



BAI Beacon

The Newsletter from Family and Community Services

www.banneralz.org

602.839.6900

May 2011

Volume 4, number 5

Gadgets to Help in Alzheimer's Care

Discover how the latest technology and home care products can make caregiving easier

When caring for your loved one do you ever find yourself thinking: "If I only had something that did_____, it would make my life easier?" Previously ignored by inventors and "techies," there are a rapidly growing number of products designed to help caregivers and people with dementia. In this month's *BAI Beacon* newsletter, we are highlighting a few of our favorites and the places where products can be found.

Effortless Telephone Dialing



To help with communication, **The Memory Phone** has spaces on the eight rapid dial buttons that hold pictures of the people associated with each number. The person simply presses the picture of the person they want to call and it dials. The phone has adjustable ring and audio, and can be hung on the wall or stand alone. Available for \$64.95 at The Alzheimer's Store online at www.alzstore.com.

Easy Medication Dispensing

The MedReady Medications Dispenser can be prefilled to help people remember to take medications. An alarm sounds and a compartment opens with the right medication in the right dose at the right time. Available for \$149.95 at The Alzheimer's Store online at www.alzstore.com.



Simple Tracking Devices



Wandering and getting lost can cause injury or even death. There are now GPS tracking devices a person can wear (usually as a watch), carry in a pocket or purse, or hide in a vehicle or bicycle. When the person does not return home, the caregiver can program their computer or cell phone and locate their loved one. There are a vast number of products and prices. You can Google "personal tracking devices for dementia" to see a wide selection.

The Alzheimer's Association is recommending the use of **Comfort Zone, PCD 8130 powered by Qualcomm in Geo**, which ranges from \$99-\$199 plus activation and monthly fees. This device uses the Internet to track the location of a person with dementia. It also sets up safety zones in a Web application and provides alerts to the caregiver. Available through The Alzheimer's Association online at www.alz.org/comfortzone.

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Tip on Brain Health:



Did you know that more electrical impulses are generated in one day by a single human brain than by

all the telephones in the world? Staying mentally challenged with cognitive stimulating activities will keep those impulses moving quickly! Check out a local bookstore for brain teaser books and activities.

May Beacon Bits

Allow Support Groups to Help You

Support groups provide a forum to obtain new ideas and tips in caregiving while being able to share your story and receive support from other caregivers like you. Banner Alzheimer's Institute offers four monthly support groups that are free and do not require registration.



Circle of Friends – meets the second Thursday of each month from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and is for spouses, adult children, other relatives and friends caring for a person with dementia.

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Banner Alzheimer's Institute



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Easy Maneuvering from Chairs

As people with dementia begin having difficulty rising from a chair, this gadget is designed to help people stand up from a chair without buying furniture. The **Electric Seat Lift with Memory Foam Cushion** can promote independence for the person and help save the caregiver's back. The electric seat lift can be moved to whatever chair the person sits on. Available for \$199.95 at The Alzheimer's Store online at www.alzstore.com.



Hassle-Free Sheet Changes



Save a Sheet is a soft comfortable draw sheet that fits across the bed to protect the bed sheets against soiling. When wet or soiled, the caregiver simply removes the draw sheet and does not need to change sheets for the whole bed. There are also seat pads designed for living room furniture.

Available for \$19.95 at The Alzheimer's Store online at www.alzstore.com.

Innovative Eating Solutions

Finally, for the person who is having difficulty managing eating utensils, cups, plates, or has a tremor, a variety of eating solutions are available from weighted silverware to cups, straws and more. Available for a variety of costs at Easier Living online at www.easierliving.com.



What Are Your Favorites?

Do you have a favorite gadget or product to help with caregiving? Let us know at (602) 839-6850 or at bainfo@bannerhealth.com and we will pass it along in future Beacon issues.



Ask The Expert

Geri Hall, PhD., ARNP, CS, FAAN
Clinical Nurse Specialist

Dear Geri,

I am excited about gadgets and products to make life easier, but where can I locate them? I would certainly want to try a product before buying as I am leery of purchasing on the Internet. Are there stores that feature these products?

Signed,

“Careful Shopper”

Dear Careful:

There are several ways to find caregiving products on and offline. I think it is best to start with an online search. Type in the name of the product you want to consider such as “Activities for Alzheimer’s Disease.” You will instantly see a vast array of products. Print off the descriptions (name, catalogue number) of the products you like and take it to your medical supply store. Some of the special locks are available at hardware stores. GPS locaters and other electronic devices may be available at some big box electronic stores or Radio Shack.

If you want professional recommendations, consider asking your loved one’s health provider to order an occupational therapy consultation. Occupational therapists have highly specialized training on how to improve function with products and may recommend specific products based on your loved one’s specific needs.

For people who prefer shopping online there are excellent resources for basic and innovative products, such as the Alzheimer’s Store (www.alzstore.com); Alzheimer’s Solutions (<http://alzheimersolutions.stores.yahoo.net>) and Best Alzheimer’s Products (www.best-alzheimers-products.com). Read each site carefully about how they handle returning merchandise. It’s also a good idea to check with the Better Business Bureau for complaints.

Happy shopping!
Geri Hall

Have a question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at bainfo@bannerhealth.com

PLUS: The RISE to Yoga program meets during the Circle of Friends support group allowing for the caregiver to bring their loved one along. RISE to Yoga is a chair yoga program focused on breathing techniques and relaxation for the person with dementia. A \$10 fee is collected at the door. No registration is required.

Adult Children – meets the last Tuesday of each month from 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. allowing children to explore solutions to caring for a parent.

Men Who Care – meets the first Wednesday of each month from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and is a men’s only group that allows solution-oriented communication tips for caregiving.

FTD Support Group – meets the second Tuesday of each month from 12:30 to 2 p.m. and addresses the unique needs of people caring for someone with a frontotemporal dementia.

Order Your Free Travel Guide from Banner Alzheimer’s Institute

Are you planning summer travel? Need tips for planning a successful cruise, bus trip, road trip? If “yes,” our Travel Guide is sure to give you lots of ideas to consider. Call the Events Line at (602) 839-6850 or email us at Deidra.colvin@bannerhealth.com and we can send you a copy.

Don’t Miss GPS for Memory Lectures

GPS for Memory will continue programming through the summer. Join us on the second Friday of each month from 11 a.m. to Noon at the Desert Botanical Gardens, Webster Auditorium. June’s session will discuss “Enhancing Sleep;” July’s session will discuss “Driving and Dementia;” and our August program will provide ideas to “Enhance Communication while Diffusing Arguments.” Don’t miss it!

Have a Question about Events?

For more information on any of the programs call the Events line at (602) 839-6850 or email Deidra.Colvin@bannerhealth.com.

This newsletter is made possible by the generous support of Banner Alzheimer’s Foundation. Banner Alzheimer’s Institute is a nonprofit organization providing prevention and care supported by generous contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. For more information about how you can make a gift of support to the Banner Alzheimer’s Institute, visit BannerHealth.org/AlzFoundation or call (602) 747-GIVE. A donation envelope is included this month’s BAI Beacon for your convenience.

For more information visit BannerHealth.org/AlzFoundation or call (602) 747-GIVE