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THE BALANCE SHEET

JUNE 2011

Your source for tips and advice to keep you Healthy, Balanced and Productive

June is Senior's Month
Summer Safety Tips



Aging Wisely: Tips for Caring for Aging Parents

More and more people provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend each year. Individuals caring for their aging parents face challenges on a multitude of fronts: financial, emotional, medical and legal. Here are some steps to take now and in the future to help you with the growing responsibility.

1. Start Talking: Start discussions about these issues. Use this article or a friend's experience as a conversation starter. Ask loved ones what they would want if they needed help.

2. Get Estate Planning Underway: Plan legally for possible incapacity; power of attorney, a living will, will or trust should be part of estate.

3. Consolidate Medical Information: Start a "health file" with copies of medical tests, doctor's contact information, and medications (including notes about medications that did not work for you). Keep in a simple file or binder, or use electronic storage such as USB drives.

4. Practice Prevention: Know family and personal medical history and risks, and practice prevention.

5. Evaluate Financial Alternatives: Review financial situation with a professional; include long-term care needs. Consider long-term care insurance as part of total insurance and financial plan.

6. Discuss Funerals: Consider funeral planning: simply write down wishes and advise others of them, or purchase a pre-need burial contract. This reduces stress for others when they are grieving.

7. Elder Proof the House: For parents still living at home, identify resources to manage specific concerns. EG: medication management systems, emergency response systems, grab bars and mobility devices, and meal delivery services.

8. Discuss Duties: Have a family discussion early regarding caregiving duties and plans for a loved one's care. Schedule regular conferences

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to ensure continuity. If there is conflict, consider using a professional to facilitate.

9. Seek Support: Talk to others who have been through similar situations, including professionals and family caregivers. Access resources such as support groups, online networks, articles and books.

10. Keep the Peace: Express your specific concerns with your loved one and work toward solutions together. Engage a professional or other family members if your loved one is resistant.

Adapted Shannon Martin, MSW, CMC. © 2008 Aging Wisely, <http://www.agingwisely.com>
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Did you know that PPC Canada offers personalized support services and resources to assist you and your family members with managing life events? This includes customized resource packages to assist you with services such as eldercare, childcare and parenting. PPC Canada's Client Care Representatives are skilled professionals who will research the topic, community and other resources prior to creating a customized package of written information for you. For more information and support for eldercare or any other concern, contact us at 1.800.663.9099 and speak to one of our Client Care Representatives.



Live Web Chat June 16 on Caring for your Aging Loved Ones

Listen to the advice of Caroline Tapp-McDougall, Author, Consultant and LifeSpeak On Demand Expert Speaker, on what busy individuals need to know about providing and arranging care for aging loved ones as well as how to cope with the stresses that are often associated with the role of caregiver:

Caring for your Aging Loved ones - Planning Ahead

We also invite you to participate free of charge in the next LifeSpeak On Demand Ask the Expert web chat, on June 16th at 9 am PST, during which Ms. Tapp-McDougall will be available to answer your own questions about caring for your aging loved ones. Click on this link to register:
<http://ondemand.lifespeak.com/asktheexpert>

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LifeSpeak On Demand also offers high-quality, expert-led trainings on a wide variety of other topics, including mental and physical health, relationships, parenting, communication and professional development. Please contact your PPC Canada account manager to learn more about this innovative online product.

Planning for Excessive Heat: Information for Older Adults and Family Caregivers

Did you know that each year more people die from "excessive heat events" than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods, and earthquakes combined? Anyone can be adversely affected by excessive heat, but older adults are particularly vulnerable. Excessive heat events are prolonged periods when temperatures reach 12 degrees Celsius or more above the average high temperature for a region.

Excessive heat events are believed to have a disproportionate public health impact in cities. One reason is that roads and buildings absorb the sun's energy and contribute to the formation of "heat islands." While rural areas cool off at night, cities retain this absorbed heat. As a result, urban residents get less nighttime relief from high temperatures. Fortunately, there are simple steps that older adults and their care-givers can take to decrease the impact of excessive heat events.

Extreme Heat: Risk Factors

Age: Older adults and young children (over

the age of 60 are 82-92% more likely than the average person to die as a result of a heat wave)
Living situation: living alone/ being confined to a bed and unable to care for oneself; living on the top floors of buildings without air-conditioning due to excessive heat exposure

Health conditions: chronic illness, mental impairment and obesity
Certain medications

Strenuous outdoor activities

Alcohol consumption: exacerbates heat-related health effects.

Coping: Reduce Exposure to Excessive Heat

Air-conditioning is one of the best protective factors against heat-related illness and death. but when temperatures are in the high 30s fans do not prevent heat-related illness.

During excessive heat events, consider the following:

- Visit air-conditioned buildings in your community if your home is not air-conditioned: senior centers, movie theaters, libraries, shopping malls, or designated "cooling centers."
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink lots of fluids. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. If a doctor limits your fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it's hot. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar. These drinks cause dehydration.

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- Ask your doctor or other health care provider if the medications you take could increase your susceptibility to heat-related illness.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Visit at-risk individuals at least twice a day. Watch for signs of heat-related illness such as hot, dry skin, confusion, hallucinations, and aggression.
- Call 911 if medical attention is needed.

Adapted from USEPA and Ottawa Citizen Journal



Focus on Safety - Cool Tips for a Safe Summer Trip

Planning a road trip this summer? From where you'll stay each night to which sights you'll visit along the way, you'll have lots of decisions to make. If you'll be traveling with others you can count on making lots of compromises too. After all, everyone has a slightly different idea of what makes for the perfect summer vacation.

But there's one thing you and all your travel com-

panions can agree on: Getting to your destination and back safely is priority number one. So take a few minutes now to focus on what matters most. By simply following the 3 steps outlined below, you can map out a strategy to avoid road trouble and ensure your entire trip is as safe and worry-free as possible.

1. Before You Go

Make sure your vehicle is road-ready by using this Vehicle Safety Checklist

Tires – Check Air pressure, tread wear, spare; maintain recommended tire pressure

Belts and Hoses – check for condition and fittings and replace and tighten as necessary

Wiper Blades – Look for wear and tear on both sides and replace as needed

Cooling System –check coolant level and top up as necessary

Fluid Levels – Top up oil, brake, transmission, power steering, coolant, and windshield fluids

Lights – make sure headlights, brake lights, turn signals, emergency flashers, interior lights, and trailer lights are working

Air Conditioning - Check AC performance before traveling and repair before you leave as on-the-road repairs can be expensive.



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Summer Safety Alert! Never leave children and pets unattended in parked vehicles. Temperatures can soar very quickly!

2. What to Take

Child Safety Seats

If you'll be traveling with children, you'll need to make room in your back seat for appropriate child safety and/or booster seats. Check with Transport Canada (www.tc.gc.ca) guidelines for proper child safety and booster seat use.

Emergency Roadside Kit

Even a well-maintained vehicle can break down, so it's advisable to put together an Emergency Roadside Kit to carry with you. Suggested Emergency Roadside Kit contents include:

- Cell phone
- First aid kit
- Flashlight
- Flares and a white flag
- Jumper cables
- Jack (and ground mat) for changing a tire
- Work gloves and a change of clothes
- Basic repair tools and some duct tape (for temporarily repairing a hose leak!)
- A jug of water and paper towels for cleaning up
 - Nonperishable food, drinking water, and medicines
- Extra windshield washer fluid
- Maps

3. On the Road

Getting there is half the fun of a road trip vacation. It's also half the hassle. Plenty of distractions both inside and outside your vehicle can take your attention from the road..

Tips for Staying Focused

Avoid fatigue by

- taking frequent breaks
- sharing the driving

Tips for Traveling with Children

Make it easier for children (and yourself) by

- making stops along the way
- bringing vehicle-friendly toys and games

Buckle Up... Every Trip. Every Time.

Wear seatbelts and ensure your passengers do that too!

By National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Public domain

Last Reviewed: February 2011

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