

# 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!**



**AUGUST 2013**

## Keeping Pathogens Away

### High-Tech Help in Killing Germs

In the age-old battle against germs, two high-tech gadgets are your best allies: the microwave and HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate-Arresting) filters.

### **The Kitchen**

The kitchen is the "dirtiest" room in the house! In the kitchen, the worst culprits are the sponges and dishcloths. The damp, dark nooks and crannies of cleaning rags, sponges and scrubbers are perfect places for dangerous viruses and bacteria such as E.coli to grow.

Washing, even in hot water and detergent in the dishwasher, doesn't always kill all these germs. What works: wash the item and while it's still wet, pop it in the microwave on high for two minutes. Your microwave is a quick way to disinfect anything,

from cups used by someone with the flu, to washcloths and towels used in the sick room. (Be sure the item is microwave-safe, the cloth is damp, and the cup has one or two inches of water. Remember to be careful with the hot item.)

### **The Bathroom**

The bathroom is the second "germiest" room in the house - not toilet seats - but doorknobs, faucets and flush handles. Keep these surfaces wiped down regularly with hot soapy water and bleach to cut down the chances of those in your care becoming sick.

### **The Air**

The next best way to protect those you care for from colds, flu and infections is to keep the air around them clean. The simplest way to do this is to encourage everyone to cover their nose and mouth for every cough and sneeze.

Another way to keep the air clean is to use a HEPA filter device, which can be bought for under \$100. Check the capacity of the device you buy and make sure it is big enough for the room you use it in. You can even find HEPA filters for your vacuum cleaner, so you

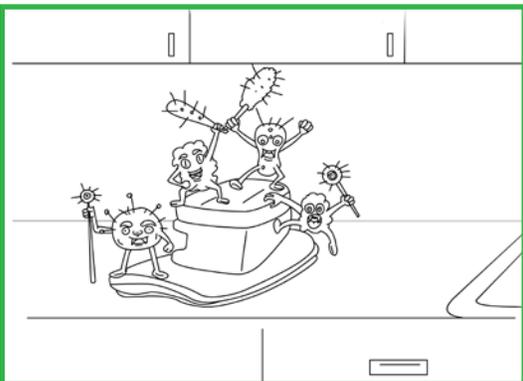
filter the air as you clean! A HEPA filter on the air conditioner will remove almost all pollen, dust, mold and bacteria from air that passes through it. It's perfect for anyone with allergies or breathing problems and an excellent way to prevent airborne infections.

### Low-Tech Help: The Body's Immune System

Two more allies in the fight against germs are your immune system and your hands.

The immune system is the body's way of protecting itself against infection. As we come in contact with bacteria and viruses (some harmless, some bad), our body knows to keep these germs out the next time they come near. To stay healthy, it's important to keep the immune system functioning. Good nutrition, with lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, is an important first step, in addition to having plenty of restful sleep. Fresh air, exercise, and sunshine are also good. Finally, "laughter is the best medicine." Humor, love and happiness help keep the immune system working in peak condition.

*Source: CDC Public Health; drgreene.com*



# Handwashing is Important!

Simple handwashing is the best way for you and those you care for to keep germs away. The most common way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is when we touch something that carries the virus, then touch our face, eyes, nose, or mouth. To minimize the chance of spreading infection, always wash your hands:

- Before and after contact with the person in your care and with other people.
- When returning from a trip outside the house, especially from “high-risk” places like doctor’s offices, public transportation, etc.
- After using the toilet.
- Before preparing medications, doing a procedure, or preparing food.
- Before meals and snacks.



## Good Hand Hygiene in the Hospital Saves Lives

Each year in the United States, hospitalized patients pick up more than a million infections while being treated for something else.

- You can help prevent infections by asking your doctors, nurses and visitors to wash their hands.
- Doctors and nurses encourage you to remind them to wash their hands.

*Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*



## Washing Hands the RIGHT Way

- Use plenty of soap and warm water.
- Rub your hands for at least 30 seconds to produce lots of lather. Do this away from running water so the lather is not washed away.
- Use a nail brush on your nails; keep your nails trimmed.
- Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers, and at least two inches up your wrists.
- Rinse well under running water. Repeat the process.
- Dry your hands on a clean cloth or paper towel.

**Soap and water are the best way to wash, but when these aren't available, a hand sanitizer is a good second-choice.**



## Don't Fall - Be Safe!!

*Some tile and bath cleaning products actually increase slipperiness. Be careful when using such products.*



*“How you do anything, is how you do everything.”*

## Taking Care of Yourself

### A Happy Mouth is a Healthy Mouth

We all know that too much stress can lead to headaches, neck pain and stomach upsets, but did you know that depression and persistent stress can also affect your oral health? Anxiety and worry - feeling like there's never enough time to get things done - can make you skip important oral hygiene routines like regular brushing, flossing and rinsing. Besides inviting cavities, this can also lead to gum disease and mouth sores, which can then affect your overall health. Depressed people tend to crave sweets, which increases the chances for tooth decay. In addition, stress can cause clenching and grinding of teeth, which can wear down enamel. No matter how stressed out you feel, remember that it is important to take care of your oral hygiene, exercise, and eat healthy foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables. Grab an apple and go for a walk. Your mood - and your mouth - will thank you!



Source: WebMD

## Upcoming Alzheimer's Association Workshops

### 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: August 13th - Caregiver/Family Stress and Grief • 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: September 24th - Caregiver/Family Stress and Grief • November 19th - Safety Considerations  
January 28, 2014 - Activities and Interaction

### What Families Need to Know...When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer's or Related Dementia

*This series of educational sessions provides an opportunity for families to learn and share together in an informal setting. Topics are presented by experts in their fields, including physicians, nurses, social workers and attorneys. Session topics include: The Nature and Progression of the Disease, Changes in Communications and Behavior, Legal Planning for Families, and Family Coping Strategies and Community Resources. The two-part series is free of charge, but reservations must be made in advance. Please call the number listed at the bottom in the purple box.*

**Adams** – August 19 and 26 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Adams County Regional Medical Center in Seaman

**Highland** – September 23 and 30 from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm at Highland District Hospital in Hillsboro

**Scioto** – August 14 and 21 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Vern Riffe Community Center in New Boston

**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 - Dog Bites**

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Pets enhance lives; however, even small dogs can be threatening if they're worked up, and any size dog can inflict a painful bite. In the US, nearly 5 million people are attacked by dogs every year. Almost one in five of those who are bitten require medical attention.

Always wash your hands after contact with pets. People with weakened immune systems should not empty litter boxes. If you or the person in your care is bitten by a dog or cat, take care of the wounds properly, as even minor bites can cause infection. See a medical professional promptly if you suffer serious wounds or if you haven't had a tetanus shot in the past five years.

- Apply gentle pressure to stop minor bleeding. Use a clean cloth or sterile gauze pad. If bleeding is serious, or if it won't stop after several minutes of applying pressure, seek medical attention.
- Use warm water and soap to gently cleanse the wound.
- Use a sterile band-aid (for very small cuts) or sterile bandages.
- Apply fresh bandages and antibiotic ointment at least one or two times a day.

Source: WebMD; CDC

