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5 Tips for Making Your Home Design Dementia-Friendly

If you remember anything about designing for dementia, remember this: contrast is key! This principle will apply to many areas of the home; using a color that contrasts with its background will draw attention to the feature, as many people with dementia face particular visual deficits with color and depth perception. So for example, furniture should be a contrasting color from the wall behind it, so that your loved one can easily find it. If you're not in the market for new furniture, consider a brightly colored slipcover or even put a throw blanket on the back of their favorite chair to draw attention. In the bathroom, put on a new toilet seat cover in a contrasting color to draw attention to the most important feature! If they're having trouble at the dinner table, try a tablecloth that contrasts with the plate to help highlight their dinner. The only place you'll want to avoid too much contrast is on the floor. That dark welcome mat at the front door might look like a hole they need to step over, or a high contrast floor threshold may end up looking like a step. These issues don't happen for everyone, but sometimes it's just a quick change that can minimize a fall risk.



MAXIMIZE (NATURAL) LIGHT

Let's shed some light on the subject - actually a lot of light on the subject! For individuals with dementia, natural light can help signal the passing of time, and helps orient the person between day and night. As much as you can at home, try to open the curtains and blinds, especially in living rooms or other areas where your loved one spends a lot of time. As an added bonus, windows provide visual stimulation as well. And for those interior spaces (and cloudy days!), make-sure there is adequate lighting in each room to provide uniform lighting in your home.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

Sometimes it's the little things that

can make a bigger difference than you think! If your loved one is beginning to exhibit any mobility issues, installing grab bars or handrails can be very helpful, especially in bathrooms. Smaller rugs or mats can be another mobility issue, especially if your loved one shuffles their feet. Getting rid of the rug can be an easy solution to prevent falls. If they're having trouble locating something? Put a sign on it! Label the bathroom door, and even put signs up with arrows directing the person. You can label kitchen cabinets with what's inside, or other storage furniture that they use frequently.

Depending on their abilities, you may want to include a picture on the sign as well, to help identify what's inside!

DON'T FORGET THE OUTDOORS!

If your loved one likes spending time outside, make sure any outdoor space you have follows these same guidelines too. While it may be a little chilly to spend a lot of time outside right now, at least be sure not to neglect your main entrance and exit. Just as with your indoor spaces, having well-defined, clear pathways are helpful. Make sure any paver stones or deck boards are as level as possible, and

Spring Cleaning Safety Tips for Seniors

By Kimberly Johnson



With the spring season officially underway, we all know what that means: it's time to do some spring cleaning! This is a great time of year to get organized, especially after spending the chilly winter months indoors, but the key focus when spring cleaning is safety. If you're wondering

how you can go about completing your spring cleaning list safely, be sure to follow these spring cleaning safety tips for seniors.

Top Tips

There's nothing quite like the sunny weather to motivate us to get organized this spring, and to help you get started, here's our top five spring cleaning safety tips for seniors:

1. Take your time. Set plenty of time aside to do some spring cleaning. The key is finding a balance: don't let tasks drag on, but don't feel like you have to get everything done in one weekend, either.
2. Check the fridge and medicine cabinet. Although they are easy to overlook, both the refrigerator and medicine cabinets can be hotspots for expired products. Be sure to throw away all expired food items and medications, especially those that are no longer prescribed to you.
3. Double-check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are easy to ignore until there's an emergency. Make sure that there are fresh

clear of leaves and debris. Check that stair or deck railings are sturdy up to the entrance, and that any furniture is solid and sturdy as well, as a back-up grab bar.

WE'RE ALL DIFFERENT

There are certainly a lot of changes that you can implement to help make your home more dementia friendly, but remember that everyone has different capabilities and needs, and these will continue to change as the disease progresses. Some of these ideas you might find helpful to implement now, others may be more useful down the road.

batteries in all of your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

4. Prep for emergencies. It's a good idea to go over what to do in case of an emergency, such as a power outage or a house fire, every spring to help keep the plan fresh in your mind.
5. Make it fun! Enlist the help of your children, grandchildren or friends to add a social component. Not only can they help you move heavy objects and furniture, but they can also make tasks seem less tedious and more fun.

Fall-proofing Your Home

While spring cleaning, it's important that you check your home for anything that may be increasing your risk of falling. A startling 60 percent of falls happen within the home, but luckily, many of these falls can be prevented by fall-proofing your home:

1. Clear out the clutter. Especially after being cooped up during the long winter months, there could be a lot of overlooked clutter in your home. Clear each room of clutter or anything else that could trip you, such as electrical cords and area rugs. Consider doubling your space by adding garage racks.
2. Add safety supports. Non-slip mats

If your loved one is still in the early stages, you may need to start labeling a few cabinets so they don't feel like a bother coming to you each time they can't find something. As they progress you may need to add pictures to the labels, or start adding grab bars and moving rugs if they become a fall risk. The goal with these changes is to help the person maintain independence and dignity - both during the holiday season and all year long!

*Taken from Insight Memory Center,
Care Givers Corner*

are probably the easiest and most affordable way to reduce your risk of falls, especially in the bathroom where most in-home falls occur. A kitchen is another great place to have these mats in case any water gets onto the slippery floor.

3. Check your stairs for safety. If you cannot have all the essential rooms on a single floor, attach non-slip treads to each step in your home and add sturdy handrails so you have plenty of support when going up and down the stairs.
4. Refurbish furniture and flooring. Replace any unsteady furniture and rearrange the layout of each room so that you can easily move around your home. Make sure that all the floors are even and that carpets are securely attached to the floor.
5. Improve lighting. Dim lighting greatly increases your risk of falling, so replace dim bulbs with brighter, more efficient bulbs. It's also a good idea to add nightlights to the hallways so you can safely move around your home during the night.

It's important to remember that spring cleaning isn't just about cleaning. Just follow these tips and your home will be both clean and safe in no time!

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Shots for Safety

As you get older, your doctor may recommend vaccinations—shots—to help prevent certain illnesses and to keep you healthy.

Talk with your doctor about which of the following shots you need. And, make sure to protect yourself by keeping your vaccinations up to date.

Flu

Flu—short for influenza—is a virus that can cause fever, chills, sore throat, stuffy nose, headache, and muscle aches. Flu is very serious when it gets in your lungs.

The flu is easy to pass from person to person. The virus also changes over time, which means you can get it over and over again. That's why most people (age 6 months and older) should get



the flu shot each year.

Get your shot between September and November. Then, you may be pro-

Seniors Can Get Help Paying for Prescription Drugs

Prescription drugs are expensive. The average adult over 65 takes 14 to 18 prescription medications a year. That's a lot of money!

Social Security has a program called, Extra Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Costs. It helps pay for costs related to a Medicare prescription drug plan. The extra help is estimated to be worth about \$4,000 per year.

People who qualify for Extra Help will get a low or no annual deductible, low or no monthly premiums, and no “doughnut hole” coverage gap. They also will pay much less for prescriptions. In 2016, most people who qualified paid less than \$2.95 for generic drugs and less than \$7.40 for brand drugs.

To qualify, seniors must:

- Be on Medicare
- Live in one of the 50 states or D.C.

Have resources (like bank accounts, stocks, bonds) less than \$13,820 (individual) or \$27,600 (married couple)

- Have an annual income less than \$18,090 (individual) or \$24,360 (married) They do not count your home, car or any life insurance policy as resources.

Even if the senior's annual income is higher, they may still be able to qualify for help. Talk with a Social Security representative for details.

Some automatically qualify for Extra Help

In some cases, older adults automatically qualify for the Extra Help program. Seniors who have Medicare and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicare and Medicaid automatically get the extra help. They don't even need to apply.

There are three ways to apply for Extra Help.

- GO online to www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213
- Visit your local Social Security office

Social Security reviews applications and provides directions on what to do if you qualify.

Older adults may even get back part of what was already spent on prescriptions once they qualify. Keep receipts and call the plan or contact Medicare's Limited Income Newly Eligible Transition Program at 1-800-783-1307.

Bottom line—it's well worth the time to investigate and apply for programs like Extra Help. It could mean a lot of extra dollars each year!

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tected when the winter flu season starts.

Pneumococcal Disease

Pneumococcal disease is a serious infection that spreads from person to person by air. It often causes pneumonia in the lungs, and it can affect other parts of the body.

Most people age 65 and older should get a pneumococcal shot to help prevent getting the disease. It's generally safe and can be given at the same time as the flu shot. Usually, people

only need the shot once. But, if you were younger than age 65 when you had the shot, you may need a second one to stay protected.

Tetanus and Diphtheria

Tetanus (sometimes called lockjaw) is caused by bacteria found in soil, dust, and manure. It enters the body through cuts in the skin.

Diphtheria is also caused by bacteria. It is a serious illness that can affect the tonsils, throat, nose, or skin. It can spread from person to person.

Both tetanus and diphtheria can lead to death.

Getting a shot is the best way to keep from getting tetanus and diphtheria. Most people get their first shots as children. For adults, a booster shot every 10 years will keep you protected. Ask your doctor if and when you need a booster shot.

Shingles

Shingles is caused by the same virus as chickenpox. If you had chickenpox, the virus is still in your body. It could become active again and cause shingles.

Shingles affects the nerves. Common symptoms include burning, shooting pain, tingling, and/or itching, as well as a rash and fluid-filled blisters. Even

when the rash disappears, the pain can stay.

The shingles vaccine is a safe and easy shot that may keep you from getting the disease. Most people age 60 and older should get vaccinated, even if you already had shingles or don't remember having chickenpox. Protection from the shingles vaccine lasts at least 5 years.

Measles, Mumps, and Rubella

Measles, mumps, and rubella are viruses that cause several flu-like symptoms, but may lead to much more serious, long-term health problems, especially in adults.

The vaccine given to children to prevent measles, mumps, and rubella has made these diseases rare. If you don't know if you've had the diseases or the shot, you can still get the vaccine.

Side Effects of Shots

Common side effects for all these shots are mild and include pain, swelling, or redness where the shot was given.

Before getting any vaccine, make sure it's safe for you. Talk with your doctor about your health history, including past illnesses and treatments, as well as any allergies.

It's a good idea to keep your own shot record, listing the types and dates of your shots, along with any side effects or problems.

Shots for Travel

Check with your doctor or local health department about shots you will need if traveling to other countries. Sometimes, a series of shots is needed. It's best to get them at least 2 weeks before you travel. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, www.cdc.gov, or call the information line for international travelers at 1-800-232-4636.

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Geriatric Care Management— Questions and Answers

What is Geriatric Care Management? A geriatric care manager is a professional. They may be a social worker, nurse, gerontologist, counselor, or other professional. Geriatric care management (GCM) provides assistance for you and your loved one in finding resources, making decisions, and managing stress. Geriatric care management provides “one stop shopping” for care for you and your loved one.

Why would someone need Geriatric Care Management?

GCM is especially helpful for long distance caregivers but is helpful for anyone needing some extra guidance and help in caring for someone with dementia. GCM can help families and ill loved ones cope with complex issues. A geriatric care manager also can help families and their loved ones with decisions connected to aging. This includes assistance in all aspects of long-term care, whether at home, in an assisted living facility, or in a nursing facility. If your loved one requires special services or changes

occur in their health or life, then geriatric care management (GCM) may be helpful for you.

What do Geriatric Care Managers do? What services do they offer? A geriatric care manager coordinates care and services to meet the full social, emotional, physical, and healthcare needs of your loved one. However, care managers do not specialize in all areas. It is important to find out whether a specific care manager has experience in dealing with your specific needs.

Geriatric care managers might help in some of the following ways:

- They conduct an in-person assessment. A thorough assessment allows the care manager to understand your needs, customize their plans, and perform services specifically to meet you and your loved one’s needs. Interview questions cover a range of issues relevant to your loved one’s health and living situation. These issues include everyday activities, nutritional status, safety,

memory, depression, finances, insurance, health history, and more.

- They make a care plan. A care plan includes the results of the assessment, recommendations, and referrals for local community options. The care manager will go into great depth in explaining some of the details of the plan, what led to the recommendations, and what you can expect. They will then help to prioritize the list.
- They arrange services. Services that are provided and arranged will be tailored to the needs identified in the care plan. Some of the services offered and arranged by a geriatric care manager are: crisis intervention, counseling and support, consumer education and advocacy, money management, referrals, decisions regarding appropriate housing

options, assistance with moving an older person to or from different types of housing, advising families on power of attorney or guardianship issues, serving as a liaison to families at a distance, making sure things are going well, and alerting families to problems.

- They monitor needs. Once services and arrangements are in place for your loved one, regular monitoring is important. There also should be frequent re-evaluations to make any necessary adjustments. The geriatric care manager needs to monitor your loved one's capabilities and functions as time goes on. This will improve the quality of your loved one's life, as well as your own.

From Alzheimer's Association

Employee Spotlight

Iveth Navarrete has celebrated her fifth anniversary working at Independent You!

Iveth is a Certified Nurse Assistant and the mom of two young sons. She has lived in Virginia all her life.

Iveth has always been attracted to the medical profession and working with her clients at Independent You has grown that interest. Iveth was referred to Independent You by a friend. She explains that she originally found it so rewarding to interact with the clients and help them adapt to having in-home caregiving. Now 5 years later, Iveth reflects, "I am more mature now and so very empathetic to my clients and

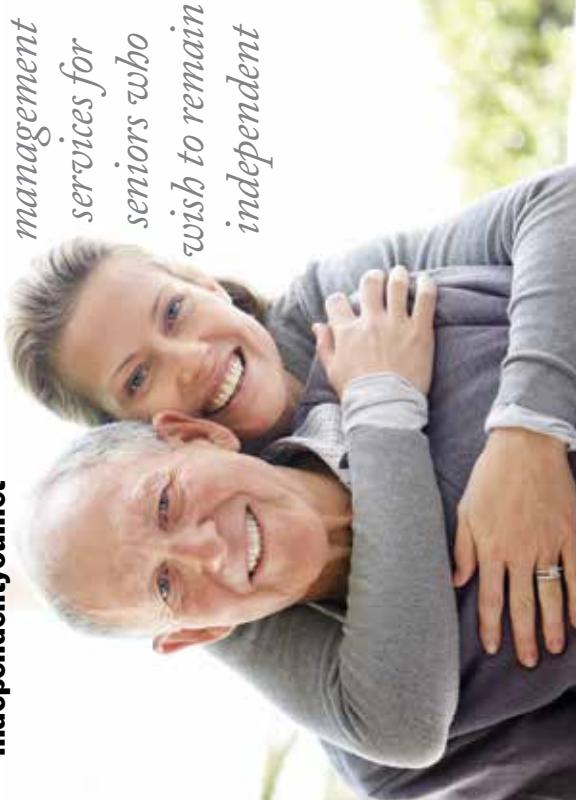
want to see them as independent, as they are able, with the best possible quality of life." Iveth says she appreciates Independent You's scheduling flexibility and their understanding that her family life is important too. Iveth revealed she has a love for organizing and has a personal goal to become an RN. Independent You is confident that she will realize this ambition and is so very appreciative for her work with our clients.





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and care
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