

Arthritis education materials available

The Eau Claire County Department on Aging & Resource Center has been developing a patient education project we would like to share with physicians around the state. The program is designed to provide education to the largest segment (58.8%) of the approximately 42.7 million Americans affected by arthritis and has been well accepted in the senior apartment complexes in Eau Claire County. The program consists of:

- a PowerPoint presentation
- an adaptive equipment demonstration
- a fall prevention component
- a nutrition component

The patient education project is also suitable for caregiving professionals to take into senior centers, meal sites, churches, community organizations, or patient homes for presentation and discussion.

An evaluation survey was designed to provide feedback on the program's impact. Of the 99 individuals who completed and returned the survey, 72% felt it was an excellent program.

The PowerPoint presentation outlines the roles adaptive equipment and nutrition play to slow the progression of arthritis and prevent falls. An educational brochure, which highlights practical ways seniors can achieve their nutritional goals and provides facts about the benefits of adaptive equipment and safety tips to prevent falls in the home, accompanies the presentation.

The adaptive equipment component explains the importance of adaptive equipment, the variety of devices available, strategies on how to use the equipment and resources on where and how to locate what is needed. Several different devices are available for individuals to view and try out for themselves.

Handouts on adapting the home

environment to reduce falls are also available, as well as a home safety checklist.

In the presentation, the food guide pyramid is discussed, emphasizing a well-balanced diet, sources of vitamins C and D and omega-3 fatty acids. Weight loss is encouraged to help reduce stress on the joints.

The presentation and handouts have been shared with Aging Offices throughout Wisconsin and can be made available to health professionals caring for patients with arthritis who may wish to review them and possibly use them in local communities. The materials are available via e-mail at no charge. They can also be found at www.co.eau-claire.wi.us/agingdepartment. For more information, please contact Lisa Wells at 715.839.4750 or lisa.wells@co.eau-claire.wi.us.

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