

HomeTimes

Your Independent Senior Living Resource for Aging in Place

From America's Choice in Homecare.



How to Communicate with a Senior Who Can't Speak

Communication problems can become more common with age. Some seniors experience communication difficulty because of impaired hearing, neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, or the effects of brain injuries such as a stroke. In some extreme cases, older adults may even lose the ability to speak entirely.

Understandably, communication obstacles can be frustrating for caregivers and visitors as well as your elderly loved one. When you learn to effectively connect with a senior who has a communication impairment, you can reduce frustration and bring back the joy of being together and enjoying one another's company.

What Causes Communication Problems in Seniors?

Although answering someone's greeting or question seems like an effortless process, your brain has to perform some steps before you can respond:

- First, you have to hear, remember, and understand the words.
- Next, you have to consider a reply, find the words, and form them into a sentence.
- Finally, you have to tell your muscles how to move and then speak the sentence.

An impediment to one or more of these steps can cause speech problems or take away a person's ability to speak altogether. Many conditions can cause these impediments. Two of the most common include:

Aphasia: a condition characterized by the inability to understand language or put a sentence together because of brain damage.

Dysarthria: a condition characterized by slurred or difficult-to-comprehend speech because of impaired control over the muscles used to talk.

Both of these conditions are common after a stroke and add to the challenge of caring for a senior who has had a stroke.

Five Strategies for More Effective Communication

Although speech problems in elderly adults can make communicating difficult, some of the following strategies can improve the process:

Respect: Keep talking to your loved one and don't make them feel excluded from conversations happening around them. Because seniors with speech problems are vulnerable, it is also very important to recognize the signs of elder abuse.

Practice: Provide support when needed but avoid speaking for them or finishing their sentences. Also, consider asking your loved one's doctor if speech and language therapy is needed. If so, go along with them to appointments and learn from the therapist how you can best help.

Patience: Make sure you stick to one topic at a time, and both of you are on the same page. Confirm your loved one means "yes" or "no" with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down gesture. If you have to change the conversation topic, let them know you're going to start talking about something else and wait until they acknowledge before switching topics. And always take time to listen to what your loved one is saying.

Touch: While it can be difficult to have a one-sided conversation with a loved one, talking to them while brushing their hair, applying lotion, or simply holding hands can make the interaction feel more natural. Always let your loved one know you're going to touch them and do so gently without sudden movement. Also, pay close attention to their body language: if your loved one pulls away or draws back, it's probably best to refrain from physical contact.

Music: Consider what tunes your loved one enjoys listening to and play those songs for them. Show your loved one you enjoy being together by playing uplifting music.

Five Benefits of Full-Time Home Care

Family members and friends are often relied upon to take care of a senior loved one. While it's a top priority, other commitments – whether personal or work-related – can get in the way of continual care. A retirement home may pop into your head as a solution, but it's not the only option.

Full-time home care provides a high-quality level of support while helping older adults age in a familiar place. Companionship from a trusted home care professional offers a wealth of emotional and physical benefits that are heightened in the comforts of a senior's own home.

Full-Time Care Services Provide Advantages

Full-time home care can offer the following unique benefits that support your senior's quality of life and provide assistance for your family.



1. Gift of Aging in Place

Full-time care enables seniors to live with dignity in their homes. The familiar sounds and smells of home can soothe seniors and keep them relaxed and happy. Moving to new surroundings can cause them to become disoriented and anxious, especially those in the early stages of dementia.

2. Increased Peace of Mind

Full-time home caregivers provide constant care at home, and their overall happiness can give you much needed peace of mind, enabling you to better concentrate on your job, family, and self. Without this professional service, family caregiving can be stressful, and caregiver burnout can occur. When you and other family members need to refresh by taking a day off or going on vacation, respite care or full-time home care are dependable options.

3. One-to-One Care and Companionship

Full-time home care ensures your senior receives personalized, one-to-one care without distraction. You never have to worry if they miss a meal, forget to take a medication, or spend limited time outside of the bedroom. Full-time home care helps seniors receive the right services at the right time throughout the day and night – based on a detailed care plan.

4. Safety and Comfort

Full-time home care ensures safer living conditions and treatment. The threat of infections dramatically reduces with only the caregiver and senior residing in the home. With eyes and ears on your loved one on a 24/7 basis, safety and well-being are emphasized.

5. Customized and Specialized Services

In-home care is tailored to the needs of your loved one. Professional caregivers have the knowledge, experience, and skills to provide more specialized care associated with dementia, Alzheimer's, chronic conditions, and even end-of-life situations. Your loved one can receive the best care without moving away from home.

If you're interested in more information about how full-time home care can help your senior loved one, contact your nearest Visiting Angels office today.



Honey Chicken Kabobs

1/4 cup vegetable oil	2 red bell peppers, cut into 2 inch pieces
1/3 cup honey	cherry tomatoes (optional)
1/3 cup soy sauce	zucchini, cut into cubes (optional)
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper	12 skewers
8 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1 inch cubes	
2 cloves garlic	
5 small onions, cut into 2 inch pieces	

Instructions:

In a large bowl, whisk together oil, honey, soy sauce, and pepper. Before adding chicken, reserve a small amount of marinade to brush onto kabobs while cooking. Place the chicken, garlic, onions and peppers in the bowl, and marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours (the longer the better).

Preheat the grill for high heat.

Drain marinade from the chicken and vegetables, and discard marinade. Thread chicken and vegetables alternately onto the skewers.

Lightly oil the grill grate. Place the skewers on the grill. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes until chicken juices run clear. Turn and brush with reserved marinade frequently.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 12 servings • Calories: 178

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/8626



Buttermilk Panna Cotta

1 (.25 ounce envelope unflavored gelatin	fruit topping (optional)
3 tablespoons cold water	
2 1/2 cups heavy cream	
1/2 cup white sugar	
3 strips lemon peels	
1/2 pinch salt	
1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract	
1/2 cup buttermilk	
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice	

Instructions:

Sprinkle gelatin over cold water; stir and let sit 5 or 10 minutes until it thickens and becomes rubbery.

Pour heavy cream into a saucepan. Whisk in sugar. Place over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture just barely starts to simmer, 3 to 5 minutes. Add lemon peel as mixture is coming up to temperature. As small bubbles begin to appear here and there, remove pan from heat. Add tiny pinch of salt, vanilla, and bloomed gelatin. Whisk until gelatin melts into the cream mixture. Add buttermilk and lemon juice; whisk until blended.

Strain through fine sieve to remove zest and any lumps. Pour into serving dishes or ramekins. Allow to cool to room temperature. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate 5 hours or, ideally, overnight.

Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 8 servings • Calories: 315

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/254451

Split the Difference



America's Choice In Homecare®

Since 1998, Visiting Angels has been providing adults and seniors with the needed assistance to continue living at home. At our nationally known, locally owned agency, it is our mission to maintain the independence and familiar surroundings for those in need.

We offer help with personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, shopping, companionship, respite care for families, live-in care and assistance with daily living activities. Call us today for a free, no obligation consultation! We care every day, in every way!

