

Medications and Alzheimer's

Jason Gruszynski, pharmacist and owner of Daly Drug, hopes for a breakthrough with Alzheimer's disease research. But since he spoke to the Alzheimer's Support Group in 2014, little has changed. There aren't a lot of new medicines, but some drug combinations might be beneficial.

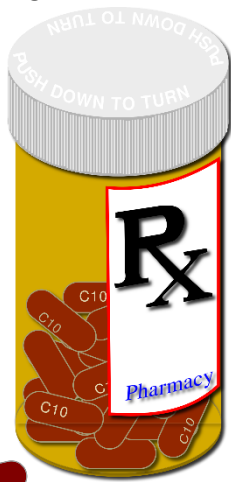
There still is much we don't know about dementia, a general term for loss of memory and other mental abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life, Gruszynski said. There are some medications that have been shown to slow the decline of the disease.

“Alzheimer's is a series of steps down,” Gruszynski said. “We are trying to lengthen those stairs.”

Medications for treatment of Alzheimer's

Exelon is available as a generic, so the cost is lower – about \$140 for a one-month supply. It also is available in a patch (no generic patch yet), which might be good for people who experience a loss of appetite while taking it. The cost is about \$350 for a one-month supply.

Aricept is one of the most common and least expensive drugs for Alzheimer's. It costs about \$15 a month.



Razadyne, also available in a generic, is available as a liquid or it can be mixed in a beverage. It costs about \$150 for a one-month supply.

Namenda recently had a generic form become available, lowering the price from \$300 a month to about \$125 a month.

The most notable change in medications is a new formulation, Namzaric, which combines Aricept and Namenda. Clinical trials suggest that using both Namenda and Aricept have increased results, Gruszynski said. If both drugs are given early in disease onset, they have been shown to slow the decline more than either used singly.

Know the cost

Gruszynski suggests you know your insurance plan coverage for drugs and shop around. Some insurance plans will offer better prices if you use a particular pharmacy.

“Costs have varied more in the past year than in the last 15,” he said.

Gruszynski checked prices for an Alzheimer's drug recently at three local pharmacies and found three different prices.

Drug prices are affected by supply. As more companies make generic versions, the price drops. But if it's no longer profitable to make a generic drug, suppliers drop out until maybe only one remains, and the price goes up. That doesn't explain the difference in prices at pharmacies, though.

“You have to price shop if you're paying cash,” Gruszynski said.

Additional treatments that have shown some evidence of slowing decline include Vitamin E and ACE inhibitors as well as fish oil, which is now being prescribed.

Healthy living

Living a healthy lifestyle is important to delay or prevent the onset of Alzheimer's, Gruszynski said.

- Increase active brain function with new learning, reading, socializing and games
- Eat fruits and vegetables to get antioxidants
- Take multivitamins
- Exercise daily
- Manage stress
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Sleep well
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower cholesterol
- Treat/avoid depression and anxiety (stay positive in attitude)
- Increase Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (fish oil)
- Stop or don't start smoking
- Limit alcohol intake (less than one drink per day for women, two for men)
- Stay friendly and social
- Get immunizations – flu, pneumonia and shingles

For more information, go to www.dalydrug.com or call 715-423-3400.

Support group

The Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group will feature Shelly Anderson, Hilltop activities coordinator, on Nov. 12, and Mike Grotesend of Alpine Medical Supply on Dec. 10. We meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Aging & Disability Resource Center in Centralia Center. Call 715-423-7400.

United Way campaign

Hilltop took part in this year's United Way campaign, including the Community-wide Denim Day. Jessa won the United Way T-shirt. Thanks to all who participated!



Employee spotlight

Brittany Kangas has been with Hilltop since June 2014 and a caregiver since 2012, when she applied for a housekeeping job and was offered a resident assistant job instead. She took it because it was better hours and more money, but the clients clinched it for her.



"I like helping people in general," she said. "Knowing that I helped somebody makes me feel like a better person."

She is inspired by Shannon Hardy, a registered nurse, who encouraged her to take a caregiving position. She told Brittany she "could do this job even if I wasn't in schooling" for it, Brittany said. "I'm still doing it," she added.

You might not know Brittany is a collector. She has been collecting 50-cent tattoos for 14 years. She has more than 62,000 of them. She jokes that she collects them now out of habit, but she admits she likes the cool designs.

Brittany is mom to Marshall James, her 3-year-old son. Someday she'd like to take him to Disneyland – even if he's an adult with a family of his own. She and Marshall's dad, Timothy, have dated for 5 years.

Hilltop held its first-ever hay ride Oct. 20 at Hilltop Estate for residents and their family members. We had perfect weather for an outstanding day.

Thanks to all who attended. Hopefully it is something we can do every year!

To read about it, check out our blog: <http://mystiqueathilltop.blogspot.com>. Watch our video on Facebook or YouTube. Search Hilltop Affiliates.



November: Happy birthday to these residents!

- Lori, Nov. 1
- Ron, Nov. 15
- Frank, Nov. 18
- Carl, Nov. 24



IMAGE COURTESY OF STUART MILES AT
FREEDIGITALPHOTOS.NET

Hilltop Grand Village

Work began in October at the site of Hilltop Grand Village, Hilltop's newest facility. It is located north of Home Depot, off Highway 54. Hilltop Grand Village is aimed at active, independent seniors who don't necessarily need assisted living now but may in the future. It will feature 40 individual apartments and resort-style amenities, including a movie theater and swimming pool along an indoor streetscape. We hope to be open by August for residents.

Follow our progress on our Hilltop Grand Village Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/HilltopGrandVillage>

Try this!

The next time you have a sink full of dishes to wash, instead of filling it with water and adding dish soap, try this instead. Put about a tablespoon of dish soap in a bowl or cup.

Add hot water to make a soapy mix. Fill your sink with hot water and put your dishes in to soak. Dip a cloth

or sponge into your soapy water and wash each dish. You can dip into the soapy water for every dish, which gets them cleaner while using less soap. Rinse your dishes and allow to air dry or towel dry. One bowl of soapy water should do a full load of dishes!



TOP, AFTER THE LAND WAS CLEARED; BOTTOM, THE WOODED LOT. THE IMAGES ARE DATED FROM WHEN THEY WERE TAKEN.