



**NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

Release Date: Monday, April 22, 2024

Contact: Jenni Lewis, Communications

1 Acy Avenue, Jackson, OH 45640

Phone: 1.800.582.7277, ext. 224

E-Mail: [jlewis@aaa7.org](mailto:jlewis@aaa7.org)

Website: [www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org)

---

**Spring Has Sprung!**

**by Debbie Gulley, AAA7 Interim Executive Director**

**April 2024 Monthly Column**



Spring has sprung! And what a welcome change to feel the warmer weather, see the sun shining, hear the birds chirping, and smell the wonderful flowers in bloom...and usually, with the warmer weather, comes the “spring cleaning” routine.

It’s always important to not only take care of the cleaning side of this yearly chore, but especially for seniors, it’s important to take this time to check other items that are also very important. The “spring cleaning” topic is very timely and a great opportunity to take stock of the overall safety of your loved one’s home. Below are some important items you should check at least bi-annually to help your older or disabled loved one maintain their independence and safety:

- **Take stock of the medicine cabinet.** Check all items for expiration dates. Are the medications stored in their own containers? Are they stored in a cool, dry place? Properly discard any unused medications. The FDA has more information regarding medication disposal online at <https://www.fda.gov/media/74164/download>
- **Replace the batteries in all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.** Run a test to ensure they’re working.
- **Check to make sure the home has a fire extinguisher that has been inspected within the past year.** Offer a brief instruction on using the device. Even if you think your loved one might not remember, it’s wise to keep a fire extinguisher in an obvious location easily accessible to friends, relatives or neighbors.
- **Clean up clutter.** Clutter increases the risk for falls, fire and other problems such as insects or rodents. Remove unnecessary furniture that obstructs the traffic flow, organize cabinets so that the most frequently used items are easily accessible, and throw away any old items from the pantry or refrigerator.
- **Destroy old financial and medical records carefully.** According to the Federal Trade Commission, destroying documents with your personal information reduces the likelihood of becoming an identify theft victim. What should you keep and what should you shred? The FTC has a list of items that you should shred and those you should keep (such as birth certificates, social security cards, tax returns, etc.). For more information, go to <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2015/05/pack-rats-guide-shredding>
- **Create an emergency plan.** Set the speed dial on the phone for emergency contacts. Appoint a neighbor as an emergency backup. If your loved one lives in a senior apartment complex, find a friendly neighbor and implement the buddy system; they should each keep an eye out for problems and have contact information for one another’s emergency contacts.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 serves 10 counties in southern Ohio, providing home and community-based long-term care options for seniors and adults with disabilities. If you have questions about long-term care options or would like to learn more about the long-term care resources in your area for you or someone you know, simply give us a call. A trained staff member is ready to assist you on the phone Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm by calling us toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. We can answer any questions you may have and also provide an in-home consultation at no cost to discuss your available options in more detail.