



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Caregiver Support Information meetings are held monthly:

Andrews Senior Center—  
3rd Tuesday @ 1:00

Big Spring Senior Center—  
2nd Tuesday @ 10:30

Fort Stockton Senior Center—  
2nd Wednesday @ 10:30

Dawson County Senior Center,  
Lamesa—3rd Tuesday @ 10:00

Memorial Health Care Center—  
Seminole—1st Wednesday @ 10:30

Manor Park, Midland—  
Last Thursday @ 10:00 and 2:00

Midland/Odessa—  
Parkinson's Caregivers  
- Call for Details

Midland Lutheran Church  
The Patio—2nd Thursday @ 2:00  
Respite Care Available

Ward County Senior Center,  
Monahans—3rd Thursday @ 10:00

Odessa Regional Medical Center-  
South Campus  
4th Wednesday @ 2:00

Courtyard at Parks, Odessa—  
4th Tuesday @ 2:00 PM

Pecos Senior Citizens Center—  
2nd Wednesday @ 1:00

Rankin Senior Center—  
3rd Wednesday @ 10:30

Martin County Senior Center,  
Stanton—2nd Tuesday @ 1:00

Permian Basin Aging Advisory  
Council Meetings are held at  
10:00am on the following dates:

**April 19, 2017, July 19, 2017, and  
October 18, 2017**

at the Permian Basin Regional  
Planning Commission

■ **APRIL 2017**  
[www.aaapb.com](http://www.aaapb.com)

# Senior Insights

## WANT A HEALTHIER LIFESTYLE? MEDICARE CAN HELP.



"Health is wealth," the old saying goes. However, the wealth of food choices in the U.S. doesn't always contribute to the health of Americans. In fact, 69% of adults are considered overweight or obese. Finding little time to exercise or prepare balanced meals, and using cars instead of walking has contributed to this epidemic.

An unhealthy body weight can increase your risk of having serious health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some types of cancer.

However, a healthy diet and exercise can help you lower these risks and better your overall health. With all the information available on eating healthy and exercising, it's sometimes hard to come up with a plan that will work for you. Not sure how to get started? Medicare can help.

Medicare covers obesity screening, 15-minute face-to-face individual behavioral therapy sessions and 30-minute face-to-face group behavior counseling sessions. These behavioral counseling sessions can help you lose weight if you have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or more.

Making small changes and celebrating along the way can help you achieve goals and maintain your success. MyPlate MyWins offers tools and tips for finding a healthy eating style. And, the resources at Eat right® can help you

increase your nutrition know-how, shop wiser at the grocery store, and prepare healthy meals for your family.

The saying may go "an apple a day keeps the doctor away," but that's not the whole truth. While apples are healthy and delicious, there are many other important factors in having a nutritious diet.

The Million Hearts® Healthy Eating & Lifestyle Resource Center can be a good resource in getting or maintaining a healthy diet. Million Hearts is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The resource center was developed in partnership with EatingWell magazine and features calorie-controlled, heart-healthy recipes for you and your family.

Planning and understanding your diet can help you stay on track.

The SuperTracker on ChooseMyPlate.gov can help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.

Reference-  
<https://blog.medicare.gov/2017/03/01/national-nutrition-month/>

# A Letter to My Fellow Caregivers

Dear Caregiver,

I want you to know that what you're feeling is normal.

It's normal to feel like caregiving is a burden, not a blessing.

It's normal to want this all to be over.

It's normal to momentarily hate yourself for feeling that way.

It's normal to enjoy aspects of your parent's age and illness -- like the quiet time it gives the two of you to just sit and be together.

It's normal to silently scream, "HURRY UP," as your parent shuffles on a walker or a cane.

It's normal to have judged your mother or father for how they talk, walk, dress or eat, and wonder, "Why do they have to act so old?"

It's normal to question what will last longer: Your parent's illness or your marriage, because the strain of caregiving is creating a rift at home.

It's normal to feel nothing as you plow through your to do list, because it's better than being felled by a wild range of emotions.

It's normal to never cry.

It's normal to burst into tears whenever someone asks you how you're holding up.

It's normal to wish you could quit your job, because pretending to care about your paid work is too much right now.

It's normal to swear at a medical insurance rep on the phone and then feel bad about it. It's not nice, but it's normal.

It's normal that you have no clean laundry and wear sweat pants everyday because who has time to wash clothes or get dressed anymore?

It's normal to look at other middle-aged daughters who accompany their parents to the doctor's office and wonder how they could let themselves go.

It's normal to look in the bathroom mirror and realize you have let yourself go.

It's normal to resent caregiving for robbing you of the prime of your life.

It's normal to find the beauty in life and in death, in joy and in sorrow.

It's normal to spend a good chunk of your day just holding your mother or father's hand.

It's normal to like the fact you are needed and capable and able to return the gift of caring for someone you love.

It's normal to ask your parent's doctor 20 questions and form a medical opinion based on research you did via Google.

It's normal to feel guilty because you made time for a manicure, or a run or a nap.

It's normal to miss your friends because time with your friends is at the bottom of your to-do list, right after sleep and self-care.

It's normal to want to hurt anyone who tells you that you should take care of yourself.

It's normal that your diet consists of Twizzlers and Diet Coke because it's all you have time for and you can throw a bag of candy and a can of soda in your bag every day.

It's normal to doubt your ability as a mother/father, a daughter/son a wife/husband and an employee.

It's normal that you want to be with your kids when you are with your parent, your parent when you are with your kids, at home when you are at work and at work just so you can feel in control again.

It's normal to just want to be alone.

Caregiving is a roller coaster. Sometimes you have to hang on for dear life and sometimes you need to just let go. It's normal.

*By Liz O'Donnell—Become a Fan  
Founder Hello Ladies Author, Mogul, Mom & Maid*

# Nursing Home Rape Epidemic: What's being done?

CNN published a report revealing widespread sexual abuse and assault in nursing homes, many people asked the same question: Why isn't more being done to stop it?

The multi-part investigation revealed disturbing cases of rape and sexual abuse by nursing assistants and found that more than 1,000 nursing homes had been cited for mishandling suspected cases of sexual abuse. It also documented the trail of one aide who is accused of being a serial abuser -- moving from facility to facility despite a history of allegations against him.

In response, the National Association of Health Care Assistants pledged to take action. The organization said it was "saddened and sickened by the CNN investigative report" and that it planned to immediately ramp up its education and training efforts. It said it especially wants to ensure that nursing assistants know how to spot potential abuse and report it promptly.

CNN also heard from family members who say they believe their loved ones were victimized, nursing home employees who say they were forced out of their jobs after reporting abuse and advocates for the elderly and industry insiders who say immediate change is needed.

"We have been advocating for quality care for more than four decades, yet the findings of the CNN investigation are among the most shocking and frightening we have ever encountered," Lori Smetanka, executive director of the nonprofit group Consumer Voice, said in a public statement, one of several issued by advocacy groups in reaction to the report. "The sexual abuse of defenseless, vulnerable residents who can't remove themselves from harm, often can't communicate what has happened, and are frequently not believed even when they do, is reprehensible."

Other advocates called for action, noting that legislation currently being considered could offer potential solutions -- while others could make the issue even worse. In Missouri, for instance, a bill introduced in January by Republican state Rep. Andrew McDaniel would allow hidden cameras in facilities across the state, mirroring laws already in effect in a handful of

other states.

But federal legislation introduced two days after CNN's investigation was published could make it far more difficult to hold problematic nursing homes accountable for abuse, according to elder abuse attorneys. The bill, submitted by Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, would limit the legal liability of nursing homes, among a wide variety of other doctors, medical facilities and companies. Proponents of the bill say it is aimed at cutting health care costs.

But if passed, critics say the law would not only apply to medical accidents but also to egregious cases of sexual and physical abuse. As a result, the costs of litigating a case against an accused abuser or nursing home -- like many of the horrific examples detailed in CNN's investigation -- likely would outweigh the amount of money a victim could recover. The measure also could result in abuses by caregivers going unchecked -- especially given the already paltry penalties facilities cited for abuse often receive from the government.

"Without the threat of litigation, companies can do whatever they want," said Kathryn Stebner, an elder abuse attorney in California who represented a woman who claims that she contracted an incurable sexually transmitted disease after being raped in a nursing home at the age of 88.

---

*Many of the readers who contacted CNN about the investigation said it confirmed their worst fears, while others with firsthand experience in nursing homes said they had long seen these problems go unaddressed. To read those messages and reference the original article, go to <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/17/health/nursing-home-sex-abuse/>*

**In response to this article, Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin's Managing Local Ombudsman, Carolyn Torres, stated, "Ombudsman, as resident advocates, play a crucial and critical role in giving a voice to the voiceless. Ombudsman are trained to be aware of signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and in the importance of advocating for residents and ensuring families and caregivers are aware of how and to whom to report abuse."**

**If you would like more information about the Ombudsman Program or would like to become a Certified Volunteer Ombudsman, contact Carolyn Torres, Managing Local Ombudsman with the Area Agency on Aging at (432) 563-1061**



of the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission  
funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission  
P.O. Box 60660  
2910 LaForce Blvd.  
Midland, TX 79711

[www.aaapb.com](http://www.aaapb.com)



[www.facebook.com/aaapermianbasin](https://www.facebook.com/aaapermianbasin)

## April is National Volunteer Month!

The Area Agency on Aging has many volunteer opportunities available. To take part in helping seniors in your area, please call 1-800-491-4636.

## WHERE DID THE EASTER EGG COME FROM?

According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs.



*If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please call*

*1-800-491-4636 or 432-563-1061*