

Be safe ... It Can Happen in an Instant

By Sandy Morse

We've all seen the much mimicked TV commercial ... "help, I've fallen and I can't get up". For those who have experienced a fall or a medical emergency, it certainly hits home for they know a life and death situation can result and happen in an instant.

Enter the world of personal emergency alert devices. Not only do they save lives, but they also help older adults remain independent in their own homes. And the peace of mind that comes in knowing if one suffers a fall, stroke or heart attack, immediate help and medical attention is on its way, is invaluable.

Medical alert devices have been around since the early 1970's but today, with sophisticated technologies, a new era of devices has emerged. There are even Auto-Alert systems, which detect falls and summon help without the user even pushing a button! The choices and options are endless, so how on earth does one begin to sort through the huge maze of devices out there?

Start with asking yourself some question: are you very active, do you leave the house a lot, would you prefer a pendant or a bracelet, what monthly cost can you afford? The key is to identify what your needs are then educate yourself as to what is available. Ask friends, family members, even your doctor may have a suggestion and of course the internet is the place to search for a wealth of information.

Our primary goal at Senior Village is to assist you; thus we hope find the following information will be helpful:

Emergency Alert Types: In-home systems have a battery base unit that uses phone or cellular lines and the user wears a pendant, bracelet, or belt buckle. The distance range varies but usually the wearer needs to be close to his/her residence. GPS enabled mobile systems allow the user much more flexibility, thus the unit can be taken anywhere outside the home where there is a cell signal, literally nationwide. All devices include a help button that automatically connects the wearer to an emergency dispatch person. Some devices have fall detection technology which automatically calls the dispatcher, who in turn calls the wearer; if not OK, they call emergency services.

Emergency Alert Costs: There is a wide variation in costs depending on the type of system, features, type of plan and whether there are startup and/or installation costs. Average monthly monitoring costs range from a low of \$20 to a high of \$45 per month and there appear to be no contracts; but as in all purchases, do your homework!

BRAND	TYPES	FEATURES	CONTACT
Bay Alarm Medical	In Home	BBB: A+ Rating Fall Detection Waterproof pendent	Bayalarmmedical.com 877-230-6394
Medical Guardian	In Home + Mobile	BBB: A+ Rating Fall Detection Waterproof pendent	Medicalguardian.com 800-487-7415
Great Call - Splash	Mobile	Waterproof, Ease of use	Greatcall.com 800-301-4397
Medic Care Alert	In Home + Mobile	No equipment to buy, waterproof devices	Medicalert.com 866-894-7796
Sentry Pal - Logic Mark	Mobile	Two way voice waterproof pendant	logicmark.com 800-519-2419 IMPACT (825-0009)
LifeFone	In Home	BBB: A+ Rating Waterproof pendent	Lifefone.com 877-857-2836

In addition, here is a link that compares most brands:
consumersadvocate.org/medical-alerts/best-medical-alerts?

Remember, a medical alert device is only good if you use it. A device that is hanging on the wall or sitting on your night table is not going to help you if you fall.