



JANUARY 2026

in this issue...

- ▶ A Matter of Trust
- ▶ How to Find Reliable Health Information Online
- ▶ Coping with Caregiving
- ▶ Healthy Living Programs Available to YOU
- ▶ All About Almonds
- ▶ Planning for Your Pet's Care After Your Death



Winter Safety Tips for Seniors: Driving With Care

As the days get shorter and the roads get icy, it's time to brush up on important winter safety tips for seniors. While the winter season may be full of family, friends and food, it also brings weather concerns, which can make it more complicated to get out of the house, especially when you're the one driving.

Snow, ice, sleet and cold temperatures create new and potentially dangerous challenges for senior drivers. Seniors who rely on their own vehicles for transportation should be aware that driving in winter weather requires additional safety measures and extra care.

Winter Safety Tips: Eight Considerations

Because driving abilities change with age, senior drivers should be prepared to take some extra precautions to help them drive safely in harsh weather conditions. These tips will help both seniors and those traveling with elderly parents keep safe through the winter months.

1. Winterize Your Vehicle - Give your vehicle a little extra care during the winter months. Make sure that your brakes, headlights and windshield wipers are working properly. Ensure visibility by checking car mirrors and external cameras.

Also, check on the antifreeze levels, oil levels and tires. It is important, especially for seniors, that the heater and defroster are fully functioning as seniors are more susceptible to the frigid winter temperatures.

2. Check Weather Conditions - Before you leave the house, always remember to check the weather conditions in your area. In times of extreme weather like sleet or heavy snowfall, you may want to delay your trip. For necessary trips, you can also make alternative arrangements like scheduling a car service.

3. Always Have a Full Tank of Gas - There is nothing worse than running out of gas when it's freezing cold and snowing outside. Keep your gas tank full during the winter months to avoid harmful

condensation forming inside your gas tank and freezing in the fuel line. It may be pricey to keep your tank full, but it is less expensive than towing and repairs to frozen fuel lines.

4. Dress Warm - When leaving the house, dress as if you'll be outdoors without the luxury of a car heater. Remember your winter coat, thick socks, gloves and a hat. While this may seem unnecessary while in the comfort of your car, it's helpful in emergencies if your car breaks down and the heater no longer works.

5. Avoid Rush Hour and Back Roads - During heavy traffic periods, there are more people on the road and higher chances for traffic accidents. If you must go out during rush hour, be aware of black ice and traffic jams. If the roads are bad, avoid using back roads and shortcuts. Because there are fewer cars on the road, they are less likely to be plowed or salted and may be more dangerous than well-traveled roads.

6. Drive With Extra Caution - During extreme weather, remember to adjust your speed and avoid sudden movements like turns or braking; these can cause skidding. Increase your following distance to provide extra time for braking. Finally, use your headlights and always wear any necessary eyeglasses or sunglasses to improve visibility.

7. Travel With a Companion - Having a travel companion can be great during the winter months. Not only do they keep you awake and aware, but senior travel companions can also help you to navigate the slippery roads and get through heavy traffic.



... continued on page 2

Staff Spotlight: Cory

Hi there...my name is Cory Miller and I'm happy to be part of your Chippewa County ADRC as the new Elder Benefit Specialist. I came onboard shortly before Thanksgiving and have been eager to learn it all to help support you in the best way possible, just as my predecessor has done (I have some big shoes to fill!).



My previous experiences include territory management for programs like blood banks and hospice care as well as serving patients/residents in long-term care

My husband Richard and I have two kids and we live here in Chippewa Falls. It is also the community from where I hail, where my sister and mom still live. Chippewa is a beautiful area with so many good things. I enjoy tea time with friends, home-steading activities, as well as getting outside to enjoy all of our seasons.

You will have questions on things like health insurance benefits or social security or even disability, to name a few, and I will be happy to work alongside you to figure it out. I hope to hear from you soon!

... continued from page 1

If you don't have someone to travel with in bad winter weather, make sure that someone knows where you're going and that you have a charged cell phone with you in case of an emergency.

8. Prepare for an Emergency - Emergency preparedness is paramount in ensuring your safety. If you're traveling during the winter months, especially for an extended period of time, it is helpful to be over-prepared. Put together an emergency kit to store in the trunk of your car, including (but not limited to):

- A blanket
- Food and water
- A flashlight with extra batteries
- A first-aid kit
- Jumper cables
- An ice scraper
- Sand, salt or non-clumping kitty litter to provide extra tire traction
- Extra clothing, boots and gloves
- A charged cell phone and charging cable

Final Winter Safety Tips

This winter, take your time driving when the roads are snowy and slick. If you don't feel comfortable driving in the winter weather don't hesitate to ask for help. Winter weather can be challenging for senior drivers, but if you plan accordingly and are aware of the dangerous conditions, you can arrive safely at your destination.

Find us at
seniorreviewnewspapers.com

The ADRC is Online!

Subscribe for FREE to get this eNewsletter emailed to you each month at www.chippewacountywi.gov/adrc or scan the QR code below. You can always pick up this free newspaper at most local grocery stores, or pay \$16/year for a mailed subscription. **Call the ADRC at 715-726-7777.**

Website	Resource Guide	Facebook	Events	Leave Us a Review	eNewsletter
					

Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Staff ... *Your Bridge to Support!*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ADRC Manager – Sarah Zielke• Administrative Assistants – Renee Price, Carmen Olson, Karen Herbison• Benefit Specialist Assistant – Breanna Schemenauer• Dementia Care Specialist – Carla Berscheit | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability Benefit Specialist – Stephanie Rasmussen• Elder Benefit Specialist – Cory Miller• Nutrition & Transportation Programs Supervisor – Kayla Colbenson• Nutrition Program Assistants – Jason Kolano, Jen Buckley | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nutrition Site Aides – Sue Barnum, Linda Felmlee, Cindy Sarazen, Ann Mueller, Cindy Irish, Vicky Steinmetz• Options Counselors – Sarah Hedlund, Erika Stevens, Jessica Gibson, Libby Leinenkugel |
|---|--|---|

Aging and Disability Resource Centers are the first place to go with your aging and disability questions. We are an "information station" where you can get accurate, unbiased information related to aging or living with a disability. Our job is to help you remain as independent as possible! Give us a call at 715-726-7777 or stop in at 711 N. Bridge Street (Courthouse), Room 118, Chippewa Falls.

A Matter of Trust

By Ken Anderson, themayberryguru@gmail.com

In one of the later episodes of The Andy Griffith Show, Andy faced a difficult decision. Opie needed surgery to remove his tonsils. The problem was that a new doctor had arrived in town, and the good people of Mayberry did not trust him. He was young, talked funny, drove a sports car, and played golf. Not quite the attributes one looks for in a doctor, especially a doctor who would do surgery on your son. Andy would need to trust this new, unproven doctor.

Trust is crucial in life. There are so many people whom we need to trust throughout our lives. And many of them are total strangers. Every time we board an airplane, we are entrusting our lives to strangers. There is a stranger in the control tower. Strangers inspect the plane before takeoff. And there is the pilot. All the people that we do not know. Yet, we entrust our lives to them, hoping they do their jobs well.

Then there is the medical aspect of our lives. Each time we have a prescription filled, we trust the pharmacist or technician to fill it correctly. One mistake could be a matter of life or death. Several years ago, I picked up a prescription. The pharmacist asked me about my serious heart condition. I told him I had no heart condition, and he then informed me that the medication prescribed was for a serious heart



ailment. He immediately contacted my doctor and discovered that a mistake had been made when sending the order to the pharmacy.

Airline pilots, air traffic controllers, doctors, pharmacists, or lab technicians cannot make mistakes. Too many lives depend on their performance. One mistake could be catastrophic. Every day, millions of parents entrust the safety of their

children to school bus drivers, teachers, day care providers, and countless others.

Trust is an integral part of life. Without trust, we would do nothing. On the back of all our money, we find the words "In God We Trust". These words were added to our coins during the Civil War to express the nation's reliance on divine support. It was later added to all paper money.

Imagine a soldier going into battle without trusting his commanding officer or fellow soldier. Or a paratrooper jumping out of an airplane, not trusting his parachute to open. We place our trust in God for many things in our lives, but we also need to trust our fellow man. Trust me on this.



*The Holidays Show
Us What Everyday
Life Often Hides*

Many families discover during holiday visits that aging loved ones need more help than they realized—missed medications, fall risks, clutter, or difficulty keeping up with daily tasks.

*Because noticing the signs is the first step.
Acting on them makes all the difference.*

Your source for clear information,
unbiased support, and resources to
explore your options with confidence.



ADRC of Chippewa County
711 N. Bridge Street (Courthouse), Room 118, Chippewa Falls
715-726-7777 | www.co.chippewa.wi.us/adrc
Hours: Mon-Thurs 7:30 am to 4:30 pm; Fri 7:30 am to 11:30 am



**SUICIDE LOSS
SUPPORT GROUP
OF THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY**

A safe place for any adult who has lost
someone to suicide.



6:30 - 8 PM

1ST AND 3RD THURSDAYS MONTHLY

DOVE HEALTHCARE SOUTH EAU CLAIRE

3656 MALL DRIVE - EAU CLAIRE, WI

Call Steve at 715-598-7037

 **Find us on Facebook**  

How to Find Reliable Health Information Online

Resourced from National Institutes of Health

Many older adults share a common concern: “Can I trust the health information I find online?” There are thousands of medical websites. Some provide up-to-date medical news and reliable health information, and some do not. Choosing trustworthy websites is an important step in gathering reliable health information.

The National Institutes of Health website is a good place to start for reliable health information. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website is another one.

As a rule, health websites sponsored by federal government agencies are accurate sources of information. You can reach all federal websites by visiting www.usa.gov. Medical and health care organizations, hospitals, and academic medical institutions may also be reliable sources of health information.

Your health care provider can also suggest ideal sources of online information. If your doctor’s office has a website, it may include a list of recommended links.

Questions to Ask Before Trusting a Website

Searching online, you will likely find websites for multiple health organizations, including many you may not recognize. The following questions can help determine which ones are trustworthy. Many of the answers can often be found in a website’s “About Us” section.

1. What is the Purpose of the Website, and Who Owns or Sponsors it?

Why was the site created? Is the purpose of the site to inform or explain, or is it trying to sell a product or service? Understanding the motive of the website can help you better judge its content. The goal of any trustworthy health information website is to provide accurate, current, and useful information versus trying to make a sale.

Knowing who pays for a website may provide you with insight into the mission or goal of the site. For example, if a business pays for the site, the health information may favor that business and its products. Sometimes, the website address (called a URL) is helpful for identifying the type of agency or organization that owns the site. For example:

- .gov identifies a U.S. government agency
- .edu identifies an educational institution, such as a school, college, or university
- .org usually identifies nonprofit organizations, such as medical or research societies and advocacy groups
- .com identifies commercial websites, such as businesses and pharmaceutical companies

While many commercial websites do provide accurate, useful health information, it can be hard to distinguish this content from marketing and promotional materials in some cases. Any advertisements on a site should be clearly marked as such. Watch out for ads designed to look like neutral health information.

2. Who Wrote the Information? Who Reviewed it? Website pages often, but not always, identify the authors and contributors. If the author is listed, are they an expert in the field? Look for health care professionals or scientific researchers with in-depth knowledge of the topic.

Does the author work for an organization and, if so, what are the goals of that organization? A contributor’s connection to the website, and any financial stake they have regarding the information on the website, should be made clear.

If the material is not authored by an expert, has the information been reviewed by a health care professional or other credentialed specialist? Dependable health information websites will share sources and citations.

Trustworthy websites will also have contact information — an email address, phone number, and/or mailing address — that you can use to reach the site’s sponsor. Look for this information at the bottom of web pages or in a separate “About Us” or “Contact Us” page.



Be cautious about testimonials, individual blogs, and posts on discussion boards. Personal stories may be helpful and comforting, but not everyone experiences health problems the same way. Also, there is a big difference between information written by a single person interested in a topic and a website developed by professionals using researched and peer-reviewed scientific evidence.

No online information, even if it is accurate and trustworthy, should replace seeing a health care professional who can thoroughly evaluate your unique situation and provide specific advice.

3. Is Your Privacy Protected? Does the Website Clearly State a Privacy Policy? Read the website’s privacy policy. It is usually at the bottom of the page or on a separate page titled “Privacy Policy” or “Our Policies.” If a website says it uses “cookies,” your information may not be private. Cookies are small text files that enable a website to collect and remember information about your visit. While cookies may enhance your web experience, they can also compromise your online privacy, so it is important to read about the information the website collects and how the organization will use it. Many websites will ask you ahead of time if you want to accept cookies, but others may not. If you are concerned about the potential use of information gathered by cookies, you can choose to disable the use of cookies through your internet browser settings.

4. How Can I Protect my Health Information? If you are asked to share personal information, be sure to find out how the information will be used. Secure websites that collect personal information responsibly have an “s” after “http” in the start of their website addresses (<https://>) and often require that you create a username and password.

Be careful about sharing your Social Security number. Find out why your number is needed, how it will be used, and what will happen if you do not share this information. Only enter your Social Security number on secure websites. You might consider calling your doctor’s office or health insurance company to give this information over the phone rather than providing it online.

Taking these precautions may help protect your information:

- Beware of health fraud scams and pay attention when browsing the internet. Do not open unexpected links. Hover your mouse over a link to confirm that clicking it will take you to a reputable website.
- Always use a strong password. Include a variation of numbers, letters, and symbols. Some websites may allow you to use a phrase as well. Create a unique password for each website and change it frequently.
- Use two-factor authentication when you can. This security feature requires the use of two different types of personal information to log into your mobile devices or accounts.
- Don’t enter sensitive information over public Wi-Fi. Learn about how to safely use public Wi-Fi networks.
- Be careful about the information you share through social media sites. For example, don’t share personal information, such as where you live or your contact information, on a public channel.

FREE: Power of Attorney Clinic



Why everyone 18 and older should have a POA

Did you know that **Wisconsin doesn't recognize relatives** as automatic decision makers when someone is incapacitated?

Completing a POA is a gift to your family and friends because they won't be left wondering what you would like.

You can save money by avoiding the need for court-appointed guardianship.

Attend a FREE event where knowledgeable staff from Chippewa County DHS will provide unbiased information on the POA for Health Care and POA for Finance.

Please plan to attend the entire presentation. No registration required.

Save the 2026 dates!

- Tuesday, February 3
 - 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Wednesday, April 8
 - 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday, June 2
 - 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Wednesday, August 12
 - 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday, October 6
 - 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Wednesday, December 9
 - 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Chippewa County Courthouse
Third Floor Conference Room – 302

For questions, contact the ADRC.
715- 726-7777 or find more info online:
www.chippewacountywi.gov/ADRC/events



Adaptive Kitchen Equipment and Supplies

A little support can go a long way in helping us remain independent. This resource highlights examples of adaptive products designed to make daily life easier. For additional guidance, please contact your local Independent Living Center: <https://compassil.org/>.

Disclaimer: We are not affiliated with or endorsed by any of the products listed. They are provided solely as informational examples of adaptive equipment options. The list is not all-inclusive. Photo credit: Amazon.com

Palm peeler: Easy and fast way to peel vegetables with ease.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Finger-Grip-Vegetable-Peeler>



Rocker Knife: used to cut food with minimal strength and dexterity

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Stainless-Mezzaluna-Rocker-knife>



Dutch oven (heavier, with dual handles): Easy to move from counter to counter and perfect for one-pot meals.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Cast-Iron-Dutch-Oven-Lid>



Lighter-weight pot (nonstick, dual handles): An easy-to-handle pot, perfect for cooking quinoa and other grains.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/BEZIA-Nonstick-Induction-Non-toxic-Kettle>



Pull through Knife Sharpener: A safe and simple way to keep your kitchen knives sharp.

Link: <https://www.amazon.com/Kitchen-Knife-Sharpener-Sharpening>



SERVICE with PASSION



DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE

Providing assisted living and memory care services in a thoughtfully designed community setting.

Experience the difference of a non-corporate, unconventional care provider like Comforts of Home.



GREAT LOCATIONS

Menomonie Chippewa Falls
Hudson River Falls
Baldwin St. Croix Falls

www.COHSeniorLiving.com

PEDALING FOR PARKINSON'S

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM YMCA OF THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

Pedaling for Parkinson's helps Parkinson Disease patients develop healthy lifestyles through fitness, education, and wellness activities in a group setting. Sessions will run for 8 weeks at a time.

The Pedaling for Parkinson's™ program is based on research indicating that exercise on a bicycle can reduce symptoms of Parkinson's. Participants that attend this program have shown up to a 35% improvement in their Parkinson's related symptoms.

COST:

- Free for all Parkinson's patients and their caregivers. All participants will receive a 1-year family membership to the YMCA of the Chippewa Valley once the program begins.
- To register, visit www.ymca-cv.org/hip

REQUIREMENTS:

- Medical clearance form signed by your doctor.
- Ability to sit upright on a bicycle for 30-60 minutes
- Ability to attend 80% of the classes

WHEN & WHERE:

- Eau Claire Downtown YMCA: Jan 5-Feb 25, 2026
 - Mondays & Wednesdays from 1:00-2:00 PM
- Chippewa Falls YMCA:
 - WINTER 1: Jan 5-Feb 25, 2026
 - WINTER 2: March 2-April 22, 2026
 - Mondays & Wednesdays from 10:30 AM-11:30 AM



YMCA-CV.ORG/HIP



JANUARY DEMENTIA SUPPORT

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PROGRAM FLYERS, CHECK OUT THE ADRC
CALENDAR EVENTS AT WWW.CHIPPEWACOUNTYWI.GOV/ADRC
AND CLICK ON "DEMENTIA SPECIALIST"

DEMENTIA P.A.C.T.

Positive & Assertive Caregiver Training

JOIN US FOR FREE QUARTERLY TRAININGS TO
INCREASE YOUR SKILLS AS A CAREGIVER.

ALL TRAININGS WILL BE HELD AT
ASPIRUS STANLEY HOSPITAL FROM 10 - 11:30AM

- **COPING SKILLS FOR CAREGIVERS - FEBRUARY 10**
Caregiving can take a toll. Learn practical strategies to care for yourself while caring for others
- **DEMENTIA LIVE - MAY 12**
Have you ever wondered what it might feel like to have dementia? Come and check out our dementia simulation!
- **DICE APPROACH TO DEMENTIA - AUGUST 11**
Sometimes people with dementia can have behaviors related to their brain changes. Learn practical strategies to manage them.
- **DEMENTIA AND HOME SAFETY - NOVEMBER 10**
Learn low tech and high tech devices that can help keep your loved one safe at home.

Join Carla Berscheit and Hannah Quicker, Dementia Care Specialists to gain knowledge, understanding and resources. Attend one or all of the trainings. Registration is required.

715-644-6153 | Diane.Finn@aspirus.org

DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUPS

This group is for people living with dementia and their caregivers, friends and neighbors. Join us for support, strategies and resources.

Menomonie

- Menomonie Senior Center | 1412 Sixth Street E
- Fourth Monday of the month | 10:30 - noon

Chippewa Falls

- Central Lutheran Church | 28 East Columbia Street
- Second Thursday of the month | 1:00 - 2:30pm

For more information, call the ADRC at **715-726-7777**

VIRTUAL DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUPS

Join us for support, encouragement & resources

For Caregivers of someone living with dementia:

Monday Coffee Connect - Every Monday 10-11 am
Contact Kelsey at kflock@lacrossecounty.org

Monday DISH - 1st Monday of the month 7-8pm
Contact Carla at cberscheit@chippewacountywi.gov

Circle of Support - 3rd Tuesday of the month 2-3pm
Contact Teresa at teresa.gander@vernoncounty.org

Evening Conversations - 2nd Thursday of the month 7-8pm
Contact Teresa at teresa.gander@vernoncounty.org

Minds & Voices - 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10:30-11:30am
Contact Rob at 920-386-4308 or rgriesel@co.dodge.wi.us

Lewy Body Dementia Caregiver Support Group -
2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month 1:30-3:30pm
Contact Rob at 920-386-4308 or rgriesel@co.dodge.wi.us

Friday Support - Every Friday morning 9-10am
Contact Karen at karen.tennyson@co.rock.wi.us

Third Wednesday - Third Wed. of the month 6:30-7:30 pm
Contact Tricia at tricia.rotering@co.trempealeau.wi.us

For those living with MCI or early stage dementia

Conversations - 1st & 3rd Wed. of the month, 10:30am - noon
Contact Rob at 920-386-4308 or rgriesel@co.dodge.wi.us

VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB

This book club is dedicated to caregivers of someone with dementia. Join Dementia Care Specialists from Pierce & Dunn County as we work through the many losses related to caring for someone with dementia.

January 7 - March 4

-Wednesdays | 10:00am - 11:00am

**Free books available for pick up at Dunn or Pierce County
Aging & Disability Resource Center**

To register, contact Amy Luther at **715-273-6780** or
email: amy.luther@co.pierce.wi.us

Questions about brain health, dementia, and/or caring for a person with dementia?

**Contact Carla Berscheit,
Dementia Care Specialist, ADRC**

715-738-2584 or 715-944-8091
cberscheit@chippewacountywi.gov

National 24/7 Helpline 1-800-272-3900 or www.alz.org

Dementia Website:



**Find more
Brain Health
information
& upcoming
events!**

Facebook Dementia
Group:



Coping with Caregiving

By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

If you're one of the more than 1 million caregivers in Wisconsin providing support to a loved one, you know the challenges that exist. Caregiver stress can put your own health at risk, jeopardizing both you and your family members. Your ADRC can help provide information and resources to manage caregiving and perhaps reduce some of the responsibilities you have.

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia can be especially trying. The emotional ups and downs associated with moments of clarity and confusion take a toll. You can take a caregiver stress check at <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/caregiver-health/caregiver-stress> to see what your stress level is. Some tips from Alzheimer's

Association include accepting changes as they occur, keeping current with your doctor's appointments, being realistic about what you can manage, and making legal and financial plans.

Another form of caregiving increasing in frequency is grandfamilies, where a grandparent is the primary caregiver of a grandchild. In Wisconsin, more than 20,000 grandparents are responsible for their

grandchildren. This provides its own set of challenges, from income and nutrition to health care and education. Legal issues also come into play, such as whether someone will be adopting, setting up a guardianship, fostering, or pursuing some other form of custodial agreement for caring for the grandchild.



STAY STRONG SHARP & CONNECTED TOGETHER

BRAIN & BODY FITNESS YMCA OF THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

Join our Brain & Body Program, a unique experience designed specifically for people living with mild to moderate memory loss—and the care partners who support them. This program blends gentle physical activity, brain health exercises, and meaningful social connection to enhance quality of life for both participants.

Led by specially trained YMCA staff, the program is safe, supportive, and proven to boost mood, physical fitness, and overall well-being. Whether you're looking to stay active, lift your spirits, or build community, the Brain & Body program offers a fun and welcoming environment where you and your loved one can thrive—side by side.

To participate, individuals must be able to follow simple instructions, engage in conversation, and complete basic exercises. Come move with us, laugh with us, and take part in something truly uplifting.

Eau Claire Downtown YMCA

- WHEN: Mondays & Wednesdays, January 5–March 25, 2026
- TIME: 10:00–11:30 AM
- LOCATION: United Methodist Church, 337 Lake Street, Eau Claire

Chippewa Falls YMCA:

- WHEN: Tuesdays & Thursdays, January 6–March 26, 2026
- TIME: 10:00–11:30 AM
- LOCATION: Chippewa Falls YMCA - Group Exercise Studio

For more information or to register, contact April Peterson, at apeterson@ymca-cv.org or (715) 833-4843

YMCA-CV.ORG/WEELLNESS



Ways to Listen



Your favorite podcast app

Find us on Spotify, Apple Music, Google Podcasts, and more



On our website

Find episodes and transcripts on adrc.wisc.edu/podcast



On the radio

Tune in to 102.9 WMUU in Madison, Fridays at 4:00 p.m.



Follow Dementia Matters!

Learn about the latest Alzheimer's disease research and caregiving strategies



Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center



@WisconsinADRC



Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Medication Management & Your Good Health Have Never Been Easier



We can help you with ALL of your needs!

- Med Sync - one pickup saves time
- Convenience Packaging such as planners
- Rx Consulting • Durable Medical Equipment
- Wellness Products • Local Delivery

Simplify your refills and your life. Ask us how. Give us a call or stop in today.

Mondovi Pharmacy

122 SOUTH EAU CLAIRE STREET - MONDOVI
715-926-4938

Ed's Pharmacy

1511 MAIN STREET - BLOOMER
715-568-2190

Wally Shong Pharmacy

153 W LINCOLN STREET - AUGUSTA
715-286-2515



Healthy Living Programs Available to YOU

The ADRC of Chippewa County has made arrangements with the ADRC of Eau Claire County to allow Chippewa County residents the ability to enroll in any of their healthy living programs. If you would like more information about any of these programs or would like to register, please call the ADRC of Eau Claire County at 715-839-4735 or go to www.adrcevents.org

Healthy Living with Chronic Pain (virtual)

If living with ongoing pain is keeping you from doing the things you want to do, this 6-week workshop can help give you tools and strategies to manage your pain. If you're 18 or older and have or live with someone who has chronic pain, this program is for you! Topics include: Mind and body connection, getting quality sleep, dealing with difficult emotions, medication usage and evaluating treatment options, balancing activity and rest, creating a pain profile, fatigue management, Moving Easy Program, healthy eating to reduce inflammation, communicating about pain with friends, family, and your medical team. A Webex practice session will be held one week prior.

- **Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m./ January 27 - March 3, 2026**

Med Wise Rx

Medication errors can result in unwanted effects from medicines, and worse, falls, hospitalizations and even death. The pharmacist is important to help people manage their medications and address their medication-related questions and concerns. Yet, patients and caregivers of-ten are unsure what questions to ask or how to ask them. In this workshop, you will gain confidence in talking with your pharmacist and learn what to ask about your medicines. Meets for two 2-hour classes, separated by one week for home practice.

- **Tuesdays, 1:30 - 3:30 pm/ February 24 & March 10, 2026**
- Lake Street Methodist Church, 337 Lake Street, Eau Claire

StrongBodies Information Session (for new participants)

Strength training is especially important as we age. Being physically active and socially connected are both essential for health and well-being. The StrongBodies program provides a safe environment for older adults to improve strength and balance with a fun group of peers. Learn more in this free orientation and sign up for classes starting in March 2026.

- **Thursday, 10:00 - 11:15 am/ March 5, 2026**
(virtual and phone conference)



Join us for the StrongBodies Program!

StrongBodies has been shown to increase strength, muscle mass, and bone density. Classes are held twice weekly and include progressive resistance training, balance training, and flexibility exercises.

For more information, contact the ADRC of Chippewa County at 715-726-7777

Virtual StrongBodies - Winter Series

Dates: January 6 - March 26, 2026

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 - 10:15 am

Deadline to register: Friday, January 30th

Offered virtually via Zoom

How to Sign Up: Call 715-726-7777



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

StrongBodies

10-week workshops, classes meet twice weekly for one hour each.

Virtual:

- Mondays & Wednesdays, **March 30 - June 3, 2026** at 8:30 am, 11:15 am
- Tuesdays & Thursdays, **March 31 - June 4, 2026** at 8:30 am

In-person:

- Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 8:00 am (Augusta Senior & Community Center)
- Mondays & Wednesdays, 5:00 pm (Dove Healthcare-West Eau Claire)
- Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00 pm (Grace Lutheran Church)



Repeat participants must complete a Re-enrollment Consent Form to sign up by March 16. No late registrations will be accepted to maintain the quality of our program. \$20 suggested contribution for repeat participants. Download form at www.adrcevents.org, email adrc@eauclairecounty.gov or call the ADRC at 715-839-4735 to request a form by mail.

REGISTER at least one week prior: Call the ADRC at 715-839-4735 or go to www.adrcevents.org.

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Go to www.esmmweighless.com to view class times for the upcoming series beginning soon.

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Does ongoing pain keep you from doing the things you love?
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"Living with arthritis pain – constant nagging pain – is so debilitating. Healthy Living with Chronic Pain taught me strategies to manage my pain. Having a little control feels great."

What is Healthy Living with Chronic Pain?





Healthy Living with Chronic Pain is an evidence-based program developed at Stanford University for adults of all ages who have chronic pain or live with someone who does. In just 6 weeks, you learn:

- Goal setting and problem solving
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- Coping with stress and depression
- Medication usage & evaluating treatments
- Quality sleep and fatigue management
- Communicating effectively with friends, family, and your medical team

Tuesdays, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm
January 27 - March 3, 2026
Virtual via Webex
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Register at least one week in advance at www.adrcevents.org or call 715-839-4735.

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Register required at least one week in advance. Call the Aging & Disability Resource Center at **715-839-4735**, or online www.adrcevents.org.

All About Almonds

A little goes a long way when it comes to almonds, the most nutrient-dense nut ounce-for-ounce. A one-ounce serving of almonds (about 23) is an excellent source of vitamin E and magnesium, a good source of protein and fiber, and offers potassium, calcium, phosphorous, iron, and monounsaturated fat, giving you a lot of nutritional bang for only 160 calories.



Eating a handful of almonds a day can help you meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid food guidance system recommendations for cutting down on saturated fat, while increasing consumption of essential nutrients like fiber, protein and vitamin E.

Vitamin E is an important antioxidant that helps protect cells from everyday damage, while magnesium helps keep bones strong. Fiber is beneficial for the digestive system and heart health. Protein is an important building block of bones, muscles, hair, nails and skin and helps repair tissues in the body. The monounsaturated fats found in almonds are the natural “good fats” that may help lower cholesterol and keep your heart healthy when substituted for saturated fat in the diet.

Previous studies have shown that almonds play an important role in a heart-healthy lifestyle. According to research from the University of Toronto, eating a specific combination of heart healthy foods can help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol levels as much as certain cholesterol lowering drugs. This special diet, called the Portfolio Eating Plan includes almonds, oatmeal, lean meats and fish. Patients who followed this diet the most closely lowered their cholesterol by more than 20 percent. Experts agree that diet and exercise are the first steps in reducing high cholesterol levels.

Additionally, further studies have shown that almonds, as part of a healthy lifestyle, can help maintain a healthy cholesterol level without causing weight gain. Researchers from Purdue University and Queens University in Belfast asked people to add two-ounces of almonds to their daily diet. After ten weeks, the subjects did not gain weight or increase their body fat. Also, participants did not increase the amount of food they were eating—suggesting that almonds naturally replaced other foods in the diet and that regularly consuming almonds does not cause weight gain. The participants also increased their intake of vitamin E and magnesium, showing that almonds can enhance the diet and contribute to overall health.

Almonds can also help manage blood sugar and insulin levels, which are often connected to feelings of hunger. Experts think that the fiber, protein and crunch of almonds are satisfying and help people feel fuller longer.

But how many almonds should you eat, and how do you measure the proper serving? Unlike foods such as apples or bananas, almonds don’t come in a pre-portioned package. A good degree of “portion distortion” exists about the proper serving size. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 and the MyPyramid food guidance system both recommend a one-ounce portion for almonds—or about 23.

JANUARY RECIPE: Power Packed Vegetables with Roasted Almonds

This dish is a quick and easy way to get the powerful health benefits of almonds and veggies.

Ingredients:

- 1 small red bell pepper
- 1 small orange or yellow bell pepper
- 1 head bok choy
- 1 ¼ cup sliced almonds
- 3 teaspoons olive oil (divided)
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice



Directions: Trim bell peppers, remove seeds, and slice thinly. Trim both ends of bok choy, slice thinly, and place in a large bowl of cold water for a few minutes to remove any grit. Remove by handfuls and immerse again in a fresh bowl of cold water. Drain in a colander. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place almonds on a baking sheet and roast for 10 minutes, tossing once or twice. Meanwhile, heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil in a large sauté pan or wok. Add peppers and sauté on medium-high heat for 3 minutes. Stir in garlic and continue to sauté for 3 more minutes. Remove and set aside in a medium-sized bowl. Heat remaining 1 teaspoon olive oil in pan. Add washed bok choy and sauté for a minute. Add lemon juice and cover pan, letting bok choy wilt. Return peppers to pan, add roasted almonds, and stir gently before serving.

RE M I N D E R :

The ADRC Office will be
closed January 1

Meals on Wheels and Senior
Dining will be closed
December 31 and January 1

Happy New Year!



Winter Gratitude



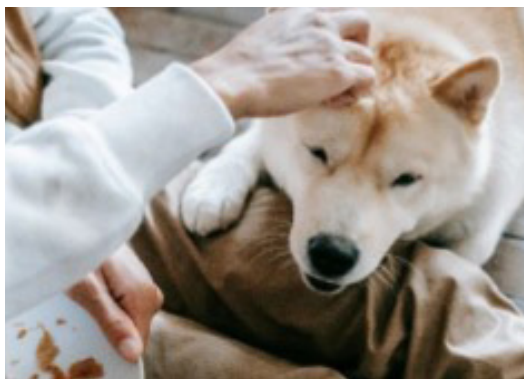
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Planning for Your Pet's Care After Your Death

Many people think of pets as family members. In Wisconsin, pets are legally considered to be property (wisbar.org). As with other property like vehicles & homes, what happens to your pets after your death is determined by your "will." A will is a document with directions on how to handle your property after death.



Your wishes for your pet may not be honored if you die without a will. If this happens, the WI state court will decide what happens to your pet.

As you make your will, you can also think about your pet's care. Here are important steps to take when planning for your pet's care after your death.

Pick a Caretaker for Your Pet

Make a list of trusted family members and friends who might be able to care for your pet if you can't. If you have more than one pet, consider if it would work best to have more than one caretaker. Once you have chosen your pet's caretaker/s, talk with them about the responsibility. They may gladly accept the opportunity to care for your pet/s. However, they may choose not to accept the responsibility. Once you confirm the caretaker/s, share with them the name & location of your pet's veterinarian and give your veterinarian the caretaker's name & contact information.

If you don't have anyone that would be a good fit to care for your pet/s, then consider alternatives. You can explore animal charities, veterinary schools, or humane organizations that can care for your pet/s or find them a new home.

Decide If You Will Leave Money to Care for Your Pet

How will your caretaker financially support your pet/s? The average amount for pet care costs each year can range from a few hundred dollars for fish and small birds to more than \$2000 for dogs and cats (anticruelty.org). Because of these costs, it is important to think about whether you can leave money for your pet's care.

One option is to state in your will the amount of money from your savings, or the sale of items you own, that should be used for your pet/s care. Another option is to create a "pet trust." A trust is a written agreement that establishes a separate entity to manage property (State Bar of WI). With a pet trust, you can leave specific directions for how and when to use money for your pet's care. If interested, you should talk to a lawyer about this option.

To talk about other important family and financial topics, contact Chippewa County Extension educator Jeanne Walsh at (715)726-7950. Visit <https://chippewa.extension.wisc.edu/> for more information.



Veteran Benefit Information and News

Benefits for anyone who has a service-connected rating of 70%:

VA Health Care

- Priority Group 1 — the highest level.
→ No copays for medical care, prescriptions, or hospital stays at VA facilities.
→ Free hearing aids, eyeglasses, and dental care.

VA Home Loan

- Funding Fee waived — you pay no VA funding fee when using your VA home loan benefit.

Education

- Chapter 31 Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) if your disability limits employment.

Vehicle Benefits:

- Possible adaptive equipment grant (if you have qualifying disabilities affecting driving).
- Specially Adapted Equipment Grants may be available for certain conditions.

Employment:

- Veterans' Preference in federal hiring.
- VA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) eligibility to help train or find employment suitable to your disabilities.

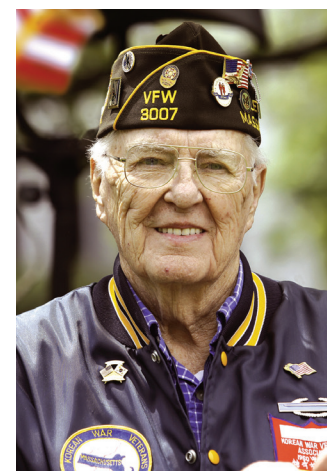
Individual Unemployability

- Qualification for receiving 100% pay and benefits due to a service-connected condition preventing gainful employment.

Wisconsin State Benefits – 70% Service-Connected

- Wisconsin Park Pass: Free entrance to state parks
- Wisconsin Veterans Home: VA pays for the stay at any Wisconsin Veterans home or contracted facility

If you have any questions please reach out to the Veterans Service Office. 715-726-7990, veterans@chippewacountywi.gov.



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Did Your Holiday Visit Reveal It's Time for a Change?

Small signs can mean big risks for aging loved ones. If your visit revealed slowed steps, forgotten tasks, or new worries... you're not alone. Don't wait for an accident to happen. Now is the time to make their home safer and their life easier.

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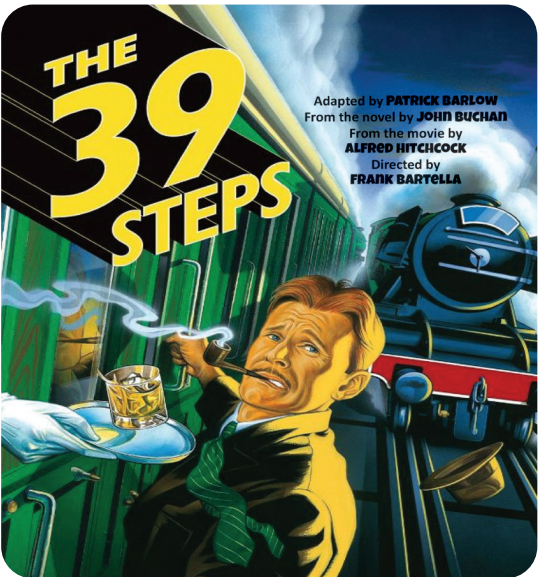
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SMPs are grant-funded projects of the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL).



Swivel Silverware: Overview, Purpose, and Benefits

Swivel silverware, also referred to as rotating or self-leveling utensils, is an adaptive kitchen tool designed to facilitate eating for individuals with limited hand, wrist, or arm control. While it may resemble standard utensils, its distinctive rotating joint allows the utensil head to remain level regardless of handle positioning. This simple mechanical feature effectively addresses a common challenge faced by many individuals with motor impairments.



Purpose of Swivel Silverware

The development of swivel silverware primarily aims to assist individuals experiencing involuntary hand or wrist movements that hinder food stability on a utensil. Conditions such as tremors, muscle weakness, or restricted range of motion can make eating a challenging and time-consuming activity. Standard utensils require users to maintain a steady, level wrist, which may not be feasible for everyone.

These utensils are engineered to eliminate that requirement. The rotating mechanism ensures the spoon or fork remains upright, minimizing spills and reducing the effort needed during meals. This innovation promotes greater independence for users.

Intended Users of Swivel Silverware

Swivel silverware is designed for individuals with:

- Tremors (e.g., Parkinson's disease)
- Limited wrist or hand mobility (arthritis, injury, age-related stiffness)
- Muscle weakness (such as multiple sclerosis, stroke, muscular dystrophy)
- Poor motor coordination (cerebral palsy, developmental disabilities)
- Restricted range of motion due to surgery, pain, or neurological conditions

It is also frequently utilized in:

- Rehabilitation settings, where patients are relearning fine motor skills
- Long-term care facilities supporting residents with mobility challenges
- Home care environments aimed at maintaining independent mealtime routines

The utensils are suitable for both children and adults who require assistance controlling utensil angles during meals.

Benefits of Swivel Silverware

Swivel utensils enhance mealtime experience in multiple ways:

- **Minimize Spills:** The leveling feature keeps the utensil upright despite hand tilt, significantly reducing food drops.
- **Promote Independence:** Users can self-feed with less assistance, fostering confidence and preserving autonomy.
- **Reduce Fine Motor Demands:** Because the utensil adjusts automatically, there is less need for precise wrist movements, accommodating users with limited motor control.
- **Enhance Comfort during Meals:** Eating becomes smoother and less stressful, contributing to a more positive emotional and nutritional experience.
- **Mechanical Simplicity:** Compared to powered alternatives, swivel silverware operates through a straightforward mechanical joint. It is lightweight, cost-effective, durable, and easy to clean.

While a small innovation, swivel silverware offers meaningful support for individuals with mobility limitations. By compensating for tremors, weakness, or restricted movement, these utensils empower users to eat independently and with dignity. Whether utilized in home, clinical, or care settings, swivel silverware is a practical and thoughtful tool that helps preserve a fundamental human activity: enjoying a meal.

There are many variations and sets of swivel silverware for purchase. Amazon has the biggest selection with prices averaging \$25. Most pieces are around 6"x1.5" and between 1-6 oz.

Compass IL offers the opportunity for individuals to borrow or try out items mentioned in our articles before making a purchase.

Six Tips To Help Prevent Falls

More than one in four people age 65 years or older fall each year, yet many falls can be prevented.

Talk with your health care provider about medication side effects

Make your home safer by using night lights, installing grab bars in the bathroom, and securing carpet to the floors

Stand up slowly to avoid dizziness

Do strength and balance exercises

Get your vision and hearing checked regularly

Use a cane or walker if you need more stability

Learn more about reducing your risk of falling at www.nia.nih.gov/falls-prevention.



To learn more about this assistive device or other devices that can improve your independence, please contact Compass IL at 715-233-1070 or 800-228-3287. Our services are provided free of charge. However, we do not directly fund the purchase of assistive technology. Through the WisTech Assistive Technology Program, Compass IL provides a variety of services, including information on alternative financing options like WisLoan, Telework, and TEPP, upon request.

What to Do After Visiting Elderly Loved Ones for the Holidays and Realizing Changes Are Needed

By Shelley Krupa, Business Operations Coordinator at Lake Hallie Memory Care

Post-holidays are a common time for the feelings of concerns about a loved one and their safety to pop up to keep you and your family wondering, “What are the next steps if this happens to Nana?” It’s an opportune time to look for the options and start your planning before it’s too late. May your family’s story be like this wise granddaughter who recognized signs in time to help her grandmother.



I didn’t expect the moment to hit me as hard as it did. It was the day after Christmas, and I was helping my grandmother put away leftovers. She moved slowly—much slower than last year—and at one point, she reached for a dish on the counter and lost her balance just enough for my heart to stop. She caught herself, brushed it off with a laugh, and insisted she was “just a little tired.” But I knew. That tiny wobble felt like a flashing red light. During that visit, I saw what I had, during previous visits, been too busy to notice: bills stacked on the table, expired food in the fridge, and a loneliness that hung in the air heavier than I remembered.

Driving home, I realized change wasn’t optional anymore—it was necessary. And like so many families after the holidays, I found myself wondering what steps to take next.

The first step is acknowledging what you observed, even if it feels uncomfortable. In my case, I listed everything from mobility concerns to signs of forgetfulness. Writing these observations down helped me separate emotion from facts. It also prepared me for conversations with family members who hadn’t been there to see what I saw.

Next, I scheduled a health checkup for my grandmother, framing it as a routine visit rather than a reaction to worry. Many aging adults resist the idea that anything is changing, so approaching this gently matters. A doctor’s evaluation can uncover issues families aren’t trained to notice—early cognitive decline, medication mismanagement, hearing or vision changes, or fall risks. That appointment became one of the most important steps we took because it gave us clarity.

I also realized how risky her home environment had become, which led to the third step: making practical safety modifications. In her story, that meant installing grab bars, adding brighter lighting, and clearing cluttered pathways. For other families, it may mean reviewing smoke

detectors, removing throw rugs, or setting up a medical alert system. These simple adjustments can drastically reduce the chances of an accident.

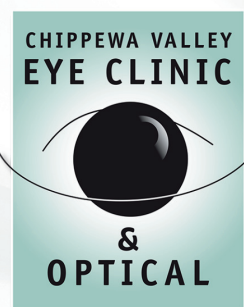
Another issue that became obvious was the growing isolation she felt. So the next step was building a support network. I reached out to neighbors, church members, and a local senior program to create a circle of connection. Whether it’s arranging weekly visits, hiring part-time help, or setting up meal deliveries, consistent social engagement and support can transform both safety and emotional well-being.

Finally, I learned the importance of initiating compassionate conversations. Instead of telling my grandmother what had to change, I shared what I felt during that moment in the kitchen. I told her I wanted her to stay independent for as long as possible—and that taking a few steps together could make that happen. When older loved ones feel included rather than managed, they’re much more open to accepting help.

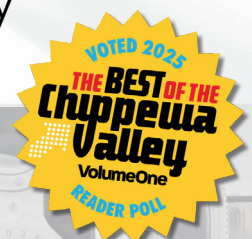
The holidays reveal what everyday routine hides. If you left your visit feeling uneasy, trust that instinct. Use what you saw as the starting point for action, support, and meaningful change that keeps your loved one safe while preserving their dignity.

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An After the Holidays Checkup

Insights into Walking the Life-long Path of Aging – Well!

By Carl A. Trapani, MA, MS, LPC, Chippewa Manor Campus Chaplain

There's something about holiday visits that shines a brighter light on life than the twinkling bulbs on the tree ever could. Maybe it's seeing Mom shuffle a little slower than last year. Maybe it's noticing Dad's hearing isn't what it used to be. Or maybe—just maybe—it's the moment you caught yourself grunting when you stood up from the couch and thought, "Wait... when did that start happening?"

After checking in on mom and dad - we realize we need a little checking on, too. If you came home from the holidays concerned about your older loved ones—and quietly aware of your own changes—you're in good company. You're part of a special generation walking a very particular road: independent, wise, still in charge... but close enough to the next chapter to feel a gentle nudge of the reality of things to come.

Noticing the changes in others helps us notice the changes in ourselves. Watching someone older struggle with everyday tasks can stir something deep inside. It's not fear—it's recognition. A quiet understanding that aging isn't something happening "over there" to someone else. It's a journey we're all walking, step by step, sometimes gracefully... sometimes creakingly. When you see someone older struggle with the losses of aging, it makes you more aware of your own life journey. When you watch your 90-year-old mother struggle trying to change a burnt-out lightbulb, you're reminded of how many lights are burnt out at your house. How much heavier the groceries seem when you carry them in from the car. And how much longer and steeper your stairs have become. Suddenly, it hits you: Aging isn't a distant idea anymore. It's relatable. Aging is shared. It connects you. It teaches you. It softens you. And sometimes... it gives you a glimpse of what help YOU may want later—and what help you definitely don't.

Seeing our elders need more help shouldn't make us anxious—it can awaken a soft awareness: "If this is coming my way someday, how do I want it to look? Who do I want around me? What small adjustments could I make now so that my future self feels supported?" There's a bittersweet beauty in that clarity. It's the heart's way of preparing us gently.

It's okay to admit that you're doing the best you can... with the knees you currently have. Some people expect AARP age seniors to swoop in and care for their older parents like professional superheroes. But guess what? Your super-hero cape is in the wash. And it's been there for three years. Helping your elders while also managing your own aging is a balancing act—and you are allowed to lose your balance sometimes. (Just not literally. Please hold the handrail.)

Let's be honest: humor is our most underestimated survival skill. If we didn't laugh through the holiday chaos, we might cry... and crying fogs up the glasses...making it even harder to see. There's humor in watching Dad insist he's "still steady on his feet" while using every piece of furniture as a handrail. There's love in convincing Grandma that the grab bar you installed is actually a "spa feature." There's comfort in realizing that half the things you're recommending for them...might not be a bad idea for you either. Humor doesn't hide aging—it softens it. It connects us. It turns tender moments into shared memories instead of private worries.

Small adjustments aren't admissions of weakness—they're acts of wisdom. As we help our older relatives with brighter lighting, sturdier



rugs, or simpler devices, something interesting happens: We start to appreciate those same things for ourselves. Maybe that reading lamp you bought Mom looks pretty appealing at your house too. Maybe that medication organizer wouldn't be the worst idea. Maybe there's no shame at all in adding a grab bar before you "need" one. Taking small steps to make life easier is not giving in. It's giving care—both outwardly and inwardly.

The real goal isn't fixing everything—it's staying connected. If you left your holiday visit feeling a little sentimental, a little protective, and a little aware of your own aches and changes—that doesn't mean life is slipping away. It means your heart is open.

Showing up matters. Listening matters. Checking in matters. And laughter—especially laughter—matters more than any safety device on the market. You don't have to solve aging. You just have to walk alongside the people you love, even if you all walk a bit slower these days.

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.

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