

senior review

FREE

June 2026

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A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Eau Claire

The Nifty Fifties Decade *By Ken Anderson, themayberryguru@gmail.com*

Anyone who knows me quite well knows that I have a soft spot in my heart for that wonderful decade of the 50s. The ten years of the 50s were a unique and wonderful time to grow up. World War 2 was over, and our country was about to enter a new decade of prosperity and excitement. It has often been referred to as “the golden age of prosperity”. I began the 50s as a 4-year-old and ended it as a teenager.

Without a doubt, my favorite part of the 50s has to be the great cars. Although I own two classic cars from the 60s, whenever I attend a car show, I am immediately drawn to the cars from the 50s. Gone were the drab, unexciting cars from the 40s. Bright colors, large tail fins, wrap-around windows, and classy convertibles were the new norm. Powerful engines and lots of chrome became the popular features on American cars. Gas was cheap, so large, powerful V8 engines became the choice for most motorists.

My second favorite part of the 50s is the music. New music groups formed, and the birth of rock and roll, and that wonderful Doo Wop sound. Elvis Presley became a household name, and young people across the country were forming rock-and-roll bands. Doo



Wop is my favorite 50s music. It is characterized by multi-part vocal harmonies, nonsensical backing syllables, e.g., “Who put the bomp in the bomp-bah-bomp-bah-bomp? Who put the ram in the rama-lama-ding-dong?” I never discovered the answer to that question.

The 50s are often described as a time of innocence for young people. Most children lived in two-parent homes where the mother stayed home. Children spent time outdoors playing, and toys were much simpler than those of today. Teenagers enjoyed school dances, malt shops, and cruising down Main Street. Television was a new form of entertainment, but programming was very different, with this era dominated by live programming, dramas, variety shows, and sitcoms. Programming had very strict standards. No foul language was allowed, married couples were always shown with twin beds, and the very first toilet ever shown on television was on *Leave It to Beaver* when Wally and the Beaver kept a baby alligator in the toilet tank. Listening to the family radio was also a popular pastime in the 50s.

The 50s were not perfect by any means. But I choose to think about the positive aspects of that wonderful decade. I hope you can, too.

10 Ways to Get More Fiber

This nutrient does so many good things for your body, from aiding weight management and quelling inflammation to protecting against heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Yet, only 7% of U.S. adults eat enough. Not that we don't try. Problem is, we need lots of the stuff—25 grams a day for women, 38 for men. To really hit your quota, you'll need a decent chunk with every meal (and snack).

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Artichokes (5 g per 1/2 cup)

Rye Crispbreads (5 g per 3 crackers)

Chickpeas (7 g per 1/2 cup, cooked)

Beets (5 g per 1/2 cup)



Raspberries (10 g per cup)

Popcorn (3 g per 3 cups popped)

Cocoa Powder (2 g per Tbsp.)

Pears (6 g for 1 medium fruit)

Red Lentils (8 g per 1/2 cup, cooked)



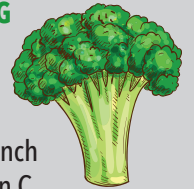
Source: Karen Ansel, M.S., RDN

Feed your face with superfoods!

SUPERFOOD: Broccoli

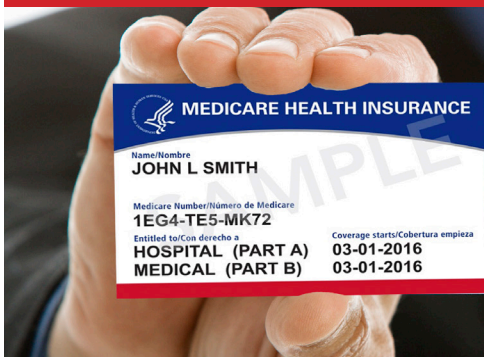
COMPLEXION POWER: SMOOTHING

This cruciferous queen packs a serious crunch and a vitamin C punch. Broccoli is loaded with C, which boosts collagen production to soften fine lines and wrinkles.



Check back here for more superfoods to satisfy your skin's cravings!

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Editor/Publisher: Arwen Rasmussen
Offices:
3315 Nimitz Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701
P: 715-831-0325
F: 715-831-7051
E: seniorreviewnewspapers@gmail.com

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Where Annuities Fit in a Thoughtful Retirement Plan

By Cole Bruner, President of Buska Retirement Solutions and Buska Wealth Management

Annuities are one of the most debated tools in retirement planning—often praised for their ability to create reliable income and criticized for complexity or cost. The reality sits somewhere in the middle: annuities can play a valuable role when used appropriately, but they are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

At their core, annuities are contracts with an insurance company designed to provide income, often for life. This makes them especially appealing for retirees concerned about outliving their savings. In a time when pensions are rare and market volatility is a constant concern, annuities can help create a predictable income stream that complements Social Security and investment withdrawals.

There are several types of annuities, each serving a different purpose. Fixed annuities offer a guaranteed interest rate and are typically the most straightforward. Indexed annuities provide returns linked to a market index, such as the S&P 500, while protecting against direct market losses. Variable annuities allow for market participation through subaccounts but come with higher fees and don't protect principal. Income annuities, including immediate and deferred income annuities, are specifically designed to convert a lump sum into a stream of income, either right away or at a future date.

Despite their benefits, annuities are often misunderstood. One common misconception is that all annuities are expensive or riddled with fees. While some products—particularly variable annuities—can be costly, others, like fixed annuities, tend to have minimal or no explicit fees. Another misconception is that annuities lock up your money indefinitely. While many contracts do have surrender periods, they often include provisions for penalty-free withdrawals or income riders that provide flexibility.

The question of how much of your retirement portfolio should be allocated to annuities depends on your individual goals, risk tolerance, and income needs. For some, annuities may serve as a foundational income layer—covering essential expenses like housing, utilities, and food. For others, they may play a smaller, complementary role by providing safe growth. A common approach is to ensure that guaranteed income sources (Social Security, pensions,



and annuities) cover core living expenses, while investment portfolios are used for discretionary spending and growth.

In practice, annuities are often used to reduce reliance on market performance during retirement. By securing a portion of income through guarantees, retirees may feel more comfortable maintaining a balanced or even growth-oriented investment strategy with the remainder of their assets. This can help mitigate

the emotional impact of market downturns and reduce the risk of withdrawing from investments at inopportune times.

Like any financial tool, annuities should not be set and forgotten. It's important to review them regularly—typically annually or when there are significant life changes such as retirement, health shifts, or changes in financial goals. Reviews can ensure the annuity is still aligned with your income needs, evaluate any riders or benefits, and determine if adjustments or additional strategies are appropriate.

Ultimately, annuities are neither inherently good nor bad—they are tools. When thoughtfully integrated into a broader retirement plan, they can provide stability, confidence, and peace of mind. The key is understanding how they work, where they fit, and ensuring they align with your long-term financial picture.

Still Holding an Old Annuity?

It might be time for a second look.

Annuities aren't "set it and forget it" strategies. If yours hasn't been reviewed in years, it may no longer align with your goals, income needs, or today's interest rate environment. Hidden fees, outdated riders, or missed opportunities could be quietly impacting your retirement.

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And We Thought Gas Was High...Life Could Be Worse

If modern life feels overwhelming, history offers a sobering reminder: things could have been far worse—like living in 536 CE, a year many historians describe as one of the bleakest in human history. While the phrase “worst year to be alive” is often repeated today, its roots lie in accounts from the medieval world itself.

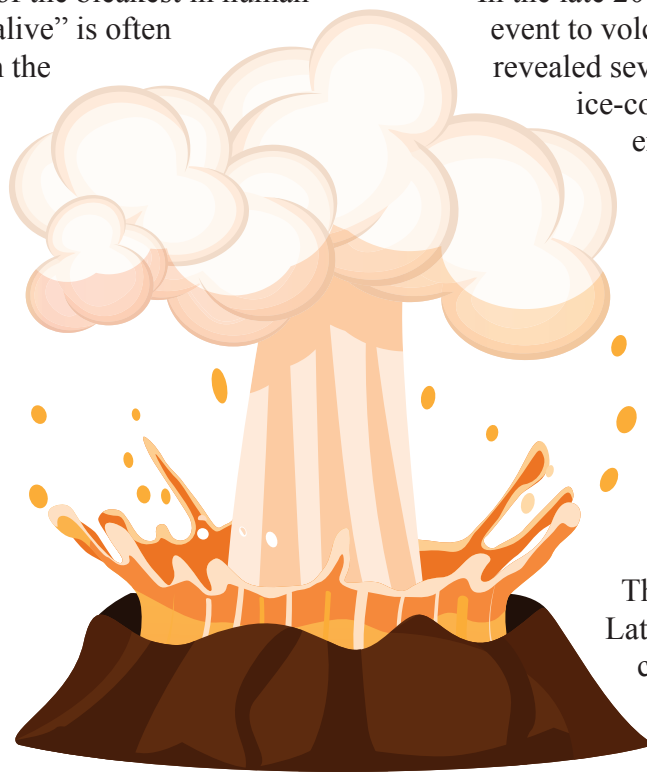
What made 536 so catastrophic? Historians believe a massive volcanic eruption sent enormous amounts of ash into the atmosphere, creating a thick haze that dimmed sunlight across Europe, the Middle East, and parts of Asia. For the people living through it, the cause was unknown—they simply experienced months of unnatural darkness. The Byzantine historian Procopius described it vividly, writing that the sun shone “without brightness, like the moon” for an entire year.

The consequences were devastating. Temperatures in some regions of Europe and Asia dropped dramatically—by as much as 30 degrees in certain areas. Snow reportedly fell in parts of China during summer. Crops failed, famine spread, and economies stalled as communities struggled to survive.

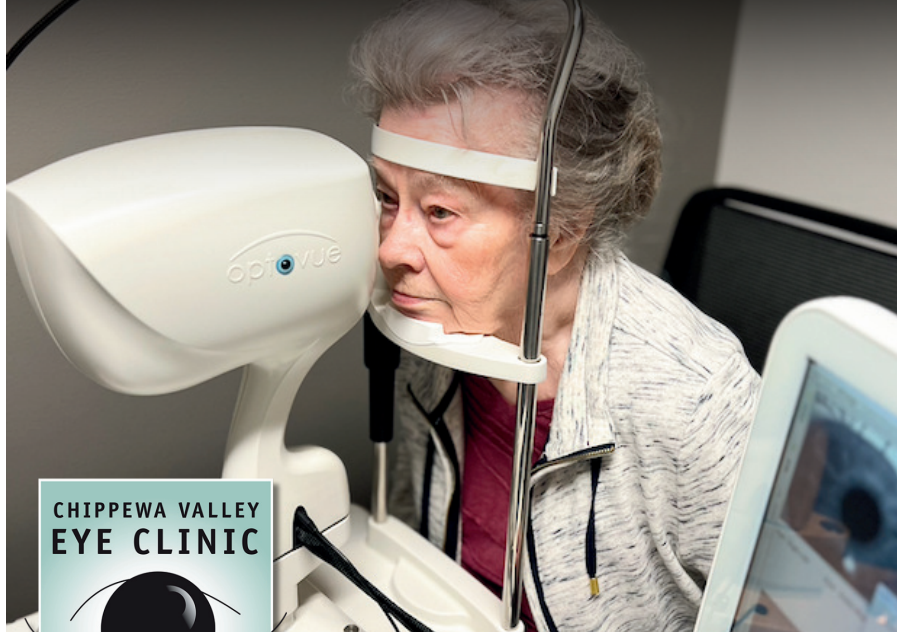
Although contemporary writers documented the strange darkness, scholars did not fully investigate these reports until modern times. In the late 20th century, researchers began connecting the event to volcanic activity. Tree-ring studies in Ireland revealed severe cooling during the sixth century, and later ice-core analysis strengthened the theory of a major eruption.

Historian Michael McCormick argued that 536 CE was not just a terrible year, but the beginning of one of humanity’s harshest eras. The climate remained unstable for years, and by 541 CE, the first outbreak of bubonic plague struck the Eastern Roman Empire, killing vast numbers of people. Additional eruptions in the 540s only deepened the crisis.

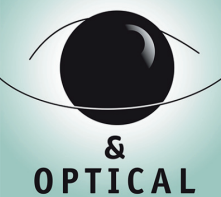
This prolonged period of cooling, now called the Late Antique Little Ice Age, lasted more than a century before conditions gradually improved. For those who endured it, 536 marked the start of a long and unforgiving chapter in human history.



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Dusting off Some Local History: “Picque-Nique”

By Greg Kocken, Archivist, UW-Eau Claire, Kockeng@uwec.edu

Woeefully, as I drafted this article, it is another cold May morning in Eau Claire. It is one of those mornings where you wake up to turn on the heat you hoped would be off for the season. Then, you check to make sure the plants outside survived the night. The weather in May is unpredictable in the Chippewa Valley; we could be inside by a fireplace or outside around a fire pit. I would much rather be around the fire pit in May and dreaming of picnicking during the warm summer months.



By the mid-20th century, the summer picnic was a ritual marketed by advertisements selling condiments, hotdogs, salads, and other staples. This cartoon, published in the Telegram, appeared in a 1961 Co-op ad.

When we visualize our perfect summer picnic we likely all have a favorite memory, or food, that idealizes the summer picnic in our minds. For me, I picture a red gingham tablecloth set across a table with small, individually wrapped sandwiches. The origin of the word “picnic” is French, from the 17th-century phrase “Picque-Nique,” which evolved into an 18th-century pastime of the wealthy French aristocracy. It was a type of pot-luck meal with small entrees

and, ironically, it was an exclusively indoor affair. It evolved into an outdoor event like today’s picnics when it was adopted by the English and American middle classes in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Beautiful picnic spots abound across the Chippewa Valley. In 1922, the Eau Claire Leader asked its readers to share their favorite picnic spots. William Bartlett responded sharing his affinity for picnicking along Elk Creek to the west of Eau Claire. Bartlett was fond of the “pines, elms, birch and other timber” along the stream, along with the trout fishing opportunities and the “large, clean pasture with fine trees for shade” in his favorite spot. Carl Johnson shared his love of a place well known to many of us today, Big Falls. A hundred years ago, Big Falls was not as well known as it is today. Johnson invited readers stating, “There are beautiful groves of trees, making ideal

picnic places. It is a spot of unsurpassed beauty and charm and there are very few here who have seen it.” Others, such as J.B. Spaulding, used the Leader’s invitation to promote tourism up north, commenting on the fun of canoeing and all the unsold lots along the Chippewa and Flambeau rivers ready for buyers.



This image, captured by amateur photographer Daniel Nelson of Eau Claire, shows a group picnicking in the Chippewa Valley, ca. 1910. Courtesy of the UWEC archives.

Here in the Chippewa Valley, we are blessed with an abundance of natural water sources, beautiful landscape features, and communities devoted to maintaining parks and recreational areas. This summer, I plan to take my family to a few of my own favorite picnic spots, Coon Fork Lake County Park and Carson Park. I will leave the red gingham tablecloth behind, but those small, individually wrapped sandwiches are a necessity for the perfect picnic with my family. Is there a local history mystery or topic you want to know more about? Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming column of “Dusting Off?” Please contact Greg at the UW-Eau Claire archives. He would love to hear from you.

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City of Eau Claire Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

The City of Eau Claire Housing Division is taking applications for its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. The Rehabilitation Loan Program is Federally funded and offers loans up to \$20,000. This program is for homes in need of repair, not for extensions or cosmetic renovations.

- Types of Eligible Work:**
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The hearing impaired may contact this office by TDD (715) 839-4943. If there are other specialized needs due to handicap, i.e. sign language interpreter, wheelchair accessibility, reader, please contact this office.

Pawaboo Hands-Free Dog Leash

With the advent of warmer days, our fuzzy friends are just as excited as we are to get outside and enjoy the weather. For those of us with joint pain, weak grip strength, or limited dexterity, however, taking the dog for a walk can become a more painful task than it needs to be. One solution is the Pawaboo Hands-Free Dog Leash. This leash is a thickly-woven "bungee" style leash that attaches to the included waist belt via a 360 degree swivel, which prevents it from tangling no matter where your companion goes. This leash supports dogs from 25-150 lbs, and its elastic design absorbs shock and reduces back strain or other injuries for you and your dog. You can find the Pawaboo Hands-Free Dog Leash at retailers like Walmart or Amazon for \$19.98.



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

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How to Know if a Special Needs Trust Is Right for Your Loved One

By Wispact

Caring for a loved one with a disability often involves difficult financial planning decisions. One of the most common questions families face is whether a Special Needs Trust (SNT) is necessary. While not every situation requires one, several clear indicators suggest an SNT may be an important part of your plan.

Your Loved One Receives or May Need Public Benefits

If your loved one receives—or may qualify for—means-tested benefits like Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), an SNT is often essential. These programs typically limit countable assets to \$2,000.

Receiving an inheritance, settlement, or financial gift directly could jeopardize eligibility. An SNT allows assets to be held for the individual's benefit without being counted, protecting access to healthcare, income support, and long-term services.

You Plan to Leave Assets to Your Loved One

Families often want to provide financial support through savings, life insurance, or estate plans. Without an SNT, leaving assets directly to a person with a disability can create unintended consequences.

A Special Needs Trust ensures those resources are used appropriately while preserving eligibility for benefits. This is especially important when planning through wills, trusts, or beneficiary designations.

Your Loved One May Not Manage Finances Independently

An SNT is also valuable if your loved one cannot—or may not always be able to—manage money independently due to cognitive, developmental, mental health, or physical limitations.

A trustee manages the funds and makes distributions on the beneficiary's behalf, helping prevent financial exploitation, overspending, or errors that could affect benefits.

You Are Planning for Long-Term Care

Support needs often change over time. Housing, healthcare, and personal support requirements may increase as your loved one ages. An SNT provides a flexible, long-term structure that can adapt to these changes.

It also allows families to plan beyond their own lifetimes, ensuring continuity of care when parents or caregivers are no longer able to provide support.

You Want to Enhance Quality of Life

Public benefits typically cover only basic needs. An SNT can fund additional expenses—such as therapies, education, travel, or technology—that improve quality of life without replacing essential benefits.

A Special Needs Trust may be appropriate if your loved one relies on public benefits, may receive assets, cannot manage finances independently, or requires long-term planning. Because each situation is unique, consulting an attorney experienced in special needs or elder law is an important step.



Understanding Wispact Trust Management

For Wisconsin families, working with a nonprofit trustee such as Wispact, Inc. can simplify trust management. Wispact administers pooled Special Needs Trusts, allowing individuals to benefit from professional oversight without appointing a private trustee.

Wispact handles recordkeeping, benefit compliance, tax reporting, and distributions, helping ensure funds are used appropriately while preserving eligibility. Its familiarity

with Wisconsin programs adds confidence that distributions are structured correctly.

In addition, Wispact provides guidance to families on allowable expenses and distribution requests. This support can be especially helpful for those new to Special Needs Trusts.

For many families, a professional trustee offers peace of mind—reducing administrative burden while ensuring assets are managed responsibly to support long-term well-being.

For more information, see www.wispact.org

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Summertime Nutrition

by Bernie Allen, Aging & Transportation Programs Manager,
Duun County ADRC

During the summer months, fresh produce grows in abundance. This benefits us all, as eating a well-balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help us stay healthy. Many delicious fruits and veggies are in season during the summer. While fruits and veggies are nutritious year-round, they often taste even better and are less expensive when you can get them fresh in-season.

One great way to enjoy June's bounty of healthy food is to make a seasonal salad. Creating your own salad is simple and easy.

- Quick preparation: You just need a big bowl, chopping board, good knife and your favorite vegetables and healthy toppings.
- Versatility: You can make a savory salad with lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers, or you can sweeten things up by mixing in fresh berries or dried fruit.
- Keeps you full: For a filling, satisfying salad, try adding a protein such as grilled chicken or steak, or a hard-boiled egg.
- Cost-effective: You can make a wonderful salad that serves four people for less than 20 dollars!

Healthy Lunch Recipe: Kale Salad with Berries

Receipt from Eatingwell.com

Ingredients:

- 5-7 kale leaves (stems removed)
- ½ cup blackberries
- ½ cup raspberries
- ¼ cup goat cheese, crumbled
- ½ cup walnuts
- 1 cup strawberries
- 1 lime
- 3-4 Tbsp. olive oil
- 6 oz. grilled, sliced chicken



Directions:

1. Chop kale leaves to desired size (the smaller, the better), and slice the strawberries.
2. Toss kale, berries, walnuts, cheese, and chicken together.
3. For the dressing, drizzle the olive oil on the top and squeeze one lime's worth of juice into the salad. Serve and enjoy.

Another way to make eating healthy easier is by growing your own vegetables. You can improve your diet and augment your fitness regimen by adding gardening into your routine. June is a great time to plant cabbage, carrots, summer squash, cucumbers and many herbs. Plus, you get a workout as you plant.

Try these tips:

- Remember to stretch. It's best to stretch for a few minutes before gardening/physical activity.
- Do it yourself. Leave the weed whacker in the garage – you'll get more exercise by doing the weeding and other activities by hand.
- Vary your activities. There's plenty to do, so try spending small chunks of time on a variety of tasks: raking, pruning, digging, weeding and mowing.
- Bend at the knees. Avoid bending at the waist, especially when lifting heavy items. This will help reduce the risk of a back injury.
- Cool down afterward. Take a short walk around your garden and admire your hard work.

Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild

"It takes a great deal of courage to stand alone even if you believe in something very strongly." — 9th Juror



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Understanding Your Thyroid: Why It Matters More Than You Think

by Heidi Toy Functional Medicine/Educated Nutrition

The thyroid is a small gland with a powerful role in your overall health. Located in the neck, it produces two primary hormones, T3 (triiodothyronine) and T4 (thyroxine), which regulate metabolism, energy, body temperature, and even brain function. Because these hormones act on nearly every cell in the body, when the thyroid is not functioning properly, the effects are widespread.

The body relies on iodine to produce thyroid hormones, yet it cannot make iodine on its own. This means it must come from the diet. Once consumed, iodine is absorbed in the digestive tract, enters the bloodstream, and is transported to the thyroid where it is used to create T3 and T4.

When thyroid hormones are balanced, the body runs efficiently. When they are not, symptoms begin to appear. Low levels (hypothyroidism) can lead to fatigue, weight gain, constipation, depression, dry skin, and feeling cold. High levels (hyperthyroidism) may present as weight loss, anxiety, rapid heart rate, loose stools, and sleep disturbances. Often, these symptoms develop slowly and are dismissed or attributed to other causes.

A critical and often overlooked piece of thyroid health is its connection to the immune system. Conditions like Hashimoto's thyroiditis and Graves' disease occur when the immune system mistakenly targets the thyroid. In Hashimoto's, this leads to reduced hormone production over time. In Graves' disease, the immune system stimulates the thyroid, leading to excessive hormone production. In both cases, the root issue is not just the thyroid, it is immune system dysregulation.

This is where a more comprehensive approach becomes essential. Many conventional evaluations rely on limited testing, often only looking at

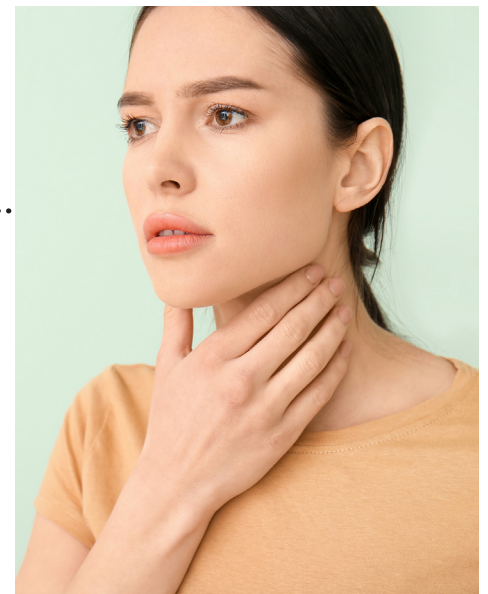
TSH and T4. However, a fuller picture includes Free T3, Reverse T3, and thyroid antibodies, which can reveal underlying imbalances long before they become severe.

Stress also plays a significant role. Chronic stress elevates cortisol, which can disrupt communication between the brain and thyroid, suppressing proper hormone signaling. This is why many individuals feel symptomatic even when basic lab work appears "normal."

Supporting thyroid health requires more than a single intervention. It involves addressing nutrition, ensuring adequate intake of key nutrients, stabilizing blood sugar, supporting gut health, and regulating the nervous system. In practice, when these systems are addressed together, it is often possible to calm immune reactivity and restore balance, allowing many individuals with autoimmune thyroid conditions to significantly reduce or even eliminate their symptoms over time.

The thyroid does not work in isolation. It is part of a larger network that includes the immune system, gut, and stress response. When you support the whole system, rather than chasing symptoms, the body can heal and function the way it was designed to.

If you have been told your labs are "normal" but you don't feel normal, it may be time to look deeper.




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5 Things to Investigate Before Moving Into an Independent Living Apartment for Seniors

Moving into an independent living apartment is a major life decision for seniors and their families. While these communities can offer freedom from home maintenance, added social opportunities, and a safer lifestyle, not every community is the right fit. Taking time to research and ask important questions before making a move can help avoid surprises later and ensure the new home truly supports long-term comfort and independence.



becomes ill or requires rehabilitation after hospitalization.

5. Talk to Current Residents and Families

Brochures and tours only tell part of the story. One of the best ways to evaluate a senior living community is by speaking directly with people who already live there. Ask residents what they enjoy most, whether maintenance issues are handled promptly, and how responsive staff

members are.

1. Understand Exactly What Services Are Included

Independent living communities vary widely in what they provide. Some include meals, housekeeping, transportation, utilities, and social activities in the monthly fee, while others charge separately for many services. Families should ask for a detailed breakdown of costs and determine what amenities are guaranteed versus optional add-ons.

It's also important to ask how costs may increase over time and whether there are entrance fees, deposits, or contract obligations. Understanding the financial structure upfront can prevent confusion and budget strain later.

2. Investigate Safety and Emergency Response

Even active seniors should carefully evaluate safety features. Ask whether apartments include emergency pull cords, grab bars, secure entrances, smoke detectors, and wheelchair accessibility. Families should also learn how emergency response systems work and whether staff are available 24 hours a day.

Look around the property carefully. Well-lit hallways, maintained sidewalks, handrails, and accessible bathrooms can make a significant difference in preventing falls and injuries.

3. Explore Social Opportunities and Community Culture

One of the biggest benefits of independent living is reduced isolation, but every community has its own personality and atmosphere. Some are highly active with daily events and outings, while others are quieter and more private.

Visit during activity hours if possible. Observe whether residents appear engaged and comfortable. Ask for an activity calendar and inquire about transportation to shopping, medical appointments, religious services, or community events. Finding a social environment that matches a senior's interests and lifestyle is essential for emotional well-being.

4. Evaluate Future Care Options

Many seniors move into independent living while they are still healthy and active, but needs can change over time. Families should ask whether the community offers higher levels of care such as assisted living, memory care, or skilled nursing if needed later.

A community that allows residents to transition without relocating again can reduce stress and provide long-term stability. It is also important to understand what happens if a resident temporarily

Families can also research online reviews, state inspection reports, and community reputation. Consistent complaints about cleanliness, staffing, communication, or billing should be taken seriously.

Making a Confident Decision


Choosing an independent living apartment is about more than finding a place to live — it's about finding a community that supports safety, independence, and quality of life. By carefully investigating services, safety, social opportunities, future care options, and resident experiences, seniors and families can make a more informed and confident decision for the years ahead.

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When Mom Needs To Move

When Karen stopped by her mother's house one afternoon, she immediately sensed something was wrong. The mail was piled high on the table, expired food filled the refrigerator, and her normally polished mother was still wearing the same clothes from the day before. A week later, Karen learned her mother had missed two doctor appointments and forgotten to take her heart medication several times. Like many adult children, Karen realized she was facing a painful but necessary question: Was Mom still safe living alone?

Knowing when an aging parent can no longer live independently is one of the hardest decisions families face. While every situation is different, there are several clear warning signs that may indicate additional support, assisted living, or a safer living environment is needed.

1. Frequent Falls or Mobility Problems

One of the biggest red flags is declining physical safety. If Mom is falling often, struggling to stand up, using furniture to steady herself, or avoiding stairs, living alone may no longer be safe. Even a minor fall can lead to broken bones, hospitalization, or long recovery periods for older adults.

Warning signs include:

- Bruises with unclear explanations
- Difficulty getting in or out of chairs
- Trouble bathing safely
- Fear of walking alone
- Increasing use of mobility aids

2. Memory Loss That Impacts Daily Life

Forgetfulness becomes concerning when it interferes with safety and daily routines. Missing medications, forgetting appointments, leaving appliances on, or becoming confused in familiar places may signal cognitive decline or early dementia.

Watch for:

- Unpaid bills or financial confusion
- Repeating stories or questions frequently
- Missed medications
- Wandering or getting lost
- Confusion about dates or time

3. Poor Hygiene and Housekeeping

A once-clean and organized parent who suddenly neglects bathing, laundry, or household chores may be struggling more than they admit. Physical limitations, depression, or cognitive decline can all contribute to changes in personal care.

Signs may include:

- Wearing dirty clothes repeatedly
- Strong body odor or poor grooming
- Clutter, spoiled food, or unsafe living conditions
- Piles of unopened mail
- Difficulty cooking or cleaning

4. Isolation and Withdrawal

Loneliness can seriously impact both physical and mental health in seniors. If Mom no longer participates in social activities, stops answering calls, or avoids leaving the house, it could indicate depression, anxiety, or declining health.

Pay attention to:

- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Skipping church or social outings
- Sleeping excessively
- Lack of appetite
- Increased sadness or irritability



5. Caregiver Stress and Constant Emergencies

Sometimes the clearest indicator is how much support family members are already providing. If adult children are making daily emergency visits, constantly worrying, or managing medications, meals, transportation, and finances, independent living may no longer truly be "independent."

Moving to assisted living or senior housing is never an easy conversation. However, waiting until a major accident or medical crisis occurs often makes the transition harder for everyone involved. Recognizing these signs early allows families to plan thoughtfully and focus on safety, dignity, and quality of life.

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When the body does not get enough fluids, dehydration can happen. This can lead to tiredness, confusion, falls, bladder leakage, constipation, and other health concerns.

The good news: drinking enough fluids is a simple habit that supports strength, focus, and overall well-being.

How Hydration Changes with Age

Aging brings natural changes, and our hydration needs change too.

- **Less thirst:** Older adults may not feel thirsty as often, even when the body needs fluids.
- **Lower body water:** The body holds less water over time due to changes in muscle mass.
- **Kidney changes:** The body may not hold onto water as well as it once did.
- **Daily factors:** Medications, health conditions, and even busy routines can affect how much we drink.



These changes mean hydration takes a bit more attention—but also offers a chance to build healthy routines that support aging well.

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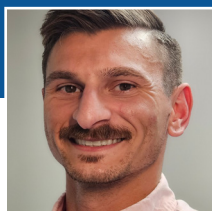


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National Dairy Month

Why Dairy Matters as We Age

June is National Dairy Month, a perfect time to celebrate the role dairy foods play in supporting health, especially for older adults. As we age, maintaining strong bones, muscle strength, and overall nutrition becomes increasingly important.



Bone Health

Dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese are rich in calcium and vitamin D (two nutrients essential for maintaining bone density and reducing the risk of fractures and osteoporosis).

Muscle Strength

Protein needs increase with age. Dairy provides high-quality protein that helps preserve muscle mass and supports mobility.

Heart Health

Low-fat and fat-free dairy options can be part of a heart-healthy diet. They also provide potassium, which helps manage blood pressure.

Brain Function

Emerging research suggests nutrients in dairy, including vitamin B12 and iodine, may support cognitive function.

Easy Ways to Enjoy Dairy Every Day

Incorporating dairy into your meals doesn't have to be complicated. Here are some simple, enjoyable ideas:

Daily Dairy Tips

- Add milk to your morning oatmeal or cereal
- Enjoy yogurt with fresh fruit as a snack
- Sprinkle cheese on vegetables or soups
- Blend a smoothie with milk or kefir

Smart Choices

- Choose low-fat or fat-free options if managing cholesterol
- Look for lactose-free milk if you're sensitive to lactose
- Try fortified plant-based alternatives if dairy isn't suitable

Social Tip

Sharing meals with others can improve appetite and mood. Consider hosting a small dairy-themed brunch or attending a community meal.

Featured Recipe – Creamy Berry Yogurt Parfait

This no-cook recipe is nutritious, easy to prepare, and perfect for breakfast or dessert.

Ingredients (Serves 2)

- 1 cup plain or vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup fresh strawberries (sliced)
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/4 cup granola
- 1 tablespoon honey (optional)



Instructions

1. In a glass or bowl, add a layer of yogurt.
2. Add a layer of strawberries and blueberries.
3. Sprinkle granola on top.
4. Repeat layers until ingredients are used.
5. Drizzle with honey if desired.

Benefits

- High in protein and calcium
- Rich in antioxidants from berries
- Easy to chew and digest

Final Thoughts

National Dairy Month is a wonderful reminder that small dietary choices can make a big difference. Whether it's a glass of milk, a slice of cheese, or a delicious yogurt parfait, dairy can be a simple way to nourish your body and enjoy your meals.

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Summer Driving Tips for Seniors: Stay Safe and Enjoy the Journey

Reprinted from <https://www.retirenet.com/>

Essential warm-weather driving tips for adults 55+ to ensure a smooth, safe, and stress-free summer.



Summer is a great time for road trips, visiting family, and exploring new places, but it also brings unique challenges for drivers. High temperatures, increased traffic, and summer storms can make driving more stressful, especially for older adults. Whether you're planning a long trip or just running errands, here are essential driving tips to help seniors stay safe and comfortable on the road.

Prepare Your Car for the Summer Heat

Hot weather can put extra strain on your vehicle, so ensure your car is in top shape before hitting the road.

- ✓ **Check the battery:** Heat can weaken your battery, leading to unexpected breakdowns. Have it tested before long trips.
- ✓ **Inspect your tires:** Hot pavement can increase the risk of blowouts. Check tire pressure regularly and look for signs of wear.
- ✓ **Top off fluids:** Ensure your coolant, oil, and windshield washer fluid levels are adequate to prevent overheating and maintain visibility.
- ✓ **Test the air conditioning:** A working AC is essential for staying comfortable during summer drives.

Beat the Heat and Stay Comfortable

- ✓ **Drive during cooler hours:** Early morning or late evening trips help avoid extreme heat and heavy traffic.
- ✓ **Wear lightweight clothing:** Light, breathable fabrics can keep you cool while driving.
- ✓ **Stay hydrated:** Bring a bottle of water to prevent dehydration, which can lead to fatigue.
- ✓ **Use sun protection:** Sunglasses and a sunshade for your windshield can help reduce glare and keep your car cooler.

Prevent Driver Fatigue

Long drives and heat can lead to exhaustion, making it harder to react quickly.

- ✓ **Take regular breaks:** Stop every 1-2 hours to stretch and rest.
- ✓ **Avoid drowsy driving:** If you feel tired, switch drivers if possible or take a short nap.
- ✓ **Eat light meals:** Heavy foods can make you sluggish; opt for snacks like fruit, nuts, or granola bars.

Stay Prepared for Emergencies

Even with the best planning, unexpected situations can arise.

- ✓ **Carry an emergency kit:** Include water, non-perishable snacks, a flashlight, jumper cables, and basic tools.
- ✓ **Have roadside assistance ready:** Keep the number for AAA or your insurance company's roadside service handy.
- ✓ **Charge your phone:** A fully charged phone ensures you can call for help if needed.

Watch for Summer Storms

Sudden downpours, thunderstorms, and extreme heat waves are common in summer.

- ✓ **Slow down in rain:** Wet roads increase stopping distances, so reduce speed and increase following distance.
- ✓ **Avoid flooded roads:** Never drive through standing water; even a few inches can cause hydroplaning.
- ✓ **Use headlights properly:** Turn them on in rain or low visibility, but avoid high beams in fog.

Enjoy a Safe and Stress-Free Summer Drive

By preparing your car, staying hydrated, and driving smart, you can enjoy a smooth and safe trip wherever the summer takes you. Whether you're heading on a scenic road trip or just visiting loved ones, these simple tips will help make your journey stress-free. Stay safe, and happy travels!



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No Laughing Matter: Protecting Independence as We Age

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

“Help! I’ve fallen and can’t get up!”

Hearing that phrase instantly brings back memories of that famous television commercial. People laughed when they first heard it. Comedians repeated it. Families joked about it around the dinner table. But for many seniors, that sentence stopped being funny the moment it became real. Over time, the commercials themselves changed in tone and became deadly serious. The lighthearted humor faded and was replaced with something much more sobering. Instead of a dramatic cry, there was only a frightened whimper: “Help. Help me please!” That quiet plea carried a different kind of weight. It revealed the loneliness, fear, and helplessness a person can feel after a serious fall.

A fall can happen in seconds — stepping out of the shower, carrying groceries, reaching for a top shelf, or getting up too quickly from a recliner. One moment you’re fine; the next moment you’re on the floor staring at the ceiling wondering, “Now how do I get up?” Sadly, sometimes no one is there to hear a call for help. A fall is not amusing if you are the one on the floor unable to rise, hurting, frightened, and wondering how long it will be before someone finds you. Minutes can feel like hours. Even a confident, independent person can suddenly feel fragile and terribly alone.

People of every age group have falls. But among older adults, falls are one of the leading causes of serious injury and death. Each year, according to the Center for Disease Control, millions of older people—those 65 and older—fall. Each year, there are about 3 million emergency department visits due to older people falls. In fact, more than one out of four older people, will experience a falling incident each year, but less than half tell their doctor.

Important fact: Falling once doubles your chances of falling again.

A broken hip, head injury, or even a long period lying on the floor alone can change a person’s life permanently. Many seniors never fully recover their strength or confidence after a major fall. For some, the greatest injury after a fall is not the bruise or broken bone — it’s the unseen loss of confidence. After a bad fall, even ordinary activities become frightening. Fear quietly moves in and begins shrinking a person’s world. After a fall, many people begin living cautiously, nervously, or even isolated. “What if I fall again?” “What if nobody finds me?” “What if this time I can’t get up?” Those are frightening thoughts. And they deserve to be taken seriously. One woman said, “The bruise healed faster than my confidence.” That’s the heartbreaking side of falls. They don’t just affect bones — they affect the spirit.

That is why fall prevention matters. This is not merely about avoiding embarrassment. It is about preserving independence, dignity, mobility, and even life itself. And yet, even in such serious matters, humor still has a place. One senior said: “I’ve reached the age where I don’t trust anything that moves — including myself.” Another joked: “I used to run from my problems. Now I walk carefully around them holding the railing.” And still another quipped: “At my age, getting down on the floor is easy. It’s the committee meeting required to get back up that’s the problem.”

Humor helps us cope. But underneath the laughter is a truth we shouldn’t ignore; falls can steal independence quickly. Using a cane, walker, nightlight, handrail, or medical alert button is not admitting defeat. It is choosing safety over pride. Pride can be dangerous. Many seniors resist using canes, walkers, handrails, or medical alert systems because they don’t want to “feel old.” But wisdom says: “It is far better to use a walker than a wheelchair.” A cane doesn’t announce weakness. It announces intelligence. One gentleman finally accepted

using a walker when his daughter told him: “Dad, it’s not surrender. It’s preventive maintenance.” A cane is not surrender. It’s strategy. One gentleman joked, “I finally accepted my walker when I realized it can also carry my coffee.”

Many falls happen at home — the very place we think is safest. A healthy amount of what I call, “preventive paranoia” will help you see that your house may be plotting against you. Common threats include throw rugs, dim lighting, electrical cords, slippery bathrooms, cluttered walkways and pets who suddenly stop directly in front of you. One man admitted: “I’m not saying my cat tried to kill me... but he’s got nine lives, and I only have one!” And walking around in those innocent-looking socks on hardwood floors? Those are basically ice skates on your indoor rink.

That famous phrase “Help! I’ve fallen and I can’t get up!” became memorable because it touched a real fear. Medical alert systems, phones nearby, and regular check-ins from family or neighbors can literally save lives. Providing regular and reliable contacts for aging loved ones ensures their well-being and is proof of our love for them. To help another in their time of need, is to love them.

Falling reminds us of something we don’t always like to admit: we are fragile. But it also reminds us how deeply people care for one another. After a fall, families gather. Friends call. Neighbors help. Love shows up with casseroles, encouragement, and advice about sensible shoes. And perhaps that’s part of God’s design — that we learn to lean on one another as the years go by. When families rally to help the injured fall victim with visits, groceries and rides. When neighbors check in. Love appears. And perhaps that’s one of life’s quiet lessons in aging — learning both how to give help and how to receive it gracefully.

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. He has more than 50 years of pastoral service and professional counseling experience. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.



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