

10 Products You've Never Heard Of

(That Will Make Your Life Easier)

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On the cutting edge of senior care products are wireless gadgets and wearable devices that help keep loved ones safe and healthy.

Top Products to Make Your Life Easier

In our increasingly tech-savvy society, it's no surprise that the most useful products to aid seniors and caregivers are innovative technologies that promise to make day-to-day life easier and make health monitoring a snap.

The buzzword of the day is “wearable technology.” We saw a lot of breakthroughs over the past year in devices like fitness monitors, GPS trackers, remote patient monitors and other wearables.

“Healthcare providers and caregivers alike are looking for devices to improve the monitoring of seniors in their own homes,” says Jonathan Collins, principal analyst at ABI Research, in an article for Senior Housing News. These devices are increasingly integrated with wireless mobile devices and cloud-based data storage, making communication and health monitoring faster and more effective than ever.

Read on for a list of our favorite senior care products you've never heard of (and a few you probably have heard of), and find out what to put on your wish lists in 2014.

1. Preventice Patient Monitoring

The company Preventice has been working with the Mayo Clinic to develop comprehensive technology to help monitor chronic or at-risk patients with wearable sensors that collect real-time health data. The device currently on the market is the BodyGuardian® Remote Monitoring System, which monitors cardiac health using a lightweight wearable sensor. Data is sent to a smartphone and, from there, to the cloud-based Preventice CarePlatform, which can be accessed by physicians at any time.

2. 9Solutions Integrated Positioning and Communication System (IPCS)

Distributed in the U.S. by Megamation, 9Solutions' system promises to provide a revolution in the way residents are monitored in nursing facilities and care homes. Emergency and assistance calls can be made using everything from wearable tags to call units to mobile phones, and the tags can also track movement and help prevent wandering in dementia patients.

3. Metria™ Wearable Sensor

This small wearable device from Avery Dennison promises to be a discreet and comfortable way for medical providers to monitor the health of seniors and others. It sticks directly to the body with skin-friendly adhesive, collecting data like heart rate, blood pressure, and amount of sleep and sending it wirelessly to be interpreted by sophisticated computer algorithms. A connected mobile app allows both patients and caregivers to examine the data.

4. The Jawbone UP System

This unique health and fitness tracker, available to individual consumers, combines a wristband monitor that tracks movement and sleep details with a user-friendly mobile app that enables logging of exercise, food and hydration. Caregivers will welcome the opportunity to help loved ones be proactive about their own senior nutrition, fitness, and healthy sleep patterns with the Jawbone UP.

5. AT&T's EverThere Emergency Response System

This light portable device, which works with AT&T's cellular network, includes a call button that notifies a nearby care center if the user experiences a fall or other emergency. The EverThere has hands-free voice communication, and it can even make a call if the wearer isn't able to do so herself. Internal GPS allows the care center to determine the user's location and send an ambulance or call a loved one.

6. American Well's Telehealth Encounters

What is "telehealth"? If you haven't heard of it before, it's simply a video health consultation, conducted online by on-call doctors. While American Well's service is already covered by some insurance companies, requiring only a copayment, they are now offering direct-to-consumer consultations via smartphone app for just \$49 using their own physician network. Especially for minor health issues, "telehealth can take some of the pressure off doctors' offices, urgent care centers and ERs," says InformationWeek.

7. IMSHealth's AppScript™

As the world of consumer health apps continues to mushroom for mobile devices, it's getting more and more difficult to know which apps are safe, reliable, and right for your loved ones. Enter AppScript™, which classifies,

evaluates, and ranks more than 40,000 healthcare apps, enabling caregivers to recommend the most appropriate ones and even track app use by patients.

8. FitBit Health and Fitness Trackers

FitBit has been selling their fitness-tracking devices for a while now, so you might be familiar with items like their Aria Wi-Fi Smart Scale for weight and health monitoring. Their latest devices can track sleep, steps taken, and distance, and integrate with mobile apps to log nutrition and set fitness goals.

9. GreatCall Wireless and Medical Alert System

GreatCall is the company behind the popular Jitterbug phone, a cellphone designed to be simple and user-friendly for seniors. Now they offer a touch-screen smartphone, too, with senior-focused health apps that assist with medication management and even provide Urgent Care. GreatCall also offers a standalone emergency response system, 5Star Urgent Response, which uses GPS and wireless cellular technology to connect users with emergency contacts or medical services during an emergency.

10. BeClose Senior Safety System

This innovative system combines a wearable alert button with wireless household sensors to help you remotely track your loved one's daily routine. Using a secure web page, you can check on sleeping habits, medication compliance, safety, and more, allowing your senior loved ones to live independently even if you are a long-distance caregiver. With its own base station, BeClose is easy to set up and doesn't require a second phone line or broadband.

Are you planning to integrate wireless or wearable devices into your senior care routine? If you're using one of these cutting-edge devices, please share your experiences with us in the comments below.