



**NEWS AND
EVENTS**

*Caring Transitions St. Louis Estate Sale scheduled for February, 2008 has been postponed. Log onto www.ctstlouis.com for more details.

When maintenance, health issues or downsizing require you to make appropriate housing decisions, Caring Transitions St. Louis senior move managers can help ease the burden of relocation or downsizing. We understand the fears involved with change, the overwhelming scale of downsizing and the emotion involved. That's why we have built a business to help ease the fear of the unknown.

Read what people are saying about Caring Transitions St. Louis:

"Your impressive-- outstanding Customer Service. Start of sale to end of sale." -Stephen K.

"The best part of the experience was the sharing and the warmth it brought our gathering!" -Nancy D.

To Sign up for our Newsletters, Upcoming Estate Sales, or For More Details and Photos of Upcoming Sales Log onto www.ctstlouis.com



Caring Transitions St. Louis

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 101, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY, 2008

February is National Heart Awareness Month!

With February hosting Valentine's Day, it's only fitting for it to be National Heart Awareness Month!



Once again it reminds us that heart disease is the number one killer among Americans. There are many factors that can lead to heart disease but having your cholesterol and blood pressure checked regularly can make a big difference in maintaining good health.

Statistics also indicate that smokers double their risk of heart disease as compared to non-smokers. Smoking is

also the most preventable risk factor! So if you smoke, quit and remember non-smokers who are exposed to constant smoke have an increased risk.

Improving your cholesterol levels is a very important preventative measure. Your risk for heart disease increases as your total cholesterol increases. A diet low in cholesterol and saturated and trans-fat will help lower cholesterol levels and reduce your risk of heart disease. Regular exercise also helps lower bad cholesterol and raise good cholesterol. Try to increase your intake of foods rich in vitamins and other nutrients, especially antioxidants, which have been proven to lower your risk of heart disease. Eating plant based foods such as fruits,

vegetables, nuts and whole grains is also helpful. In some cases, medication is needed to reach a good cholesterol level.

Controlling high blood pressure is also important. Hypertension affects about 60 million people in the United States alone, which makes it the most common heart disease risk factor. It's also known as the "silent killer." Nearly 1/3 of all adults have systolic blood pressure (the upper number) over 140, and/or a diastolic blood pressure (the lower number) over 90, which is the definition of hypertension. Talking with your doctor about controlling your blood pressure through diet, exercise and weight management is very important.

(See Heart Page 2)

Are You Ready?

After the devastation of the recent hurricanes, let's be reminded that personal emergency readiness needs to be a priority for everyone including older adults and caregivers. Also, with Spring right around the corner, it's not too late to prepare for those St. Louis Springtime storms that can cause massive destruction in a heartbeat.

Gain perspective by learning the risks your community faces. Do you live in an earthquake zone? What about tornados? Is a nuclear power plant or chemical storage complex near you? Do you live near a railroad? What if you had to be evacuated? Educate yourself on the risks that you may face. Know how to do simple things such as turn off your gas and electric and get to know your neighbors. If you have lived in your neighborhood for decades or recently moved to a retirement center, chances are that there already is an emergency plan in place. But also count on yourself for taking the responsibility at a personal level. Emergencies are very disruptive and they come at us in different levels of intensity. That's why you may not think you will ever need those batteries to the flashlight or the flashlight, for that matter, or that portable radio, but when your power goes out, it will be the first thing you're looking for and you will be so grateful you had them handy. Continue to Page 2 to take our Readiness Test...



FAST FACTS:

Did you know?

Your heart beats 101,000 times a day. During your lifetime it will beat about 3 billion times and pump about 400 million litres (800 million pints) of blood.

The muscle that lets your eye blink is the fastest muscle in your body. It allows you to blink 5 times a second. On average, you blink 15 000 times a day. Women blink twice as much as men.

In 1900, a person could expect to live to be 47. Today, the average life expectancy for men and women in developed countries is longer than 70 years.

We actually do not see with our eyes - we see with our brains. The eyes basically are the cameras of the brain. One-quarter of the brain is used to control the eyes.

Men loose about 40 hairs a day. Women loose about 70 hairs a day.

Test your Readiness by Asking and Being Able to Answer These Questions:



- 1) If an evacuation was ordered, what is the recommended exit route from where you live? If you do not drive, what are your transportation options? Where is the nearest Emergency Shelter?
- 2) Do you know where the shut-off valves are for your household utilities? (i.e. gas, electricity and water)? Do you know how to shut them off? Is a special tool needed to shut them off and if so, is it kept right there, ready to use?
- 3) Do you have an emergency contact? Perhaps someone out of area? Phone service may be down, do your loved ones know who your emergency contact is?
- 4) Do you know your neighbors? Neighbors helping neighbors is so important. Do they know you and any special needs you may have?



Another important factor in preparing for an emergency is having your supplies ready. There are two aspects to this. First, you will need your "stay at home" supplies. This would be the necessary supplies should you need to stay in your home until assistance arrives. This could mean several days so assume that you will be without power and unable to go out for food or water. Second, you need to prepare an evacuation bag. These are things that you would need for a safe evacuation. It can be a backpack or travel bag and it's recommended that it's one that rolls and has room for many items.

Consider what other items you may need for your situation. Your goal is to be as prepared as possible for any situation. If you have a car, you will want to keep your gas tank half or three-quarters full. You may have to visit the gas station sooner than you want, but that certainly beats worrying about it when something happens. If you have an animal, make sure you have plenty of supplies on hand for it as well. No one knows your situation better than you so you will need to make a personal emergency response plan. In other words, what special needs do you have and how can they be met in an emergency?

If you live at home and depend on electric power for home dialysis or infusion, you or your caregiver needs to know your options for temporary emergency power, or in the case of home infusion, you may need to discuss the option of a back-up drip system.

Perhaps you live in a retirement community or assisted living facility. You will want to learn about their emergency planning and procedures. How do they plan on keeping you informed and what does the facility expect of you and your fellow residents?

In setting up your personal plan, you do not have to do this alone. You can ask a family member or friend to work through a checklist with you. I'm sure they will even jump at the idea and it will be a good reminder for them as well.

We've all learned from years of experience, the first ingredient in preparing for almost anything is little practical information. It's up to you to set forth your plan and to be prepared. If you would like to download a pre-printed checklist to get you started, go to <http://www.ctstlouis.com/checklistsforms.php>



HEART—Cont.

Staying active is another way to decrease your heart disease risk. Many of us lead such sedentary lives that we exercise so infrequently, if at all. Performing even the mildest to moderate amounts of physical activity can be beneficial in fighting heart disease. Gardening or even walking can lower your risk. But remember to always check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.



And finally it is important to manage stress. Poorly controlled stress and anger can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Practice relaxation techniques such as guided imagery, massage or yoga to diminish your risk. If you suffer diabetes, it is important to keep it under control as well. If not properly controlled, it can lead to significant heart damage or even heart attacks and death.

While there are no guarantees that a heart-healthy lifestyle will keep heart disease away, these changes will certainly improve your health and improve your well-being both physically and mentally. Also you need to keep in mind that whatever you do today can either help, delay or minimize the effects of heart disease or it could worsen it. That's why it is extremely important to always check with your physician before making any changes to your diet or exercise regime.