



Aging in Place: Preparing Your Home by: Lori Hauge

This is our second installment in a three part series to help you prepare to “age in place.”

In the December edition of A Better Life News, discussed preparing our relationships, our homes and our finances. We also introduced some strategies for preparing relationships. In this article we will focus on preparing our homes for aging in place.

As we age, we will find that our strength, endurance and sensory acuity are not as robust as they were when we were younger. Generally, these will continue to decrease, significantly impacting our ability to manage our home.

To accommodate changes in hearing, vision, muscular strength and stamina we can make changes in our home to minimize the risk of falling and other hazards.

As you evaluate your

home, think: SIMPLE and EFFICIENT. For all rooms, minimize clutter, make sure lighting is bright and switches are easy to access and ensure rooms are arranged with wide walk areas and straight pathways. Ensure safety equipment and measures are in place, including working smoke detectors, easy to use fire extinguishers, emergency information, in easy-to-read large print posted by each phone and on the refrigerator. Smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and emergency information should be checked monthly. Confidential information and valuables should be protected in a locked area of the home. A phone should be available in each room if you do not have an emergency response system. Specific areas of the home should be considered individually, as well:

Kitchen:

- Move frequently

used items, equipment and supplies to low, easy to reach shelves and drawers.

- Make sure all cooking equipment and utensils are safe for use by a person with decreased hand strength, balance and lower vision.
- Remove trip hazards, including loose throw rugs
- Repair any faucet leaks or drips.

Bathrooms:

- Make sure there is adequate room in bath and toilet areas to move and turn around, even if you were using assistive equipment
- Install easy to reach grab bars in the bath/shower and near the toilet to stabilize your movement
- Apply non-skid strips to any slippery surfaces, such as the bottom of the bath/shower or in front of the toilet if tile is slippery.
- Purchase an appropriate bath/shower chair to make transfers in and out of the bath/shower

safer or to provide a place to rest if your endurance is low.

- Remove trip hazards, including loose throw rugs.

Bedroom:

- Ensure bed is a good height to allow safe movement to and from bed.
- Install adequate lighting that is easy to reach from the bed. Touch adapters and movement detectors are very useful in the bedroom for lighting.
- Remove trip hazards, including loose throw rugs.

Good preparation can help ensure you are ready to continue your life in a safe and healthy way, right where YOU want to be...**Home Sweet Home.**

*Need Help
at Home?*

Call A Better
Life Homecare
918-392-3838

Caregiver's Corner: Inspirational Poem

Just for Today

....smile to a stranger
....listen to someone's heart
....drop a coin where a child can find it
....learn something new, then teach it to someone new
....tell someone you're thinking of them
....hug a loved one
....don't hold a grudge
....don't be afraid to say I'm sorry
....look a child in the eye and tell them how great they are
....look beyond the face of a person and into their heart
....make a promise and keep it
....call someone for no other reason than just to say "hi"
....show some kindness to an animal
....stand up for what you believe in
....smell the rain, feel the breeze, listen to the wind
....use all your senses to their fullest
....cherish all of your TODAYS

Author Unknown

Skin Care Tips for Seniors

by Julie Beaulieu

When we are born, human skin is thick and soft. As we age, our skin becomes drier and thinner. This change makes it harder for seniors to recover from mild skin injuries, such as a simple cut.

Tips for avoiding health problems related to skin:

- **Keep your skin clean.** This is particularly important for the feet, armpits, groin, and chest.

- **Consider reducing showers to 2-3 times per week.** Showering too much will dry out the skin.

- **Find good products to give a bed bath.** A bed bath is a good alternative on days you don't take a shower. Natural, soap-free products are a good choice.

- **Fill a spray bottle with baby oil and spray**

it over your body after a shower, then towel dry.

Spraying baby oil helps the skin stay moist, but keeps it from being too slick. Avoid using baby oil in the shower or tub, as you could slip and fall.

- **Use a humidifier.** Extra moisture in the air can increase skin moisture.

- **Consider soap-free products.** Soap can dry

fragile skin.

- **Drink Water.** 72% of a skin's weight is due to water, so it is important to drink plenty of water to keep your skin healthy.

- **Go to the doctor, if necessary.** If your skin is continually feeling irritated, and you have tried some home remedies go to the doctor. Skin irritation could be sign of something more serious.

Need Help Getting to the Doctor?

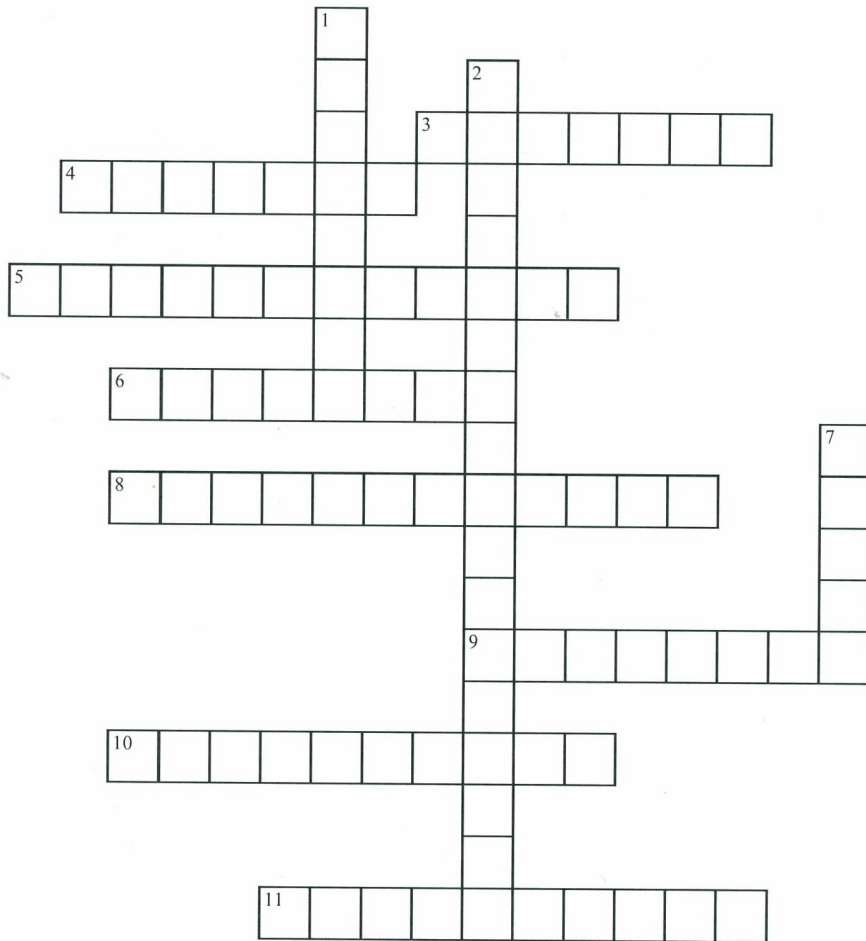
Call 918.392.3838

A Better Life Homecare
Can Help!

A Better Life
H O M E C A R E

Exercise Your Brain!

by Julie Beaulieu



ACROSS

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- 4 Fire Safety Month
- 5 Taking five or more medications
- 6 When your body doesn't make enough insulin
- 8 A creative activity that helps a person with dementia
- 9 How often you should go over your Medicare Part D Plan
- 10 Another name for Advanced Medical Directive
- 11 The most common form of dementia

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- 2 A secondary traumatic stress disorder
- 7 Percentage of identity thefts that are committed by people the victim knows

January 2010 Award Recipients

By: Julie Beaulieu

A Better Life Homecare recently recognized two caregivers for the outstanding work they have been doing.

Linda Newsome received the Better Life Award on January 24, 2010. The Better Life Award goes to someone who really has made a big, positive impact in a person's life.

Linda Newsome has really gone above and beyond to make sure the people she is caring for really challenge

themselves to reach the personal goals they have set forth.

When asked why she became a caregiver Linda responded, "I enjoy taking care of people. I love people. I look forward to seeing the quality of life improve for my clients."

Cindy Smith received the Opty Award on January 24, 2010. The Opty Award goes to an employee that exudes

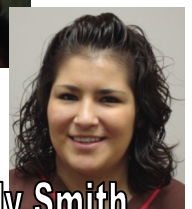
optimism, and is willing to do whatever is asked of him or her.

Cindy Smith is great at being able to put someone in a good mood. She is a very happy, and caring person which is obvious to anyone that has had the pleasure to work with her.

When asked why she became a caregiver Cindy responded, "I know that I am good at taking care of other people. Also I would like to help

others by providing good quality care, which I know I will eventually need myself."

Congratulations Linda and Cindy!





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February: American Heart Month by Jolynn Officer

February has been celebrated as American Heart Month since 1963 to urge Americans to join the battle against heart disease. A presidential proclamation required by Congress helps to educate citizens on the No. 1 killer in America.

Consider these statistics:

- One in three American adults has one or more types of cardiovascular diseases (CVD). More than half of those directly affected with heart disease are under the age of 60.
- Coronary heart disease is the No. 1 single killer of women over age 25, but only 21% of women view it as a health threat.
- Coronary heart disease kills over 460,000 women a year, about one per minute. On average, an American dies

of Coronary heart disease every 35 seconds.

The estimated cost of Coronary heart disease in 2008 was \$448.8 billion.

The American Heart Association's web site, <http://www.americanheart.org>, is a great source of information. The site includes informational links, specific diagnosis info, an eNewsletter and Heart Hub; a portal for information. Check out the web site and take the quiz to see how cardiac healthy you are. Here are some of the great tips available from the site:

Heart Attack Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too

long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
 - **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
 - **Shortness of breath** with or without chest discomfort.
 - **Other signs** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness
- Remember this:** Even if

you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out (tell a doctor about your symptoms). Minutes matter! Fast action can save lives. Don't wait more than five minutes to call 9-1-1.

Prompt, emergency medical services treatment is crucial for survival. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital.

Cardiac disease is preventable but only with daily interventions. To lower the staggering statistics of heart disease, Americans must get active; control cholesterol; eat better; manage blood pressure and lose weight. Let's all make sure a broken heart is not from heart disease.

The heart is the only broken instrument that works. T.E. Kalem