



Renaissance

Choices Today...Possibilities Tomorrow

Slippery Slope for Seniors

When the temperature drops, older adults run a higher risk of health problems and injuries related to the weather.

Most dangerous are: hypothermia, frostbite, snow shoveling injuries, carbon monoxide poisoning and falls on ice and snow. Fall prevention instructor Taylor Boyle of Elderbridge says "It's essential for older adults to maintain mobility and continue to go out into the community. However, when the weather is bad, staying indoors and doing simple balance exercises is a great way to keep your body moving."

If you are at risk of falling while walking on winter sidewalks, here's advice to stick to so you don't slip.

- Inspect outer soles on your shoes and boots for excessive wear. Replace badly worn footwear.
- Boots with deep cleats are best when walking on snow. If ice is expected, use ice cleats or Yaktrax that fit over your shoes/boots to provide increased traction on ice.
- Consider an ice gripper for your cane or use hiking poles with rubber tips that can be removed to leave an ice tip on the bottom for use in icy conditions.
- Take slower smaller steps especially when turning. Understand that activities such as crossing streets will take longer.

- Wear gloves to keep hands free (not in your pockets) to help balance yourself.
- Consider a backpack, an over-the-shoulder strapped bag, or a suitcase/cart with wheels to carry items. Besides keeping your hands free for balance assistance, your vision will not be obstructed.

When you have a choice, travel on pathways that are in direct sunlight since they are often less icy. Be aware that sunlight causes melting and refreeze should be expected.

If snow and ice cannot be removed from a particular area, spread ice melt or sand to improve traction.

Carry a zip plastic bag in your pocket filled with kitty litter to spread out ahead of your path if there is an unavoidable icy area.

If a sidewalk is icy, consider walking on the ground next to it. Be alert for holes and uneven surfaces.

Keep walking paths clear of snow and ice. Be aware and be cautious. Walk as though snow and ice are present with an upright posture, weight above knees, short strides and a flat footed gait.

Stephanie Carlson of Elderbridge teaches "Stepping On" fall prevention workshops. Carlson says "If you can't do your own snow removal, hire someone or ask for help to ensure that there are clear pathways when out walking around your property. To prevent falls, don't go outside until pathways are clear."

January 2017

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MORE HELP IS HERE

Elderbridge offers more help through our fallprevention programs, "Stepping On" and "A Matter of Balance". The next 8 week workshop for "A Matter of Balance" will take place starting Tuesday, January 24th in Pocahontas at the Hinde Community Center. Contact Taylor Boyle for more information at 800-243-0678 extension 7030.

Also please visit www.lifelonglinks.org to watch falls prevention videos and to access resources to help prevent future falls.

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New Ideas for Old Programs

During the past presidential campaign, President-Elect Donald Trump said he would protect Social Security without cutting benefits, raising taxes or raising the retirement age. "We're not going to hurt the people who have been paying into Social Security their whole life," Trump said, calling the payment of promised benefits "honoring a deal." Trump is also on record saying he would protect Medicare benefits.

Meanwhile, those within his own party are offering different views on how to cut government spending on those two programs. On Friday, January 20, 2017 Republicans will be in control of Congress and the presidency. House Speaker Paul Ryan said he will then have the best chance in his political career to turn his deficit-cutting ideas into reality. Chief among these proposals are controversial Medicare reforms.

Medicare is the federally funded health care program that pays for much of the hospital care, doctor visits and medications for those 65 and older. At about 15 percent of total federal spending, most budget planners and fiscal watch-dog groups have said for years that this huge portion means Medicare must be included in any plans to tackle long-term debt.

Ryan's solution is to gradually raise the Medicare eligibility age to 67 beginning in 2020. In addition, Ryan wants to move Medicare towards a "premium support" model. Instead of Medicare's current guarantee of paying for a certain level of coverage — such as 80 percent of a hospital stay, for example — a premium support plan would give a fixed sum to buy coverage on the private insurance market to new beneficiaries beginning in 2024.

The amount would likely cover most or all of the cost of a modest private-health plan. The question is whether these sums would keep up with the rising costs of health care. Critics of Ryan's reform plan say it could shift too much of the health care cost burden onto seniors' shoulders.

Ryan has also supported limiting Social Security benefits by raising the retirement age for full benefits to as high as 69 or 70 years old. Right now the age is set at 66 and will rise gradually to 67.

What Trump says and what Ryan's plans are seem in opposition right now. But there is no doubt where House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi stands on the issue of changes to Medicare. After her party lost on many fronts to the Republicans in the Nov. 8 election, Pelosi said in an interview with The Washington Post that Ryan and Trump would be badly misreading the wishes of voters if they tried to move ahead with major changes to Medicare.

While portions of the Social Security and Medicare programs are facing long term financial challenges as more baby boomers retire and fewer workers pay into the programs, both programs have a vast political constituency — making it a potentially high risk venture for either party to seek major cuts or changes.

Elderbridge receives meal grant

Elderbridge recently received a big contribution toward its meals on wheels program. As part of the 100th anniversary of Farmers Bank of Spencer, area charities were awarded a total of \$30,000. Area residents were encouraged to vote for their favorite organization and the winners received a variety of donations based on the results of the voting. Spencer Area Home Delivered Meals, sponsored by Elderbridge, was selected as one of the gold prize winners. Gold prize winners were each awarded \$1000 to continue their work in the Spencer area.

Farmers Bank President David Woodcock said to the donors at the award ceremony, "We truly believe our bank is a reflection of our community. When our community thrives, we thrive. That drives us to work hard every day making our community better."

The 30 organizations were carefully selected by the bank for their involvement in bettering the lives of the citizens of Spencer and were split into three groups. Area citizens had the opportunity to vote for who they believed to be the most deserving of the organizations represented. The

organizations would then receive either a platinum, gold, silver, or bronze award, with values ranging from \$1500 to \$500.

This donation will go towards funding the Spencer Area Home Delivered Meals program which helps provide meals to area seniors. Providing nutritious food to area residents helps to keep them leading healthy lifestyles. Sandi Iwen, Nutrition Coordinator says, "Elderbridge wants to keep people in their homes as long as they are safe and can live with dignity and independence. It really warms your heart to know how much they appreciate this program."

If you or someone you know needs nutrition assistance, contact your local Elderbridge office to ask about options for home delivered meals or attending meal sites. Meals are delivered weekdays at noon. For more information call Elderbridge at 800-243-0678 and ask about our nutrition programs. Diners who meet eligibility (60+ years old and housebound) can make a confidential donation for their meal. The suggested contribution is between \$3.50 and \$5.50.

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www.grassley.senate.gov

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Seniors and Post-Holiday Blues

As the end of the holidays approaches, many people feel relief knowing the hustle and bustle is nearly done. Yet the day after decorations are packed away and the leftovers are in the freezer, that relief can be replaced with feelings of depression, especially for seniors.

Seasonal Causes-Seasonal depression is not unusual during the winter months. The lack of daylight, cold temperatures, and slippery weather can leave people stuck inside and feeling trapped. For the elderly, this may be even more serious because of the fear of a fall or accident. Look into light therapy to boost your loved one's melatonin levels and find ways to help them get out as much as possible.

Memories of Lost Loved Ones-The holidays are a time to reminisce. While many memories will be pleasant, this time of year can also bring to mind the people your loved one has lost. Parents, spouses, and even children may no longer be around to celebrate with your loved one, which may lead to loneliness and longing for the old days. Helping your loved one stay busy with fun holiday activities can keep him or her more focused on the present rather than the past.

Feelings of Helplessness-People may also feel like a burden during this busy time of the year. The need for others to take care of shopping, baking, or decorating can take away the joy a senior once felt for this special time. This is especially true if your loved one was once the party planner. Encourage your loved one to get involved with holiday planning. Signing Christmas cards, helping with baking, or directing the decorating can keep them involved and feeling more useful.

Financial Stress-Depression may also result from the added financial strain that can occur during winter. The cost of heating and higher utility bills reduces the amount of money everyone can spend on the ones they love. Consider giving your loved one gift cards for groceries or paying for their heating bill as a Christmas present. Discourage your loved one from feeling guilty by purchasing supplies and helping them craft handmade gifts.

Go out or invite others in-Though it may be difficult to make plans to attend events and socialize if one is feeling blue, this is the time when reaching out matters the most. Even a small get together can contribute to a happier outlook on the New Year ahead. If one's health prevents traveling, invite friends over for a simple gathering. It can make all the difference as can connecting with grandkids while they have vacations from school--even if it's by phone, email or Skype.



Here are some other ways seniors can help alleviate the post-holiday blues:

- Plan a getaway in February or March, especially some place warm. It doesn't have to be a big, expensive trip to keep one's spirits up and looking forward.
- Make a plan to learn something new. It can be anything from yoga exercises a person can do in a chair to learning about the computer.
- Work with family members to create visible memories of the holiday season. Collecting favorite photos and cards, and telling stories about the photos is not only entertaining, but preserves the history of a family.
- Consider taking decorations down slowly rather than all at once. Leave a wreath on the door, or garland along a bannister.
- The American Geriatric Society Foundation for Health in Aging recommends volunteering as a way to ease the post-holiday blues. One need not make a long-term, formal commitment to have a positive experience and impact.

Seniors can also benefit from taking time to talk about their feelings after the holidays, whether with others at a senior center or church, or with a geriatric counselor. Often times just talking about sadness helps one understand it better and feel more in control.

The holidays can be exhausting at any age, but for seniors, traveling, shopping, cooking and decorating can take a much bigger toll than it once did. It is important to note that exhaustion sometimes feels like depression, so seniors should schedule more opportunities to nap or simply get a little extra rest.

Keeping in Touch During a Long Winter

The winter season is one of the busiest at Elderbridge Agency on Aging offices. And it all begins when people get together for holiday visits. Typically a person hasn't seen their aging friend or relative in months and notice that they may need assistance to safely live in their home. There are many things to consider. That's why calling your local area agency on aging is a good first step in getting information and establishing a connection to resources and services that are available in the community.

Here are just a few things to look for and discuss with the person you care about:

- Does an elder require help with chores or housekeeping, bathing, dressing, shopping, meal preparation, managing money, transportation or medications?
- Are they isolated? How often do they socialize with others?
- If living with another, are they dependent on that person for care? Is that person an appropriate caregiver? Does the caregiver understand the health conditions that the elder has?

Are there warning signs of abuse or neglect?

Self-neglect indicators might be confusion, depression, no longer able to handle tasks of daily living, under nourished, under/over medicated or dehydrated. Neglect or abuse by others may include: the presence of a "new best friend"; recent changes in banking or spending patterns; fear and unexplained bruises.

Creating some private time with the elder is beneficial to discuss future planning since they may not be aware of the gradual decline they are experiencing and may be reluctant or unable to plan for needed care. Support and guidance from family members or friends can help prevent serious accidents and future health complications. Noticing and correcting problems can help keep seniors safely in their homes.

For more information on these issues and other aging related concerns, contact Elderbridge Agency on Aging at www.elderbridge.org, or by calling 800-243-0678.

FEBRUARY 2017 MENUS				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Each Meal Includes: * 1/3 of the Required Daily Amounts (RDA) for persons age 70+ *Milk * Condiments as appropriate * Sodium > 800mg		1 Swiss Style Gr. Beef Squash Scalloped Cabbage Blushing Pears Tomato Juice	2 Turkey & Dumplings Asparagus Mixed Fruit OJ	3 Italian Meatloaf Roasted Red Potatoes Brussel Sprouts with Cranberries Cinnamon Apples w/Crunchy Top
6 Spaghetti Tossed Salad Apricots French Bread	7 Liver & Onions or Beef Patty Mashed Potatoes Broccoli Oranges and Pineapple	8 Baked Chicken Baked Potato Peas Cinnamon Raisin Applesauce Tomato Juice	9 Chili or Beef Barley Corn Bread Tangy Coleslaw Strawberries OJ	10 Ham Loaf Sweet Potatoes Calico Corn/Corn Mixed Fruit
13 Salisbury Ground Beef Mashed Potatoes Mixed Vegetables Peaches OJ	14 Autumn Chicken Creamed Asparagus Quinoa Plums WW Roll	15 COOK'S CHOICE	16 Tater Tot Casserole California Blend Fruit Salad WW Roll	17 Crunchy Pollock Baked Potato Spinach au gratin Carrot Cake Mandarin Oranges
20 Chicken Rice Broccoli Casserole Tossed Salad Garlic Bread Hot Fruit Compote OJ	21 Pork Loin Baked Potato Cooked Cabbage & Onions Cook's Fruit Bar Tomato Juice	22 Beef & Noodles Stewed Tomatoes Broccoli Raisin Salad Peach Crisp	23 Baked Chicken Mashed Potatoes w/ Gravy Cranberry Brussel Sprouts Cinnamon Applesauce	24 COOK'S CHOICE
27 Ham & Bean Soup Corn Bread Carrots Strawberries & Bananas OJ	28 Turkey Roast Sweet Potatoes Green Beans Pumpkin Custard			

Amy B. Jones MS RDW LCN

Older Worker Employment Program Helps Those in Need of Employment

While many seniors rely on Social Security and personal savings after they retire, some decide to continue working. For those who are seeking work or are forced to change jobs later in life, Elderbridge offers its Older Worker Employment Program. The program helps those 55 and older overcome barriers that would otherwise keep them from being gainfully employed.

The Older Worker Employment Program is a partnership between Iowa Vocation Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Agencies on Aging. This coalition found that those aged 55 and older needed more help and training in finding employment.

Caseworkers from the program work alongside a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor to identify those who need assistance and pair them with employment specialists in the state. Marsha Harmonson is the Elderbridge employment specialist. She works to connect workers with specific skillsets and needs to employers that are a fit for specific occupational demands and can accommodate the needs of their employees. Marsha has a long history of connecting employees and employers, having worked

with the planning commission in Spencer for 12 years. Harmonson says "Everybody is an individual, has different work background and different work interests, different skills they can bring to the job and different accommodations they're going to need on the job." For more information on the Elderbridge Older Workers Employment Program contact Elderbridge Agency on Aging at www.elderbridge.org, or by calling 800-243-0678. You may also contact LifeLong Links at www.lifelonglinks.org, or by calling 866-468-7887.



Elderbridge Employee Spotlight

Shelly Sindt, Co-Executive Director, Spencer

Where did you grow up and spend your early years?

I was born and raised in Spencer, Iowa.

Tell us a little bit about your family.

I am the youngest of three children. I am married to my husband Gaylen of six wonderful years. I have two grown children and two grown step-children as well as a 14 year old step-son. I have a seven year old grandson and four year old granddaughter and I love being a grandma!

Did you ever have a job(s) sometime in your life that no one would guess you had?

I worked one summer between my freshman and sophomore years of college at a local grease gun factory and it made me realize that I needed to work hard on my degree as I wasn't cut out for factory work.

What made you want to get involved in social services and elder care?

My dad was a Regional Director for the Department of Human Services for many years and he was my mentor.

How long have you been with Elderbridge?

Three and a half years.

What is the favorite part about your work at Elderbridge?

Seeing the positive results of our services to our seniors and knowing what we do improves the quality of life of older Iowans.

What are 3 career lessons that you've learned thus far?

1. It takes teamwork to effectively deliver quality service.
2. Lead by example.
3. Don't sweat the small stuff.

What are some of the changes that you have seen in your profession since you started?

The profession of aging services has become very business focused due to the growing aging population and funding remaining stagnant.

What are some of your hopes for the future of the

work done in social services for the elderly and disabled adults?

To be able to support all aging and disabled Iowans to the extent that is needed for them to have all their needs met.

What are some of your favorite things to do while away from work?

Reading, spending time with family, watching and attending sporting events.

What is your favorite meal?

Any meal shared with family and friends.

Tell us something about yourself that would surprise people.

My nickname is Beany after the cartoon character from Beany and Cecil which was popular in the 1960's.

Do you have a personal motto or words of wisdom that you try to live by?

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, but learning to dance in the rain!



Pictured is Shelly Sindt with centenarian Anna Resink at the centenarian event held in October in Spencer.

New Year's Resolutions for Seniors

We've compiled our Top 10 New Year's resolutions designed to make for a better 2017!

1. Be around next year to make another resolution! It's all about living life to the fullest!
2. Pray for peace in the world! Hope that the future brings more love and compassion to people.
3. Smile more! It's a good time to learn to be kinder.
4. Be a better listener! When you're old and wise, it's sometimes difficult not to interrupt others!
5. Drive more carefully! A resolution we should all make at any age!
6. Visit or write your grandchildren. The art of a handwritten letter isn't lost just yet!
7. Rekindle or find a hobby. Use the start of the New Year to get back to one of your favorite pastimes.
8. Volunteer. Experience a sense of purpose and satisfaction by helping others in need.
9. Take your health into your hands. Listening to health professionals is important.
10. Find a new, healthy activity. The great thing about physical fitness is that there are so many ways to incorporate it into your lifestyle.





22 N. Georgia Ave., Ste 216
Mason City, Iowa 50401

Our Mission is to Empower Older Iowans
and Adults with Disabilities to Live with
Dignity and Independence.

Returned Service Requested

The Elderbridge Agency on Aging. . .
seeks to empower older Iowans to live with dignity and independence. Created under the Older Americans Act, Elderbridge has been meeting the needs of Iowans age 60 years and older and their caregivers for more than 40 years.

Elderbridge serves older Iowans in a 29-county area in Northwest, North Central and Central Iowa with the goal of providing the necessary information and resources to empower our constituents to manage their lives and the aging process to the best of their and our abilities.

To learn more about the services Elderbridge provides to older Iowans, contact an Elderbridge office or visit www.elderbridge.org.

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