

Senior Sense

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Your Resources

SMART SHOPPING AT THE GROCERY STORE

Out of all of the spending categories in your budget, you can exercise the most control over groceries because you make the decision on buying every item. Here are some tips for saving money at the grocery store.

- Never go into the grocery store without a list. If you do, you are much more likely to buy impulse items and other things you do not need. Shop without a list and you are more likely to forget something, resulting in another trip to the grocery and more impulse buys. Get to know the store you use the most, and list the items you need in order of where they are in the store.

“Never go to the grocery store without a list.”

- Buy fresh fruit and vegetables when they are in season. For example, instead of buying blueberries in winter months and paying for the shipping and import fees, buy them in the summer when they are more likely to be grown nearby. You will get a fresher product and hang on to more of your money. Your food section in your local newspaper usually features articles and recipes on seasonal items.

- Use coupons to save money on items you usually buy anyway. Conversely, do not buy items just because you have a coupon if you would not normally buy them. Make sure that what is shown to be on sale is really a bargain for you.



- Do not be a brand loyalist. Consider buying the store brand instead of the national brand. If you compare ingredients, you will often find no difference between brands. Store brands are often as good or even better in some instances than national brands.
- Use the unit price to compare costs. The unit price is how much the item costs per ounce, pound or other unit. The largest size of an item is not always the cheapest. You can find the unit price on the shelf sticker.

Paying attention to how you shop at the grocery store can help you to get more for your food dollar. Saving a few dollars each trip to the store may seem to be more trouble than it is worth. Those few dollars each week can add up to a lot of money in a year or two.

Your Relationships

CAREGIVING IN THE COUNTRY

Ed and Ada had farmed together their entire lives. Now that they both were getting up in years, Ed had given up most of the day-to-day farming to his sons. In fact, Ed's recent stroke made it very difficult for him to even work his backyard garden. Ada did as much as she could manage, but managing the

household on top of Ed's increasing needs was a struggle for her too. Their neighbors and children encouraged them to consider moving into town to one of those new assisted living places, but the farm was home to Ed and Ada. They might have to do some things differently, but they could adjust and stay right where they were.

Ed and Ada's situation is not uncommon. Many families living in rural areas have lived there their entire lives. Other rural residents move to the country in retirement, seeking the relative peace and quiet of country life. When caregiving needs increase, however, that distance from others can become a challenge.

Caring for a senior, especially as caregiving needs increase, usually means depending more and more on a network of support resources. This network may include informal supports such as family

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and friends, as well as formal supports such as visiting nurses and drivers. Caregiving in a rural area can be similar to providing care in an urban or suburban area in a number of ways, but it can also be quite different. Some of the reasons people move to and live in rural areas -- for example, because they enjoy open



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spaces and less congestion -- are the very things that can cause isolation and other difficulties. Compared to their suburban and urban counterparts, many Americans living in rural areas have access to fewer financial resources, social and health services, public transportation options, business opportunities and young people. In most cases, rural residents must travel farther than city dwellers to get the services they need.

There are many ways you can improve your situation as a rural caregiver. One of the best things you can do is to take care of yourself. Staying healthy makes you a better caregiver. You can do more when you eat well, exercise and stay rested. You will make more sound decisions, be better able to handle physical demands, and more likely to stay healthy yourself.

If you anticipate that you will become a caregiver soon, find out how prepared you actually are to perform this role. Even if you are already a caregiver, it is never too late to make adjustments along the way. Conduct a home safety check. Look for things that might cause problems, such as tripping/stumbling hazards like throw rugs or extension cords. Cluttered kitchens may be difficult for wheelchair or walker mobility. You should also take an honest look at your own strengths and growth areas. Write down your strengths and

look at how they might contribute to being a successful caregiver. Next, make a list of the areas of your personality and physical abilities that may get in the way of being a successful caregiver. What are your fears and concerns about your own ability to care for someone in the best possible manner?

Another very important way to help yourself when you are a caregiver is to

Take advantage of health care professionals while you have their undivided attention. Do your homework, take advantage of all available resources, and be assertive.

learn how to talk with health care and insurance professionals. As a rural caregiver, this is particularly important because you may not have as much actual physical access to doctors, nurses and other medical staff since they may be located in communities several miles away. During your appointments at clinics, hospitals and at the pharmacy, make the best use of your time. Know what to ask and how to get more information. Take advantage of health care professionals while you have their undivided attention. Do your homework, take advantage of all available resources, and be assertive.



Do you have a circle of friends who check in on one another? For many rural residents, their network includes friends from church and neighbors. If you're not as close to friends as you'd like, what could you do to strengthen those ties?

Plan ahead for possible emergency situations. Most rural areas are served by emergency medical services, but sometimes those services can take awhile to arrive. Do you have first aid supplies on hand, and do you know how to use them? Can you call on a neighbor to come quickly if needed? Talk to those neighbors now so they'll be prepared.

Caregiving in cities can be isolating. In rural situations, it can feel very lonely, especially if you have little time for yourself or social activities. Realize that others are caregiving as well -- maybe even some of your neighbors "down the road." More than one out of every five adults in the U.S. provides unpaid care for another adult. Just knowing this may help a bit. It is likely that there are several people you know and see regularly who are providing care and you don't even know about it. There may be potential for social support and respite care from people you haven't even thought about.

Adapted from eXtension, 2009, "Family Caregiving and Rural Life."

Your Health

MAKING A VISIT TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM LESS STRESSFUL

No one wants to go to an emergency room (ER) but sometimes a visit is necessary. Your visit can go more smoothly if you take along the following items:

- Your health insurance card or policy number.
- Your list of medications.
- Your list of medical problems.
- The names and phone number of your doctor and one or two family members or close friends.

Carry this information in your wallet or purse all the time. It may speed up how quickly you are treated. Even if you have been at the ER before, they will ask for this information again.

When the ER staff first asks about your problem, be very clear about your symptoms. This will help them to know how serious your condition is and get you treatment as quickly as possible.

Depending on your problem, you may have a long wait, so take along a sweater or jacket in case the room is cold and something to read. If possible, have someone you trust stay with you while you are waiting and being treated.



While in the emergency room, ask questions if you don't understand the tests or procedures that may be done. Other good questions to ask the emergency room staff are:

- Will they talk to your primary care doctor about your care?
- Do you need to arrange for further care?
- (If you do not speak English well) Is there someone who speaks your language in the ER or hospital that can explain instructions?

Before leaving, make sure you understand what the doctor has said and ask for written instructions. Also, once you are home, inform your primary care doctor as soon as possible about your emergency room visit.

BROCCOLI SLAW FOR ONE

Here is a delicious side dish for grilled meat, poultry or fish. Can easily be multiplied if you want to serve more than one person.

3 tablespoons plain non-fat yogurt
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
1 packet artificial sweetener or 2 teaspoons sugar
1 tablespoon raisins or dried cranberries
1 cup broccoli slaw mix

- 1) Mix yogurt, mayonnaise and sweetener in a small cup or bowl.
- 2) Add raisins or dried cranberries.
- 3) Add broccoli slaw mix and stir well.
- 4) Refrigerate until ready to serve or eat immediately.

Calories: 85

Carbohydrate: 17 grams

Protein: 4 grams

Fat: 1 gram

Saturated fat: 0 grams

Cholesterol: 1 gram

Sodium: 179 milligrams

Fiber: 2 grams

Diabetes Exchange: 2 vegetables, ½ fruit



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Dear Friend,

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Cooperative Extension office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians. Please contact your local Cooperative Extension office for more information on these and related topics.

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Learning *for* Life

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