

Technology Boosts Independence for Seniors

Technology can be used to help older adults age in place and improve their quality of life. Increased independence can be obtained through the use of devices that help with physical, sensory or communication needs.

As the goal of technology should be to support daily routines, it is important to consider a person's lifestyle. There may be some reluctance to adopt the new technology on the part of the older adult as it may be foreign to them and there is no perceived advantage or benefit. Older adults focus their limited energy on activities that are most important and learning new technology may not be high on that list. It has been shown that support by a trusted professional to learn and adopt the technology can be very beneficial.

Some initial products to consider are listed below. They are generally cost effective and easy to obtain.

- **Personal emergency response system (PERS).** Generally worn as a pendant a button can be pushed when there is an emergency or need to be addressed. This initiates a call for assistance and to family. There are new models now which can detect a fall and do not rely on the person to push the button to call for assistance.



- **Medication Dispenser/Reminder Systems.** These come in various styles and cost points, and, depending on the situation, it may require that they be locked and alarmed. Once prefilled by family, the dispenser can alarm when it is time to take the dispensed medication and notify family if a dose has been missed.



- **Enhanced Telephones.** Large buttons with pictures of contacts on speed dial buttons can assist with telephone use. In addition, there are specially designed phones for enhanced sound for those with hearing loss and designs that display conversation in print. There are cell phones with voice dialing and large buttons.

Proper installation, training and support with any kind of technology placed in an older adult's home are essential for success. While technology can assist with preventing or delaying a move to an Assisted Living or Nursing Home it does not replace human touch. Professional intervention such as routine visits to the physician and frequent visits from friends and family should continue to be encouraged.

Living Well Senior Solutions can assist with assessing the benefit of technology and installs the equipment mentioned above. For more information, contact Peggy Slade-Sowers at pssowers@erhinc.com or (513) 312-7083.