



## Sleep—Needed for Good Health at Any Age

active aging



Do you feel awake and alert on most days? If so, the experts at the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) say that you are probably getting enough sleep. The 2003 NSF *Sleep in America* poll found strong

links between adequate sleep and good health. However, if you're often sleepy during the day, you may be like the 67 percent of older adults who reported one or more indicators of sleep problems. Signs include:

- trouble falling asleep
- waking often during the night
- waking early and being unable to return to sleep
- feeling tired much of the time
- snoring
- pauses in breathing while sleeping
- discomfort in the legs while resting
- memory loss
- problems concentrating
- feeling irritable without immediate reason
- feeling depressed or confused

If you have trouble sleeping, is something happening in your life that may be causing the problem? If so, it may resolve itself. If the problem doesn't work itself out, talk with your doctor. He or she might prescribe medication or tests to decide if you have a sleep disorder. Try keeping a sleep log for a week or two before you visit the doctor. Record the amount of sleep you get nightly, your fatigue level for each day, and any other symptoms you have and then share the information with your doctor.

Changes in your behavior that can help you sleep longer and better include:

- Getting exercise in the afternoon several hours before bedtime.
- Avoiding stimulants, such as caffeine, within three or four hours of bedtime.
- Going to bed and getting up at the same time every day.
- Using your bed only for sleep or sexual activity.
- Relaxation training.
- Counseling to help you change any ways of thinking that might contribute to poor sleep.
- Avoiding alcohol in the late evening. It can cause awakenings later in the night.
- Consider a nap carefully. A short nap (30 minutes or less) in the afternoon may give you more energy during the second part of your day, but that daytime sleep does affect nighttime sleep. Taking a nap may cause you to take longer to fall asleep or sleep for a shorter period of time that night.
- If you don't fall asleep after 20 minutes of lying in bed, get up and engage in a quiet, relaxing activity such as reading or listening to relaxing music. When you feel sleepy, go back to bed. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, repeat this process.

Resources: "Aging Gracefully and Sleeping Well," National Sleep Foundation Website, <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleepmatters/index.php?id=46&tsecid=25>; "Aging," National Sleep Foundation Website, <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/sleepmatters/index.php?id=7>

Contributed by Joyce J. Brown, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Athens and Meigs Counties.

# Eating Healthy When Dining Alone

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If you're dining alone tonight, you are part of a growing trend. Each evening, one in 10 Americans eats alone. This can become a concern if you do not plan for good nutrition in your meals.

In one study of people 55 and older, the diets of men who lived alone were found to be low in calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, B6, and C. Women who ate alone had diets low in thiamin, riboflavin, vitamin B6, calcium, and magnesium. Interestingly, those who ate alone did not eat less nutritious foods than those who ate with others. Rather, they tended to skip meals or eat very little in order to shorten the time it took to prepare meals.

The good news is that many manufacturers now cater to the single diner. From frozen dinners to single serving cans of soup, you can find it all in the supermarket. These prepackaged individual serving foods offer convenience, some variety, and measured portions. However, they usually cost more—up to twice as much per serving.

Here are some tips to boost the nutrition in the meals you prepare:

- Don't skip breakfast, even if you're in a rush or don't feel hungry. Breakfast can be anything from a fruit milkshake to left-over pizza.
- Serve a combination of prepackaged convenience foods and fresh foods. For example, serve a frozen meat entrée with fresh or frozen vegetables and fresh fruit. The fresh fruits and vegetables help balance out the higher fat and sodium in the frozen entrée.
- Brown a pound of hamburger, then package it in meal-size portions in freezer bags and freeze it. Use the meat later in chili, tacos, spaghetti, and other entrées.
- And, don't forget to create a pleasant dining setting for yourself. An attractive placemat, flowers, and candles help make a meal important.

*Resources: Eating Well As We Age. U.S. Food and Drug Administration Website. Available at: <http://www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/eatage.pdf>; Good Nutrition: It's A Way Of Life. National Institute on Aging Website. Available at: <http://nia-publications.org/agepages/nutrition.asp>*

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



## Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate? Workbook

University of Minnesota  
Extension Service

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Transferring personal belongings is inevitable when a family member dies. Often arrangements are made for the monetarily valuable items but it's the little things—like who gets Grandma's pie plate—that are ignored and can end up leading to family disagreements.

This guide to passing along personal possessions is a must-read for families in advance of making emotional decisions while grieving. It outlines issues to consider and makes practical suggestions on how families should deal with sensitive issues while carrying out the wishes of the individual in distributing belongings.

Having a will isn't enough. While most people like to believe that their family will not allow conflicts to arise, early and open communication about how non-titled property should be distributed will lessen the chance of hurt feelings and family rifts.

Read this book. Share it. Start the discussions. NOW!

*Reviewed by Cindy Clark, Special Projects Manager, Ohio Department of Aging*

# Mary Ann



Have you ever thought about aging? My great grandmother

lived to be 90 and everyone attributed her longevity to "imbibing a hot toddy" every night. I have pondered longevity since I was 23 years old, but it was not until I was approaching 50 that I met my mentor.

When Mary Ann and I became friends, she fascinated me with her ability to be so

independent. We shared weekly phone calls, lunch outings, and visits to bookshops and nurseries. We often exchanged favorite dishes; hers had an Italian flair. With each visit, I learned more about aging positively.

Mary Ann was sensible about her aging. When Mary Ann's legs bothered her, she sensibly had a stair glide installed. At 92, she developed heart problems and accepted a pacemaker. When her Chihuahua, Candy, died she declined a new puppy. When she rolled down the bank that connected

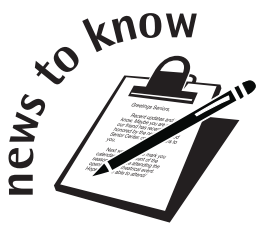
to her garden, she knew it was time to quit gardening.

Mary Ann lived to be 94 and then quietly died last spring. Her death seemed to equate with how she liked to live—surrounded by family and friends. Now, as I tend my own garden, I see her face in every flower. As I age, I will remember Mary Ann as my mentor and how she taught me independence, perseverance, and good sense.

Thank you, Mary Ann.

*Submitted by Linda Vogel, Planning Associate, Area Agency on Aging, 10B*

## Medicare Offers Help to Pay for Drug Costs



If you are on Medicare, have a low income and limited resources, and are having trouble paying your prescription drug costs, help may be available to help you pay for the drugs you need.

Medicare offers financial assistance that helps pay for Medicare's prescription drug benefit, known as Part D, to individuals with limited income and resources. This assistance, called the Low Income Subsidy (LIS), can reduce a beneficiary's out-of-pocket expenses associated with the prescription drug benefit. The subsidy helps with an individual's premiums, deductibles, and co-payments, and also helps with drug costs while in the coverage gap (sometimes called the doughnut hole).

If you are single and have a monthly income of less than **\$1,225** and resources less than **\$11,500**;

or a couple with monthly income of less than **\$1,650** and resources less than **\$23,000**, you may qualify for this extra help.

To apply for the Low Income Subsidy, you must complete an application made available by the Social Security Administration. To get more information or to apply for the additional assistance, visit Social Security's web site at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213.

There are also agencies available and willing to assist you in determining if you may qualify and help you through the process. Please call:

- **The Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIIP)**, 1-800-686-1578
- **Medicare**, 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227)

*Source: www.medicare.gov*

*Submitted by: Andrew Haggard MSW, LSW Medicare Outreach Specialist, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging*

# Caregiving: The Unintended Consequences

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Informal caregivers, such as adult children or other relatives, make up 75 to 80 percent of all long-term care in the United States. According to the National Center on Caregiving, as of 2004, there were more than 28 million caregivers in the United States, and over 1 million in Ohio.

Caring for an aging parent or a loved one can be a difficult but rewarding experience. However, as caregivers strive to meet the needs of the person for whom they are caring, their own health and needs may be compromised.

Whether your loved one is living at home, in an assisted living facility, or in a nursing home, your caregiving role must include caring for yourself as well as your loved one. Often, caregivers don't think to ask for help and end up carrying the burden of caregiving responsibilities alone. Due to the physical and mental demands, stress is an inevitable result. This can have serious consequences, as stress can lead to a decline in one's health, which in turn can lead to lower quality of care for the aging parent or relative. In addition, when left unmanaged, stress can lead to several health problems including depression, substance abuse, and chronic health conditions.

There are community resources to help caregivers as they juggle their career, family, and caregiving responsibilities. One of the most important resources caregivers can utilize is respite services. Time away from caregiving responsibilities allows you to "recharge" and enables you to better care for your loved one. Respite can be provided by relatives, friends, adult day centers, or through community-based long term care programs. For more information on caregiver support services in your community, contact your local Council on Aging or Area Agency on Aging.

## For more information:

**Family Caregiving 101:** <http://www.familycaregiving101.org>

**National Center on Caregiving:** <http://www.caregiver.org>

**National Alliance for Caregiving:** <http://www.caregiving.org>

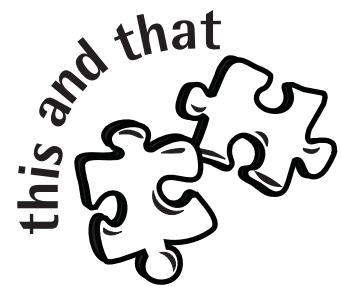
**Connect Me Ohio:** <http://www.connectmeohio.org>

**Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging:** <http://www.ohioaging.org>

**Ohio Department of Aging:** <http://www.goldenbuckeye.com>

*Resources: Finding a Good Home, U.S. News & World Report, November 2006; Estimated Prevalence and Economic Value of Family Caregiving, National Family Caregivers Association, National Center on Caregiving, 2006; Elders & Caregivers, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging*

*By: Beth Mikovitz-Wibby, Graduate Student Intern, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging.*



## What a Difference

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I have a story to tell,  
But no one to listen,  
I have memories to share,  
But no one with time,  
I have great answers to give,  
But no one asks the questions,  
I have wisdom to impart,  
But no one wanting to learn.

I am here for now,  
But not forever,  
So please don't wait too long  
To consider my offer,  
To listen to my story,  
And enjoy my memories,  
To ask me your questions,  
And learn all you can.

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

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Series

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## For More Information

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Address editorial comments to:  
Kirk Blair  
Ohio State University Extension  
Human Development and Family Science  
1787 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210-1295

### Issue Editors:

Kirk Blair, Ohio State University Extension  
Deanna Clifford, District XI Area Agency on Aging, Inc.  
Karen Puterbaugh, Greene County Council on Aging

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