

senior review

FREE

January 2026

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

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.

balanced living

Tips and ideas for a healthy and balanced life

Heart Health Boosters ❤

A recent study has shown that dog owners are more likely than non-dog owners to reach the recommended physical-activity guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week. "You're walking for the pet, not just you. It gives that extra motivation." says Yvette Johnson-Walker, DVM, PhD, clinical instructor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's College of Veterinary Medicine. In fact, some doctors suggest getting a dog to their patients with cardiovascular issues – moderate-intensity walking is as effective as running in lowering blood pressure and cholesterol.



Source: Health.com

Shrooms on the brain



which acts as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.

A new study conducted by the National University of Singapore suggests that eating cooked mushrooms regularly may help preserve cognitive function later in life. The six-year-long study showed that those who ate more than two servings per week cut their risk of mild cognitive impairment in half. Scientists believe this may be related to a compound found in mushrooms called ergothioneine,

Source: Health.com

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.

We're here to provide trusted resources, safety solutions, and peace of mind so they can stay safe.

Because noticing the signs is the first step.

Acting on them makes all the difference.



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The *Senior Review* distributes throughout the Eau Claire area every month.

Advertising: 715-831-0325

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Financial Wellness in Retirement: Protecting Your Peace of Mind and Your Future

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

Financial wellness takes on new meaning in retirement. After decades of hard work, this chapter of life should be defined by freedom, security, and the ability to enjoy the moments you've spent years planning for. Yet with longer lifespans, changing financial landscapes, and rising costs, staying financially well in retirement requires thoughtful planning and ongoing attention.

For retirees, financial wellness begins with clarity. Understanding your income sources—such as Social Security, pensions, investment withdrawals, and savings—provides the foundation for a sustainable retirement plan. Knowing what you have coming in each month helps ensure your lifestyle aligns with your resources, reduces stress, and gives you confidence in your financial future.

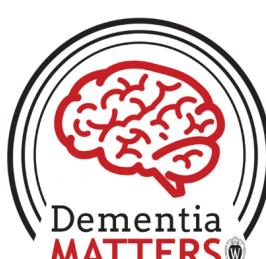
Equally important is managing expenses in a way that supports your long-term goals. While retirement often brings more flexibility, it also may include new financial considerations: healthcare costs, inflation, home maintenance, travel, or helping family members. Reviewing your spending regularly helps you stay on track and make intentional choices that reflect your priorities. Even small adjustments can help preserve your nest egg over the long run.

Another core component of financial wellness in retirement is understanding your withdrawal strategy. The pace at which you draw from your investments can significantly impact how long your savings will last. Working with a financial professional to establish a tax-efficient, sustainable distribution plan can help extend your resources and minimize surprises. This includes considering required minimum distributions (RMDs), tax implications, and market fluctuations to keep your plan balanced and resilient.

Retirees must also protect themselves from financial risks. Healthcare expenses, long-term care needs, and unexpected emergencies can quickly erode savings if not planned for. Maintaining adequate insurance coverage—whether Medicare supplements, long-term care options, or life insurance—acts as a safety net and can help preserve your financial independence. Building or maintaining an emergency fund also provides comfort and stability when life brings the unexpected.

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Estate planning is another pillar of financial wellness in retirement. Having updated documents—such as wills, powers of attorney, and healthcare directives—ensures your wishes are honored and reduces stress for your loved ones. Trusts and other legacy tools can help protect your assets, avoid probate, and create a lasting impact for your family or favorite causes. Reviewing these plans regularly gives you greater control and peace of mind.

Finally, financial wellness isn't just about numbers—it's about quality of life. Staying connected, pursuing meaningful activities, and maintaining a sense of purpose contribute to emotional and financial well-being alike. When your financial house is in order, you're free to enjoy retirement on your own terms.

Financial wellness in retirement is an ongoing journey, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. By staying informed, reviewing your plan regularly, and seeking trusted guidance, you can continue to feel secure, confident, and prepared. Most importantly, you can focus on the moments that matter—because retirement should be a time to live fully and enjoy the life you've worked so hard to build.

JANUARY IS FINANCIAL WELLNESS MONTH

It's a reminder to take a closer look at your financial situation, set goals for the future, and develop strategies to improve your financial well-being.

READ OUR ARTICLE TO LEARN MORE

Financial Wellness in Retirement: Protecting Your Peace of Mind and Your Future



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How to Trip- and Fall-Proof Your Home for Elderly Loved Ones

Creating a safer living environment for an older adult doesn't require a full renovation—just thoughtful adjustments to reduce hazards and improve mobility. Falls are one of the most common causes of injury among seniors, but many of the risks can be significantly reduced with careful planning. Here are practical ways to trip- and fall-proof a home and help your loved ones maintain independence and confidence.

1. Start With a Clear, Uncluttered Pathway

One of the simplest yet most effective steps is removing everyday clutter. Shoes, loose papers, small décor items, and stacks of magazines can create dangerous obstacles. Aim for wide, clear walking paths through all main areas, especially hallways and the route between the bedroom and bathroom. If the home has pets, consider using gates or designated pet areas to prevent unexpected obstacles underfoot.



2. Secure or Remove Loose Rugs

Rugs may be decorative, but they can easily slide or curl at the edges, creating a major tripping hazard. If rugs must stay, use non-slip backing or rug-gripping pads to keep them firmly in place. High-pile, thick, or fringed rugs are especially risky and should be removed when possible.

3. Improve Lighting Throughout the Home

Many falls occur simply because an older adult couldn't see an obstacle clearly. Bright, consistent lighting can greatly improve safety. Replace dim bulbs with brighter LEDs, add night-lights in hallways and bathrooms, and consider motion-activated lights for convenience. Pay special attention to stairways, entryways, and transition areas between rooms, where shadows tend to create hidden risks.

4. Reorganize Frequently Used Items

Reaching for objects on high shelves or bending low for heavy items increases the risk of imbalance. Rearrange cabinets, closets, and kitchen areas so that everyday items—medications, dishes, cleaning supplies, clothing—are at an easy-to-reach height. This reduces unnecessary stretching and makes daily living more manageable.

5. Add Supportive Handrails and Grab Bars

Handrails and grab bars provide stability where balance is most often challenged. Install sturdy handrails on both sides of staircases and consider adding grab bars in bathrooms, especially near toilets and inside showers or tubs. These simple additions help prevent slips on wet surfaces and provide steady support when standing up or moving around.

6. Make Bathroom Safety a Priority

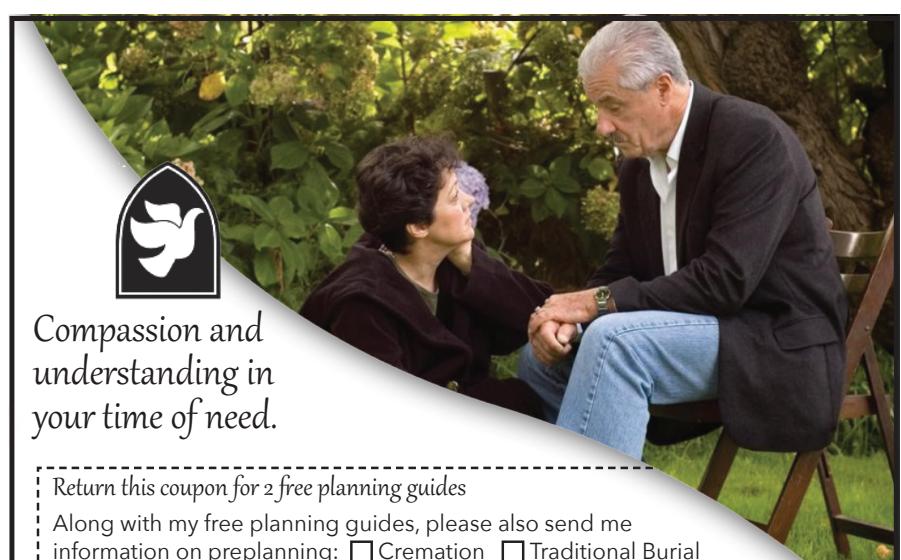
Bathrooms are common fall zones due to moisture and hard surfaces. Non-slip mats inside and outside the tub, raised toilet seats, and shower chairs can make a significant difference. Ensure towel racks are not used as substitute grab bars—only safety-rated equipment should support weight.

7. Check Furniture Layout and Height

Furniture that is too low, too soft, or oddly positioned can make sitting and standing difficult. Arrange seating so there is enough room to move easily, and choose chairs with firm cushions and stable armrests. Avoid furniture with sharp corners or unstable legs.

8. Ensure Proper Footwear Indoors

Encourage the use of supportive, non-slip shoes indoors instead of slippers or socks. This simple change greatly improves traction on smooth flooring.



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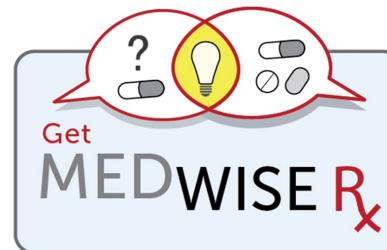


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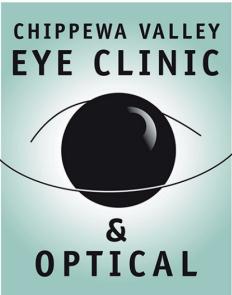
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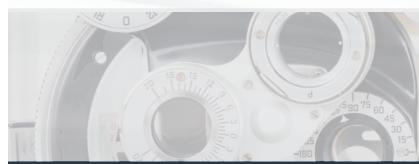


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Your Holiday Was a Wake-Up Call

By Assisted Living Advisors

The holidays have a way of revealing things we don't always see from a distance. You come together expecting traditions, laughter, and familiar routines—yet you leave with a lingering worry. Maybe Mom was more forgetful than last year. Dad seemed weaker, lost weight, or struggled to keep up with basic tasks. The house felt cluttered, medications were confusing, or there was a near fall that was brushed off with, "I'm fine."

If your holiday visit raised concerns, you're not alone. For many families, time spent together during the holidays becomes a wake-up call—a realization that aging has quietly shifted from a future possibility to a present reality.

These moments are emotionally complex. Adult children often feel guilt for not noticing sooner, while older adults may minimize challenges to protect their independence. Many seniors fear that admitting difficulty means losing control of their lives. But subtle signs—changes in mobility, memory, nutrition, hygiene, or social engagement—often indicate a need for additional support.

The hardest part is knowing what to do next.

Start by trusting your instincts. If something felt off, it likely was. Aging doesn't always arrive as a crisis; it often appears as small changes that add up over time. Addressing concerns early can prevent emergencies later.



Next, plan a thoughtful conversation. The holidays themselves may not be the best time—emotions are high, privacy is limited, and everyone is busy. Instead, follow up once routines return. Focus on observations rather than accusations. Use "I" statements: "I noticed you seemed unsteady on the stairs," or "I was concerned when medications were mixed together." The goal is partnership, not pressure.

This is where many families feel overwhelmed. They know help is needed but don't know what kind—or where to start. Senior care options can be confusing, with assisted living, memory care, in-home support, and financial considerations all intertwined. Families often worry they'll make the wrong choice or move too quickly.

That's where an Assisted Living Advisor can be invaluable.

An Assisted Living Advisor serves as an independent guide—helping families understand care options, assess current and future needs, and navigate local senior living communities. Advisors take the time to listen, ask the right questions, and match seniors with appropriate support, rather than pushing a one-size-fits-all solution. They can also coordinate tours, explain costs, clarify levels of care, and help families avoid common mistakes that lead to unnecessary stress or rushed decisions.

Perhaps most importantly, this support is typically provided at no cost to families, making it accessible during an already emotional and overwhelming time.

If your holiday visit was a wake-up call, consider it an opportunity—not for guilt, but for proactive planning. Awareness gives you time: time to gather information, have meaningful conversations, and make thoughtful decisions that preserve dignity and independence. The best outcomes rarely come from waiting for a crisis. They come from recognizing the signs, seeking guidance, and taking action with compassion—before the next holiday brings the same worries back again.

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Enhancing Home Safety with All Star Mobility

Creating a safer living environment for an aging loved one or someone experiencing mobility challenges is one of the most effective ways to support long-term independence. All Star Mobility, with locations in Eau Claire and Chippewa provides specialized accessibility solutions designed to reduce risk, enhance comfort, and help individuals remain in their homes confidently and safely.

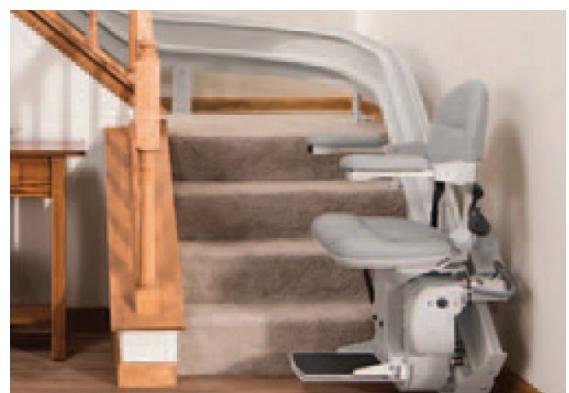
A primary way All Star Mobility supports independent living is through home accessibility equipment. Their stair lifts, ramps, and home elevators offer practical solutions for navigating stairs and thresholds—two of the most common areas for falls. A stair lift or home elevator allows individuals to move between floors without physical strain, while professionally installed ramps ensure safe access at entry points. These upgrades can transform a home into a more secure, barrier-free environment.

In addition to modifying home structure, All Star Mobility carries an extensive selection of mobility devices. Power scooters, power wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, walkers, rollators, and canes provide users with stability and freedom of movement, both indoors and outdoors. For individuals who experience fatigue, balance issues, or reduced strength, the right mobility aid can significantly reduce fall risk while enabling them to maintain daily routines with greater autonomy.

Home safety also depends on addressing high-risk areas, especially the bathroom. All Star Mobility offers bathroom safety products such as shower chairs, transfer benches, raised toilet seats, grab bars, and commodes. These devices ensure safer transfers, reduce slips on wet surfaces, and lessen the physical strain of routine tasks. With the proper

supports in place, a bathroom becomes a more accessible space rather than a potential hazard.

To ensure each home receives the right solutions, All Star Mobility provides free in-home assessments. Their specialists



evaluate the layout of the home, discuss individual mobility needs, and recommend customized solutions tailored to both immediate challenges and anticipated future changes. This personalized approach helps families make informed decisions that maximize safety and comfort.

Finally, All Star Mobility offers ongoing service and equipment maintenance, ensuring that installed solutions such as stair lifts, scooters, and elevators remain reliable and safe to use over time. Consistent service reduces the risk of equipment failure and provides families with long-term peace of mind.

With the right combination of accessibility modifications, mobility equipment, and expert support, All Star Mobility in Eau Claire and La Crosse helps families create safer homes where loved ones can continue living independently, confidently, and comfortably for as long as possible.

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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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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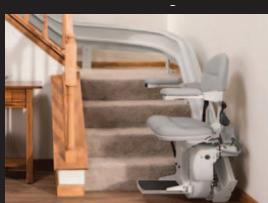
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An After the Holidays Checkup Insights into Walking the Life-long Path of Aging – Well!

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 superhero 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. 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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What's the Crack?

By Ben Soborowicz, DC, Active Health Chiropractic & Nutrition

As we approach the new year, 'Old Man Winter' hits his stride, and we may find ourselves looking for some relief after slipping on the ice or eagerly shoveling every driveway on our block. Regardless of the cause, many end up at the chiropractor looking for a good "cracking" following frigid adventures. We ultimately leave the chiropractor feeling ready for the next blizzard while wondering "what is going on when I get my back adjusted?" Is it the noise that determines whether the adjustment worked, one may ask, or more importantly, why do we feel so much better after getting adjusted?



To start, no, the size of the crack, or the amount of noise heard has little connection to the effectiveness of the adjustment. In fact, the sound made during a chiropractic adjustment is often referred to as a cavitation. It is the rapid expansion and contraction of tiny air bubbles in a well-hydrated joint that creates this popping noise. While the sound may be satisfying to many, the primary effect of the chiropractic adjustment doesn't lie within the joint that "popped," rather, it lies within your nerve system responding to the impulse of information being sent from the adjustment to your brain.

The purpose of the chiropractic adjustment is to restore nerve flow, a communication between our brain and our body. Chiropractic adjustments primarily affect our 'sixth sense' called proprioception—our ability to sense ourselves. It is the sensory input our brain relies upon to know what is happening in our body, both consciously

and unconsciously. A simple example of proprioception is knowing where your hands and feet are even when your eyes are closed, or navigating a dark room in the middle of the night without falling over; the position and balance sense. This sense is maintained by nerves throughout our body which constantly send signals to our brain. Some of these little nerve sensors, found in muscles and joints, detect stretch and friction, while other, more specialized sensors can be found all across the body monitoring bodily functions.

Our brain relies on a constant flow of information from our nerve sensors to coordinate every bodily function and maintain its working form. Everything we do from walking, getting up out of a chair, digestion, and most importantly, healing depends upon this communication. Our brain and nerve system is continually gathering as much sensory information from our bodies as possible which is essential to our optimal function. Slips, falls, injuries, and frigid adventures can cause interference to our body's sixth-sense ability to communicate, potentially leading to loss of balance, pain patterns, and deeper health issues.

The chiropractic adjustment is a method used to address interference and restore our vital-sixth sense by creating a specific stretch and friction within a certain joint; reactivating nerve sensors optimize information sent to our brain. This leads to more effective stabilization and regulation of our bodily function. With or without the satisfying pop accompanying it, each chiropractic adjustment is focused on restoring health and ease, allowing our body to function at its highest potential.

Your Holiday Visit Was a Wake-Up Call.

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“Dusting off Some Local History: A Top Ten Coldest Place?”

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

In my role as the University Archivist at UW-Eau Claire one of the most persistent rumors I have heard is that the footbridge crossing the Chippewa River was once featured in late night TV host David Letterman’s top ten coldest places



Steam rises from the Chippewa River below as students cross the UW-Eau Claire footbridge on a cold morning, ca. 1980. Courtesy UWEC Archives.

in America. The footbridge is an iconic part of the UW-Eau Claire campus. Anyone who has had the privilege, or curse, of crossing the footbridge on a very cold, windy morning knows just how bone-chilling that short trek is. It is easy to understand how it could be considered one of the ten coldest places in America, but I have never seen the evidence to suggest that the bridge was ever featured in a Letterman top ten list. Others have suggested it was featured in “The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson” and connected to Doc Severinsen who led the NBC Orchestra on The Tonight Show and had visited UW-Eau Claire. The truth is lost somewhere between fact and fiction and adds to the lore surrounding the footbridge.

The footbridge on the UW-Eau Claire campus opened in late 1969. It was critical for connecting the Haas Fine Arts Center, which opened in 1970, with the rest of campus. It also eliminated an extra half-mile walking distance to campus for a growing body of students living in the 5th Ward Neighborhood and transformed the entire Eau Claire community by encouraging the development of more student rental properties in that ward. The footbridge offers stunning views of the Chippewa River and reinforced UW-Eau Claire reputation as one of the most beautiful campuses in Wisconsin; it was even briefly incorporated into a campus logo in the 1990s.

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Perhaps the most amazing fact about the bridge, and one which always gives me pause to imagine just how different UW-Eau Claire might have been, is best stated in the caption from a photo published in the July 29, 1969 issue of the Eau Claire Leader. It is an image of the footbridge with the caption stating it was “Originally planned as an enclosed, heated bridge, it has been scaled down to an open bridge, but will still provide a quicker, easier route across the river for pedestrians.” Construction of the footbridge cost more than initially anticipated and plans to scale it back to an open bridge were probably due to budget constraints. It is, however, amazing to think how different the UW-Eau Claire experience would have been for generations of Blugolds across the Chippewa Valley who shared the experience of crossing the footbridge in sub-zero conditions.



Introduced around 1990, a logo featuring the footbridge was briefly used in the 1990s. Courtesy UWEC Archives.

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.

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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Ten Real-Life Strategies for Dementia Caregiving

By Family Caregiver Alliance

As caregivers, we often use intuition to help us decide what to do. No one ever gave us lessons on how to relate to someone with memory loss. Unfortunately, dealing with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias is counterintuitive; i.e., often the right thing to do is exactly opposite that which seems like the right thing to do. Here is some practical advice:

1. Being Reasonable, Rational, and Logical

Will Just Get You into Trouble.

When someone is acting in ways that don't make sense, we tend to carefully explain the situation, calling on his or her sense of appropriateness to get compliance. However, the person with dementia doesn't have a "boss" in his brain any longer, so he does not respond to our arguments, no matter how logical. Straightforward, simple sentences about what is going to happen are usually the best.



2. People with Dementia Do Not Need to Be Grounded in Reality.

When someone has memory loss, he often forgets important things, e.g., that his mother is deceased. When we remind him of this loss, we remind him about the pain of that loss also. When someone wants to go home, reassuring him that he is at home often leads to an argument. Redirecting and asking someone to tell you about the person he has asked about or about his home is a better way to calm a person with dementia.

3. You Cannot Be a Perfect Caregiver. Just as there is no such thing as a perfect parent, there is no such thing as a perfect caregiver. You have the right to the full range of human emotions, and sometimes you are going to be impatient or frustrated. Learning to forgive your loved one as well as yourself is essential in the caregiving journey.

4. Therapeutic Lying Reduces Stress. We tend to be meticulously honest with people. However, when someone has dementia, honesty can lead to distress both for us and the one we are caring for. Does it really matter that your loved one thinks she is the volunteer at the day care center? Is it okay to tell your loved one that the two of you are going out to lunch and then "coincidentally" stop by the doctor's office on the way home to pick something up as a way to get her to the doctor?

5. Making Agreements Doesn't Work. If you ask your loved one to not do something ever again, or to remember to do something, it will soon be forgotten. For people in early stage dementia, leaving notes as reminders can sometimes help, but as the disease progresses, this will not work. Taking action, rearranging the environment, rather than talking and discussing, is usually a more successful approach. For example, getting a tea kettle with an automatic "off" switch is better than warning someone of the dangers of leaving the stove on.

6. Doctors Often Need to Be Educated By You. Telling the doctor what you see at home is important. The doctor can't tell during an examination that your loved one has been up all night pacing. Sometimes doctors, too, need to deal with therapeutic lying; e.g., telling the patient that an antidepressant is for memory rather than depression.

7. You Can't Do It All. It's OK to Accept Help Before You Get Desperate. When people offer to help, the answer should always be "YES." Have a list of things people can do to help you, whether it is bringing a meal, picking up a prescription, helping trim the roses, or staying with your loved one while you run an errand. This will reinforce offers of help. It is harder to ask for help than to accept it when it is offered, so don't wait until you "really need it" to get support.

8. It Is Easy to Both Overestimate and Underestimate What Your Loved One Can Do. It is often easier to do something for our loved ones than to let them do it for themselves. However, if we do it for them, they will lose the ability to be independent in that skill. On the other hand, if we insist individuals do something for themselves and they get frustrated, we just make our loved one's agitated and probably haven't increased their abilities to perform tasks. Not only is it a constant juggle to find the balance, but be aware that the balance may shift from day to day.

9. Tell, Don't Ask. Asking "What would you like for dinner?" may have been a perfectly normal question at another time. But now we are asking our loved one to come up with an answer when he or she might not have the words for what they want, might not be hungry, and even if they answer, might not want the food when it is served after all. Saying "We are going to eat now" encourages the person to eat and doesn't put them in the dilemma of having failed to respond.

10. It Is Perfectly Normal to Question the Diagnosis When Someone Has Moments of Lucidity. One of the hardest things to do is to remember that we are responding to a disease, not the person who once was. Everyone with dementia has times when they make perfect sense and can respond appropriately. We often feel like that person has been faking it or that we have been exaggerating the problem when these moments occur. We are not imagining things—they are just having one of those moments, to be treasured when they occur.

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Why Your Gut Symptoms Keep Coming Back And Why the Real Problem Might Be Your Brain

By Heidi Toy, Functional Medicine

If you've dealt with chronic gas, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, or abdominal pain, you've probably walked the typical functional medicine path:

You see a practitioner, run a GIMAP or Gut Zoomer, and start an expensive protocol filled with antimicrobials, probiotics, binders, and gut healing supplements.

And what usually happens? **You feel better... until the symptoms return.**

Most people assume their practitioner didn't know how to help, but that's rarely the case. The issue is that many well-meaning clinicians are trained to look for root causes in the gut but not the mechanisms driving gut dysfunction. And the mechanism that is almost always overlooked is the **brain-gut connection**.

The Missing Piece in Most Gut Workups

A typical GI intake covers medications, infections, alcohol use, testing, and maybe a quick check for hypermobility. All these matter but functional gastroenterologists like **Dr. Steven Sandberg-Lewis** emphasize that the true driver of chronic gut issues is often never mentioned:

A past traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Here's the surprising part: You don't need to hit your head to injure your brain. Whiplash, falls, concussions, sports injuries, broken noses, broken tailbones, and blast exposure can all "shake" the brain enough to affect gut function — even decades later.

If nobody screens for these events, the real mechanism behind your gut issues goes undetected.

How a Brain Issue Turns into Gut Symptoms

Your entire digestive system depends on brain and nerve communication. When the brain is inflamed or injured, several things happen:

- Gut motility slows or becomes irregular
- Blood flow to the gut decreases
- Digestion becomes impaired
- The gut lining weakens (leaky gut)
- Microbiome balance shifts
- Inflammation rises

Leaky gut allows bacteria and toxins to slip into the bloodstream, triggering a systemic immune response that can travel back to the brain creating a vicious cycle where brain and gut inflammation continually worsen each other.

This is why your symptoms may improve temporarily with supplements yet return over and over again. **You're treating the consequences, not the cause.**



"I Practiced the Same Way... Until I Learned Better"

For years, I also relied heavily on stool testing and gut protocols. Clients improved, but many relapsed. Eventually I realized what many advanced practitioners now understand: **If you don't evaluate the brain-gut axis, you're doing an incomplete workup.**

Once you include the brain, cases that seem "mysterious" suddenly make sense. And protocols finally stick.

"Has your brain ever been shaken?" This includes:

- Whiplash
- Falls
- Contact sports
- Broken tailbone
- Broken nose
- Blast exposure
- Any injury that jolted the body

These events can be the real driver of chronic digestive symptoms that won't resolve.

The Bottom Line

Gut symptoms are rarely just gut problems. If your issues keep returning despite all the testing, supplements, and protocols, you likely need a deeper evaluation one that includes the brain. Because when the brain-gut axis is disrupted, no stool test in the world can fix the problem.



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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.

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.

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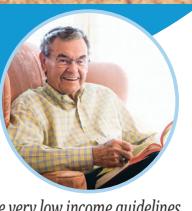
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