Skincare and Aging

Cynthia had always been proud of her skin, especially her summer tan. But as years went by, she saw her skin getting more fine lines and wrinkles. Cynthia began to worry about what other skin problems she might have. What are those brown spots on her hands and arms?

Your skin changes with age. It becomes thinner, loses fat, and no longer looks as plump and smooth as it once did. Your veins and bones can be seen more easily. Scratches, cuts, or bumps can take longer to heal. Years of sun tanning or being out in the sunlight for a long time may lead to wrinkles, dryness, age spots, and even cancer. But, there are things you can do to protect your skin and to make it feel and look better.

**DRY SKIN AND ITCHING**

Many older people suffer from dry spots on their skin, often on their lower legs, elbows, and lower arms. Dry skin patches feel rough and scaly. There are many possible reasons for dry skin, such as:

- Not drinking enough liquids
- Spending too much time in the sun or sun tanning
- Being in very dry air
- Smoking
- Feeling stress

**LOSING SWEAT AND OIL GLANDS**

Losing sweat and oil glands, which is common with age, can cause dry skin to become dry and itchy. Some medicines can make skin itchy. Because older people have thinner skin, scratching can cause bleeding that may lead to infection. Talk to your doctor if your skin is very dry and itchy.

Here are some ways to help dry, itchy skin:

- Use moisturizers, like lotions, creams, or ointments, every day.
- Take fewer baths and use milder soap. Warm water is less drying than hot water. Don't add bath oil to your water. It can make the tub too slippery.
- Try using a humidifier, an appliance that adds moisture to a room.

**BRUISES**

Older people may bruise more easily than younger people. It can take longer for these bruises to heal. Some medicines or illnesses may also cause bruising. Talk to your doctor if you see bruises and don’t know how you got them, especially on parts of your body usually covered by clothing.

**WRINKLES**

Over time, skin begins to wrinkle. Things in the environment, like ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun can make the skin less elastic. Gravity can cause skin to sag and wrinkle. Certain habits, like smoking, also can wrinkle the skin.

A lot of claims are made about how to make wrinkles go away. Many of them don’t work. Some methods can be painful.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**
Do you know the rights of residents Living in long term care facilities in Missouri?

Before deciding on which facility is best for you or your loved one, find out what types of services are provided, as well as the reputation and philosophy of the facility.

As a resident, or prospective resident, you and your family have rights which are guaranteed and protected by law. These “resident rights” support the principles of dignity and respect for every person who lives in a long-term care setting. The facility must protect and promote these rights for all residents and inform you of these rights when you are admitted.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THOSE RESIDENT RIGHTS:

BE FULLY INFORMED
You should receive a copy of all rules and regulations pertaining to your rights and responsibilities as a resident. You should be informed in writing of all matters relating to you, including services and charges not covered by the government or by the facility’s daily rate.

PARTICIPATE IN YOUR CARE
You have the right to know your medical condition and the options available for treatment. You may refuse any option.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN DOCTOR
You may continue to use your own doctor or select another who will be responsible for your total care. If you prefer, the facility will assign a doctor.

REMAIN IN THE FACILITY
You can be discharged only for medical reasons, non-payment of a bill, or the threat of physical harm. You must be given notice 30 days in advance of the transfer or discharge. This notice must tell why you are being discharged and how you can appeal.

VOICE GRIEVANCES
You may voice concerns and problems, along with recommended changes, to facility staff or outside representatives. Owners and staff of facilities are prohibited by law from retaliating if you complain. You should speak with the director of nursing or the administrator of the home if you encounter problems requiring immediate action. For non-emergencies, speak to the resident council or an ombudsman.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY
You cannot be required to have another person sign a guarantee of payment for your care when you move into the facility.

Manage Your Own Finances
Whether you hold your money or have the facility keep track of it, nobody can tell you how to spend your personal funds. The operator of the home can help you manage your financial affairs.

Be Free From Abuse and Restraint
You should not be subjected to physical, sexual or emotional harm. Chemical or physical restraints should not be imposed for purposes of discipline or staff convenience. Restraints are only to be used as treatment for medical symptoms.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Medical, personal, social or financial affairs should be considered privileged information.

Have Privacy and Respect
You have the right to privacy in medical treatment, personal care, telephone and mail communications, visits of family and meetings of resident groups. You should be treated with consideration and respect, with full recognition of your dignity and individuality. You should not be required to do things against your will.

COMMUNICATE FREELY
You may privately associate and communicate with persons of your choice. You may send and receive unopened mail.

PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES
You may participate in social and religious activities, both inside and outside the facility. The facility should not require you to perform any duties or services.

KEEP YOUR POSSESSIONS
You may retain your personal possessions as space permits. On a quarterly basis, you are entitled to receive an accounting for all your personal possessions or funds entrusted to the facility.

RETAIN MARITAL PRIVILEGES
You have the right to private visits with your spouse and may share a room with your spouse if you are both residents.

PURCHASE GOODS AND SERVICES
You should receive an itemized bill for all goods and services provided by the facility. You may purchase or rent goods or services not included in your daily or monthly rate.

If you have any questions concerning resident rights in long-term care facilities, please feel free to call your Regional Ombudsman Director, Jan McFerron, at 1-800-392-8771 or 1-573-335-3331.

Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

EVENT TO BE HELD AT CAPE VETERAN’S HOME

The RSVP/VIC Program is hosting a Tribute to our Veterans at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at the Missouri Veterans Home in Cape Girardeau. There will be great music provided along with cake and ice cream. Dance partners are always welcome to dance with the veterans. Come out and show your support for these most-deserving veterans.

If you have any questions about this event or the RSVP/VIC programs, please contact Tina or Christy at 573-335-7555 or 573-887-3664.
Healthy Weight

We are bombarded with articles, advertisements and news stories about why and how to lose weight. There’s always a new diet, a new supplement, a new exercise regimen that promises to make weight loss fast, easy and requires little effort from us. How do you make sense of it all? We ask ourselves questions like “Is it really worth spending the extra money to try that product that looks so good on television?” or “Should I buy that piece of exercise equipment that promises great results?” Extreme diets and intensive exercise regimens may work well at first, but they rarely last over the long term.

It’s true that maintaining a healthy body weight can keep you in shape and help to ward off a host of health problems, including:

- Diabetes, Heart Disease, and other chronic diseases
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol levels
- Stroke
- Some cancers
- Loss of mental acuity

Health can improve with relatively minor weight reduction (5 to 10 percent of your body weight). Adopting a healthy lifestyle – eating smarter and moving more – can improve your health status even if you don’t lose any weight at all.

You and your doctor should discuss what a healthy body weight is for you and the best way for you to achieve and maintain that weight. Healthy weight is all about balancing food intake with physical activity. Little changes in eating and activity level have a more positive impact on health than drastic ones. That is because you are more likely to stick with smaller changes over time.

**SMALL STEPS ADD UP!**

Start by making smart choices from every food group; choose the right fuel for your body to get you through your hectic schedule. When you enjoy a wide variety of nutrient-rich foods that are packed with protein, vitamins and minerals and provide the energy you need. When you go shopping for groceries, look to the four corners of your store:

- Choose fruits and vegetables from the produce aisles.
- Choose whole grains from the bakery or bread aisle.
- Choose low-fat milk and milk products from the dairy case.
- Choose lean proteins from the meat/fish/poultry departments.

Your goal is to get the most nutrition from your diet. Americans are challenged by the abundance of high-fat, high-sugar foods and drinks, such as snack foods, candies and sugary drinks. These kinds of foods provide us with calories but very little nutrition. Most of us will not stop eating these foods altogether, but just by eating and drinking smaller portions and by making empty calorie choices less often, we can make a positive impact on our diets and our health. The key is to moderate, not eliminate.

If your goal is to cut some calories from your diet, while still getting the nutrition you need, here are a few more tips that may help.

- Use smaller plates and bowls. We tend to fill up the dish we are using and then eat it all. Our brains think we are getting more when the same amount of food is placed in a smaller dish.
- Savor your meals. Eating slowly helps you consume only what your body needs to feel satisfied.
- Leave some food on your plate. By leaving even a few bites, you can focus more on your internal signals of satisfaction and less on eating food just because it is there.
- Don’t eat out of a bag or box. Pour one serving into a small bowl.
- Choose your glass wisely. Use a smaller glass for any beverage except water.
- Rethink your drinks. Whenever possible, replace high-calorie beverages like soft drinks, juice drinks, energy drinks, specialty coffees and alcohol with water. These drinks add calories but not much nutrition.

Remember to add exercise into your healthy weight efforts. Exercise may be more difficult as you age, or maybe you’re just not getting as much activity into your day as you should. Health problems, arthritis, and soreness may seem like good excuses to skip exercise, but you’re doing yourself more harm than good by being sedentary. Research suggests that regular physical activity can help boost memory, improve balance, and prevent depression along with helping with weight control and maintenance. It’s okay to start out slowly, and then gradually increase your activity level until you’re working out and burning calories on most days of the week. You’ll feel better and it will be easier to maintain your weight.

**Spaghetti Mushroom Frittata**

By Mayo Clinic Staff

**Ingredients:**

- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 10-ounce-bag fresh spinach
- 1/4 cup feta cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/2 cup fat-free cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
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**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a 10- or 12-inch nonstick, ovenproof skillet, sauté garlic and onion in olive oil for about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and thyme. Cook an additional 5 minutes. Remove skillet from stove. Place spinach in a separate saucepan. Add 1 tablespoon water. Cover and cook until just wilted. Drain spinach and let cool in a colander. Squeeze out any liquid. Chop leaves. In a large bowl, beat together egg substitute, dill and pepper. Stir in the spinach, mushroom mixture and feta cheese. Clean nonstick skillet. Spray liberally with cooking spray. Return skillet to stove over medium heat. When skillet is hot, pour in egg mixture. Place in oven, uncovered. Check frittata in 10 minutes. Check every 5 minutes thereafter until center of frittata is slightly firm. Do not overcook. When frittata is done, place a large serving platter over skillet. Flip skillet over so that frittata falls onto the plate. Cut into six pieces and serve. **Serves 6**

**Creamy Cheesy Macaroni**

By Mayo Clinic Staff

**Ingredients:**

- 1 package (14.5 ounces) whole wheat elbow macaroni
- 1 1/2 cups fat-free cottage cheese
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 cup skim milk
- 2 cups reduced-fat sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- Fresh parsley for garnish, optional

**Directions:**

Cook macaroni according to package directions. Meanwhile, blend cottage cheese in a food processor or blender until smooth. Set aside. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine oil, flour and garlic powder. Stir until mixed. Gradually stir in the milk and bring to a boil. Cook for 2 minutes or until thickened and smooth. Add cottage cheese and cheddar cheese, stirring until melted. Spray a 2-quart casserole dish with cooking spray. After the macaroni has been cooked and drained, place it in the prepared dish. Pour the cheese mixture over the macaroni and mix until blended. Bake at 350 F for about 30 minutes or until heated through. Top with tomatoes just before serving. **Serves 10**
Skincare and Aging

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

or even dangerous, and many must be done by a doctor. Talk with a doctor specially trained in skin problems, called a dermatologist, or your regular doctor if you are worried about wrinkles.

AGE SPOTS AND SKIN TAGS

Age spots, once called “liver spots,” are flat, brown spots often caused by years in the sun. They are bigger than freckles and commonly show up on areas like the face, hands, arms, back, and feet. Using a broad-spectrum sunscreen that helps protect against two types of the sun’s rays may prevent more age spots.

Skin tags are small, usually flesh-colored growths of skin that have a raised surface. They become common as people age, especially for women. They are most often found on the eyelids, neck, and body folds such as the armpit, chest, and groin.

Age spots and skin tags are harmless, although sometimes skin tags can become irritated. If your age spots or skin tags bother you, talk to your doctor about having them removed.

SKIN CANCER

Skin cancer is a very common type of cancer in the United States. The main cause of skin cancer is the sun. Sunlamps and tanning booths can also cause skin cancer. Anyone, of any skin color, can get skin cancer. People with fair skin that freckles easily are at greatest risk. Skin cancer may be cured if it is found before it spreads to other parts of the body.

There are three types of skin cancers. Two types, basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma, grow slowly and rarely spread to other parts of the body. These types of cancer are found mostly on parts of the skin exposed to the sun, like the head, face, neck, hands, and arms. But they can happen anywhere on your body. The third and most dangerous type of skin cancer is melanoma. It is rarer than the other types, but it can spread to other organs and be deadly.

Check your skin once a month for things that may be cancer. Skin cancer is rarely painful. Look for changes such as a new growth, a sore that doesn’t heal, or a bleeding mole.

Check Moles, Birthmarks, or Other Parts of the Skin for the “ABCDE’s”

A = Asymmetry
   (one half of the growth looks different from the other half)
B = Borders that are irregular
C = Color changes
   or more than one color
D = Diameter
   greater than the size of a pencil eraser
E = Evolving
   The growth changes in size, shape, symptoms (itching, tenderness),
   surface (especially bleeding),
   or shades of color

See your doctor right away if you have any of these signs to make sure it is not skin cancer.

KEEP YOUR SKIN HEALTHY

Some sun can be good for you, but to keep your skin healthy, be careful:

• Use sunscreen. Look for sunscreen with an SPF (sun protection factor) number of 30 or higher. It’s best to choose sunscreens with “broad spectrum” on the label. Put the sunscreen on 15 to 30 minutes before you go outside. Sunscreen should be reapplied at least every 2 hours. You need to put sunscreen on more often if you are swimming, sweating, or rubbing your skin with a towel.
• Wear protective clothing. A hat with a wide brim can shade your neck, ears, eyes, and head. Look for sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of the sun’s rays. If you have to be in the sun, wear loose, lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and long pants or long skirts.
• Avoid tanning. Don’t use sunlamps or tanning beds. Tanning pills are not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and might not be safe.
• Your skin may change with age. But remember, there are things you can do to help. Check your skin often. If you find any changes that worry you, see your doctor.

Source: National Institute on Health
Space heater safety

Winter time brings cold temperatures; cold temperatures lead to the use of portable space heaters in efforts to keep warm and cut down on heating costs associated with central heating systems. The use of portable space heaters can provide warmth and comfort, but they also require responsible use. The CPSC or the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates that more than 25,000 residential fires are caused by these units. Misusing heating equipment results in life threatening accidents that had safety directions been observed could have been avoided.

Review the following tips on using a portable heater safely (source: wikiHow.com):
- Use a space heater with the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label attached. This symbol confirms that the model has undergone product testing for electrical safety.
- Always read the warning labels and manufacturer instructions before operating your portable heater.
- Buy the correct size portable heater for the space you want heated.
- Check the product specifications for the square feet a portable heater is rated for in order to maximize heater safety.
- Using a space heater that is too large can discharge air pollutants and use lots of energy.
- Using a space heater that is too small may lead to the device overheating.
- Choose portable heaters with a tip-over safety switch and overheat protection.
- A tip-over safety switch shuts off a space heater in the event it is accidentally knocked over.
- A temperature sensor protects against overheating by automatically switching off a space heater when it becomes too hot.
- Check for proper ventilation before operating gas heaters.
- Gas heaters are fueled by natural gas, propane, butane, or kerosene. Never use a fuel that is not approved for your heater.
- These fuels can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide and other unhealthy gases if not properly vented.
- Portable gas heaters should be vented so that exhaust fumes are expelled outside.
- Let a heater cool down before filling and be careful not to overfill.
- Place space heaters a minimum of 3 feet from furniture, draperies or clothing.
- Do not place anything on a portable heater.
- Put space heaters on flat, hard surfaces.
- Keep a portable heater away from water or damp places.
- Dam locations like a bathroom or basement can cause problems with heater safety.
- Don’t touch a heater with wet hands, which can lead to an electrical shock.
- Position a space heater away from foot traffic and away from children and pets.
- Avoid plugging a portable heater into an extension cord or power strip. An outlet provides better electrical safety.
- Don’t plug other electrical devices into the same outlet as the space heater.
- Verify that a plug and outlet have a good fit to avoid overheating.
- Never pull on the cord to unplug a space heater; only pull on the actual plug.
- If you have no other choice but to use an extension cord, use a heavy-duty one with at least 14-gauge wire.
- Turn off a portable heater and unplug it if you are leaving a room. Space heaters should never be unattended.
- Inspect space heaters regularly for electrical safety.
- If cold temperatures require the use of portable space heaters, be sure to have smoke detectors installed in your home. They provide valuable protection year-round and double your chance of surviving fire in your home by providing an early warning. If you cannot install a detector yourself, ask a relative, friend, or neighbor to install it for you; they can help you locate the best spot for the detector. The ideal spot for a detector is immediately outside your sleeping area, on the ceiling or high on the wall, out of corners where ‘dead air’ space might not capture rising smoke and gasses. Detectors also should be placed at the top of open airways (or at the bottom of enclosed stairways), and there should be a detector on every level of your home.
- Do not disable your detectors by removing batteries or disconnecting wires. Doing so could mean the difference between life and death. If your detector goes off because of cooking fumes or steam from the bathroom, you may need to move it or may need a different type of detector. Perform periodic cleaning to keep them free of dust and dirt, and test the batteries. Detectors connected to your house wiring should be tested regularly, too. Smoke detector batteries should be changed twice a year. As a reminder, use your birthday or any other special date (mark these dates on your calendar) as your battery replacement day.
- If you live in an apartment or other rental property, and your landlord or building manager is responsible for the smoke detectors, call and ask when they will be tested, cleaned or replaced. If the detectors have not been attended to, insist that the party responsible act immediately. If they do not respond, call the Fire Department, your local Area Agency on Aging, or the Housing Authority.

Smoke detectors play an important role in your protection and escape from a fire. Be safe and have a warm and happy winter!
Rules for the Golden Years

Some of us have reached our golden years, and some of us have not. These suggestions have been collected from many seniors. Some you know, some may surprise you, and some will remind you of what’s important.

It’s time to use the money you saved up. Use it and enjoy it. Don’t just keep it for those who may have no notion of the sacrifices you made to get it. Remember there is nothing more dangerous than a son or daughter-in-law with big ideas for your hard earned capital. Enjoy the present moment. The sand in the clock may run out at any moment.

Stop worrying about the financial situation of your children and grandchildren. You’ve taken care of them for many years, and you’ve taught them what you could. You gave them an education, food, shelter and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their way.

Keep a healthy life with moderate exercise (like walking every day), eat well and get your sleep. It’s easy to become sick, and it gets harder to remain healthy. Keep in touch with your doctor; get tested even when you’re feeling well.

Always buy the best, most beautiful items for your significant other. The key goal is to enjoy your money with your partner. One day one of you will miss the other, and the money will not provide any comfort then. Enjoy it together.

Don’t stress over the little things. You’ve already overcome so much in your life. You have good memories and bad ones, but the important thing is the present. Don’t let the past drag you down or the future frighten you.

Regardless of age, always keep love alive. Love your partner, love life, love your family, love your neighbor, your surroundings, your country. We are never old as long as we have intelligence and affection.

Be proud, both inside and out. Don’t stop going to your hair salon or barber, do your nails, go to the dermatologist and the dentist, keep your perfumes and creams well stocked. When you are well-maintained on the outside, it seeps in, making you feel proud and strong.

Don’t lose sight of fashion trends for your age, but keep your own sense of style. There’s nothing sillier than an older person trying to wear the current fashion among youngsters. You’ve developed your own sense of what looks good on you - keep it and be proud of it. It’s part of who you are.

Read newspapers, watch the news. Go online and read what people are saying. Make sure you have an active email account and try to use some of those social networks. You’ll be surprised which old friends you’ll meet. Keeping in touch with what is going on and with the people you know is important at any age.

Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same viewpoints as ours, but they are the future and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism, and try to remind them of yesterday’s wisdom that still applies today.

Never use the phrase: “In my time”. Your time is now. As long as you’re alive, you are part of this time. You have been younger, but you are still you now, having fun and enjoying life.

Some people embrace their golden years, while others become bitter and surly. Life is too short to waste your days in the latter mode. Spend your time with positive, cheerful people, it’ll rub off on you and your days will seem that much better. Spending your time with bitter people will make you older and harder to be around.

Do not surrender to the temptation of living with your children or grandchildren (if you have a financial choice, that is). Sure, being surrounded by family sounds great, but we all need our privacy. They need theirs and you need yours. If you’ve lost your partner (our deepest condolences), then find a person to move in with you and help out only if you feel you really need the help or do not want to live alone.

Don’t abandon your hobbies. If you don’t have any, make new ones. You can travel, hike, cook, read, or dance. You can adopt a cat or a dog; grow a garden, play cards, checkers, chess, dominos, or golf. You can paint, do volunteer work or collect certain items. Find something you like and spend some real time having fun with it.

Even if you don’t feel like it, try to accept invitations: baptisms, graduations, birthdays, weddings, conferences. Try to go. Get out of the house; meet people you haven’t seen in a while; experience something new (or something old). But don’t get upset when you’re not invited. Some events are limited by resources, and not everyone can be hosted. The important thing is to leave the house from time to time. Go to museums, go walk through a field. Get out there.

Be a conversationalist. Talk less and listen more. Some people go on and on about the past, not caring if their listeners are really interested. That’s a great way of reducing the desire to speak with you. Listen first and answer questions, but don’t go off into long stories unless asked to. Speak in courteous tones and try not to complain or criticize too much unless you really need to. Try to accept situations as they are. Everyone is going through the same things, and people have a low tolerance for hearing complaints. Always find some good things to say a well.

Pain and discomfort go hand in hand with getting older. Try not to dwell on them but accept them as a part of the cycle of life we’re all going through. Try to minimize them in your mind. They are not who you are, they are something that life added to you. If they become your entire focus, you lose sight of the person you used to be.

If you’ve been offended by others, forgive them. If you’ve offended someone - apologize. Don’t drag resentment around with you. It will make you sad and bitter. It doesn’t matter who was right. Someone once said, “Holding a grudge is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die.” Don’t take that poison. Forgive and move on with your life.

If you have a strong belief, savor it. But don’t waste your time trying to convince others. They will make their own choices no matter what you tell them, and it will only bring you frustration. Live your faith and set an example. Live true to your beliefs and let that memory sway them.

Laugh. Laugh A LOT. Laugh at everything. Remember, you are one of the lucky ones. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life. But you did. So what’s not to laugh about? Find the humor in your situation.

Take no notice of what others say about you and even less of what they might be thinking. They’ll do it anyway, and you should have pride in yourself and what you’ve achieved. Let them talk and don’t worry. They have no idea about your history, your memories and the life you’ve lived so far. There’s still much to be written, so get busy writing and don’t waste time thinking about what others might think.

Now is the time to be free, at peace and as happy as you can be!
Tax Credit for Caregivers  By Kathy Bullis

With tax season just around the corner, caregivers will be glad to know that there is a state tax credit which may be available to them called the Shared Care Tax Credit. Although not well publicized, it has been available since the year 2000. To take advantage of this credit, caregivers must register with the Department of Health and Senior Services as a certified “Shared Care Member.” Caregivers may request a registration packet from them. The packet will contain a short form for your care recipient’s doctor to fill out attesting to the fact that your loved one is in need of a caregiver. It will also contain a two page large print form for the caregiver to fill out. It requires basic identification information for the caregiver and the care recipient and eligibility questions regarding the tax credit. As government forms go, it is pretty painless. By now you are all probably wondering just what the eligibility standards are.

You may qualify for a tax credit of up to $500 if:
- You provide care for a family member who is at least 60 years of age and unable to live alone as verified by a physician.
- You do not receive compensation for the care you provide.
- The family member resides with you for an aggregate of at least six months out of the year.
- The family member requires assistance with activities of daily living to the extent that without care and oversight at home would require placement in a licensed facility.

• The family member is unable or not allowed to operate a motor vehicle.
• The family member does not receive services paid for by Medicaid or Social Services Block Grant funds. (This does not include home delivered meals.)
• You are a registered member of the Shared Care Program.

Once the registration form is filled out, returned to DHSS and is processed, you simply file the Physicians Certification for Shared Care Tax Credit, form MO-scc with your (the caregivers) Missouri State Taxes.

Care giving can be a drain on family resources. Often working caregivers lose pay due to necessary time off to manage care or provide care for their loved ones. Some have to leave the work force altogether to provide care, drastically limiting their financial resources. A MetLife study reported that caregivers lose an estimated $659,000 in wages, retirement contributions and social security benefits combined and will pay out an estimated $19,500 in food, transportation, assistance with rent, mortgages, and costs to retain home care professionals. The Shared Care Tax Credit can lighten the load for some. If you would like to request a registration packet or would like more information you may contact the Department of Health and Senior Services at 573-522-6864 or you may go to the Missouri Department of Revenue’s website at income@dor.mo.gov.

The Funny Side

Valentine’s Day Fun Facts

Here is the most enjoyable and unbelievable collection of Valentine’s Day Fun Facts. Share these fun facts with your friends to amaze them this Valentine Day.

• About 1 billion Valentine’s Day cards are exchanged in US each year. That’s the largest seasonal card-sending occasion of the year, next to Christmas.
• Women purchase 85% of all valentines.
• In order of popularity, Valentine’s Day cards are given to teachers, children, mothers, wives, sweethearts and pets.
• Parents receive 1 out of every 5 valentines.
• About 3% of pet owners will give Valentine’s Day gifts to their pets.
• Valentine’s Day and Mother’s Day are the biggest holidays for giving flowers.
• California produces 60 percent of American roses, but the vast number sold on Valentine’s Day in the United States are imported, mostly from South America. Approximately 110 million roses, the majority red, will be sold and delivered within a three-day time period.
• 73% of people who buy flowers for Valentine’s Day are men, while only 27 percent are women.
• Men buy most of the millions of boxes of candy and bouquets of flowers given on Valentine’s Day.
• The oldest surviving love poem till date is written in a clay tablet from the times of the Sumerians, inventors of writing, around 3500 B.C
• Amongst the earliest Valentine’s Day gifts were candies. The most common were chocolates in heart shaped boxes.

Valentine Dreams

One morning Emma woke up startled. Her husband Jim asked what was the matter, she told him, “I just had a dream that you gave me a pearl necklace for Valentine’s Day. What do you think it means?” “You’ll know tonight,” Jim said. That evening, Jim came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, Emma opened it - only to find a book entitled “The meaning of dreams”.

Relatives?

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats and pigs, the husband asked sarcastically, “Relatives of yours?” “Yep,” the wife replied, “in-laws.”

Candy Love

Four-year-old Sam loved candy almost as much as his mom Sally did. He and Daddy had given her a beautiful heart-shaped box of chocolates for Valentine’s Day. A few days later Sam was eyeing it, wishing to have a piece of it. As he reached out to touch one of the big pieces, Sally said to him, “If you touch it, then you have to eat it. Do you understand?” “Oh, yes,” he said, nodding his head. Suddenly his little hand patted the tops of all the pieces of candy. “Now I can eat them all.”
Put these nature sayings to the test!

Mark your calendar with your observations and find out just how reliable they are.

DECEMBER: A white Christmas means we’ll have a green Easter. A green Christmas means a white Easter.

FEBRUARY: Listen for thunder. If you hear thunder any time in February, we’ll have frost in May.

JUNE: If it rains on the fifth of June, that means the blackberries will be small and full of seeds.

AUGUST: The number of fogs you count in August will tell you how many snows we’ll have in the coming winter.

SEPTEMBER: The first day you hear locusts sing in September, count six weeks ahead. That day will bring the first killing frost.

OCTOBER: Find a persimmon that has recently fallen from a tree. Take out a seed and split it open with a knife. If the white, middle part of the seed is shaped like a spoon, expect to have plenty of snow to shovel that winter. If it’s shaped like a fork, there won’t be much snow. If you see a knife, that means we’ll have a cutting-cold winter.