

Maintaining Independence Through Home Technology

Technology usage among seniors is growing, and there are now more options than ever for easy-to-use devices and tools to enhance safety and independence at home. Below is a sampling of tools now available:

Wandering Devices

Appropriate for whom? Emergency location/tracking devices are appropriate for those with Alzheimer's or dementia who may wander and get lost. The devices can provide safety for the senior and a little extra peace of mind for the senior's family.

How do they work? The location devices on the market today use LBS, or location-based mapping service. This term refers to a wide range of services that provide information about a person's (or object's) location. If you've ever used a GPS device in your car for turn-by-turn driving directions or tracked a package online, you've used LBS. The devices are typically worn or embedded in a pager or cell phone. Families can also decide on the level of monitoring needed, such as verifying location from a computer; receiving alerts when the person has traveled in or out of a zone; or just emergency assistance if there is a wandering incident.



In-Home Medical Monitoring

Appropriate for whom? In-home medical monitoring, or telehealth, is a vital part of disease management and working with those who have chronic diseases. It is particularly appropriate for those with health issues that require sporadic but immediate assistance, like COPD, diabetes and CHF.

How does it work? Telehealth allows data collection of a person's vitals on a regular basis without leaving the comfort of home and reduces hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Vitals that can be measured at home with the devices and reported immediately to a physician include:

- Heart Rate
- Weight
- Temperature
- Blood Pressure
- Glucose
- PT/INR
- Oxygen Saturation

Medication Management Devices

Appropriate for whom? Medication management devices are appropriate for people who may have trouble remembering which medications to take when.

How do they work? An electronic medication reminder apparatus may remind someone to take his medicine at pre-set times with:

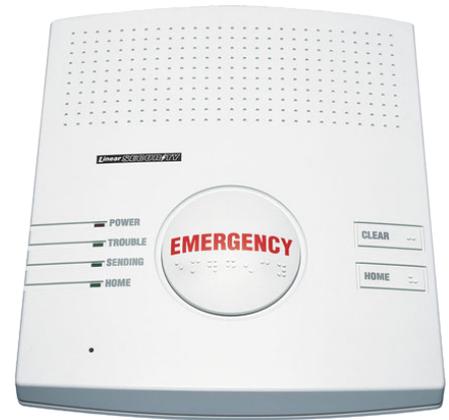
- Voice prompts
- Light indicators
- Safety alarms to alert if the wrong medication is selected

Some devices even dispense the correct dosage of medication at the appropriate times and may include a monitoring service that is notified if a dosage is missed.

Personal Emergency Response Systems

Appropriate for whom? Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) are important for those at risk of falls or a stroke, as well as people with medical conditions that would necessitate a need, such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), arthritis, balance disabilities, communication disabilities, deafness, hearing loss, multiple sclerosis, quadriplegia, seizures, speech disabilities and spinal cord injury (SCI).

How do they work? Most PERS operate by having a user press the transmitter's "help" button, sending a radio signal to the console (connected to the user's telephone). This causes the console to automatically dial one or more pre-selected emergency telephone numbers. When an emergency response center is contacted, the caller is identified through speakerphone on the transmitter or console so they can determine the nature of the emergency and send emergency personnel when appropriate.



Family Communication Tools

Appropriate for whom? Online family communication tools are appropriate for chronically ill patients with several care providers, as well as anyone wishing to be more involved in someone's care, even when they are out of town.

How do they work? The online portals work to better coordinate care between hospitals, community providers, family members and patients. They help keep family members and caregivers apprised of their loved one's care every day via a secure online portal. Dietary preferences, care calendars, a document repository and more can also be shared with designated family and friends.

Eastern Maine HomeCare is able to blend personal, individualized care at home with the latest in technology.

For more information or to make a patient referral, please call Eastern Maine HomeCare's Central Intake toll-free at 1.866.591.8843.