

One Senior Place: Advancing technology helps make aging at home safer than ever before



Brenda Lyle | Special to FLORIDA TODAY

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Q: Can technology help me safely age in place?

A: This is a topic we keep coming back to because of technology's amazing progress and its relevance for today's seniors.

Year after year, AARP reminds us that nearly 90% of seniors want to "age in place" in their own homes.

Cognitive and physical declines and social isolation make this a challenging goal for many.

Evolving technology, however, is continuing to create and refine ways to help keep seniors safe and happy at home.

Previous three One Senior Place columns:

Burial or cremation? It's best to decide which one while you're still alive

Take care of seniors: More than one million seniors are victims of elder abuse

Statewide alert: Silver Alerts have very specific criteria to be met before activation

Imagine this scenario: Your 80-something parents live alone.

Your mom has mild dementia and frequently forgets to eat and take her medications.

Your dad struggles with arthritis pain and often doesn't feel up to cooking or caregiving.

You worry constantly and call several times a day to make sure they are okay.

Well... say hello to "Lively!"

The remote passive monitoring system includes sensors (not cameras) placed around the home, in places like the medicine cabinet, the microwave, the refrigerator and more.

You can log onto the Lively website to ensure your parent's daily activities all fall within the programmed baseline.

Did the refrigerator open at lunch time?

Was the medicine cabinet accessed?

Unusual patterns will prompt alerts via web, text, email or phone to the remote user or local caregiver.

Smart technology in myriad forms can help seniors maintain their independence and avoid a move from home.

Far beyond the "I've fallen and I can't get up" emergency alerts, technology includes GPS-enabled trackers and real-time health monitors via smartwatches.

Other examples include electronic medication dispensers, reminder devices such as Alexa or Reminder Rosie and remote health and activity monitoring platforms like GrandCare Systems.

Many adult children find a sense of peace with a new digital connection to their parents.

"Connected Independence technology" is now a \$2 billion industry.

Leading the way are gerontologists, engineers and entrepreneurs like Aging 2.0, with 40k+ innovator/members in 31 countries focused on accelerating

innovation in aging technology.

And then there are the personal assistance robots.

With artificial intelligence built in, robots like ElliQ are taking interaction to the next level.

According to the Washington Post, “ElliQ offers soothing encouragement, invitations to games, gentle health prodding, music thoughts and, most important, a friendly voice that learns a person’s ways.”

Senior users can access social media, hear jokes and conduct on-screen video chats to stay connected to the outside world.

While we are all continuing to age, the experience is changing for those who are ready to embrace some level of technology.

Are you?

One Senior Place is always ready to help.

One Senior Place is a marketplace for resources and provider of information, advice, care and on-site services for seniors and their families. Questions for this column are answered by professionals in nursing, social work, care management and in-home care. Send questions to AskOSP@OneSeniorPlace.com, call 321-751-6771 or visit One Senior Place, The Experts in Aging.

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