

# 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!**



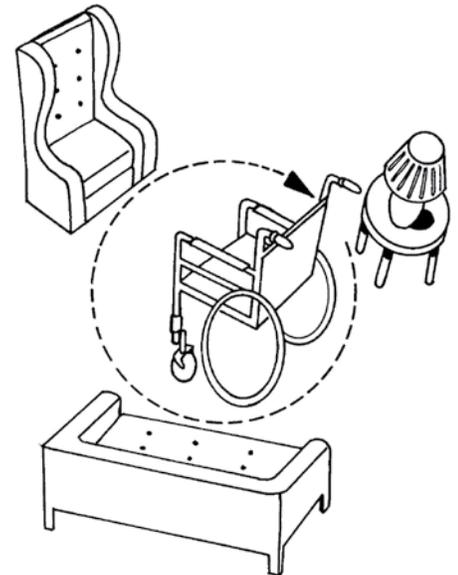
**OCTOBER 2017**

## Coming Home from the Hospital - Prepare the Home

The main concern in any home is safety. Accidents can happen, but with a little planning, falls can be prevented. Take a close look at the home where you will provide care. You may want to ask a relative or friend to look at it with you to make sure you haven't overlooked any safety hazards. You can also rely on a social worker's assessment if you have a care plan.

For the safest home, follow as many of these steps as possible:

- Remove any furniture that is not needed. Clutter is dangerous.
- Place the remaining furniture so that there is enough space for a walker or wheelchair (see diagram below to the right). This will avoid the need for an elderly or disabled person to move around coffee tables and other barriers. Move any low tables that are in the way.
- Once the person in your care has become used to where the furniture is, do not change it.
- Make sure furniture will not move or break if it is leaned on.
- Make sure the armrests of a favorite chair are long enough to help the person get up and down.
- Add cushioning to sharp corners on furniture and avoid using glass tables.
- Make chair seats 20 inches high. (Wood blocks or a wooden platform can be placed under large, heavy furniture to raise it to this level.) The chair must be easy to get out of.
- Have a carpenter install railings in places where a person might need extra support. (Using a carpenter can ensure that railings can bear a person's full weight and will not give way.)
- Place stickers or colored tape on glass doors.
- Have a lamp and automatic night-lights.
- Clear fire-escape routes.
- Provide smoke alarms on every floor and inside every bedroom (see your local laws on requirements).
- Place a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, but make sure it is the correct one for household fires.
- Think about using monitors.
- Place nonskid tape on the edges of stairs (and consider painting the edge of the first and last step a different color from the floor).



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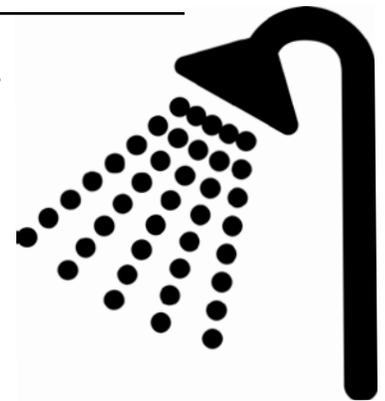
## Coming Home from the Hospital...continued from Page 1

- Remove area throw rugs - even using backing tape is not a guarantee of safety.
- It is easier to walk on thin-pile carpet than on thick-pile. Avoid busy patterns.
- Remove all hazards that might lead to tripping.
- Keep electrical and telephone cords secured and out of the way.
- Adjust rapidly closing doors.
- Place protective screens on fireplaces.
- Cover exposed hot-water pipes.
- Provide enough no-glare lighting—indirect is best.
- Place light switches next to room entrances so the lights can be turned on before entering a room. Consider “clap-on” lamps beside the bed.

## Bathroom Safety

Many accidents happen in bathrooms, so it is important to do a safety check.

- Cover all sharp edges with rubber cushioning.
- Put lights in the medicine cabinets so that mistakes are not made when taking medications.
- Remove locks on bathroom doors.
- Use non-skid safety strips or a non-slip bath mat in the tub or shower.
- Think about putting a grab bar on the edge of the vanity. (Do not use a towel bar.)
- Install grab bars in showers.
- Remove glass shower doors or replace them with unbreakable plastic or tempered safety glass.
- Place a bath and shower seat in the tub or shower.
- Use only electrical appliances with a ground fault interrupted (GFI) feature.
- Set the hot water thermostat below 120° F.
- Use faucets that mix hot and cold water, or paint hot water knobs/faucets red.
- Install toilet guard-rails or provide a portable toilet seat with built-in rails.



## Hospital 2 Home Program

If you have been recently discharged from the hospital and need help with short-term services such as personal care or home-delivered meals, the AAA7's **Hospital 2 Home Program** might be able to help! To be eligible, you must be over age 60 and not on Medicaid. Call Donna Hurt at 1-800-582-7277, extension 21123 to learn more or to find out if you may be eligible.



## Upcoming Wellness Programs Through the AAA7!

Starting November 8th - Diabetes Self-Management in Gallia County

Starting November 8th - Diabetes Self-Management in Scioto County

Starting November 13th - Matter of Balance Falls Management in Gallia County

Starting November 14th - Chronic Pain Self-Management in Ross County

**Classes are available at no cost for individuals age 60 and over.**

**Call us at 1-800-582-7277 to register or to learn more about upcoming classes coming soon to your county or community in 2018!**



# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## When You Doubt the Time is Right for Discharge

According to federal law, a hospital must release patients in a reasonable manner for safety or else must keep them in the hospital. Letting a patient leave the hospital is not wise if the person has constant fever, wounds, requires injections, has infection or pain that cannot be controlled, is confused or disoriented (no sense of time or place), or is unable to take food or liquids by mouth. In some cases; however, it may be better for the person to be released because the noise and risk of catching other diseases may make it more difficult to recover. If you plan to appeal a discharge, understand the rules of Medicare, Medicaid, the HMO, or the person's insurance plan. Always request a discharge plan with clear instructions in writing because this is your road map of care.



## 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 2018.

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.

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](http://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.



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

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## **Safety Tips - *Coming Home from the Hospital*** —————

- Assess the person's condition and needs.
- Become part of the healthcare team (doctor, nurse, therapists) so that you can learn how to provide care.
- Get complete written instructions from the doctor. If there is anything you don't understand, **ASK QUESTIONS.**
- Develop a plan of care with the healthcare provider.
- Meet with the hospital's social worker or discharge planner to determine home care benefits.
- Understand in-home assistance options and arrange for in-home help.
- Arrange physical, occupational and speech therapy as needed.
- Find out if medicine is provided by the hospital to take home. If not, you will need to have prescriptions filled before you take the person home.
- Buy needed supplies; rent, borrow or buy equipment such as wheelchairs, crutches and walkers.

