

Senior Post

Living well and gracefully through the golden years

**How caring for aging
parents brings families
back together**

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THE DOMINION
Post

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Did you know?

Conventional wisdom has long suggested adults should drink eight glasses of water each day, but some medical experts note daily water consumption recommendations depend on variables that are unique to each individual.

For example, people who engage in activities that make them sweat, like exercise, will need to consume extra water to make up for the loss of fluid. Water consumption needs also may change with the seasons, as people are more likely to lose fluid when temperatures are high and cause people to sweat than they are when temperatures are moderate or low.

Experts note high altitudes can increase the risk for dehydration, which may require people in high altitude locations to drink more water each day. People dealing with certain medical conditions, including bladder or urinary infections, or illnesses that cause fluid loss due to vomiting or diarrhea also may need to consume extra water each day to avoid dehydration.



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Sypolt: Putting his 'thing' about records to work for Preston County

BY JENIFFER GRAHAM
For the Dominion Post

Preston County Clerk David Sypolt said he has always "had a thing" about records. He said working as a surveyor taught him how important it is to have accurate ones.

Sypolt earned his A.S. in land surveying and regents from Glenville State College in 1988. He went on to receive his B.A. from Glenville State College in 2004.

Sypolt became a registered football official for the Southern States Athletic Conference (SSAC). He also became a licensed ham radio operator,

call sign KC8YSO, as well as an NRA Certified Pistol Safety Instructor. He has worked in independent mapping and as a cartographic consultant, and was also a curriculum advisor for both Glenville State College and Fairmont State University.

According to Ballotpedia, Sypolt worked as a land surveyor for various companies until he was elected to the West Virginia State Senate in 2006. He served in this capacity until 2022 when he chose not to seek reelection.

"I thought running for County Clerk would be a good job for me," said Sypolt,



County Clerk Dave Sypolt sits at his desk.

Jeniffer Graham

“

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— Estelle Lombardi, Resident



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Jeniffer Graham

Preston County Deputy Clerk Tammy Johnson and Clerk Dave Sypolt discuss a Certificate of Transfer.

having taken office in July 2025. “I soon learned how diverse the job is.”

As county clerk, Sypolt serves as the official custodian of a varied array of county records, making his office a central repository. Sypolt and his deputy clerks are responsible for receiving, recording and preserving records such as vital statistics, including birth, death and marriage certificates. Property-related documents like deeds, mortgages, liens and plats are also managed by his office, ensuring a public, searchable record of ownership and encumbrances. They also handle the filing of business names and maintain records of military discharges, as well as serving as clerk for the county commission.

“I was surprised at how busy the job keeps me,” Sypolt said. “I had an illusion that I would be busy maybe three or four days a week. Fortunately, I have a wonderful staff. I had to learn a little about everything the job requires. There’s bits and pieces I have learned but it will take time to learn everything. I feel I have seen everything at least one time so I can anticipate what the next fiscal year holds.”

Sypolt said the clerk’s office handles and keeps a lot of records, so it is important to know the law. He said there are records that are open to the public and some that require

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Did you know?

Americans will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States in July 2026, and the word “semiquincentennial” may come up in conversation during those celebrations. Some people may not be familiar with the term and what it means.



A semiquincentennial is the 250th anniversary of something. It breaks down to “half” of a “quincentennial,” which is 500 years. Synonyms may include sestercentennial, bis-equicentennial or quartermillennial.

Each term refers to a period of 250 years. It’s a rather large word for a simple meaning, but people are bound to hear more of it as 2026 goes on and Independence Day is celebrated July 4.

a court order to be opened.

When he is not working, Sybolt said he and his wife Terri Funk Sybolt love to go camping. He said they joke around because now that he works full time again they have to cut into their camping trips. Sybolt said the couple go a place at Big Bear Lake.

“This is our first season at Big Bear. We have a lot of friends up there, and so far it’s been a good experience. We have grandkids and great-grandkids that we want to take to Big Bear Lake

this summer. They have splash pads, swimming and other amenities they can enjoy,” he said.

Sybolt’s wife Terri was a Republican member of the West Virginia House of Delegates and represented District 52. She served as Preston County Assessor for 16 years prior to running for the House of Delegates.

The County Clerk’s Office is open Monday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or call 304-329-0070.



Jeniffer Graham

Dave Sybolt looks up information for the County commission.

Did you know?

Mini golf is understandably characterized as a family-friendly recreational activity. But a round of mini golf might be able to help novice golfers young and old fine-tune some important skills that can be applied on traditional courses.

While a round of mini golf won’t help golfers sharpen their long games and add distance to their drives, it might help them bolster their short games. Mini golf courses can help golfers learn to analyze the slope and speed of a green and can help them work on their grip and touch, both of which are very important for players’ short games.

Mini golf also might help golfers learn to work around obstacles. While golfers are unlikely to encounter any clowns or windmills on a traditional course, learning to strategize when confronting such obstacles on a mini golf course may teach novice golfers the importance of playing patiently and strategizing when confronting obstacles like trees and bunkers at their local courses.





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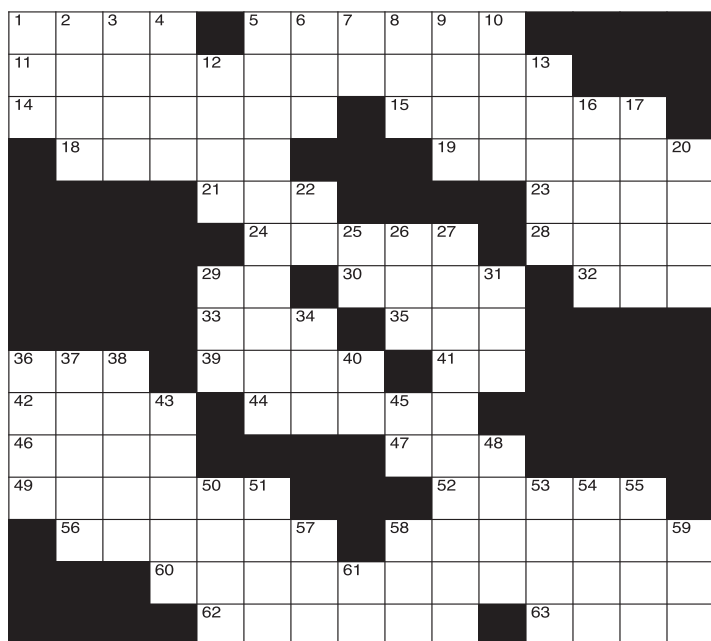
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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ chat
5. Statue near the Pyramids
11. A process to change the look
14. Herb
15. Think about excessively
18. Bass vocal part
19. Supreme Allied Cmdr. of NATO
21. A major division of geological time
23. New Zealand parrot
24. Cognitive contents
28. Lump of yarn
29. Atomic #109
30. Let go of
32. Indian title of respect
33. Whereabouts unknown
35. Electronic data processing
36. Drivers' licenses count
39. Snakelike fishes
41. They precede C
42. Popular personal computers
44. Intermediate community stage in ecological succession
46. Wings
47. Indicates position
49. Pleasantly smooth or soft
52. Jeweled headdress
56. In slow tempo
58. ___ Falls
60. Reassertions
62. Eras
63. Hyphen

CLUES DOWN

1. Corporate executive
2. A plant used for flavoring food
3. Opinion or belief
4. Sheep in their second year
5. Intensities of sound
6. Indicates support for
7. Expression of laughter
8. OJ trial judge
9. Pointed ends of pens
10. True bugs genus
12. Lawyers argue theirs
13. Body parts
16. Closes tightly
17. World Heritage site in Nigeria
20. Islamic calendar month
22. Commercial
25. "Westworld" actor Harris
26. They ___
27. Religious guilds
29. Woman (French)
31. Parts per billion (abbr.)
34. Brew
36. Spiritual leader
37. Indigo bush
38. Burn with a hot liquid
40. Older citizen
43. Scad fish genus
45. Morning
48. Line passing through the center (abbr.)
50. Double S-shaped curve
51. Small, thin person
53. Older
54. Mars crater
55. Humanities
57. Word element meaning ear
58. To the ___ degree
59. Residue
61. It cools your home

Solution on page 9

How caring for AGING PARENTS



brings FAMILIES back TOGETHER

ON THE COVER: Most seniors said that being cared for by their child in their older years has truly been one of the most joy-filled parts of their lives (Talker News).

Talker News

In spite of burnout and exhaustion, most Americans who are caring for an aging parent said it has healed their relationship with them.

That's according to a recent survey of 2,000 sandwich generation parents who also care for an aging parent, in which most (88%) said that caregiving has given them a life-changing reset with their

aging loved one.

As part of the survey, the seniors were also asked a few questions, and their responses proved that the reconciliation is mutual: 89% of seniors agreed that being cared for by their adult child has healed their connection.

The study was conducted by Talker Research and commissioned by Comfort Keepers as part of their annual National Day of Joy ini-

tiative to explore caregiving — its unique beauty, as well as its many challenges and stressors for the sandwich generation.

In the study, nearly all seniors (82%) said that being cared for by their child in their older years has truly been one of the most joy-filled parts of their entire lives.

One senior respondent aptly described the joy of bond-



Respondents said caring for their aging parent makes them feel:



Purposeful

58%



Proud

56%



Fulfilled

48%

ing with their adult child in small, simple moments together, saying: “It wasn’t a grand moment, just a quiet afternoon that somehow felt golden. My child was helping me water the plants on the porch.

“At one point, they started humming a song I used to sing, and without thinking, I joined in. We both laughed when we forgot the words, just like we used to. In that simple, shared rhythm, it felt like time had folded in on itself, and for a moment, nothing had really changed except who was holding the watering can.”

But blended with the joy and beauty of caregiving for an aging parent, there’s also hardship. In the survey, almost all caregivers (92%) agreed: Caring for an aging loved one brings both joy and emotional strain.

Even still, the majority of respondents (73%) would not choose to do things differently when taking on caregiving responsibilities.

Demonstrating the complexity of being a parent and caregiving for an aging parent at the same time, sandwich generation respondents said caring for their aging loved one makes them feel purposeful (58%), proud (56%) and fulfilled (48%), even though most (79%) confessed they’re tired and burnt out.

As an example of this, an astounding majority of people polled (54%)

said they’ve missed or forgotten about a doctor appointment in the last month because of their parenting or caregiving responsibilities.

Layered on top of this, most caregivers (87%) also juggle careers and work, adding even more to their loads.

But even while tired and exhausted, the study found that adult children are making meaningful sacrifices to show up for their aging parents.

Forty-two percent of respondents have moved closer to be near their senior loved one, many (40%) have missed out on travel and 31% have even given up hobbies to be present for their loved one.

“Caregiving is often talked about through the lens of sacrifice, but these findings show it can also be a powerful source of joy, healing and renewed connection across generations,” said Joni Magnus-Ramsey, chief happiness officer for Comfort Keepers. “Our research shows that while many family caregivers are carrying heavy responsibilities, they’re also experiencing meaningful moments with senior loved ones that can strengthen relationships in lasting ways. As we recognize the eighth annual National Day of Joy, it’s an important reminder that even in challenging seasons, joy is still found in caring for others.”

The data proved that, for caregivers, family comes first. And this prioritization has given back to the caregivers in a priceless way. In the study, 59% of respondents said they’ve prioritized being present for family more than their careers, and nearly all (87%) agreed that caring for an aging parent has been one of the most satisfying and fulfilling roles in their lives.

But it hasn’t been easy. Seven in 10 (69%) disclosed that they need more support when tending to their aging loved one.

Looking at practical ways to do this, most sandwich generation caregivers (85%) said that if respite or in-home care support for their aging parent were more accessible, it would make a notable positive difference in their own lives and well-being.

“The sandwich generation is navigating one of the most demanding life stages — raising children, managing careers and high-stress jobs and caring for aging parents all at

once — that creates significantly high rates of burnout,” said Sherri Snelling, gerontologist, author and spokesperson for Comfort Keepers. “This research highlights both sides of that reality: the emotional strain caregivers feel, yet the deep sense of purpose and accomplishment that often comes with showing up for family. Having the ability to get a respite break and having in-home support from a professional caregiver are so critical to protecting the sandwich generation’s well-being and helping families thrive.”

Research methodology

Talker Research surveyed 2,000 “sandwich generation” parents who have a child (18 or under) living at home and an aging parent they care for who have access to the internet; the survey was commissioned by Comfort Keepers and administered and conducted online by Talker Research between April 9 and April 20, 2026.

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Hip-hop or Doris Day?

Exercise instructors can speak their peers' language

BY DONNA
BLANKINSHIP

Associated Press

SEATTLE — Bengie Santos was a dancer and choreographer for 30 years before reaching an age when most artists hang up their dancing shoes and take a seat in the audience. But she wasn't ready to sit back and enjoy the show. So Santos began her third act as an exercise instructor.

Now 72 and in her 14th year teaching at the YMCA of Greater Seattle, Santos has an almost cult-like following of older adults — many in their 80s and 90s — who come to stretch, dance and lift weights multiple times a week.

From Doris Day singalongs to hip-hop routines and country line dances, the classes get people kicking, popping and spinning.

Some of Santos' students say younger instructors — however great — don't quite "get them" in the same way.

And Y organizers and other experts say many older instructors can be role models, speaking their peers' language in a way that makes exercise more fun.



AP photo

Instructor Bengie Santos, 72, leads a class for older adults at the Dale Turner Family YMCA on April 30 in Shoreline, Wash.

Exercise can build social connections

Sharon Ruff, 81, was attracted to Santos' classes by the eclectic mix of music, and loves the instructor's energy and enthusiasm. Before she retired from her job as a teacher, she had never exercised regularly. "I didn't really like it, because it wasn't fun," she says.

Her friend Ann Kashiwa, 91, often stays for two hour-long classes in a row. She started taking Santos' classes during the pandemic, and has stuck with them through treatment for pancreatic cancer.

"She is not only a fantastic teacher, but she gets people together," says Kashiwa, whose Y friendships have helped her through tough times.

Santos says inspiration flows both ways. Her students inspire her to keep going, she says, and "I'm hoping I inspire them to keep going."

What older instructors can offer

Exercise and being with people are crucial for healthy aging, so finding incentives to do that is important.

"Everybody has to figure out what their barriers are" and come up with strategies to make physical activity rewarding, says Daniel E. Lieberman, an evolutionary biologist at Harvard and author of several books, including "Exercised: Why Something We Never Evolved to Do is Healthy and Rewarding."

Finding someone to get you moving, whether an instructor or a friend, can help overcome that natural resistance.

"People who stay active as they get older are important role models for everyone," Lieberman says.

Harry King, an 83-year-old personal trainer in Greenville, South Carolina, agrees that motivation to take that first step is tough for many people, and becomes even harder as their mobility weakens.

King had always been active — kayaking, hiking and playing basketball — but when he retired from his job as an insurance executive and business coach, he felt a pull toward a comfortable chair in front of the TV. But that got boring fast, so when he saw a Help Wanted sign at Planet Fitness, he applied and worked his way up to become a trainer.

Most of his clients are 50 or older.

"I've heard people say I set a good example and I try to," he says. "At my age, if I can exercise, why can't other people too?"

Recruiting older instructors

The YMCA in Seattle is mindful of the value of having an older instructor leading a senior class.

"We don't put an age limit on our applicants," says program executive Kerry Ashby, who started there as a younger instructor for the Active Older Adults program. The Y does recruit from within the older adult classes, and a lot of instructors



AP photo

Ann Kashiwa, 91, uses an exercise band while taking a class for older adults led by instructor Bengie Santos.

are former participants.

"We know it's more than just fitness for the majority of our active older adults," Ashby says. "It's also the mental and emotional aspect."

Tom Kleinecke, 67, has been a member of the Y for 18 years and has sampled many different classes. Younger instructors, he says, tend to teach their classes, while Santos leads and inspires.

Kleinecke says his fitness and endurance have improved noticeably since he started taking three of Santos' classes a week. Although he's fit, he says, it's challenging to keep up with her.

One of the classes includes a faster-paced dance class not designed for older students. At first, parts were tough to follow, he said, but before long, he knew all the steps, from mambo to moonwalk.

"If you're worried about being out of sync and uncoordinated, don't worry about it because

nobody is paying attention to you," Kleinecke says. They're all watching the instructor.

Now, he and his wife go out dancing on the weekends.

Looking forward to working out

Santos says she considers the ages and backgrounds of her students when choosing the exercise class soundtrack.

"I always tell other instructors it isn't your class, it's their class," she says.

She also teaches smaller classes in three senior living facilities. Those students range from 80 to 102.

"The caregivers wheel them out. I play their music. It triggers their memory," from Judy Garland to Louie Armstrong, Santos says. "When they see me they think they're going to party."

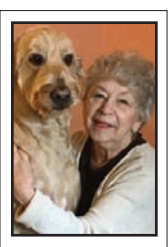
Some even waltz in their chairs.

Entering the elder years can be a new beginning

BY IRENE MARINELLI

For The Dominion Post

At any casual gathering we've probably heard that rusty old quip:



"Aging is hard, but think of the alternative." Chuckles all around, then conversation returns to other topics. If we stop to dig a little more deeply into that hackneyed phrase, it can open a

window to a perhaps forgotten realization that life, in all its facets and changes, is incredibly precious, even though death may be peeking from behind a dark curtain. Certainly, some aspects of growing old can be challenging, but we can find ways to brighten our elder years.

Aging seems to be a fruitful field for research studies these days. Some such studies point to several

things we need in order to have a comfortable, contented, even a happy old age. At the top of the list is good health, not the robust health of our youth, but enough stamina and good health to allow for independence. Research points to independence as the prime factor in a happy old age. Being in charge of our own life, our home wherever it may be, our time, finances, activities brings a feeling of independence that nothing else can match as we go through our elder years. Handling our own daily life brings dignity. Of course, general good health points the way to such independence. We have been told often enough, how to care for our bodies. It's never too late to start eating healthy, get regular medical check-ups and get off that couch, put down that phone, turn off the TV. Research also suggests gentle exercise, not necessarily in a gym. Walking, swimming and gardening stand out as the top three.

Routine makes a difference. Our days can drift by without shape, and we drift along with them. The routine does not need to be rigorous, just a rhythm to follow: Perhaps a quiet start to the day with breakfast and the newspaper or a book; a cup of tea in the afternoon; dinner around the same time every evening. We can think of this soft routine as a shape to our days, a structured support system. One thing to avoid is feeling there's no reason to get out of bed in the morning. Each day should hold at least one thing to which we look forward with anticipation and joy. It can be something as small as reading a chapter in our current book, breakfast on the patio listening to the birds, a cup of coffee and conversation with a good friend. We don't need to be productive as we move into old age, we need to take charge of our days.

Research also points to the importance of social connections. Our circle of friends may shrink as we

navigate our older years. People die; people move away. The active participation in a number of different activities, meetings, social functions that marked our calendars in our youth and middle age changes as we age. These later years are beautified by fewer commitments but deeper relationships. Now we need a few close friends with whom we can be completely ourselves, be comfortable in silence as well as in conversation; friends with whom we can speak freely on any subject without fear of judgment.

If we are lucky, wisdom will be part of our elder years. By changing our perspective, we can see aging in a brighter light, see it as a time of earned peace and contentment. The wise words of philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre point the way: "The more sand that has escaped from the hourglass of our life, the clearer we should see through it."

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Should you pay off debt before making a will or trust?

Why protecting your family shouldn't wait

BY DOREEN SEAMON

For The Dominion Post

It's a common thought: "I'll get my estate plan done once my debts are paid off." With mortgages, credit cards, or medical bills, many people feel they should wait until their finances are in perfect shape.



But here's the truth—waiting can leave your family unprotected.

You Don't Have to Be Debt-Free

Estate planning isn't just for the wealthy or debt-free. It's for anyone who wants to make life easier for their loved ones.

In fact, having a will or trust becomes even more important when you have debt. That's because your financial responsibilities don't

simply disappear—they must still be handled after you're gone.

Without a plan, your family could face delays, confusion, and added stress during an already difficult time.

What Happens to Debt After You're Gone?

When someone passes away, their debts are typically paid from their estate—the money and property they leave behind.

■ Secured debts (like a mortgage or car loan) are tied to property, which may need to be sold or returned.

■ Unsecured debts (like credit cards or medical bills) are paid from available funds in the estate.

If there isn't enough money, some debts may go unpaid. In most cases, family members are not personally responsible unless they co-signed.

Why a Will Still Matters

A simple will can make a big difference.

It allows you to:

■ Name someone you trust to

handle your finances

■ Give clear instructions on how debts should be paid

■ Decide what happens to your home and belongings

■ Reduce delays and legal costs

Without a will, the court makes these decisions—and that process can take time and create unnecessary stress for your family.

Where Trusts Fit In

For some families, a trust can offer added benefits. Trusts can help avoid probate (the court process), speed up distribution, and keep matters private.

They can also be helpful if you:

■ Own property in more than one state

■ Want to provide for children or dependents over time

■ Prefer a more structured plan for how assets are managed

Even so, the key point remains: a trust works best as part of a plan—not as something to wait on.

Should You Focus on Debt First?

There are times when paying

down debt should be a priority—especially if:

■ You have high-interest balances growing quickly

■ Your financial situation feels unstable

But even then, it's wise to put basic documents in place, such as:

■ A will

■ A financial power of attorney

■ A health care directive

These documents ensure someone can step in and help if needed.

A Balanced Approach Works Best

You don't have to choose between paying off debt and planning your estate. You can—and should—do both.

Start with a few practical steps:

■ Make a simple list of your accounts, debts, and assets

■ Name beneficiaries on retirement and insurance accounts

■ Choose someone you trust to handle your affairs

■ Review your plan every few years

Peace of Mind Starts Now

Life doesn't wait for the "perfect" financial moment—and neither should your planning.

Creating a will or trust now means your wishes are clear, your loved ones are protected, and your finances are handled the way you intend.

You can always update your plan as your debts shrink and your situation improves.

The Bottom Line

You don't need to be debt-free to take care of your family.

By putting a plan in place today, you give your loved ones something invaluable: clarity, security, and peace of mind—no matter what tomorrow brings. Remember, it is never too early to plan!

Doreen Seamon is an estate and elder law attorney serving both WV and PA. She has dedicated her practice to helping our community plan for their future while protecting their loved ones and their assets. She can be reached at Doreen@SeamonLawOffices.com.

SENIOR CENTER ACTIVITIES

Westside Senior Center

The volunteer-operated center is open from 9 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at 500 Dupont Road in Westover. Our exercise room is available when the center is open.

BINGO: Bingo every Wednesday at 6 p.m. Doors open at 4 p.m. and kitchen open at 5 p.m. No reserved tables. Cards are \$5 each (e.g. - 4 cards are \$20 and 6 cards are \$30). Concessions.

CARDS AND GAMES: Tuesday and Thursday mornings are especially active for our card plays and anyone is invited to join in. Playing usually starts around 9:30.

DULCIMERS: They get together on Tuesday mornings to play and practice. They welcome anyone who would like to learn also. Judy Werner leads this group, and it is enjoyable to just sit and listen.

LINE DANCING: We now have line dancing classes on Wednesday morning at 10:15 a.m. The classes are designed for beginners, but all are welcome.

Assisted Living at Evergreen

Assisted Living at Evergreen is an alternative to nursing home care. A variety of specially developed leisure activities include outings to Oglebay, holiday dinners and parties and weekly shopping trips. Housekeeping and personal laundry services are available. There are community areas, dining and family rooms, an activity center and a gazebo with fish pond for outdoor relaxing.



Assisted Living at Evergreen, Morgantown

What seniors should know about red meat

MetroCreative

As people age, their dietary habits may need to be modified in protection of their long-term health. Seniors may be advised to avoid certain foods, including red meat.

The consensus regarding seniors and red meat now emphasizes balance. Red meat, which consists of beef, lamb and pork, offers bioavailable nutrients that are difficult to get from plants alone. Red meat contains vitamin B12, which is crucial for cognitive function and nerve health. Since absorption of B12 often declines with age, according to UCLA Health, it can be challenging to get enough.

Red meat contains heme iron, which is more easily absorbed by the body than the non-heme iron found in beans or spinach. Iron helps ward off age-related anemia, according to UMass Memo-

rial Health. High-quality protein also is essential to combat age-related muscle loss, a condition known as sarcopenia.

Despite the benefits of red meat, the American Heart Association and the World Cancer Research Fund suggest moderation because of the impact it may have on cardiovascular health. Many cuts of red meat are high in saturated fats, which have the potential to elevate LDL (bad) cholesterol. For seniors with a history of elevated lipid panels or heart disease, leaner cuts of red meat are key. Alternative protein sources also should be chosen more often than red meat.

Limiting red meat also can help combat digestive system concerns. As a person ages, the digestive system produces less stomach acid, says Cary Gastroenterology Associates. That makes it harder to break down heavy



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For seniors with a history of elevated lipid panels or heart disease, leaner cuts of red meat are key.

proteins like red meat. This can lead to bloating or discomfort if too much is consumed.

Certain studies have explored the link between high red meat consumption and

systemic inflammation that can aggravate conditions like arthritis. Baylor College of Medicine says high levels of saturated fat and omega-6 fatty acids could elevate inflammatory mark-

ers like C-reactive protein, exacerbating autoimmune conditions and other health issues.

Best practices for seniors concerning red meat involve looking for cuts with loin or round in the name, as they have the highest protein-to-fat ratios. Seniors also should discuss the newest federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans with their doctors or nutritionists, as the 2026 guidelines represent a significant shift that promotes higher consumption of red meat, full-fat dairy and animal proteins, rather than restricting them to one to two times per week, despite advising limiting saturated fat intake. These contradictory messages may confuse the average person.

As with all dietary recommendations, advice will vary depending on one's specific needs and underlying medical conditions.

ASSISTED LIVING AND RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES

Monongalia County

Evergreen Assisted Living

3705 Collins Ferry Road, Morgantown
304-598-8401

Morgantown Health and Rehab (formerly Golden Living Center)

1379 Van Voorhis Road, Morgantown
304-599-9480

Madison Center

161 Bakers Ridge Road, Morgantown
304-285-0692

Mapleshire Nursing and Rehab Center

30 Mon General Drive, Morgantown
304-285-2720

Sundale

800 J.D. Anderson Drive, Morgantown
304-599-0497

The Suites at Heritage Point

1 Heritage Point, Morgantown
304-285-5575

Harmony at Morgantown

50 Harmony Drive, Morgantown
304-503-4349

Preston County

Kingwood Healthcare Center

300 Miller Road, Kingwood
304-329-3195

The Country Retreat

3712 Coal Lick Road, Albright
304-413-4541

Majestic Care Hopemont

150 Hopemont Drive, Terra Alta
304-789-2411



Kingwood Healthcare Center

How best to manage multiple medications

MetroCreative

Polypharmacy, or the practice of managing multiple medications, is a part of life for a significant percentage of seniors. Many prescription and over-the-counter drugs are essential for maintaining health and managing chronic conditions. However, the chemical complexity of mixing so many drugs can lead to dangerous outcomes if one isn't careful.

Older adults take more medications than any other age group. A report conducted by Age Wave and The John A. Hartford Foundation found that the average senior takes four medications, but more than 15 percent take eight or more. Some medications can create further conditions or worsen existing conditions. Data from the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality show that 15.9 percent of older adults use inappropriate medication.

Structured medication management is essential for seniors' safety. Here's how to safely navigate taking multiple medications at once.

Conduct a medication audit. Take all of the medications and supplements you use to a primary care physician or pharmacist to discuss potential interactions and if any prescriptions can be canceled. Research from Clarest Health indicates that patients taking five to nine medications have a 50 percent chance of experiencing a significant adverse drug event.

Talk about deprescribing. Speak with a doctor about the process of tapering off medications that may no longer be necessary or are resulting in more harm than benefit.

Use one pharmacy. Always fill prescriptions from the same pharmacy. Modern systems are equipped with safeguards to flag certain drug-to-drug interactions automatically. Also, the pharmacist is often an underutilized resource. Ask questions and figure out if he or she can conduct a medication review to ensure a regimen for taking medications is as complication-free as possible.

Utilize smart systems. Rely on smart pill dispensers that unlock

only at the correct time to manage high-risk medications. Other pill organizers and digital apps can set reminders to take medications at the appropriate times. An app like Medisafe will notify family members if a dose is missed.

Link doses to actions. Make medications an automatic part of your day by linking them to activities, like morning pills taken with a cup of coffee or evening pills when you eat dinner.

Use visual cues. Keep pill organizers in a visible spot so you remember to take the medication.

Ask for help. If managing medications has become a tall order, ask a friend, family member or a visiting nurse or aide to assist with medication management.

Update your list. Always maintain a current list of the medications and supplements you are taking, and bring it along to every new medical appointment for further review.

Managing medications becomes more complex as seniors typically take multiple drugs and supplements to maintain health.



MetroCreative

Structured medication management is essential for seniors' safety.

SENIOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

If you are a senior and find yourself in need of emergency assistance, the following is a list of locations where heating, food, pet food, and other emergency help can be obtained.

Catholic Charities

827 Fairmont Road, Suite 203, Westover | 304-292-6597

Christian Help, Inc.

219 Walnut St., Morgantown | 304-291-0221

DHHR

Monongalia County

114 S. High St., Morgantown | 304-285-3175

Preston County

18351 Veterans Memorial Hwy., Kingwood | 304-329-4340

North Central West Virginia Community Action

Marion County

215 Scott Place, Fairmont | 304-363-4367

Preston County

428 Morgantown St., Kingwood | 304-363-2170

The Connecting Link

235 High St., Morgantown | 304-296-3300

Salvation Army - Monongalia County

1264 University Ave., Morgantown | 304-296-3525

Salvation Army - Preston County

124 Morgan St., Kingwood | 304-329-1245

Catholic Community Charities - Preston County

304-329-3644

The Raymond Wolfe Center is the only food pantry in Preston County that has specialized diet foods (diabetic, salt free, etc.). It also has some pet food available. Call to check availability.

The following locations are for Preston County residents only:

Wesley United Methodist Church

304-329-0707

St. Vincent DePaul Helpline

304-329-6229

Heat for Preston (January - March only)

304-329-2316

Terra Alta Council of Churches (Terra Alta residents only)

304-789-2509

Should I Hire a Live-in or a Private (Under-the-table) Caregiver?

By April L. Wintermoyer

For The Dominion Post

One of our clients recently called to say they had met a nice couple and planned to move them into their basement as full-time, private caregivers. In their estimation, it would be much less expensive, would help the couple, and they would always have someone available to help.



On the surface, this sounds like a great idea! It really can work for some. Beware and be aware: what may seem like a simple arrangement can quickly become a minefield.

Among the most serious risks of hiring a private caregiver are safety risks, theft of valuables, legal liabilities, financial pitfalls, and the overwhelming stress of becoming a household employer. You do need to understand the legal liabilities and what you are signing up for.

Having had my Right at Home In-Home Care and Assistance company for almost 20 years, these are the important things to consider...

Background Checks and Vetting

- Insist on a thorough background check, including fingerprints.

- When interviewing, ask specific, open-ended questions. We like situational, what would you do in this situation type of questions.

- Know what you are looking for, what kind of help you need, what times, and what you are willing to pay or provide. Once in the thick of it, these details can become overwhelming.

- Do not let the background check slide. Do not forgo the drug screening! You are trusting this individual with everything you or your parents have worked so hard for over the years!

- None of this is a guarantee. Incidents that did not result in convictions are often not reported.



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When considering hiring a private caregiver, know what you are looking for, what kind of help you need, what times, and what you are willing to pay or provide.

- Refusing to submit to a background check or a drug screening should be a glaring red flag; a deal breaker.

Congratulations, you are a Household Employer!

- This means you are now responsible for several important obligations. If the individual meets standards set forth by the government, you will be responsible for payroll taxes: Medicare and Social Security, both yours and theirs, as well as state and federal unemployment taxes and

withholding taxes.

- You will need an Employer Identification Number and the ability to maintain accurate time tracking for payroll records. Employees must be paid by the hour and may not be paid a flat daily rate. All hours count, even if they are “standing by” while your

loved one sleeps.

■ Can you pay under the table? The fines are hefty and the consequences difficult. Wage disputes, unemployment claims, and accidents are the most frequent ways to get tangled up in an innocent agreement.

Care.com has a nice article in their resource center at <https://www.care.com/hp/west-virginia-nanny-taxes/>.

Some defining information from the Department of Labor can also be helpful: <https://www.dol.gov/general/domesticworkers> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/79b-flsa-live-in-domestic-workers>

Training, Safety, and Security

Your loved one is essentially giving a stranger access to their world.

■ Caregiving is largely common sense. Some workers may have less life experience and fewer opportunities to develop guidelines for responsibility. In today's world, common sense is not so common.

■ Agencies provide training on infection control, privacy, record-keeping, transferring or moving a person from place to place, the proper way to steady a client, and essential guide-

lines for good care. It will be up to you to provide instruction and be alert for quality.

■ Valuables, cash, financial documents, and prescription medications should always be secured. The person who lives or spends significant time becomes like a part of the family, and can have access to items that create significant vulnerability.

■ It's the "trust paradox" – the intimacy that makes private care so very appealing also creates vulnerability. When something comes up missing or a misunderstanding occurs, accusations are made. Proof is difficult. This trust, once broken, is never fully healed.

■ Safety – yours and theirs. The home where your private caregiver works must be reasonably free of hazards. Trip hazards, poor lighting, hoarding situations, or unsanitary conditions can create hazardous conditions.

■ After an injury? You could be on the hook for expenses. Your homeowners' policy may cover an accidental slip or strain. It is unlikely to cover an employee. You could bear the cost of health care for your caregiver and wages while they are off work.

■ Vehicle Safety – Will your caregiver be driving your car or theirs? Who will do the driving? Will they need to be on your insurance?

■ Privacy - Both theirs and yours. Establish privacy guidelines. Are there places in the home where the caregiver should not go? Do they have free access to common areas? May they have guests? Do they need to provide their own food? Can they smoke or enjoy alcoholic beverages? Are there quiet hours? Can they have animals?

■ How will you communicate the need for help during downtime? I might suggest a baby monitor-type device.

Parting Ways

■ What if something goes wrong or if there is a disagreement that ends this relationship? Is this person considered a guest? Can you just "make" them leave? Was their housing included in their wages? Are they now a tenant? Do you have to go through the legal eviction?

■ Much of this depends on the issues we discussed above and on how the law views your caregiver. I would

seek legal advice up front on this.

Call-Off and Time Off

■ Illness or call-offs: Will you need backup, or will you be okay for the day? If they ask for time off and you disagree, do you get a say? Does time away affect their pay?

This is an effort to make you aware of some of the pitfalls of hiring independently or under the table. There are special considerations when hiring a live-in caregiver. I've seen families assume a caregiver can do everything – be a nurse, a chef, a maid for the whole house, a chauffeur, and a therapist. This does not work.

We would love to help you, to earn your trust. We can offer you protection from many of these liabilities. If you choose to do this on your own, please get some advice. The world is not a gentle place, but there are still good people!

April Wintermoyer is the Owner and Operations Manager of Right at Home in North Central West Virginia and the upper Ohio Valley. You can reach her at 304-296-6600 or at april@rahcares4u.net

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Why you need dental insurance in retirement.

Many Americans are fortunate to have dental coverage for their entire working life, through employer-provided benefits. When those benefits end with retirement, paying dental bills out-of-pocket can come as a shock, leading people to put off or even go without care.

Simply put – without dental insurance, there may be **an important gap** in your healthcare coverage.

When you're comparing plans ...

- ▶ Look for coverage that helps pay for major services. Some plans may limit the number of procedures – or pay for preventive care only.
- ▶ Look for coverage with no deductibles. Some plans may require you to pay hundreds out of pocket before benefits are paid.
- ▶ Shop for coverage with no annual maximum on cash benefits. Some plans have annual maximums of \$1,000.

Medicare doesn't pay for dental care.¹

That's right. As good as Medicare is, it was never meant to cover everything. That means if you want protection, you need to purchase individual insurance.

Early detection can prevent small problems from becoming expensive ones.

The best way to prevent large dental bills is preventive care. The American Dental Association recommends checkups twice a year.

Previous dental work can wear out.

Even if you've had quality dental work in the past, you shouldn't take your dental health for granted. In fact, your odds of having a dental problem only go up as you age.²

Treatment is expensive — especially the services people over 50 often need.

Consider these national average costs of treatment ... \$274 for a checkup ... \$299 for a filling ... \$1,471 for a crown.³ Unexpected bills like this can be a real burden, especially if you're on a fixed income.

¹"Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2025. ²"Aging changes in teeth and gums", medlineplus.gov, 4/17/2022. ³FairHealth, Inc. National average dental fees. Data current as of July 2025; subject to change.

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