



Nuggets of Hope A Newsletter for Caregivers

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Welcome to Clifty Falls, Indiana, LWML Retreat Attendees

How wonderful to welcome you to “Nuggets of Hope”, a newsletter for caregivers. You will find encouragement and support. Thank you for signing up on Annetta Dellinger’s green sheets. If you know of anyone else who might like to receive this by email, you can go to my website, www.karenboerger.com, and click on Newsletter Subscription to sign them up. I pray that you will enjoy this newsletter, and that it will give you ideas and encouragement through your challenging days of caregiving. Hugs! ~ Karen



Traveling Tips for the Elderly

By Leonard J. Hansen, www.AgingCare.com

Travel may be one of the greatest gifts you can give Mom or Dad.

The trip may be to visit other family and, particularly, grandkids and great grandchildren. It may be an adventure to a destination, aboard a cruise ship or even a return to a home of long ago.

You may accompany your parent; or, if he or she can maintain some independence, the trip may be solo. Either way, there are 10 important steps to take:

1. Research and Plan Ahead

Whether you will travel together or your parent will be solo, planning, reserving and confirming must be accomplished sooner rather than later. When the destination is resolved with target dates, research airlines, Amtrak, buses, cruise lines. For air and land transportation, seek the most direct and shortest travel times.

If there is a choice of three airlines, for example, enroll your parent in the no-cost frequent flier program for each. This should give you access to the lowest fares and possible benefits at the airport and aboard the flight, as well as for requesting special services.

Know that once very common, most senior discount fares are history except for Southwest Airlines and Amtrak. To find other senior-special offers, go online to SmarterTravel.com.

2. Request and Reserve Special Services

Request seat assignment in the rows designated for disabled travelers. And, importantly, request cost-free wheelchair service at every airport origination, connection and arrival location. If there is meal service aboard, advise the reservation system of any dietary needs.

If traveling alone, ensure your parent will have human assistance from the counter, through security, to the gate and then to board the aircraft. If staffed by an airline employee, there is no cost for wheelchair or assistance. If staffed by Red Cap-type personnel, you or your parent will be expected to tip for that assist. If you are traveling together, you can offer to handle the wheelchair.

If you don't make and confirm all of these requests at the time of reservation, the airline, train or bus line has no obligation to make them available on check-in or while en route.

3. Prepare Documentation

A government passport is accepted as the highest level of identification by federal TSA security officers. If you or your parent do not already have a passport, consider applying for such months prior to your travel. Your local post office will have the application forms; or you can go online to access the information and forms. Official photographs are available at AAA offices and at many large drug and department stores. Personal photos are not acceptable. Two copies of the photograph must be sent with your application.

Request copies of prescriptions and/or statements of medical conditions from each physician and medical treatment center.

Make at least four photocopy sets of the passport, driver's license, [Medicare](#) and insurance cards, travel tickets and itinerary, boarding pass (if secured in advance online), plus any physician prescriptions and/or statements. One complete set is placed in your parent's hand-carry bag, another in his or her roll-aboard luggage. One set is forwarded to family at the arrival destination, and one is left at home.

Provide a telephone calling card so that he or she can maintain contact. An alternative is to provide a cell phone, perhaps one with a predetermined number of minutes. Program in your telephone number as the first emergency number.

4. Be Practical When Packing

Pack light. For a person traveling with at least some limitation, aim to pack everything necessary in a roll-aboard suitcase plus a medium-size over-the-shoulder carry-on. Do not check the roll-aboard as luggage, as in-cabin flight staff will gladly stash it in the overhead rack. Such will save a lot of time at the final destination airport.

All prescription and over-the-counter medications should be placed in a one quart zip-lock freezer bag, including also copies of any prescriptions and/or physician statements in the hand-carry bag. Do not place the pill combinations separately into a separate plastic box as "the next combined dosage." Such will never get through security. Enclose also any medical appliances such as extra braces or first-aid needs.

If Mom or Dad is toting gifts to relatives, do not wrap them. Place the items in the roll-aboard luggage.

If your parent is traveling alone, before you close up her or his carry-aboard bag, prepare and slip in at the top a note stating "I love you" and "I delight in your new adventure."

5. Think about Safety, Security and Comfort

There are thieves everywhere and, particularly, in high-traffic travel centers. Don't give the scalawags any opportunity to steal from your parent.

Mom should not carry a purse but, instead a money belt worn under a blouse or a neat Passage Wallet hidden under her coat by a neck cord. Dad should not carry a wallet in his back pocket but, instead, the same Passage Wallet from the neck cord or as a hidden wallet tucked into his pants and secured by a cord to his belt.

Advise Mom or Dad, if traveling alone, always to keep their carry-on between their feet when standing, or with the shoulder strap looped around the leg of a chair when seated.

For comfort, consider the purchase of a travel pillow, a c-shaped balloon that supports the neck and head when resting aboard transportation.

6. Arrange Medication Management

Most mature adults take five or more medications once or even several times a day. The transportation staff has no obligation regarding the medical dosing of your parent. But you can ask in advance that at a specified time (stated in local time), the staff remind Mom or Dad to take the medication. The alternative is to provide your parent with an alarm watch.

7. Plan for Security Checkpoints

If Mom or Dad is in a wheelchair at transportation centers, access to and through TSA (transportation security administration) security may actually be quicker than through the long line of other travelers.

Brief your parent (or state to the TSA, if you are traveling together) about any medical condition that would set off alarms, such as surgical hip and knee implants. To avoid unwanted delays, get a physician's statement about the implanted steel and make sure the senior has that documentation with them. Oftentimes, personnel will ask the elder to step aside and perform a wand screening, rather than passing through the sensors. If your parent is in a wheelchair, security will use a wand while he or she is seated.

Dress your parent in easily-removed (but safe) walking shoes. Security will probably want them removed. Present, if pertinent, any physician statement regarding your Mom or Dad's medical condition or limitation.

Before traveling, explain to Mom or Dad that the security process is vital to her or his safety.

8. Consider Destination and Travel Options

The world of travel is open to just about everyone, even those elderly parents receiving care. Start a discussion with Mom or Dad to learn her or his travel wishes. Determine if your parent can travel solo, or if you want or need to share in the adventure. Start with the mission of fulfilling a parent's dream; don't just go online to find cheap air tickets.

9. Consider Tours and Cruises

There are thousands of tour and cruise possibilities. Tours and cruises offer a unique service, in that they are totally planned, operated and staffed to deliver the promised program and destination discovery. Several tours operators, including Accessible Journeys and Flying Wheels, specialize in "accessible lifestyle vacations," which cater to those with special needs and disabilities.

Cruise and tour accommodations are priced on a per-person basis based on double-occupancy. Therefore, if choosing a tour or cruise, travel with your Mom or Dad to provide caregiving assistance while in the room and during non-programmed times. A cruise or tour may be the ultimate escape and very civilized adventure.

10. Ensure Those at the Destination are Prepared

If your parent is flying solo to visit other family, schedule a telephone conference with your relatives to go over the caregiving support your elder needs. Advise of your approach in assisting Mom or Dad, so that they do not assume to take the domineering and dictating role. Advise of your parent's favorite foods and activities so that they can try to be accommodating during the visit, making it all the more "like home" for Mom or Dad. And, importantly, advise of the medical and medication regimen that must be followed. Also make sure that they have all important legal documents with them should an emergency arise (for example, if you are listed as their agent for the Advance Directive, be certain this information is with them should something happen).

On the day of travel, arrive at the airport or other transportation two hours early, to visit with your parent without pressure, share a meal or snack, review the travel plan and itinerary and, importantly, to use the wheelchair-capable restroom shortly before heading to the gate. The latter should reduce the need for your parent to access the small restroom during travel.

In Summary

Travel with Mom or Dad. You may find it to be one of the best experiences of your life. Yes, you continue to be a caregiver, but your travel and destination will probably prove to be an escape, a freedom because of the new setting, environment and opportunity.

Travel safely and well.



RECIPE CORNER

Carrot Ambrosia Salad

This is a favorite of our family and goes back at least 2 generations.

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded carrots
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pineapple tidbits or crushed
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup raisins (use $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, if desired)

¼ cup shredded coconut
½ cup miniature marshmallows
¼ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup sour cream
1 cup Cool Whip

Toss first 5 ingredients together. Fold together mayonnaise, sour cream, and Cool Whip. Fold into carrot/fruit mixture. Chill.



MEDITATION CORNER

The following is a “Mustard Seed” from the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League. It fit my day perfectly, and I hope it fits yours perfectly also. Hugs and God’s blessings to you!

In the Word

... in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [Philippians 4:6](#)

Of the Word

The four-year-old was literally bouncing with excitement. He could barely contain himself. His mother handed him the first birthday present with the reminder, "Can you say thank you to Grandma for the gift?" "Not yet," the little boy innocently responded, "I don't know what it is!"

Isn't that just like a kid? The grandmother, who knows him well, chose something just perfect for him. He should have trusted her and thanked her before opening the gift. But wait a minute! Haven't we responded to our Heavenly Father in the same way?

The apostle Paul tells us to take every request to God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving ([Philippians 4:6a](#)). We can trust His loving response. Our generous Father, who sacrificed Jesus to make us His own again, most assuredly knows what we need. We need not wait to see what we get before we express our gratitude. It will be the perfect gift from the Perfect Giver.



Walking with my Lord

Lord, every time I come to You with a request, help me acknowledge Your compassion and grace by thanking You in advance. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Jan Struck, Author
