



Live Safely, Independently With Assistive Technology

By Sharon Whalen, technology associate, Lutheran SeniorLife

The normal aging process can bring with it a host of unwelcomed guests: vision concerns, decreased hearing, frailty or memory concerns—just to name a few. One or any combination of these conditions can impede with an aging loved one's quality of life. In many instances, it can also mean the search for a higher level of care.

This is the time to consider the use of assistive technology!

Many of the devices available can help older adults to remain living at home for as long as possible while remaining safe, healthy, engaged in purposeful activity and connected to the people and things most important to them.

SilverSmart Technology, a service of Lutheran SeniorLife, works with seniors, family members and staff to identify assistive technology solutions that will give a resident or loved one the opportunity to live in place and experience an *Abundant Life*®.

Current options in assistive technology include remote monitoring systems that can provide updates to caregivers/families on the loved one's daily activities or deviations from normal patterns. Emergency pendants have evolved so that a fall can be detected and appropriate medical or emergency help can be sent, even if the senior is unable to press the button. GPS devices continue to offer peace of mind to those caring for someone who may wander.

For those with medical conditions that require monitoring, vital signs can be taken and the results wirelessly sent to providers. This gives the clinical team the information needed for early intervention without requiring the elder to have to travel outside the home. There are also several medication reminders and medication dispensers available that help with compliance and maintain health.

There are a number of magnifiers, amplifiers, talking products and large button devices that can serve as an aid to those struggling with recreational activities or hobbies, a small assistive device that can offer participation and enjoyment. Additionally, captioned or amplified phones, tablets or augmentative communication systems can reconnect a loved one with family and friends.

Assistive technology can offer increased independence and safety, allow an aging loved one to remain living in their home while remaining active and connected—it can change a life!