

# wecare NEWS

*A newsletter from WeCare—where peace of mind has a home address*

## Services for clients with brain injuries

Unlike general home care service providers, support workers for individuals with brain injuries require some very special knowledge, special skills and related experience.



At WeCare, our support workers have the knowledge to anticipate and address the special challenges

that children and adults with brain injuries face.

To find out more about our services, call the WeCare office in your area.

## 10 things to make you smile

1. Watching a funny film, show or play
2. Spending time with your grandchildren
3. Cuddling up with a pet
4. Phoning an old friend
5. Receiving a cheerful letter or e-mail
6. Listening to upbeat music
7. Walking in a park
8. Playing any sort of game
9. Getting your hands dirty in the garden
10. Preparing a great meal and sharing it

## Rehabilitation and your stroke care team

### What is rehabilitation therapy?

For stroke survivors, rehabilitation is an important part of regaining as much independence as possible. Rehabilitation cannot cure damage to the brain. It can help survivors to relearn the best possible use of their bodies.

### When should rehabilitation begin and how long should it last?

Rehabilitation should begin as soon as possible after a stroke. Frequent turning, proper positioning, and gentle exercising of paralyzed muscles can help prevent stiffness and soreness. This will help prepare the muscles for more complicated tasks. At first, a nurse or a therapist will provide this care. Later, other caregivers will be taught how to help.



**Your loved ones and a strong care team can make the difference in stroke recovery.**

Once survivors have left the hospital, caregivers and family play an important role in rehabilitation. Some health professionals

*continued on page 3*

## Welcome to WeCare

WeCare is the largest independently owned home care service provider in Canada, with over 50 locations from coast to coast. Our services include

- Nursing
- Personal Support
- Meal Preparation
- Homemaking and cleaning
- Personal care
- Appointment escort
- Companionship
- Specialized infant and child care
- Respite care and palliative care
- Alzheimer and Parkinson care

All of this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

## INSIDE

Keeping your loved ones mobile **2**

Top six tips for care planning **2**

Ask our experts: Advice and information **3**

Your bathroom safety **4**



[www.wecare.ca](http://www.wecare.ca)

# Keeping your loved one mobile: How the pros select mobility equipment

By Linda Norton, BSc OT, OT Reg (Ont)  
Rehabilitation Education Co-ordinator with Shoppers Home Health Care

**As your loved one ages, seating and mobility devices—such as walkers and wheelchairs—may impact many areas of her life. The right piece of equipment can mean the freedom to stay mobile and active.**

How do professionals choose the right equipment for your loved one? How do they ensure that the equipment is used and doesn't collect dust in the corner? It starts with a comprehensive assessment by a trained therapist.

## Areas of assessment

Seating and mobility covers many areas, so a professional assessment will be multidimensional. Assessment domains include but are not limited to the following:

**Medical and surgical history.** The therapist may gather this information from an interview with your

loved one, through the referral process, and from the primary physician or health care provider.

**Postural control.** How much body control is needed will influence the amount and type of support required in the seating system.

**Skeletal factors.** Spinal and joint deformities may influence whether or not modular seating or custom-seating is required.

**Sensory status.** Development of pressure ulcers on a person who uses a wheelchair is a serious concern.

**Functional skills.** The position that your loved one needs to be in to optimize their functional ability will also be reviewed.

**Respiratory status.** Does she find it easier to breathe in a particular position? Will she require supplemental oxygen or a ventilator mounted on her mobility device?

**Cognitive/behavioural.** Is there anything that needs to be incorporated into the seating system to ensure her safety? Will she be safe using a power mobility device?

**Communication.** Does your loved one have a communication device which needs to be mounted on the mobility device and/or integrated with the wheelchair electronics?

**Transportation.** Does she access public transit, disabled transit or a personal or agency vehicle? Ramp/lift dimensions, weight capacity, internal vehicle space, tie-down systems and whether or not your loved one can drive the vehicle will all influence the therapist's recommendation for equipment.

**Goals of the individual, caregiver and therapist(s).** What are the goals that need to be achieved by the seating and mobility system? Oftentimes, these identified goals can be mutually exclusive.

**Funding sources.** Funding should not limit the scope of the assessment; however, funding does influence what equipment can be prescribed. Having a clear understanding of resources will help the therapist determine a prescription.



## Top six tips for care planning

**Below are the top six care-planning areas that are sure to cross your path. Think about your answers to this quick list, and you'll be on your way to finding and providing better care.**

**1 Medical issues.** What resources and skills will be needed? How can you find nursing, home-making and care support?

**2 Legal and financial issues.** This includes who will be responsible for what. Do you have wills and powers of attorney close by? Is the family in agreement? Who is in charge?

**3 Day-to-day activities.** How is the person coping now? What will change? What needs to be done to keep things going? Is personal care needed?

**4 Mobility.** How will your elder get around? Is there a need for a cane, crutches, walker, scooter or wheelchair? Does he or she need constant care or an escort?

**5 Environment.** Review living arrangements and plan for adjustments. Stay at home or move? With support or not? Where are friends and family?

**6 Community.** Take a look at which community resources may be accessed (including home care, nursing care and retirement living).

# Ask our experts:

*Forward your questions or comments, and we'll ask our experienced nursing team to provide you with the latest advice and information.*

**Do seniors need less to eat as they age? Mom never seems hungry and just picks at her food.**

Although seniors' appetites tend to decrease with age for a number of reasons, their nutrient requirements do not decline. Ask your mum to keep a thorough food diary for three days. Reviewing this diary will help you assess if she is getting a balanced diet. Check the fridge and cupboards to see what food is available. Perhaps your mom would agree to Meals on Wheels, which are ample and nutritious, or keep several frozen entrees on hand. Homemaking services may also be a recommended solution.

**My family is anticipating a lengthy hospital stay for my aunt. Other than doing her laundry, making regular visits and taking gifts, is there anything we can do to make her stay easier?**

A lengthy hospital stay can always be a little overwhelming, so planning ahead of time is a good step to take. Certainly, bringing some personal items—a favourite pillow, blanket or a few family photos—from home will help to make her room more pleasant. Does your

aunt enjoy listening to the radio or reading? Consider hobbies that may be portable. Perhaps renting one of the hospital's TVs may help to pass the time.

**I was talking to a co-worker about getting home care for my mother. I always thought she needed a nurse, but she mentioned I could also consider a personal support worker. What's the difference between the two?**

- A nurse is a registered staff member who will provide nursing care, such as injections, dressing changes, intravenous therapy, and pain and symptom management.
- A personal support worker will assist a client with activities of daily living, such as personal hygiene, meal preparation, feeding, toileting, reminding the client about his or her medication and assisting with laundry. A personal support worker has completed an approved course of study, usually at a community college and has the training to assist with hands-on care. This caregiver is supervised by a nurse and provides the care that has been documented in the client's care plan.

Send your questions to [skelly@wecare.com](mailto:skelly@wecare.com)

## Rehabilitation and your stroke care team *continued from cover*

may make home visits; others may arrange for office visits. These can provide valuable support to the caregivers and survivors. Programs are tailored to meet individual needs and can also change as the survivor's condition improves.

### Who is on the rehab team?

The number of services that survivors will need depend on their degree of disability. Rehab usually involves the services of a number of professionals, including a nurse

who works closely with survivors, their families, and the health care team during the initial stages following a stroke. Nurses help survivors with daily care such as taking medications, bathing, dressing and toileting until they can do more for themselves. Nurses also help organize the community services that survivors need after discharge.

*Excerpted from "Let's Talk About Stroke," Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation.*

## WeCare foot clinics save the day!



A lifetime of wear and tear can be hard on our feet. Foot problems can be an early warning of more serious medical conditions such as arthritis and diabetes or of nervous and circulatory disorders. It's especially important for seniors to care for their feet on a regular basis. Consider this good advice:

- ★ To avoid injury, don't go barefoot.
- ★ Inspect your feet daily and report any blisters, cracking, sores and/or redness to your doctor.
- ★ Take extra care in cutting toenails to avoid injuries. If you can't manage this, you should consult a foot specialist. Never cut your cuticles.
- ★ Wash feet daily and dry them well.
- ★ Use a good moisturizing cream to prevent the skin from drying.
- ★ Wear clean socks each day.
- ★ Buy and wear properly fitted footwear.

**WeCare offers regular foot clinics with registered nurses. To find an upcoming clinic day in your area, contact your local WeCare office.**

Source: The Encyclopedia of Health and Aging

## Attention caregivers

Ask for your complimentary copy of Solutions magazine, courtesy of your local WeCare Home Health Services location.



# Tax tips

## 1. Caregiver credit

If your dependent meets certain criteria and if you have maintained a dwelling where you and a dependent lived at any time during the year, you may be eligible for a caregiver credit amount. You can split the claim if you and another person share support and expenses.

## 2. The infirm dependant deduction

Claim up to a certain amount (determined by Revenue Canada each year) for each dependant relative. Your dependant must be completely reliant on you at some time during the year by reason of mental or physical infirmity.



## 3. Age credit

Claim an age amount of \$3,912, if you were 65 years or older by December 31 of the year for which you want to claim the credit. This amount is reduced by 15% of your net income in excess of \$29,124. You're not eligible for an age credit if your net income exceeds \$55,204.

There are also spousal and equivalent to spouse credits, medical expense credits, disability credits and basic personal credits.

**It never hurts to check!  
Contact your local Revenue  
Canada office or your  
accountant for more info.**

## FALL PREVENTION

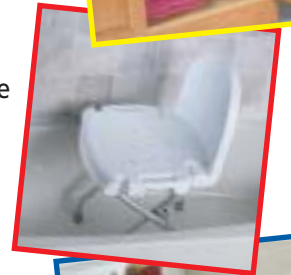
# Your bathroom safety checklist

**8  
quick  
tips!**

*Falls happen very easily for seniors who are home alone. While bathroom safety products offer consumers opportunities for independence, help is sometimes needed. Normal daily personal care may be performed in safety and comfort with or without assistance if some preplanning is done.*

*Tub transfer benches, stools, shower/bath chairs, bathtub rails, grab bars and hand showers allow easy, full use of the tub and shower. Moving in and out of a tub or shower becomes an enjoyable routine if the experience can be made safe and hassle-free. Check out these helpful hints:*

- Ask for the assistance of a personal support worker to ensure safety and comfort while bathing and dressing.
- Install grab bars or tub bars to make getting in and out of the tub or shower safer. These devices offer solid support for people who have difficulty standing or balancing.
- Place non-skid strips or a rubber mat in showers and bathtubs.
- For elderly or injured residents, consider a transfer bench. This device fits securely over the tub and helps the bather balance when stepping into a tub or shower.
- For older residents or anyone who would like more stability in the shower, consider a specially-designed shower seat or chair. Many feature adjustable legs and slip-resistant feet for extra stability and comfort.
- Use a hand-held shower attachment for better control of water flow when washing your hair, shaving your legs, using a shower seat or cleaning the tub.



- Raised toilet seats and safety frames help a person use a standard home toilet safely and comfortably, often without assistance. These products feature contoured seating, easy installation and easy clean-up.
- Use non-skid rugs and install a night light in halls to light the way.

 **wecare**<sup>™</sup>  
Home Health Services

*Where peace of mind has a home address<sup>™</sup>*

**1-888-429-3227**  
**www.wecare.ca**