

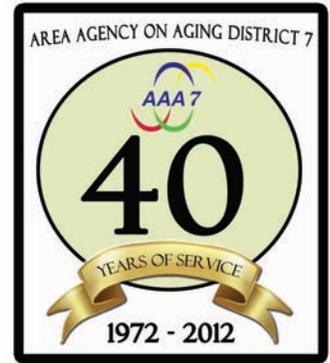
Caregiver Assistance News

"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 2012

Eye Safety - Eye Health

Home Can Be a Dangerous

Place for Eyes

Prevent Blindness America has named October "Home Eye Safety Awareness Month." It's easy to forget how easily, quickly and tragically an accident can happen, robbing us of our most precious sense - sight.

To protect your eyes:

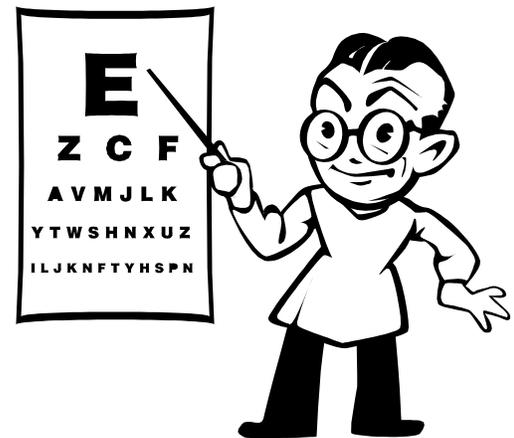
- **Never mix cleaning agents or other chemicals.** Read and follow all manufacturer instructions and warning labels.
- **Wear safety glasses** with side protection or dust goggles to protect against flying particles. Wear chemical goggles to guard against exposure to fumes and splashes. Many safety glasses or goggles will fit over your regular prescription glasses. Regular eyeglasses do not always provide enough protection, and may even cause further injury upon impact.
- **Remove debris from lawns before mowing.** Keep others away or make sure they are wearing eye protection - bystanders can be hit by flying debris.
- **Keep paints, pesticides and fertilizers securely stored,** especially if the person in your care has dementia. Read and follow all prod-

uct instructions.

- **Keep tools in good condition;** repair or replace damaged tools.
- **Limit exposure** to fluorescent lights, computer screens, smoke, and excessive sunlight.
- **Get enough sleep;** sleep allows the eyes to rest and repair.
- **Stay hydrated** to prevent dry, irritated eyes.
- **Quit smoking!** Lighting up more than 20 cigarettes a day doubles the risk of macular degeneration.

Eat Well To Boost Eye Health

- Vitamins A, C, E and minerals like copper and zinc are essential to eyesight, as are antioxidants like beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin. Find them in eggs and yellow and green veggies.
- Garlic and onions are rich in sulfur, cysteine and lecithin that protect the lens from cataracts.
- Blueberries and grapes contain anthocyanin, an antioxidant that improves vision.
- Sardines, mackerel, cod and



salmon have DHA, an important fatty acid.

Source:

<http://www.preventblindness.org>

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www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

Causes of Vision Loss

Most older adults notice changes in eyesight, usually because it becomes more difficult to read small print, move around in dim lighting, or tell the difference between dark blue and black. These changes are a normal part of aging; however, other vision changes can be much more serious, caused by stroke, traumatic brain injury or a brain tumor. This type of loss may be temporary or permanent.



Common Eye Conditions in People over 50

Macular Degeneration (MD) – Characterized by vision loss in the center of the eye, blurred vision, straight lines looking wavy, and more light required to see. MD can affect either one or both eyes. Over 9 million Americans over 40 have MD, and although there is no cure yet, treatments can slow its progress.

Glaucoma – This leading cause of blindness in the U.S. is characterized by a gradual loss of peripheral (side) vision, difficulty driving at night, and loss of contrast. It is important to seek treatment for early symptoms to prevent total blindness.

Cataracts – Cause clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye. Symptoms are hazy vision, difficulty driving at night, double vision, trouble distinguishing colors, and sensitivity to glare. Cataracts typically develop gradually. Cataract surgery removes the diseased lens and replaces it with a plastic one.

Diabetic Retinopathy – Typically occurs in people with advanced diabetes and high blood sugar levels. It is caused by leaking blood vessels and symptoms include blurred or changing vision, difficulty reading, and floaters that affect either central or peripheral vision. About 25 percent of people with diabetes have some diabetic retinopathy, but few develop severe vision problems. Usually, there are no symptoms in the early stages, so those with advanced diabetes should have regular vision exams. The best prevention is maintaining stable blood sugar levels. See a doctor immediately if the person has blurred vision, flashes of light, or blind spots.

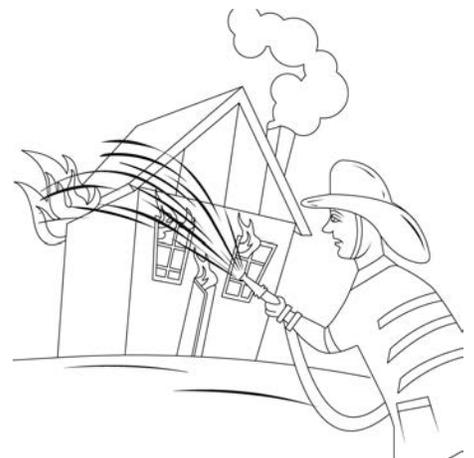
October is Fire Prevention Month

Fire kills and injures more people every year than any other force of nature. Older adults and disabled people are especially vulnerable.

Install smoke alarms on every level of the home. For the best protection, install both ionization and photoelectric-type smoke alarms (some models provide dual coverage). Place detectors inside or near every bedroom. Test them monthly and replace with new batteries once a year. If your smoke alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them.

Buy a fire extinguisher for every level of the home, plus the basement and garage. Learn how and when to use them.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration; Home Safety Council



“My best friend is the one who brings out the best in me.” - Henry Ford

Reach Out to People

It is important for you and the person in your care to not become isolated from social activities with other people.



Ask yourself how often you are seeing friends, going out for fun, or just sharing stories with other people. If the answer is "not much," try to incorporate at least one activity a week with others.

Seek out support groups - especially those that share the same challenges as you - such as low vision, stroke, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's chapters. If you attend a religious service, spend time talking with others before or after the service.

Flu Shots



The influenza vaccine saves lives by helping to prevent flu, and by preventing the serious complications that sometimes result.

Because pneumonia can be a complication of the flu, those over 65 should have a yearly flu shot in the Fall to prevent viral influenza pneumonia, which can lead to bacterial pneumonia.

Live Life Laughing



*"I used to be indecisive.
Now, I'm not so sure."*

Mark Your Calendar!

Medicare Check-Up Days Coming This Fall!

Adams County

November 5th at 10:00 am
Adams County Senior Center, West Union

Brown County

November 7th at 10:00 am
Adams-Brown Community Action, Georgetown

Gallia County

October 17th at 10:00 am - University of Rio Grande
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 1-800-582-7277, ext. 250

Highland County

October 18th at 9:30 am
CHANGE IN LOCATION to Highland County Senior Center
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call (937) 393-4745

Jackson County

November 26th at 9:00 am
Jackson One Stop Tech and Training Center, Jackson
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 740-286-4181, ext. 343

Lawrence County

November 27th at 10:30 am
Southern Branch Library, South Point

Pike County

October 22nd at 10:00 am - Bristol Village, Waverly

Ross County

November 16th at 10:00 am
Ross County Senior Center, Chillicothe
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 740-773-3544

Scioto County

December 3rd at 10:00 am
United Scioto Senior Activities (USSA), Portsmouth
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY - Call 1-800-582-7277, ext. 250

Vinton County

December 4th at 9:00 am
Vinton County Senior Center, McArthur

For more information, call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277, extension 250.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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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 nurse or social worker 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.

The Eyes - A Window into Health

Your eye doctor can learn a lot about your overall health by looking deep into your eyes at the blood vessels and nerves in the back of the eye. This painless exam may catch the first signs of high blood pressure, diabetic complications or autoimmune disease.



When to Have a Vision Screening

Forty-Plus: Age-related changes in vision and the earliest signs of glaucoma, cataracts and diabetic retinopathy caught early can help minimize vision loss. Frequency of follow-up screenings depends on your test results, medical conditions, and your eye-health history.

Over 60: Seniors should have their eyes examined once a year to screen for cataracts, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and age-related macular degeneration. If you have risk factors for eye problems like high blood pressure or diabetes, your doctor may check you more frequently.

Source: American Academy of Ophthalmology

Eye Specialists

Ophthalmologist - *Medical Doctor (MD) for care and surgery of the eyes.*

Optometrist - *Specialist for basic eye care.*

Optician - *Fitting and making of eyeglasses and lenses.*