



# CareTalk

A Publication of Hope Hospice, Inc.

## MEMORY CARE TIP

### Dementia Care in the COVID Era

The pandemic has taken a toll on us all, but it's an especially confusing time for people living with dementia. Realities like ever-changing rules, mask wearing, and social isolation are making life extra hard for those experiencing cognitive decline. How can you help the people in your care?

#### Infection Control Reminders:

Posters with illustrations are helpful reminders to encourage hand washing, wearing masks the right way, and physical distancing. For some, the pictures may be easier to understand than verbal instructions. You can place them

---

*Some people living with dementia develop a tendency toward paranoia, so it's best to avoid sharing unnecessary details.*

---

throughout the house or facility as a visual aid to help explain or remind about safety measures.

**Virtual Socializing:** Take advantage of technology like Zoom and Facetime to ensure that the elderly remain connected to loved ones and social circles. They may need frequent reminders on how the device works and that they're having a live conversation.

**The Power of Music:** Science shows that, in many cases, the part

(See "Dementia" on page 4)

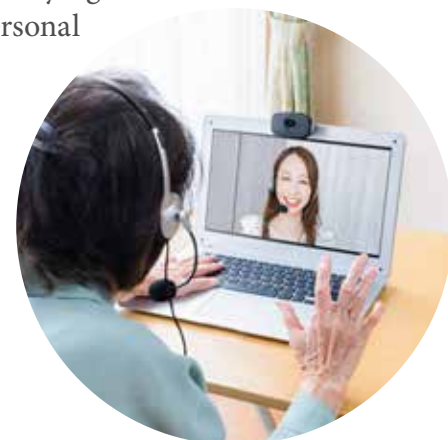


### Helping Families Overcome Caregiving Challenges During a Pandemic

Being a caregiver—especially to an aging family member or other loved one—comes with many challenges. Watching someone close to you decline may leave you feeling depressed and overwhelmed. Neglecting your own needs can lead to exhaustion. And, even if friends and other family occasionally help or check in, you still might feel alone. All these feelings are common, even in the best of times. The COVID-19 pandemic has created an even more challenging situation for individuals who are trying to balance their own needs and attention to personal mental health with the responsibilities of caring for an aging loved one.

To offer support to the community, Hope Hospice converted its Family Caregiver Education Series into an online format to make this popular program more easily accessible during this time. The Zoom webinars present a variety of topics related to caring for seniors or those with a chronic disabling condition.

A special edition, "Caregiving in the COVID Era," was developed to address the challenges that family caregivers are now facing. You can view a recording of this presentation, as well as a similar class that focuses specifically on dementia care during the pandemic, at [HopeHospice.com/family-past](https://www.HopeHospice.com/family-past). Following are a few key takeaways.



(See "COVID Care" on page 3)



Hope Hospice, Inc.  
6377 Clark Ave., Suite 100  
Dublin, CA 94568-3024  
(925) 829-8770  
[HopeHospice.com](http://HopeHospice.com)

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jennifer Hansen  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Jatinder Pal Singh Marwaha, MD, HMDC  
*Medical Director, Hospice*

Epi DeLeon, MD  
*Associate Medical Director*

Kuljeet Multani, MD, HMDC  
*Associate Medical Director*

Kshitija Kari, MD  
*Associate Medical Director*

Gia Barsell  
*Dementia Services Manager*

Maria Iglesias  
*Director of Human Resources*

Satu Johal  
*Chief Financial Officer*

Kathy Nouri, RN, BSN, MPH  
*Chief of Quality Compliance*

Raul Perez, RN, BSN, PHN  
*Chief of Patient Care Services*

Kari Rayford, LVN, CHPLN  
*Director of Outreach*

Michael Sinclair  
*Controller*

Kendra Strey  
*Director of Communications*

Elsei Ye-Arling, RN, BSN, CCM  
*Director of Patient Care Services*



Community-based and non-profit, Hope Hospice is accredited by The Joint Commission, certified by Medicare and Medicaid, and is a member of the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and National Partnership for Hospice Innovation.

© 2020 Hope Hospice, Inc.

## Preparing the Home: Safety First

Preparing your home for a senior or a disabled adult involves considering how to make the home comfortable and safe. With a little planning, you can prevent most accidents from happening. You must evaluate each room and reorganize, if needed, to ensure the environment is as accident-proof as possible. Ask a relative, friend, or a homecare agency to help identify any safety hazards you may have overlooked.

### General Safety Tips

- Keep furniture in the same place and make sure it will not move if leaned on. Take out unnecessary furniture and leave space for a walker or wheelchair to get around.
- Contrasting colors help a person with vision deficits to better see objects in his or her path. As much as possible, the color of furniture, toilet seats, counters, etc., should be different from the floor color. This setup makes important objects (like the toilet!) easier to identify.
- Sturdy chairs with long armrests help the person get up and down.
- Add cushioning to sharp corners.
- Carpeting should be low-pile and in a solid color.
- Don't leave anything on the floor that might cause tripping, especially on stairs. Do away with area rugs and conceal power cords.
- Install strong railings.
- Ensure good lighting—inside and out. Put nightlights in the rooms used by the person in your care.
- Have (and practice) an emergency fire escape plan; keep escape routes clear of objects and all clutter to ensure quick egress.

### Kitchen Safety

- If the person in your care still prepares his or her own meals, encourage a transition from stovetop/oven cooking to using a microwave (but not if a person with a pacemaker is present).
- Install the microwave at countertop height, not overhead.
- If the stovetop remains in use, a model with controls on the front edge is better than one with knobs at the back, which requires the user to lean over hot spots to turn burners on/off.
- Set the water-heater temperature below 120°F to prevent burns.
- Provide a step stool, never a chair, to reach high shelves.

### Bedroom Safety

- A baby monitor in the person's room can alert a caregiver to calls for help or other sounds that signal trouble.
- Make sure the bed is secure and won't slide on wood floors.
- Place a flashlight and whistle at the bedside.
- Using a portable toilet at the bedside may be safer for some than having to navigate a dark hallway at night to reach the bathroom. ➔



Now's the time to embrace technologies that make life easier. Ask for help in learning how to use websites or smartphone apps to order restaurant food and groceries delivered to the home.

## COVID Care *(continued from page 1)*

**1** For many older adults, this new effort to reduce in-person engagements has resulted in isolation. But with crisis comes opportunity. Take this time as a chance to learn how to **use technology to help with everyday tasks**. Grocery stores offer home delivery. Restaurants can send your favorite meals right to your doorstep with just a few clicks on the computer. Online courses in a variety of subjects are easier to access than ever. Book clubs, churches, and other social gatherings meet online, too! Don't be afraid to ask for help from a friend or neighbor to help you get set up. Or, if you feel too intimidated to learn these new programs, ask a grandchild to order up that meal or groceries for you and get the goods sent to your home—it can be done on a smartphone from any location!

**2** **Weigh the risks of home care versus facility care.** During times when you feel overwhelmed trying to care for your loved one by yourself, you may start thinking about transitioning him or her to a nursing home or assisted living facility. That's a normal consideration. But before you make any changes, be sure you know the facility's policies for keeping residents and staff safe during this public health crisis. Each facility has unique rules, but most either forbid or strictly limit visits from outside people, even family. If spending quality time with your loved one is your main priority, you might instead work on getting in-home help from a small network of people who agree to take extra measures to prevent exposure to the virus.

**3** **Self-care is more important now than ever.** Any stress, depression, or other troubling emotions that a family caregiver would experience under normal circumstances are amplified under the current health crisis. It's imperative to carve out time for yourself to engage in activities that are just for you. It could be exercise, reading, an online activity, or even just a nap. These moments of self-care may involve some planning, so create a schedule and seek commitments from trusted friends, family, or a paid caregiving service. ➔

## QUICK QUIZ

Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Some people living with dementia develop paranoia, so avoid oversharing details about the pandemic.

True or False

2. Playing music from a patient's early years is likely to bring on bad memories, so don't play it when they're within earshot.

True or False

3. When you are planning to move an elderly person into your home, your own comfort should be the priority.

True or False

4. Remove unnecessary furniture from the home to provide a safe space for an elderly person to move about.

True or False

5. Area rugs pose a high risk for causing the elderly to trip.

True or False

6. The countertop is the safer place for the microwave, not installed overhead.

True or False

7. If a patient inquires about the pandemic, you should be upfront and explain all of the details and provide the current worldwide death count so that they have the facts.

True or False

8. Preplan a fire escape route and keep the path clear of clutter.

True or False

9. Self-care for the caregiver is an important part of providing good care to the patient.

True or False

10. Keep the home's water heater set over 140°F to ensure shower water is always hot.

True or False

Find the quiz answers at the bottom of page 4.



of the brain that recalls memorized music, poems, and scriptures stays intact throughout the dementia journey. Use this to your advantage as a caregiver and boost your charge's mood with favorite tunes from earlier times. It's not uncommon to observe positive responsiveness to music, even in the patient who is otherwise nonverbal.

**Creative Truths:** It's not helpful to repeat scary terms like *worldwide pandemic* or to watch the nightly news when the person is in earshot. There's no harm in downplaying the situation by simply calling it a bad bug and reinforcing hand washing. Some people living with dementia develop a tendency toward paranoia, so it's best to avoid unnecessary details. ➔



Posters with illustrations like these free downloads from [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) offer helpful reminders around the house or care facility. Pictures may be easier to comprehend than verbal instructions—particularly for individuals who exhibit cognitive deficits.



## In-Service Training During COVID-19

As a safety measure during the ongoing pandemic, Hope Hospice has made our **in-service educational seminars available via Zoom teleconference**. We remain a resource to local hospitals, SNFs, board-and-care homes, and assisted living residences for complimentary education about senior-care topics. We want to help you maintain physical distancing at your facility and still offer valuable education to your staff and residents.

Please connect with us to discuss your needs and the logistics of offering these seminars remotely. ➔

### Available Topics

- Dementia care
- Pain in the elderly
- Skin care of the elderly
- Fall prevention
- Senior nutrition
- Medication administration
- Respiratory concerns
- MRSA/C-Diff
- Body mechanics
- Hospice education
- Agitation/terminal restlessness
- Advance healthcare directives

### For More Information

Please connect with Hope Hospice Director of Outreach, Kari Rayford, LVN, at [karir@hopehospice.com](mailto:karir@hopehospice.com) or (925) 829-8770 to discuss your team's needs.