



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!**



DECEMBER 2013

Winter Safety - Indoor & Outdoor

When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Prolonged exposure to cold will eventually use up your body's stored energy. The result is hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature. A body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and will not be able to do anything about it.

To Prevent Hypothermia

- Keep the house temperature no lower than 65° F (at 70° F if the person is ill).
- Have him/her wear warm clothes and place leg warmers on the arms and legs for extra warmth. Use warm blankets when the person is in bed.
- Wear a warm hat outside or a knit hat indoors to keep the body from losing heat.
- Provide a balanced diet.
- Keep moving by walking around the house or down an apartment hallway, lifting and stretching legs and arms.

Be aware that people with dementia may not dress appropriately for the weather or understand the risk of cold weather.

Signs of Hypothermia

Signs include impaired judgment, shivering, cold/pale skin, slow breathing and pulse, slurred or mumbled speech, weakness, drowsiness, loss of coordination, fumbling hands, stumbling steps, confusion, and memory loss. Fifty percent of hypothermia deaths occur in people over the age of 75. Even mild cold can cause hypothermia in the elderly because of compromised circulation or respiratory conditions.

If these signs are present:

- Wrap the person in blankets, notify the doctor, give warm fluids, and increase room temperature.
- Avoid rubbing the person's skin.
- Do not re-warm the person rapidly. Use a heater on low or warm hot water bottles (wrapped in a towel) on the chest and abdomen.
- Do not give the person alcohol or caffeine. Be alert to signs



of heart attack. (Chest pain, shortness of breath, discomfort in the jaw, bluish pale skin, sweating, and nausea. Call 911 immediately if hypothermia or heart attack symptoms are present.)

Source: CDC; www.livestrong.com; American Geriatrics Society

Season's Greetings!



Winter Safety Tips

- ✓ Check your furnace filter each month and change when necessary. Have it serviced every year.
- ✓ If you use gas, wood, or kerosene heaters, make sure gases are vented to the outside.
- ✓ Keep space heaters away from any flammable objects; do not keep them on carpets or flammable surfaces, or near water. Check the cord for fraying. Don't use extension cords or run electrical cords under carpets.
- ✓ Don't use the kitchen stove to heat the home - it is dangerous.
- ✓ Remove dust from radiators each month, and keep furniture and drapes away from radiators.
- ✓ Install a programmable thermostat to make the home more energy efficient.
- ✓ Insulate water pipes to avoid freezing and bursting.
- ✓ Take advantage of local heating assistance funds and utility no-cutoff programs.



Prepare for Winter Emergencies

- ✓ Identify temporary living arrangements in case you are unable to stay in your own home and have a plan for transportation there.
- ✓ Keep in touch with family and friends.
- ✓ Plan for your medical needs. Have extra medications on hand or identify a pharmacy that will deliver them to you.
- ✓ Have canned food, a can opener, and one gallon of water per person, per day.
- ✓ Keep batteries and battery-powered flashlights available and, when needed, use flashlights instead of candles.
- ✓ If you have medical equipment, be sure you know how to maintain or move it in an emergency.

Live Life Laughing



"To me, the Holidays are a very important time of the year. It's my stomach's busy season."

Don't Fall, Be Safe!

Arrange to have leaves, snow and ice removed from stairs and walkways. Use salt or sand throughout the winter months.

If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn smooth. You can buy an ice pick-like attachment at a medical supply store that fits onto the end of the cane to help you from slipping when you walk.



"When you're through changing, you're through." - Martha Stewart

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

The Season for Dry Skin

Dry skin is more common as we age because of age-related thinning of the skin; moreover, dry skin can become easily infected and dry throats can more easily be susceptible to colds and flu. Since it is easier to prevent dry skin than it is to cure it, follow these tips and feel smooth, soft and comfortable.

- Take only short, lukewarm showers and baths. Hot water washes away our natural oils.
- Use soaps with moisturizers. Use moisturizers often during the day.
- Wear gloves when washing dishes and cleaning.
- Use lipstick or lip balm on your lips.
- Drink plenty of fluids - especially water - which will not add calories or caffeine.
- Use a humidifier in the winter or keep bowls of water near the heating vents.



Healthy U

Chronic Disease Self-Management Class



Have a chronic disease such as asthma, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, or other life-long conditions? Want to better manage your conditions and feel healthier? Put life back into your life with Healthy U! Participants in the Healthy U program will gain needed support in addition to a number of other benefits, including:

- Learning practical ways to deal with pain, fatigue and depression.
- Discovering better ways to be more physically active.
- Learning how to eat healthier.
- Learning better ways to talk with your physician and family about your health.
- Setting personal goals.
- Finding ways to relax and deal with stress.

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

Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Smoke Alarms

A leaky gas stove can give off dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Install a carbon monoxide detector and check the smoke alarm batteries. They can save a life.



Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. Program is free of charge. No registration required.

Gallia County - 2881 SR 160 (HMC Thaler Building) in Gallipolis from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
Remaining Topic: January 28, 2014 - Activities and Interaction



For more information or to inquire about similar programs available in or near your community, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.



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.

Safety Tips - Winter Driving

- *Listen for National Weather Service radio or television travel advisories.*
- *Do not travel in low visibility conditions.*
- *Avoid traveling on ice-covered roads, overpasses, and bridges if at all possible.*
- *Winterize your car by checking antifreeze levels, tire tread and pressure, and windshield wipers.*
- *If you must travel by car, fill your gas tank, use tire chains, and take a mobile phone with you.*
- *Let someone know your destination and when you expect to arrive. Ask them to notify authorities if you are late.*
- *Check and re-stock the winter emergency supplies in your car before you leave.*
- *Never pour hot water on your windshield to remove ice or snow - it may shatter.*
- *Do not rely only on your car to provide sufficient heat; the car may break down.*

