



# The *Senior* Newsletter

## How to Grow Old Wisely

Issue #24



There is a problem in society with the amount of aging Americans and the health coverage available to them. Why does this concern us? Well, the number of elderly is only growing with time and we all will one day be in the shoes of our grandparents. If we cannot find a solution to sufficient health care for the elderly now, how can we assume it will be there when we are in need of it in the future? There was an editorial written in the New York Times expressing the problems with long-term elderly care. There are three types of care: Medicare, Medicaid, and private payments. Medicare barely covers short-term care for those who qualify. Since the cost of nursing homes has reached an average of \$70,000 a year for private patients, Medicare does not cover it. The primary payer for long-term care is Medicaid; it is responsible for about half of America's spending on long-term care. The downfall to Medicaid is that it is quickly exhausted after short nursing home stays and is focused on serving the poor and middle class. Private payments are only for the wealthy that have the means to pay for high-cost care out-of-pocket. Only about 10% of today's elderly have health policies since it is too expensive. When and how will we decide for ourselves what is right? What decisions will we be faced with when we've reached our ripping old age and it is time to choose our final years?



Choosing long-term care is not easy. Have you ever wondered how our grandparents do it? It is hard to understand the differences in what is available, what is covered, and what the conditions are. There is senior housing, adult day care, nursing homes, assisted living, home-based services, and retirement communities. It seems that the problem with the decision making of which road to take is merely a problem of income and class. Should the amount of money one has determine if they deserve health coverage? Sadly enough most decisions about long-term care are made when faced with a crisis. My suggestion is always to become as educated as possible with every options available. Know what is out there, all the loopholes and all the contingencies. There are resources available to help with the decision processes. Check out the A.A.H.S.A. (American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging). There is also a great website that is helpful. Go to [www.help4srs.org](http://www.help4srs.org), it gives impartial information for families on elder care, law, finances, and more.

-Jenny Sebenuk

### SOVA Canned Food Drive

Start collecting canned goods and other nonperishables to donate to the SOVA food drive to benefit the less fortunate. Bring them to the Marilyn Magaram Center during the week of April 20th.



This newsletter was named 'The Betty' after the Betty Lamp: a symbol adopted by Family and Consumer Sciences representing joy, knowledge, fellowship, cooperation, service, achievement, and the light of home and mind.





## FROM INFANCY TO ELDERLY



Many people may be unaware that your nutritional needs change throughout your lifetime. When we get older our bodies don't work as well as they may have when we were in our 'prime'. A few nutrients that we need to pay attention to as we get older include Calcium, vitamin B12, and Fiber. All of these nutrients need to be consumed more often as we get older. The first nutrient is Calcium. This is found in many dairy products and leafy greens and is required to maintain strong and healthy bones. As we age our bones begin to deteriorate and become brittle without efficient amounts of calcium. Vitamin B12 is not as well known of a vitamin as say Vitamin C but it is essential to the brain, nervous system and blood. More of this vitamin is necessary because our bodies don't produce as much intrinsic factor, which is the glycoprotein that makes B12 absorption possible. B12 can be a tricky since

it is only found in animal products but it can be supplemented. However, fiber can be easily found in fruits, vegetables and grains. This nutrient is possibly the most important for elderly people for several reasons. Older individuals sometimes lead more sedentary lifestyles and often consume more than one medication at a time. These factors coupled with decreased muscle function in the body can cause constipation. Chronic constipation can lead to diseases like colon cancer because the toxins in your body are not being properly disposed of. With the right amount of fiber (coupled with water) the digestive tract can overcome these harmful and sometimes uncomfortable effects of aging on your system. No matter what age you are it seems to all boil down to watching what you eat and paying attention to your bodies needs

-Amanda Mason-

## HOW TO DRESS FOR SUCCESS

As we age, there are different standards for what fashion is appropriate for our bodies. Also, we begin to notice that those around us will begin to change as well. Here are a few tips to stay hip with the broken hip crowd:

*Dress monochromatic head to toe:* Pick one color, any color in the rainbow, and wear only that color from your hat to your shoes. The next day, chose a whole different color and repeat.

*Wear every color in your closet in one day:* This breaks the above mentioned rule but if you don't have pink velour shoes to match your pink velour jogging suit yet, mix up as many colors as possible.

*Use as much perfume in one day as possible:* As we get older, it is less necessary for us to shower as often; our bodies just don't produce as much oil. So to prevent people from smelling the real you, just shower in perfume. The more the better. We want to smell it for miles!

*Wear lipstick on your lips AND teeth:* Be sure when you apply your lipstick (orange or pink work best at this age!) to apply it to both your lips and directly onto you teeth.

*Theme clothing is always in:* Start collecting holiday sweaters and other festive tops early. Christmas sweaters are always a favorite and you can wear them year round! To accentuate a great sweater, be sure to wear sleigh bells and other noise making jewelry.

*Pants should reach your breasts:* Now that we have aged, be sure you pick out pants that reach as high as possible. Aim to completely cover your belly button. If your breasts actually cover the waist band, you definitely have a winner!

Now that you have a few tips, put on some perfume and get shopping! The

salespeople are waiting for you!

-Valerie Yu, editor

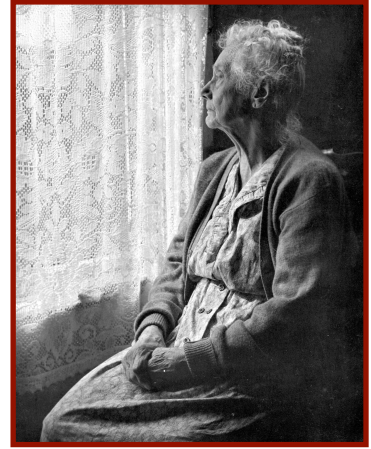
*Please take this article with a grain of salt. I love my grandmas; I really do!*





## ELDER ABUSE: A REAL PROBLEM

It would be easy to assume that scamming the elderly is rare but the truth of the matter is that they are considerably more common than we would like to believe. Abuse cases against those who are sixty-five and older have jumped to sixty-five percent from 2000 to 2006. Elder abuse cases in the Los Angeles County have been increasing in recent years and could get worse as the senior population grows. Elder abuse is defined as physical or psychological mistreatment, neglect and financial exploitation or extortion of a senior citizen. Scam artists tend to prey on seniors who often have more assets, are more willing to trust others, and may be vulnerable because of loneliness, withdrawal, and physical or mental capabilities. They are known to be easy prey and this is the main reason that criminals attempt to exploit their trust, and steal their money. Financial abuse tends to occur not only with people from the outside but also within the family. Guardians or family members misuse their power over the elderly and their estates. Financial exploitation usually occurs when fraud or influence is used to gain control over the elder's personal property and financial resources. The best approach to dealing with elder abuse is to prevent it from occurring in the first place. Family members caring for an elder should take occasional breaks or hire someone part-time for support.



-Patricia Alfaro

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## CARING FOR YOUR PARENTS



Is choosing long-term care for an elderly parent difficult? It is recommended to plan ahead of time because it can be very difficult to look for the right care especially when many older adults have been neglecting their health, nutrition, hygiene as well as their finances. Many don't recognize that they have lost the skills to live independently and safely. Some refuse help and suffer from medical problems and depression. So how do you help the parents who raised you?

*Questions to ask yourself when considering taking a parent in:*

If you have children, are your children old enough to appreciate a grandparent moving in? Will they feel distressed by the loss of personal attention? Are your lifestyles and values compatible with your parents? Can you rely on family or community resources to

give you a break from care giving? Is there a history of conflict or disagreement that may flare up once everyone is living together? Will you feel like a child again, and not an adult with a separate life? Do you expect your parent to help with household chores, finances and/or child care, when in fact he or she may not be willing or able to do so? Do you know what amount of care giving will be needed now and in the future? Are you willing and able to provide it?

Caring for an aging and ailing parent is important to all of us, but we must remember to remain realistic of our abilities and expectations.

-Anna Esfandiary

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### What is this all about?

So you may be asking yourself, "Why is an entire issue of *The Betty* dedicated to old people? We're young college students!" The truth of the matter is Family and Consumer Sciences aims to better the life for ALL people, aged or not. We are all affected by senior citizens, either our parents, grandparents, or those we encounter every day. We will all grow old one day, and we need to learn to how to make informed decisions for ourselves. Maybe this issue has inspired you to take a class in gerontology or work with the elderly.



## DISEASE DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE



The young are not the only ones that want love, seek love, or have sex. The elderly population is also in need of companionship or in need of physical intimacy. I know that it is gross to think about it, but one day we will be in this age bracket and have these needs. Viagra and other enhancement drugs have made it possible for the elderly (and even some middle aged men) to have sex with their partner(s) and to have a fulfilling sex life. Unfortunately, this may come with some consequences. Although there is still a lot of controversy over sex education, people of the mature market/generation were not taught about sex as much as Generation Y or even Generation X. Even though there is plenty of information out

there about sex and safe practices, many older people may feel embarrassed or ashamed to investigate the topic. As a result, there has been a rise in STIs among the elderly. Many believe that nothing will happen with to them, that these sexually transmitted infections only affect the young, but this is not true. As we age, our immune systems get weaker. These diseases can become fatal for an older adult as their bodies have a harder time fighting off infections. This comes to show that sexual education is important at any age and that regular screening can help to fight off STIs. More light needs to be brought to this issue since we do think of STIs as a young person's disease. There is a large amount of information for teens and young people about STIs but very little for senior citizens. Stay informed.

*-Silvia Olmos*

### Help Fight Cancer!

SAFCS is participating in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. Help our team by joining us, or donate to our team. Even ONE dollar will help. To donate or join our team click the link: [http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLFY09CA?team\\_id=374700&pg=team&fr\\_id=13630](http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLFY09CA?team_id=374700&pg=team&fr_id=13630)

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## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!



It is EXTREMELY important to us in SAFCS that we highlight each option, discussing current issues, trends or just fun things to know. Please, write for the Betty. Your major is important, LET'S HEAR ABOUT IT!!!! The editor can't write it all. SHE NEEDS YOUR HELP! NOW!

Send an article to the editor, Valerie Yu, at [valerie.yu.17@csun.edu](mailto:valerie.yu.17@csun.edu) and watch for it in the following issue!

Submit your article with your full name, major and option, and a picture of your pretty face.