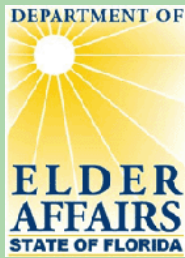


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Aging Resource Center News

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2010

Fall Prevention a Priority for Seniors

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More than one-third of adults 65 and older in the US fall each year. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths, and the most common cause of hospital admissions for trauma. For those who survive a fall, 20%-30% suffer from limited mobility that restricts independence and increases the chances of an early death.*

There are several proactive steps that you can take to protect yourself from fall-related injuries. Perhaps the most important is regular exercise and strength training. Increased muscle strength and endurance not only improves ones overall health, but also improves coordination and balance. Additionally, a proper diet with plentiful fruits and vegetables, calcium, Vitamin D, and water can improve bone health and reduce the risk of fatigue, dizziness and weakness.

Be sure to have your doctor check your eyesight frequently. Dramatic changes in vision can make your own

household a dangerous obstacle course. Also, have your doctor review your list of current medications to check for potential side effects such as dizziness, light-headedness and weakness.

Take steps to fall-proof your home. Maintain adequate walk-ways, remove potential hazards like throw rugs and

unnecessary furniture, and be certain to have adequate lighting in each room. Additionally, consider having grab-bars installed where needed.

For those with a history of frequent falls, you may wish to consider investing in an emergency alert button. These devices can be life-savers for frail seniors.

To help keep our seniors safe and informed, Elder Options is hosting a training series called "A Matter of Balance", a free class designed to reduce fear of falling and increase the activity of older adults who have concerns about falling. The class will consist of eight two-hour sessions. If you or a loved one is interested in attending "A Matter of Balance" class, contact Betty Flagg at Elder Options: (352) 378-6649.

*Source: www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Falls/adultfalls.html



Elder Options to Introduce Classes for Seniors and Caregivers

As a part of the Title III D Program of the Older Americans Act, the Elder Options Division of Community Outreach and Healthy Aging will be presenting a series of education programs and classes throughout our PSA. The goal of the effort is to create a noticeable difference in health and well-being of elders through health promotion and disease prevention.

Classes will cover a variety of topics, such as healthy living, balance and fall

prevention, memory training, chronic disease prevention and maintenance, and medication management. Several articles in this edition of the *Aging Resource Center News*, such as the lead story on Fall Prevention, introduce some of the topics to be detailed in the classes.

If you are a senior or caregiver who is interested in attending one of these programs, or if you have a facility or group that

you think may benefit from participation, please contact Betty Flagg at (352) 378-6649.



SALT for Senior Safety

SALT, which stands for Seniors and Law Enforcement Together, is an advisory council that is comprised of older adults in the community, people that work with seniors, and law enforcement. In close collaboration

with the Alachua County Sheriff's office and Gainesville Police Department, SALT focuses on the crime and safety related needs of older adults in the community.

SALT meets once monthly on the first Thursday at 9:30 a.m. Meetings are currently being held at Pine Grove Apartments

at 1901 NE 2nd Street in Gainesville. Anyone is welcome to become a member of SALT and participation of seniors is encouraged. There are no membership fees or dues. So if you are interested in safety for you or a loved one, stop by a meeting and voice your concerns or just obtain valuable information!



Memory Training

As we age, we all experience some level of forgetfulness. More than 1/2 of all adults 50 or older note some degree of memory changes, and 85% of older adults report a difficulty remembering names. But you can take steps now to maintain or improve your cognitive function in later life.

One of the keys to maintaining or improving memory as we age is a proper diet. Diets rich in Omega-3 fats, low glycemic index carbohydrates (whole grains), and antioxidants have all been shown to boost memory performance. Additionally, eating five small meals per day prevents dips in blood glucose

levels. Glucose is the "fuel" the brain uses to operate.

Physical fitness, like in all other areas of life, is important to memory. Daily activities such as brisk walks not only can improve overall health, but increases memory performance. Additionally, exercise promotes better sleep at night. Adequate sleep has been shown to be vital to attention and concentration during the day, two essential components of memory.

Reduction of stress can also have a big impact on memory performance. Stress releases cortisol into the body, which has been shown to impede memory processes in the brain. A moderate amount of exercise, yoga or meditation, pets, and visiting with family or friends can all help reduce stress.

Social interaction and an intellectually-stimulating environment has also been shown to have an effect on memory. Studies have shown that individuals who engage in stimulating conversation or activities, especially with other people, are less likely to undergo cognitive decline later in life.

Finally, much like the muscles in your body, your memory re-

sponds to active training. Research has shown that daily mental exercises like brainteasers, crossword puzzles, games such as Scrabble, and memory games can significantly improve memory performance in all age groups.

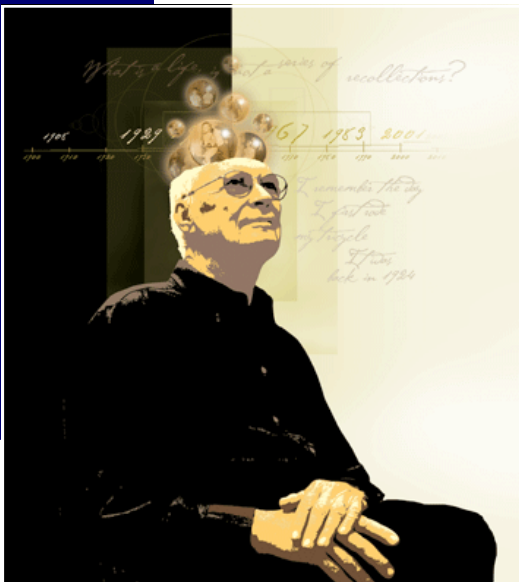
For those seniors age 60 or older who would like to maintain or improve their memories, Elder Options will be coordinating Memory Training classes throughout Mid-Florida, beginning with Sumter, Marion, and Citrus counties. The classes, which will be held for two hours a week for five weeks, are designed to improve general memory, memory for names and faces, recall numbers, and build skills to maintain memory performance. Research has shown that five weeks of Memory Training can boost memory performance by 43%. If you are interested in attending a Memory Training in your area, contact Betty Flagg at (352) 378-6649 for more information.

Sources:

www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/34868.php

www.associatedcontent.com/article/2608391/

how_to_prevent_memory_loss_in_seniors.html



Applying for Medicare

We've been telling people how quick and easy it is to apply for Medicare benefits online — even if you're not ready to apply for retirement benefits.

And our celebrity spokespeople — the television family of *The Patty Duke Show* — have been spreading the word in a series of public service announcements. Reunite with television's favorite identical cousins, and the whole family, at www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

But perhaps the best advocates we have for the online Medicare application are the people who are using the application and discovering that it really does take less than 10 minutes. Just ask your average John.

John from Wisconsin told us, "filing for Medicare online was simple and I couldn't believe what little time it took to complete."

John from Indiana said, "This month I filed for Medicare at www.socialsecurity.gov. Filing online took less than five minutes from start to finish. Finding the place to start my application, answering its simple questions, and submitting my claim was an easy process. I will recommend using Social Security Online to others who want to apply for Medicare."

You don't have to be named John to appreciate the application. Kim of Wisconsin said, "I am so impressed with your website. It was possibly the easiest website I have ever navigated. I had put this off for a few months thinking it would be difficult with it being the federal government, but I am stunned and amazed at how quick and easy this really was."

Even if you decide to apply for retirement benefits after you reach age 65, most people should apply for Medicare coverage at age 65. If you'd like

to begin your Medicare coverage, you should apply within four months of reaching age 65.



It's important to note that people who already receive Social Security retirement or disability benefits do not need to apply for Medicare; they will be automatically enrolled.

If you're within four months of age 65 or older, you can apply right now. Visit www.socialsecurity.gov and select the "Retirement/Medicare" link in the middle of the page.

Go online to apply for Medicare benefits, even if you're not ready to retire. It takes less than 10 minutes!

Article by Donna Maitland, Social Security District Manager—Gainesville, FL

Summer Safety for Seniors

Summertime is here, and the temperatures have already begun to soar. All Floridians need to take precautions in the heat, but seniors can be especially susceptible to conditions like heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Follow these simple rules to stay safe this summer:

Protect yourself from the sun.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer, yet is the most preventable. Be sure to wear sunscreen and lip balm whenever outdoors. Also, you may wish to wear a broad-rimmed hat and wrap-around sunglasses for further protection.

Stay hydrated. Thirst is a poor indicator of hydration, because the body is already in need of water by the time your brain signals your thirst sensation. Some medications also can

increase dehydration. Remember to drink plenty of cool water often, and avoid drinks filled with caffeine, sugar, or alcohol.

Protect yourself from heat.

Wear light and breathable clothing that allows your body to perspire naturally. Perspiration is the body's "vent" for heat. Additionally, avoid going outside during the hottest portion of the day, and make sure to spend some time in an air-conditioned or well-ventilated room. If you do not have air-conditioning, make a trip to the local library or shopping mall.

Know the warning signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Dizziness, lethargy, dry mouth, dry eyes, dark urine or infrequent urination, headaches, confusion, rapid breathing



and rapid heartbeat can all indicate that you are overheated. If you experience any of these symptoms, immediately proceed to a cool environment, apply cool, moist towels to the head, and seek medical attention.

A little knowledge and pre-planning can keep you and you loved ones safe as you enjoy the Florida summer.

Summer 2010—Important Dates

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	NOTES
6/15/2010	C4A Senior Safety Summit	Citrus County Resource Center 2804 W. Marc Knighton Court, Lecanto	1:00—4:00 pm Featured Speaker: Sheriff Dawsey
6/16/2010	Bradford and Union County Men's Health Fair	Bradford County Health Dept. 1801 N. Temple Ave., Starke FL	7:00—10:00 am Health screenings available
6/17/2010	Mind, Body, and Soul Health Fair	First United Methodist Church 8831 W. Bradshaw St., Homosassa FL	9 am — 12 pm Food, Drink, and Health screenings
6/18/2010	S.A.L.T. Senior Safety Summit	Thelma Boltin Center 516 NE 2nd Ave, Gainesville FL	8:30 am — 12:30 pm
7/22/2010	ADA Assistive Technology Expo and Health Fair	Sidney Lanier Center 312 NW 16th Street, Gainesville FL	11:30 am — 3:30 pm Lunch provided
8/09/2010	Thomas E. Langley Health Fair National Health Center Week	Thomas E. Langley Medical Center 1425 S. US 301, Sumterville FL	9 am — 12:30 pm
8/16- 8/18/2010	2010 Florida Conference on Aging	Caribe Royal Hotel Orlando, FL	Visit www.fcoa.org for more information

Chronic Disease: Public Health Priority

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, are still the leading cause of death and disability in our country—accounting for approximately 70% of all deaths. Over 125 million people in the U.S. suffer from at least one chronic illness, and 75 million suffer from two or more. These conditions account for more than 75% of the total health care spending annually. The irony is that while these diseases are the most common and among the most costly to treat, they are often the most preventable.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports four common causes of chronic disease:

- Lack of adequate physical activity
- Poor nutrition
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol abuse

These behaviors have a direct impact on the most common chronic diseases, including heart disease and hypertension, diabetes, respiratory disease, obesity, cancer and arthritis. The good news is, these behaviors are changeable. Making these changes should be everyone's goal in the effort to revamp our country's health and wellness.

Of course, proper diet and exercise is atop the list of important changes to make. Maintaining an adequate weight reduces the risk of

diabetes by 58%, and can also reduce blood pressure and cholesterol. Reducing your systolic blood pressure by 12-13 points reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease by 25%, and a 10% reduction in cholesterol reduces the risk of coronary disease by 30%. A walk around the neighborhood in the morning, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and opting for a piece of fruit instead of a bag of chips can have an almost immediate impact on your waistline.

Quitting smoking also has an immediate positive effect on both heart and lung health. One year after quitting, the risk of a heart attack and cancer is half that of a current smoker; fifteen years after quitting, the incidence of heart disease in an ex-smoker is about the same as a life-long non-smoker.

Beyond changing unhealthy behaviors, such as the ones listed above, you can take other steps to practice prevention or maintenance of chronic diseases. Early diagnosis of many chronic conditions, such as arthritis, is key to managing symptoms and keeping function. Visit your doctor regularly for "well-person" exams and regular check-ups. Women should get regular and consistent mammograms and Pap test screenings; men over 40 should get a regular prostate exam. Those with diabetes should get regular eye and foot exams to reduce vision loss and amputation.

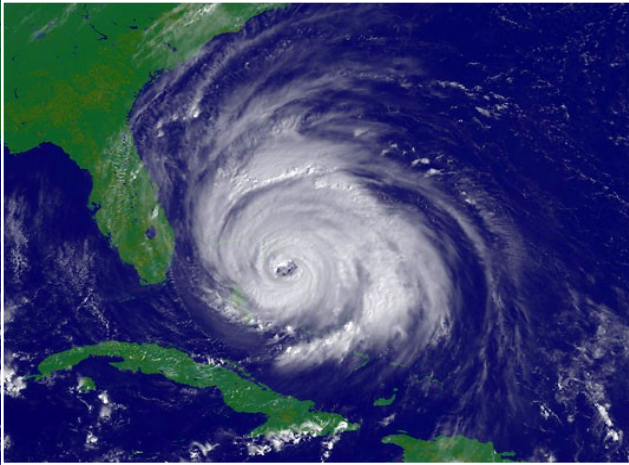


In the professional sector, it is our responsibility to increase awareness and education about chronic disease prevention and management to all segments of the population, as many diseases are disproportionately present in the minority and low income populations. As part of our Educational Outreach, Elder Options will be conducting classes for seniors designed to educate about common chronic diseases, prevention strategies, and regaining function. If you are interested in finding a class in your area, contact Betty Flagg at (352) 378-6649.

Article adapted from CDC's *Power of Prevention*.
Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/pdf/2009-Power-of-Prevention.pdf>

Hurricane Season Is Here

Once again, hurricane season is upon us in Florida, and everyone should take a few moments to make sure that they are prepared should our area be hit with one of these deadly storms. Though this list is by no means exhaustive, we have provided a few basic steps to complete **before** a hurricane strikes:



- Learn about your community's emergency plans, warnings, evacuation routes, and emergency shelters.
- Identify potential home hazards, secure structurally unstable materials, be prepared to turn off electricity and water.
- Locate and secure important paper such as insurance policies, wills, etc.
- Inform local authorities about any special needs such as elderly, disabled, or home-bound individuals.
- Prepare Disaster Supply Kits, including bottled water, canned goods, flashlights, medications, an hygiene products. Each household should have sufficient water and food for at least 3-7 days.
- Be sure to have a working fire extinguisher in your home.
- Have a plan in place for any pets or livestock, as many emergency shelters will not accept animals.

Of course, stay tuned to radio and television broadcasts to stay up-to-date on hurricane activity and any evacuation orders.

These are just a few tips to be prepared before hurricane season, but each family should have their own plan in place. There are many local and online resources and checklists to develop a disaster plan, including the *Disaster Preparedness Guide for Elders*, which is available in May every year. Don't be caught unprepared—make a plan today!

Battling this Stronghold: Depression

Depression is a common medical condition causing changes in feelings, esteem, activity level, sleep patterns and appetite. It is often triggered by life circumstances, such as loss of job, death of a loved one, divorce, or abuse but it can also be a physical condition. Depression is much more than temporarily feeling sad or blue.

A diagnosis of major depression represents an often-debilitating illness that affects approximately 17 million Americans. This fact makes major depression the most commonly diagnosed mental disorder in the United States. A clinical case of depression is separated from everyday blues in terms of the duration and severity of depressive symptoms. Periodic bouts of sadness or a depressed mood that lasts a few days are relatively common, but are not the same as major depression.

Here is a list of the signs or symptoms of major depression:

- Sadness, depressed mood, crying over seemingly minor setbacks
- Increased irritability, crankiness, difficulty being satisfied
- More easily frustrated, gives up quickly after initial failures
- Poor self-concept, low self-esteem, reluctance toward attempting endeavors
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Changes in appetite often signaled by rapid weight gain or loss.
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Slowed, inhibited actions (slow, soft speech; slowed body movements).
- Fatigue, loss of energy
- Poor concentration, attention and/or memory.
- Thoughts or words about death or suicide.

Most people will experience some of these symptoms from time to time, but in order for it to be considered major depression; you should be experiencing at least 5 of these symptoms, continuously, for at least 2 weeks.

Depression is treatable. If you feel you fit the criteria for major depression, seek professional assistance through your doctor, or contact the Elder Helpline at (800) 963-5337 to find a professional in your area that can assist you.

Article adapted from FCS2183, one of a series of the Family, Youth and Community Sciences Dept., Fla. Coop. Svc., IFAS, UF

ELDER OPTIONS

Photo Gallery Event

In honor of Older Americans Month in May, Elder Options hosted a Photography Contest and Gallery at The Village of Gainesville on 5/13/2010. The photos were auctioned off to as a part of Elder Options' 2010 fundraising effort.

We would like to thank all the photographers for their donation of time and talent to the cause, and thank all of the attendees of the Gallery Event for their support. Additionally, we would like to extend a special thanks to our sponsors: The Village of Gainesville, Randy Batista Photography, Creative Workshops Inc., and Ameriprint; and our guest judges Randy Batista, Star Bradbury, and Victoria Golden.



Gallery attendees enjoy food and drink while viewing photos at The Village Ballroom.



First Place: "The Swing"
by Haven Whiteman



Left to Right: DOEA Secretary Doug Beach, 1st Place Winner Haven Whiteman, Elder Options Executive Director Kristen Longmore, Marion County Senior Services Director Sarah Stroh

Second Place: "Coral Reef"
by Diane Wood



Third Place: "No Title Two"
by Candice Hildebrandt

