

Senior Series

*The Ohio
Department of
Aging*



Senior Series - Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Aging Networks
Working Together to Address Older Adult Issues

Senior Hotline

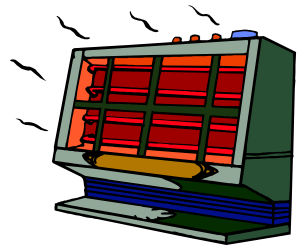
*... a newsletter for older adults or
those who care for an older adult*

Volume 7, Issue 2

The Ohio State University, The
United States Department of Agriculture and County Commissioners
Cooperating.

Project Thaw

In his "State of the State" address, Governor Taft announced a new program to assist Ohioans with paying their high heating bills. **Project THAW** (Temporary Heating Assistance for Warmth) is now available through the



County Departments of Ohio Jobs and Family Services. The THAW program includes a one time payment of up to \$250 to help pay a current heating bill or an unpaid balance on a heating bill. Individuals currently participating in the HEAP program are eligible. All types of heating sources are covered. To find out if you are income eligible and to locate the local office handling Project THAW in your county call the "THAW Hotline" at 1-866-901-6446. You will need to fill out an application and provide income verification and a current heating bill. **The deadline for applications is March 30, 2001, so DON'T DELAY!**

Submitted by Christine Price, Extension State Specialist,
Aging, The Ohio State University.

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DINING FOR ONE

Meals for one can be fun. If you follow a few simple steps you may find mealtime to be a pleasure you look forward to instead of a chore.

Shopping

When you go shopping buy three pieces of fresh fruit. Buy one ripe, one medium ripe, and one green. This will allow your fruit to ripen and be ready to eat at different times. This way you won't have to throw out spoiled fruits.



When you purchase grocery items, try to buy what you can in small portions. For example, purchase small cans of vegetables and apple sauce. If you cannot find small packaged items, buy larger items and divide them at home. When you are in the meat department buy the larger package on sale and a box of freezer bags. When you get home, portion out individual servings, label and date them and place them in the freezer.

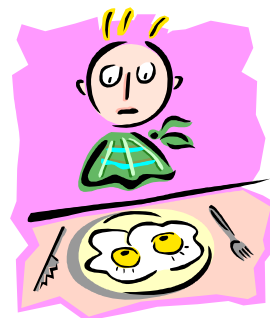
Cooking

When you are preparing meals there are several things that can make the job less difficult.

- Cook in small skillets and saucepans
- Have microwave cookware for re-heating
- Prepare several meals at once. If you have 2 pounds of ground beef you can brown it and use some for sloppy joe sandwiches, chili, spaghetti and tacos. Place the meals in labeled and dated containers in the freezer for future use.

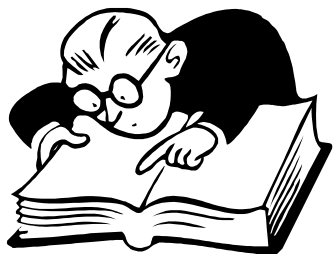
Dining

There is no better way to complement a meal than music and candlelight. You should clear a place at the table and set it with a place mat and napkin. Turn on your favorite music, relax and enjoy your meal.



Submitted by: Michele Bruns, Dietetic Intern, Department of Human Nutrition and Food Management, The Ohio State University.

The Reader's Corner



“*Life is So Good*” (2000) by George Dawson & Richard Glaubman
Publisher: Random House (260 pages, Hardback \$18.40)

This is a story about George Dawson, the grandson of slaves, who at 98 learned to read. George shares a remarkable story about the lessons he learned over his long life, living as an African-American man in a racist society. Despite facing many challenges, George always sees the positive side of things. Never having an opportunity to go to school, George started his education at 98 and continues it today (the latest report he was 104). His story is a tribute to the spirit of generosity, forgiveness and optimism. Despite years of discrimination and difficulty he teaches us to focus on what we HAVE rather than what we don't. People of all ages can learn a lot from this uplifting story and from George's long time philosophy “life is so good.”

By Christine Price, Extension State Specialist, Aging, The Ohio State University.

May is Better Speech & Hearing Month



Who has hearing, speech and language problems? Lots of people. In fact, people of all ages can have a

communication disorder. Children can have communication disorders from birth; adults can develop disorders related to an injury or illness; and older people can experience gradual decline in their ability to hear, speak and understand.

Since May is Better Hearing and Speech Month, it is a good time to take stock of your own hearing and seek help if you or someone you care about has a problem.

You may have a hearing loss if you:

- Frequently ask people to repeat themselves
- Often turn your ear toward a sound to hear better
- Understand people better when you wear your glasses or look directly at their faces
- Lose your place in group conversations
- Keep the volume on your radio or TV at a level that others say is too loud
- Have pain or ringing in your ears

People who see themselves in these descriptions should see an audiologist for a hearing test. Most kinds of hearing loss can be helped. However, it is important that people check their hearing regularly and visit an audiologist when they have a hearing problem.

Hearing loss often occurs slowly. Some sounds remain clear (often low pitched sounds, such as bass line in music), whereas, others seem fuzzy (women's and children's high-pitched voices). There are many causes to hearing loss including exposure to loud noise. The most common hearing loss is associated with aging.

Forty-two percent of people with hearing loss are 65 years of age or older. An annual hearing checkup is a good idea for people from age 45 and up, especially if there is a family history of hearing loss. Since loss of hearing occurs so gradually, the individual with the loss may not even be aware of the problem. If you have been told by family members you may have a hearing loss or if you suspect a change in your own hearing, see a specialist soon. Don't miss out on the world around you; temporary silence may be golden but permanent silence is not.

Submitted by: Lynn Dobb, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging.

Quote of the Day:

"Ever since I turned a hundred, life has been busy"

- George Dawson, 101



Home Alone - Is That The Best for Mom?



How do you know if Mom should still be living by herself? You do not want to take her independence away, but you also do not want her living alone if that is unsafe. This

question can be difficult to answer for many caregivers and family members. We want the best care for our loved one but how do we know what kind of care he/she really needs?

To help answer some of these questions there is an assessment tool available that can help determine an appropriate level of care. You can get a copy of the tool by calling Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging at 800-860-5799 (ask for the Housing Department), or you can visit the Senior Housing Net web site to get a copy (www.seniorhousing.net. - look in the top box for "Evaluation Tool" and click on this).

The assessment tool is divided into nine categories including: *Mobility, Nutrition, Hygiene, Housekeeping, Dressing, Toileting, Medications, Mental Status and Behavioral Status*. In each category, you will need to select the statement that best reflects the person you have in mind. For example, in the category "*Dressing*," choose one item that best

reflects the abilities of your loved one to dress him/herself.

- Independent and dresses appropriately. (1 point)
- May require assistance with shoelaces, zippers, medical appliances or garments, or may require reminders, motivation or initiation assistance. (4 points)
- Dependent on others for dressing. (5 points)

After completing each of the 9 categories, add up the number of points in each category for a TOTAL. The assessment tool then provides a chart which describes the most appropriate type of housing based on the TOTAL score. By using the assessment tool you will have a better idea if Mom needs to be in an "Assisted Living" facility or if she would be better in a "Senior Congregate Housing" facility. Remember, this assessment tool simply provides a place to start. It is always best to consult with health and social service professionals before making a choice. Also, do not forget to tour the facility of your choice several times before making your final decision.

Source: www.seniorhousing.net

Submitted by: Teresa Cook, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging.

Senior Series Fact Sheets on a variety of topics are available at no charge! To obtain copies contact your local Extension office or your local Area Agency on Aging. Example topics include:

- Communicating with a Doctor
- Grandparents as Parents
- Consumer Fraud

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DETERMINE

If you're an older adult, or if you care for someone older, look for these warning signs of poor nutrition. They spell the word "determine." Anyone with three or more of these risk factors should consult a doctor, registered dietitian (RD), or other health-care professional.

Disease
Eating poorly
Tooth loss or mouth pain
Economic hardship
Reduced social contact
Many medicines
Involuntary weight loss or gain
Needs assistance in self-care
Elder years above age 80



Source: Duyff, R.L., American Dietetic Association's Complete Food & Nutrition Guide.

Submitted by Lisa Gibson, Ohio State University Extension, Franklin County.

Climb With Care



As the weather warms, you may begin to notice things to do around your home. Your list may include painting, window cleaning, or repairs. Many of them require the use of a ladder.

Accidents from ladders result in approximately 65,000 emergency room visits each year according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Here are questions to consider in order to ensure the safe use of a ladder:

- How will the ladder be used? Is it long enough for the job at hand? Can the ladder be used without standing on the top of a step ladder or the top three (3) rungs of an extension ladder?
- How much weight will the ladder hold? Is it rated light-duty, medium-duty, or heavy-duty? (Did you realize this rating includes the weight of the person and what he/she carries?)
- What is the condition of the ladder? Does your metal ladder have sharp edges, dents or bent steps? Does your wooden ladder have split, or cracked wood? Are the steps loose?

Never use a metal ladder near power lines since metal conducts electricity. Avoid using a ladder when it is windy. If you must use a ladder in front of a doorway, block or lock the door. Be sure the ladder is placed securely before you use it.

Ladders should be stored in a sheltered area which is dry and well ventilated. Keep your ladder in good repair. Always inspect ladders before using them.

Keep these tips in mind as you climb with care. Remember, there may be times when it just makes sense to ask someone to help you rather than doing it yourself.

Source: *Purchase and Proper use of Ladders*, AEX-691, Ohio State University Extension Factsheet
Submitted by: Patricia Holmes, Ohio State University Extension, Preble County.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Sincerely,

**Extension Agent,
Family and
Consumer Sciences**

*For More Information,
Contact the OSU Extension
office at:*



All educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, age, disability or Vietnam-era veteran status.

Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Ag. Adm. and Director, OSU Extension
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868

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