

## Injury Prevention for Caregivers Webinar

Notes entered in the Chat Box - November 23, 2017

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Risk of injury for caregivers is very high - 4 times that of the rest of the population

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: A soft tissue injury can be related to one incident or chronic - cumulating over years

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: This can often be the case in the caregiver role when care is provided over a period of time

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: OUCH - don't ignore the signs!!

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Assisting, supporting and repositioning another person exposes us to risk

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: The risk can be accelerated by a change in the condition of your care recipient - and the same goes for you

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Become familiar with your big muscle groups

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Examples of awkward positions e.g. assisting in bathing, helping someone get dressed, transferring someone from one place to another

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: For most of us - our shoulders need to be dropped down and aligned with our hips

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Avoid "goosenecking" or craning your neck forward

Maureen: Other examples might include shifting the wheelchair, adjusting someone in the wheelchair,

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Be aware of "static postures" where you are maintaining a body position for a long period of time

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: A good demonstration of how quickly muscles tire is to do a static chair squat against a wall - your thighs will tire very quickly!

Maureen: Even supporting someone while walking

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Combined awkward postures and duration - impacts small muscles

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Repetitive injuries are often upper body injuries to small muscles

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Being aware of these risks is important as they build on each other

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Even though tasks might be different the same muscle group may be involved - increasing the risk of injury

Maureen: So true!

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: If your family member resists - don't insist

Maureen: Alternative for bending at the knees? My arthritis makes this a difficult and treacherous move.

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Try to plan ahead to have your care recipient within reach so you can maintain a neutral posture

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Perhaps sit on a stool and keep your butt behind you and have everything within reach

Maureen: Good tips!

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Take micro breaks - shift to an opposite muscle group to give muscles a break

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Think about things like counter heights - make sure shoulders are in a low, neutral position

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Food preparation - are your knives dull? This could be stressing your wrists unnecessarily. And laundry - make sure you are careful when removing wet laundry from the washing machine - they are often heavier than you think!

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Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Support yourself on an elbow when leaning into the machine – known as the "golfers reach" - they support one arm with their golf club and the opposite leg goes behind them for support.

Maureen: That's a hoot! I did it but never thought about why other than it feels better :-)

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: When carrying groceries - keep bags close to your body

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: When holding your care recipient for a prolonged period - put one foot forward and raise it if possible - like a foot rail in a saloon!!

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Keep returning to a neutral posture

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Bring the person or part of their body you are helping closer to you

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Minimize weight support in addition to leaning forward

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Do some of the dressing while your care recipient is still in bed

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Use long handled tools to help with chores - avoid force and awkward positions

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Make sure to check in - be a stranger to the situation to increase your observation skills

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: If you sense a risk - don't go into override

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Remember the weed whacker and the ladder example

Gabrielle: My mom is in late stage dementia. She is being cared for at home. How do I tell my sister that mom is NOT helping in transfers. She is basically a dead weight.

Gabrielle: We have a hooyer lift and caregivers.

Mavis: Perhaps you can have your sister sit in the hooyer lift to see how it feels

Gabrielle: Wow! Great idea! Wonderful!

Maureen: Me too ... also, lifting legs and putting them down from incline leg supports ... a challenge since mom very sensitive and unable to lift on her own ... they're 'dead weights' too

Family Caregivers of British Columbia: Floor lifts can be used to move limbs individually

Maureen: No ... it's fairly easy in the lift and on the bed, but she needs a change in position in leg position ... requires me being able to maneuver wheelchair legs, insert cushions (she needs extra), while holding the legs and bringing them up and helping mom bend and put down ... this happens "out and about" not just in transfer.

Maureen: I've tried sitting, standing ... can't do the bend at knees

Jim: This has been a great presentation. The tips provided were helpful. I really appreciate it. I have a great rehab team that have been an important source of support.

Gabrielle: At what point does one say mom doesn't need to exercise her legs to be able to stand or to be able to stand?

Mavis: Movement of the legs may be required to avoid contraction

Gabrielle: Mom does have some contracture. Did you say use lift to exercise??

Maureen: She is afraid of the lift and it causes skin tears

Mavis: It is worthwhile looking into equipment that might help and seeing what expertise your health authority might be able to provide to help e.g. Occupational Therapists

Maureen: Great suggestion ... always worth trying out new ideas, thanks

Gabrielle: Amazing! I'm on it! We have OT access

Maureen: Yes, a great presentation ... lots of thoughts and ideas, thanks so much!