



## Ohioans Can Get Help With Prescription Drug Costs

active aging



Paying for prescription drugs has caused a financial hardship for many Ohioans, but a state program may be able to help with that. Ohio's Best Rx is a prescription drug discount program designed to lower the cost of prescriptions for Ohio residents. The program is open to people of any age who have no prescription coverage.

For those over age 60, there are no income guidelines to apply. There are, however, many benefits. For example, individuals who have Medicare Part D can use the discount card for drugs not covered by their prescription plan or for drugs during the time they are in the "coverage gap." While an individual may have both a Part D plan and Ohio's Best Rx, only one discount can be applied to a prescription.

Ohio's Best Rx also provides prescription coverage to persons under 60. To be eligible, an individual must have income under 300% of the federal poverty level, or about \$2,553 a month. For a family of two, that income limit is \$3,423 a month and the income level increases for each additional person in the family.

Ohio's Best Rx began in 2005 as a program of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Recent enhancements to the program by the state legislature have increased the number of people who are eligible and have made it easier for individuals to apply. The program also moved to the Ohio Department of Aging, where it replaces the prescription drug component of the Golden Buckeye Card. All individuals who use their Golden Buckeye Card for a prescription discount will be transitioned to Ohio's Best Rx so that discount will continue. On average, participants in the program receive a 34 percent discount on the cost of their prescription drugs. The Golden Buckeye Card will continue to operate as a discount program.

Applying for the Ohio's Best Rx program is simple and free—it just takes a toll-free call to **1-866-923-7879**. Applications are also available to print out or are accepted online at the web site **[www.ohiobestrx.org](http://www.ohiobestrx.org)**. There is no fee to apply or to use the card. Once the application is processed, the new member receives a card in the mail that can be used at almost all Ohio pharmacies on almost all brand name and generic drugs. The program includes a mail-order option as well.

If you are an Ohio resident without prescription drug coverage but with prescription drug expenses, apply now to start saving with your Ohio's Best Rx card.

*Submitted by Deanna Clifford, Director of Community Relations, Area Agency on Aging 11, Inc.*

# Healthful Eating Tips

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food for thought



The May 2007 *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* reports that four out of the top ten causes of death in the United States are related to diet. These four are heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. Learning how to eat wisely can help reverse that trend.

The Food Guide Pyramid is part of a long history of food guidance developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that is designed to assist the public in making wiser food choices.

Early food guides emphasized minimum intakes of milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, and grain products. But when scientists looked closer, they realized that those guides didn't give any recommendations on fat, fiber, or nutrient intake. The latest food pyramid, MyPyramid, gives more direction on increasing fiber, decreasing fat, and consuming a variety of nutrients on a daily basis.

Fiber is one dietary component in which Americans are deficient. Breads, fruits, and vegetables are all important for increasing fiber in the diet. Six servings of whole grain bread, cereal, crackers, rice, or pasta should be consumed every day. The word "whole" on the label indicates that the item is a healthier choice. Five or more one-half to three-quarter cup servings should be consumed daily from the fruit and vegetable groups. When selecting from these groups, in order to get as many different nutrients as possible, fruits and vegetables should be a variety of colors. Fruit juice, which is usually high in sugar, should only be consumed in moderation.

Milk, meat, and beans are very important to supply protein in the diet. All older adults should drink three 8-ounce cups of milk a day to help prevent osteoporosis. If unable to tolerate milk, other dairy products can be substituted in place of the milk. Meat is healthiest when it is baked, broiled, or grilled. Red meats and dark poultry should be limited. Individuals should eat more fish, beans, peas, and nuts.

Saturated fats and sweets should be limited. Most of the fat in the diet should be polyunsaturated. Salmon and tuna are good sources. It is recommended that fatty fish be eaten twice a week to lower bad cholesterol levels.

Although nothing can guarantee good health, making moderations in the diet, as well as increasing exercise, has been shown to decrease disease and keep people healthier longer.

Submitted by Leigh Sliwinski, RD/LD, Area Agency on Aging 10B.

reader's corner



## Dog Is My Co-Pilot: Great Writers on the World's Oldest Friendship

From the Editors of  
The Bark  
Three Rivers Press, 2003

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I was given this book as solace when I put my late dad's beautiful dog up for adoption. I had asked his new parent to mail back "Tig's" collar and they sent this beautiful book as well.

The book includes contributions from a number of individuals and explores our endearing and often eternal relationships with our dogs. The reader will enjoy short stories filled with love, laughter, familiarity, and poetic chances to smile and recognize similarities with our own experiences. *Dog Is My Co-Pilot* speaks to anyone who finds spiritual comfort in knowing that when we love our pets, not only do we receive so much from the relationship, but we also feel a bit closer to heaven.

Thanks dad for one more touching opportunity to read this gem and be richly blessed. I know you're smiling down and I hope you're thrilled that your earthly "co-pilot" now bonding with a new buddy, still soars.

Reviewed by Jenny Justi, PSA-10A, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging.

# Shirley and Cleveland

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I am blessed to have many wonderful seniors in my life. Some I have

met only in recent months, while others have been a part of my life for years. For the latter, it is heartwarming to reflect on all that we have gone through since first meeting.

Among my favorite long-time senior friends is the dynamic duo of Shirley and Cleve-

land. They are special individuals and together they make one heck of a team! I have known this special pair for more than fifteen years. We have enjoyed many laughs, shared some challenging times, and learned so much from each other. They have been the glue for their "senior citizens club," caregivers for community members of all ages, and two individuals I have come to count on. Their home and hearts have always been open to me, as long as I have "paid the freight"—meaning

a hug or a peck on the cheek! They have shown me that being a good person and standing by your word is worth more than any money or belongings you might acquire.

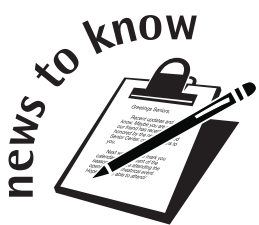
I have always believed that we take with us a bit of every person we meet along our journey, and I am so honored to have a bit of both Shirley and Cleveland in me!

*Contributed by Karen Puterbaugh, Executive Director, Greene County Council on Aging.*

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## Homestead Exemption Offers Older Ohioans Relief from Property Taxes

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Older homeowners who are struggling to pay their yearly property taxes can get some relief under the Homestead Exemption Act. A statewide program in Ohio, Homestead Exemption offers

a reduction in real property and manufactured home taxes to certain qualified owners. It is an additional reduction in real estate and manufactured home taxes beyond any other property tax deductions and rollbacks an individual may already be getting.

Eligible homeowners are those age 65 and over who own and occupy their home as of January 1 in the year of application. You may apply for the Homestead Exemption in the year you turn 65, regardless of when your birthday occurs during the

year. In addition, those who are totally and permanently disabled are also eligible.

Homestead Exemption began in Ohio in the early 1970s, but included income guidelines which determined eligibility for the program. Beginning July 1, 2007, Governor Ted Strickland and the state legislature expanded the Homestead Exemption Program to include all homeowners over age 65.

Under the Homestead Exemption Program, the first \$25,000 in home value is not counted in property tax assessment. The tax bill is then calculated on the remaining value of the home, at the tax valuation rate for the county.

Contact the office of your local county auditor for additional information or to apply for the program.

*Submitted by Deanna Clifford, Director of Community Relations, Area Agency on Aging 11, Inc.*

# Resolving Conflict

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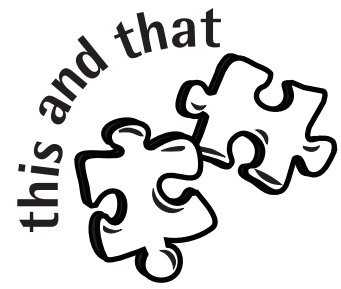
Everyone has had a unique combination of life experiences that give us an outlook on life that is unlike that of anyone else. These different viewpoints can make relationships more interesting, but they can also create conflict.

Conflict can actually help a relationship. Working toward a mutually satisfying solution to a problem can create a better, stronger connection between two (or more) people. Here's how to do that:

- Treat others as you would want to be treated. Attitudes and words of disrespect reduce communication and can cause irreparable damage.
- Commit to finding a solution that works for everyone.
- Talk when neither of you are rushed, stressed, or angry. Meet where you can be private and both of you are comfortable.
- Define the real problem. Be clear and specific.
- Describe feelings, behaviors, consequences, and desired changes clearly and politely.
- Instead of saying, "You make me angry when you ..." say, "I become angry when you ..." After all, no one can force you to become angry!
- Focus on behaviors and outcomes, not on people or personalities.
- Think of the conflict as a problem for both of you to solve together and not as a battle to be won.
- Try to see the situation through the other person's eyes or think about a time when you were in their position and remember how you felt then.
- Try to understand the other person, not just to be understood.
- Calmly explain how you see the problem after you have discussed it together. Share any changes you have made in your thinking or feelings after discussing the problem.
- Together, list all ideas for solving the problem. Stay positive and considerate. Don't judge any idea at this point, no matter how absurd it sounds.
- Consider the possible consequences of each idea.
- Work for a "win-win" solution. At the very least, work toward finding a solution you both understand and can live with.
- Plan to evaluate the agreed-upon solution. Don't be afraid to make adjustments if they are needed.

When conflicts are resolved with caring and respect, relationships are strengthened and grow stronger. That's well worth the time and effort it takes!

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



## We're Living Longer ...

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A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that the average life expectancy (LE) in the United States is now 77.8 years. Women continue to live longer than men: women—80.4; men—75.2.

The report also shows that once a man reaches age 65, he can expect to live an additional 17.1 years (for a total LE of 82.1 years). Women who reach age 65 can expect to live an additional 20.0 years (for a total LE of 85.0 years).

On the not-so-good side, the report shows that the nation's leading causes of death for people age 65 and older were: heart disease (31.2 percent); cancer (21.6 percent); stroke (7.7 percent); chronic lower respiratory disease (6.0 percent); Alzheimer's disease (3.5 percent); influenza and pneumonia (3.2 percent); and diabetes (3.0 percent). Analyses of recent mortality rates suggest that while incidence of most of the leading causes of death among older persons is declining, there are several areas where it may be increasing: essential hypertension and hypertensive renal disease, as well as unintentional falls.

*By Kirk Bloir, Ohio State University Extension.*

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.*

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Series

A partnership between  
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