



In Support of Caregivers

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Winter 2017

Vol. 30, Number 1

In this issue:

- ⇒ **Spring Workshops**
- ⇒ **“Powerful Tools” Classes**
- ⇒ **Technology for Caregivers**
- ⇒ **Dry Mouth**
- ⇒ **The 5 D’s of Advance Directives**
- ⇒ **Music and Memory**

The Caregivers’ Resource Center

Striving to support those who are caring for family and friends

- Telephone support available Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
- Referrals to respite services and other community-based services for caregivers and their care-receivers
- Volunteer Support for Caregivers through Project CARE
- *This quarterly newsletter: *In Support of Caregivers*
- Powerful Tools for Caregivers* classes
- Periodic workshops for family caregivers
- Caregiver Support Group Listings
- Lending library of books and videos on caregiving topics
- *Directory: “Resources for Caregivers in Tompkins County”
- Alzheimer’s education and support
- Speakers available to talk to community and employee groups on caregiving topics



***These publications are also available on-line at: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa**

(Click on “Local Resources for Older Adults” or “Newsletters”)

Local Caregiver Support Services

Caregivers' Resource Center & Project CARE Services

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

David Stoyell (274-5492)

Katrina Schickel (274-5491)

The Caregivers' Resource Center & Alzheimer's Support Unit

offers family caregivers information, consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, and a lending library of books on family caregiving topics. Stop by or call for an appointment.



Volunteers from **Project CARE** offer caregivers a needed break and help out in other ways as needed. We may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers having difficulty paying for those services. Call Katrina to discuss your needs.

Caregiver Counseling

Family and Children's Service

Ann Dolan (273-7494)

A caregiver counselor will meet with family caregivers periodically in her office to help them work through complex caregiving issues or provide emotional support. Special circumstances may be considered for in-home service. No charge. Donations accepted.



Adult Day Program

Longview Adult Day Community

Monday thru Friday, 9 AM- 3 PM

Pamela Nardi (375-6323)

Adult day programs offer older adults companionship along with planned social and recreational activities. It often provides a break from caregiving and time for other matters. Fee: \$50/day includes lunch and snack.



Support Groups



Caregiver Support Group

3rd Tuesday of each month

6:30 PM-8:00 PM

Family and Children's Service

127 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St., Ithaca.

Facilitated by Ann Dolan, LCSW. Especially for caregivers of older adults. Call for information, 273-7494, before attending first time. Please ring buzzer located next to the front door for entry.

Alzheimer's Support Group

4th Tuesday of each month

1:00-2:30 PM

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

214 W. Martin Luther King Jr/State St., Ithaca

Facilitated by David Stoyell. Open to anyone caring for a relative or friend with significant memory impairment. Call 274-5492 for more information.

Other Alzheimer's Caregiver Groups

1st Wednesday of each month at 5:30 PM

at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca. For information, call Alzheimer's Assoc: 330-1647

3rd Wednesday of the Month, 12:30-1:30 PM

at Walden Place, Cortlandville. Call 756-8101.

Companion care for your loved one available during the meeting.

Cancer Caregiver Group

2nd Tuesday of the month, 5:30-7:00 pm

At the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, 612 W. State St., Ithaca. For family, friends and caregivers of individuals with Cancer. For info, call 277-0960.

Parkinson's Spouses Group

Meets monthly at the Office for the Aging. Call David Stoyell, 274-5492 for further information.

Spring Trainings of Interest to Family Caregivers

Note: See page 9 for upcoming workshops for those caring for persons with Alzheimer/dementia.

Adaptive Equipment and Occupational Therapy (OT) Strategies for Maintaining Mobility and Independence

Saturday, March 11: Presentation at 1:30 PM; repeated at 2:30 PM

During the Senior Living Expo which runs from 1:00-3:30 PM
at the Ramada Inn, N. Triphammer Rd., Ithaca

As part of the Senior Living Expo on March 11, there will be presentations by the OT Department at Ithaca College at 1:30 and 2:30 PM as well as an opportunity throughout the afternoon for 1:1 consultations with occupational therapists and other professionals about strategies for maintaining mobility and independence. The presentations and displays may be of interest to those faced with temporary physical limitations (such as after knee placement or other surgeries) or when you or a loved one need increasing assistance with getting around or coping with other disabilities. A room will be set up with displays of adaptive equipment. You can also consult with professionals about how to use the equipment and how it can be borrowed or purchased.



The Senior Living Expo also will feature tabling by more than 30 organizations there to explain to you the services they offer to older adults and their family caregivers. Free. Pre-registration is not necessary.

Save Yourself: How to Manage Caregiver Guilt and Stress

Thursday, April 6, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

at the Office for the Aging, 214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Presented by: Ann Dolan, LCSW

“What do people mean when they tell you to “take care of yourself”? Who has time for that?” Sound familiar? This talk will explore the thoughts and feelings behind caregiver guilt and stress. Ann Dolan, a Geriatric Mental Health Clinician at Family and Children’s Service of Ithaca, will help you begin to explore ways to lessen these difficult feelings, and to give yourself some breathing room. Please call ahead, 274-5492, or email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org to register for this program. Free.



**The following workshop is being held at Lifelong, 119 W. Court Street, Ithaca
Pre-registration is required. Call Lifelong, 273-1511.**

Medicare Basics- Sarah Jane Blake - Tuesday, April 4, 5:30-7:30 PM

For those just starting to learn about Medicare. Topics will include: Medicare Part A (hospital), B (medical), and D (Medicare prescription drugs). Also, Medigap plans and Medicare Advantage plans, EPIC, Extra Help and Medicare Savings Program subsidies available to income-eligible individuals/couples. How retiree plans and VA coverage work with Medicare. Free.



Feeling Stretched?

Let's Face It...

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease, stroke, or chronic cancer can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially.



Balance Your Life

**Powerful
Tools
for Caregivers**

Spring 2017

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

The program consists of 90-minute class sessions offered weekly for six consecutive weeks.

These classes are offered free of charge to those caring for spouses, parents or other adult relatives/friends. (It is not intended for professional caregivers.)

Choose the class most convenient for you:

Wednesdays, April 19 - May 24

6:30-8:00 pm

at GIAC (Greater Ithaca Activities Center)

301 W. Court Street, Ithaca

Thursdays, May 4 - June 8th

1:00-2:30 pm

at Kendal at Ithaca

2230 N. Triphammer Rd. Ithaca

Register as early as possible as class size is limited.

**To register or inquire about the program, call the
Tompkins County Office for the Aging:**

607-274-5482

Technologies for Family Caregivers

With more than 170 technology accelerator programs in the United States, is it any wonder that professionals and consumers seem overwhelmed with new technology products and services? Media stories, tech demonstrations and presentations at conferences tout the latest idea as the perfect solution for a single older adult living alone or a family caregiver. But when looking up that new product six or 12 months later, one finds it has disappeared because it failed to find an audience or was bought by another company. How to keep up with the trends and recommend technologies to older adults or caregivers?

Let's start with keeping up with the technologies. One of the best websites with the latest in technology products and changes for older adults is [Aging in Place Technology Watch](#) which features blog posts written by Laurie Orlov, and is a must-read to keep up with tech.

There are more than 40,000 apps for use by older adults and family caregivers. Many have multiple functions; others do just one thing well. Generally they fall under four basic categories: home environment, health monitoring, community engagement, and caregiving.

For a few tested suggestions, the following apps have been around for a while and offer secure communications to family and friends involved with providing short- or long-term care:



[Caring Bridge](#) and [Lotsa Helping Hands](#). These applications can cut the endless email threads and they include calendar functions for task scheduling.

There has been significant investment in home-sensor technologies and personal emergency

response systems—two areas where there has been uptake by older adults and family caregivers. There are hundreds of products and service plans.



Go to [Techenhancedlife.com](#) and look at the guide *Caring from Afar: Guide to Home Sensor Systems*. It provides overviews on products and help with selecting the best product and services for specific care situations.

Here are a handful of companies offering such products and services:

[GreatCall](#) has incorporated lively sensor technology;


[Sentinel Care](#) incorporates personal and sensor data with alerts to family caregivers;

[Philips personal health programs](#) and [Health Watch](#) are other services that have been around for a while.

Finally, keep an eye out for voice-activated apps that run through [Amazon Echo](#). Functions related to the home environment, entertainment and medication reminders are added continually for use in this product, making it a potential hub for technologies in the home.

(Excerpted from an article on the website of the Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.com.)

The Tompkins County Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), in cooperation with Doyle Medical Monitoring, now offers at an extra charge **Fall Detection Sensor and GPS Mobile Service** to manage safety and security virtually anywhere. For more information, contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging (274-5487).

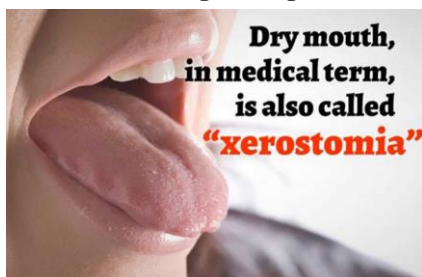


Dry Mouth

Myth: Dry mouth is a natural part of the aging process. You just have to learn to live with it.

Fact: Dry mouth is not a part of the aging process itself; it's important to find the cause of dry mouth so you can get relief.

Dry mouth is the condition of not having enough saliva, or spit, to keep the mouth wet. Without enough saliva, chewing, eating, swallowing and even talking can be difficult. Dry mouth also increases the risk for tooth decay because saliva helps keep harmful germs that cause tooth decay and other oral infections in check. Saliva also contains minerals (calcium and phosphate) that can help reverse early decay.



If you or your loved one have dentures, dry mouth can make them uncomfortable and they may not fit as well. Without enough saliva, dentures can also rub against the gums and cause sore spots.

It's important to know that dry mouth is not part of the aging process itself. However, many older adults take medications that can dry out the mouth. And older adults are also more likely to have certain conditions that can lead to oral dryness.

Here are some causes of dry mouth:

- Side effects of medicines. Hundreds of medicines can cause the salivary glands to make less saliva. Medicines for high blood pressure and depression often cause dry mouth.

- Disease. Some diseases affect the salivary glands. Sjögren's Syndrome and HIV/AIDS can cause dry mouth.
- Radiation therapy. The salivary glands can be damaged if they are exposed to radiation during cancer treatment.
- Chemotherapy. Drugs used to treat cancer can make saliva thicker, causing the mouth to feel dry.
- Nerve damage. Injury to the head or neck can damage the nerves that tell salivary glands to make saliva.

If you think the person you are caring for may have dry mouth, see a dentist or physician. He or she can try to determine what is causing dry mouth and what treatments might be helpful. For example, if dry mouth is caused by a medicine, your physician might change your medicine or adjust the dosage.

The dentist or physician also might suggest keeping the mouth wet by using artificial saliva, sold in most drug stores/pharmacies. Some people benefit from sucking sugarless hard candy or chewing sugarless gum.

From the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health.

Other Tips for when Dry Mouth is a problem:

Sip water and herbal teas regularly.

Breathe through your nose rather than mouth.

Avoid caffeinated beverages, tobacco, and alcohol, all of which increase mouth dryness.

Avoid antihistamines and decongestants.

Add moisture to the air at night (humidifier).

Use *Biotene* toothpaste (no sodium laurel sulfate)

The 5 D's of Advance Directives

When should your Advance Directives be reviewed for possible updating? An Advance Directive is a set of documents that are written statements of a person's wishes regarding medical treatment to be used in the event that the person cannot make the decisions for themselves. A Durable Power of Attorney, Health Care Proxy, and sometimes a Living Will are commonly included in an Advanced Directive. Just like any other estate planning document, it is important to review these documents on a regular basis to make sure that they reflect your current wishes. The American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging has come up with an easy way to think about the guidelines for reviewing your Advance Directive called the 5 D's.

1. **Decade** – Go over your documents when you start a new decade of your life.
2. **Death** – Review your wishes whenever you experience the death of a loved one.
3. **Divorce** – Take a look at what your plan says when you experience a divorce or other major family change.
4. **Diagnosis** – Think about how your wishes might change if you or your health care proxy or power of attorney are diagnosed with a serious health condition.
5. **Decline** – Ensure that your plan continues to reflect your current situation if you experience a significant decline or deterioration of an existing health condition, especially when it diminishes your ability to live independently.



Joint Bank Accounts: Be Careful!

Some choose to share a bank account with Selderly parents when tasked with helping them with finances. That can work for some families. But be careful to weigh the pros and cons before setting up a joint account.

Some advantages of a joint bank account:

As a co-owner of a joint bank account, an adult child has the same privileges as the parent. With that access, the child can:

- Help the parent identify fraudulent activity on the account. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimates financial exploitation costs older Americans \$2.9 billion each year.
- Keep tabs on bank fees, such as overdraft charges.
- Pay the parent's bills if his or her health fails.



The joint account may give easy access to funds to cover funeral expenses and remaining bills.

Disadvantages/legal issues that could arise

A joint bank account carries some legal risks for parents and children that can vary by state and can cause financial hardships.

- Creditors for either owner can use the account to satisfy debts. An account can be drained if parent or child has unpaid debts.
- Siblings could be disinherited. Depending on the terms of the account, the money could go to the co-owner when a parent dies. The rights of survivorship on the account could bypass a will.
- The money could be involved in a divorce. The bank account may be listed as an asset in the adult child's divorce. An attorney would have to build a record to prove that the money belongs to the parent.
- Either owner could forfeit eligibility for financial assistance. If the adult child wants financial aid for his college-bound kid, or the parent needs Medicaid, the money in the account may be factored into eligibility.

News and Notes

A Wheelchair Accessible Taxi

can be reserved at Collegetown Cab by calling 607-588-8888. Advance notice is recommended but not required.



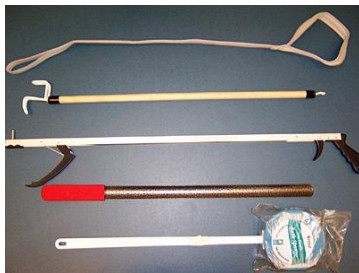
Tax Deductible Home Renovations?

Typically, home renovation costs are not deductible on your federal tax return. However, if you make improvements to your home for medical purposes, such as adding wheelchair ramps or lowering cabinets for better accessibility, you can deduct those renovations as medical expenses if you have enough medical expenses to itemize. If the renovations increase the value of your home, however, you can't claim them as medical-related expenses.



Try-It Room

The Try-it Room at the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) provides an opportunity for people to try adaptive devices and equipment that make everyday tasks easier. By borrowing an item, you can assess whether you want to purchase it for long-term use. Items can be now borrowed with no deposit or cost involved. Visit FLIC at 215 Fifth Street, Ithaca (607) 272-2433.



The Ithaca Area Parkinson's Group

has resumed meeting at Kendal at Ithaca on the second Monday of the month at 10:30 -12:00 in Conference Room A of Kendal at Ithaca. It is open to both persons with Parkinson's Disease and other Parkinsonisms as well as family caregivers of persons with Parkinson's. For information, email dalentini@yahoo.com.



ICGI Spring Workshops

Register for either or both of the following Ithaca College Gerontology Institute workshops online at Ithaca.edu/agingworkshops. They are held at the Country Inn and Suites, 110 Danby Rd. (Rt. 96B), Ithaca. Cost is \$25 per workshops (\$15 for retired individuals). Questions? Call: 274-1607.



Elder Abuse: Prevalence, Process and Prevention

Tuesday, March 21, 2:00-4:30 PM

Presented by Kristen Lind, Senior Caseworker at Tompkins County Adult Protective Services and Victoria Rizzo, Ph.D, LCSW, Binghamton University

The Nurse's Perspective

Tuesday, April 11, 2:00-4:30 PM

Three experienced local nurses will offer unique perspectives and practical lessons on caring and advocating for the elder population, including critical care of the geriatric patient, rehabilitation and quality of life, and emergency planning/accident prevention.

Alzheimer's Notes

Respite Scholarships

Some of you are providing daily assistance to loved ones with Alzheimer's or other dementia who need a significant amount of supervision.



Taking periodic breaks from caregiving is important for your own health. If you cannot afford to hire substitute care, the Office for the Aging has received a limited amount of NY State funding for Respite Scholarships through the CNY Alzheimer's Association. **Please contact the Tompkins County Office for the Aging soon** to discuss the possibility of getting substitute aide service. Call David Stoyell (274-5492) or Trina Schickel (274-5491).

Music and Memory

Wednesday, May 3, Noon-1:00 PM
Tompkins County Office for the Aging
214 W. Martin Luther King Jr./State St.

Even for persons with severe dementia, music can tap deep emotional recall. Favorite music or songs associated with important personal events can trigger memory of lyrics and the experience connected to the music. Teri Reinemann, Gerontology Programs Manager at the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute, will do a short presentation on developing individualized playlists for family members with dementia. She will discuss the possible benefits and equipment/technology that can be used up setting up a personalized playlist for your loved one. Please call ahead, 274-5492, or email dstoyell@tompkins-co.org to register for this program. Free.



Living with Alzheimer's Series at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St. Ithaca

The **Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers** series of education programs is being presented by staff from the CNY Alzheimer's Association to provide answers to the questions that arise in at the different stages of the disease. Hear from those directly affected and learn what you need to know, what you need to plan and what you can do at each point along the way. These programs are free, but pre-registration is required. *You can participate in the entire series or register for each class individually.* To register, call Lifelong at 273-1511



Middle Stage Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers, Part 1- Thursday, February 23, (5pm-7pm)

Middle Stage Living with Alzheimer's for Caregivers, Part 2- Thurs., March 2, (5pm-7pm)

Late Stage Living with Alzheimer's- Tuesday, April 4 (5pm-7pm)

Some other services available from the Central New York Alzheimer's Association:

24-Hour Helpline- 1-800-272-3900- Get answers to your questions and assistance during crisis from a dementia expert.

Care Consultations- Meet with dementia experts to solve immediate problems and plan for the future.

Safe Return + Medic Alert- New grant funding enables both caregiver and care-receiver to obtain ID jewelry and be enrolled in safe return program free of charge.

From Tompkins County, call 330-1647 to inquire about these services.

The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us
at the **Tompkins County Office for the Aging**
214 W. Martin Luther King, Jr./State Street, Ithaca.
(Open weekdays, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM)

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Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: www.tompkinscountyny.gov/cofa

**Click on "Local Resources for Older Adults" to access our Tompkins County resource guides.*

**Click on "Newsletters" to view electronic editions of this newsletter for the past year.*

Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org

CaringBridge: www.caringbridge.org

Caregiver Action Network: www.caregiveraction.org

AARP Caregiver Resource Center: www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving

Next Step in Care: www.nextstepincare.org

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