunteered for dessert duty for November.

Arita McCoy, a nurse from the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Center at Johns Hopkins was our guest this month. She spoke about clinical trials and other current happenings in Parkinson's Disease. There was also a lively Q&A session following her presentation. We have copies of her presentation if anyone missed it and would like a copy. **Thanks Arita!**

Would You Like to Meet Year-Round?

For the months of December, January and February, we are considering meeting at a restaurant for lunch, weather permitting. If you did not make the meeting this month, and would like to comment on this question, please call or email Art.



Recognize this happy fellow? See Page 2.

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group Contact

Group Facilitator, Art Guyer:
Phone: 240-625-2722
E-mail: aguyer42@myactv.net

Visit Our Website at:
www.fareshare.net/Parkinsons/

November Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Join us for our Parkinson Support Group *Holiday Lunch Meeting* At Homewood at Williamsport

Thursday, November 1, 2012

Dr. Linda Sigmund, Director
Movement Disorder Center of the
Neurology Center of Fairfax

Lunch Reservations Required

Our lunch and follow-on meeting will be held at the Community Center Dining Room at 1:00 PM.

Cost for lunch per member: \$6.50

Please call
Kathy Lanham @ Homewood
301-582-1750

For reservations or if you need directions.

Tips for Swallowing Pills: See Page 3

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group has been supported in part by:



16505 Virginia Avenue
Williamsport, MD 21795
301-582-1750

Volume 2, Issue 11

Upcoming Events

Future Meetings

November 1, Dr. Linda Sigmund

Note: July 2013 meeting will be on 11th.

Educational Activities

JHM PD201, Managing Care, October 12
(410-955-8795)

UMMC Parkinson's Seminar, October 16
Achieving Your Goals, BWI Westin

JHM DBS Information Sessions,
November 5 (410-955-8795)

Washington County Senior Center
Stepping On (Fall Prevention Program)
October 24 – December 12, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
(See Page 2 for more Details)

Berkeley Co. Parkinson's Support Group
Oct. 24th – 6:30 PM (Hospice Criteria)
Nov. 28th – 6:30 PM (Speech Therapy)
(304-886-8594)

Caregivers' Breakfast, Tuesday,
October 23, 2012, 8:30 am
Call Art Guyer for Information.

Please let us know of any events you would like to see publicized.

Reminder! If you are not receiving this newsletter by email, send a note to Art asking to be put on our email list. You get the newsletter sooner by email! Plus you get extra, quick turn-around information.

UNSUBSCRIBE: If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please email: aguyer42@myactv.net

Or call him at: 240-625-2722

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

November 2012

Caregiver's Breakfast.

In September, Dave DeHaven, Peg Hayzlett, and Art Guyer enjoyed the Caregivers' Breakfast together. This month, caregivers will meet for breakfast on **Tuesday, October 23rd**, at the Railroad Junction Family Restaurant in Hagerstown, at 8:30 AM.

This restaurant has a good breakfast, lots of coffee, and we provide conversation and fellowship. You are encouraged to participate in this if at all possible. Caregivers should call Art at least 24 hours in advance, if you plan to attend this breakfast. If transportation is a problem, let Art know when you call.

Birthdays

We're collecting birthdates (not years, just day and month) so we can celebrate a little at each meeting for those with birthdays that month.

To participate, sign up at the next meeting or contact Art who is keeping a master schedule for the group.



October Birthdays:

Marci Saterbak, Mike Churchman, Norma Craver, David DeHaven, Patsy DeHaven, Violet McConnell, and Miriam Timmons celebrate birthdays this month.

PICNIC

Our covered-dish picnic at the St. James Brethren Church on September 24th was once again a great success. There were 21 attendees and lots of great food.

It was a cool and "breezy" day but we were able to use the Church's community room inside, resulting in a very comfortable event.

Thanks go to Lorre Jones and her mother, Nancy Starliper, for arranging the facility and providing a number of games and drawings. And thanks goes to Dave DeHaven for getting the fried chicken and at a discount!

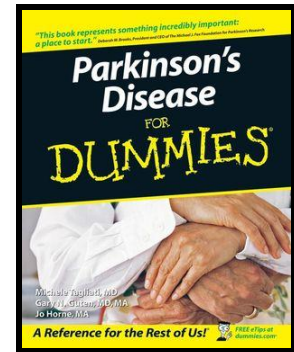
We are already looking forward to other picnics next year, indoors or out!

Fishing!



Dave DeHaven and Art took Huck Hayzlett fishing on the Potomac River on September 26th. Huck enjoyed himself and caught the first fish and the first bass. Peg and Huck took Dave and Art up on their offer to give a caregiver a break by spending some time with their spouse. How about you?

Parkinson's Disease for Dummies



One of our new members, Pat Myers, recommends this book as an easy to understand reference for Parkinson's Disease. It's free from the Michael J. Fox Foundation. Thanks, Pat.

STEPPING ON Classes

A proven program designed to build confidence and reduce falls for seniors by about 31 percent. STEPPING ON focuses on how strength and balancing exercise, medication management, home safety, footwear, vision and mobility are important in preventing falls.

Classes meet once per week for 7 weeks; please plan to attend each of the 7 sessions.

Robinwood Prof. Center – Wednesdays
October 24th – December 12th
1:00 – 3:00 PM

Classes are FREE
Registration is Required
For Information or to Register
Please call: 240-313-3360

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

November 2012

Tips for Swallowing Pills

By Janie Rosman (Caregivers.com)

Swallowing pills — medicine, vitamins or supplements—is the most commonly-reported problem for people living with dysphagia, according to Jan C. Pryor, Speech-Language Pathologist at University of Washington Medical Center.

Water is a usual companion with pills, yet there are other options to the clear liquid. “It is very important to take a full glass of water with pills,” says Pryor, who is also a dysphagia consultant with the National Foundation of Swallowing Disorders. “Without sufficient water, it (pill) can get stuck in the esophagus and dissolve, causing erosion in the mucosa and pain, and more trouble swallowing.”

Maggie Kuhn, MD, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, UC Davis School of Medicine, says “If able, we're more confident about the complete dosage being ingested when taken with water; however, for many patients with dysphagia, this is simply not an option.” Their different consistencies make water and pills difficult to manage together. “One is held on the tongue, and the water needs to take the pill with it,” Pryor says. Sometimes, though, the water is swallowed while the pill can stick to the tongue.

People with established dysphagia may need to be assessed by Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) to determine the extent of their difficulty and the most appropriate formulations. Check with the pharmacy or doctor to see if the pills can be crushed. While many tablets can be crushed or opened to release their granules, “some medications should not be crushed—anything that is time released—and you might not know this,” Pryor says.

If the pill can be crushed, then either consult a compounding pharmacy — which changes the formulation (solid to liquid) and delivery, not the key contents — or crush it yourself and mix it with liquid or a soft solid, like pudding or applesauce; helpful for those with difficulty juggling a pill and a glass of water. The soft substance also helps mask the taste of a bitter medication. “When the two (pill and soft substance) stay together and move through the throat at the same velocity — the pill in the substance like a little raft — people can have an easier time,” Pryor says. “(The) caveat here is, some medications are not to be taken with milk products, so (caregivers) need to be aware of this before putting them into ice cream, for example.”

Consider the importance of the pill that is causing difficulty. “Often, when I talk to patients, the problem is large vitamins, and so we have a discussion about the benefit of the vitamin versus the risk of choking on it,” Pryor says. “One can sometimes take two smaller mg pills of the same dosage instead of one large pill — for example, 500 mg of calcium (a large pill).” Many vitamins come in liquid and chewable forms. Alternatively, some pills with indentations can be halved half using a pill-cutter.

Pay attention to the underlying reason for difficulty in swallowing pills, dense solids, bread or other foods, or liquids — coughing, choking or sticking in the throat or chest area, “Let your physician know, and pursue a medical work up for the problem,” Pryor says. “Some of these problems can signal a condition that needs to be treated, such as strictures and webs or diverticulae (pouches) that can develop in the throat or pharynx.”

Use a non-prescription, flavored spray, available over-the-counter, to ease discomfort. Sprayed on a pill, it creates a water-based barrier between it and the tongue/throat, preventing friction and the “stuck in the throat” sensation. It also prevents taste buds from coming into contact with bad-tasting pills.

While chewable pills, liquid formulations or beaded capsules (“sprinkled” on soft-consistency foods like applesauce) minimize the need for pill-form medication, some conditions require swallowing pills.

Each person can check to make sure his or her swallowing reflex is automatic and comfortable by swallowing an average-sized mouthful of water. If none spills, and there is no coughing, gagging, or vomiting, then try the following methods.

Practice taking pills by starting with small “faux” pills like cake decorations — round candy balls in white so they look like medicine — and move to larger-sized decorations.

The Hagerstown Parkinson's Support Group

Hagerstown, MD and the Four-State Area

Monthly Newsletter

November 2012

The caregiver can first demonstrate the technique:

- Initially, take and swallow a comfortable mouthful of only water.
- Take the smallest cake decoration and place it in the middle of the tongue. Where it is placed may need to be modified by its size, form and the degree of the person's gag reflex.
- For those with a sensitive gag reflex, keep the chin to the chest and relax, then breathe before tipping head back when ready to swallow.
- Take a sip of water, and either keeping the head level or tipping it back, swallow the water and the "pill" together.
- Take another sip of water to keep the "pill" moving down the throat.
- Continue until anxiety/frustration at taking the small "pill" is diminished and continue to the next larger-sized "pill," gradually increasing the "pill" size.

In addition to Pryor's suggestions, the following may be helpful:

- Use cool, never hot, liquids since drinking the latter may dissolve the medication before it reaches the stomach.
- Take the pill with a carbonated beverage, which can help transport it quickly and help with swallowing.
- Try a two-gulp method by placing the pill on the tongue, taking a sip of liquid and swallowing it, not the pill. Take a second sip immediately and swallow the pill together with it.
- Put the pill or capsule far back on the tongue and use a straw to quickly drink the liquid.
- Chew a cookie, cracker or small piece of bread after moistening your mouth. Just before you swallow, put the pill in your mouth, and swallow both together, taking care not to tilt the head back to avoid choking.
- Take pills while standing or sitting up to help them pass quickly down the throat and into the stomach and avoid lying down for half an hour after taking pills.
- Don't rush, eliminate distractions, and take a deep breath before taking the pill.

Caregivers will want to use trial and error with various methods and techniques to see what works best and is most comfortable for the person with difficulties.

This "Low Talker" article came from the "Bottom Line" publication and was contributed to our group by Peg Hayzlett.

Are You a Low Talker? Easy Ways to Be Heard

Susan Berkley The Great Voice Company

Do people often ask you to speak up? Use these simple techniques to make sure that you're heard...

Add resonance. The voice originates in the larynx, where the sound is very weak, then resonates through the sinuses, throat, mouth, nose and

chest, where the volume gets pumped up. To be most powerful, your voice should come from every part of the facial mask, the inverted triangular area that stretches between the two sinuses and the throat. Practice engaging this area by humming as you count to 10, blending the hum with the numbers in a smooth flow—*mmm/one, mmm/two, mmm/three*, etc. (Your lips and nose should tingle.) Do this daily.

Work the phone. When you're on a call, imagine that the other person is several feet away from you. This will help you project your voice. Never cradle the handset between your ear and shoulder—that makes you sound as if you are calling for ransom money.

Strengthen your vocal cords. Susan Miller, PhD, director of the Center for the Voice at Georgetown University Hospital, recommends a way to build up the vocal cords by vibrating the lips. You can stick



out your tongue and make a raspberry sound or trill the "r" sound. The vibration should be powered by your lungs, not your lips.

Polish your vowels and consonants. If people say you mumble, it could be that your diction needs a little help. Say the follow-

ing sequence of phrases slowly several times each day to improve your clarity—*Green tea ice cream is a treat to eat... Mean men may cause harm... Go with the flow to stay in the know... Ed said get into bed... She lost her poise after hearing the noise... I knew the crew in a blue canoe.*

Believe that you deserve to be heard. Insecure people often speak softly. Remind yourself that your ideas are as important as anyone else's.

See a doctor if you have hoarseness, laryngitis and/or pain while speaking. These could be signs of a medical problem.

Bottom Line/Personal interviewed Susan Berkley, president of The Great Voice Company, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, and author of Speak to Influence: How to Unlock the Hidden Power of Your Voice (Campbell Hall). She is the voice-over artist who says, "Thank you for using AT&T." www.GreatVoice.com

