

Boomers, Elders, and More E-Newsletter

2140 Belcourt Avenue
Nashville, TN 37212

<http://vanderbilt.edu/child-family-center/>

Message from the Coordinator

You give so much of yourself when caring for your loved one that it can be difficult to remember to take care of number one, YOU! This Valentine's Day, choose to love yourself. How do you love yourself? Well, here are a few easy ways you can sneak in some self-care every week.

1. **Release and Let Go**—Be gentle with yourself. Make sure you deal with your emotions; especially on tough days when your energy is low. Being a caregiver can be very tough, but remember, you are not alone.
2. **Take Some 'Me Time'** - Just as important as it is to connect with others, make it a priority to spend time alone. Setting aside 'me time' will allow you to connect to yourself inward and understand your needs better, thus allowing you to decompress.
3. **Pamper Yourself**—It may be hard to even think what 'pampering' means any more, but go ahead and make an appointment at the salon, day spa or create the experience at home and relax until you are able to schedule something. It's ok to splurge a little on yourself, so go head out to the mall and buy that little something you had your eye on—I mean who doesn't deserve it more than you?!
4. **Create a Buddy System**—You are honorable to handle all the caregiving yourself, but please try to accept help and delegate when you can to other family members, friends, and neighbors. It's easy to fall into the mindset that you need to do it all, but let's face it, at times, it's just not possible. You will soon learn how many people are there for you that will help ease the burden.
5. **Take the Break you Deserve!** As a caregiver, sometimes you just have to get out of the house, whether it's for a doctor's appointment, a social gathering, some pampering or you just need to take some extended 'me-time'. It may not always be possible for you to rely on others, so by hiring an agency that provide respite care services will allow you to do what you need to do without the worry or stress.

Happy Valentine's Day to You! Remember, it doesn't have to be Valentine's Day or a special occasion to show yourself some love and choose to be happy and take care of yourself every day!

Division of Administration

Child & Family Center



News Highlight

2017 BRINGS CHANGES TO “FULL RETIREMENT AGE”

By Robin Fountain
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist, Nashville, TN

Every worker’s dream is having a secure retirement to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Social Security is here to help you secure today and tomorrow. Part of that commitment is ensuring you have the most up-to-date information when you make your retirement decisions.

“Full retirement age” refers to the age when a person can claim their Social Security benefits without any reduction, even if they are still working part or full time. In other words, you don’t actually need to retire from your work to claim your full benefits. Also note that waiting until you’re 70, if you can, will bring you a higher monthly benefit. The choices you make may affect benefits your spouse or children can receive on your record, too.

As the bells range in a new year, they also rang in changes in 2017 for people considering claiming Social Security retirement benefits. For people who attain age 62 in 2017 (i.e., those born between January 2, 1955 and January 1, 1956), full retirement age is 66 and two months.

Full retirement age was age 65 for many years. However, due to a law passed by Congress in 1983, it has been gradually increasing, beginning with people born in 1938 or later, until it reaches 67 for people born after 1959.

You can learn more about the full retirement age and find out how to look up your own at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners/retire/retirechart.html.



There are some things you should remember when you’re thinking about retirement.

You may start receiving Social Security benefits as early as age 62 or as late as age 70. The longer you wait, the higher your monthly benefit will be. Your monthly benefits will be reduced permanently if you start them any time before full retirement age. For example, if you start receiving benefits in 2017 at age 62, your monthly benefit amount will be reduced permanently by about 26 percent.

On the other hand, if you wait to start receiving your benefits until after your full retirement age, then your monthly benefits will be permanently increased. The amount of this increase is two-thirds of one percent for each month—or eight percent for each year—that you delay receiving them until you reach age 70.

If you decide to receive benefits before you reach full retirement age, you should also understand how continuing to work can affect your benefits. We may withhold or reduce your benefits if your annual earnings exceed a certain amount. However, every month we withhold or reduce increases your future benefits. That’s because at your full retirement age we will recalculate your benefit amount to give you credit for the months in which we reduced or withheld benefits due to your excess earnings. In effect, it’s as if you hadn’t filed for those months. You can learn more at <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/whileworking.html>.

If you pass away, your retirement date can affect the benefit amount your surviving loved ones receive. If you started receiving retirement benefits before full retirement age, we cannot pay the full amount to your survivors. Their benefit amount will be based on your reduced benefits.

You can learn more by visiting our Retirement Planner at <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/>.

4 Tips for Better Sleep While Caregiving

By Barry J. Jacobs

(a clinical psychologist and family therapist)

Adequate sleep—generally seven to eight hours per night—has restorative powers. Too little sleep has been associated with increased appetite, higher rates of depression and anxiety, more frequent traffic accidents, memory problems and more.

Many family caregivers, contending with their role's responsibilities and challenges, sleep even less than most—though it's so crucial to maintain your own health when you're caring for another. There are a few steps you can take to help yourself fall and stay asleep.

1. Create a nighttime environment for sleeping, not caregiving. Unless it is essential that you sleep in the same room as the person you're caring for, you should sleep in a separate room. Protect that room as a sanctuary. It should be cave-like—cool, dark and relatively quiet—to help elicit your natural sleep response. Keep it free from anxiety-provoking stimuli, such as insurance forms and medical reports. If you must listen for your loved one in another room, then use a baby monitor.
2. Worry intentionally during a specific "anxious hour." Many caregivers have difficulty falling or staying asleep because they have a head full of worries about their loved one's care. Rather than worrying at night when it's time for sleep, you can purposely worry at more convenient times during the day. Set an hour during the early evening to write down a to-do list as well as all the concerns that are troubling you. Then put the writing away in a drawer until the next morning. This simple action may have the effect of depositing your anxieties for the night, helping you relax and fall asleep.
3. Prompt sleep with good habits. Just as children need bedtime stories and lullabies, many adults need routines before sleep. Playing video games and watching TV can be too stimulating. Drinking alcohol may drop you into slumber but won't keep you asleep all night. Gentle stretching, reading or listening to relaxing music or guided imagery will help you attain a more restful frame of mind and promote more restorative sleep. Try to keep your sleep cycle regular by getting into bed at night and rising in the morning at the same times every day.
4. Use your breath. Yoga and meditation are based on the power of deep breathing. Sleep can be, as well. By taking deep, slow, regular breaths, you can slow your heart rate and begin to relax your muscles—all necessary physiological changes for falling asleep. It helps to keep your focus on your breathing by counting your breaths or feeling the air pass in and out of your nose and mouth. When your mind drifts back to your anxieties, just remember that staying awake and worrying doesn't make you a better caregiver or help you solve the next day's problems. It only makes you tired. Let sleep overtake you so you can face the coming challenges with your best energies.



Source: <http://www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/info-2017/4-tips-for-better-sleep-while-caregiving.html>

Caregiver Survival Tips



Source: Pinterest

Upcoming Events

Juggling family, work, and personal needs can lead people to feel imbalanced and unfulfilled. Come listen as Katherine Y. Brown, occupational therapist with Vanderbilt Home Care Services, discusses valuable skills to manage your time and maximize quality of life. She will provide an approach to caring for others while caring for self at the Child & Family Center's February Boomers, Elders, and More meeting. This month's Boomers, Elders, and More Lunchtime session will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2017 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in Light Hall Room 306 AB. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Dr. Sandra F. Simmons, Associate Professor of Medicine in the Division of Geriatrics at Vanderbilt University, will provide an overview of a guide that help families choose a dementia care facility. She will provide general tips on what you need to know when choosing a nursing home or assisted-living care environment for someone you love. This month's Boomers, Elders, and More Lunchtime session will be held on Wednesday, March 1, 2017 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Light Hall Room 437. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Vanderbilt Family Resource Center's Caregiver Support group will be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2017 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in Light Hall Room 407D. The caregiver support group is a time to share information and openly discuss your problems without judgment, to process your feelings, and to hear others talk about their expectations. *****PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION*****

If you need information or resources to assist you in your caregiving role, contact Stacey Bonner, Family Services Coordinator, at stacey.l.bonner@vanderbilt.edu or 936-1990.