

# SeniorHOTLINE

Volume 12, Issue 3

## Senior Series

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



## Improve Your Health Through Exercise



The healthiest thing you can do for yourself is exercise! Continued physical activity is important to good health. Research studies suggest that by not exercising, older adults are at risk of losing the ability to do things on their own.

It just doesn't happen because you age, it happens because you become inactive.

But, don't be discouraged. You can stay healthy by doing simple activities in your everyday life. Things like walking at a brisk pace, gardening, or simple household chores are easy ways to retain balance, flexibility, endurance, and strength. These are important areas of overall health.

Exercise is not just important for the young-old, it is just as important for people who are 90 and over. In some cases, exercise can even improve health for people who have diseases and disabilities. To be helpful, exercise needs to be done on a regular basis. There are four types of exercise that help older adults:

**Endurance** exercises increase breathing and heart rate. These are things like climbing stairs and grocery shopping. These may delay or prevent diseases such as diabetes, colon cancer, heart disease, and stroke.

**Strength** exercises build your muscles. They give you strength to do things on your own and may even help prevent osteoporosis.

**Balance** exercises are important for fall prevention. Falls are a major cause of broken hips and other

injuries that often lead to the loss of being independent. One balancing exercise is simply standing on one leg.

**Flexibility** exercises stretch your muscles. By doing simple stretches each day, you can prevent injuries from happening. Flexibility can also help prevent falls.

If you are not currently physically active, remember to start slow. You may want to check with your health care provider about what types of exercise would be good for you. Too much physical activity too quickly can also be a bad thing. Start with one or two exercises and build up to more. Make physical activity easy by incorporating it into your everyday activities.

Success can come from exercise by setting realistic goals for yourself. The U.S. Surgeon General's Report states that you are more likely to keep your exercise goals if you think that you will benefit from the activity, that the activity you choose is fun, and that you can fit the activity into your daily schedule.

Start today to improve your health through regular physical activity. You can receive a free workbook that includes simple exercises to get you started from the National Institute on Aging. Call toll free: 1-800-222-2225 and ask for *Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging* or e-mail [niais@jbs1.com](mailto:niais@jbs1.com)

*By Linnette Mizer Goard, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Lorain County.*

*Source: Exercise: A Guide from the National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.*

# Snack for Good Health

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Snacks can provide energy, make us feel better, and help with the growth and repair of body tissue. Medical experts often suggest eating several small meals daily (snacks) instead of two or three larger meals.

There are no bad foods. However, eating too much of some foods can lead to health issues over time. Foods that are high in calories, fats, and sweets and low in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients can fill the stomach and satisfy the appetite. They may also crowd wholesome foods such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and whole grains from the diet.

Want to make your snacks count toward better health? Here are some ideas:

- Change is hard. Make dietary changes in small steps and spread them out over time. Too many (or too drastic) changes at once can make you feel deprived and wreck your plan!
- Choose snacks using MyPyramid as a guide. Check out <http://MyPyramid.gov> for ideas.
- Look for ways to include whole grains in your snacks and meals.
- Eat fruit instead of drinking juice. Although healthier than sodas, even 100% fruit juice is higher in sugar and calories and lower in fiber and other nutrients than the fruit itself.
- Make it easier to choose healthful foods than junk foods. Keep healthful snacks on hand and ready to eat. The reward of good health is worth the time and effort spent cutting and storing fruits and vegetables.
- Junk food is expensive and can lead to poor nutrition. Poor nutrition can lead to poor health—and more money spent on health care.
- Do not make any food or group of foods "off limits" except for medical necessity. Remember that "forbidden fruit" is always more attractive than the "legal" choice!
- Match snacks to your activity level.
- Think you're hungry? Many people mistake the feeling of thirst for hunger. Try drinking a glass of water before you reach for a snack. If you're still hungry in a few minutes, you can always grab a healthy snack!

Remember that snacks are a part of your daily food intake. Make them count toward good nutrition!

*By Joyce J. Brown, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Athens County*

*Sources: United States Department of Agriculture, Web site <http://MyPyramid.gov>, downloaded on June 2, 2006.*

*National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, "Can Eating Fruits and Vegetables Help People to Manage Their Weight?" [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/rtp\\_practitioner\\_10\\_07.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/rtp_practitioner_10_07.pdf), downloaded on June 2, 2006.*



## Earth's Elders: The Wisdom of the World's Oldest People by Jerry Friedman (2005) Earth's Elders Foundation, Inc., 211 pgs. (Hardcover: \$29.95)

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This book is a unique documentation, through photographs and essays, of the lives and experiences of 50 "supercentenarians"—those living 110 years or more. Author and award-winning photographer Jerry Friedman traveled the globe to interview and photograph the elders portrayed in the book. Their extraordinary stories provide an intriguing glimpse into lives spanning three different centuries. The photographs are especially poignant since they represent such diverse faces of aging. The book also documents the personal reflections and experiences of the author as he traveled the world and interacted with these remarkable elders. Finally, personal essays by four reputable authors consider the value of connecting the generations and the role of healthcare in the extended longevity witnessed today. All proceeds from book sales go to Earth's Elders Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization created to increase awareness about the elderly and facilitate intergenerational connections.

*By Christine A. Price, Ph.D., Extension State Gerontology Specialist, The Ohio State University*

# My Senior Friend, Bob



I often wonder if as a senior I will have the same positive impact on

others that some seniors have had on me. Will I be able to give without hesitation my energy to care for a loved one who can no longer care for themselves? Will I be willing to share my time and enthusiasm to promote my community's history and make it a better place in which to live and raise

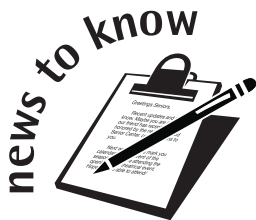
children? And, will I be able to keep the undivided attention of others when I share stories of my family, work, and interesting life experiences?

These are but a few of the characteristics that have drawn me to a very special senior named Bob. I first met Bob at a monthly caregiver meeting when he came to see if it was a place he needed to be. The answer was yes, for both of us. As it turned out, he was to be the only consistent caregiver to attend, giving us many hours to get to know each other and

make a true connection. Without question, Bob is a tremendous caregiver for his wife—a true inspiration. He is also the local historian, able to share in great detail most everything about the community and "famous" for giving downtown tours to the elementary children. But even more impressive is his ability to engage me in such wonderful stories and adventures so I anticipate our meetings even more so than he.

*By Karen Puterbaugh, Executive Director, Greene County Council on Aging*

## A Safety Check Against Identity Theft



Don't you just get the biggest kick out of those recent commercials about identity fraud? As the biggest source of U.S. consumer fraud, identity theft affected 9 million Americans last year so it's no

laughing matter. For about 3 million of these folks, the average cost of repairing their credit was nearly \$1,200. And for all victims, the average time to set the record straight was 40 hours.

Fortunately, the growth of identity theft seems to be slowing but don't let down your guard. As scammers are getting more sophisticated, we too must consider additional safety strategies such as these—

"Leave home without it." Thirty percent of frauds begin with a lost or stolen wallet, checkbook, or credit card. Don't take everything with you. And since one in seven cases of ID theft is traced to a trusted friend or family member, lock-up/keep

secured your valuable papers, cards, and checkbooks at home as well. Less is more when it comes to keeping track of your identity.

Monitor all accounts for any unusual activity. You are likely to catch it before your bank does. It is a good idea to review your credit history too. You can get a free credit history annually from each of the three Credit Reporting Bureaus (Experian: 1-888-397-3742; Equifax: 1-877-576-5734; Trans-Union: 1-800-680-7289). By rotating the requests, you can receive a report every four months free. This free credit report can be requested through the web site [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com), by phone, or by mail.

*By Kathy Oliver, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Hardin County*  
*Sources: Kirchheimer, S. (2006). Scams Unmasked! AARP The Magazine. Retrieved May 30, 2006, from [www.aarpmagazine.org/money/scams\\_unmasked.html](http://www.aarpmagazine.org/money/scams_unmasked.html) and Frequently Asked Questions. (2006). Central Source LLC. Retrieved May 30, 2006, from [www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/helpfaq.html](http://www.annualcreditreport.com/cra/helpfaq.html).*

# Spending Quality Time With Your Grandchildren: Some Do's and Don'ts

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Whether you see your grandchild(ren) every day or only a few times a year, the time you spend together is precious. Sometimes your conversations may feel forced or shallow. If you think there is some room for improvement, here are some do's and don'ts that can help you

achieve a closer relationship through better conversations. During the next visit with your grandchild(ren) think about the following suggestions.

**DO** take time to be alone with each grandchild. Establish individual relationships to learn what makes each child unique. Getting alone time with you can also make each grandchild feel special.

**DO** give your full attention. Let your grandchild know how important he/she is by making direct eye contact, turning off the television, and turning on the answering machine. Reduce as many outside distractions as you can.

**DO NOT** dominate every conversation. Spend most of your time listening to your grandchild instead of talking, giving directions, or correcting behavior. While grandchildren should not run wild, they should have the freedom to be themselves and talk about things that are important to them.

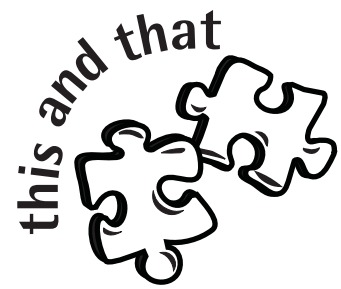
**DO** try to be available to them when they want to talk to you. If you cannot be available, agree on a time you can be together again very soon and be sure to make that happen.

**DO NOT** always have a hurried activity planned or one that takes you away from home. Sometimes just taking a walk or baking cookies or working in the wood shop together can turn into very special memories.

**DO** ask an older grandchild how they are feeling or ask their opinion about something. By listening carefully to what they say you will be learning about the adult they are becoming. These conversations may also give you a chance to share your own thoughts and feelings about important topics and may help them to learn more about you.

**DO NOT** always be in the role of teacher. Instead, ask your grandchild to teach you something, for example, how to use the computer or what to look for in a skateboard competition. You can give your grandchild a chance to feel useful and grown up at the same time you learn something new yourself!

*By Christine A. Price, Ph.D., Extension State Gerontology Specialist, The Ohio State University*



## Water Thoughts

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The gentle sounds of rain,  
Or the clap of thunder that foretells a storm  
The sounds of water from a rushing brook,  
The roar of the rapids down a river filled with canoes  
Windshield wipers washing the rain away  
Waves hitting the shore, leaving prints in the sand

Water to drink fresh from the tap  
Bottled from the store  
Pumped from a well—as in day's gone by or  
Ice to cool a glass of lemonade

In the summer a place to play  
Sitting by a pool, lake, pond, or beach  
The soothing feel of water during a shower or bath  
Or a dip in the pool, lake, or pond  
Escape from the heat on a hot summer's day

Water in the winter—a frozen sheet of ice,  
Skating on a pond  
Falling snow to cover the landscape  
Snowball fights, snowmen, and igloos made of snow

*By Cindy Oliveri, Center Specialist, Ohio State University Extension*

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## For More Information

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

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