

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Preparing the Home—Safety First

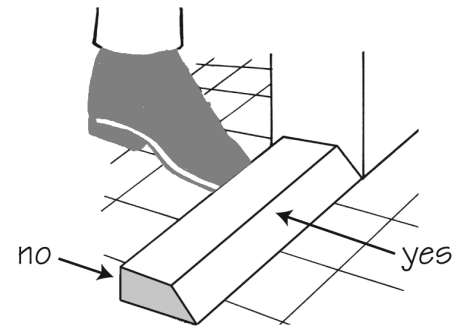
Preparing your home for a senior or a disabled adult is about how to make the home as comfortable and safe as possible. It can be much the same as childproofing your home for a young child who can get hurt. Accidents can happen, but with a little planning they can be prevented. Each room must be gone through, reorganized if needed and made as accident proof as possible. Ask a relative, friend or a home care agency to help see any safety hazards you may have overlooked.

General Safety Tips

Keep the furniture in the same familiar place and make sure it will not move if leaned on. Take out unnecessary furniture and leave space for a walker or wheelchair to get around. Contrasting colors play a big part in seeing well. As much as possible, the color of furniture, toilet seats, counters, etc., should be different from the floor color.

- Use chairs with long armrests to help the person get up and down.
- Add cushioning to sharp corners.
- Use low-pile carpet in solid colors.
- Don't leave anything on the floor that might cause tripping, especially on stairs.**
- Install strong railings.
- Ensure good lighting—inside and out.
- Put night-lights in the rooms used by the person in your care.

- Have an emergency fire escape plan; keep fire escape routes clear; keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen; and put up smoke alarms.



Thresholds should be trip resistant. If possible, they should be beveled and not abrupt.

The Kitchen

The kitchen can be filled with booby traps for the unwary. Dangers include cuts from sharp knives, burns and scalds, and injuries from reaching and bending. To keep handicapped or elderly people who enjoy helping in the kitchen safe, follow the tips below.

Kitchen Safety Tips

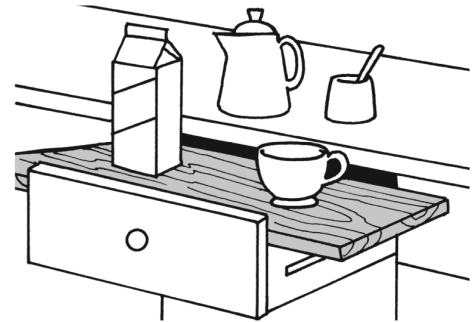
- Use an electric tea kettle.
- Install microwave ovens at countertop height, not over-head, to reduce the chance of spills.
- Set the water-heater temperature below 120°F.
- Use a single-lever faucet that can balance water temperature.
- Provide an area away from the knife drawer and the stove where the person in your care can help prepare food.



- Use a microwave oven whenever possible (but not if a person with a pacemaker is present).
- Ask the gas company to modify your stove to provide a gas odor that is strong enough to alert you if the pilot light goes out.
- If possible, have the range controls on the front of the stove.
- Provide a step stool, never a chair, to reach high shelves.

Kitchen Safety, Comfort and Convenience

- Use adjustable-height chairs with locking casters.
- Install a Lazy Susan® (swivel plate) in corner cabinets.
- Set up cabinets to reduce bending and reaching.
- Put in a storage wall, rather than upper cabinets.
- For easy access, replace drawer knobs with handles.
- Place a wire rack on the counter to reduce back strain from reaching for dishes.
- Adapt one counter for wheelchair access.
- Remove doors under the sink to allow for wheelchair access; cover exposed pipes.
- Create different counter heights by putting in folding or pull-out surfaces.
- If bending is difficult, consider a wall oven.
- Install pullout shelves in cabinets.
- If possible, use a fridge that has the freezer on the bottom.
- Prop the front of the fridge so that the door closes by itself. (If needed, reverse the way the door swings.)



A cutting board placed over a drawer provides an easy-to-reach surface for a person in a wheelchair.

Note - Bedroom Safety

Use a monitor to listen to activity in the room, and—

- ➔ keep a cell phone, flashlight and whistle near the person's bed
- ➔ provide a sturdy chair or table next to the bed for help getting in and out of bed
- ➔ make sure the bed is stable and doesn't move.

Taking Care of Yourself— Happy Feet Prevent Falls

Every year one in three Americans will take a tumble, and risk increases with age.

Healthy feet prevent falls. As we age, the foot's muscle tissue thins, blood circulation decreases, nerves become less sensitive and the cushioning tissues on the soles becomes less springy. Arches start to fall; the foot flattens and spreads.

Older toes tend to curl because of weak muscles. Corns bunions and tender spots are frequent. Because diabetes damages the foot's nerves, diabetics are at particular risk of foot problems.

Sore feet are a major reason for unsteady gait and poor balance, and most elderly people who fell reported that they had chronically aching feet.

Footwear is the single most important factor in foot health. Getting the right size is vital. A good orthopedic shoe specialist and the trained staff at sporting goods stores can help in getting good shoes for older feet.

Source: *Harvard Health Letter*



Inspiration

Eliminating clutter makes room for your true treasures.

Live Life Laughing!

It is a lot of pressure on me not to pressure them.



Memory Care - Avoid Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among people 65 and older. Protect the person in your care by-

- exercising to preserve muscle strength and flexibility
- being extra careful when the person takes medications that cause dizziness or sleepiness
- going to the eye doctor once a year for check-ups

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

Ordering Info

From the publishers of

*Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®*
Caregiver Series

available from...

CareTrust Publications LLC
PO Box 10283, Portland, OR 97296
800-565-1533
or www.comfortofhome.com

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SAFETY TIPS— Outdoor Areas for Alzheimer's Safety

Safe outdoor areas are important, especially for those who are confused and are mobile. Safety features should include—

- ramps for access on ground that is not level or even
- a deck with a sturdy railing
- outside doors locked or alarmed
- a key hidden outside
- enough light to see walkway hazards at night
- nonslip step surfaces in good repair
- stair handrails fastened to their fittings
- step edges marked with reflective paint
- a hedge or fence around the yard and dangerous areas like pools or streams

In addition, unplug or remove power tools.

NEXT ISSUE... UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S BEHAVIOR THE ABC WAY

Caregiver Assistance News

“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

Falls, sprains, strains, and burns are a common source of injuries for older adults. In planning for comfort and safety at home, think ahead. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. If a medication causes dizziness or sleepiness, be *extra* careful when the person in your care is walking.
T F
2. If you are planning to take care of an elderly or disabled person at home, prepare the house with safety in mind.
T F
3. Have an emergency fire escape plan and keep the route clear.
T F
4. Furniture should be kept in the same familiar place and be sturdy so as not to move when leaned on.
T F
5. Outside doors do *not* need to be locked or alarmed for the safety of people who are confused and are mobile.
T F
6. To prevent falls, provide a sturdy chair or table next to the bed for help getting in and out of bed.
T F
7. Sore feet are a major reason for unsteady gait and poor balance, and most elderly people who fell reported that they had chronically aching feet.
T F
8. To prevent scalding, set the hot water thermostat below 120° F.
T F
9. Low-pile carpets in solid colors are *not* the safest for an elderly person.
T F
10. Help avoid falls by picking up clutter from the floor, especially on the stairs.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

New Year

Today, a record 53 million people in the U.S. are providing care for older loved ones. Caregiving brings with it many emotional rewards. But caregiving can be physically and emotionally demanding. Caregivers are stressed as they struggle to balance caregiving tasks with their work and other family responsibilities. They lose sleep worrying about the quality of care they're providing. It's no wonder! Today's family caregivers are asked to perform medical tasks "that would make a nursing student tremble," noted AARP vice president Susan Reinhart.

The pandemic of 2020 has increased caregivers' workload considerably. An October 2020 poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed that family caregivers now are providing 36% more care than a year ago, trying to keep their senior loved ones both safe and socially connected—this on top of working from home, and perhaps supervising their children's school days.

Juggling all these tasks can lead to "caregiver burnout"—a sense of exhaustion when a caregiver feels drained of time and energy, coupled with feelings of anxiety and guilt. Caregiver burnout can lead to serious depression, and raises the caregiver's own risk of heart disease, diabetes, dementia and early death.

If you are a family caregiver, make caring for yourself a top goal. Remember that if you don't take care of yourself, you will be a less effective caregiver for your loved one. So add these items to your list of 2021 New Year's resolutions:

#1 "I will build some 'me time' into my schedule." Caregivers often tell themselves that they don't have time to do things they enjoy, to visit with friends, or just to relax for a while. But respite is vital so you can recharge your emotional batteries.

#2 "I'll get enough exercise and eat a healthy diet." Studies show family caregivers often neglect the basics of a healthy lifestyle. But you endanger your own health if you live on fast food and your lifestyle is busy, yet largely sedentary.

#3 “I’ll keep current with my own healthcare.” Though they might spend a great deal of time managing their loved one’s doctor appointments and medications, caregivers seldom have the same diligence about their own healthcare. When was your last checkup?

#4 “I’ll learn more about my loved one’s health condition and what I can expect in the future.” Uncertainty and fear of the unknown can stress us out. Getting a handle on your loved one’s situation lets you plan ahead, with fewer surprises that could catch you off guard.

#5 “I’ll connect with others who understand.” Many caregivers hesitate to discuss what they’re going through. But it’s so important to express your feelings. If it doesn’t feel safe to share with family and friends, join a caregiver support group—either in person or, more likely these days, online.

#6 “I’ll seek professional counseling.” A counselor can help you sort through your feelings and provide tools for navigating the complicated emotions of family caregiving. Choose a therapist who is familiar with caregiver issues and dynamics.

#7 “I’ll set boundaries.” As a loved one’s care needs increase, family caregivers often find themselves spending more and more time and head space on those needs. This is understandable when a beloved family member needs us! But you may need to say no sometimes.

#8 “I won’t let ‘old business’ dominate.” Often the tables turn as loved ones age, and we’re providing rather than receiving care. Yet who can push our buttons better than Mom or Dad, a sibling, or our spouse? Focus on the tasks at hand. This is an area where your support group or counselor can be of great help.

#9 “I’ll practice self-compassion.” Feelings of guilt are gasoline on the fire of caregiver burnout. Cut yourself some slack. Replace that critical voice inside your head with the same kind of caring empathy you would offer a dear friend.

#10 “I’ll get help!” Maybe you have a wry smile on your face at this point. “Those are lovely resolutions,” you might be saying. “But who has time for that? I’m a family caregiver!” You don’t need to go it alone. It’s time to get help, and there are resources to which you might turn:

Talk to your family. Be open about the many things you do to support your loved one. Other family members might be unaware of the load, especially if they live at a distance. They might be glad to help by spending time with your loved one while you take some well-earned time to yourself, by assisting financially, or by helping you locate support services.

Bring in professional care. During 2020, professional in-home care became an even more attractive solution for supporting the well-being of seniors. Professional in-home caregivers take over many of the typical tasks of family caregivers, such as hygiene care, assistance with managing healthcare appointments and medications, light housekeeping and laundry, meal preparation ... whatever tasks need doing. They provide respite care so you can take a break.

www.rightathome.net

ONLINE CARE PROVIDER TRAINING

A facilitation provided by:

**The National Family Caregiver Support
Program A Program of the:**



****SAVE-THE-DATE****

TWO ONLINE ZOOM SESSIONS

WHEN: WED, JANUARY 20th & 27th 2021

TIME: 2:30 P.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

WHERE: VIA ZOOM

PLEASE CALL TO REGISTER!

(CONTACT INFORMATION PROVIDED BELOW)

!! FREE 4 HOUR TRAINING!!

ENHANCE AND PROMOTE THE “QUALITY OF CARE IN THE HOME”
TO PERSONS LIVING WITH ALZHEIMER’S AND RELATED DEMENTIAS

****Certification of Completion will be Awarded at End of Two Sessions****



MODULE TOPICS:

- The Attitudes and Process of
 - Caring for Someone with Early to Mid-Stage Alzheimer’s
 - Caring for Someone with Mid to Late Stage Alzheimer’s
- Virtual Dementia Tour and Community Resources



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www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

Wednesdays in January (6, 13, 20, 27) **11:00 am Eastern**
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Caregiving During COVID-19: A Series with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD *Whether caregiving for a loved one or trying to care for ourselves during the pandemic – we are all experiencing a series of common emotions. When we don't address these emotions, they can impact upon our physical and mental health. Most of us lack a forum to discuss these feelings and experiences around COVID-19, which this series will provide.*

Thursdays in January (7, 14, 21, 28) **11:00 am Eastern**
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Pride of Caring: A Series for LGBT Caregivers & Professionals with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD *This series discusses the role of sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of identifying resources, services and supports of aging LGBT adults and those who care for them. In addition, policies, planning and hot topics affecting the LGBT community are explored.*

Monday, January 11th **1:00 pm Eastern**
12:00 pm Central
11:00 am Mountain
10:00 am Pacific

Strange Behaviors: Dementia versus Delirium with Dr. Jennifer Arnouville, DO *Learn this subtle differences between behaviors that are due to dementia or delirium. Gain confidence with handling some common behaviors in dementia patients, and with recognizing signs that can instead signify another underlying medical problem.*

*****Sponsored by North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection*****

Tuesday, January 12th **11:00 am Eastern**
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Who cares for the Caregiver with Dr. Nestor Praderio *Caregivers – you find yourself as lead control center or life coordinator for your loved one with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia. You become nurse, cook, physical therapist, accountant, counselor, chauffeur, activity director and so much more. But who takes care of you? Join Nestor H. Praderio, M.D. as he reviews current data, trends and tips for maintaining a healthy role as a Caregiver.*

Tuesday, January 19th **12:00 pm Eastern**
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

What is Memory and How Can I Keep Mine? with Tam Cummings, PhD. *In this session I will explain what memory is, how it functions, and what happens to the brain during dementia. Exercises for keeping your healthy and normally aging brain strong will also be discussed.*

Tuesday, January 26th **12:00 pm Eastern**
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Best way for Dementia Caregivers to handle a loved one's memory loss with Barry Jacobs, PsyD *In this Caregiver Teleconnections by a clinical psychologist and co-author of AARP Meditations for Caregivers, we'll discuss the importance of loosening the grip of our own memories of who our loved ones were and accepting them as they are now to best help them.*



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free



www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

PRESENTS

Caregiving During COVID-19: A Series of Emotions

Presenters

Dr. Elliot Montgomery Sklar
Lucy Barylak, MSW

Whether caregiving for a loved one or trying to care for ourselves during the pandemic – we are all experiencing a series of common emotions. When we don't address these emotions, they can impact upon our physical and mental health. Most of us lack a forum to discuss these feelings and experiences around COVID-19, which this series will provide.

Join us to discuss:

Table with 3 columns: Date, Time, and Topic. Topics include Fear, Anger, Uncertainty, and Sadness, each with a brief description.



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free



ELDER LAW RIGHTS & RESOURCES

A presentation hosted by Texas RioGrande Legal Aid with help from the Area Agency on Aging of the Coastal Bend

Find more info about:

- ✓ Estate planning documents
- ✓ Advance directives
- ✓ Public benefits & rights in nursing homes
- ✓ Scams that you may be susceptible to

**February 18, 2021
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM CST**



Attend by video at: <https://bit.ly/ElderRights>
Video Passcode: TRLA_AAA



To attend by phone, find your local number here:
<https://zoom.us/j/aesLTdTli>
Phone Passcode: 77374234

Meeting ID: 941 7097 6201



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