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## ABC in Action, Supporting the Community

### ABC Home Healthcare at Woburn Senior Center's "Fall Festival"

Join us on September 18th, from 9am-1pm at the Woburn Council on Aging's Fall Festival in recognition of National Senior Center Week. Stop by and say hello to the ABC staff, enjoy free food, door prizes and more at the Health Fair!

### World Alzheimer's Day is September 21st

Every 70 seconds, someone will develop Alzheimer's. The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization providing support to families facing Alzheimer's and funding research to get us closer to a cure. To learn more about this debilitating disease or how you can help support the Alzheimer's Association visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

On Sunday, October 4th, ABC will support the Alzheimer's Association efforts as a Gold Sponsor of the 17th annual Northeastern MA Memory Walk. Lace up your shoes to participate or cheer on the anticipated 10,000 walkers 9am-1pm Brookstone Square, Andover. For more information visit: [www.memorywalkMANH.org](http://www.memorywalkMANH.org).

### Home Office Updates

The home office team has been extremely busy this summer

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# the ABCs of Homecare

Fall 2009

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Welcome to the Fall issue of the ABCs of Homecare.

As the fall season draws near and the beauty of New England can be seen right outside our window we wanted to dedicate part of this issue to the wonderful caregivers in our lives. Perhaps your daughter or son have taken on this role, or you have added the role of caregiver in your own relationship. We honor you and want to share with you with some interesting facts as well as some low cost, no cost techniques to give back to yourself. Something every one needs to do for themselves.

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and the back half of this issue highlights the efforts of Project ZERO - The Project to end Prostate Cancer. To accomplish their goal, they provide comprehensive treatment information to patients, education to those at risk and conduct more free screenings than ever before. By educating lawmakers, training advocates, and working with organizations across America, Project Zero has led the fight to increase government investment in prostate cancer research from \$85.5 million in 1995 to more than \$440 million in 2007.

We close this issue with some breathing techniques. You might be amazed at the power the act of breathing has to center us and bring about a sense of calm. This can be incorporated into your life anywhere - and cost nothing. We need to be true to ourselves and give our body and soul what it needs whenever possible.

With all good wishes for a safe and colorful fall season.

Jeannette Sheehan, MSRN  
Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner  
President and CEO

### Inside this issue

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## ABC in Action

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implementing a new ADP payroll system and new Procura scheduling system.

The ADP payroll system ensures cohesiveness between the HR and accounting departments.

With the implementation of Procura scheduling software we will be able to utilize many new features including:

Point of Care, which allows care plans to be updated from the field and Telephony, saving workers time in the field on paperwork and providing an accurate reflection of the time on site.

Procura also provides a more systemic integration between departments within the office.

In addition, we applied for two grants recently and have been awarded the Medication Management Grant from Minuteman Senior Services.

### Join Our Social Network

Are you up on your social networking? You can now get the latest news about ABC Home Healthcare on Facebook and Twitter. Find us by searching Facebook ABC Home Healthcare on Google. Already a member of Facebook? Become a Fan of ABC and read the latest news and share your favorite ABC stories. You can also follow us on Twitter: [www.twitter/ABCHomecare](http://www.twitter/ABCHomecare).



## Benefits of Being a Caregiver

At some point, you may find yourself becoming a caregiver for a spouse, parent or other loved one. Some people might worry that the pressure of their own daily life combined with being a caregiver might shave years off their life. Interestingly this nurturing may actually have the opposite effect and extend their life based on findings from a University of Michigan study and Journal Stroke study. A full 90 percent of those interviewed in the study reported a deeper appreciation of life due to their care giving experience. Many also expressed it helped them develop a more positive attitude towards life.



Children caring for an aging parent report feeling a stronger bond with their parent as well as improved self-esteem. In some cases, the additional time spent with a parent has allowed for old wounds to heal and forgiveness over past issues. For the individual being cared for it allows for individualized attention, shared life experiences and forging a deeper relationship with someone close to them.

Overall, taking care of a human being often makes people feel their life takes on deeper meaning. Where some aspects of daily life do not allow for closure, many of the care giving tasks allow people to feel they accomplished something during their day and feel more in control.

On the flip side, there is no denying that being a caregiver will have moments of increased stress and frustration, perhaps leading to exhaustion. As the caregiver, look at the tasks you perform. Based on these duties you can determine where you may benefit from help with the care, such as sharing or delegating duties. Perhaps you might need help with transportation, groceries or with the physical challenges of caring for an individual that is similar in stature to yourself. Enlist the efforts of



## Caregiving Benefits cont.

another family member, friend or consider hiring an agency like ABC Home Healthcare. We provide in-home care and respite services based on your needs for as little as 1 hour a day\*.

Another consideration for those caring for others are out-of-home programs like senior centers, which offer activities, trips, transportation, meals and more; or adult day-care centers which offer more medical assistance versus socialization. For more information on these options go to [www.800ageinfo.com](http://www.800ageinfo.com) or [www.ucanhealth.com](http://www.ucanhealth.com).

To be a successful caregiver it is essential that you maintain a healthy lifestyle, have a support network and take time for yourself each day to avoid Caregiver Burnout (see “Caregiver Burnout” sidebar right).



Care giving may be tough, but it can also be very rewarding. By planning time ahead for yourself, you'll be able to better deal with the challenges you may be faced with each day. For an easy, no cost way to help regain focus and balance, see “The Power of the Breath,” page 6.

\*based on service area

## Caregiver Burnout

Caregiving is a balancing act. In an age where many of us are burning the candle at both ends, we often prioritize caring for ourselves at the bottom of our list. We must recognize that we need to take time for ourselves in order to be a better caregiver to those depending on us, as well as those simply living with us. Stress in life has become a norm for so many people, burnout often follows when a person doesn't allow others to help or find ways to incorporate time for themselves in their day.

The challenges of care giving are often only spoken about among those who share the same challenges and even then, it is rare that people admit to it. Sometimes we feel we need to do things ourselves. As burnout approaches you may not notice it. Sometimes it is those around us who point it out. Or you may recognize that you are feeling stressed but feel you don't have the time to “talk to someone” about it. Some signs of caregiver burnout include:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Inability to focus
- Short tempered, over reacting to simple little things
- Loss of interest in work, hobbies or social interactions
- Feelings of resentment
- Inability to relax
- Being on the verge of tears or crying often

### Avoiding Caregiver Burnout

The number one way to combat burnout is to take time for yourself. That means sharing the care giving, whether with another family member or friend, or through an agency like ABC for a few hours of respite care. In addition, maintain a healthy diet limiting the amount of sugary snacks and alcohol. Find ways to save time for yourself including utilizing conveniences like online grocery shopping and delivery services. For a small fee you save on gas and gain time for yourself.

### Caring for Yourself

While having a few minutes for yourself might mean you try to catch up on your own chores, it's important to use some time to focus on you. Taking just 15 minutes can leave you refreshed. Consider using respite time to:

- Relax with a good book
- Get out and walk/exercise in the fresh air to clear your head
- Laugh – find humor in books, TV or audiotapes. Laughter is one of the best medicines allowing us to release tension and feel better.
- Meditate
- Catch up with old friends via phone or in person
- Spend time with your pet(s) –see pg 4 for more Benefits of Pets
- Pamper yourself (massage, haircut, etc)

Caregiving is a wonderful opportunity to give back to your loved ones. To be the best caregiver it is essential that you take time for yourself as well as those around you. It may feel selfish but is a requirement for success as a caregiver. For more information on respite care, contact ABC Home Healthcare at 781.245.1880 or online at [www.abchhp.com](http://www.abchhp.com).



## The Benefits of Pets

No matter what your age may be, a cuddly puppy or a cute kitten seems to evoke a smile out of most. Although having someone around to take care of you in your golden years is important, being able to care for someone yourself is just as valuable. Pet therapy has been used for years to reduce stress, reduce feelings of loneliness and even offers physical health benefits. Having a pet, primarily a dog or cat, can give an elderly person a feeling of worth long after their children have left the nest. Feeling needed at any age makes you feel worthwhile and important.

The emotional connection of having an animal companion keeps our elderly population sharp. Some diseases common among the elderly population show a decreased level of verbalization. In some cases pet therapy has been shown to increase socialization. Pets can provide a necessary relationship which may have been lost if someone is recently widowed or feeling lonely in general.

Health wise, some studies show that people over 65 who have a pet experience significantly lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Taking care of a pet can be challenging in a positive way. Dogs need to be taken on walks, and most animals need some form of grooming. The increase exercise gained from walking a pet is beneficial in most situations. Brushing and combing a pet can help build muscle and gain strength in those that have become frail.

Of course there are some negatives to having a pet. For those that have become too frail to care for a pet, it can be difficult to find someone help care for the animal or find him a new home. When a pet passes away it can be just as devastating as a human loved one. Despite the negatives, many people cannot resist feeling happy when they see their dog wag his tail or hear the purr of a cat. The unconditional love and companionship may be worth any of the hassle.

*Submitted by Anna Roberts, ABC Home Healthcare's Community Liaison*

## It's Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men other than skin cancers. It is the leading cause of cancer death behind only lung cancer. More than 55 million American men are at risk for prostate cancer.

That number translates to one in every six men getting prostate cancer sometime in their life. These odds increase to one in three if you have a relative with this disease. The risk of prostate cancer increases with age. It is rarely found in men under 40 and in most cases occurs in men over the age of 65.

**An estimated 27,360 men in the US will die of prostate cancer this year.**

**(American Cancer Society)**



While these facts and estimates are staggering it's important to note that nearly 100% of men diagnosed with prostate cancer while in its early stages are still alive five years after diagnosis! Considering there are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer in its early stages, early detection is essential. The good news is that it only takes about 10 minutes for a simple blood test and physical exam to test for prostate cancer and it's covered by health insurance in many states.

### Who Is At Risk?

Prostate cancer risks increase with age. Rarely is it found in men under the age of 40. It is most commonly found in men over the age of 65. If your brother or father had prostate cancer, your odds are doubled. African American men have a 60% higher risk of getting prostate cancer than white men. Also, veterans of the Vietnam and Korean wars who were exposed to Agent Orange have an increased risk.

While there are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer in its early stages, in its more advanced stages symptoms might include difficulty and/or frequent urination, blood in the urine or bone pain.

**Prostate cancer is a common, but usually slow-growing cancer, compared to other types of cancer.**

## Prostate Cancer (Continued from page 4)

### When To Get Screened?

Men with more than one risk factor should begin annual screenings at age 40. Men with one risk factor should begin screenings at age 45. General population should begin annual screening at age 50.

### What Treatment Is Available?

Treatment for prostate cancer varies depending on the individual case. For early or local prostate cancer that has not spread outside the gland or nearby area, the most common options include surgery, radiation or deferred treatment keeping a close eye for signs the disease is progressing.

**Nearly 100% of men diagnosed with prostate cancer while in its early stages are still alive 5 years after diagnosis!**

In it's advanced stages when the cancer has spread to other parts of the body the treatment might include:

- Hormone Therapy where they starve the cancer cells of the testosterone by using drugs that inhibit testosterone production.
- Chemotherapy and Radiotherapeutic Agents which involve taking medications that are toxic to cancer cells. This option is often used when the cells have become resistant to the hormone therapy.
- Bisphosphonates which are medications that strengthen bones, helping to prevent damage and pain from bone metastasis. This also counteracts the bone weakening that might occur from hormone therapy.
- Patients might also consider participating in a clinical trial. Working closely with your doctors and specialists will help determine the best course of treatment.

September is Prostate Cancer awareness month. A leading force behind the campaign is Project Zero, the project to end prostate cancer. Project Zero has helped reduce prostate cancer deaths by nearly 40 percent since their inception in 1996. They continue their efforts through education, free screenings and more.



## Top 10 Cancer Fighting Foods

Studies show men with a diet high in saturated fat and red meat have a higher rate of prostate cancer diagnosis. They also show a connection between obesity and prostate cancer as it becomes more difficult to detect PSA levels due to the PSA levels being diluted by increased blood volume due to excess weight.

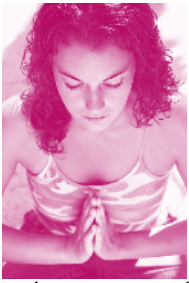
Studies show you may reduce the likelihood of getting certain types of cancers and other chronic diseases by eating a healthy diet consisting of brightly colored fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, with an emphasis on the foods highlighted below. While there are many choices of fruits and vegetables, several stand out ahead of the pack when it comes to their cancer-fighting abilities including:

1. **Tomatoes** - rich in lycopene, a plant chemical that's been shown to reduce the risk of prostate, ovarian, and cervical cancer. Spaghetti sauce, tomato paste, and ketchup are particularly concentrated sources.
2. **Broccoli Sprouts** - an excellent source of sulforaphane, a plant chemical that may reduce the risk of stomach, breast, and skin cancer.
3. **Berries** - getting their rich color from plant chemicals called anthocyanins (potent antioxidants) and protect against a variety of cancers.
4. **Soybeans** - contain Isoflavones and help to reduce the risk of breast and prostate cancer by protecting cells from the harmful effects of estrogen.
5. **Green and Black Teas** - natural sources of catechins, potent antioxidants that act as powerful inhibitors of cancer growth, and may reduce the risk of liver, skin, and stomach cancer.
6. **Pumpkin** - along with carrots, squash, red and yellow peppers, and sweet potatoes, are excellent sources of beta carotene help reduce the risk of many types of cancer through their potent antioxidant capacity.
7. **Spinach** - Packed with lutein and vitamin E, both powerful antioxidants, helps ward off cancer of the liver, ovaries, colon, and prostate.
8. **Garlic** - shown to reduce the risk of cancer of the stomach, esophagus, and breast. Mince garlic 10 minutes before cooking to increase its cancer fighting potential.
9. **Pineapple** - good source of the antioxidant vitamin C. In addition, it contains the enzyme bromelain, which may protect against breast and lung cancer.
10. **Apples** - with antioxidant benefits, also contain the plant chemical quercetin, shown to reduce lung cancer risk and slow the growth of prostate cancer cells.

Eaten alone these foods have great power, but studies show when eaten together they have a much greater effect.

SOURCE: [thedietchannel.com](http://thedietchannel.com)

# The Power of the Breath



The power of the breath. It is amazing to think that something so natural can be so powerful in our well being. Breathing is an involuntary act; we cannot control the fact that we breathe. However, we can control how we breathe. If you stop and listen to your body, you may notice throughout the day that your breath becomes shallow, or perhaps you even hold your breath. By being conscious of our breathing we can regain some focus, integrating the body and the mind.

Deep breathing takes practice. To begin, make yourself comfortable in a chair or lie down on your back. You should be comfortable enough

that your diaphragm rises and falls with each breath. Breath in and out through your nose. Your abdomen should rise and fall with each breath. You may find this does not happen right away, concentrate on relaxing this area. Think of it as filling and emptying a balloon. The length of the inhale should equal the length of the exhale. As we get better at this the length of each can increase.

**As your breath becomes balanced, your mind becomes balanced.**

Once you have succeeded in diaphragm breathing, fill the diaphragm, followed by the lungs beginning at the bottom all the way to the top. Release the breath begin-

ning at the top of the lungs, ending with the abdomen. Continue this pattern for a full set of 20 breaths. You are now moving from deep breath work to yoga breathing, known as pranayama.

When you focus on your breath, you may have other thoughts, which tend to distract you, let them be and continue focusing on the movement of the breath. Focus on the sound, the rise and fall of the chest, the rhythm and the length of your inhalations and exhalations. As your breath becomes balanced, your mind becomes balanced. Many people find this practice invigorates them and relaxes them at the same time. Considering it costs us nothing and is a power we all have from within, it's a shame not to incorporate it into our daily lives.

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**We want to hear from you.  
Is there a topic you want  
to know more about?  
Call or email us.  
Your topic may be a  
feature in our next  
ABCs of Homecare!**