



The Upbeat

December 2020, Volume 1



A warm welcome

To all our members,

I'd like to welcome you to the first edition of the Assured Allies newsletter "The Upbeat". Our team is excited to share some tips and tricks with you for the holiday season, ensuring you take precautions visiting with family, eating well, and filling up your tank to thwart future fears of isolation.

This has been a challenging year for all of us, and like you, I am looking forward to 2021, hoping it will bring us a vaccine and a much needed return to normalcy. I am also looking forward to working with many of you, serving as a resource when it comes to aging-in-place questions and concerns. As this is our first issue of The Upbeat, we welcome your feedback, and would love to hear any ideas for topics you would like us to cover in future issues.

Be well and healthy.
Happy Holidays!

Mark Friedman

Head of Member Services, AssuredAllies

Six tips for preventing winter falls

By: Marissa Badler, MSW, LICSW, CCM

As we enter the winter months, those of us living in colder climates are woefully aware of the perils of winter. Everyday actions that we may take for granted during the warmer months: walking to our cars, getting the mail, or just stepping outside the front door present a higher risk for falls.

Although the thought of falling can be scary for many, the good news is that falls can be prevented. Here are some steps you can take:



Go slow!

Walk slowly and cautiously outside. Sometimes it can be difficult to identify a slippery surface, so take your time when walking.

Winterize surfaces, shoes and assistive devices

Wear shoes with good traction. Treat surfaces like your driveway and walkways with de-icer, rock salt, sand or kitty litter. You can even carry a bag of kitty litter with you when you go out to sprinkle in front of you before you walk. Consider attaching an ice gripper tip to your cane to ensure it gets a secure grip when used on ice. These can be purchased online.

Clear your walkway

Better yet, ask someone else to clear them for you, if that is an option.

Wear appropriate clothing

It can be tempting to go out to the mailbox in our bathrobe and slippers, but in the winter, this increases the risk of slipping and falling. Consider wearing warm clothes and good shoes when you go out. Keeping your hands in your pockets increases the risk of injury if you fall, so wear warm gloves so you can keep your hands out to maintain better balance and to brace yourself if you do fall.

Bring a flashlight

It gets darker earlier in the winter. If you are going to be out in the dark, bring a flashlight, or use the flashlight on your (charged) cell phone to help you see better.

Carry a cell phone

If you do fall, make sure you have a way to call for help.

Falls happen. We hope that the tips above will help prevent falls, but if you do fall, try to identify how it could have been avoided. Ask yourself what you were doing and what could have been done differently to avoid a similar situation in the future.

Covid-19 testing options

By: Katelynn Dornbusch, OTD, OTR/L

Over the past month, COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the United States have hit a record high. To stay safe during this time it is essential to know the symptoms of COVID-19, follow CDC recommendations, and to get tested if you are symptomatic or exposed to the virus. However, with all the advances in science and various types of testing it can get confusing to understand the rapidly evolving information about COVID-19 testing.

When it comes to COVID-19 testing, two main categories of tests exist:

Antibody

Antibody tests can determine if you have developed antibodies which means you may have been infected with the COVID-19 virus in the past. However, antibody tests cannot tell you if you have an active case of COVID-19.

Diagnostic

Healthcare professionals most often use diagnostic tests to diagnose people with an active case of COVID-19. Fortunately, these tests can now be administered in a number of ways. Samples are most often taken from a patient's nose or throat area, but some tests can now use samples of saliva. Results from diagnostic tests can be delivered in minutes (rapid point of care tests), or may take days or even weeks depending on how fast they can be processed in a lab.

One important thing to know, is that diagnostic tests are considered either molecular tests or antigen tests. Antigen tests, sometimes called rapid antigen tests, tend to deliver results more quickly, but are more likely to miss an active case of COVID-19.



If you think you might have COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19, it is important to contact your healthcare provider, local pharmacy, or local health department IMMEDIATELY to find out about testing in your area. If you want more information about COVID-19 testing you can also visit the FDA's webpage on COVID-19 testing basics at [go.assured.care/fdacovidtesting](https://www.fda.gov/assured/care/fdacovidtesting).

5 simple holiday nutrition tips for a joyful and healthy holiday season

By: Sahra Pak, MS, RD

As 2020 comes to a close, most of you may be feeling relieved but perhaps also a little stressed. Especially in a year where we had to deal with a pandemic, you deserve a break! Here are some simple nutrition and health tips that may help everyone have a holiday season that's not only less stressful, but enjoyable and memorable

Tip 1: Get enough vitamin D from sunshine and mushrooms for a strong immune system

Vitamin D works with calcium, phosphorus, and other minerals in your body to keep your bones strong but also supports a well functioning immune system. During this winter season - particularly when we are dealing with COVID-19, having a strong immune system is vital.

Tip 2: Add some spice to your meals to release those "feel-good" chemicals

Spicy foods release endorphins - the chemical produced naturally by our nervous system. It helps us to cope with pain or stress and hence, it's often called the "feel-good" chemical. Studies show that when capsaicin, found in hot peppers, binds to pain receptors on our nerves, the brain releases endorphins.

Tip 4: Drink and be merry with...water and tea!

Sure a little red wine may help with your mood and health (especially when you enjoy a glass with your loved ones) but today, we're referring to drinking enough fluid, like water. During the winter season, you may tend to drink less water because you may not feel hot, sweaty, or thirsty. But no matter the season, your body needs hydration to function at its best. Water helps lubricate our joints, keep our blood clean, carry nutrients to the cells, and help regulate our body temperature.

Tip 5: Keep moving to keep the joy flowing

When it's cold and perhaps even snowy out, it feels more challenging to get out and about. But movement is key to our health and happiness. In addition, engaging in playful or physical activities can help improve our mindset, lower stress, and increase social bonds, which can all add up to a more fulfilling and enjoyable holiday season.

Holiday season is time for unwinding, relaxing, recharging, and yes, indulging a little. With a few health tricks up your sleeve like the ones we shared with you here today, we hope that your winter and holiday season will be filled with joy, health, and connection. May your 2020 end on a happy and enjoyable note!



What's in the bag? Holiday gifts for older adults

By: Angelina Portuense, Case manager

The holidays are quickly approaching and that means it is time to start thinking about gifts. It can be especially hard trying to find the “perfect gift” for an older adult. Therefore, here is our list of tech gifts that are simple and enjoyable to utilize.



Grandpad

First up: Grandpad (grandpad.net), a tablet designed specifically for older adults. This subscription service includes a tablet pre-loaded with the user's preferences and contacts. It allows users to connect with loved ones through a simple video chat platform, send videos, photos, or voice emails through the easy to use large text applications. In addition, there is customized music and popular games to ensure the user has plenty of opportunities to stay engaged.

Jitterbug Smart2

Great Call, a company whose focus is on providing older adults with health and safety products, has developed cell phones specifically for them. The Jitterbug Smart2 (greatcall.com) is a top pick this year, with features including a large 5.5" screen, voice typing text, a clear-named list based menu, and a long-lasting battery life. It also has mobile internet access and the ability to video chat with loved ones. In addition to being a cell phone, consumers can turn their phone into a personal safety device at an additional cost, by choosing a Lively Health & Safety Package upon purchase.

Amazon's Kindle

For the older adults in your life who enjoy reading books, but have difficulty doing so, Amazon's Kindle is an ideal gift. The Amazon Kindle has a few versions with different price points. We recommend the new Kindle Oasis, available via Amazon. This model is waterproof, has an adjustable warm light, a side space with page turn buttons, and the ability to adjust the size of the text. Also, for individuals who have eyesight impairments, the kindle can be paired with Bluetooth headphones and be used with Audible so that listening to books is just a click and connection away.

Still not the right option? We have a couple more suggestions on our blog at assured.care/blog

How to get together safely during the holidays

By: Mark Friedman, VP Services & Operations, AssuredAllies



The holidays have arrived. There is no question that Covid-19 will test our patience, will bring fears to the surface, and increase what is already a stressful experience for many -- the holidays.

The key to success is planning. Here are 6 steps for a successful holiday experience:

Communicate

It is critical everybody understands the others concerns and fears. Talk openly about them. What is behind them? Define the “Musts Haves” versus the “Wants.” Understand the implications of each person’s view.

Align on a plan

Do not try to convince others of what you want. Focus on the “Must Haves” first then work the plan to meet the wants as best as possible.

Stop and think

Give everyone a chance to reflect on the plan and the tradeoffs they may be required to make.

Adjust to new information from anyone in the group

This is not a negotiation trying to convince others you are right and they are wrong and convince them to “Just go with it.” This is a time to - if possible - build around the most restrictive needs.

Be willing to cancel at the last minute

Last minute concerns can arise and things can change quickly. Be willing to accept that without holding it against anyone.

Take recommended precautions while you are together.

This may sound arduous and complicated, but the benefits from such a well-defined plan are tremendous. The virus has isolated many of us, and making this effort will reunite our family for some much needed bonding, be online or in person. Be safe and sound no matter your plans this holiday season.

EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope you enjoyed this first edition of "The Upbeat". Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends, family and neighbors as well.

We welcome any feedback, comments, or questions you may have. Please reach out to us at newsletter@assuredallies.com. If you prefer to receive this newsletter in electronic format, contact us as well.