

## Falls and Home Safety

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one out of every three adults age 65 or older fall each year but less than half of them talk to their healthcare providers about it. In this age group, it is the most common cause of injury and death.

There are many ways to decrease the likelihood of falling. Set up an appointment with your doctor to discuss medical conditions and medications that can cause falls. You may benefit from physical therapy.



**What can you do to prevent falls at home? There are simple steps you can take to decrease your risk of falling.**

- 1** Use a cane or walker
- 2** Keep rooms free of clutter, especially on floors
- 3** Use plastic or carpet runners on slippery floors. They should be skid-proof or tacked to the floor
- 4** Wear low-heeled shoes that provide good support
- 5** Do not walk in socks, stockings, or slippers
- 6** Be sure stairs are well lit and have rails on both sides
- 7** Put grab bars on bathroom walls near the tub, shower, and toilet
- 8** Use a rubber bath mat in the shower or tub
- 9** Keep a flashlight next to your bed
- 10** Use a sturdy step stool with a handrail and wide steps or a "reach stick"
- 11** Avoid keeping things you use regularly on high shelves
- 12** Add more lights to rooms
- 13** Obtain an emergency alert system (see article on Safety Monitoring for further information)
- 14** Wear rubber-soled shoes when you are outside so you don't slip
- 15** Walk on grass when sidewalks are slippery

## What is Geriatrics?

Older adults have special healthcare needs that often make their medical care more complicated. More than half of adults age 65 and older have 3 or more medical problems such as dementia, osteoporosis, arthritis, incontinence, or high blood pressure. Older adults with multiple medical problems often end up taking more medications than younger adults. Taking multiple medications can cause drug interactions and adverse side effects. Aging also causes a decline in physiologic

reserves causing more complications from minor illnesses. Unfortunately there is no way to avoid getting older but one can better accommodate the changes aging brings with the help of geriatrics.

Geriatrics is the medical practice of treating older patients.

It is a sub-specialty of internal medicine and family medicine. A geriatrician is a doctor who is specially trained to manage the unique healthcare needs of seniors. Geriatricians use a holistic approach to address the physical,



psychological and social needs of the patient and their family. The interdisciplinary team approach to healthcare is integral to geriatrics. The geriatric team promotes wellness and maintenance of functional independence with the goal of helping older adults live happy and satisfying lives.

## What is a Nurse Practitioner?

A Nurse Practitioner (NP) is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) who has completed a Master's level education, holds national board certification in their area of specialty, and is licensed through the state nursing boards. Nurse Practitioners are trained to manage medical conditions through comprehensive history taking, physical exams, interpreting

diagnostic tests, diagnosing and providing appropriate treatments, including prescription medications. NPs often work in collaboration with medical doctors to provide the highest quality patient-centered care. They provide an inherently holistic approach to care with emphasis on prevention, wellness, and education to patients and their families.



Nurse Practitioners from left to right:  
Joan Maeshiro, APRN-RX,  
Jessica Ackerman, APRN-RX,  
Mylene Lumanog, APRN-RX  
Not pictured: Jake Moore, APRN-RX

## Safety Monitoring and Devices for Seniors

Helping our aging seniors stay safe while maximizing independence is priority. Although the best care is generally provided by qualified caregivers, there are several products on the market that can detect when a senior is in trouble in or outside of the home,

whether it is from a fall, wandering, poor medication adherence, etc. This article provides information on available senior safety devices. We recommend you research the devices individually and avoid making decisions based on cost of the device alone.



### Medical Alerts

These are probably the most frequently used products for seniors home alone for any period of time. These devices are usually a wearable "SOS" button that when pressed, activates a call to a trained operator through a land line receiver on a powerful speaker phone. The operator will find out what is wrong and immediately notify the emergency contact or, if indicated, emergency services. Philips Lifeline is the most widely used alert service. There is also Life Alert, MobileHelp, ActiveCare, LifeTrac Mobile Protector and VTech CareLine home safety systems.



### GPS Cell Phones

These are a great way to keep track of your loved one when they are outside of the home. Many of today's cell phones have a built-in GPS tracking chip. Contact your cell phone provider to find out if mom's phone has one or if it can be added. If so, you can install free tracking software that will track her on your computer or cell phone. If mom doesn't have a cell phone, there are other tracking systems called Comfort Zone, Comfort Zone Check-in, and AccuTracking. The Alzheimer's Association website is a great resource to learn more about the Comfort Zone products.



### Monitoring Systems

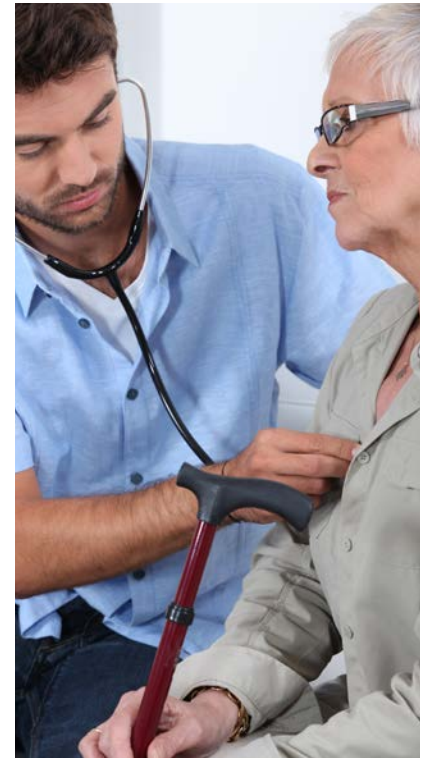
These systems are generally more sophisticated methods for keeping tabs on your loved one. Small wireless sensors placed in various locations throughout the home track dad's routine and movements and can tell you when he is waking up, if he is going to bed on time, eating properly, showering or taking his medicine correctly. If the routine is "abnormal", the system alerts you via phone, email or text. The companies that provide this service are BeClose and GrandCare Systems. For simpler, cost-effective systems, baby monitors or adapted home security systems can be used.



### Medication Management

Devices available for rent that can dispense medications on a schedule provide constant reminders and notify you if medicines are not taken. Two companies that offer this are MedMinder and Philips Medication Dispensing Service.





## 5 Basics of Adult Day Care

### 1 **What is adult day care?**

It is a licensed facility where elders enjoy planned activities such as games and exercises, participate in social time, take field trips, and enjoy meals. Some adult day cares also are able to provide some health care such as giving medications. Some are able to do specialized activities such as providing bathing services. It provides daytime respite for caregivers, allows family to continue to work, and gives daytime flexibility.

### 2 **Plan ahead.**

It takes time to enroll in adult day care. It is recommended that you visit several facilities near you and find the one that most fits the senior who will be attending. Keep in mind that some popular day cares have waiting lists. Get your name on the list as soon as you make a decision.

### 3 **Paperwork.**

Every adult day care has its own admission paperwork. Some of the paperwork family completes and some the doctor will fill out.

### 4 **Annual physical.**

Before enrolling in adult day care, the elder will need to have a physical exam done by a doctor. Every year after that an annual physical (sometimes more often if the day care requires) and paperwork along with it will need to be done.

### 5 **TB skin tests.**

Included in the physical exam will be a TB skin test. State regulations require all persons attending day care to prove that he or she does not have tuberculosis. If the person attending has never had a positive TB skin test, before enrollment, there will need to be a 2 step TB skin test (this means 4 visits to the doctor's office and takes about 1.5 weeks to complete). To keep the TB skin tests up to date, every year after that there is a 1 step TB skin test (just 2 visits). If there has been a positive TB skin test, the doctor will order a chest x-ray to check for tuberculosis.

## What is a POLST?

### Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment



The POLST form is intended for a person who has a chronic debilitating illness or who is facing a life limiting disease, such as end-stage lung or heart disease or a terminal cancer.

–Kokuamau.org

The POLST form is an in-case-of-emergency form that tells paramedics, fire fighters, emergency room physicians, and other health-care personnel your wishes.

It includes whether or not you would want to be resuscitated (that is have CPR) in case your

heart stops or your breathing stops or whether or not you would want to be allowed to pass naturally. It also includes how aggressive you would want your medical care to be if you were very ill. There is a section on the POLST for you to document whether or not you would ever want artificial nutrition (such as tube feeding).

If you are interested in completing a POLST form, please speak to your healthcare provider. Your own doctor must sign the POLST but any healthcare provider can help fill it out.



## What Vaccines do you Need?

- **Flu shot** (influenza vaccine)

The flu season is usually between September and March. It is recommended that all people older than 6 months get a flu shot in the fall. Only people who have had a severe reaction to a flu shot in the past or have had Guillian-Barre syndrome should never get the flu shot. Be sure to tell your health care provider if you are sick as this may mean you will have to wait until you are well to get it. Also notify your provider if you have an egg allergy which may mean you need a different type of flu shot.

- **Pneumonia shot** (pneumococcal vaccine)

The pneumonia shot helps prevent pneumonia and decreases the severity of a pneumonia illness if you happen to develop it. The current recommendation is that all persons over the age of 65 get a pneumonia shot. It is also recommend that anyone younger than 65 get one if he or she has asthma, smokes, does not have a spleen, or has other chronic illnesses which increases the risk of developing pneumonia. If you had a pneumonia shot after the age of 65 you likely would not ever need another one.

- **Shingles shot** (zoster vaccine)

Shingles is a painful skin rash that someone can get if they have ever had chicken pox. The chicken pox virus stays in a person's body even years after having the initial infection. Sometimes as we get older the chicken pox virus becomes active again and causes shingles. It is recommended that persons older than 60 get a shingles shot even if you have had shingles in the past.

- **Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis vaccine** (Td or Tdap)

Every 10 years, all adults need to have a tetanus and diphtheria booster (this is the Td part of the vaccine name). If you are around babies and children, it is recommended that you get the Tdap vaccine instead as this one also includes the pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine. Also, if you have never had a pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine then you should get the Tdap (this can be given if you have had a Td shot within the last 10 years).

– CDC.gov

– American College of Physicians Foundation  
*Adult Vaccines*

# Hospice Care

## What is Hospice?

The goal of hospice is to provide comfort and dignity to those with life-limiting illnesses. Hospice provides symptom control and pain relief as well as emotional and spiritual support for the person with the life-limiting condition, his or her family, and caregivers.



## What does it cost?

It is a free service covered by Medicare, most insurance plans, and most Medicaid programs.

## What does it include?

It includes nurses, physicians, nurse's aides, social workers, chaplains, and volunteers. Hospice can be provided in a private house, care home, foster

home, nursing home, hospice residential facility, or hospital. Typical services include physicians and nurses providing check ups in the home, nurse's aides who can provide bathing services if needed, and emotional support and planning with social workers and chaplains. Medications related to the person's life-limiting illness are provided free of cost. Hospice providers are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

## Is hospice available here?

There are four hospices on Oahu: St. Francis Hospice, Bristol Hospice, Islands Hospice, and Hospice Hawaii.

## Who can enroll?

Any person with a life expectancy of six months or less can enroll in hospice. Typical conditions for which people enroll include cancer, heart disease, lung disease, dementia including Alzheimer's type dementia, liver failure, and kidney failure.

alzheimer's  association

Call 591-2771  
to register

## FREE Caregiver Classes by Alzheimer's Association Aloha Chapter!

**Where:** Ward Warehouse, 1050 Ala Moana Blvd, Ste. 2610, Honolulu, HI 96814

**When:** Classes are always on Tuesdays from 9:30-10:30am (Call for dates)

Registration Required. Call 591-2771 to register

- **Communication**

Tips on ways to improve communication with someone who has Alzheimer's disease or dementia

- **Hiring and Managing In-Home Caregivers**

Introductions to homecare planning and management

- **When is it time to Move Your Loved One into a Facility?**

Steps to take when exploring residential facilities

- **Taking Care of Yourself**

How can I cope while I care for my loved one?

- **Basics of Alzheimer's disease and Memory Loss**

A comprehensive guide to Alzheimer's and dementia

- **Putting Legal & Financial Affairs in Order**

How to begin with legal and financial issues

- **Managing Challenging Behaviors**

How to approach or reduce some of the more challenging care situations that arise







In 1999, The Queen's Medical Center initiated Geriatric Services to help support the complex needs of Hawaii's medically fragile elderly.

### ***Did you know...***

- Queen's Geriatric team is well recognized in the community for their expertise?
- Queen's makes house calls for home-bound seniors and supports the terminally ill?
- Queen's plays an instrumental role at the University of Hawaii medical school by teaching new physicians and nurses how to best care for Hawaii's elderly?

Your financial support is needed to help continue these programs for seniors.

Please contact:

**Fund Development** at **691-4976** for more information on how you can help!

## **Clinic Information**

**Hours of Operation:** Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. – 4:30 pm

**Address:** Queen's Physician's Office Building III (POB III), 550 Beretania Street, Suite 601, Honolulu, HI 96813

**Phone:** 691-8877 **Fax:** 691-8875

### **Refills for new or existing prescriptions:**

Call our medication refill line at **691-8876**.

Please plan ahead and call before you run out. Allow us 3-4 days to process your request. Our medication line is an automated recording which will ask you to leave your name, phone number, medication and pharmacy information. If we have any questions regarding your request, we will contact you.

**Office Staff:** Mirasol, PSR; Arvi, PPA; Leo, PPA; Ronette, PPA; Mary Jane, PPA; Christine, Office Coordinator.

**Clinic Providers:** Dr. Jeremy Chun; Dr. Jessica Barry; Jessica Ackerman, APRN; Dr. Kentaro Nishino, Dr. Elizabeth Rhee; Dr. Shari Kogan; Amy Kuraoka-Goo, Social Worker

