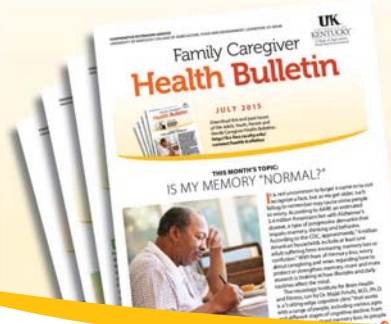


Family Caregiver Health Bulletin



MAY 2016

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Reprinted by:
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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PLANNING FOR CAREGIVING



By 2029, when all of the baby boomers reach 65 years and older, more than 20 percent of the United States population will be over the age of 65. Moving into retirement and old age, the baby boomer's influence will have increasing implications on families who will need to care for their aging loved ones. As a result, issues surrounding quality of life and caregiving are significant for boomers, especially as they balance their duties related to children, work and older parents. Boomers also recognize that today they are caregivers, while tomorrow they will be the ones needing care. As a result, boomers need to be thinking about ways in which they can prepare for caregiving, both at present time and in the future.

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If families do not plan ahead, the odds that caregiving decisions will be made reactively and under pressure increase.

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Today, over half of Kentucky's older adults report living with a disability. In addition, there is a growing prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. According to the 2012 *Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures Report*, an estimated 5.4 million Americans live with Alzheimer's disease, including 800,000 who live alone. By 2050, it is expected that there will be as many as 16 million older Americans living with the disease. In 2010, approximately 80,000 Kentuckians had been diagnosed with AD; however, many more cases go undiagnosed. To help with the various needs, Kentucky's 260,815 caregivers provide over 297,016,579 hours of unpaid care.

Despite the positive rewards associated with caregiving, there is strong evidence that caregivers experience strain and burden. When older adults and their family members plan ahead for care needs in later life, family members are more likely to experience less stress because they have time to prepare for the caregiving role and are relieved from the burden of being the sole decision maker. While discussing the future needs of aging parents will not completely shield families from negative outcomes, AARP advocates for adult children and families to discuss caregiving prior to parental dependency. Having such conversations may improve difficulties often faced by both caregivers and care recipients. If families do not plan ahead for caregiving, the odds that caregiving decisions will be made reactively and under pressure increase.

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According to AARP, to help prepare for caregiving, families must:

- Prepare to talk
- Form a team
- Assess needs
- Make a plan
- Take action

For more information on caregiving preparation, contact your local Extension agent or AARP chapter. (888) OUR-AARP).

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Health Bulletin

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