

PRESS RELEASE



Get SMART and keep the elderly safe this winter

www.agespace.org

Worries and anxieties around caring for mum and dad can easily escalate during the colder months, especially if we don't live around the corner from them. With the Covid-19 crisis far from over, and uncertainty about how long restrictions will be in place after Christmas, it is vital families start planning how older people can be kept safe this Winter.

Elderly care experts, Age Space are urging families to 'get SMART' by integrating Smart Home Technology into their elderly parent's homes. Founder Annabel James says

"Whilst the pandemic has resulted in many negatives for older people, the generational advancement in terms of technology shouldn't be ignored. Now is the time for families to embrace this new eagerness to learn and use smart technology to help elderly relatives feel safe and connected in their own home. With winter setting in fast, and uncertainty about where we will be in the new year, we advise families to start researching and getting home tech solutions in place now before it's too late."

A recent Ipsos MORI survey* by The Centre for Better Ageing revealed how older people have embraced technology during lockdown. The biggest change being in relation to video calling and three quarters (75%) are now doing this more often.

Whatever your concerns are about your elderly relative's safety, there is likely to be a Smart Home solution. Age Space have outlined six common worries, and how technology can help to solve the problem.

1) Worried about your relative opening the door to scammers?

Sadly, scammers take advantage of older people. Now more than ever, this is a greater worry, as scammers know that older people are likely to be at home, potentially on their own.

Solution: ring Video Door Bell 2nd Generation, £89

As well as a video door bell, this neat little gadget detects motion when people come to your door and sends instant notifications to your phone, tablet or PC.

Age Space likes: There's no need to rush to answer the door as you can see, hear and speak to visitors in real time from anywhere in the house. It's also a great way of avoiding unwelcome callers and therefore reducing scamming potential.

2) Worried about your elderly relative having a fall?

Having a fall is one of the biggest concerns for elderly people, particularly if they are unable to contact a relative or ambulance for help.

Solution: Buddi GPS Fall Detector, £203 plus £22 a month

Buddi is a GPS alarm, housed within a comfortable silicone wrist strap with an integrated fall detector and alarm button. The Buddi wrist band sends a signal to a clip that can be attached to clothing, keys or carried in a handbag and which dials through to a 24/7 monitoring centre.

Age Space likes: The design is similar to that of a Fitbit, so perfect for the more image conscious user. Plus, mobile technology means the alarm works anywhere as the operator can communicate directly via a small microphone in the clip. The integrated GPS is perfect for family, carers or emergency services needing to locate the user too.

3) Worried about detecting changes in your parents behaviour?

Changes in behaviour or routine can be one of the first signs of a change in physical or mental health, such as dementia. Due to isolation rules, many are unable to see elderly relatives regularly and therefore these changes in routine or behaviour can be hard to spot.

Solution: Howz Home Care Kit, £199 plus £9 a month

A combination of door sensor, motion sensor and smart plug, designed to monitor routines and trigger an alert if there's a problem. The Howz Smart Plug can be connected to a regularly used appliance such as a kettle or toaster and will confirm that a person is up and keeping to their routine.

Age Space likes: It's not too intrusive - no cameras or microphones, just simple infrared sensors. Plus, the intelligent timer constantly counts down to the next 'checkpoint' of an individual's routine and if a checkpoint passes by without any activity detected, Howz will alert you immediately via an app on your smart phone or tablet, Amazon Alexa, Google Echo or PC.

Solution: SECOM CareTech Care Alert, price on a case-by-case basis

The Care Alert offers a totally bespoke service, allowing you to get instant phone notifications on important matters to you and your relative. Whether it's a change in temperature, your relative being in the bathroom unusually long, or reminders to take medication, the Care Alert can be

tailored to your needs.

Age Space likes: It's flexible – you only receive notifications about the things that you choose to receive them about. It is also not too intrusive as it has no cameras or microphones, the door sensors are all wireless and the motion sensors are discrete.

4) Worried that your parents will forget to take their pills?

Forgetting to take pills can be a real problem, particularly for people living with dementia. It can be tiring to constantly call your parents to check that they have taken the medicine they were supposed to.

Solution: Pivotell® Advance GSM Automatic Pill Dispenser with SMS messaging, £198

If you are caring for someone remotely and want to make sure they're taking their medication, this is a great gadget. At the pre-programmed times, the dispenser rotates, the alarm signal is heard, and the correct dosage comes into view through the opening in the lid. The alarm can be programmed to ring for up to 5 hours.

Age Space likes: The dispenser sends text messages to up to three family members or carers to confirm that medication has or has not been dispensed from the device at the specified time. If the user has a mobile phone, he or she can then be sent one of six messages to help them manage their medication. Plus, the self-locking shutter over the lid opening prevents access to the medication tray except at the alarm time, reducing the risk of double dosing.

5) Worried that you can't see each other in person this Christmas?

The thought of not seeing family members' faces at Christmas is an awful one, but we understand that for some families it simply isn't possible. Video-calling is the next best thing but not all older people feel confident in setting up Zoom and Skype.

Solution: CallGenie Appliance with HD Webcam, £429.99

CallGenie is an easy-to-setup video call system that allows the user to automatically answer Skype calls on their Television. No additional devices or remote controls. Once set up it simply turns the television on when an incoming call is made by anyone in the restricted contacts list and switches it back to its original state after the call. The bundle includes an HD Logitech webcam

Age Space likes: CallGenie makes face-to-face video communication with relatives easier than ever because it isn't dependent on the user's ability to use a smartphone or tablet. It's expensive but a great way to communicate for older people who are less confident with tech.

6) Worried that your relative is finding your support too intrusive?

As our parents get older, we worry more - have they had a fall? Have they remembered to take their pills? Are they feeling lonely? An increase in 'checking in' to see they're ok, can feel intrusive, especially if they are proud of remaining independent.

Solution: Sentai, price TBC

Sentai uses artificial intelligence to provide tailored support to older people that live independently. It can provide gentle nudges in the right direction, from remembering when to take pills to a reminder that their favourite TV show is starting soon. Sentai has discreet heat and motion sensors, and can provide real-time updates to family providing peace of mind.

Age Space likes: Sentai offers a bit of everything. The way it speaks and offers gentle reminders is comforting and feels like company, but it is also fully equipped to identify and escalate in an emergency situation.

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Note to editors:

1. *The experience of people approaching later life in lockdown: The impact of COVID-19 on 50-70-year olds in England' (Ipsos Mori survey in collaboration with the Centre for Better Ageing July 2020) surveyed 1000 older people aged 50-70 years old
2. www.agespace.org is the trusted guide for anyone anxious about or caring for elderly parents and relatives. Set up in 2016 by Annabel James following her own experience caring for her parents, Annabel felt overwhelmed and didn't know what to do for the best for both parents, what questions to ask or where to look for information. Annabel realised that there were lots of people at this "age and stage" who were juggling work and families, perhaps while living at distance from their parents.
3. In fact - 7 million British adults aged 45 + currently care for elderly parents or relatives, set to increase by 20% in the next 15 years. (Age UK. 2017)
4. Alongside the national site there are 14 localised online hubs in Norfolk, Sussex, Dorset, Merseyside, Cheshire, Suffolk, Kent, Hampshire & IOW, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.