



Mature Market News

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***SINCE YOU CARE GUIDE: ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE – CAREGIVING CHALLENGES,
FREE TO THE PUBLIC FROM THE METLIFE MATURE MARKET INSTITUTE***
Offers Information and Resources Specific to Families Affected by Alzheimer's

(Westport, CT – Tuesday, October 04, 2005) – The MetLife Mature Market Institute's® latest Since You Care guide, available free to the public, has a wealth of information for those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease. The 27-page booklet contains advice and guidance for the challenges specific to Alzheimer's caregivers and offers explanations, instructions, resources and two helpful checklists, one with safety items and another for identifying and locating needed services and resources. *Since You Care: Alzheimer's Disease – Caregiving Challenges*, was prepared in cooperation with the National Alliance for Caregiving.

“Since advanced age is a primary risk factor for Alzheimer's, the possibility of millions of people developing the disease is a daunting prospect for families and communities,” said Sandra Timmermann, Ed.D., director of the MetLife Mature Market Institute. “Currently, there are an estimated 4.5 million Americans with the disease. Based on Census Bureau estimates for population growth, by 2050 that number could reach 16 million. Sadly, Alzheimer's impacts entire families; for every person with the disease, it is estimated there are one to four caregivers.”

The publication differentiates between Alzheimer's and the changes common to normal aging that do not significantly interfere with a person's ability to function. Alzheimer's is non-reversible and should not be confused with some other causes of dementia that might be brought on by medication or vitamin deficiency, for instance, and may be reversible.

“Alzheimer's caregivers sometimes feel more burdened than those caring for people with other chronic, debilitating diseases,” said Timmermann. “It's important to remember that as a caregiver you need not, nor should you try to, travel this road alone. There are professionals as well as fellow caregivers, informational resources, community services, friends, families and clergy willing to help.”

The guide lists a number of resources, including, books, pamphlets and Internet sites for those needing help. It also points to organizations that might provide assistance and referrals to support groups in one's area.

While each family's situation is unique, there are guidelines that may lead to better care, says the Mature Market Institute. The publication contains information such as the following:

- How to communicate patiently and effectively with an Alzheimer's patient. The guide contains tips on verbal and non-verbal communication that may comfort the patient and ease a caregiver's burden.
- How to promote safety. Caregivers should anticipate potential hazards and modify a loved one's environment to minimize or eliminate these hazards. These may include removing anything around the home, such as clutter that can confuse an Alzheimer's sufferer or adjusting tap water that gets too hot, or lighting that promotes disturbing shadows.
- How to adjust to a person's changed behavior and personality traits. The publication encourages maintaining routines, keeping familiar objects at hand and listening to a family member's anger and frustration with his or her limitations.
- Tips on how to assist a person when he or she can no longer perform Activities of Daily Living, such as eating, bathing and getting from place to place.

The guide also contains information on how to prevent wandering, which is not unusual for Alzheimer's patients. It offers information on causes of wandering and how to proceed if a person does wander. It advocates registering a loved one with a program, i.e. the Alzheimer's Association's Safe Return program, or another national system for locating, identifying and returning individuals who wander and become lost.

The MetLife Mature Market Institute is MetLife's information and policy resource center on issues related to aging, retirement, long-term care and the mature market. The Institute, staffed by gerontologists, provides research, training and education, consultation and information to support MetLife, its corporate customers and business partners.

The National Alliance for Caregiving is a non-profit coalition of 38 national organizations that focus on issues of family caregiving. The Alliance was created to conduct research, do policy analysis, develop national programs and increase public awareness of family caregiving issues.

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For a free copy of MetLife's *Since You Care: Alzheimer's Disease – Caregiving Challenges*, please write to the MetLife Mature Market Institute, 57 Greens Farms Road, Westport, CT 06880, call (203) 221-6580 or e-mail: MatureMarketInstitute@metlife.com. This publication and others in the series can also be accessed at <http://www.maturemarketinstitute.com/>.

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