

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 **Helping You Age Better!**



OCTOBER 2019

Toileting in Alzheimer’s Disease

Incontinence usually begins in the late part of the middle stage of Alzheimer’s Disease (AD). It is a symptom of AD that caregivers fear they will not be able to handle. Many learn to take it in stride and find that it is not the “deal breaker” they expected it to be. Knowing how to use the proper products will help you with the discomfort you may feel.

Confusion about how to find the bathroom, inability to get there on time, or a urinary tract infection may be the cause of the problem. Be sure to ask the doctor if there could be a physical cause of the problem, rather than the progression of AD.

Reducing Incontinence Problems

A regular toileting schedule and reading the signals when the person needs to go to the toilet may help the person to continue to use the toilet for a longer time. However, you will probably need to use protection for the bed since the person may sleep through the need to go.

- Always be calm and understanding when accidents occur.
- Wear gloves. This prevents the spread of disease; wash hands before and after assistance.
- If the person cannot use the toilet and cannot learn to use a urinal, commode, or in-bed toileting, incontinence products will be necessary. If the person can move around on their own, do not encourage bed toileting.
- Watch for signs of urinary tract infection (blood in urine, cloudy urine with sediment, etc.).
- Because they may not recognize the need to use the toilet, “suggestions” to go to the bathroom can be very helpful—just a simple reminder after a meal, for example, or early in the morning, or before bedtime.
- If the person is in the early stage of AD, leave a bathroom light on at night so they can find the bathroom easily. If it is in another room, make sure the “pathway” is marked. Marking a path can be done with something simple, such as reflecting tape. A person with middle-stage AD cannot toilet independently. Some caregivers will wake the person at night to take them to the bathroom, while others prefer to use incontinence products. You may need to try different incontinence products before you find the one that works best for the person in your care.



Using a Commode

A portable commode is helpful for a person with limited mobility. The portable commode (with the pail removed) can be used over the toilet seat and as a shower seat.

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Toileting in Alzheimer's Care *(continued from Page 1)*

Using a Portable Commode

1. Gather the portable commode, toilet tissue, a basin, a cup of water, a washcloth or paper towel, soap, and a towel.
2. Wash your hands and put on gloves.
3. Help the person onto the commode.
4. Offer toilet tissue when the person is finished.
5. Pour a cup of warm water on female genitalia.
6. Pat the area dry with a paper towel.
7. Remove the pail from under the seat, empty it, rinse it with clear water, and empty the water into the toilet.
8. Remove your gloves and wash your hands.
9. Offer a washcloth so the person can wash his or her hands.

Using the Bathroom Toilet

If the mobile person is missing the toilet, get a toilet seat in a color that is different from the floor color. This may help them see the toilet better. If the person with AD fails to remember to wipe himself or herself or wash hands, you will have to prompt, help, or do it for them.

Open Enrollment for Medicare Ends December 7th – AAA7 Available for Assistance and Help

Are you a Medicare beneficiary? Are you aware that open enrollment for some Medicare benefits ends December 7th? Open enrollment is the time of the year when changes can be made in the plans and providers you've chosen for your Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and/or Medicare Advantage option. If you wish to make changes, you can only do so between October 15th and December 7th. Open enrollment is also a good time to run drug comparisons to make sure the Medicare Part D plan you are on is still your best option as Medicare Part D plans do change from year to year.

Individuals who receive the Low Income Subsidy (LIS) can change their plans anytime of the year. Even if you are receiving help through LIS, it is a good idea to check your plans to make sure all of your medications will be covered on your current plan for 2020.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is a local resource you can utilize for assistance with the open enrollment process and can be reached by calling 1-800-582-7277. We are also participating in local Medicare Check-Up Days where presentations and counseling appointments are available in some areas across the district. Call our toll-free number to learn more.

To be eligible for Medicare health insurance plans, you must be at least 65, or be on Social Security disability for two years, and be a US resident or legal citizen for at least five years.

Original Medicare, sometimes referred to as Part A and Part B, helps with hospital, doctor and outpatient services. More than likely, a Medicare supplement is needed in order to cover the costs not covered by Part A and Part B. Medicare Advantage, or Part C, combines Part A, B and D in to one plan. During open enrollment, beneficiaries have the opportunity to make changes to these plans that provides better support for their health and well-being. It's a time to change what doesn't work and keep what does.

More information about Medicare plans and options is available at www.medicare.gov.

Locally, the AAA7 is available as a resource to those in its ten-county district who would like assistance with Medicare or open enrollment. Counties covered by the AAA7 include Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. For questions or assistance, call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Stay Connected

Many psychologists suggest feeling connected to others is essential to happiness and well-being. Yet, so many of us, even though we are very busy taking care of children and/or loved ones, can feel “disconnected.” Find one activity to do each week that connects you to a community of your peers.

Enjoying an activity with some of the same people each week creates a wonderful feeling of being a part of something bigger. The key is to make sure that you are speaking with others at the activity, not just sitting quietly in the back of the room. Try a choir group, ballroom dancing, a book club, or a class at a local community college or church.



Memory Care

Sometimes people with dementia touch or expose their genitals in public or try to touch others. Ask yourself what the behavior is telling you. It may be as simple as clothing being too tight or wet, or the person needs to use the bathroom. It may be that they are trying to express affection or longing for physical contact. Try to divert attention. They are likely to quickly forget the attempt.



ATTENTION!!

Reminder if you have not already...



Did You Know....

What you eat and drink can affect the way your medicines work? Go over your full list of medications with your doctor at each visit, but at least once a year.

Become familiar with the medications you take. Ask questions and be sure you understand what each medication does and how it can affect you.

Learn more at the Ohio Department of Aging’s website at www.aging.ohio.gov/medicationsafety





Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

F32-URG, PO Box 500 • 160 Dorsey Drive • Rio Grande, OH 45674-0500

Toll-Free Number: (800) 582-7277 • TTY: 711 (Relay Ohio)

Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

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 trained Resource Specialist 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.

Safety Tips - Fecal Incontinence

Fecal incontinence (FI) is an inability to control bowel movements, which may result in stool leaking. Although it can be embarrassing to discuss in detail, it is crucial to gather as much information as you can to help the person's physician understand the situation. Injury to the nerves that sense stool in the rectum or those that control the anal sphincter can lead to FI. The nerve damage can be caused by childbirth, constant straining during bowel movements, spinal cord injury or stroke. Some diseases, such as diabetes and multiple sclerosis, also can affect these nerves and cause damage that leads to FI.

Keeping a diary of eating and drinking habits, symptoms, and digestive issues can help narrow down possible causes. The doctor may also perform some diagnostic tests, including a colonoscopy, to determine the underlying cause. For those who are caring for a person with FI, it can be difficult to know how to handle and help with the symptoms. For seniors and their caregivers, adequate planning can help decrease the likelihood of accidents and ensure you are prepared in the event one does occur.

Source: Caring for a Loved One with Fecal Incontinence; agingcare.com; Mayo Clinic.