Recognizing The Signs And Symptoms Of Schizophrenia And Seeking Support

(NAPSA)—Imagine that during the holiday season you are busy with the demands of your work, family, and friends. You begin to feel that something is wrong with your world. You think that people around you are not really there, behaving strangely without control and having problems speaking clearly. These are some symptoms of schizophrenia, a chronic and disabling brain disorder that affects about 1.5 million American adults and usually occurs between the late teens and mid-30s. Meet Rebecca Roma, M.D., medical director Community Treatment Team at Mercy Behavioral Health in Pittsburgh, Pa., and Rebecca P., an individual who was diagnosed with schizophrenia during college. Together they discuss the signs and symptoms of the condition, where to seek help and how to start on the path toward recovery.

How does one recognize the signs of schizophrenia?

Dr. Roma: Schizophrenia may occur abruptly and manifest as social withdrawal, deterioration in daily personal care, unusual behavior, outbursts of anger, paranoia, hallucinations or delusions.

Rebecca: When I was 17, I started thinking people were talking about me. I felt sad and became paranoid. By college, I thought people were coming after me. I was unable to turn off unwanted thoughts, making me unmotivated, suspicious and scared.

What can you do if you suspect you or a loved one may have schizophrenia?

Dr. Roma: First, it is important to talk to your doctor or health care provider. There are also local organizations, such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health America, that offer support for both individuals with mental illness and their family members/caregivers.

With support and treatment, schizophrenia can be managed and people living with the illness can lead meaningful lives.

Rebecca: When I first experienced symptoms, I withdrew from family and did not talk about what was going on with me. Over time, I realized my mom was my strongest source of support.

She communicates with my treatment team and attends classes with me at our community mental health center.

In your experience, is recovery possible for someone with schizophrenia?

Dr. Roma: Mental health recovery is an ongoing process, not one single outcome. The experience can vary widely from one person to the next. That’s why recovery plans are individualized and tailored toward each person’s unique needs.

That said, I know individuals with schizophrenia who are living independently and keep steady jobs and others who are living with family, helping with chores and contributing to the household income.

Once diagnosed and on treatment, I recommend that individuals sit down with their treatment team and loved ones to create an action plan for achieving goals.

Medication, including oral and injectable treatments, is the mainstay of treating schizophrenia symptoms. Long-acting injectable antipsychotic therapies (LARTs), which are administered every few weeks to a month depending on the medication, offer patients a choice of how often to take their medication and may help eliminate one less pill a day for their schizophrenia.

There are resources available for those affected by schizophrenia, including support groups, peer-to-peer programs and informational websites, such as www.TreatmentOnOnce.com.

Rebecca: With support and treatment, I have redirected my focus from managing my disease to living life. I now take a long-acting medication and am no longer worried about remembering to take my medication every day, although I do still have to remember to go to my medication appointments.

To others struggling with schizophrenia I would say, you are not alone. Learn more about treatment options for schizophrenia at www.TreatOnceMonthly.com.

Help Your Hands (And Feet) With Hot Water

(Cetaphil)—The use of antibacterial gels during flu season may prevent a cold but can cause dryness and irritation to skin, so try to moisture time after you wash.

Coat With Hot Water

Nothing feels better than a shower after a cold day, but it can actually harm the skin, stripping it of essential oils and leaving it dry. Stick to warm, not cool or lukewarm showers or baths and soak for only 10 minutes or less to avoid damaging the skin.

Choose a hydrating body wash, such as Cetaphil Restoring Body Wash, which uses advanced technologies to help restore the skin barrier function and retain moisture.

Don’t rub—dry with a soft towel.

In New Jewelry Collection

Women Placed At The Center Of The Universe In New Jewellery Collection

(Women Placed At The Center Of The Universe)—Imagine that during a droll season you are buying a gift that will last a lifetime. That’s the idea behind a new collection of diamond jewelry celebrated by more than 2.5 million American adults and usually occurs between the late teens and mid-30s.

(Visit the site to watch patient videos, access a doctor’s visit guide and learn more about different types of long-acting treatment. Visit www.TreatOnceMonthly.com.)

(NAPSA)—For many, cold weather can mean dry, irritated skin. That’s estimated that almost 20 percent of people in the U.S. suffer from severely dry skin or eczema. A general term that refers to skin that is inflamed, swollen and irritated. Red, itchy and irritated skin that doesn’t properly retain moisture is a common symptom of eczema. Fortunately, there are ways to help prevent eczema and treat the condition.

Treat It Gently

It’s important to keep skin hydrated, especially when temperatures cool down, and one of the easiest ways is to choose a rich yet gentle body moisturizer.

“Look for products containing urea and lactic acid, as well as ceramides or ceramide analogues,” says Dr. Joshua Zeichner, Director of Cosmetic & Clinical Research in the Dermatology Department at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in NYC. “Expensive does not always mean better, and you can find an effective moisturizer for as little as $3 for a 16-ounce bottle.”

For example, Cetaphil Restoring Derm Skin Restoring Moisturizer is clinically shown to provide long-lasting hydration by helping repair the skin’s natural barrier function.

Invest In A Humidifier

Dry heat from heaters in your home can wreak havoc on your skin. “If your skin isn’t improving, it might be time to see a dermatologist,” says Dr. Zeichner. A doctor can prescribe anti-inflammatory creams to complement your daily cleansing and moisturizing routine,” says Dr. Zeichner.

Seek Professional Advice

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For more information, visit www.cetaphil.com.

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(NSPF)—Storm window panels from ScreenAgain.com can be an attractive, effective and simple way to reduce energy loss. Plus, this built-to-order in a variety of colors and sizes to suit any home. To calculate your savings, go to www.ScreenAgain.com/winter.

An aid to choosing color for your home is a new online color tool ColorSmart by BEHR. The paints are available exclusively at The Home Depot. Visit www.colorsmartbybehr.com for how-to information, explore design and color guidance and order sample color cards.

A Latron home heating system can raise and lower blinds, turn lights and music on and off, and alert your security provider in an emergency. Another handy bit of technology: a dimmer switch with a delay feature. Learn more at www.latron.com.

Upholstery that carries the gold Upholstered Furniture Action Council hangtag was manufactured using construction criteria designed by GfK. Fred Bacchus of the Upholstery Fire Control Committee of the Upholstered Furniture Action Council hangtag was manufactured using construction criteria designed by GfK. Fred Bacchus of the American Home Furnishings Alliance. For more information, please visit www.findyourfurniture.com.

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Each year, as part of the Voice of Color program, Pittsburgh Paints analyzes the societal trend, color and design and incorporates them into new color palettes. Learn more at www.voiceofcolor.com.