

# SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 11, Issue 2

## Senior Series

A partnership between  
Ohio State University Extension and  
Ohio Aging Network professionals



## You Can!

active aging



**You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging** is a campaign initiated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to encourage Americans of every age to make healthier choices. The message is that good eating

habits and physical activity can help you feel better. Simple things that are done every day can help improve your health and well-being.

Are you interested in:

- Gaining strength and vigor to help you do the things you want to do?
- Managing your weight?
- Improving your mood and relieving anxiety?
- Reducing your risk of chronic disease and premature death?
- Strengthening your bones and helping to prevent falls?
- Making new friends and having fun?

All of these benefits can be yours if you make some simple lifestyle changes. Start by setting a goal. It can be as easy as adding one whole grain food to your diet at lunch each day, or parking farther back in the parking lot when you go grocery shopping. Both of these things, if done on a regular basis, can help improve your overall health.

Here are some more ideas:

- Get up to change the television channel instead of using the remote control.
- If possible, walk to a friend's house instead of calling.

- Return the shopping cart to the store instead of leaving it in the parking lot.
- Add one fruit to your breakfast each day to reach the goal of eating 2 to 4 servings of fruits daily.
- Choose pretzels instead of potato chips as a snack.
- Make condensed soup with fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water to boost your consumption of calcium-rich foods.

Finding time to add new activities sometimes seems challenging. Think of small changes you can make in what you do every day. Try writing down everything you do in a day's time. Look at your list. Is there some time during the day where you are inactive? Perhaps you watch a television show just because it is on. Think about things you can do during this time, such as riding a stationary bike. Try to use this time to work toward your goal.

There are many resources available throughout your community. Look around for new opportunities. They may be as close as your neighborhood library, religious organization, senior center, or community center. Visit the Administration on Aging website [www.aoa.gov/youcan](http://www.aoa.gov/youcan) for more information.

*By Linnette Mizer Goard, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Lorain County. References: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2004). Steps to Healthier Aging: A Campaign of Steps to a Healthier US Toolkit. Washington, D.C.: Administration on Aging. • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1996). Physical Activity and Health: A Report from the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. • National Resource Center on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Aging. (2004). Eat Better and Move More: A Guidebook for Community Programs. Miami: Florida International University.*

# Drink More Water

---



Dehydration is one of the most frequent causes of hospitalization for those over 65, and occurs due to the loss of water and salts essential for normal body function. It is estimated that more than one-third of older adults may not drink enough water. Adequate water intake can depend upon factors such as humidity, temperature, altitude,

exercise, medications, and use of diuretics. Water is essential to every cell, tissue, and organ in your body, and makes up about 50 percent of total body weight for seniors.

Older adults can dehydrate due to muscle mass loss, cell changes due to aging, less efficient kidney function, and reduced thirst sensation, which means you may not know when you need water. Even some prescribed and over-the-counter medications such as diuretics, tricyclic antidepressants, and laxatives can cause dehydration. Drinking enough fluids is essential for proper digestion and good health. What is enough? Most nutritionists and physicians recommend eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily.

Signs of dehydration can be fatigue, dry mouth and sticky saliva, swallowing difficulties, muscle cramps, dizziness or lightheadedness, lower urine output or darker urine, nausea, confusion, and even shock. Heat and high temperatures can cause dehydration, so whether you are an active or inactive senior, you should drink more water when the temperature climbs. Keep a bottle of water with you when getting any form of exercise, especially in the heat. Seniors who visit or move to climates that are warmer or dryer than they are used to should make it a practice to drink even when they are not thirsty.

Foods and drinks that can help prevent dehydration include fruits and vegetables (which are also excellent sources of vitamin C, minerals, and anti-oxidants), soups, juices, and milkshakes. Remember that caffeinated beverages have a diuretic effect on the body, so if you are drinking lots of caffeinated coffee, tea, or soft drinks, you should increase the amount of plain water you drink.

Whether you choose water, juice, or other liquids, consuming at least eight sources daily is essential for maintaining good health, according to the "70+" USDA Food Guide Pyramid.

*By Deborah Weber, Public Affairs Coordinator, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc., Mansfield OH. Sources: Dehydration; [www.lifesteps.com/gm/Atoz/ency/dehydration.jsp](http://www.lifesteps.com/gm/Atoz/ency/dehydration.jsp)—Retrieved from Internet 02/08/05. • Hydration and Seniors; [http://pcchu.peterborough.on.ca/nutnews\\_hydration\\_seniors.htm](http://pcchu.peterborough.on.ca/nutnews_hydration_seniors.htm)—Retrieved from Internet 11/18/04. • Insight 27, September 2002, More Than One in Three Older Americans May Not Drink Enough Water—[www.usda.gov/cnpp/FENR/FENRV16N1/fenrv16n1p49.pdf](http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/FENR/FENRV16N1/fenrv16n1p49.pdf)—Retrieved from Internet 02/08/05. • Food Pyramid Remodeled for Seniors; [www.fitnessandfreebies.com/seniors/fgp4seniors.html](http://www.fitnessandfreebies.com/seniors/fgp4seniors.html)—Retrieved from Internet 11/18/04.*



## In My Mother's Kitchen

by Robin A. Edgar

---

A touching book that reflects the healing power of reminiscence and telling one's story is *In My Mother's Kitchen: An Introduction to the Healing Power of Reminiscence* written by Robin A. Edgar. The author lost her mother to cancer and used written accounts of memories of her mother's life as examples in her work as a teacher, noting that she felt great comfort in recording these special memories.

Ms. Edgar began teaching workshops on the healing power of reminiscence and put her stories together in this book. The stories help the reader feel and understand the awesome power of connection we can share with family and friends. Each chapter includes questions posed to the reader and space to make notes to write down one's own recollections, providing a format to put these special memories in writing.

This powerful little book speaks to the importance of healing rituals and memory.

*Reviewed by: Lynn Dobb, Education Manager, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging*

# Chuck and Anita Scott

---



Charles "Chuck" and Anita Scott came from different worlds—

Chuck was a farm boy, the son of Romanian immigrants; Anita was a city girl from New York who decided to attend Westminster College, a small college in Northwest Pennsylvania to pursue a music education career.

Their paths crossed when introduced by a mutual friend and they have been together ever since! Their love of life and sense of humor have seen them

through many struggles during their fifty-five years of marriage.

Growing up with seven sisters and two brothers, Chuck learned to be (in his words) patient and self-sufficient. He can fix almost anything including cars, appliances, and broken hearts. An avid gardener, Chuck enjoys sharing his flowers and vegetables with others. Known for his sense of humor and twinkle in his eye, Chuck has never met a stranger!

Anita is the ultimate party planner. She loves to organize events and is attentive to every detail. Even though her health has slowed her down a bit in

recent years, she can still be counted on to take charge! She credits her successful battle with two cancers to support from family and friends, great doctors, and purpose in her life.

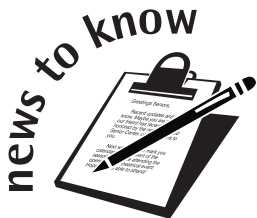
Anita and Chuck stay active in their church and Masonic organizations and make the most of every day. Surrounded by family and friends, Anita and Chuck are treasures to all who know them. Who are my senior friends? They are my parents—my very first best friends.

*By Cindy Oliveri, OSU Extension South Centers*

---

## Ohio's Senior Centers

---



There are more than 400 senior centers in Ohio offering those 60 and over socialization, interaction, and recreation. They are great gathering places! Older citizens meet for nutritious meals, social activities,

health screenings, health and consumer education, creative arts, exercise, travel opportunities, and more.

Many multi-purpose senior centers work with a variety of local organizations to deliver home and community based services such as transportation, meals, adult day care, personal care, homemaker services, and more.

Call the senior centers in your area and find out what they have planned. Ask to be added to their mailing lists for newsletters or calendars. Many senior centers plan bus trips to some great places, as well as provide entertainment, parties, square

dances, bingo, and more! You could learn to use a computer, explore the Internet, or indulge in a euchre tournament. The possibilities are endless, but one thing is certain—you will make new friends.

Senior centers have become an important part of the lives of thousands of older adults. They have found a place where others understand them, have been through the same life changes, or have the same interests—a place where they can reminisce about the good old days and plan for some exciting new ones.

Go to [www.goldenbuckeye.com/advocacy.html](http://www.goldenbuckeye.com/advocacy.html) and click on Senior Centers to find the list in your area, or look up Senior Citizens Service Organizations in your phone book. Give them a call . . . they're waiting to hear from YOU!

*By Deborah Weber, Public Affairs Coordinator, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc., Mansfield, OH. Source: Department of Aging/GoldenBuckeye.com*

# Feline Friends and Canine Companions

---



Americans are now living longer and fuller lives. Unfortunately, older adults often outlive loved ones, live far from family, or live alone. Loneliness is especially difficult for those who are socially isolated and have trouble getting out. Depression is a common and serious condition affecting seniors with few family or friends to provide support.

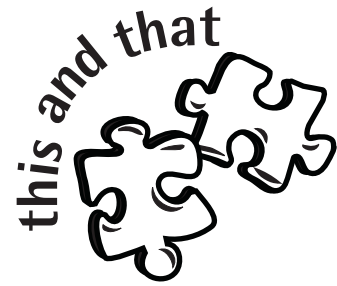
Pets can help overcome loneliness by providing companionship, a sense of security, and unconditional love. Studies have shown the medical benefits of having a pet. These include lowering blood pressure, reducing stress, decreasing blood cholesterol, and improving blood circulation. Studies have linked pet companionship with increased chances of survival after a heart attack and fewer anxious outbursts in Alzheimer's patients.

One of the biggest benefits may be the psychological boost we feel when we hold a kitten or pet a dog that won't stop wagging its tail. For those who have lost a spouse, hugging an animal can give a feeling of connection that is important for human existence. Pets also provide a sense of security and importance. Having to care for an animal and provide a loving home requires physical activity and can increase social contact by providing a topic of conversation with others.

Before deciding to adopt an animal, think about what's involved in having a pet. Do you have time for a pet? Pets require feeding, grooming, walking, fresh water, and attention. Consider adopting an older adult animal that is more likely to be calm, possibly spayed or neutered, vaccinated, housetrained, and less likely to behave unpredictably. Can you afford a pet? Having a pet requires expenses, like licenses, veterinary care, and food. Having your pet spayed or neutered is also important. Are your living arrangements suitable for a pet? Rental communities may have restrictions. Learn about them before you bring an animal home. Know who will take care of your pet when you are away from home.

Should you decide to adopt a furry friend, visit your local animal shelter or humane society. There are many kittens, puppies, dogs, and cats that are waiting for that special someone—maybe you!

*By Jenny Even, OSU Extension, Hamilton County. Sources: Humane Society of the United States, "What to Consider Before Adopting a Pet," 2004. • American Association of Retired Persons, "It's a Wonderful Life With a Pet by Your Side." • The Pet Care Trust, "Companion Animal in the Lives of Senior Citizens," 2000.*



## Ask

---

Oh the things we could learn  
If we only would ask,  
From these pillars of knowledge  
Who are linked to the past.

Once they're gone from this earth,  
Our connection is lost.  
So let's reach out in numbers;  
It's so worth the cost.

Their stories and tales  
They gladly will share,  
Too soon at our heartstrings  
Their passing will tear.

*By Karen Puterbaugh, Greene County  
Office on Aging*

# SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 11, Issue 2

Senior  
Series

A partnership between  
Ohio State University Extension and  
Ohio Aging Network professionals



## For More Information

For more information, other Ohio State University Extension resources, and links to your local Extension website, visit (without the www): <http://ohioline.osu.edu>

Address editorial comments to:  
Senior Hotline Newsletter  
151 Campbell Hall, 1787 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210-1295  
e-mail: [hdfsext@hec.osu.edu](mailto:hdfsext@hec.osu.edu)

### Issue Editors:

Christine A. Price, Ohio State University Extension State Gerontology Specialist  
Kirk Bloir, Ohio State University Extension Associate, Human Development and Family Science  
Joyce Brown, Ohio State University Extension, Athens County  
Deborah Weber, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging

OSU Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all educational programs conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, age, gender identity or expression, disability, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, or veteran status.

Keith L. Smith, Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, OSU Extension

TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868

Mention of a proprietary product, trademark or commercial firm in text or figures does not constitute endorsement by Ohio State University Extension and does not imply approval to the exclusion of other products or firms.

Copyright © 2005 Ohio State University Extension. All rights reserved.

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

The Ohio  
Department  
of Aging

