

Holidays can be stressful for seniors

(StatePoint) The holidays may be filled with joy, but for the ever-growing number of aging Americans and those who care for them this otherwise celebratory season can become mired in challenges.

The stress of visitors, eventful meals, gift giving and social obligations can be overwhelming for anyone, but especially for those juggling busy schedules with caring for an elderly family member.

An estimated 15 million Americans are sandwiched between two generations and working to support both, according to the Pew Research Center. Known as the “Sandwich Generation,” these adults struggle to balance caring for their children and their elderly parents.

“Staying organized is especially important during this time of year to ensure that loved ones aren’t ignored in the hustle and bustle of the season,” says Mark Armstrong, founder and CEO of ComForcare Senior Services and At Your Side Home Care, an international senior care franchise that provides in-home, non-medical care to seniors and others in need of assistance.

Armstrong is offering some juggling tips for family caregivers:

- Map out doctor’s appointments, prescription pick-up dates, school holiday pageants and other planned events on a calendar or on your smart phone to avoid double booking and overextending yourself.
- Members of the sandwich generation often feel they don’t spend enough time with their children because they’re busy caring for their parents and vice versa. Combat this issue with intergenerational activities, such as decorating the home, trimming the tree, planning the menu or wrap-

ping presents.

- Caring for another human being for an extended period of time can take its toll on even the most caring and nurturing of people. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. It may mean alternating days with a relative or bringing in a professional caregiver.

- Watch out for these red flags that could mean your aging relative is in need of additional assistance: mismatched, wrinkled or soiled clothing, weight loss or gain, trouble remembering names or an unclean home.

- Discuss the possibility of hiring a professional caregiver to relieve some strain on you, especially around the holidays. In the long-term, a caregiver can help your loved one age safely and comfortably in his or her own home, by providing a wide range of non-medical home care services, including help with bathing, hairstyling and dressing, incontinence care, medication reminders, chores and light exercise assistance.

Look for a company that offers a wide range of services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. For example, ComForcare Senior Services and At Your Side Home Care develop a customized care plan based on an in-home evaluation by a nurse and provides ongoing training and education to caregivers. More information can be found at www.ComForcare.com or www.AtYourSideHomeCare.com.

- Even you need some care sometimes! Set aside “me” time every day to do something just for you and you’ll be able to return to your caregiving duties refreshed and ready to help.

This holiday season, take the time to address the challenges facing you and your aging loved one.

Don’t let finances add to your holiday stress

(StatePoint) With the holiday season in full swing, minding one’s budget can sometimes be as much of a challenge as watching your waistline. Despite signs of an improving economy, consumers have identified managing spending at the top of their holiday stress list, according to a recent poll conducted by Ally Bank, Member FDIC.

“The real key to keeping your expenses in line during the season is to establish savings goals and a budget for your holiday-related spending, from gifts, decorations and entertainment to charitable donations and tips for service providers,” says Diane Morais, an Ally Bank executive in charge of deposits and lines of business integration.

While it may be too late in the game to start saving for this season, consumers should be thinking of their financial goals for 2014, if they haven’t already. When it comes to saving money, every little bit counts toward fiscal fitness, and the first step would be to establish a goal for next year and set up a savings plan to get there.

A good savings account is crucial. Here are a few things to keep in mind when shopping for a savings account that will help you grow your money faster:

- No maintenance fees: Some banks charge a monthly fee if a deposit doesn’t come directly from

an employer, or will charge a fee if a balance dips too low. This can put a dent in savings. Find a bank that doesn’t charge monthly maintenance fees or require a minimum balance in order to waive those fees.

- Competitive, consistent interest rates: A little advance research will help you identify a bank that offers consistent, competitive rates as opposed to those that tempt new customers with promotional rates and one-time offers. An added bonus is finding a bank that compounds interest daily - such as Ally Bank - as opposed to monthly, quarterly, or even annually.

- Mobile convenience: Rapidly becoming a “must have,” mobile banking enables consumers to easily access account information, deposit checks, transfer money and locate nearby ATMs to save ATM fees or surcharges. Also growing in popularity is the ability to create custom accounts for specific savings goals, such as “2014 Holidays.” This feature allows people to track their progress toward specific goals.

More information about different types of savings accounts can be found at www.allybank.com.

Between buying the right gifts for everyone and juggling family and social obligations, the holiday season can be a time of stress. But getting your finances in order can help you better enjoy the season.

Ultimate video game wish list for holidays

(StatePoint) Gaming has never been more engaging, more realistic, or had as many options as it does today.

And this holiday season, gaming is experiencing a renaissance that is a long cry from the days of the 8-bit Atari. According to a recent report from Framingham, Mass.-based research firm from IDC, sales of game consoles are expected to rise as new offerings from Sony and Microsoft make their way to retailers in time for the holiday season. Additionally, highly-anticipated titles are emerging that are so realistic that it’ll make you do a double-take.

With all of this excitement around gaming, make sure the gamer in your life doesn’t miss out! Keep an eye out for these exciting holiday gifts:

New Consoles

The next generation of gaming consoles is here. The new XBOX One and PlayStation 4 are hitting shelves just in time for the holidays. Each has exclusive game franchises as well as vastly superior hardware, software and usage policies than their previous versions. It is an expensive investment but no serious gamer will want to be the one playing with an outdated system.

Enhanced Experience

While playing games like “Madden NFL 25” or “Call of Duty Ghosts” are thought to be best on a big-screen TV, there are ways to make the experience even better. One way to achieve that is by using a projector, such as Casio’s SLIM series of projectors.

A new projector coupled with a new gaming system can be more fun to play, as well as more efficient to run. A SLIM projector offers sharp imagery and adjustable brightness. And the Laser & LED Hybrid light source means minimal power consumption for gamers, lasting 20,000 hours, which is 10 times longer than a mercury lamp.

For more information, www.CasioProjector.com.

Hot Games

Some of the most highly anticipated games are coming out right around the holidays, and there will probably be a wait to get some of the most popular ones. “Call of Duty: Ghosts” looks to be one of the hottest games this season. Now up to the tenth installment in the series, “Call of Duty” has been a major player in the gaming world for years. What a perfect game to up the playing experience, with a Casio SLIM projector you can project up to 300 inches diagonally and have four players playing simultaneously.

“NBA 2K14” is also garnering rave reviews, with many new features and superstar LeBron James on the cover. Sports fans everywhere will be playing this game throughout the season.

We are in a golden age of gaming. Plan your gift lists for the gamers in your life today.

Choosing the right tablet for kids this Christmas

(StatePoint) Everyone is using technology to stay connected these days -- especially kids. And the holidays are a great time to think about getting your kids a device to keep them plugged in and learning at the same time, like their very own tablet computer.

Parents worry mobile technology can be expensive, breakable and give users access to a world of information -- not all of it kid-friendly. But that doesn’t mean you should exclude the next generation from the tech trend, say experts.

“Technology can be intimidating for parents who aren’t familiar with the wide array of choices available,” says Dr. Eric Klopfer, Toy Development Consultant and Learning Expert at VTech, a maker of age-appropriate and developmental stage-based electronic learning products for children. “But there are good options out there that can provide safe, fun, innovative, yet age appropriate experiences for young kids – if you know where to look.”

Here are some things to consider when looking for new technologies for children this holiday:

- Kid-friendly tablet: A conventional tablet is a delicate, breakable instrument. But a kid-friendly tablet is tough, durable and able to withstand being handled by little ones. For example, VTech’s InnoTab3S, is made to fit comfortably in little kid hands, so they’ll be more likely to maintain a good grip.

- Safe messaging: Whether they are at daycare, a neighbor’s house or across the country visiting grand-

parents, a tablet can help kids stay connected to their parents. And thanks to breakthroughs in kid-safe family networking, you can ensure your children are communicating only with people approved by you. The VTech Kid Connect app, for example, allows for safe communication with parents and friends through an InnoTab 3S tablet.

Preschoolers as young as three years old can emulate their parents and older siblings, allowing them to feel like they are part of the messaging trend by sending text and voice messages to parents’ smartphones, all from a kid-safe, kid-friendly tablet.

- Safe browsing: With a kid-safe Web browser, kids won’t be able to access inappropriate content, but can still explore the sites they love through an easy-to-navigate format.

- Educational content: You can give your kids full-time access to great educational content with the right downloads. Look for educator-approved fun and games.

More tech tips for parents can be found at www.VTechKids.com.

This holiday season, you can help your kids stay on top of tech trends safely and securely.



Drug Tip Hotline
1-866-424-4382
(toll-free - your name is not required)

Toll-free Treatment Help Line
1-866-90-UNITE



And warm wishes to you, our neighbors and friends, this holiday season.

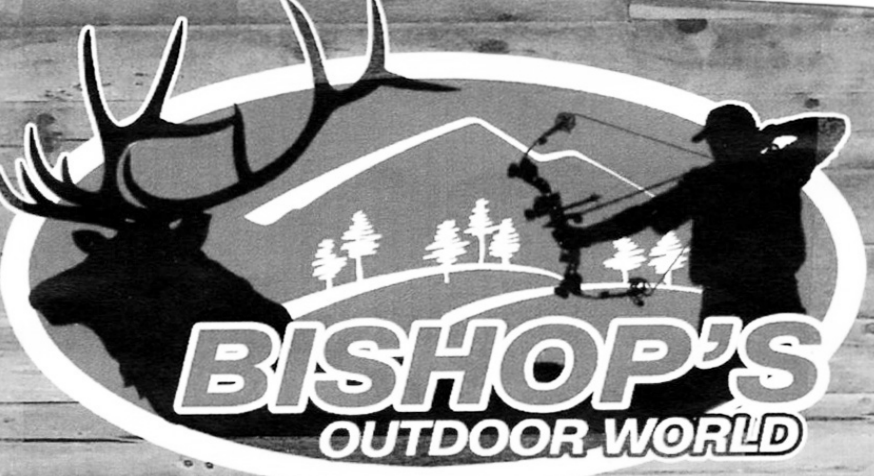


From left: Megan Moore, Dustin Bishop, Sabrina Bishop, Chris Bishop and Dakota Bishop.

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