



# HEALTH CARE ALERT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PROVIDING HEALTH CARE TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL AND/OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS

## Risk Management Corner

# ...Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite!

Many people are familiar with the saying “good night, sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite”; however, not many people know that bed bugs are real! During the late 1990's bed bugs re-emerged all across country as the common pest with which we were once familiar. Although we cannot pinpoint the exact cause of the re-emergence of bed bugs some experts contribute it to:

- 1) *the increase of travel*
- 2) *the lack of familiarity of bed bugs to both public and professional exterminators and*
- 3) *the change in pest control formula to decrease the use of DDT*

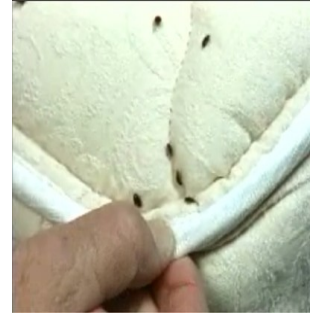
Currently, Pennsylvania has the second highest incidence of bed bugs in the Nation, closely following New York. Sadly, bed bugs present a serious social stigma in which individuals are labeled as unclean or poor because of their exposure to bed bugs. Exposure to bed bugs; however, has nothing to do with cleanliness and/or socio-economic status. Nevertheless, the social stigma attached to exposure to bed bugs can lead to unreported cases and can potentially contribute to psychosocial issues and emotional distress.

### How do you protect yourself from Bed Bugs?

The first thing you can do is to become familiar with bed bug behavior for easy detection. Bed bugs are usually carried into homes unknowingly on clothes, luggage, furniture, bedding and even humans. They like to hide in cracks and crevices including: electrical outlets in walls, behind loose wallpaper, base boards, picture frames, mattresses, headboards and nightstands. They are pretty clever bugs that will hide until the opportune time, around 2-4 AM, when they can come out to feed. In addition, they like to remain in groups and clusters; therefore, you may notice a group of them hiding together someplace.

**Next, take the necessary precautions to prevent bringing them home with you:**

- Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- When traveling, inspect the bed and furniture.
- Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- If you suspect you have come into contact with bed bugs dry your clothes and belongings on high heat for 20 minutes or store in a sealed plastic bag until you can do so.
- Seal cracks and crevices with caulk, even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.



If you have bed bugs, you shouldn't feel ashamed. Anyone can get bed bugs. It is important to notify your landlord, neighbors and anyone else who may be at risk for getting bed bugs. The sooner everyone responds, the more successful everyone will be in getting rid of the pest.

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\*PCHC does not support or advocate for any one company. We share all of our resources to keep you fully informed.



## Special Smiles

In 2000, Dr. Mark Goldstein and Dr. Philip Siegel founded Special Smiles, Ltd as a response to the many special needs patients, both adults and children, who require anesthesia for their dental care. Since that time, Special Smiles has provided caring and comprehensive dental treatment for over 10,000 patients that have difficulty receiving dental treatment in a traditional dental setting.

The dental facility is exclusively dedicated to patients with special needs. Special Smiles' team of dentists, registered nurses, anesthesiologists, dental assistants and patient care coordinators work hard to understand patient challenges.

Special Smiles offers a wide range of dental services, including, but not limited to: oral examinations, dental x-rays, cleanings, scaling and root planing (deep cleaning), fluoride treatments, dental restorations, stainless steel crowns, dental extractions, soft tissue biopsies, gingivectomies and root canal therapy. Special Smiles partners with Southeastern Pennsylvania Oral Surgery and Temple University's graduate periodontal program to provide complex oral surgical and periodontal procedures for patients.



In conjunction with the dental treatment, registered nursing staff can perform adjunct medical services with the appropriate written order from the patient's physician. The Special Smiles team has administered vaccinations and PPD skin tests; performed blood draws for laboratory testing; and conducted 12-lead EKGs for subsequent interpretation by the requesting medical professional.

Special Smiles is conveniently located at the Episcopal Campus of Temple University Hospital, 100 E. Lehigh Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19125. For questions or more information to coordinate services, please contact the office: 215-707-0575 or [www.specialsmilesLtd.com](http://www.specialsmilesLtd.com).

### *Bridging the Gap...*

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) would like to invite individuals who have dual diagnosis and people who know them well to participate in our storytelling project, "*Bridging the Gap...One Story at a Time*". "*Bridging the Gap...*" is a project stemming from the public awareness efforts of the PA Developmental Disabilities Council funded, *Dual Diagnosis Services and Supports Grant*. The mission of this grant is to determine how people with dual diagnosis want to be supported, identify ways the support system could be more responsive, provide a comprehensive review of best practices from existing literature, advocate for increased collaboration between systems that support people with dual diagnosis, educate one and all to improve outcomes, and create public awareness to increase acceptance and understanding.



"*Bridging the Gap...One Story at a Time*" is a project designed for individuals who have intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) as well as mental illness to share their stories in a way that engages people, changes perceptions and connects them to the community. In helping individuals with dual diagnosis to tell their stories, PCHC hopes to reduce disparities by increasing cultural sensitivity, creating public awareness, dispelling societal assumptions, and increasing acceptance of people who have dual diagnosis. As a participant of the "*Bridging the Gap...*" project participants will be able to tell their stories through various methods, including: video recording, audio recording and written interviews.

PCHC would like to sincerely thank all of those who have participated in the Storytelling Project thus far. In July 2010 PCHC collaborated with StoryCorps for the audio recording portion of the project. StoryCorps is a national oral history project whose mission is to "provide Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of our lives." Currently, 10 videos have been captured and 21 people have been interviewed using video recording. PCHC is working hard to create a way to share these wonderful stories with the public and all those who may be interested in listening. It is our aim to encourage all participants to focus on their personal and emotional lives and their experiences surrounding having and/or supporting individuals who cope with dual diagnosis; not simply dates, places and chronologies. We realize that each participant's story is personal and special to them and we are so grateful for everyone's contribution to this very important venture.

Ultimately, it is our goal to make a compelling case about people with dual diagnosis, their struggles, successes and more importantly, their humanness. Each participant will receive a copy of their recording and the opportunity to work with PCHC for any following related initiatives. Currently we are still accepting appointments and would love your support and participation. To schedule storytelling appointments or if you have any questions please contact Monique Shaw, Community Outreach Projects Manager, at 215-546-0300 ext. 3230 or [MShaw@pmhcc.org](mailto:MShaw@pmhcc.org).

## Eating Well as We Age



American society represents a very diverse group of people with many able to talk about their global family history. Some traditions have become lost over time but typically food preparation, cooking, and eating remain very important regardless of varied heritage. It is true to say that as we age into our 70's and 80's, one of the things we want to continue to enjoy is the food we love to eat! Continuing the 'Health Care Alert' series of articles on the Aging Process let's take a brief look at Digestion, Dysphagia and Aging.

### Digestion

- \* Digestion starts with chewing and the production of saliva. The elderly can experience problems due to missing teeth, dentures that don't fit well or are painful. The production of saliva is less efficient in the elderly and can also be affected by medications. Please ensure that the elderly person you know sees the dentist regularly, even if they have full dentures. Gum disease can also cause chewing problems and typically can be treated.
- \* The sense of smell (which helps to initiate saliva production) diminishes with age as does the sensitivity of taste buds. If you witness an elderly person putting large amounts of salt or other condiments onto their cooked food, they are probably just trying to make it taste like it use to taste! You can substitute the added salt for sodium free condiments such as Mrs. Dash.
- \* The stomach also produces less acid to help break food down. If an elderly person eats a large meal in one sitting, they may complain of cramps or bloating. Think of the feeling of eating the Thanksgiving Day turkey every day of the week! It can be helpful to offer smaller meals that have a variety of appealing tastes and textures.



### Dysphagia

Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing problems. Swallowing is a complicated process that involves moving food and liquids from the mouth to the stomach. Nerves and muscles in our lips, tongue, throat, and esophagus (*the tube that connects down to our stomach*) are all involved in eating. There can be a problem at any stage of the swallowing process. If you see any of the following symptoms you should assist the individual to get an evaluation from a Speech Language Pathologist:



- Choking on foods, liquids or medications
- Coughing during or after eating
- Wet, gurgly voice during or after eating or drinking
- Pocketing food on one side of the mouth
- Excessive drooling

The elderly are particularly vulnerable to dysphagia as they are more likely to develop conditions that weaken or damage muscles and nerves used to swallow as they age. If you know of or work with an individual who has any of the following conditions, you need to be alert to the symptoms of dysphagia:

- Having a stroke or injury to the head or spinal cord
- Diseases that affect muscles such as Multiple Sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease or other dementia
- Head and neck tumors
- Side effects of medications including seizure and psychotropic medications

Aging doesn't mean that people need to change their love of eating. They may need to change some habits, make some adjustments, and limit foods that may not "agree" with them. Tuning into their bodies and listening to what they are saying may help avoid unnecessary episodes of discomfort or distress and most important – keep them safe.

# Genetic Testing

## Did you know...

- Many diseases or medical conditions have a genetic component.
- Genetic testing may help you understand how variations (changes) in your DNA may affect your health.
- There are hundreds of genetic conditions known that are associated with intellectual disabilities.



*For more information on genetic testing contact PCHC to receive a copy of our new genetic testing brochure*

## Announcements

### 2011 Special Needs Unit Meeting Dates

January 19, 2011  
April 20, 2011  
July 20, 2011  
October 19, 2011

# Save the date!



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) will be hosting its annual

### Stay Healthy Fair

For individuals, families and provider staff

Date: April 15, 2011  
Time: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Doubletree Hotel/Philadelphia West  
640 West Germantown Pike  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462  
Phone: (610) 834-8300

### PCHC's New Website Trainings

Constipation  
Oral Hygiene  
Hospitalization & Discharge



### Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

123 S. Broad Street ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19109 ♦ 215-546-0300 ♦ fax 215-790-4976  
*PCHC is a core program of PMHCC, Inc.*



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Upcoming  
Regional Nurse  
Network  
Meetings

Please join us quarterly for updates and educational presentations

February 4, 2011  
April 8, 2011  
July 8, 2011  
October 7, 2011  
January 6, 2012