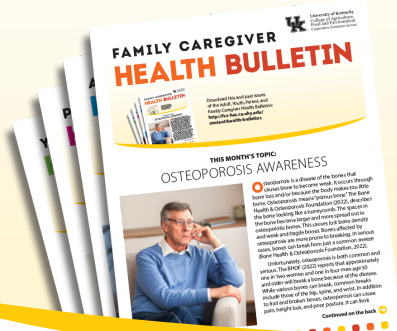




University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

FAMILY CAREGIVER HEALTH BULLETIN



JANUARY 2023

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

HOME AND PERSONAL SAFETY



To prevent crime, the Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition recommends being alert, making your home safe and secure, and being on guard for con artists and identity theft. The following tips can help conquer fear and prevent crime. Whenever you see or suspect suspicious activity, call local authorities or 911.

Be alert

- Do not go out alone.
- Lock car doors.
- Park under lights and near entrances.
- Be aware of the surroundings.
- Sit near the driver and/or exits on public transportation.
- Guard your purse or wallet.
- Do not carry excess cash or extra credit cards.
- Use direct deposit for checks.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

Stay safe at home

- Pay attention to people walking and driving in your neighborhood.
- Lock all doors and windows.
- Keep your garage door closed to prevent criminals from “garage shopping.”
- Install a wide-angle door viewer and/or a doorbell system that shows who is at the door.
- Keep house or mailbox numbers well-lit and visible from the street.
- Don’t open your door if you don’t know who is there or cannot see them.
- Ask service and delivery people to identify themselves with a photo ID.
- Do not partially open the door to talk to someone.
- Keep landscaping thin around doors and windows to prevent someone from hiding.
- Re-key locks if you move.
- Use dead bolt locks that extend at least one inch beyond the edge of the door and consider adding an auxiliary lock.
- Reinforce or replace a glass door if the glass is within 40 inches of the lock.
- Replace hollow entrance doors with a solid door.
- Secure an inactive double entrance door with top and bottom security bolts.
- Secure out-swinging door hinges so that they cannot be accessed.
- Secure sliding doors with locking devices or bars cut to fill the exact distance between the frame and door when closed.
- Secure garage doors with a hasp and padlock.
- Consider installing a home alarm system.
- Give a spare key to a trusted neighbor instead of using a hidden key.
- Put interior lights on intermittent timers and leave radios on when away.
- Keep house or mailbox numbers well-lit and visible from the street.
- Stop newspapers, mail, etc., or ask someone to pick them up daily when away.
- Ask someone to park their car in your driveway or outside your house when away.
- Notify police and request a vacation watch if you will be away.

Do not get fooled by a con artist

- Do not fall for something that sounds too good to be true (e.g., Sweepstakes).
- Do not share personal information over the phone.
- Do not rush into signing documents, especially during states of emergency. Read them over and have someone else read them.
- Call the police or National Consumers League Fraud Info Center at 1-800-876-7060 if something feels suspicious.

Prevent identity theft

- Protect your PIN and passwords by using words and numbers that are not readily known.
- Do not provide personal information over the phone, mail or internet unless you initiated it or know with whom you are working.
- Shred personal information before throwing it away.
- Check accounts, statements, and billing cycles regularly to be sure all charges and withdrawals were authorized and timely.
- Do not leave bills or checks in your mailbox.
- Order free copies of your credit reports from each of the three major credit bureaus once a year.
- Use credit versus debit cards.
- Do not carry your Social Security card in your purse or wallet.
- Watch out for “shoulder surfers,” who spy on you while writing checks or paying tabs in public.

If you think you are a victim of identity theft, call your bank and ask them to close and review your accounts. File a report with your local law enforcement. Review your credit reports to be sure other accounts have not been opened in your name or unauthorized changes made on existing accounts. Finally, contact the FTC’s Identity Theft Hotline at **1-877-ID-THEFT**.

REFERENCES:

- Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition. (n.d.). Identity Theft.
- Kentucky Crime Prevention Coalition. (n.d.). Senior Safety.
- Lexington Police Department Community Services. (n.d.). Garage Burglaries.
- Lexington Police Department Community Services. (n.d.). Your Security Starts at Home!

**FAMILY CAREGIVER
HEALTH BULLETIN**

Written by: Amy F. Kostelic,
Associate Extension Professor,
Adult Development and Aging

Edited by: Alyssa Simms

Designed by: Rusty Manseau

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