



CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

The Perks of Spending Time in the Sun

Now that the weather is warmer, it's time to get outside more. While gardening and lawn work beckon many outdoors, others can't wait to golf, bike or hike. As a caregiver you may be exhausted just thinking about that, but it's still time for you and your loved ones to get outside. That's because it's good for you!

One reason to spend time in the sun is to soak in Vitamin D. Vitamin D is crucial for bones, blood cells, brain function and the immune system. We get Vitamin D from various foods, too, but people over 65 have been shown to produce less Vitamin D, making spending time outdoors even more important.

When the sun's ultraviolet rays hit the skin, a complex chemical reaction occurs to produce Vitamin D. People with lighter skin need about 15 minutes of sun two or three times a week. Melanin offers a protective effect, so people with darker skin need longer exposure. If you or your loved one has had skin cancer, always use a sunscreen of at least 15 SPF.

According to WebMD, here are more reasons to get out there:

Reduces Anxiety Sunlight helps keep up your levels of serotonin, a chemical messenger in the brain. This helps raise your energy and works to keep your mood calm, positive and focused. While having a plant in the room or pictures of nature can help you feel less stressed, it's even better to go outdoors.

Improves Sleep Take your loved one outside in the morning, and they may sleep better at night. Cells in your eyes need enough light to properly set your internal clock. In addition, older eyes are less able to absorb light.

Boosts Immunity Besides improving Vitamin D production, being outdoors exposes us to plant substances called phytoncides that seem to boost immunity, WebMD says. And sunlight seems to energize T cells, a type of blood cell, that help protect the body from infection.

Improves Creativity Studies show that time in nature can boost your creative problem-solving abilities. "This is partly because the outside world engages your attention in a quieter way that lets your attention re-focus," according to WebMD. "The more time you spend, the bigger the benefit." Even just "getting some air" can nudge your brain into a new thought pattern.

Enhances Self-Esteem As little as five minutes of outdoor activity can help you feel better about yourself. And it's not high-intensity exercise that we're talking about here. More relaxed activity such as a walk or light gardening seems to work even better.

Sharpens Focus Similar to boosting self-esteem, being in nature, near water or just being in a green space can help you concentrate better.



Summer Essentials for Caregivers

Go outside, and be safe, too. Follow these tips:

*** Stay hydrated** For most of us -- Drink at least eight glasses of water a day! Do whatever it takes to make this happen: set a timer reminder, track your intake, drink a glass before each meal, flavor your water. If your doctor has said to limit liquids, ask what you should do during extreme heat.

*** Check medications** Some prescriptions cause increased sensitivity to the sun or heat, so check the listed side-effects. Medications that may interfere with the body's ability to respond to hot weather include:

- * beta blockers for high blood pressure
- * diuretics
- * antidepressants
- * antipsychotics
- * vasoconstrictors (such as decongestants)

*** Stay cool** When summer sets in and the temperature hits 90 degrees, it's time to play it cool. Get your dose of sunshine in the morning, then avoid going outside during the heat of the day. If you do not have air-conditioning, keep fans going. During extreme heat, go to a friend or family member's home, the mall or a senior center to stay cool. Contact Central Plains Area Agency on Aging at 855-200-2372 during extreme heat for information about local cooling centers.

*** Protect skin and eyes** Always use sunscreen. Our skin gets thinner as we age, making it more prone to damage. Use sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB radiation. Sunglasses with UV protection help save eyes from damage and cataracts. Hats are great, too.

*** Wear light, loose clothing** Dressing in light colors reflect the heat. Loose-fitting, lightweight clothes in natural, breathable fabrics like cotton are best.

***Join us for Caregiver Chat
Every Friday on Facebook***

**Search for "Caregivers Caring
for One Another," a private
group. Click to join the group
and the conversation.**

***Caregiver Support Group
Meets Monthly***

**Jessica.Huber@Sedgwick.Gov
316-660-5244**

*** Know the forecast** Knowing the upcoming weather will give you time to prepare for any drastic changes and make plans for your loved one.

*** Have emergency contacts handy** Maintain your contact list and keep it in an easy-to-access place.

*** Problem signs** Headache, confusion, dizziness or nausea could be a sign of a heat-related illness. Move the person into air-conditioning and contact the health provider right away.



Celebrate Older Americans Month With a Fun Event

This year, Central Plains Area Agency is excited to celebrate Older Americans Month with a Wellness in the Park event. It's Thursday, May 18, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Sedgwick County Park, Plum Shelter, off of 21st Street.

There you will find a variety of wellness opportunities such as biometric screening services, a registered dietitian to answer nutrition questions, vaccine info and free test kits to take home.

We'll also have fun demos featuring art, music and therapeutic robotic pets, along with information from a select number of organizations focused on overall wellness. Come and see the mobile farmer's market and visit with Master Gardeners. Take part in a live version of "On the Go with Joe" as our Diabetes Education and Wellness Coordinator leads an exercise activity.

We're celebrating 50 years of the national creation of the Area Agencies on Aging as well, and you're invited to top off your visit with a celebratory piece of anniversary cake.

See you there!

Wellness in the Park

CELEBRATING OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

- ✓ Fun Demos
- ✓ Art Activities
- ✓ Wellness & Nutrition Info
- ✓ Health Screenings

May 18, 1-4 p.m.
Plum Shelter, Sedgwick County Park,
6501 W. 21st St. N., Wichita, KS



Central Plains Area Agency on Aging

1-855-200-2372

JOIN US FOR CAREGIVER CHAT ON FACEBOOK



As a caregiver, you play a vital role in helping older adults maintain their health and independence. Caregiving can be immensely rewarding but often caregivers are faced

with multiple challenges.

Caregiver Chat provides a network of support!

Each Friday, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging's caregiver expert provides information, tips and videos using Facebook as an easily accessible online support system. "Caregivers Caring for One Another" is a private Facebook group for caregivers to receive support from each other. Please request to join the group, and share!

W W W . C P A A A . O R G
J O I N U S O N
F A C E B O O K & Y O U T U B E



**CENTRAL PLAINS AREA
AGENCY ON AGING
271 W 3RD ST N., STE 500
WICHITA, KS 67202**

MISSION STATEMENT

Assisting older adults, caregivers and individuals with disabilities to achieve improved health and greater independence.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a community that empowers and supports individuals to live and age with dignity and choice.

Central Plains Area Agency on Aging is mandated to advocate for older adults in the community along with current and future policies impacting them. We are dedicated to being a leader in the aging field and work with a network of providers to offer services that meet the needs of the community while planning for current and future needs. CPAAA has been serving seniors, caregivers and adults with disabilities for nearly 50 years.

INFORMATION AND OPTIONS COUNSELING

1-855-200-2372