

Ask an Expert Question and Answers Provided by SeniorNavigator

Topic:

Annual Healthcare Decisions Day

Question:

I continue to hear the importance of advance health care directives and advanced health care planning. My husband and I have not executed these forms.

Answer:

You are smart in investigating these important documents. Advance health care planning can seem like a daunting and depressing task; however, taking the time now to think about your end of life care options and express your wishes to your loved ones and healthcare professionals can ensure that your preferences are known and will help to prevent future disagreements.

The 8th Annual Healthcare Decisions Day in the Commonwealth of Virginia will take place on Thursday, April 16, 2015. Healthcare Decisions Day (HDD) is designed to help everyone learn more about the importance of advance care planning. Additionally, it is a great opportunity to raise the subject about end-of-life care with your friends and family and/or to your primary care physician. You can find the current VA Advance Directive forms at www.vsb.org/site/public/healthcare-decisions-day . If you and/or your loved ones already have an advance health care directive, HDD is a great time to review your wishes and make any updates.

You should make this year's Healthcare Decisions Day a memorable and successful day. Invite your friends and family members to take charge of their end of life care before it is too late.

For any other health and aging questions you may have visit: www.SeniorNavigator.org

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Topic:

Early-onset Alzheimer's

Question:

Will you please provide a few details about Early-onset Alzheimer's Disease? I am hearing about it more and feel that we all need to be aware that it is not only an older person's disease.

Answer:

The Alzheimer's Association suggests that many people with early-onset, often called younger-onset, are in their 40s and 50s. They estimate around 200,000 people in the United States have the disease.

Diagnosing early-onset in younger people can be challenging because health care providers are not looking for Alzheimer's disease in younger people and often symptoms are thought to be caused by stress.

The Alzheimer's Association has 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's:

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with works in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

If you are experiencing memory problems, write down what you are experiencing and when you seem to have difficulty. You may want to get in touch with a healthcare provider that specializes in Alzheimer's disease. Your local Alzheimer's Association Chapter may be able to provide you with additional information.

For more information please visit: www.SeniorNavigator.org or www.alz.org to find your local chapter, or call their 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900.

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Topic:

Adding Exercise to Your Routine

Question:

Now that the weather is getting nicer, I need to stop procrastinating about getting active and begin an exercise program. Can you suggest 'first steps'?

Answer:

First, congratulations for taking this first step! Wanting to begin an exercise program and picking physical activities that you enjoy and match your abilities will help you stick to them. If you are not doing regular physical activity now, and have a chronic disease like: arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure or a heart condition, it is usually a good idea to check with a health professional before becoming physically active. You can ask your health professional for suggestions for what type of exercise you can start off with, and build on your program from there. Many people think that they have to go to a gym to exercise. You can, but that isn't necessary. Walking is an inexpensive way to get started. Most of us are able to walk. You can do it alone, with friends or even with your dog. A few safety reminders:

- Walk during the day or if you are walking at night, do it in well-lit areas or if you are walking around your neighborhood, carry a flashlight and wear reflective clothing or a vest.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Hydrate if you are doing an exercise that makes you sweat.
- Warm up and cool down with your exercise programs.

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Topic:

Out of state driver's license accepted in Virginia?

Question:

My husband and I are moving to Virginia in July. Currently I have a Pennsylvania Driver's License. I am 78 years old. Do I have to get a new license or will Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles honor my existing license?

Answer:

Within 60 days of moving here, you must obtain a Virginia driver's license. However, if you hold a commercial driver's license (CDL), you must obtain a Virginia CDL within 30 days. Since you are from out-of-state and possess a valid driver's license, DMV may exchange your out-of-state driver's license for a Virginia driver's license if you meet the identity, legal presence, residency, and social security requirements and Virginia's driver education requirements, if applicable.

You must show two proofs of identity, one proof of legal presence and one proof of Virginia residency. Proof of your social security number (if you have been issued one) is also required;

Effective January 1, 2015 Virginia drivers age 75 or older are required to appear in person at Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for their next license renewal and pass a vision screening. Once issued, your license will generally be valid for five years.

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