

# senior living

THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024

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ON AGING NEWS**

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**ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT TO THE MORNING JOURNAL**



## LORAIN COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING NEWS

### NEW PROGRAM: SAFE AT HOME

LCOOA is offering seniors 60 years + who own and reside in their homes the opportunity to receive at no cost: Grab Bars, Toilet Rails, Wheelchair Ramps, Walker Ramps, Stair Safety Rails (indoor/outdoor), ADA Toilets (raised seat) and some Bathtub Area Modifications.

Keeping seniors Safe at Home. For more information please call 440-406-3337 or 440-326-4800.

The Senior Years Newspaper is now available digitally and subscribers can sign up for a mailed copy online. Visit <https://lcooa.org/senior-years-subscribe/>.

**Do you know an older (60+) or a disabled adult living in Lorain County who is in need of assistance?** We offer a comprehensive mix of services to protect the health, well-being and independence of seniors. Call 440-326-4800 for more information.

Lorain County Office On Aging Southern Satellite Office, Wellington Township Complex, 105 Maple Street

### Utility Assistance Now Available at SSO

Laureen Suspennski, representative from the Lorain County Community Action Agency, will be available to help individuals in Southern Lorain County apply for utility assistance through the HEAP/PIPP Programs every Friday, by appointment only from 8-11:30am and 1-4:30pm. To schedule an appointment, please call 440-731-2640. The Lorain County Office on Aging Southern Satellite Office (SSO) is just a phone call away if you or someone you know may need help or resources. If you are in need of assistance or know someone who is, please call the SSO at 440-647-0777. They will be happy to address any of your questions or concerns.

### April is Volunteer Month

The AmeriCorps Seniors Program is looking for passionate & dedicated adults 55+ years of age interested in sharing their time, wisdom and skills to improve the lives



of needy Lorain County residents. Many types of volunteer opportunities are available to choose from throughout Lorain County based on your interests, availability and experience including flexible hours, opportunities to meet new people, make friends and learn new things.

No experience needed — just an interest to help others. Contact AmeriCorps Senior Program at: (440) 326-4800.

Please visit our website at [www.lcooa.org](http://www.lcooa.org) for up to date information on programs and services offered by the Lorain County Office on Aging.



## Protect Your Loved Ones by Planning for Your Future

Whether your concerns are about Medicaid, Social Security, retirement and disability planning, long-term and nursing care options, or providing for your family and leaving a legacy, the elder law and estate planning attorneys at Hickman Lowder can help you and your family make a clear, thorough plan for the years ahead.

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## The role of a home health aide

Caregivers come from all walks of life. Doctors and nurses may be the frontline medical providers people encounter most frequently, but there are plenty of others who do their part to maintain the well-being of individuals, including home health aides.

Home health aides, sometimes called personal care aides, are brought in to assist a person with activities of daily life. An HHA typically helps a person who may need some assistance with tasks they cannot perform due to illness or disability. HHAs may work in a person's home, in a group home or in another care facility.



AARP says home health aides are considered health care paraprofessionals and must meet established training requirements, which vary by location.

HHAs may perform various duties, including:

- assistance with personal care, such as dressing, toileting, feeding, and moving from bed to chair, etc.

- checking vital signs
- monitoring a client
- light housekeeping
- meal planning and cooking
- picking up prescriptions
- companionship

HHAs typically will not provide skilled nursing care and may not be able to offer recommendations on treatment or medications.

Individuals can find the services of HHAs who may work independently or are placed through agencies. Sometimes a doctor or hospital will have connections to HHA services and can make referrals. It can be useful to interview several potential HHAs to find one who will fit with the needs and personality of the person requiring assistance. A good HHA will be compassionate, patient and flexible. As illness or injury also can affect a person's

mood, HHAs must be able to adjust if a client is reluctant to receive help or is depressed or anxious from his or her limitations.

Home health aides serve vital roles in the health care community by providing care and companionship to those who can no longer live independently.

## What people can do to prevent stroke

Stroke has been described as a "brain attack." Stroke occurs when blood flow to a part of the brain becomes blocked or when a blood vessel in the brain breaks, which can damage or kill brain cells. The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion says stroke is a leading cause of death and long-term disability in adults. It also can cause irreversible damage to the brain.

Individuals who experience stroke may end up with memory problems or experience difficulty thinking or forming words. Mobility issues like difficulty walking or paralysis and weakness may occur. Some individuals also may experience incontinence and other issues resulting from neurological damage.

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## Tips for daily living with arthritis

Arthritis isn't a single disease, but a term that refers to more than 100 conditions characterized by joint pain or joint disease, says the Arthritis Foundation. Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, and affects women at a proportionally higher rate than men.

Arthritis looks and feels different to the various people who experience it, and symptoms can vary from day to day depending on variables such as the weather and individuals' level of physical activity. When arthritis flares up, it can make performance of daily activities challenging. Therefore, people experiencing arthritis can take steps to make living with the condition somewhat easier.

### Work with an occupational therapist

An occupational therapist can assess work and home situations and make recommendations on potential modifications to these spaces that might be right for your situation. The bathroom and kitchen typically are two spaces where people spend a lot of time and can be areas of focus. Having items at counter height; purchasing smaller sizes of products that are easier to hold; avoiding bending down by using a grabber tool; and having a chair or stool nearby so that you can sit while doing an activity can help.



### Use smart devices

The bevy of smart devices now available can work to your advantage. With the push of a button on a phone app or through voice control, you can turn on lights, switch the thermostat or perform any other tasks programmed around the house. This can help when mobility is compromised.

### Focus on kitchen tasks

Meal preparation can be a chore when arthritis

makes it painful. Rather than eating out all of the time, some tips can help. Utilize frozen fruit or vegetables that already are chopped and prepared to cut down on these tasks. Invest in lightweight cookware and dishes to simplify moving items around. Electric jar openers, kitchen scissors and even vegetable steamers that require less water are additional kitchen tools that can make life with arthritis a little easier.

### Move your bedroom

If climbing stairs repeatedly is problematic, move clothing or even your bedroom downstairs to reduce trips up and down. Additional relocation techniques can include putting a mini fridge in your bedroom or relocating the washer and dryer upstairs to make laundry easier.

### Get a rollator

A rollator is a wheeled walker that doubles as a seat. It provides support when walking, but also can be a comfortable place to stop and take a seated break.

### Get the right pain relief

Pain relief can make it easier to cope. Strategies include anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy and massages, stretching and exercising.

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## 5 GARAGE SAFETY TIPS

(Family Features) When you throw open the windows, you'll likely be spending more time with the garage door open, too. Make access to your outdoor equipment safer with these tips to get your garage ready for the warmer months.

Organizing clutter is part of the process, but warmer weather can also serve as a reminder to make sure your garage equipment and features are secure and functioning properly.

- **Your garage floor** tends to capture grime and grit from the outdoors, especially where your car sits. Take time to thoroughly sweep and mop, but also take stock of the floor's condition for any chips or other damage that may grow worse over time and pose a risk for tripping or other safety issues.

- **Check your garage door** performance. Ensure doors are rolling smoothly with no hitches. If you do happen to notice any abnormalities, it's a good time to investigate. In some cases, a little grease or a minor adjustment is all you

need to get things back on track.

- **Don't forget to** check your garage door sensors, too. Warmer weather means animals and children (and their toys) are more likely to find themselves in an automated door's path when it begins to lower. Ensure sensors are operating properly to prevent injury or property damage.

- **Verify all outlets,** lights and other electrical features are in proper operating condition and all wires are intact and free of damage or fraying.

- **Ensure any poisonous** materials, such as paint, garden pesticides, cleaners and automotive fluids, are safely stored out of reach of pets and children that may have increased access to the garage during warmer months. Also check for spills or leaks of any potentially hazardous or flammable materials.

Taking time to safety-proof your garage can provide your family months of stress-free use. Find more tips for getting your garage in order at [eLiving-today.com](http://eLiving-today.com).



## LIVING WITH ARTHRITIS FROM PAGE 4

and even prescription therapies that target the immune system in people with autoimmune arthritis. Work with health professionals to get the right combination of what is needed to alleviate pain and stiffness.

Arthritis affects millions of individuals around the world. By making some changes, people living with the condition can find life a little bit easier.



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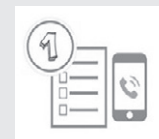
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## How Volunteering Can Help Older Adults Combat Loneliness

(Family Features) The bonds found in friendships and other relationships are an important factor in health and wellness – even science says so.

According to the American Psychological Association, forming and maintaining social connections at any age is one of the most reliable predictors of a healthy, happy and long life. Studies show having strong and supportive friendships can fend off depression and anxiety, lower blood pressure and heart rates in stressful situations and change the way people perceive daunting tasks.

However, statistics show approximately half of U.S. adults lack companionship and feel socially disconnected, according to the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community. In fact, 12% don't have anyone they consider a close friend, per the Survey Center on American Life. This "epidemic of loneliness," as coined by U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, can take a severe toll on mental and physical health.

As people age, the risks of isolation increase. With America's older population growing rapidly – the 65 and older population reached more than 55 million in 2020 – discussing how older adults can combat loneliness is relevant to public health and individual well-being.

Consider volunteering, which is one of the best and most rewarding ways to combat loneliness.

### **Volunteering Combats Loneliness**

People often volunteer to find a sense of purpose, learn new skills, improve their communities or establish new routines after retiring or becoming empty nesters. For many, making friends through volunteer work is a welcome bonus. The act of volunteering provides proven benefits for older adults.

Forming connections can make all the difference in a person's volunteer experience and sense of well-being. People who meet through volunteer work inherently share a common interest and something to bond over. These friendships can carry over outside of volunteer work and lead to bonding over other hobbies and interests.

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# VOLUNTEERING FROM PAGE 6

## Connection-Focused Volunteer Opportunities

In addition to making friends with fellow volunteers, many older adults also form relationships with the people they're serving, especially if those recipients are their peers.

For example, AmeriCorps Seniors is the national service and volunteerism program in the federal agency of AmeriCorps that connects adults aged 55 and up to local service opportunities that match their interests. Its Senior Companion Program pairs volunteers with other older adults or those with disabilities who need companionship or assistance. Volunteers may help with tasks such as paying bills, shopping or getting companions to appointments. In some cases, volunteers may also provide support and respite for family members caring for loved ones with chronic illnesses.

"We often think of volunteering

as 'giving back,' but we've seen firsthand that it often becomes so much more than that," said Atalaya Sergi, director of AmeriCorps Seniors. "By spending a few hours each week with another older adult in need of support, our volunteers are not only giving back to others, but they're adding meaning to their own lives and establishing new connections. They're helping to fight the loneliness epidemic one visit at a time."

Growing older can come with challenges, but some of those can be minimized with a positive mindset and commitment to remaining connected and engaged – whether with friends, relatives or fellow community members. Fostering relationships is a key ingredient to a healthier and more fulfilling life.

For more information and to find volunteer opportunities near you, visit [AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment](https://AmeriCorps.gov/YourMoment).



## Manage Heart Health for Stronger Brain Health

(Family Features) The same risk factors that contribute to making heart disease the leading cause of death worldwide also impact the rising global prevalence of brain disease, including stroke, Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The global death rate from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is increasing even more than the rate of heart disease death, according to the American Heart Association's Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics 2022 Update.

Globally, more than 54 million people had Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in 2020, a 37% increase since 2010 and 144% increase over the past 30 years (1990-2020). Additionally, more than 1.89 million deaths were attributed to Alzheimer's disease and other dementias worldwide in 2020, compared to nearly 9 million deaths from heart disease.

"The global rate of brain disease is quickly outpacing heart disease," said Mitchell S.V. Elkind, M.D. M.S., FAHA, the past president of the American Heart Association (2020-21), a professor of neurology and epidemiology at Columbia University's Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and attending neurologist at New York-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

"We are learning more about how some types of dementia are related to aging, and how some types are due to poor vascular health. It's becoming more evident that reducing vascular disease risk factors can make a real difference in helping people live longer, healthier lives, free of heart disease and brain disease."

According to the statistics update, people with midlife hypertension were five times more likely to experience impairment on global cognition and about twice as likely to experience reduced executive function, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The risk for dementia associated with heart failure was nearly two-fold.

Experts recommend maintaining a healthy weight, managing your blood pressure and following other heart-healthy lifestyle behaviors that can also support good brain health while studies show maintaining good vascular health is associated with healthy aging and retained cognitive function.

Optimal brain health includes the ability to perform tasks like movement, perception, learning and memory, communication, problem solving, judgment, decision making and emotion. Cognitive decline and dementia are often seen following

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## What is the “silver tsunami”?

The United States is changing, and observant individuals may notice the nation is skewing a little older than it has in recent years. Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau indicate roughly 56 million Americans had reached age 65 by 2020, which marked a nearly 39 percent increase since 2010. The increase in the population that has reached traditional retirement age has been dubbed a “silver tsunami,” and that increase could stretch government resources thin in the decades to come. In fact, a 2018 report from the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy noted that the federal government could face considerable challenges as more of its budget is allocated to age entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare. That problem may not prove unique to the United States, as the United Nations estimates that the elderly population in Europe is expected to account for around 30 percent of all residents by 2050. Though entitlement programs differ from country to country, finding ways to successfully manage the silver tsunami could be imperative to various nations’ financial stability in the decades to come.



## HEART HEALTH FROM PAGE 8

stroke or cerebrovascular disease and indicate a decline in brain health.

Consider these steps to live a healthier lifestyle and protect your heart and brain health:

- Don't smoke; avoid secondhand smoke.
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight. Be mindful of your eating habits; eat foods low in saturated fat,

trans fat, sodium and added sugars.

- Be physically active. Start slowly and build up to at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking) each week. As an alternative, you can do 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or a combination of the two, to improve overall cardiovascular health.
- Get your blood pressure checked

regularly and work with your health care team to manage it if it's high.

- Have regular medical checkups and take your medicine as directed.
- Decrease your stress level and seek emotional support when needed.

Learn more about the relationship between heart health and brain health at [heart.org](http://heart.org).



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## PREVENT STROKE FROM PAGE 3

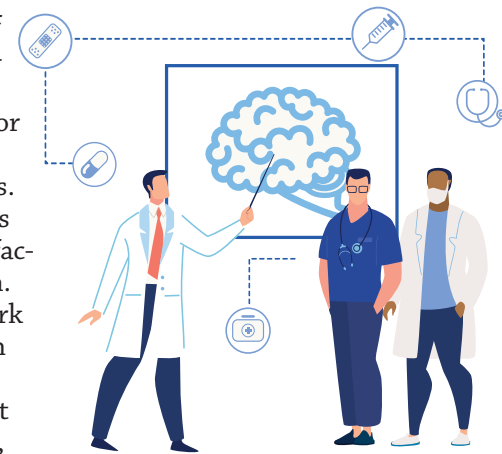
Although stroke can come out of the blue and is not always preventable, there are several steps people can take to help reduce their risk for stroke.

- Reduce blood pressure numbers. High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is a significant risk factor for stroke, says Harvard Health. Doctors may advise patients to work to lower blood pressure to between 140/90 to 120/80.

- Work to lower BMI. Overweight or obesity increases risk for stroke, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Losing weight and maintaining a health body mass index can help lower stroke risk.

- Exercise more often. Routine physical activity can not only help a person lose weight, but also lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels — all of which are risk factors for stroke. The U.S. Surgeon General recommends individuals get a minimum of two hours and 20 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week.

- Get a cholesterol check. High cholesterol can increase risk of stroke, which makes routine cholesterol checks important. The Office for the Assistant Secretary of Health says people should get their cholesterol checked at least every four to six years, with some needing to get it checked more frequently.



- Drink only in moderation. Alcohol can increase risk of high blood pressure. Individuals should reduce their alcohol intake, with one drink or less for women and two drinks or less for men per day.

- Know your family health history. Knowing one's family health history may illustrate a risk for genetic health conditions that can make a person more likely to experience stroke.

- Treat heart disease. Do not delay medical treatment for heart disease. Heart conditions like coronary artery disease or atrial fibrillation should be addressed promptly to prevent stroke.

Stroke is a serious medical condition that can leave a person debilitated. That is why it is key to reduce risk of stroke throughout one's life.

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