

Take a Hike

Hiking isn't a race. . . Take your time and appreciate nature at its finest. What do you do differently as a senior? *Pace yourself.* It's okay to stop and savor the scenery and conserve your strength.



Start early in the day so that you don't have to rush, wear good non-skid hiking boots with high ankle supports. Take a light-weight backpack with plenty of nutritious snacks and bottled water (you will be surprised at how hungry and thirsty you will get). Do not drink water from a stream no matter how pristine it looks. Take an extra pair of socks and fit yourself out with a walking stick. Walking sticks are good if you have trouble with your knees, back or balance (some people like using two). The poles help lessen the impact on your knees.

Take along a GPS system, a map, a cell phone or, even better, a buddy to hike with. Thumb your noses at your rocking chair and keep on doing fun things! You can fall down walking to the mail box, so conquer your fears, and do something cool.

Are you ready for flu season?

Influenza symptoms range from mild to severe fevers, aches and pains, coughing, sore throat, runny nose, fatigue and chills.

Flu is highly contagious as it is an airborne disease. This means that you don't have to touch anyone or anything to contract it – it travels in the air. An ill person coughing or sneezing sends tiny droplets of moisture into the air, spreading the influenza virus. You can also catch the flu by touching surfaces after someone with influenza touches them and then those germs can pass from your hand to your nose or mouth.

The influenza virus can hit anyone hard, but **seniors are at a higher risk** of developing dangerous complications. Getting a flu shot is one way to protect yourself and others around you – but what more can you do to beat the flu bug? Here's how you can take steps to defend yourself and your family against the influenza virus.

If you're 50 or older, see your doctor for a flu shot. If you have **chronic health conditions like diabetes, asthma or other illnesses**, you're at an even greater risk for complications from the flu, so the influenza vaccine should be seen as a necessity. **Health workers should also routinely get vaccinated.**

It's best to get an influenza vaccine in October or November, before the flu season gets into full swing. But even if you've missed those months, ask your doctor about the influenza vaccine – in this case, it's truly **better late than never**. The influenza vaccine can't completely prevent the flu, but it often does. And for those who still get the influenza virus after taking the vaccine, the symptoms are usually greatly reduced in severity.

In addition to the influenza vaccine, the best way to prevent becoming ill with influenza is by practicing good and **frequent hand washing**. Keep your hands clean, and also keep them away from your nose and mouth. And always wash your hands before eating (though you should be doing that anyway)!

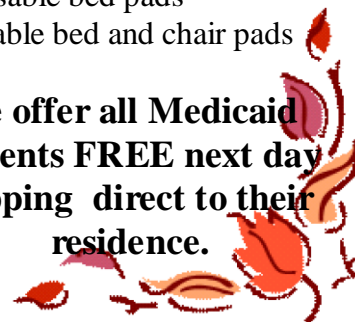
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See Aging in a New Way

Taking a new view of aging can help to ensure a happy life

Writer Ken Garfield, formerly of the *Charlotte Observer*, offered a thoughtful argument about the need for all of us to start seeing aging in a new way -- and to value what we see. "The elderly need affordable health care and medicine, a safe place to live, and loved ones who won't turn their backs on them. But to live a truly good life until the end, the elderly also need to see themselves in a new light, and so do their children," Garfield said.

A New Model for Old Age

Garfield advocates giving up the standards we use to measure success in our 20's (or our 50's) -- like being busy all the time -- and embracing instead the creativity and dignity that seniors demonstrate as they cope with the challenges that come with aging and the imminence of death.

"[Older adult] challenges go beyond climbing the corporate ladder or paying down a credit card," Garfield said.

"Their struggles involve living with the death of a spouse or the loss of their health, or being abandoned by children who think they have better things to do than visit mom in the nursing home."

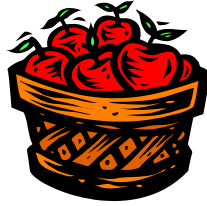
Older people and young people alike can benefit from thinking of seniors as "wise guides" and "wounded healers" who can teach others how to live with dignity and compassion.

Aging and Keys to Contentment

Here are a few suggestions that can help to ensure happy senior years:

- Love yourself and others
- Have faith, and engage in prayer or meditation
- Identify a purpose for your life, and live it daily
- Maintain your self-esteem
- Practice forgiveness, for yourself and others

Fall is Apple season and nothing is better than a hot apple dessert on a cool Autumn Day. Here's a quick and easy recipe for individual apple crisps for one, two, or a whole gang.



Quick and Easy Microwave Apple Crisp

Wash one apple - peel, core and slice the apple into thin slices. (Honeycrisp, Gala, Fuji, Macintosh or Granny Smith work best) Arrange the slices in your microwave safe ramekin or individual baking dish.

Crumb Topping:

To a bowl add

1 1/2 tablespoons of self rising flour

3 tablespoons of old fashioned oats.

1 tablespoon of butter

2 heaping tablespoons of brown sugar

Sprinkle of cinnamon. Mix topping ingredients until you get a good texture for the crumb topping.

Spread the crumb mixture over the apple. Microwave the dish for 2 1/2 minutes on high.

Serve with a dollop of whipped cream if desired and enjoy!

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