

October 2008

Fall Prevention

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Quotable Quotes

"We act as though comfort and luxury were the chief requirements of life, when all that we need to make us happy is something to be enthusiastic about."

Charles Kingsley

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that one in three adults, 65 years and older, falls each year. Such occurrences cause moderate to severe injuries which result in hospitalization. Sadly, a senior person who suffers an injury, often find the result to be detrimental to continued independence.

The most significant concern after a fall is the reality of fractures. The most common bones to become fractured are the hip, femur (thigh bone), pelvis, spine, forearm, hand, leg and ankle bones (medicine.net, 2008).

Some very common reasons why seniors fall can be linked largely to diminishing muscle tone and balance, declining vision and hearing, medication, illness, lack of safety around the house and lack of proper equipment to help with ambulation, and balance.

Knowing the primary reasons for falls, can help seniors make essential environmental modifications. The first step to making changes around the home involves critically looking at the living space. Ask yourself, is there clutter that get in the way of mobility? Are there rugs that hinder movement, or can cause one to trip? Are there phone cords, or other electrical cords that needs to be stapled to a base surface? Is there adequate lighting in each room?

Changes may include the addition of grab bars in the bathroom or bedroom, a raised toilet seat, or commode for night usage, clearing of clutter and removal of rugs from walking areas. Also important is making sure stair rails are practical, sturdy enough for support.

In addition to physical changes to prevent falls, there are important lifestyle/social changes that may enhance a senior person's life - an active lifestyle that incorporates exercise as part of a daily routine, helps to strengthen muscles and reflex potential. Equally important is remembering to wear eye glasses and hearing aids, if poor vision and hearing are concerns. Taking medicines as prescribed, using a walker or cane and having frequent visits with your physician are also important factors that will assist in fall prevention.

To learn more about fall prevention please visit:
http://www.hap.org/healthy_living/seniors/fallprev.php
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/spotlite/falls.html>



Coping with the Autumn Blues

It's October and we all know what that mean - fall has begun. For some this is a long awaited, much loved time of the year – for others, like me, it is too rainy, too cold, too damp, too blue! Watching as the sun develop a sudden shyness, peaking out occasionally from behind the clouds, like a bashful child hiding behind it's mother's skirt, can cause feelings of sadness. Just when you'd allow yourself to forgot the colder seasons, the fall taps on the shoulder - in my case, it kicks me on the knee, a cold swift kick, that causes me to retreat to the land of *Wisdom*, where the words Island and sunny are never overused!

So how should one cope with the fall blues? The experts suggest therapy; bright light therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and supplement melatonin therapy are just a few. While all their suggestions are no doubt helpful and well researched, I don't have the time to do any of it. I am a busy working mother of three, the only free time I have is after 10PM when the children are in bed, so I had to come up with my own plan to deal with the fall blues.



"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

Author Unknown

This year I started Journaling, it's relaxing, and helps me focus on the good moments in my day (and it can be done any time during the day or night). I'm not a fall convert as yet, but I have to admit, it's the only time of the year I smile at the trees. The colorful leaves blocks out the gray clouds, if only for a brief moment, it's a wonderful reminder of the privilege we have in being vertical on this beautiful earth.

Another activity that is great for the fall is reading. I have to steal moments for this one, but my most recent read was well worth the late bedtime – it was *The Shack* by William Young, chock full of surprises.

Some other suggestions for coping with the fall blues are letter writing, and volunteering. Giving of ourselves to others helps us forget the gray skies. I have found that focusing on another person's needs have a surprising effect on the giver, the reward is a sense of purposefulness and well being – all of which makes me forget how much my knees hurt when the cold season begins!

Whichever way you chose to deal with the loss of summer, as a fellow member of the fall blues club, I encourage you to remember that spring will come when you least expect her. So enjoy the beautiful leaves and give generously of yourself.



September

By *Helen Hunt Jackson*

The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusky pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest
In every meadow-nook;
And asters by the brookside
Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
And autumn's best of cheer.

"Think excitement, talk excitement, act out excitement, and you are bound to become an excited person. Life will take on a new zest, deeper interest and greater meaning. You can think, talk and act yourself into dullness or into monotony or into unhappiness. By the same process you can build up inspiration, excitement and surging depth of joy."

Norman Vincent Peale

October's Bright Blue Weather

By *Helen Hunt Jackson*

O sun and skies and clouds of June
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather;

When loud the bumblebee makes haste,
Belated, thriftless vagrant,
And goldenrod is dying fast,
And lanes with grapes are fragrant;

When gentians roll their fringes tight,
To save them for the morning,
And chestnuts fall from satin burs
Without a sound of warning;

When on the ground red apples lie
In piles like jewels shining,
And redder still on old stone walls
Are leaves of woodbine twining;

When all the lovely wayside things
Their white-winged seeds are sowing,
And in the fields, still green and fair,
Late aftermaths are growing;

When springs run low, and on the brooks
In idle, golden freighting,
Bright leaves sink noiseless in the hush
Of woods, for winter waiting;

When comrades seek sweet country haunt
By twos and twos together,
And count like misers hour by hour
October's bright blue weather.

O sun and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.



Apples Grilled in Parchment Paper

A grown-up treat from the grill that even kids will devour. Simple. Sublime.

Yield: 4 servings

2 granny smith apples
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
2 teaspoons light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
Prepare a medium fire for direct grilling.

Quarter the apples through the core. Remove and discard the core, then cut each quarter into thin slices. Place the slices in a medium bowl. Add the cranberries, maple syrup, sugar, and cinnamon. Stir to combine.



To make the packets: Cut four pieces of baking parchment paper, about 12 by 15 inches each. Spoon one quarter of the apple mixture into the center of each piece of paper and dot with one quarter of the butter. Bring the two long ends of each paper together and fold them over several times to seal the top of the packet. Twist the other two ends of the papers in opposite directions to close the packets.

Grill the packets over direct medium heat for about 10 minutes. Serve in packets or pour the apple mixture from each packet into a separate bowl. Either way, serve warm with ice cream if desired.

Source: Weber's Big Book of Grilling by Jamie Purviance and Sandra S. McRae (Chronicle Books; 2001) Photographs by Tim Turner.



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