Your Resources

LifeWise Home

The National Association of Home Builders Research Center (NAHB Research Center) in conjunction with organizations such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the National Housing Endowment and the National Center for Senior’s Housing Research have built the LifeWise Home. The LifeWise Home was built as part of the MADE (Marketable, Affordable, Durable and Entry-Level) Homes project. The LifeWise home is designed to be senior friendly, energy efficient and low maintenance.

For homeowners who are older or have conditions that may affect their level of mobility, the LifeWise home features design techniques and products that allow for ‘aging in place.’ The NAHB Research Center describes the home as “incorporating features that allow residents to live more comfortably, safely and independently in the home regardless of income, age or physical ability level.” The home is designed to be cost-efficient and durable. The home features extensive design features that facilitate ‘aging in place.’ Just some of these features include:

• Main living areas are located on the first floor,
• The home is has an upper level that can be finished to be a caregiver suite,
• 36” doorways and wider hallways are designed to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers,
• No-step entry to home,
• Open floor plan that allows sufficient area for turning wheelchairs,
• A roll-in shower with grab bars
• Raised dishwasher,
• Staircases feature wider treads and double handrails.
The LifeWise home, located in Bowie, Maryland, is open for public tours. For more information on the LifeWise Home, visit the NAHB Research Center webpage at www.nahbrc.org. You too can make your current home more suitable for ‘aging in place’ or adapting to the needs of disabled people by duplicating some of the features found in the LifeWise Home!

Some of the easiest to do include:

• Shift main living areas and activities to the main floor. Consider closing off the rest of the home to conserve energy.

• Make at least one entranceway no-step by affixing a small ramp outside the door.

• To ensure the home is more energy efficient, add insulation. The easiest place to add more insulation is in the attic.

• For those with low vision levels, paint the walls, baseboards and cabinets contrasting colors.

• Remove stumbling hazards such as rugs and electrical cords from often used pathways.

• Add handrails throughout the house.

Some of the more involved upgrades to consider include:

• Have doorways widened to 36".

• Replace thick, soft carpets that make it easy to trip with a low-pile berber.

• Install non-slip flooring in the kitchen and bathrooms.

• Add more lighting.

• For those with limited range of motion, make contents of storage areas, especially those in the kitchen and bath, easier to access without having to stoop or climb on dangerous ladders or step-stools by installing shelving and cabinets at mid-level.

• For those in wheelchairs, make contents of storage areas, especially those in the kitchen and bath, more accessible by installing shelving and cabinets on lower levels. That way, things won’t be placed out of reach.

• For those in wheelchairs, convert sinks to the roll-under variety. Convert shower to a roll-in model.

• Widen the treads on staircases to ensure safer footing.

• Make your home more energy-efficient by adding appliances with the Energy Star label.

Reference: NAHB Research Center
Your Health

Cooking for One

If you live alone, you may find it difficult to scale down your cooking for only one after years of cooking for a family. Or if there is no one else to appreciate the food you’ve prepared, you may feel like it’s not worth the effort to cook just for yourself.

These reasons and many others contribute to less than healthful eating when you live alone. You may find yourself snacking instead of preparing meals and eating out or ordering take-out food often. Consequently, you are likely eating more sodium and fat, and getting less nutritious meals overall.

The first thing you need to do is to reinforce to yourself that you are worth cooking for. Your health is very important and planning and preparing nutritious meals will help you eat healthier meals. Here are some suggestions to help you get started:

• Plan ahead. Don’t wait until the last minute to try to decide what to prepare. Shop for the week and plan what you’re going to prepare each day that you plan to eat at home.
• Purchase meat, fish, and poultry with the intention of freezing part of it for later use. For example, if chicken breasts and salmon are on sale, buy enough for several meals and freeze the extra in individual portions in freezer bags. You can even ask the butcher to cut chickens and roasts into meal-size portions. At a later date, you can defrost and cook the portion that’s just right for you.
• Buy just enough fresh fruits and vegetables that you can eat in a week. This will prevent spoilage and save you money. It will also entice you to eat more fruits and vegetables to prevent waste. Consider buying fresh spinach in place of lettuce to last longer in the refrigerator. Keep some frozen vegetables and canned fruits on hand to use as needed. Buy frozen vegetables in bags as they are easier to portion out than vegetables packaged in boxes.
• Plan for healthy leftovers. For example, make enough grilled chicken to cut up and mix with a pasta salad the next day. Cook extra vegetables to eat for several meals. Spend the time to prepare some healthy casseroles, stews or soups one day and freeze them for later use. You can then simply thaw and reheat a meal on a day you don’t feel like cooking. The food will taste better and will be lower in sodium and more nutritious than most of the frozen dinners in the
• Invite family and friends to eat with you a couple of times a week.

Socializing is important for everyone and often makes eating more fun.

Have a potluck and share some of your favorite healthy dishes.

More people live alone now than in the past. Living alone has its advantages -- you can eat what you want, when you want it. By planning ahead, you are more likely to eat healthier meals. Remember, your health is worth the effort.

**Sesame Honey Vegetable Casserole**

1 package (16 ounces) frozen mixed vegetables such as baby carrots, broccoli, onions, and red peppers, thawed and drained

3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce
2 teaspoons sesame seeds

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Place mixed vegetables in shallow 1½ quart casserole dish.

Combine honey, oil, soy sauce and sesame seeds; mix well. Drizzle evenly over vegetables. Bake 20-25 minutes or until vegetables are hot, stirring after 15 minutes.

Makes 4 servings.

Exchanges: 1 fruit, 3 vegetable, 1 fat

Nutrition Information:

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Reference: www.diabeticcooking.com

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## Your Relationships

### The Stress of War for Seniors

In times of war, terrorism and economic upheaval, we hear lots of advice for helping children cope with this added stress. While young children are vulnerable to such stress, news of war can create added tension for many seniors as well. How can caregivers help seniors cope better with tragic world events?

As with all other age groups, different seniors cope with war stress differently. New research indicates that seniors are less likely to feel negative emotions such as loneliness, depression, anger and boredom as they age. The reason: since seniors have lived longer, they have more experience coping with trauma and have developed coping strategies that work for them. In addition, how we experience positive emotions does not seem to decline over time. In effect, many seniors have learned to focus on the positive and not let negative feelings overwhelm them.
Many seniors are not able to bounce back from physical and emotional trauma as quickly as they may have when they were younger. Keeping yourself fit physically, through exercise and good nutrition, will help you recover more quickly. Likewise, you can pump up your emotional resilience so you can bounce back from stress, loss, and tragedy. Here are some tips that have worked for many seniors:

- Limit the amount of TV news coverage of war that you watch. Many seniors fill their days with TV. When war and terrorist attacks fill the news, seniors can become more fearful and anxious for themselves and their loved ones.
- Keep active and maintain your routines. Being physically fit and getting enough sleep can build your reserves to fight off stress. Keeping to routines provides structure and a sense of normalcy to your day.
- Find a way to help serve others in need. Even if you are homebound, perhaps you could write letters to those serving our country and to our elected officials. If you are able, you could help the family of a deployed soldier with household chores, or volunteer to help with a community youth organization.
- Talk about your feelings with a network of friends. As we age, our circle of friends tends to shrink. Having friends is important for your resilience. If you can’t travel as much as you might like, stay in touch by phone, letter, or e-mail. And be a listening ear for them.
- Turn to your faith for solace and understanding. The power of prayer and meditation can boost your spiritual health and perhaps promote peace on our troubled planet.
- If you feel overwhelmed by sadness, anger, or depression, reach out to professional helpers.

Since seniors have lived longer, they have more experience coping with trauma and have developed coping strategies that work for them.
Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Extension Service 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 Extension Service office for more information on these and related topics.

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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean and Director