COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Veteran’s benefit can help pay for independent or assisted living

If you are an American wartime veteran or surviving spouse of one, you could be entitled to the Veterans Aid and Attendance benefit which is paid in addition to your monthly pension. This benefit is available to individuals who may require assistance with various activities of daily living, including meal preparation or medication monitoring, who live in a full-service retirement community or in assisted living communities, personal care homes, skilled nursing facilities and those who have a need for personal in-home care.

At Independence Hill Retirement Community, residents have seen first-hand what a help this benefit can be. “It had been a blessing to get my mother into Independence Hill Assisted Living three years ago when she decided to no longer live alone,” said the daughter of an Independence Hill resident. “She has improved so much under their care that she was able to move to their independent living retirement community. “Our Veterans Aid and Attendance benefit will follow her and continue to provide her financial help. This was a tremendous help that it allowed them to continue to live independently while giving them the extra help they now need. This is one of the most misunderstood benefits being administered by the VA today. There are veterans and spouses who are told that they do not qualify when, in fact, they can. Many have been referred to Jim Hanna, veterans claims agent, who has helped veterans submit their application and is their advocate throughout the process. If you would like to learn more about this program, Independence Hill is hosting an informational session at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25. Please RSVP to (210) 782-9942 by September 23.

Independence Hill is dedicated to keeping residents informed and as independent as possible. If you are interested in learning more about their application and are their advocate throughout the process. If you would like to learn more about this program, Independence Hill is hosting an informational session at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25. Please RSVP to (210) 782-9942 by September 23.

Independence Hill is dedicated to keeping residents informed and as independent as possible. Anyone who is interested is welcome to come in to take a tour of Independence Hill. They are located at 20490 Huebner Road, San Antonio, TX 78248.

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— Courtesy of Independence Hill Retirement Community

Sufficient vitamin D helps keep bones healthy

By Tiffany Villanueva, Registered Dietitian, Meals on Wheels and Christian Senior Services

In the last few years, there has been quite a buzz about vitamin D and calcium. There have been changes in the requirements of these nutrients, including increased sun exposure. This is contradictory to the common recommendation of using sunblock and protecting the skin from the sun’s harmful rays. Many seniors are at risk for developing a vitamin D deficiency, and it is estimated that 50 percent of older women do not get adequate amounts. A major role of vitamin D is to help with calcium absorption in the intestines, which helps maintain bone density and strength. If we do not have enough vitamin D, calcium is not properly absorbed, which can ultimately lead to osteomalacia, a softening of the bones. Osteomalacia increases the risk for fractures and bone pain, especially as we age.

So, why are seniors prone to vitamin D deficiency? One of the major factors is because they spend little time outside, which leads to minimal sunlight exposure. This is significant because exposure to sunlight actually helps the body create vitamin D. Other factors that lead to deficiency include having dark skin (melanin blocks the rays that help make vitamin D), being obese, and not consuming enough dietary sources that can actually help the body create vitamin D. Other factors that lead to deficiency include having dark skin (melanin blocks the rays that help make vitamin D), being obese, and not consuming enough dietary sources that can actually help the body create vitamin D.

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Most doctors recommend spending six to 15 minutes at least three days a week with some skin exposed (not covered with sunblock). Always monitor your skin so you do not get sunburned. If you are concerned about your vitamin D levels, speak to your physician.

Sources: Garad, R. The Vitamin D Dilemma; Australian Nursing Journal, 2011;38-45; National Institute of Medicine; WebMd. com; The Vitamin D Council.