



Lewy Body Dementia

This disorder shares characteristics with both Alzheimer's disease, in that it causes confusion and Parkinson's disease in that it can result in rigid muscles, slowed movements and tremors or a shuffling walk.

The most striking symptom is its visual hallucinations. Other symptoms are: delusions that may consist of false ideas about another person or situation; cognitive problems including confusion, memory loss and reduced attention spans, and a sleep disorder can cause a person to physically act out their dreams while sleeping.

Risk factors are age, most cases occur after age 60; it is most common in men and if a family member has the disorder, you may have an increased risk of the disease.

Testing and diagnosis usually consist of a neurological exam, mental status exam, lab tests, EEG, MRI or CT scan.

Treatment can be challenging, and there is no cure for Lewy body dementia. Instead, doctors treat the individual symptoms.

Medications may include cholinesterase inhibitors that work by increasing levels of neurotransmitters in the brain that are important for memory, thought and judgment. Parkinson's disease medications that can reduce the muscular symptoms, but they can also cause increased confusion, hallucinations and delusions.

Antipsychotic medications may improve the delusions and hallucinations, but some people with the disease have a dangerous sensitivity to these types of drugs.

People with Lewy body dementia often experience a mixture of emotions-confusion, frustration, anger, fear, uncertainty, grief, and depression.

You can help a person cope by being there to listen, reassuring the person that life can still be enjoyed, providing unconditional love and doing your best to help the person retain dignity and self-respect.

Caregivers must watch closely to make sure that the person with this illness doesn't fall or lose consciousness or react badly to medications and must reassure that person during times of delusions and hallucinations.





Mayo Hospice Program is again offering Community Grief Support Groups for Spring 2009

These are for adults on seven Tuesday afternoons from 1-2:30 p.m. for Spousal Loss. On seven Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. for Death of a Parent/Grandparent and Spousal Loss.

These meetings are open to the public and free of charge to anyone who has lost a significant person in their lives through death prior to January 31, 2009. You must register by April 17 if you plan to attend either session. Call Carol Kuisle at either 507-284-1690 OR 1-800-679-9084.

'Health' Foods Often Higher in Sodium

A new finding from *Consumer Reports* reveals that super-high amounts of sodium are packed into so-called health foods such as "fat free" salad dressings and "heart smart" tomato sauces. Seems salt is a tasty and cheap substitute for high-fat oils. But by raising blood pressure, too much salt can make you more susceptible to heart attack, kidney disease, and stroke. While some salt is good for us, we should step up efforts to avoid overdosing. Instant Jell-O chocolate pudding has nearly four times as much sodium as the cook-and-serve version, and Maple Grove Farms Fat Free Balsamic Vinaigrette has far more sodium than the full-fat kind.



From U.S. News and World Report, provided by Olmsted Co. Public Health Services

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month Please read the article in *The Courier* for April on page 10 by P.J. Thompson entitled "Reaching beyond compliance to commitment through conversion".



Pax Christi Parish Health Fair on Sunday morning April 19th

Conducted by your Health Cabinet. It will be held in the centerspace after all masses. The monthly pancake breakfast by the Men's Club will also be taking place that morning. Join us to gain valuable health information!