

This Weekly Newsletter
is brought to you by

HOOK LAW CENTER
Legal Power for Seniors

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Myths About Alzheimer's Disease

There are many myths about Alzheimer's which many people accept as common knowledge. However, many of these so-called "facts" couldn't be further from the truth. For instance, the Alzheimer's Association lists 8 myths associated with the disease. They are:

Myth #1 - Memory loss is part of the aging process. While some memory lapses happen to all of us, Alzheimer's is a disease in which cells of the brain are affected and eventually cease to function. Alzheimer's patients begin by forgetting how to find their way home from familiar locations and eventually forgetting how to swallow in the final stages of the disease. Alzheimer's is the cause of 70-80% of the cases of dementia, according to Dr. Robert Stern. The other causes of dementia (memory confusion) he says, those due to certain thyroid conditions or vitamin deficiencies are reversible, but Alzheimer's is not. (www.alzheimersreadingroom.com, May 14, 2011.)

Myth #2 - Alzheimer's is not fatal. Alzheimer's is a fatal disease. In the final stages, patients can no longer speak, talk, walk, and even swallow. Its victims cannot remember the steps to perform many physical acts. While some may die of other conditions before the final stages develop, many die of the disease itself.

Myth #3 - Only older people get Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, it is not the case that only older people get Alzheimer's. People in their 30s, 40s, and 50s have been affected, representing about 4% of the people who contract Alzheimer's. This is called younger-onset Alzheimer's.

Myth #4 - Drinking out of aluminum cans or cooking in aluminum pots and pans can lead to Alzheimer's. During the 1960s and 1970s, a popular notion

Myths About Alzheimer's Disease (con't.)

was that trace elements from using aluminum products was a cause of Alzheimer's. This theory has been debunked.

Myth #5 - Aspartame causes memory loss. This is another notion that was in vogue for a time, but it, too, has been disproven. In May of 2006, the FDA said that it had no evidence that artificial sweeteners caused Alzheimer's.

Myth #6 - Flu shots increase the risk of Alzheimer's. The chief proponent of this theory was a doctor in South Carolina whose license has not been suspended. In fact other studies report just the opposite. Older adults who have vaccinations for diphtheria or tetanus, polio, and influenza have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Myth #7 - Silver dental fillings increase the risk of Alzheimer's. Once again, this theory has been discredited. Silver fillings do contain mercury, that in certain forms can be toxic to the brain. However, fillings contain other substances, which together do not pose a threat, according to many public health organizations and the World Health Organization.

Myth #8 - There are treatments available to stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Unfortunately, this statement is not true either. There are certain drugs now on the market which slow the disease for about 6-12 months, but even these don't even work for all who have the disease.

In short, Alzheimer's is an incurable disease at this stage of medical research. Hopefully, this will change in the future and not always be the case. (Information taken from www.alz.org)



Is Training A Dog Important?

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, is it important to train your dog?

Kit Kat: I thought I would answer a few dog questions, since I usually talk about us cats. Yes, it's very important to train a dog, especially large dogs. If you can train your dog to "shake hands" or be "touched" by a human, it will go a long way in making the dog and the person interact in a friendly way. Large dogs can be very threatening to people who are not used to dogs. So here's how you go about it. To teach the dog to be "touched," first start by extending your hand, palm upside down. As soon as the dog approaches the hand, praise him/her and give him/her a treat.

Continue doing this behavior, each time turning the hand more and more until you are actually touching the dog's face, so you are actually petting the dog.

To teach the dog to "shake hands," have him/her sit while you hide a treat in one hand. Then move that hand near the dog's nose, so the dog can get a whiff of the treat. If the dog begins to bat at the treat hand with his/her paw, grab the paw with your free hand, praise him/her, and then reward the dog with a treat. With enough practice, the dog will extend his/her hand, every time he/she is in a sitting position and meets a new person. Once again, this is a way to have positive interaction between humans and their canine friends in a non-threatening way. And that's what we want! Our canine friends just need a little instruction in the finer aspects of social etiquette.

(www.msnbc.com, 8-24-12)

Upcoming Events

■ Hook Law Center is presenting a Veteran's Aid & Attendance Seminar at The Ballentine, 7211 Granby Street, Norfolk, VA 23505 on **December 12, 2012** at **6 p.m.** To r.s.v.p., please call 757-440-7400 or 757-399-7506.

■ Hook Law Center is presenting a seminar on Long-Term Care Planning and Estate Planning at Lake Prince Woods, 100 Anna Goode Way, Suffolk, VA 23435 on **January 25, 2013** at **2 p.m.** To r.s.v.p., please call 757- 923-5500 or 757-399-7506.

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