

# 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!**



**JULY 2014**

## **Emergencies - Take Protective Measures**

### **Emergency Planning**

Recovering from an emergency or a natural disaster tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done **today**. In addition to the standard supplies of food, water and first aid kits, consider these additional precautions:

- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- List the type and model numbers of medical devices, like oxygen tanks and wheelchairs.
- Note medications that require refrigeration and have a cooler chest ready.
- If the person in your care is in a wheelchair or has mobility problems, plan for how they will evacuate. Have a manual wheelchair as a back-up for a motorized one.
- Be prepared to bring your own durable medical equipment to an evacuation shelter. Most do not have them.
- For those who are blind or visually impaired, keep an extra cane by the bed and attach a whistle to it.
- For hearing impaired, store hearing aids in a container attached to the nightstand or bedpost so that they can be located quickly.
- Have ID information as well as copies of emergency documents, evacuation plans and an emergency health information card.
- Ask your doctor about stocking up on a week's supply of all prescription medication.
- Make sure everyone knows where the first-aid kit and emergency supplies are located.
- Make a communication plan so that if you are separated from family, you will know how to contact one another.
- Designate a back-up provider in case you cannot reach the person in your care.



In an emergency, Alzheimer's or dementia patients can sense when something is wrong. Remain calm, explain what is happening simply, and give clear directions.

*Source: CDC; FEMA; www.agingcare.com*

## Create an Emergency Supply Kit

An emergency supply kit should contain everything you and the person in your care will need for three days. Make two kits. In one kit, include everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own for a period of time. The other kit should be lightweight and a smaller version that you can take with you. Besides food and water and a basic emergency first aid kit, supplies should include:

- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both; local maps.
- Flashlight with extra batteries and a whistle to signal for help.
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Pet food, extra water and supplies for your pet or service animal.
- Specialized items, like extra wheelchair batteries, hearing aid batteries, oxygen, catheters, medications.

**For more information, read [ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)'s "Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans" or visit the Red Cross website at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).**



## Family Communication Tips

Staying in touch with family and friends during an emergency is important. Name an out-of-state friend or relative as the contact person that everyone gets in touch with. Someone outside of the area of the emergency, power outage or natural disaster will be better able to keep everyone informed as each person "checks in." Be sure all family members know the phone number and program the contact person's phone number into each person's cell phone speed dial list. List the person as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. Emergency personnel will often check ICE listings to reach someone that you know. Tell your family and friends that you've listed them as an emergency contact.

- Text messages can often work around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- Community alert systems will text or e-mail to let you know about weather and emergency conditions.
- Register the person in your care with emergency response providers so that they can be located during disasters.

**To learn more, visit <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>**



## Don't Fall - Be Safe!

The more medications a person takes, the more likely they are to fall. People who take four or more prescription drugs have a greater risk of falling than those who take fewer drugs. Check with a doctor if you think medications are causing dizziness or unsteadiness. Do not change medications on your own.



# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Some Pains You Shouldn't Ignore

Caregivers—it's important to pay attention to pain. Some of these pains need immediate attention:

- **Worst Headache of Your Life.** Although a cold or sinus infection could be the problem, you could have a brain hemorrhage or brain tumor. Do not wait; go to the emergency room.
- **Pain or Discomfort in the Chest, Throat, Jaw, Shoulder, Arm or Abdomen.** This could signal a heart attack or pneumonia.
- **Pain in Lower Back or Between Shoulder Blades.** It could also be caused by high blood pressure, circulation problems, smoking or diabetes.
- **Severe Stomach Pain.** Appendicitis, gallbladder and pancreas problems, stomach ulcers, and intestinal blockages are possible causes that need immediate attention.
- **Calf Pain.** This can be a sign of deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a blood clot in the leg's deep veins. Without fast treatment, the clot could break loose and travel to the lungs, which could be fatal. If you have unusual swelling and pain in your calf muscles, see a doctor immediately.
- **Burning Feet or Legs.** This is a common sign of diabetes.



Source: WebMD

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

*Programs provided by the Alzheimer's Association*

*This program 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. Program is free of charge. No registration required.*

**Gallia County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm**

August 26th - Safety Considerations (Abbyshire Place)

**Jackson County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)**

August 21st - Open Discussion (Four Winds) • September 18th - Activities and Interaction (Jenkins)

October 16th - Advanced Stage Issues and Decisions (Four Winds)

November 20th - Dealing with Holidays (Jenkins) • December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)

January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

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

August 12th - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility

October 14th - How to Make Visits More Meaningful (At Home and Nursing Facility)/Dealing with Holiday Issues

December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

**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.**

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](http://www.aaa7.org) • E-Mail: [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org) • Facebook: [www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7](https://www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7)

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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 - Before a Blackout - Be Prepared**

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Losing electrical power often means losing more than lights: refrigeration, water supplies and cell phones all depend on a power supply. If you are warned of a coming blackout:

- Keep electricity use as low as possible to help power companies avoid rolling blackouts.
- Fill plastic containers with water and freeze them. Leave about an inch of space inside each one, because water expands as it freezes. This ice will help keep food cold during a power outage.
- Most medication that needs refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem. If unsure, check with your physician or pharmacist.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Know where the manual release lever of the electric garage door opener is located and how to operate it. Garage doors are heavy, so you may need help to lift it. Always keep the garage door key with you.

**Source: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)**