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# Age Spots by Jackie Dover - An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

AUGUST 16TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Age Spots by Jackie Dover - An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

## **An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away**

When I was a young 20 something I had an old clunker of a car which had been passed down to me from my older sister. It wasn't fancy but it got me from point A to point B, which is all I needed at that time. I learned a lot about cars; how to check the fluids, change a tire and fix little dents and even cracked windows. I babied that car for as long as possible. Eventually I traded that car in for a younger, newer model. Since we can't change ourselves in for a more updated model we need to do our best to do as much "upkeep" as we can and preventive services can help.

Medicare has put a lot of focus on preventive services in the last few years. Preventive services are screenings to look for disease before a patient has symptoms of a disease. Why is it important to find out if you have a problem before you have symptoms? Because finding problems early can save not only money but also lives. Using the old car idea, it is much cheaper to get regular oil changes than it is to replace an engine.

Medicare will cover a variety of preventive services at \$0 out of pocket cost. Some services are available to everyone; some are covered only if you have certain risk factors. Aging Matters has check lists and guides to the preventive services so you can see what might be appropriate for you.

If you have had Medicare for longer than 12 months you are eligible for a yearly “Wellness” visit. This is not a physical as most of us expect it to be. It is an assessment of your current health, a review of your medications, family history and a review of what risk factors and treatment options available to you. This is an opportunity for you and your provider to assess your health and possibly schedule you for more testing, if appropriate.

Other preventive services that are available include:

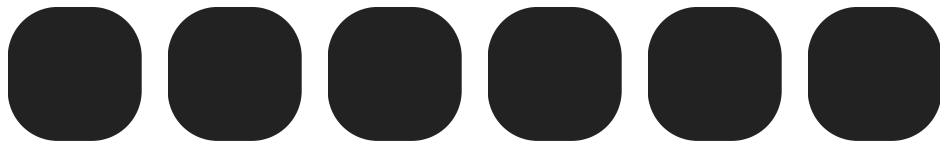
- annual flu shot
- Pneumococcal shot
- prostate screening
- glaucoma tests
- colorectal cancer screening
- tobacco use cessation counseling

For more information on preventive services or if you would like a guide to services, please call Aging Matters 1-800-392-8771.

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# Age Spots - The Heat is On by Jackie Dover

JULY 13TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Age Spots - The Heat is On by Jackie Dover

July, a month know for family vacations, fireworks, cookouts and hot, humid temperatures. As a kid I loved July, freedom from school and I could stay outside playing much later than normal. As I have gotten older July has definitely dropped in favor. I now have work to do and the heat and humidity that is Southeast Missouri affects me in ways I never worried about as a child.

Keeping cool in the Summer months can be difficult. The best way to keep cool is to stay in an air-conditioned area. This could be a home, the mall, a library or senior nutrition center. In extreme heat waves, cooling centers may be set up in your community; these will be announced as needed.

Drinking more fluids, especially water is also recommended, regardless of your activity level. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink. Some may be on water pills or have conditions where their doctor limits how much fluid they can have, speak with your doctor about how much you should drink, while the weather is hot.

Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. It is also a good idea to a wear wide-brimmed hat and sun-block with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15, if you will be outside. This will protect you from sunburn. If you do need to be outside, try to plan to do so in the morning or evening hours when it is cooler and the sun is not at its strongest. And I would be remiss if I did not remind everyone to not leave people or pets in cars in the Summer, the temperature in vehicles can soar in minutes.

Even with precautions we can become over heated. Watch for the warning signs of Heat Exhaustion:

- Heavy seating, paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Cold, pale and clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting

- Fainting

If you see any of these signs move to a cooler location, lie down and loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of the body as possible and sip water.

A more serious condition is Heat Stroke, if anyone shows these signs you would need to call 911 immediately. Get the person to a cooler place and put cool cloths on them or even put them in a cool bath. The signs of heat stroke are:

- High body temperature (above 103 degrees)
- Hot, red skin (moist or dry)
- Rapid and strong pulse
- Dizziness or confusion
- Possible unconsciousness

The hot Summer months can be dangerous but there are some fun things to do that you can't do the other seasons. My grandparents always had a large glass jug of sun tea all Summer long. Just throw some teabags and water in a jug and place it where it can sit in the sun and let the sun do all the work. It is also fun to throw in some mint or other flavors to mix it up once in awhile.

And Summer just screams for homemade ice cream. We always did the crank kind which seemed to take forever, but the results were pure heaven. It is much easier now as there are electric versions that require almost no effort. The flavor possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

So remember as we make it through the "dog days of Summer" to have fun and be safe and enjoy the freedom that Summer allows.

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## Age Spots - This Call Is For You!

JUNE 10TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Age Spots - This Call Is For You!

This Call is For You

The phone rings on a warm June afternoon. Picking it up you say “hello”, the caller on the other end is distorted and the line is full of static. You can barely make out that it is your grandson and he has been arrested in Mexico and needs you to send him money immediately.

The call comes in as you are sitting down for dinner. It is the IRS and they are calling to inform you that you owe a substantial amount of money and if you do not give them a payment right away, there could be severe consequences.

Medicare calls you on your cell phone, to inform you that it has received some questionable charges that you need to verify. They are afraid someone has used your Medicare number and need you to verify your number and other personal information.

All of these phone calls illicit a similar response panic, confusion, and even fear. All of these phone calls are also scams. Phone scams targeted at seniors are very popular and are increasing at an alarming rate.

Seniors are a prime target for scammers for various reasons. Many seniors have paid off their homes, saved money over their lifetimes and have good credit all of which makes

them “ripe for the picking” in a scammers mind. And many seniors are just nice people, those who grew up in the 30’s, 40’s and 50’s were raised in a time when people strived to be polite and trusting, so once a scammer gets them on the phone, many have a hard time saying no or hanging up on the caller.

A real problem is that many people who fall victim to a scam or even those who want to report questionable activity do not know where to go to report the call. You can always report a scam to your local police or Sheriff’s office. The Mo Attorney General’s Office can also take reports of scams and identity theft. Missouri Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, so any suspected Medicare scams can be reported to the SMP. Don’t be embarrassed or afraid if you have fallen for a scam, these criminals work very hard to stay one step ahead of us and practice what techniques work to get your money or information. If you have been scammed, please report it with as much information as you can.

There are some simple things you can do to avoid becoming a victim. First, sign up for the Do Not Call Registry managed by the Attorney General’s Office at 1-866-662-2551. This will stop many calls but if you are still receiving calls they may be scammers, who do not care if you are on the registry.

Protect your identity by not giving out personal information such as Medicare and Social Security numbers and banking information. Remember that Medicare, Social Security and the IRS will NOT call you if they need to contact you.

Talk to family members or a trusted friend if you are receiving calls that concern you. Scammers count on your silence to continue their scams. Remember that you can receive a free credit report from each of the 3 credit bureaus every year for free. Check them to make sure there is no unusual information.

And most importantly remember that it is ok to hang up on someone, especially if they are trying to frighten or bully you. Block the number if possible or do not answer the calls. Take the steps you need to so answering your phone is not something you regret doing.

If you have fallen for a scam or have concerns please call our office at Aging Matters 1-800-392-8771 and we will do our best to assist you.

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## Age Spots - A Sunday Drive

MAY 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Age Spots - A Sunday Drive

#### A Sunday Drive

My oldest son will be turning 16 soon. This is a very exciting and personally terrifying experience. We both look forward to the day he has license in hand and can truly embrace freedom in a way he has never yet experienced. Still a tiny part of me really wants him to fail the test at least the first 30 or 40 times, so I can keep him safe. So I can know where he is, and who he is with, and what he is doing.....

All of these are logical “Mom” emotions, but they can also be logical “child” emotions. Many times at Aging Matters we get calls from adult children who worry about their senior parents driving. They want advice on when to take the keys. This is not an easy thing to consider as it is the first taste of freedom for an excited teenager; it can also be the last remaining freedom for a senior.

The discussion on when someone should stop driving will vary for everyone. If there are physical limitations involved such as vision loss or dementia the conversation may come sooner than anyone wishes and some people will be good drivers their entire lives. The National Institute on Aging has an Older Drivers Age Page brochure that gives great

information about physical changes that can impact older drivers and safety tips that could help older drivers stay on the road. There is also a list of Safe Driving Tips that is appropriate for those of any age. I printed out the list for my son. Some of the tips include:

- Plan to drive on streets you know
- Add extra time for travel if you must drive when conditions are poor
- Always wear your seat belt and make sure your passengers wear theirs too
- Stay off your cell phone
- Use your window defrosters to keep both the front and back windows clear
- Drive a car with air bags
- Check windshield wiper blades often and replace them when needed

AARP also has a wonderful website [www.aarp.org/families/driver\\_safety](http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety) that has helpful information for seniors who want to stay safe on the road. It is great information for those who want to ensure their parent is safe as well. There are several other resources that offer refresher courses or evaluations for older drivers. For a copy of the Older Drivers Age Page or more information on this topic, please call Aging Matters 800-392-8771.

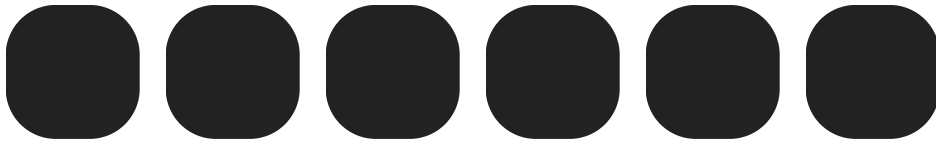
This Sunday as you're driving down the road enjoying the beautiful weather, be on the lookout for a Mom that keeps slamming the imaginary brake on the passenger side, it is probably me.

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# Age Spots - Senior Nutrition

APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Age Spots - Senior Nutrition

### Senior Nutrition-Getting the Most Out of That Bite

“Mom...what’s for dinner?” How many times have we as children asked this simple question? The results in our house would vary from a good old Sunday dinner of fried chicken and all the fixins to an “I’m busy, just grab a sandwich.” But now that simple question could mean the difference between a healthy life and hunger.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA) 1 in 6 older adults, are at risk for hunger in the United States. Seniors in your neighborhood are at risk! If seniors are struggling to afford healthy food choices, there are many ways to help.

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) also known as Food Stamps, helps seniors with low-income buy the food they need for good health.
- SEMO Food Bank serves over 180 local hunger relief organizations in the Southeast Missouri area.
- Senior Centers offer hot nutritious lunches to those 60+ or those married to someone 60+, in the center or delivered to the home of those who cannot get to a center. There are 32 senior centers in our 18 county area, the centers also offer social interaction, fun activities and learning programs.
- Distance Dining Program, is a service of Aging Matters that will deliver frozen meals to those who qualify and live outside the delivery area for a senior center.

Financial concerns are not the only reasons seniors are at risk for malnutrition. Many seniors take medication that can change the way food smells and tastes. Medicines could have side effects that make them nauseous or cause them not to be able to absorb the nutrients in their food. Other physical conditions might make it hard to chew certain foods or even shop for and prepare a nutritious meal. These limitations make it more important to choose healthy nutritious foods.

Tracey Tripp, RDN, LD at Aging Matters states “The issue of hunger and food insecurity, especially among the older adults in Southeast Missouri, is not always obvious and many people are not aware of how many of our seniors are affected. Another facet of this issue is that many seniors may have *enough* food, but it’s not the healthy, nutritious food they need to help reduce their risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer, and anemia. If they already have one or more of these chronic diseases, eating well and being physically active may help them better manage these diseases. Healthy eating may also help them reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and manage diabetes. Eating well gives them the nutrients needed to keep their muscles, bones, organs, and other parts of their body healthy throughout their life. Or to put it simply, health requires healthy food.”

Healthy eating begins with you! Giving your body the right nutrients and maintaining a healthy weight can help you stay active and independent. You’ll also spend less time and money at the doctor. This is especially true if you have a chronic condition, such as diabetes or heart disease.

The definition of healthy eating does change a little as you age. For example, as you grow older, your metabolism slows down, so you need fewer calories than before. Your body also needs more of certain nutrients. That means it’s more important than ever to choose foods that give you the best nutritional value.

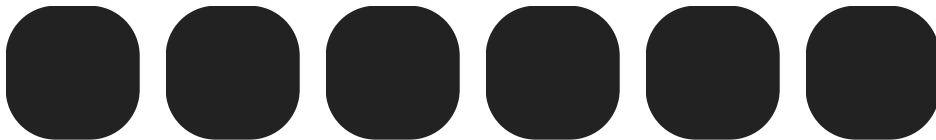
So remember no matter how old we get asking “Mom, what’s for dinner?” will always be an important question.

For questions or more information please call Aging Matters, 1-800-392-8771.

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