

SeniorHOTLINE

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Senior Series

A partnership between
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Don't Lose Control



temper for any number of good and not-so-good reasons!

Throughout our lifetime there are many things we lose. Our first soccer game or gymnastic meet; a favorite earring or pocket knife; a sock (or two); weight, even though many of us find it again; our patience and, sometimes, our temper for any number of good and not-so-good reasons!

There are other losses that are even more significant—jobs, hearing, relationships, memory, balance, and a spouse or other loved ones through death. But one of the most difficult for many of us is the loss of control. We all like and want to be in charge, every last one of us! And while there are things we truly cannot control, one area we can keep some control over is our health care decisions.

To help our health, we can take care of our bodies to help minimize illness and injury. We can steer clear of situations that jeopardize our health. We can find a physician with whom we are comfortable and share similar philosophies. We can be good consumers and understand what health care insurance and other benefits we have and how to best utilize them.

While it is our hope to always be healthy and not face an acute or chronic illness or condition, this may be out of our control. What we can do, however, is take control over who would make our health care decisions if we were not able. We can find a trusted family member or friend that understands how we

feel about potential health care situations and then follow-through with having him or her named as our Health Care Power of Attorney. Those decisions would include the following: where we would like to go for medical care and treatment; what treatments we would want and not want; situations and scenarios that cause us the greatest concern and worry; our wishes for comfort care—reducing pain and suffering—when a cure is not possible; and any ethical, religious, or spiritual instructions and considerations.

But be aware that having a Health Care Power of Attorney is a process and not just a document listing names and giving directions. The conversations you have about your care wants and needs, before the documents are signed, are just as important as the documents themselves. Our health care is too important to leave to assumptions, so don't ask someone to take this responsibility because you assume they know what to do. Share your wishes with a potential Power of Attorney, see if you have the right person(s) and then make it official if things fall into place. If you are not sure your wishes would be followed, search for someone who will follow them!

So lose yourself in a good book or lose an umbrella, but don't lose control over your health care decisions!

By Karen Puterbaugh, Greene County Council on Aging.

A New MyPyramid for Older Adults?



Older adults have unique dietary needs. According to Alice Lichtenstein at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University, older adults need fewer calories but the same or an even higher level of nutrients as they age.

In December 2007, Tufts

University updated their Food Guide Pyramid for Older Adults to reflect the USDA MyPyramid and to include additional guidance about forms of food that help older adults meet their unique dietary needs. The Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults was published in the January 2008 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition*.

The Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults was designed to provide general guidance as a graphic print-out, with pictures that represent healthy food choices and convenient forms of food for older adults. For example, in addition to fresh forms of brightly colored vegetables such as carrots and broccoli, and deeply colored fruit such as berries and melon, bags of frozen pre-cut vegetables and fruits are shown. These items are good choices for older adults since they can be resealed and have a longer shelf-life. Single-serve portions of canned fruit are represented as an alternative for fresh and frozen forms for adults who have arthritis or limited physical ability. Canned foods are easily stored in the pantry for bad weather days when it may be difficult for older adults to get out.

Fiber-rich foods are emphasized through whole grain products rather than refined foods. Low-fat and non-fat dairy products such as yogurt and low-lactose milk are pictured. Lean protein choices include fish, poultry, beans, hummus, and tofu. Fluid intake is emphasized by a row of glasses at the bottom of the food groups. At the bottom, the chart emphasizes the importance of physical activity as a foundation for a healthy life. Regular physical activity can help prevent weight gain, reduce the risk of chronic disease, and improve the quality of life for older adults.

At the top of the Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults is a flag that suggests certain supplemental nutrients older adults might need. These include calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B12. Some people may find it difficult to get these nutrients from food and will need to discuss this with their health care professional.

By Jennifer Even, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Ohio State University Extension, Hamilton County.

Source: Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy—Tufts University; Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults; December 2007.



Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Well-Being

By Andrew Weil, M.D.

"Whenever you are on the continuum of aging, it is important to learn how to live in appropriate ways in order to maximize health and happiness." An essential for all of us as quoted from this bestselling author.

The first section of this book lays a framework of the science of aging—our body's reaction to the physical effects of aging. It is an in-depth look at the science. Some may skip this section or use it for reference and proceed to the second section. The second section gives practical advice for aging in the best way possible—healthy diet, physical activity, and reducing stress.

I enjoyed this informative and practical book. I agree with the author that there no quick fixes, special diets, or magic bullets that will keep us healthy. *Healthy Aging* really does provide a lifelong guide to help keep you healthy throughout the aging process.

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

Reference: Weil, Andrew (2005) Healthy Aging: A Lifelong Guide to Your Well-Being. New York: Anchor Books.

Life's Second Chance



A fall could have been tragic for my friend Betty. Fortunately she had a

safety net in place. Several years ago, Betty had made the decision to protect her health care choices by naming her daughter as Health Care Power of Attorney.

Betty's fall caused head trauma and left her with a broken arm. She experienced incontinence, became dependent on a walker, was disoriented to place and time, and her diabetes was complicated. After her arm

was set, Betty was transferred to a nursing home. After several weeks, her daughter chose to pay privately for home care because she believed Betty would thrive at home.

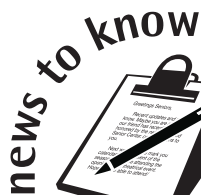
Slowly, Betty's daughter advocated for changes. As Health Care Power of Attorney this was her responsibility. After being disheartened with her mother's increased confusion, she asked the doctor to decrease Betty's Dilantin. Amazingly, Betty responded with clarity. Not only did her memory improve but also her incontinence. Physical therapists worked with Betty until she no longer needed a

walker and she began using a cane. Today she is able to walk without a cane, but takes it with her when she goes outside. Her diabetes is no longer controlled by injections but with oral medication.

I am so thankful that Betty had recognized the importance of having a Health Care Power of Attorney. It makes me wonder, though, how others would answer the question, "What have I done to insure my second chance, should an accident change my life?"

By Linda Vogel, Area Agency on Aging 10B.

Own Your Future: Educational Campaign Targeted to Ohioans Age 45 to 65



Did you receive your letter yet? 1.7 million Ohio households with residents between the ages of 45 and 65 likely received a letter from Governor Strickland in May,

encouraging the recipient to request a free, long-term planning guide as part of the campaign titled "Own Your Future."

Own Your Future is a joint federal-state initiative designed to increase overall awareness among Ohio citizens about the importance of long-term care planning and available care options. The public education campaign began this spring and will continue through the summer and into the fall. The Own Your Future planning guide encourages the importance of healthy lifestyles; outlines considerations for legal and estate planning; and describes a variety of tools and products that could

be very useful in putting together a long-term care plan for you, a family member, or a loved one. Ohio's Departments of Aging and Insurance officials expect to distribute more than 100,000 guides during this campaign.

Beginning this June, in coordination with the twelve Area Agencies on Aging, the campaign will present a series of regional educational forums around the state. At the forums, all Ohioans—regardless of their age—will have a chance to talk with professionals in their own communities about long-term care issues. Individuals with more immediate needs for long-term care information and options may call 1-866-243-5678 and request a free personal assessment by a professional long-term care consultant from their local area agency on aging.

By Jenny Justi, Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging.

A Pet May Be for You!



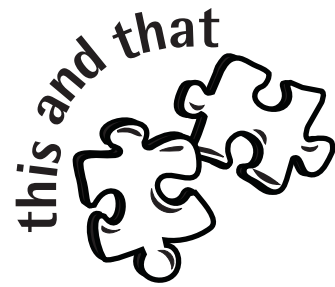
Do you find it hard to get up and get moving in the morning? Is stress affecting your health and happiness? Do you just want someone to be your friend without asking for much in return? If you can answer "yes" to any of

these questions, consider owning a pet. Owning a pet can improve your physical and mental health and well-being. Pets provide unconditional love and affection. Their presence reduces loneliness and provides people with endless hours of companionship. Research shows that petting animals lowers people's blood pressure, reduces levels of stress, and lessens anxiety. People experiencing depression tend to be less depressed if they own a pet.

Caring for pets gives people a purpose and a sense of belonging. Pets provide a social outlet. They facilitate play. Animals must be fed, played with, groomed, exercised, and loved. Consider a dog as your companion. Dogs demand attention and need daily exercise. A dog needs to be walked in the morning, fed, walked in the evening, fed, and then walked again before bedtime. Besides spending time with your dog, you now are walking three times a day. Over time, this daily exercise can improve your cardiovascular health, as well as lower blood glucose levels. Sharing time with your loyal companion can improve your outlook on life. You now have a reason to get up and get moving.

If you'd like a dog but can't have one, volunteer at a local humane society or animal shelter. Many shelters welcome volunteers to socialize, groom, and walk their dogs. You can make a difference—not only by improving your health, but by helping others.

By Lucinda Miller, 4-H Center Specialist, South Centers at Piketon.



Go Red, White, and Blueberry for Summer

Blueberries are available from April to October. July is the season's peak. Blueberries are nutritious, low-fat, and sodium free. One cup has 5 grams of fiber, 80 calories, and 15 percent of our daily recommended vitamin C. Research at the Ohio State University shows that blueberries contain compounds that might prevent colon cancer. Other research offers hope that nutrients in blueberries may decrease the effects of osteoporosis and reduce age-related brain deterioration.

Blueberries are tasty when fresh, canned, or frozen. Layered with lemon or vanilla yogurt and granola, they're a great dessert or snack.

When freezing blueberries, the North American Blueberry Council suggests not washing them first. Berries in the store container should be placed in a resealable plastic bag before freezing. Or you can freeze them on a cookie sheet and transfer them to a freezer-safe container once frozen. Fresh or frozen, blueberries should be washed right before use.

*By Joyce J. Brown, Extension Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension, Athens and Meigs Counties.
Source: US Highbush Blueberry Council,
<http://www.blueberry.org>.*

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Address editorial comments to:
Kirk Blair
Ohio State University Extension
Family and Consumer Sciences
185 Arps Hall, 1945 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43210

Issue Editors:

Kirk Blair, Ohio State University Extension
Karen Puterbaugh, Greene County Council on Aging
Deanna Clifford, Ohio Department of Aging

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Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension

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