

A bi-monthly publication for Senior Citizens  
published by The Wayne Herald  
August 10, 2023

# GOLDEN YEARS

## When parents say 'No' to Home Care because of Cost Worries Home Care: An Affordable Care Option

By Andrea M. Trautman from the Home Instead® office in Norfolk

Most aging adults want to remain in their homes as they age. Those of us in the home care industry have heard this time and again, and it's an opinion confirmed by research.

According to a study commissioned by Home Instead, Inc., for the Home Instead® network, 86 percent of seniors want to live at home for as long as possible. But many older adults need help to achieve that goal.

In fact, as individuals age, some form of care is often necessary to remain at home. There generally are two types of home care:

- Home health care provided by licensed medical professionals for which the individual has received an order or prescription from a healthcare provider.

- In-home care such as personal care, homemaker or companionship services provided by professional caregivers.

Cost can be a concern for many aging adults. Perhaps you have these apprehensions yourself or your aging parents have expressed this worry. But home care can help older adults stay independent and home longer, and cost doesn't need to be a roadblock.

## How active seniors can protect their vision

Retirement may be seen as a time to slow down and enjoy some well-earned rest and relaxation, but today's seniors clearly did not get the memo. Modern seniors look and act a lot different than traditional depictions of retirees.

The shift in attitudes regarding aging is noticeable in the growth of active retirement communities, which are designed for aging men and women who want to engage in activities where no chairs are required.

Active seniors may not fit outdated

Research reveals that home care is, in fact, one of the most affordable options available, according to industry surveys. Consider this, from the 2021 Genworth Cost of Care Survey: Nationally, the daily average costs of homemaker services (\$163) compare favorably with \$260 for a semi-private nursing home room. So, older adults could stay in their own homes with the support they need to remain independent.

Home care services can allow you or your parents to remain at home and services are designed to be flexible and geared to individual needs. For example, home care organizations, such as Home Instead, provide at-home care and companionship support for aging adults from a few hours a day to 24-7 support. Services span the care continuum – from providing personal care to specialized Alzheimer's care and hospice support. Depending on the level of care needed, home care has the potential to save thousands of dollars a month compared with nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

For more information about Home Instead, contact Andrea M. Trautman at 800-732-2577 or [andreatrautman@homeinstead.com](mailto:andreatrautman@homeinstead.com) or visit [www.homeinstead.com/104](http://www.homeinstead.com/104)

stereotypes of cardigan-clad grandparents shuffling about dusty retirement homes, but even the most energetic retirees may still be vulnerable to age-related health complications.

For example, the American Optometric Association notes that men and women over the age of 60 may be vulnerable to age-related vision problems. A certain degree of vision loss is natural as men and women age, but that does not mean

See VISION, page 4



## Lunch time entertainment

Terry King (above) provided music for attendees at the Wayne Senior Center recently. King is one of several van drivers for the Center and is also a musician, performing throughout the area. (below) Members of the Terry King Fan Club made a point to be at the Senior Center to support him on that particular day. Music is part of the Senior Center's activities on a regular basis.



# Understanding cataract causes and symptoms

Individuals' bodies, including their eyes, change with age. Vision can become less sharp as a person ages. Some aging individuals also experience difficulty seeing in bright light or in the evening. Cataracts may be to blame for these vision changes.

by 2050, the number of people in the United States with cataracts is expected to reach roughly 50 million. Those projections suggest now is a great time for people of all ages to learn more about cataracts.

What causes cataracts?  
The American Academy of

Ophthalmology says normal changes in the eye occur after turning 40. Notably, normal proteins in the lens - the clear portion of the eye that sits behind the pupil - begin to break down, leading to a gradual cloudiness of the lens.

Most cataracts are related to aging. However, babies, children and middle-aged adults also can experience cataracts from birth or related to specific medical conditions, offers Johns Hopkins Medicine. An injury to the eye also may cause cataracts.

## Symptoms of cataracts

Individuals with cataracts may begin to experience diminished vision. Harvard Medical School says cataracts typically do not cause any symptoms until they have grown large enough to affect vision. Afterwards, symptoms can include:

Double vision, cloudy or blurry vision, seeing halos around lights, increased glare sensitivity, colors appearing faded or yellow, requiring more light to read and difficulty seeing well at night.

## Cataract development

Cataracts tend to form gradually. A cataract may be in one eye or both. It may be possible to slow down the development of cataracts by protecting the eyes from sunlight.

Wearing sunglasses that filter out UV

rays or regular eyeglasses with anti-UV coating can help. Proper treatment for diabetes and quitting smoking can help reduce risk of cataract development as well.

## Cataract diagnosis and treatment

An eye doctor will examine dilated eyes to diagnose cataracts. A slit-lamp microscope can make it easier to spot abnormalities, states the AOA.

The eye professional will consider age and the severity of cataracts to determine a treatment strategy. Early loss of vision due to cataracts may be mitigated by stronger lighting or a change in eyeglasses or contact lens prescription.

Johns Hopkins says cataract surgery is one of the most common eye surgeries. It is safe and effective.

An ophthalmologist will remove the cloudy lens and replace it with an artificial, clear lens. If cataracts are present in both eyes, each surgery will be performed separately. A possible complication of cataract surgery is when a part of the natural lens that is not taken out during surgery becomes cloudy and blurs eyesight. This can be remedied with a laser treatment.

Cataracts are a common byproduct of aging, but they can be successfully managed to improve eyesight outcomes.




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# Alleviate everyday aches and pains

Pain occurs for a variety of reasons. Pain may be a byproduct of overuse of a particular part of the body, or it could signal an underlying illness or condition. Sometimes injury is at the heart of aches and pains.

Daily aches and pains may be seen as a normal byproduct of aging, but that does not mean aging individuals should simply accept pain. In fact, daily discomfort can be remedied with some relatively easy techniques.

- **Get moving.** Lower back pain is common among adults, and most often appears when individuals are in their mid-30s and 40s. Strength training and cardio exercises can remedy this pain because these activities increase blood flow and help build core muscles, which support the spine. Support can alleviate pressure on the discs in the back. Exercising also will build strength in other areas of the body and support joints.

- **Practice good posture.** Sitting and standing with optimal posture can help the body feel better. The body is designed to stand in a "neutral" position that stacks the pelvis, head and torso, according to DMC Healthcare. When posture is out of whack, this puts undue stress on

muscles, leading to pain. Dropping your head or shoulders also can create unnecessary tension that leads to headaches. Good posture can alleviate this.



- **Exercise more often.** Certain pains arise when exercising for the first time or performing a new activity. Allan H. Goldfarb, Ph.D., a professor and exercise physiologist at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, says when you do the same activity again and again, your muscles will start to get used to it and soreness will be reduced. Do not give up on exercise too soon, but include off days in your routine to give your body time to become more acclimated to increased physical activity.

- **Get tested.** Speak with your doctor if you have chronic pain in one or more areas. Such pain may be a sign of osteo-

arthritis, an inflammatory condition that is associated with aging. Rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune conditions can cause aches and pains as well, leaving the joints and tendons inflamed and a body with low energy. A doctor can rule out these conditions or help you get the therapy and medications you need.

- **Increase stretching and movement exercises.** Incorporate stretching and

movement exercises like yoga or tai chi into your daily regimen. These activities slowly stretch areas of the body and can improve range of motion and flexibility over time.

These are just a few ways to address common aches and pains. Medical interventions, physical therapy, occupational therapy and ergonomics assessments, and massage therapy also may help to alleviate aches and pains.



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# Embrace the view at these Nebraska scenic state park trails

The great outdoors beckons people of all ages. Fresh air can be hard to resist and the benefits of spending time outdoors are so numerous that it behooves anyone, including seniors, to answer the call of nature.

According to researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, human beings benefit both physically and psychologically from spending time in nature. Such experiences can reduce stress and help lower heart rates, potentially decreasing individuals' risk for cardiovascular disease. In addition, the Forest Service notes spending time outside in green spaces has been linked to a lower risk of depression.

Seniors who are retired or even aging empty nesters who are still in the workforce can make great use of their free time by venturing into the great outdoors.

Hiking provides a great workout and an ideal opportunity to spend time in an idyllic setting. The U.S. National Park Service notes hiking helps individuals build stronger muscles and bones, improves their sense of balance, has a positive effect on heart health and can decrease the risk of certain respiratory problems. Hiking is an especially attractive outdoor activity for seniors, as many parks feature trails with varying degrees of difficulty, ensuring there is a trail for

seniors whether they are seasoned or novice hikers.

Some of the best views in the state can be found along a trail at Nebraska's state parks. Whether you are exploring a shady pine forest or trekking to a scenic overlook, these trails are worth seeking out for the adventure – and beauty – they hold.

## Indian Cave State Park

Hike Trail 8 at the thickly forested Indian Cave State Park to reach a ridgetop overlooking the Missouri River. Stop to take in the scenery at one of the benches along the way or plan an overnight stay at the Adirondack shelter. Trail 10 also offers ridgetop views of the river, but be prepared for a steep climb at the start.

## Ponca State Park

For outstanding river views, choose the Tri-state Overlook Trail loop, which starts near the east shelter and is a relatively easy hike. From the overlook, hikers can view Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota. Eastern portions of the 2-mile

See VIEW, page 5

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## Vision

(Continued from page 1)

active seniors have to sit idly by. In fact, there are many ways for active seniors to protect their vision so they can continue to get up and go without having to worry about losing their eyesight.

· Make your diet work for you. The AOA notes that a number of eye diseases can develop after an individual turns 60, and some of these conditions can be minimized with wise lifestyle choices.

For example, a healthy, nutrient-rich diet can protect vision over the long haul. The National Council On Aging notes that studies have found omega-3 fatty acids, which can be found in foods like spinach, kale and salmon, can reduce individuals' risk for age-related eye diseases. Seniors can speak with their physicians about other ways to utilize diet to combat age-related vision problems.

· Protect your eyes and look cool at the same time. Active seniors spend lots of time outdoors, and that may have an adverse effect on their vision.

The NCOA notes that lengthy exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays can cause both short- and long-term eye damage. Thankfully, such issues are easily avoided if seniors wear sunglasses with UV protection when going outside. Brimmed hats also can protect the eyes from harmful UV rays.

· Be mindful of screen time. Much has been made of how much screen time is healthy for young people. But seniors also are not immune to the potentially harmful effects of spending too much time staring at their phones and other devices.

The NCOA recommends seniors employ the 20-20-20 rule in regard to screen usage. Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This quick exercise can reduce eye strain.

An active lifestyle benefits seniors in myriad ways. Seniors should take steps to protect their vision so they can continue to get up and go long after they retire.



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# View

(Continued from page 4)

Buffalo Run Trail also offers spectacular river vistas.

**Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area**

The 1.5-mile Turkey Run Trail will show you most of the park, including

a view of the North Platte River Valley.

**Niobrara State Park**

Check out the Bottom River Trail, which runs just under 3 miles and shows the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers. You may see some



fascinating rock formations and pine woodlands. It is a popular trail with visitors and is moderately difficult. Staff also recommend the Monument View Trail, which is half a mile long and offers

wildlife too, including deer, foxes and eagles. For a beautiful view of a cedar forest, hike the Deer Creek Trail, which runs for about 2 miles through the heart of the park.

**Chadron State Park**

Most popular for its scenic views is the Black Hills Overlook Trail; you can see for miles from the butte formations. The rocky path also shows where a 2012 wildfire came through. This trail is 1.5 miles one-way. To enjoy the sight of an undisturbed ponderosa pine forest, hike the Norwesca Trail, which is a relatively easy walk and is three-quarters of a mile one-way.

**Fort Robinson State Park**

You cannot go wrong with any of the trails set in the buttes. Take the Red Cloud Butte Trail to see the fort complex from overhead; it is a popular route and is often used by equestrians. Another option is the Mexican Canyon Trail, which also leads up into the buttes and pine trees. If you are lucky, you might see bighorn sheep.

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## Tips for safe travel for senior citizens

Travel was once a key component of their ideal retirements. While the COVID-19 pandemic put

many retirement travel plans on hold in recent years, jetting off to distant locales is once again on retirees' radars.

A 2022 survey from AARP found that individuals 50 and over were poised to not only get back on the road, but also spend significantly more money on travel. Prior to the pandem-

ic, Americans 50 and over spent \$7,314 annually on travel, according to data from AARP. By spring 2022, individuals in that same age bracket indicated a readiness to spend \$8,369 on travel. Eagerness to get back on the road, in the air or on the high seas could make it easy to overlook some principles of safe travel. However, such an oversight could lead to complications that could make it hard to enjoy time away from home. The following tips can reduce the likelihood that seniors encounter trouble while traveling.



Determine if any health issues are affecting your desired destinations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a website devoted to

nations/list can help seniors determine if there are any health-related safety issues in countries they hope to visit.

• **Speak to your physician.** A pre-trip consultation with a physician can uncover any issues that might arise while you're away. Such issues may be easily managed for domestic travelers who are not planning to visit any especially remote locations, but they will not necessarily be as easily navigated when traveling overseas. Physicians can recommend certain vaccinations or measures to ensure your health while away. In addition, a pre-trip doctor visit is a great time to refill prescriptions that you will need while you're away.

• **Take financial precautions as well.** Of course, not all travel-related concerns are medical. Finances also require some pre-trip attention. Inflation has caused a sharp spike in the price of various commodities since the start of 2022, so travelers should study up on the cost of food and attractions at their destination to ensure they have enough money to enjoy themselves. Baggage costs have risen significantly in recent years, so seniors traveling on a budget may want to pack less and do laundry while traveling in an effort to save money. In addition, the unpredictable nature of travel since the onset of the pandemic has underscored the utility of travel insurance. Seniors can look into travel insurance that could reimburse them in the case of delays or cancellations.

• **Privately share your itinerary.** Prior to departing, share your itinerary with friends and family. Avoid sharing the itinerary on social media platforms, which can make you a target for criminals at home and at your destination. The itinerary should include where you're staying, the dates you're visiting certain locations and the dates of activities you'll be engaging in on your trip.



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## Amazing benefits to seniors having pets

Pets bring much joy to the lives they touch. So it should come as no surprise that the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey, which was conducted by the American Pet Products Association, found that about 85 million families in the United States own a pet.

Pets offer companionship and unconditional love. While they are fitting for any family, seniors may find having a pet is especially beneficial.

Caring for pets and being around them can produce a chemical chain reaction in the brain that may help to lower stress hormones while also increasing production of the feel-good hormone serotonin.

This is not the only health benefit pets may provide. A recent study from the Mayo Clinic, which looked at 1,800 people between the ages of 25 and 64 who had healthy hearts, found almost half owned a dog. Having a dog was likely to spur heart-healthy behaviors, like exercising with the pet, eating well and having ideal blood sugar levels.

Pets also provide emotional support and companionship that can help seniors - including those who may be divorced or widowed - feel more secure and happy. The National Poll on Healthy Aging found that, among respondents who had pets, 88 percent said their pets helped them enjoy life, and 86 percent said their pets made them feel loved.

Seniors considering getting a pet can explore the many benefits to doing so.

·Reduce pain: A 2012 study published in Pain Magazine found therapy dogs provided "significant reduction in pain and emotional distress for chronic pain patients."

·Feeling of purpose: Caring for an animal not only stimulates physical activity, but it also can give seniors a reason to get up and go, which equates to a feeling of purpose.

·Altered focus: Having a pet can help seniors focus on something other than physical or mental health issues and pre-occupations about loss or aging, according to New York-based psy.

·Increased physical activity: Pets require care, and that interaction can get seniors moving more than if they didn't have a pet.

·Improved health: Ongoing research from Harvard Medical School has found dog owners have lower blood pressure, healthier cholesterol levels and lower risk of heart disease than those who do not own a dog.

·Stick to routine: Caring for pets helps seniors maintain a routine. Having structure after retirement can be important to ward off risk of depression. Staying on top of feeding, grooming and other pet needs also can help prevent cognitive decline.



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