

# Caregiver Assistance News

*"Caring for You - Caring for Others"*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

[www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org) **Helping You Age Better!**



**SEPTEMBER 2013**

## Fight the Flu - Three Easy Steps

It's flu season again and adults over 65 are particularly vulnerable to the flu and its complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza is a major cause of hospitalization, disability and even death for older people. Every year in the U.S., about 9 out of 10 flu-related deaths occur in adults over age 65. Because the immune system may decline with age, traditional flu vaccines sometimes do not work as well in older adults; therefore, a higher-dose version is also available. The higher dose triggers the body to produce more antibodies against the flu virus. All flu shots for those age 65 and older are covered by Medicare Part B with no copay.

Fight the flu with the following three simple steps:

### **1. Have a Flu Shot.**

A yearly flu vaccine is the first and most important step to protecting not only yourself, but those in your care against flu viruses. Both you and the person in your care should be vaccinated, ideally in later summer or fall before the flu season starts. A yearly vaccine is needed because the flu virus changes year

to year. Each year's vaccine is made to protect against the three most common viruses for that year. The most serious complication of the flu is pneumonia. In addition to age, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, COPD, diabetes, or heart disease are at especially high risk.

### **2. Stop the Spread of Germs.**

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and toss it after use.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand washing is the NUMBER ONE way to reduce spreading germs.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Avoid close contact with sick people.

- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing meds) except to seek medical care or for other necessities. While you are sick, it is important to limit contact



with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

### **3. Use Flu Antivirals if a Doctor Prescribes Them.**

Prescription antivirals like Tamiflu and Flumadine do not prevent or cure the flu, but are sometimes given to make the flu milder and possibly prevent serious complications. They work best if used within 48 hours of first symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever, aches and stuffy/runny nose), but may be given later if the person is very sick or is at high-risk of complications. Antivirals are not a substitute for the flu vaccine.

*Source: National Council on Aging; CDC*

# At the Pharmacy

Always fill prescriptions at the same drugstore because they keep careful records which can help prevent side effects and drug interactions. Choose a pharmacy that uses large, easy-to-open containers with large print labels. The pharmacist can also help you select over-the-counter products.



## Questions to Ask:

- Will the insurance company pay for this drug? What is the highest amount they will pay?
- Is a generic drug available? Will the pharmacist call the doctor for approval?
- What side effects should you look for? When should you call the doctor?
- Can using more than one drug at the same time cause unsafe interactions?
- Will the pharmacy's computer alert the pharmacist about possible drug interactions or side effects before the prescription is filled?
- What are the risks of not taking the medicine? Are there risks with not finishing the entire prescription?
- How dangerous is an overdose?
- Is drinking alcohol or smoking allowed while taking the medication?
- Should it be taken with a meal, or with water or milk?
- Should any specific foods be avoided, such as grapefruit?



## Don't Fall - Be Safe!!

Taking any medication may increase your risk of falling. Medications can make you dizzy or sleepy. Be careful when starting a new medication. Talk to your healthcare provider about potential side effects or interactions of your medications.

# Mark Your Calendar!

## Medicare Check-Up Days Coming Soon!

### Adams County

November 6th at 10:00 am at the Adams County Senior Center in West Union. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

### Brown County

November 7th at 10:00 am at Adams-Brown Community Action in Georgetown. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

### Gallia County

December 5th at the Gallia County Council on Aging (Senior Center) in Gallipolis. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

### Highland County

November 22nd at 10:00 am at the Highland County Senior Center in Hillsboro. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (937) 393-4745.

### Jackson County

November 18th at 9:00 am at Jackson One Stop Tech and Training Center. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (740) 286-4181, extension 343.

### Lawrence County

November 26th at 10:30 am at the Southern Branch Library in South Point. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

### Pike County

October 28th at 10:00 am at Bristol Village in Waverly. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (740) 947-7035.

### Ross County

November 15th at 10:00 am at the Ross County Senior Center in Chillicothe. To schedule a counseling appointment, call (740) 773-3544.

### Scioto County

October 30th at 10:00 am at the Friends Community Center in Portsmouth. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

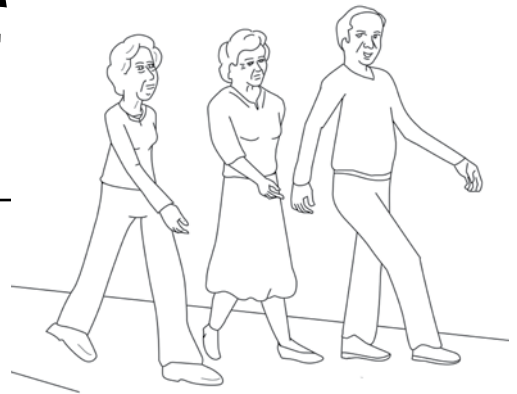
### Vinton County

September 30th at 10:00 am (Educational Presentation) at the Herbert Wescoat Memorial Library in McArthur and December 3rd (Counseling Appointments) at the Vinton County Senior Center in McArthur. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Strength Training Builds Muscles *and* Bones

If you think strength training with weights or resistance bands/machines is only for body builders, think again. Weight training helps to build strong bones, too! As we age, hormonal changes, inactivity, and poor nutrition can lead to weak bones, a condition known as osteoporosis. These changes can start as early as 40, but are most serious in older adults. The most devastating result of weak bones is fractures - more than 2 million every year in the U.S. Hip fractures are the worst for the elderly: six out of ten people with hip fractures will never fully regain their independence.



Exercises and activities that place stress on muscles - and then on bones - trigger the body to pump more calcium into bones, slowing and sometimes even reversing osteoporosis. Weight-bearing aerobic activities, like walking, are a great way to build stronger, healthier bones. Strength training targets bones of the hips, spine, wrists and ribs, which are most vulnerable to fractures. Plus, resistance-type workouts increase strength and stability, which can boost confidence, keep people active, and reduce the chance of falls.

Source: WebMD

# Healthy U Chronic Disease Self-Management Class

Have a chronic disease such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, or other life-long conditions? Want to better manage your conditions and feel healthier? Put life back into your life with Healthy U!

## Coming Soon to....

Vinton County - Starting October 9th

Jackson County - Starting November 4th

*Class size is limited, so call today to register! Ask for Vicki Woyan (ext. 215) or Carla Cox (ext. 284).*



## Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

*These programs will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. You are invited to attend any or all of the programs listed below. Programs are free of charge. No registration required.*

**Scioto County - Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg from 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm**

Remaining Topics: October 8th - Safety Considerations • December 10th - Activities and Interaction

**Gallia County - 2881 SR 160 (HMC Thaler Building) in Gallipolis from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm**

Remaining Topics: November 19th - Safety Considerations • January 28, 2014 - Activities and Interaction



**For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.**



**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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*Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency can also be reached via e-mail at [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*

## **Safety Tips - Medication Safety Tips**

Medical errors hurt 1.5 million people in the U.S. per year. The average hospital patient is subject to at least one medication error per day, and drug errors are responsible for killing more than 7,000 hospitalized patients a year. Poor communication as patients move through the hospital system is responsible for 50 percent of all medication errors.

- Refill prescriptions early so you won't run out.
- If someone will be taking several medications on his/her own, find a pharmacy that will do simplified packaging.
- Take medication in adequate light with eyeglasses on.
- Check expiration dates frequently and discard any medicines that are out-of-date.
- Keep all medicines out of sight and away from Alzheimer's patients, children, and pets. Keep the phone number of the closest poison control center near the phone just in case there is a problem.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or carry a card that lists the medications the person is currently taking. This can save his/her life in an emergency situation.



*Source: Institute of Medicine of the National Academies*