

# 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!**



**OCTOBER 2013**

## October is Fire Safety Month

Older adults are at greater risk of dying in a fire. Poor vision, limited mobility, hearing loss, a reduced sense of smell, medication side effects (drowsiness) and dementia all contribute to the danger of fire for seniors. Caregivers can prevent tragedies by reducing the chance of the person in their care being killed or injured by a fire.

### **The Big Four Fire Starters**

#### **1. Smoking**

Unsafe smoking habits lead the cause of fire deaths among older Americans. Never leave smoking materials unattended. Use wide-lipped "safety ashtrays." Douse ashtrays with water and empty them into a metal container before going to bed. Never smoke in bed or on upholstered furniture. Check all furniture and carpets for fallen cigarettes and ashes before leaving home or going to sleep. Set your cigarette lighter on "low" to prevent burns. Keep all smoking materials out of bedrooms as burning bedclothes can create a fire from which escape is impossible and toxic fumes from the smoke can kill. Never allow smoking near an oxygen tank.

#### **2. Heating Equipment**

Especially dangerous are kerosene

heaters, woodstoves and electric space heaters. Buy only UL approved heaters and use only the manufacturer's recommended fuel for each heater. Do not use electric space heaters in the bathroom or other wet areas. Keep paper and fabric away from heat sources. Once a year, have chimneys, fireplaces, wood stoves and furnaces serviced. Never use a cook stove to heat your home.

#### **3. Cooking**

Cooking is the third leading cause of fire deaths. For older adults, the kitchen can be a dangerous place. Most kitchen fires occur when cooking food is left unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the burner. If there's something in the oven, check it every 15 minutes and use a bell timer to remind you. If you leave the kitchen briefly, carry a spoon or potholder with you to remind you to return. If a fire starts in a pan, place a lid on it and never throw water on a grease fire. Keep flammable liquids, like alcohol and cooking oils, and paper away from the stove. Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen (but not right next to the stove) and learn how to use it. Never cook while wearing robes or other loose fitting garments that



can contact hot surfaces.

#### **4. Faulty Wiring**

Many seniors live in older homes with wiring problems. Regularly inspect extension cords for exposed wires or loose plugs. Unplug them when not in use. If you need to plug in two or three appliances, lamps, etc., have a UL-approved unit that has built-in circuit breakers. If you see or smell smoke or sparks coming from any electrical appliance or outlet, shut off the main breaker and call an electrician at once.

*Source: U.S. Fire Administration;  
Home Safety Council*

*Source: National Council on Aging;  
CDC*

# Home Escape Plan

People with disabilities should be more cautious because of physical limitations and a decreased ability to react in a fire emergency. They may also need the help of a caregiver to practice proper fire safety precautions. Special fire warning devices are available, such as smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light for the deaf and hard of hearing. In case of fire, plan the escape around the person's capabilities.



✓ **Keep three essential items by your bedside:** Your eyeglasses, a whistle, and a telephone. You need your glasses to see how to escape from fire and avoid injury. The whistle lets people know where you are so that you can be rescued and helps you warn others of fire. If you are trapped, the telephone will let you call for help. Remember, your first priority is to get out of the building. Don't stop to call the fire department until you are safely outside.

✓ **Plan your escape route:** Have primary and back-up routes mapped out for each room. Practice getting out. If you have practiced escape routes, your memory and instinct will help you move in the right direction and in the right way.

✓ **Check windows from which escape is planned:** Can you open the window or is it painted or nailed shut? Make sure your exits allow you to exit!

✓ **If you use a wheelchair or walker:** Map out escape routes that are wide enough for you to move through.

✓ **Discuss escape plans** with your family, the building manager or neighbors. Everybody should know where to meet outside the building and what routes everyone is taking.

✓ **If you have impairments** that might make it difficult for you to escape from fire, let your local fire department and other emergency service providers know. Many departments issue special window stickers to mark the bedrooms of people with special needs.

## Alzheimer's Fire Safety

If a person with dementia or Alzheimer's disease lives in the house, take additional fire safety precautions: be sure to keep matches and cigarettes out of reach and install a gas stove shut-off valve or a circuit breaker for an electric stove so the stove cannot be turned on without proper supervision.

# 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

December 3rd at the Vinton County Senior Center in McArthur. To schedule a counseling appointment, call 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## How to Let Go of Anger

Anger is like a storm rising up from the bottom of your consciousness. When you feel it coming, turn your focus to your breath. Breathe in deeply to bring your mind home to your body. Then look at the person triggering this emotion: with mindfulness, you can see that they are unhappy and suffering. You'll feel motivated by a desire to say or do something nice to help the other person suffer less. This means compassionate energy has been born in your heart. When compassion appears, anger is deleted.



Source: From the book "Anger: Wisdom for Cooling the Flames," by Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh (New York: Riverside Books, 2002).

## 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
- Gallia County - Starting October 17th
- Jackson County - Starting November 4th

Class size is limited, so call today to register! Ask for Vicki Woyan (ext. 22215) or Carla Cox (ext. 22284).

## Have Your Annual Flu Shot

It's not just influenza that can kill, but the complications (usually pneumonia) that follow a bad infection. If you're over 65, having an annual flu vaccine greatly reduces your chances of falling ill to the flu or its dangerous complications.



## Don't Fall, Be Safe!



Remove dangerous items such as loose scatter rugs and ensure that staircases and hallways are free of clutter.

## 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: 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 - Your Best Defense: Smoke Detectors**

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*Smoke detectors can double the chance of surviving a fire by providing early warning and time for escape. Don't live without them! For the best protection, install both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms (some models provide dual coverage). Smoke detectors should be installed on every level of your home or apartment building.*

- If you cannot install a detector yourself, ask for help. Many local fire companies will install free detectors for you.
- At a minimum, have a detector immediately outside your sleeping area, either on the ceiling or high on the wall.
- Never disable detectors by removing batteries or disconnecting wires. If the detector goes off from cooking fumes or bathroom steam, it may be in a poor location and needs to be moved.
- Clean detectors periodically to keep them free from dust and dirt and test the batteries.
- Detector batteries should be changed at least twice a year.

