

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!**



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Practical Aids for Living

Many people have some physical limitations, whether these involve moving, seeing, hearing, communicating or using everyday tools like knives, forks, spoons, toothbrushes or telephones. Solutions exist for overcoming these limitations.

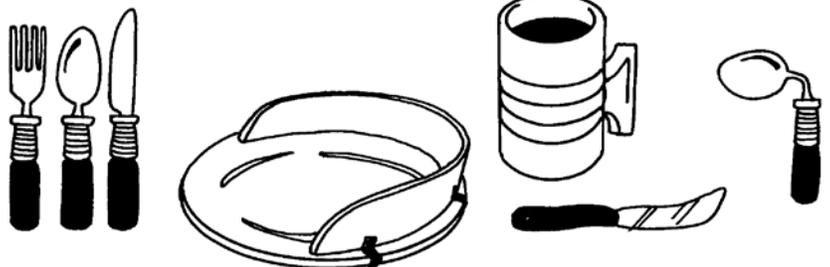
It is important to assess medical, social and environmental factors to make a good decision on what equipment you need. Before buying any equipment or signing any contract for rental, consult your doctor, physical or occupational therapist, or nurse. Salespeople may not have the training necessary to assist you in making a decision about what you need. Occupational therapists can consult on low-cost substitutes for expensive equipment.

With appropriate doctor's orders and documentation, Medicare or private insurance covers some equipment. For individuals covered by Medicare only (or Medicare and private insurance), you should contact your insurance carrier to check if the equipment is covered, then follow their procedures for pre-authorization.

The following are a few of the assistive devices that can make life easier.

Eating Aids

- Spoons that swivel for those who have trouble with wrist movement.
- Foam that can be fit over utensils to increase the gripping surface so that they can be lifted more easily.
- Plate guards or dishes with high sides that make it easier to scoop food onto a spoon.
- Rocker knives that can cut food with a rocking motion.
- Food-warming dishes for slow eaters.
- Mugs with two handles, a cover, a spout, and a suction base.

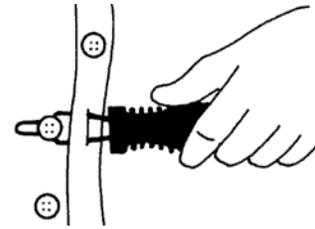


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Dressing Aids

- Buttonhooks that make buttoning clothes easy.
- Dressing sticks that make it possible to dress without bending.
- Long-handled shoehorns so a person doesn't have to bend over when putting on shoes.
- Elastic laces for shoes to allow slip-on.



Devices for Summoning Help

- Touch-tone phones with speed dials.
- Medical security response systems.
- Beepers for the caregiver.



How to Pay for Medical Equipment

If you need assistance in paying for medical equipment:

- Ask the doctor to write a prescription for a home evaluation (assessment), including an evaluation of needed equipment.
- If you are going through county services for in-home support, ask your assessment social worker what recommended medical equipment can be paid for. You might have a waiver.
- Find out if the equipment is partly or completely covered by private health insurance with home care benefits.
- Check state retirement and union programs.

To find a supplier who is enrolled in the Medicare program, visit www.medicare.gov and select "Find Suppliers of Medical Equipment and Supplies." Call (800) MEDICARE (800-633-4227) for information. TTY (877) 486-2048.

Flu Season - Why Get Your Flu Shot?

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Between 80% and 90% of flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older. "Flu season" in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Mood Booster - Make a Date

Caregivers are some of the busiest people in the world. By some estimates, the average caregiver day is 18 hours long. No wonder collapsing in front of the TV is the easiest thing to do with a free moment. But watching TV can actually cause more stress and depression.

Instead, make a date with yourself to explore a local park, wander through a thrift shop, visit a museum, sit in a coffee shop to read a book, or simply listen to music. We don't need to wait for a friend for a date.



Be Wary of Scams *Faulty Equipment?*

If you think there is something wrong with the equipment you have bought and you want to find out if it qualifies as a "lemon," call the attorney general's office in your state. They may be able to help you in getting a replacement or a refund.

Don't Fall - Be Safe!

Choose a cane that has a wrist strap that can also be used to hang on a chair or bedpost, or select a cane with a hooked handle grip that easily hangs from counters or furniture.



"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." - Charles Darwin

Community Wellness Classes

brought to you by the Area Agency on Aging District 7

**Chronic Disease Self-Management • Diabetes Self-Management
A Matter of Balance Falls Prevention • Tools for Caregivers**

Classes available throughout our ten-county district in 2016. Contact us to learn more about these FREE classes and when we will be in your area!

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





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Safety Tips - Alert Systems

Alert systems are a good idea: at the push of a button, the system will notify a friend, caregiver, or neighbor that you need help, or call 911 or your doctor. Before shopping for an alert system, make a list of the protection features you need. There are many products on the market, so it can be difficult to choose one that meets the needs of the person in your care—and is still affordable. Be wary of monthly fees or long-term contracts associated with some alert systems. Each of these products offers different features, such as range of service, medication dispensers, GPS tracking, or fall detection. See an alert system comparison at: <http://medical-alert-systems-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Features to look for include 24/7 help at the push of a button, no start-up costs, no cancellation fees, no long-term contracts, and low monthly costs. A system that is easy to install (for example, by plugging it into a phone line or wall receptacle using a power adapter) is a bonus. Look for free shipping, online discounts, and customer support.

