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June 2021

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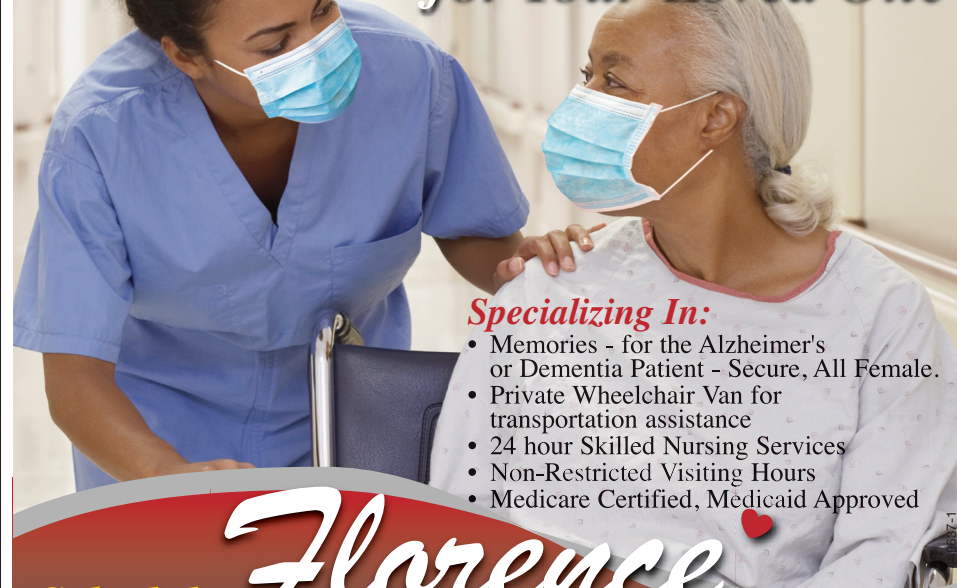
Living 50 Plus



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A Rebirth of Independent Living:

Senior Care in the Shoals Area

By Mickey Lollar

Maintaining independence as we ease into our senior years is of the utmost importance to physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Two senior care businesses in the Renaissance City are helping clients see a rebirth in the living of their daily lives in the Shoals area.

When asked what the overall goal of their respective businesses are, Pam Hodges, franchise owner of Home Instead Senior Care, and Dee Mussleman, owner of ElderCare Services, agree that it is to provide in-home caregivers to assist with the activities of daily living and keeping seniors as active as possible.

With over 25 years in business, ElderCare was the first non-medical senior care business in the Shoals area. Founded by Jean Gay Mussleman, in honor of her father, the business focuses on keeping seniors at home that otherwise might have to transition to a long-term care facility.

"We take great pride in being a family-owned business, which adds a deeper understanding of the Shoals area communities and their needs," Mussleman states.

The services that ElderCare offers include Alzheimer's and dementia care, companionship, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene and toileting, ambulation and transferring, fall prevention, medication reminders, food preparation, light housekeeping, transportation, and concierge services.

Each client's needs are different, so the skills of the caregiver are carefully matched to those identified needs. Interestingly, ElderCare also provides its services in the hospital, at other facilities, as well as the client's home.

Depending on the needs, care can be provided from between four hours to 24/7, during days, nights, weekends, and holidays.

With an experienced and vetted staff that are bonded and covered by workers compensation and liability insurance, ElderCare allows those who need assistance to live with dignity, independence, and security in their own homes.

Mussleman adds, "The care provided by ElderCare is professional- and is personalized, and, despite our name, we provide assistance to those of any age who are being discharged from the hospital or rehab, are recovering from surgery, are suffering from chronic illness or disability, or have experienced falls or injuries."

With Dee Mussleman being a Certified Senior Advisor and Certified Dementia Practitioner and the business boasting memberships including the Home Care Association of America, Regional Effective Action

Care Transition Team, and Shoals Chamber of Commerce, not to mention having a Better Business Bureau accreditation and A+ rating, ElderCare and its services have been designed with dignity, independence, and security in mind.

Pam Hodges of Home Instead Senior Care is very proud of the fact that her business has been going strong for over 18 years and represents "answers to clients' prayers."

Hodges worries that private caregivers can come into employment with no background checks, training, or professional references, possibly leading to detrimental effects for Shoals area clients of all ages and their families. Hodges delineates, "Home Instead is about enhancing the lives of aging adults and their families, with our caregivers participating in the unique CAREGiver training program."

The CAREGiver training program is a comprehensive educational experience that equips the caregivers

of Home Instead to provide individualized care to every person they serve. A panel of experts, from geriatricians to practitioners, have worked with Home Instead's network to develop content and enhance the Alzheimer's and other dementias CARE: Changing Aging Through Research and Education training program for caregivers.

Home Instead Senior Care provides companionship and home helper, medical appointments, personal, Alzheimer's and other dementias, transitional care, and hospice support services, among many others, with a care hotline available 24/7.

"You can't always be there, but Home Instead CAN. From as little as four hours to 24 hours, 365 days a year, days, nights, and overnights," Hodges beams. She adds that "Home Instead is always looking for more employees to service clients of all ages and needs. I welcome anyone interested to apply through our website, and thank them for their interest!"

With such caring, compassionate, and professional senior care businesses in the Shoals area, seniors and their families can rest easy that dependable and trusted sources are available to provide a renaissance of human ability both short- and long-term.

Please visit www.CaregiverStress.com and www.HelpforAlzheimersFamilies.com for a 24-hour connection to support and resources for the family caregiver.

Home Instead Senior Care can be reached at (256) 764-4316 and www.HomeInstead.com/200, and ElderCare at (256) 740-8249, and www.eldercareweb.com.



Dee Mussleman - ElderCare Services



Pam Hodges - Home Instead Senior Care

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Saving strategies as retirement draws near



Professionals on the cusp of retirement are often excited about what lies ahead. Some prospective retirees may look forward to traveling once they no longer have to go to work each day, while others may plan to return to school. Regardless of how adults envision spending their retirement, they're going to need money when they're no longer being paid by their employers.

As retirement nears, some professionals may be concerned that they haven't saved enough. There's no one-size-fits-all answer in regard to how much money people will need in retirement. People who are worried they haven't saved enough can try various strategies to build up their account balances before they officially call it a career.

Take advantage of catch-up contributions. Adults who are 50 or older are eligible to take advantage

of catch-up contributions. These are designed to help people over 50 contribute more to certain retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or IRA, than statutory limits would otherwise allow. There are limits that govern the amount of money people can designate as catch-up contributions, but taking advantage of this perk can help people save more as retirement draws closer.

Consider relocating. A recent study from the Employee Benefit Research Institute found that housing

costs accounted for 49 percent of seniors' spending. Professionals nearing retirement who live in areas traditionally associated with a high cost of living can begin to rethink their long-term housing strategy. Relocating to an area with a lower cost of living is one option, while those who prefer to remain in their current town or city can consider downsizing to a smaller home to reduce their property taxes and monthly utility bills.

investments and your risk tolerance. Maintaining a diversified portfolio with a little risk can be a great way to grow your savings as retirement draws near.

Professionals approaching retirement may be dealing with a mix of excitement and anxiety, particularly if they're concerned about their retirement savings. Various strategies can help quell such anxiety and make it easier for professionals over 50 to build their savings as retirement nears.

Continue investing.

Conventional wisdom suggests moving away from investing in stocks the closer you get to retirement. Though that's a sound strategy, professionals who are trying to build their retirement savings in the final years before retiring could be missing out on significant growth by abandoning stocks entirely. Speak with a financial advisor about stock-based

What to know before claiming Social Security benefits

Hardworking adults spend years striving to achieve their professional goals. Along the way, planning for retirement is a way to ensure all that hard work pays off when the time comes to call it a career.

In the United States, men and women nearing retirement age may be thinking about when they should begin collecting their Social Security retirement benefits. Social Security is a social insurance program instituted by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1935. The program consists of retirement, disability and survivor benefits, and workers in the United States contribute to Social Security each week.

The decision about when to claim Social Security retirement benefits is one all those who have contributed to the program must eventually make. In recognition of the difficulty of that decision, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau offers the following tips to people wondering when they should begin collecting their Social Security benefits.

Confirm your full retirement age. Full retirement age refers to the age at which people can begin collecting their full benefits. Depending on the year you were born, you can begin collecting your full benefit at age 66 or 67. Claiming your benefit before you reach full retirement age will lead to a permanent decrease in your monthly benefits. Conversely, claiming after you reach full retirement age will lead to a permanent increase in your monthly benefits. Since the stakes are so considerable, it's vital for adults to confirm their full retirement age before they claim their benefits.

Delay claiming if you can. The CFPB notes that you can expect to get an additional 5 to 8 percent in monthly benefits for every year you wait to claim your Social Security benefits after age 62, maxing out at age 70. If you can afford to do so, wait to claim your full benefit until age 70, as doing so can translate to a benefit that's 32 percent higher than it would have been had you claimed your benefit at age 62.

Budget for retirement. Short- and long-term budgeting for retirement can help you assess how much money you will need to cover your expenses when you stop working. This step can help you understand how much a reduced or increased Social Security benefit will affect your bottom line in retirement.

Continue working. Remaining in the workforce full-time or even part-time can have a considerable impact on the size of your Social Security benefit. The CFPB notes that continuing to work for one or two additional years can replace low- or no-income earnings from your earnings record, thereby increasing your benefit.

Consider the long-term needs of your spouse. Surviving spouses receive the higher of the two spouses' benefits. So it makes sense for the higher earning spouse to wait to collect his or her benefit until he or she reaches full retirement age.

The decision about when to collect your Social Security benefit is complex. Discussing your options with your spouse and financial advisor can help you make the most informed decision.

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6 *tips*

for seniors to travel safely

One of the perks of getting older is having more time to devote to recreation and traveling.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there are roughly 52 million people who are age 65 or older in the United States. With a \$1.6 trillion total net worth, seniors spend more on groceries,

pharmaceutical items and travel and leisure than any other demographic.

Age does not have to restrict one's ability to travel, and with age comes experience and more opportunities to enjoy travel. Before taking off for parts unknown, men and women over 50 can take steps to ensure their excursions are as safe as they are memorable.

1.

Consider risk.

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020 taught the world that situations can change rapidly. Before booking any travel, weigh the risks and the benefits of a trip. Determine if COVID-19 is spreading where you live or at your destination. Older adults have a higher risk for severe illness caused by the virus. Until you are vaccinated, it may be best to wait to travel.

2.

Use senior-friendly services.

Seek out travel services that offer the

best perks for older adults. Many travel providers no longer offer senior discounts, but they may offer other benefits, such as early boarding or assistance with traveling from gates to baggage areas.

3.

Get travel insurance.

According to Liz Dahl, co-founder of Boomer Travel Patrol, a website featuring expert advice geared toward the Baby Boomer demographic, travel insurance can be essential for older travelers. Older travelers may be more at risk of falling or getting sick and

some may need extra medication if travel is interrupted or delayed. Travel insurance can provide extra coverage for a relatively low price if something goes wrong.

4.

Don't advertise your absence.

It may be tempting to upload photos of your beach-side vacation to social media as you are immersed in paradise. Unfortunately, seniors tend to be targets for thieves because they are seen as vulnerable. Don't make the job easier by advertising you are away from home. In addition,

have a neighbor periodically pick up your mail and set lights on timers to give the impression you are home even when you're not.

5.

Share your itinerary.

Keep loved ones apprised of your general travel itinerary, especially if you are traveling solo, recommends AARP. Keep a mobile phone on you at all times.

6.

Pack copies of important documents.

In the event paperwork is lost while traveling,

request copies of prescriptions and/or statements of medical conditions from each physician and medical treatment center so you have a second set. Keep copies of your passport, driver's license, insurance cards, travel tickets, and other documents as well.

Seniors have the ability to travel much more than other age groups. Make the experience enjoyable by focusing on safety.

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Get Active *as you get older*

There are a lot of preventative measures you can take to stay healthy as you get older. One of those is staying active as you get older.

Here are some tips from health.gov to keep you moving and active.

BEFORE YOU START

Physical activity is great for people of all ages. But, before you start, there are some things you should know. If you have a health problem such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity, talk to your doctor before getting out and getting active. Your doctor should help you determine what exercises and activities would be a good starting point.

START SLOW

If you have never been very physically active and are looking to begin, there are some steps you should take to ease yourself into being active. Begin by aiming for two and a half hours of moderate activity a week. See how working out fits into your weekly schedule and what you can take. You can always add more time of exercise a day as your body adjust to the workouts.

Choose aerobic activities such as walking fast, dancing, swimming or raking leaves outside. What matters is doing activities that will make your heart beat faster. Talk to your doctor if you have shortness of breath, chest pain or unplanned weight loss.



ANYTHING IS A WORKOUT

Working out doesn't necessarily have to be running or lifting weights. Household chores can be a good workout for you. Raking leaves, cleaning the house or even doing some simple balance exercises can be good workout for you. As long as it

gets your body moving and active.

A good workout can be as simple as tossing the ball around with grandchildren or swimming in a pool.

Health.gov does recommend doing muscle-strengthening activities at least two days a week.

These kinds of workouts can be anything such as using bands or hand

weights. If you don't have bands or weights available you can also use bottles of water or food as weights.

You can find some inexpensive weights at local outdoor stores or even your local grocery store.

Routine health checkups are a key part of staying healthy. Older adults may feel like they're always visiting one doctor or another. But what is an acceptable frequency for doctor appointments?

The answer isn't always so cut and dry, and many health professionals have mixed feelings even among themselves over the magic number. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adults over the age of 65 visit the doctor more than twice as often as 18- to 44-year-olds.** According to Paul Takahashi,

a physician at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., adults should see their primary care physicians at least once a year to make sure diseases are being properly managed and to stay current on preventative screenings.

Visiting the doctor more frequently does not necessarily add up to better health, and it actually can do the opposite. Dr. Peter Abadir, an associate professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, says frequent visits to health facilities where sick people congregate puts one at a higher risk of illness or infection. Visiting the doctor only when necessary is one way to avoid risky exposure.

Doctor visit frequency is not a one-size-fits-all answer. A yearly physical or checkup is a given, even for people who are healthy. People with a family history of certain conditions, like sleep disorders, cancer, high blood pressure, and other conditions, may need to see a doctor more frequently than those with no such histories. In addition, patients may need

How often to see the doctor



referrals to certain specialists who work together to provide an overall health plan. That can increase the number of appointments and shorten the intervals between them. Johnson Memorial Health offers some statistics.

- People visit the doctor four times a year on average.
- Studies show that poor or uninsured people prolong the time between doctor's visits.
- Individuals with high blood pressure may need to see the doctor four times a year to ensure medications are working properly.
- Patients on dialysis see the doctor several times a week.

Dr. Jennifer Caudle, a family physician and assistant professor at Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford, NJ, says too often people visit the doctor only when they are really sick. That works to their disadvantage because the appointment will focus only on treating the illness instead of addressing other preventative care and screenings. Balance is necessary in regard to health care.

Patients can work together with their doctors to develop screening schedules that are customized to their particular profiles. These schedules can be modified as health history information changes or as patients age. Doctors can dial back or increase health visits as needed.

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MK Infusion Pharmacy:

Point of Vital Fluids and Medications

By Mickey Lollar

With health care under a microscope in the news and advances in medicine and patient care seen daily, it is truly a comfort when cutting-edge research and compassionate and empathetic care meet up and put down business roots to service communities in need.

MK Infusion Pharmacy, located at 307 West State Street, Muscle Shoals, is such a business.

Founded by Missy Montgomery, PharmD, CEO, in 2015, MK Infusion offers intravenous (I.V.) and injectable medications for in-home use. The goal of the pharmacy is to provide individualized, quality care at home, with an emphasis on Christian values.

MK Infusion Pharmacy offers a wide array of services, including Anti-Infective Therapy: Antibiotics & Antivirals; Antiemetics: Zofran and Reglan for nausea; Corticosteroids to lower inflammation in the body; fluids for Hydration; Iron Infusions; IVIG/Immunoglobulin to boost an immune system; Total Parental Nutrition (TPNs) to provide daily nutritional

requirements; Inotropic (as in muscle contractions)/Cardiac Medications; Pain Therapy for hospice patients; Opioid Conversions; and other specialty medications.

MK Infusion also offers “MK Heart Failure Kits,” created by Dr. Montgomery, which have reduced avoidable re-hospitalizations by over 60% for heart failure patients. As you would expect, MK Infusion Pharmacy is also a proud sponsor of the Shoals Heart Ball.

Dr. Montgomery states very emphatically that the staff of MK Infusion Pharmacy wants “patients to feel more comfortable during treatment. Whenever possible, we fit treatments into our patients’ current lifestyle, with the least invasive delivery method available. We strive in every effort to help patients feel more comfortable during treatment.”

In that vein, MK Infusion Pharmacy administers vital fluids and medications, usually at home, without the inconvenience to or cost of a hospital or other outpatient venue.

Additionally, MK Infusion is ready when you need them, with a Clinical Pharmacist on-call 24/7, working in conjunction with a Home Health Nursing Agency.

MK Infusion Pharmacy is accredited by The Joint Commission and licensed to provide care in Alabama- Colbert, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Franklin, Marion, and Winston counties; Mississippi- Tishomingo, Alcorn, Prentiss, and Itawamba counties; and Tennessee- Giles, Hardin, Lawrence, McNairy, and Wayne counties.

With a multitude of client testimonials as well, MK Infusion Pharmacy has been nominated for three Business Excellence Awards by the Shoals Chamber of Commerce. The nominations included Family-Owned Business of the Year, Woman-Owned Business of the Year, and Small Business of the Year.

Dr. Missy Montgomery is a native of the Shoals area and loves serving its citizens. She attended the University of North Alabama before receiving

her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from Samford University in 2004.

When asked about inspirations, Dr. Montgomery says that she had “an amazing opportunity to move to the Memphis area in 2009 and be trained by two of the founders of home infusion. It was under their mentorship that I soon discovered a love for home infusion. I found it so rewarding in fact that in 2015 I decided to move back home to the Shoals and open my own home infusion pharmacy!”

Dr. Montgomery also serves across the Shoals community, volunteering as one of the Vice Presidents of the REACT Coalition, is an active member of Caring Connection and Shoals Chamber of Commerce, donates medical supplies to Global Missions of Mercy, and teaches College and Career class at her local church.

“I am extremely grateful for the outstanding team that I have around me, which consists of, among others, certified and licensed pharmacy technicians, registered nurses, four Doctor of Pharmacy, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice. I consider my work to be my ministry and am very proud to call the Shoals my home,” Dr. Montgomery concludes. “We truly provide excellent care for our patients and excellent collaboration with providers.”

Dr. Missy Montgomery and the MK Infusion Pharmacy team have over 30 years of combined home infusion experience and be reached at (256) 320-7611. Office Hours are Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with Saturday – Sunday: Closed.



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Choosing Healthy Meals

Eating healthy begins at home with you. As you get older, you need to be mindful of the food you put in your body. You don't have to begin a crazy diet or crazy workout routine to be healthy.

Being healthy can be as simple as eating better food and maintaining a healthy weight.

KNOW YOUR PLATE

Healthy eating changes as you get older. As you grow older, your metabolism slows down, so you need to take in fewer calories than you did in the past. Your body also needs to take in as much nutrients as it can. This means eating the best and healthiest foods that will give you the best nutritional value.

A part of this is knowing your plate and knowing what you take in every day.

Everyone remembers the food pyramid and what it contains, but the

United States Department of Agriculture has began a new simpler way for people to see what they should eat each day called MyPlate.

The program helps people find out what they should be eating and about how much of a certain item they should each at a time, making it easier for you to head down to your local grocery store with confidence knowing you have a list of what you need and how much of it.

EAT IN MODERATION

Eating healthy all the time can be tiring and, after a while, all the healthy foods can become tasteless and aggravating. It's OK to eat out at your favorite fast food place or even have a

burger and some fries. Just remember to eat those types of food in moderation, maybe once every week or two.

It's important to also monitor how much of a unhealthy food you eat a day. Don't spend a whole day eating unhealthy foods that will break your diet.

Begin the day off with a heathy oatmeal and fruits for breakfast and eat the burger for dinner or you can switch it up with a pancake, sausage and egg breakfast and a wholesome salad for dinner.

You don't have to drive yourself crazy to be healthy and you can still eat all the foods you love, just in moderation.

Nursing homecare and the 'look-back period'

Health care plans provide access to medical care and other necessities and reduce out-of-pocket health-related expenses. Each plan is different, and depending on where you live, your coverage may vary. People quickly find that many healthcare plans do not include provisions for long-term health care, such as paying for nursing facilities. Understanding how health plans work and learning about potential financial reviews for nursing home payment qualification is a good idea for anyone concerned about financing their future health care needs.

Health care basics

Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada have access to a universal health care system that is paid for through their taxes, according to the Government of Canada. Each province or territory has its own health insurance plan that covers a variety of services. In the United States, health care is largely privately managed, with most employers offering access to various health coverage plans. Government subsidized plans include Medicare, which is for retirement-age individuals and younger people with disabilities. Medicaid is a joint state- and federally-run government program that provides health coverage to low-income individuals and families.

Just as in the United States, health insurance in Canada does not pay for nursing home care in most cases. In the



United States, unless an individual meets low-income criteria, nursing home care is paid for by the resident; otherwise, people who qualify for Medicaid can have their nursing home expenditures paid for by that program. To receive Medicaid assistance, applicants should expect a financial review, including a look-back period.

What is the look-back period?

The senior health, finance and lifestyle resource Senior Living advises that Medicaid is a "last resort" method of financing nursing home costs. Individuals are expected to use other means of payment first and "spend down" their

assets. When financial resources dwindle, Medicaid will kick in to provide coverage.

To ensure that individuals simply do not transfer money out of their accounts to avoid paying for nursing home care by their own means, Medicaid requires a look-back period into applicants' finances to determine if there were any violations to rules regarding asset transfers. Most people engage in some sort of long-term planning to protect a portion of their assets so that they can be used to support spouses or children. According to rules, an applicant is permitted to transfer certain monies to his or her spouse, provided the spouse isn't also applying for long-term care through Medicaid. Most money and tangible asset transfers (check with your state Medicaid office for the most current rules) must have taken place 60 months (5 years) prior to application for Medicaid. Penalties will be instituted when rules are broken, namely gifts or asset transfers that take place within the look-back period. This could delay Medicaid acceptance. Paying for long-term care can be complicated business with look-back periods and required spend-downs. It is in a person's best interest to seek the guidance of a financial planner who specializes in elder care to navigate these financial waters.

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Stopping Infections

A young body can fight off most infections pretty easily but, just like everything else as you get older, it becomes harder for your body to keep up and fight off illnesses.

Luckily, there are some things you can do to prevent the spread.

EAT IMMUNE-BOOSTING FOODS

Your diet directly effects your immune health and the foods you eat can increase its efficiency. Eating a low-fat, plant-based diet may help give the immune system a boost.

Your immune system relies on white blood cells to combat bacteria, viruses and other invaders. People who eat more plants have been shown to have more effective white blood cells when

compared to non-vegetarians.

Foods high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants boost immune health. Studies have shown fruits and vegetables provide nutrients that can boost immune function.

It's because they are rich in antioxidants and nutrients such as beta-carotene, vitamin C and vitamin E.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR REGULARLY

As you get older, there are more reasons for you to get out and go see your doctor. It's important to get regular

scheduled check ups with your doctors to make sure you monitor your health. Your body changes day by day and anything can happen overnight. You may be wondering how often "regular" is exactly. There are a few things to consider when asking yourself this:

- On your last visit, did your doctor advise a return date for you?
- Did you go back on the return date?
- Have you noticed any health change since the last time you visited?

SLEEP AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your body needs sleep to function and sleep is especially important for your immune system. Sleeping issues are linked to health problems such as heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and obesity. Lack of sleep can harm immune system by weakening it's defenses and making it easier for your body to catch sickness or colds. Add more fruits, vegetables, grains and beans to your diet to help yourself get better, deeper sleep.



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Rest is Important

Rest is not only important for your body but it's also important for brain and emotional health.

Sleep.org says getting good rest and relaxing your muscles and brain can help restore a sense of calm during times of exhaustion, illness or overexertion.

BENEFITS OF SLEEP

Sleep.org says our brains are dependent on quality sleep, which helps remove toxins that accumulate during the day. Without sleep, our bodies can't recover or recharge.

Getting good quality sleep has a positive effect on your brain, emotions and body. Getting good sleep helps your body's immune system and can help protect your body from disease. Sleep can have a direct effect on how you feel during the day. If you aren't sleeping well at night, you won't be able to tackle the day effectively.

Sleep.org says deprivation is linked to lower immunity and increases inflammation, which makes us more susceptible to depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses. Sleep also effects your weight and heart health. Getting enough sleep helps your body regulate appetite and burn more calories.

GETTING MORE SLEEP

If you aren't getting good sleep during the night on a regular basis, there are tips and tricks you can try to get you feeling sleepy quicker and sleeping longer.

Sleep.org shares the following tips on how you can get more sleep during the night.

- Avoid using phones, computers or other devices right before you go to bed.
- Adopt a relaxing pre-sleep ritual to help get your mind and body ready for sleep.



- Exercising during the day will help you feel more tired at night.
- Avoid caffeine or tobacco products before bed.
- Nap less during the day; it can have a direct effect on your sleep schedule.

GET MORE REST

Resting during the day can be as beneficial as getting good quality sleep. Adopt a rest routine to help you find a consistent way to feel more sleepy.

Sleep.org says listening to music, reading or taking a relaxing bath will help you sleep better.

Getting away from your stressful work during the day is also beneficial for you. When work becomes overwhelming, take a few minutes to go for a walk or listen to music away from your desk.

Sleep is so important for all aspects of your health. It's important to prioritize it and make sure you get the sleep you need to get.

How to build friendships in your golden years

Making friends as a child or even as a parent to school-aged children is relatively easy. Classrooms and school functions facilitate the building of friendships. Even as one gets older and enters the workforce, it's not uncommon for people to become friends with their coworkers.

As people near retirement age, their situations may have changed considerably. Children have moved out, careers are coming to an end and friendships may be hard to maintain due to people relocating or traveling. Older adults may aspire to make new friends, but they may not know how.

According to Irene S Levine, Ph.D., The Friendship Doctor and contributor to Psychology Today, it is not unique for seniors to want to make new friends. Age can be a barrier because there are stereotypes that pigeonhole people of certain ages. But Levine notes that state of mind and physical ability is not directly tied to chronological age. Making friends is possible at any age. These guidelines can help along the way.



Explore online connections. A 2016 study published in the Journal of Gerontology found seniors (even those in their 80s) who stay connected with friends and family using social media report feeling less lonely and better overall. Connected seniors also demonstrated higher executive reasoning skills. There are plenty of ways to meet new people online by

joining social media groups that cater to your interests. In person meetings in particular cities or regions of the country also can make for great ways to make new friends. Exercise caution when meeting people in person after contacting them online. Bring another person along, whether it's a spouse or an adult child, to ensure that you are safe.

Volunteer your time. One way to meet new people is to get involved with causes or activities you love. This serves the double benefit of getting you outside and active and puts you in touch with people who share your passions and interests.

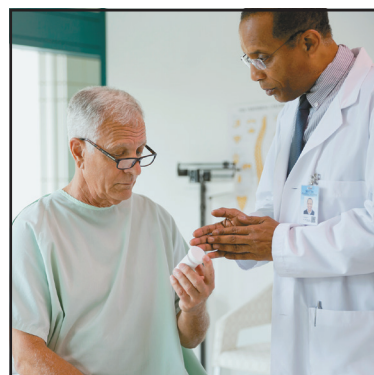
Attend alumni events. If you have an interest getting in touch with someone from your past and reconnecting, make the time to attend school reunions and other alumni activities. It can be fun to reconnect with friends from high school or college.

Join a gym. The local gym isn't just a great place to get physically fit. Group exercise classes also can be ideal places to meet other people who enjoy working out. Strike up a conversation with another class participant you see on a regular basis. Once you develop a rapport, schedule lunch dates so your friendship grows outside of the gym.

Making friends is not just for the young. Men and women over 50 also can find ways to build new friendships.

Did you know?

Health screenings are a vital component of preventative health care. Specific screenings for older adults can help them stay healthy. Healthline and WebMD recommend older adults schedule these routine tests. The frequency of the screenings may depend on individuals' health histories, so each test should be discussed with a physician during adults' annual checkups.



- Blood pressure check
- Blood test to check cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Colorectal cancer exam
starting at age 50
- Weight screening to check for gains or losses
- Prostate cancer screening for men age 70 and older
- Breast exam and mammogram for women, starting at age 40

- Pap smear and HPV tests at the recommended intervals advised by a doctor
- Hearing test
- Osteoporosis test
- Shingles and pneumococcal vaccines
- Eye exam
- Periodontal exam once per year

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Taking Supplements



As you get older, you may need to add dietary supplements to your daily diet to add extra nutrients to your diet or lower your risk of health problems.

Dietary supplements come in many different forms such as pills capsules, powders, gel capsules or liquids. Many dietary supplements contain different vitamins, minerals fiber, amino acids,

herbs and other enzymes.

It is important to understand supplements are not intended to prevent to treat, diagnose or prevent disease or sickness. Unlike drugs, you don't need to see a doctor to take dietary supplements nor do you need to a prescription to take supplements.

It is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that you see a doctor if you are unsure of what supplements to take.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Just like everything else you take or put into your body, there are some risks to taking supplements, especially for older consumers of vitamins.

There are certain products that may do more harm than good and create unexpected risks. Many supplements

contain some ingredients that triggers effects in your body. If you are taking prescription or over-the-counter medicine, extra supplements may cause unexpected results.

Another circumstance to take into account is if you are planning surgery. Talk to your doctor about any and all supplements you may be taking. The Federal Drug Administration says supplements may have an effect before, during or after your surgery. Your doctor may ask you to cease taking the supplements two or three weeks before your surgery.

Too much of a good thing can be bad for you. You have to consider your age, health status and what you are taking. Taking too much of different vitamins and supplements may cause the effects of each supplement to interfere with

each other and harm your health.

TALK TO YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

The FDA says you and your health professionals are a team working toward a common goal, a developed and personalized plan for you.

That being said, it is important to let them know everything you are taking or are planning to take. Your doctors and other health care professionals will help professionals monitor your health and how certain supplements affect your body. It is important to understand they may not have every answer for your questions and concerns but they can consult other professionals that may.



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Bladder Health



Your bladder changes as you get older. You can't control everything that happens with your bladder, but there are precautions you can take to prevent issues such as infections and other problems.

Here are some tips from the National Institute on Aging to keep your bladder healthy as you get older.

DRINK WATER

Water is the liquid of life and this is especially important for your bladder. Water is the best fluid for bladder health. The NIH says most healthy people drink six to eight 8-ounce fluid glasses of water each day. Water should be at the least half of your fluid intake.

For some people, this amount of water can be harmful, so it's important to speak with your health care provider about how much water you should be drinking a day.

If you drink a lot of sodas, caffeinated drinks or alcohol, you are not getting the amount of water intake a day that you should.

USING THE RESTROOM

If you're drinking plenty of water in a day, that means you will be using the restroom plenty of times. It's important to use the bathroom

often and when needed. NIH suggests you should urinate at least every three to four hours. Holding urine in your bladder for too long can weaken your bladder muscles and make a bladder infection more likely. It is important to take your time in the restroom to make sure you fully empty your bladder. If urine stays in your bladder for too long, you can increase the chances of getting a bladder infection.

Using the restroom can be stressful for some seniors. It is important to make sure you are as relaxed as you can be when using the restroom. Relaxing the muscles around your bladder will make it easier to empty the bladder.

NIH says hovering over the toilet for women can make it hard to relax your muscles, so it is best to sit on the toilet seat.

Stress is the body's natural danger alarm.

When your body sense danger, your brain sends stress signals to your muscles and your adrenaline starts to pump.

Once your body sense the danger has passed, your body goes back to normal. Chronic stress can be harmful to your body and even more hazardous to the elderly.

EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress changes your body in many ways. First, chronic stress can lower the power of your immune system, leaving you vulnerable to infections

Stress and Seniors



and disease. Adults are already more susceptible to illness due to age-related problems in the immune system. This, combined with chronic stress, can leave your body even more vulnerable to illness and disease.

Stress also cause heart problems. Stress raises your adrenaline, which in turn, makes your blood pressure and heart rate rise. Stress can cause seniors and adults to find relief in other

activities such as drinking, smoking or eating, which can cause even more harm over time.

In all, stress can make your body and health change quicker than you can anticipate, so it's important to know how to regulate and cope with stress.

COPING WITH STRESS

An increase of stress over time can result in seniors losing loved ones,

their independence and their health more quickly than they want to. It's important to know how to cope and deal with stress in healthy ways. Here are some tips to help you manage your stress in a healthy way.

Working out has been shown to relieve stress in a healthy way as well as making you more healthy.

Picking up a new hobby, such as painting or walking in your local park with your dog, can be a healthy way to get you out of the house and away from work life or what ever is stressing you out.

Getting involved in causes you care about and volunteering your time can help manage your stress while also making you feel good and making an impact in your town or society.

Focus on things you can control and not on things about life or your day that you cannot change. Learning to manage stress can be as simple and as difficult as learning to manage your mind.

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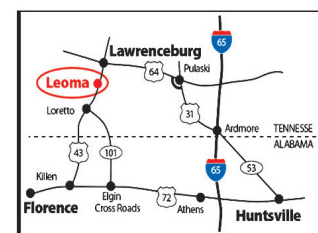


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