

# 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 2018**

## **Elder Abuse and Neglect - Alcohol Issues**

Most seniors never report abuse because they're too scared or too ashamed, especially when the abuser is a family member or caregiver. The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that only a small fraction of cases are reported. If abuse happens to someone in your care, contact your local law enforcement agency to make a report. They will decide what steps to take.



Neglect is defined as providing inadequate food, water, clothing, shelter, or help with personal hygiene and health care. (When medically and legally sanctioned, the withholding of nutrition and hydration at the end of life or when a person is in hospice care is not defined as neglect.)

People with dementia are especially vulnerable to mistreatment. Understanding dementia, knowing how best to communicate with a person with dementia, and having adequate support for yourself can go a long way toward preventing these very upsetting situations.

### **Signs of Elder Abuse**

Knowing the signs and symptoms of abuse can help you determine if there is a problem. Signs and symptoms may include:

- Physical injury—bruises, cuts, burns or rope marks, broken bones or sprains that can't be explained.
- Emotional abuse—feelings of helplessness, a hesitation to talk openly, fear, withdrawal, depression or agitation.
- Lack of physical care—malnourishment, poor hygiene, bedsores, soiled bedding, unmet medical needs.
- Unusual behaviors—changes in the person's behavior or emotional state, such as withdrawal, fear, anxiety or apathy.
- Changes in living arrangements without notifying anyone.
- Unexplained changes such as the appearance of previously uninvolved relatives or newly met strangers moving in.
- Financial changes—missing money or valuables, unexplained financial transactions, unpaid bills despite available funds, and sudden transfer of assets.

*continued on Page 2*

## Elder Abuse and Alcohol Issues...continued from Page 1

### Alcohol Issues

Caregivers can be especially vulnerable to problems involving alcohol in two ways. They themselves can drink or take prescription drugs to ease the stress and pain of working overtime to care for a loved one or client. Second, caregivers are naturals at taking care of someone else, and can find themselves involved with a person who has alcohol dependence and needs someone to care for him or her.

Alcoholism is a disease that includes the following four symptoms:

- Craving—A strong need, or urge, to drink.
- Loss of control—Not being able to stop drinking once drinking has begun.
- Physical dependence—Withdrawal symptoms, such as nausea, sweating, shakiness, and anxiety after stopping drinking.
- Tolerance—The need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to get “high.”

### What is a Safe Level of Drinking?

For most adults, moderate alcohol use is up to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women and older adults. (One drink equals one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.) The beer or two you could drink without consequence in your 30s or 40s has more impact in your 60s or 70s.

Certain people should not drink at all; however, including:

- Women who are pregnant or trying to become pregnant.
- People who plan to drive or engage in other activities that require alertness and skill (such as using high-speed machinery).
- People taking certain over-the-counter or prescription medications.
- People with medical conditions that can be made worse by drinking.
- Recovering alcoholics.
- People younger than age 21.

There are many national and local resources that can help. The National Drug and Alcohol Treatment Referral Routing Service provides a hotline, 800-662-HELP, offering various resource information. Through this service, you can speak directly to a representative concerning substance abuse treatment, request printed material on alcohol or other drugs, or obtain substance abuse treatment referral information in your State.

### Memory Care

Individuals with moderate dementia may not remember how much they drank and may inadvertently partake in heavy drinking without even realizing it.



# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Dealing with Critical People

We are wired to go immediately into defensive mode when criticized. People criticize us for the same reason we criticize them. They may feel badly about themselves and reflexively get judgmental or lash out. Take time to genuinely consider the other person's point of view. We can learn to listen differently, to ask questions, to apologize for the part we play, and define how we see things differently.

Tips to help you defuse a fight when an angry person approaches you:

1. Recognize your defensiveness. Catch yourself when you are focusing on the inaccuracies and exaggerations.
2. Breathe. Calm yourself with slow, deep breaths.
3. Listen only to understand. Do not interrupt, correct facts, or bring up your own criticisms.
4. Apologize for your part. It will help shift the exchange out of combat into collaboration. Save your thoughts about their part until later.
5. Let the offended party know he or she has been heard and that you will continue to think about the conversation.
6. Draw the line at insults. Exit from rudeness while offering the possibility of discussing the issue again.

*Source: "Why Won't You Apologize?: Healing Big Betrayals and Everyday Hurts" by Harriet Lerner, PhD.*



## Medicare Open Enrollment Ends December 7th

*The AAA7 is available for assistance and help!*

During Open Enrollment, you can:

- Make changes to the plans and providers you have chosen for your Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and/or Medicare Advantage option.
- Run drug comparisons to make sure the Medicare Part D plan you are on is still your best option.

For some, these changes can only be made during Open Enrollment time (October 15th - December 7th).



**Call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, ext. 250 for more information or assistance!**



**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)

---

*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](mailto:info@aaa7.org).*

## **Safety Tips - Mixing**

Alcohol-drug interactions are dangerous. Because alcohol and many medications are processed by the liver, this can enhance the effects of alcohol or the medications. Some examples are:

- Heartburn drugs like Zantac interfere with the metabolism of alcohol and raise blood-alcohol levels.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol), when combined with alcohol, can damage the liver.
- Mixing alcohol with blood thinners like Coumadin can cause dangerous bleeding.
- Taking alcohol with some pain medications and anti-anxiety drugs can make a person overly sleepy, more likely to have heart problems, and, most important, more likely to overdose.
- Long-term alcohol use can raise blood pressure.
- Alcohol tends to irritate the stomach.

If you're not sure if a medication can be combined with alcohol, avoid any alcohol consumption until your doctor or pharmacist has told you that it's safe to mix the two.

*Source: CDC; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*

