

## The Family's Role in Promoting Well-Being in Aging Relatives

There's a great deal that one can do for his or her aging relatives to help maintain optimal health.

### Family Members' Role with the Physician.

- As one ages, regular medical examinations are very important. Family members should be available to answer any questions the physician might have about the older person's physical and emotional status and capacity for self-care. Older people may neglect to tell the doctor all of the things he or she is experiencing.
- Older persons frequently take a number of medications. A family member should take the responsibility of keeping a complete, current medication list and ensuring that it is brought to the doctor's office for each visit. Since older people are more apt to experience serious side effects from medications, one should ask the physician about the likelihood of such effects and measures one can take should they occur.
- Make sure to ask the doctor any questions about an elderly relative in regards to his or her care.

### Health Care in the Home

- Posting medication schedules in familiar places, such as the kitchen or bathroom, and putting medications in labeled containers with instructions will help older people to follow doctors' orders.
- Stressing the importance of taking medications as prescribed, reporting any unusual reactions, and continuing medications until the doctor states otherwise.

Making the Home Safe and Comfortable. Since older people's ability to function may be impaired and they are often more prone to accidents, helping the elderly person arrange the home to make it as safe as possible is advised. A few essentials include:

- Night lights.
- Rubber mats in the bathtub.
- Non-slipping rugs.
- Lightweight, unbreakable, cooking and eating utensils.
- Arrangement of cupboards so climbing is not needed in order for one to reach regularly used items.
- List of emergency phone numbers.
- Furniture and bathroom fixtures that are easy to get in and out of.
- Handrails on stairs and bathroom fixtures.