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BOOMERS & BEYOND

Boomer & Senior News Line

What's Our No. 1 Reason for ER Visits?

A recent study revealed that the number of deaths from senior falls has tripled. This is not new. A 2015 study also concluded that the number of falls was increasing, even when America's growing senior population was taken into account.

For those over age 65, falls are the leading reason we go to the emergency room. Falls can start a vicious cycle: A simple fracture or brain injury can lead to hospitalization, which can bring its own problems, such as catching an infection or becoming weak from staying in bed. Being weak can lead to more falls ... and more decline. An older study concluded that one-

fourth of seniors who had a hip fracture died within six months. Many of those who survived ended up in a nursing home and were still there a year later.

What can increase our risk of falls? Sometimes it's foot pain, lower body weakness or vision problems. Sometimes it's a sedentary lifestyle, or scatter rugs in the wrong places. Sometimes it's the drugs we take. When you get a new prescription, ask the doctor about side effects. Also check with the pharmacist, who knows what other drugs you might be taking.

Whatever the cause, we can avoid falls. The recent study divided par-

ticipants into two groups: those in an exercise program and those not in one. Those who exercised fared better when it came to reducing falls.

Contact your senior center to ask about balance classes, either at the center or through the local hospital. Look for senior-oriented exercise classes to build muscle strength. Walking is your next best bet, aiming for a half-hour walk a few times a week. Explore tai chi for leg strength, flexibility and balance. Also look online for the free Tufts University booklet called Growing Stronger.

TURNING 65 AND NEED HELP WITH YOUR MEDICARE CHOICES?



Call Paul to help simplify the complicated.

541-517-7362

Paul Henrichs ~ Local Independent Agent
coverage4oregon@gmail.com

Magnolia Gardens Senior Living

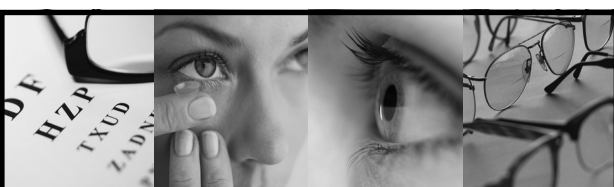


FREE Special Event
DEMENTIA SUPPORT

Learn the symptoms of DEMENTIA, including ALZHEIMER'S, and learn how to support loved ones and friends who live with dementia.

Wednesday, July 24 – 6:30 p.m.
For more information call:
Linda LaZar (541) 942-0054

1425 Daugherty Ave • Cottage Grove
Refreshments will be served



E

verything for Your Eyes Only

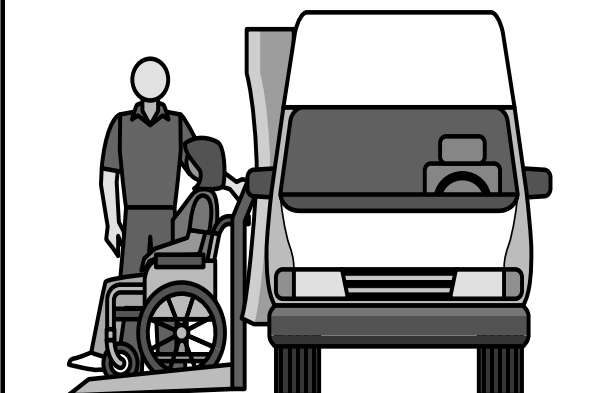
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Counting Steps

Have you been counting your steps every day? Do you have one of those step trackers?

I keep reading that we're supposed to take 10,000 steps per day for good health. Some studies say 4,400 are enough. I knew I wasn't getting anywhere near that (especially in the winter when everything outside is covered in ice), but I didn't know how many steps I was actually taking.

Enter Amazon.com, our go-to for nearly everything, delivered to our door.

The first step was to select Average Customer Review to see which pedometer, or step tracker, had the highest rating. Some were very high-

tech and tracked steps, miles, calories burned and more.

Looking for more guidance, I checked out a study done by the National Institutes of Health a few years ago. Researchers tested four models, ranging from very simple to very expensive. Imagine their surprise when it turned out that the simple, inexpensive step counter was the most accurate. Fingers crossed, I picked out one by that company.

Then the fun started. I paced off 100 steps at the grocery store then compared it to what the tracker said. Very accurate. So far, so good.

Then the counter went a little crazy. I left it on top of the microwave while

I heated up something, and unbeknownst to me, the microwave apparently took 17 steps across the kitchen.

Today I did a lot of walking around town -- but I can't believe I took as many steps as the counter says I did.

So I'm back on Amazon, looking for an additional counter. My plan is to wear both for a few weeks and see if they give approximately the same number.

That's my suggestion if you want to start tracking your steps: buy two. And look for pedometers that do only one thing ... count steps. Sometimes simple is better.

Staying Safe Online

It's getting more and more difficult to stay safe on our phones, computers ... everything that involves communication that someone else can access.

If your local senior center holds classes, recommend that it conduct one on how to recognize scams in your email and on websites. Scammers are getting more sophisticated as they try to lure you in, making you feel that it's safe to click a link or give

information. Once you learn how to identify (or at least be suspicious of) what you see online, you increase your safety because you know to stop and think.

Realize that phone apps are likely not very safe, especially for things like your bank, grocery store and buying things online.

I don't often suggest brand names in this column, but in a few cases it's worthwhile to let you know things I've personally tried.

If you need work on your computer, consider Geek Squad. They're part of Best Buy (BestBuy.com). If

you have a store near you, you can go there to sign up and also leave your device for repair. Call ahead.

In many cases, depending on the problem, you don't have to take in your device. If you call Geek Squad, they can do a remote access. If the problem is something like a bug, in many instances they can fix it from their end while you sit at home and watch the screen. If you contact Geek Squad for any reason, ask if you need to consider getting Webroot (www.webroot.com) anti-virus.

I also can recommend Kim Komando, a woman with a tech website full of information you need (www.komando.com). She also has a weekly radio show. You can sign up for free weekly email newsletters that are worthwhile and full of safety and how-to information.

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