

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 2022

High Blood Pressure - Falls

Falls are serious at any age, but especially for older people who are more likely to break a bone when they fall. Falls are the most common cause of nursing home placement. The risk of falling increases with age. Keep in mind, falls and accidents seldom “just happen.”

Medicines that lower blood pressure can cause balance problems and dizziness, leading to falls and injuries. High blood pressure affects many older adults, whose bones tend to be weaker, and for whom a fall injury—such as a broken bone—can have serious health consequences.

High blood pressure (140/90 mmHg or higher) is referred to as “the silent killer” because it usually has no specific symptoms and no early warning signs. Both you and the senior in your care should have blood pressure checked regularly.

Researchers studied whether there was any link between the number of people taking blood pressure drugs and the number of people who had serious falls. Compared with people not taking blood pressure drugs,

those taking the drugs were more likely to have a serious fall. But remember, you or the person in your care should NEVER change medications without the doctor’s advice.



Regular exercise as well as regular eye and physical exams may help reduce the risk of falling. Getting rid of tripping hazards in the home will also help. Getting enough calcium and vitamin D reduces the chances of breaking a bone if a fall does occur. If the person in your care has osteoporosis, they are more likely to break a bone if they fall. Osteoporosis is called the “silent disease” because bones become weak with no symptoms. People often find out they have it when a strain, bump, fall or even a cough causes a bone to break. Suggest the person in your care get tested.

Preventing Falls

To reduce the risk of falls:

- Use a cane or walker, if needed.
- Wear low-heeled rubber soled shoes that don’t slip, and do not walk in socks, stockings or slippers.
- Walk on grass when sidewalks are slick.
- Put salt or kitty litter on icy sidewalks.
- Keep floors free of clutter.
- Be sure rugs have skid-proof backs.
- Stairs should be well lit with hand rails on both sides.
- Put grab bars on bathroom walls near tub, shower and toilet.
- Use a non-skid bath mat in the shower or tub.
- Keep a flashlight next to the bed.
- Keep rooms well lit.

Fainting

Fainting can be caused by—

- A heart attack and a change in blood pressure.
- Medications
- Low blood sugar and standing up quickly.
- Straining to have a bowel movement.
- Dehydration



Sometimes, fainting can be prevented:

- Ask the doctor if medications that do not cause fainting can be prescribed.
- Monitor blood sugar levels.
- Monitor blood pressure.
- Avoid constipation.
- Do not let the person stand up or sit up too rapidly.

If a fainting spell occurs:

1. Do not try to place the person in a sitting position. Instead, immediately lay the person down flat.
2. Check the person's airway, breathing and pulse.
3. Turn the person on their side.
4. Elevate the legs.
5. Cover the person with a blanket if the room or floor is cold.
6. Do not give fluids.
7. Call 911 if the person is having difficulty breathing or is not breathing or not responding to your voice and touch.
8. If not breathing, be prepared to give Rescue Breathing and start CPR as instructed in CPR class.

Source: The Comfort of Home for Chronic Heart Failure: A Guide for Caregiver

NOTE – Ladies, Don't Delay in Going to the Hospital

One of the reasons **women die more often than men following a heart attack** is that women wait longer to go to the hospital. More heart muscle has already died by the time they receive treatment.

Source: Strong Women, Strong Hearts by Miriam E. Nelson, PhD.; Penguin Group

Our Resource Center is OPEN and available to answer your questions about home and community-based resources in your community!

1-800-582-7277 - info@aaa7.org



Taking Care of Yourself

A Bad Marriage Can Lead to a Broken Heart

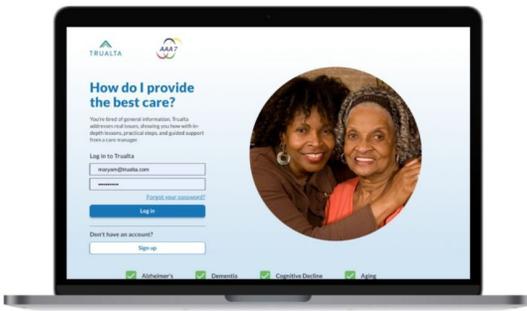
A study of married couples in their 70s and 80s shows that older couples in an unhappy marriage have a higher risk of heart disease. Negative marriage qualities—such as having a critical spouse—have a bigger effect on heart health than positive marital qualities. The study concluded that being in an unhappy marriage caused stress, which can be harmful to cardiovascular health. The study emphasizes the need for marriage counseling as marriages grow older, not just in their early stages.

Source: *theglobeandmail.com*



NOTE - Dizziness can mean different things—balance problems, feeling faint, light-headed, weak, or unsteady. Some causes are minor problems, some are serious and even life-threatening. If you feel dizzy regularly and you do not know why you are dizzy, you should see your doctor to get it checked out

Trualta helps families learn skills to manage care at home, provided for free by AAA7



- You can register today to access an **interactive eLearning environment**
- Short, quick lessons created by experts in aging
- Easy to use for all ages, completely private and **accessible 24/7**
- **No app required**, view on any browser, laptop, phone or tablet

The AAA7 is excited to offer this interactive opportunity to caregivers to support them in their caregiving role at no charge!

Sign up today!

aaa7.trualta.com



Memory Care Falls

About one in every four older adult falls at least once a year, and it's even more common for people who have Alzheimer's disease. The main thing to watch for is any sign that the senior's condition is worse after a fall.

Safety Tips - Water Therapy

Water therapy is a time-tested form of healing. It is also a safe way for a senior or a person with a disability to exercise because there is no danger of falling. Floating in water allows easy movement and little strain on joints and muscles.



Using a kickboard or simply walking in place in water may produce aerobic benefit. Water also resists movement, so it produces increased heart rate in less time. Water can also be a good place to exercise for those with balance problems.

Talk to a physical therapist about whether a water aerobics class might be appropriate for the person in your care. YMCAs often offer water aerobics classes for people of all abilities.

Some content in this publication is excerpted from The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series. It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.



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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 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.