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## SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER JUNE 2007

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### ISSUE 6 ARTICLES:

- **COPING WITH ARTHRITIS**
- **TIPS ON HEALTHY EATING**
- **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

## COPING WITH ARTHRITIS

One in five Americans suffers from arthritis or chronic joint symptoms. Arthritis is a collective term covering more than 100 medical conditions, which together are the nation's leading cause of disability, second only to heart disease as the leading cause of work disability.

Arthritis causes pain, loss of movement and swelling. Damage to joint cartilage causes weakness, instability and visible deformities. Everyday tasks like walking and brushing teeth become difficult.

While there is no cure for arthritis, almost everyone can reduce pain and loss of function. While advances in drugs and surgeries account for part of this improvement, it is also becoming clear that self-management is also an important component of helping persons with arthritis of all degrees achieve a better quality of life.

People with arthritis can contribute significantly to their own care. The first step is accurate diagnosis and a treatment plan from their doctors. Then they can develop a personal self-care plan that can lower pain, improve function and make life more enjoyable. Self-management strategies cover a broad range of actions ranging from nutrition, exercise, physical therapies and coping skills, to use of assistive devices, stress management, alternative therapies like massage and acupuncture, and more. With so many options, learning as much as possible about the disease and its treatment is the key to making living with arthritis easier.

Eating right and staying active is a good first step. There is no proven "arthritis diet," but experts recommend adding variety, eating more foods with fiber and starch, and reducing intake of salt, fat, cholesterol, sugar and alcohol.

Physical exercise is an important part of an arthritis treatment program. A sedentary lifestyle actually adds to pain and stiffness, while exercise increases energy, controls weight, helps in sleeping and fosters a better self-image. Strong muscles are better able to support and protect joints damaged by arthritis.

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Questions or  
comments call  
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Manager of  
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(888) 994-3863,  
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There is an appropriate exercise program for all levels of arthritis. Doctors, often in conjunction with a physical therapist and occupational therapist, can help develop a personalized program that will reduce pain and allow daily activities without hurting joints. Check with local community centers and YMCAs for exercise programs and activities geared to people with arthritis.

Developing and practicing pain management skills are essential to good self-care. Asserting control over pain can help to avoid feeling helpless or depressed. Thinking of pain as a signal to take positive action rather than as something to endure can help keep an upbeat attitude, refocus thoughts and change negative messages to positive ones. Pain can also be an alert to unhelpful habits, such as spending a lot of time in bed or using alcohol to ease the pain, and an incentive to replace them with positive behaviors.

For more information about arthritis management, treatment and other helpful resources, visit [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org) or call **(800) 293-7800**.

Source: Arthritis Foundation

## **TIPS ON EATING HEALTHY**

- **Eat slowly:** It takes 20 minutes for the brain to know that the stomach is full, so slowing down will help avoid taking in all those extra calories that you didn't want anyway.
- **Eat foods from all the food groups:** Foods of different groups work together to metabolize efficiently. Be sure to include lots of fruits, vegetables and fiber in your diet.
- **Cut down on fats, oils and sugar.**
- **Drink plenty of water.**
- **Limit portions:** A good check on portion selection is to estimate a portion without measuring, then check with a measuring cup exactly how close the estimate was to the desired amount.

You can contact the American Dietetic Association at **(800) 877-1600** or visit their website at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org). You can also go to [www.mypyramid.org](http://www.mypyramid.org) to find links on diet and nutrition.

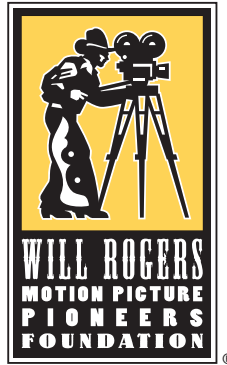
Source: American Dietetic Association

## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*“Advice can get you into more trouble than a gun can.”*

— Will Rogers

**QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS CALL  
KAREN WIENER, MA, MFT, MANAGER OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
(888) 994-3863, EXT. 2390**



June 2007

Dear Valued Member:

In our attempt to keep you informed and included in activities carried out by the Social Services Department, enclosed please find copies of our Social Services Corner newsletter for the past three months. Our Social Service Department continues to provide a monthly newsletter entitled, "Social Services Corner," in order to bring relevant issues and areas of concern to the forefront.

The department also has a number of informative brochures available to its members on a range of topics including advanced medical directives, long-term care options, caregiver issues, and aid with the grief process. Please call our Social Service department at (888) 994-3863, ext 2370.

The MPPAF Social Service staff are trained, licensed, compassionate master's level social workers, with specialties in gerontology, who are able to assist members with a wide range of needs and concerns. Our social workers provide guidance and support without charge to all our members. If you or a family member is facing one of life's challenges and would benefit from a consultation, please call me directly at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2390 or email me at [karen@wrinstitute.org](mailto:karen@wrinstitute.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Wiener". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Wiener, MA, MFT  
Manager of Social Services

Enclosures