

## BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. E-NEWS

### Families with Special Needs: Caregiving Tips

Whether your family member with special needs is a child or an adult, combining personal, caregiving, and everyday needs can be challenging. Below are general caregiving tips to help you and those you care for stay safe and healthy.

#### Be Informed

- Take time to learn about your family member's condition and special need requirements
- Talk to health care providers and other professionals that work with families with special needs
- Understand the needs of you and your family, and work together to make good choices about things like housing, schools and health services
- Notice how others care for your loved one, and be aware of signs of mental or physical abuse

#### Get Support

- Seek help from family and friends when you need it
  - Join a local or online support group
  - Expand your search for local and national groups that provide information, services and recreation for individuals and families with special needs
  - Research local, state, federal or other programs that may be available



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## April is National Autism Awareness Month

For more information about Autism, visit [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org)



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## Planning for Severe Weather

Spring is the time of year when many things change — including the weather. Temperatures can swing back and forth between balmy and frigid. Sunny days may be followed by a week of storms. Sometimes extreme weather changes can occur within the same day. Mark Twain once said, "In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours."



*Spring weather can be unpredictable. When severe weather hits unexpectedly, the risk of injury and death increases, so planning ahead makes sense. Prepare for storms, floods and tornadoes as if you know in advance they are coming, because in the spring, they very likely will.*

Thunderstorms cause most of the severe spring weather. They occur when warm, moist air collides with cool, dry air and produce lightning, tornadoes and flooding. To prepare for such events, the Center for Disease Control and Prevent recommends having the following on hand:

- A battery-operated flashlight, a battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio, and extra batteries for both
- An emergency evacuation plan for every type of severe weather emergency
- A list of important, personal information, including: telephone numbers of neighbors, family and friends; medical information; insurance information and telephone numbers of utility companies
- A first aid kit including: prescription medication, over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment and bandages and dressings for injuries
- A 3–5 day supply of bottled water and nonperishable food
- Personal hygiene items
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- An emergency kit in your car



Prepare your family members for the possibility of severe weather. Tell them where to seek appropriate shelter as soon as they are aware of an approaching storm. Practice your emergency plan for every type of severe weather. Show family members where the emergency supplies are stored, and make sure they know how to turn off the water, gas, and electricity in your home.

While you may not encounter extreme weather this spring, you can put yourself and your family at ease by being prepared for this very real possibility. For more information about natural disasters and severe weather, visit [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters). Ψ



## Help Your Fridge Help You

One of the easiest ways to improve your diet is to give your fridge a healthy makeover. "Taking a look at the foods inside your refrigerator is like taking a look inside your heart and your health," says Debra R. Judelson, MD, a cardiologist with the Cardiovascular Medical Group of Southern California in Beverly Hills. Dr. Judelson offers these two simple suggestions on how to reorganize your fridge to support a healthy diet:

**Take stock of what's inside.** Once a month, pull everything out and separate the better-for-you foods from the rest. Make sure you have more low-fat, high-fiber and low-sugar foods than other types. If not, gradually decrease the number of not-so-good foods and increase the number of healthy foods.

**Organize by "more" and "less."** Divide your refrigerator into different sections of "choose more often" and "choose less often." This could be by shelf or within the shelf, always keeping more healthy foods up front, and less healthy foods toward the back. "Choose more often" foods include fresh fruits and vegetables; lean meat, poultry and fish; skim or 1 percent milk; low-fat yogurt, margarine, salad dressing and mayonnaise and low-fat frozen foods. "Choose less often" foods include fatty cuts of meat and bacon, breaded and fried foods, whole milk or 2 percent dairy foods, regular salad dressing, sugar-based soft drinks, creamy dips and high-fat frozen foods.

"Making small changes is much more effective than trying to implement a total dietary overhaul all at once," says Dr. Judelson. Ψ

**"Depression loses its power when fresh vision pierces the darkness."**

*~ Peter Sinclair, television personality, radio host & author*



## Financial Tip: Contribute to a Retirement Plan

If your employer has a 401(k) plan and you don't contribute to it, you're walking away from one of the best deals out there. Ask your employer if they have a 401(k) plan (or similar plan), and sign up today. If you're already contributing, try to increase your input. If your employer doesn't offer a retirement plan, consider an IRA. Ψ

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**Be an Advocate**

- Ask questions and know your rights
- Become familiar with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family Medical Leave Act and other state and national provisions; Know how and when to apply them to your situation
- Inform other caregivers of any special conditions or instructions; Always remind dental or medical staff of this information each time you visit
- Document the medical history of your family member and keep this information current

**Be Empowering**

- Focus on what you and your family member *can* do
- Recognize appropriate milestones to celebrate; Look for memorable events and achievements to honor your family member

**Take Care of Yourself**

- Stay healthy for yourself and those you care for
- Work to maintain your personal interests, hobbies and friendships – balance is key
- Set reasonable expectations about caregiving; This may lower stress and make you a more effective caregiver
- Take a break – whether short or long, they can be helpful Ψ

**A Short, Simple Story of Motivation**

At a big steel plant one morning, the day shift showed up and found, chalked in the floor, the message: “Night shift did 3 tons.” When the night shift walked in that evening, they, too, found a chalked message: “Day shift did 3.1 tons.”

And the competition started.



**Portobello Mushrooms with Sundried Tomatoes**

from [www.mealsmatter.org](http://www.mealsmatter.org) (© 2011 Meals Matter)

**Servings:** 4

**Prep time:** less than 15 min

**Cook time:** less than 15 min

**Ingredients:**

- 4 Medium Portobello mushroom caps, cleaned
- 12 Small sundried tomatoes
- 2 tbsp Olive oil
- 2 tbsp Balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese

**Instructions:**

- Place mushroom caps, top side down, in a 9-inch square microwavable baking dish
- Place 3 sundried tomatoes inside each mushroom cap
- Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar; Sprinkle with cheese
- Microwave on high for 4 minutes or until heated through, or bake at 350° in a conventional oven for 10-12 minutes

**Nutrition Information:**

Calories: 153; Total Fat: 9g; Carbohydrates: 15g; Protein: 6.5g; Fiber: 3g