

# SmithLife<sup>®</sup>

## H O M E C A R E

Bringing care home.



Welcome to our Winter Wellness Newsletter!

Happy holidays and warm wishes for the New Year to all our caregivers, clients, referral partners, vendors, and friends who support SmithLife Homecare. Your dedication and trust make all the difference, and we truly appreciate each of you.

As we enter the season of celebration, we're pleased to share helpful tips, resources, and updates to support health, happiness, and peace of mind through the winter months. We hope you enjoy the content below!

### Follow Us on Social Media!

Have you connected with us on social media yet? If not, we'd love to see you there! Dive deeper into our community—follow us for updates on events, useful resources, and community highlights.

Click below to follow us and stay in the loop!



## Tips from Your Home Care Agency: Building Strong Relationships with Your Home Care Aides

With the arrival of colder weather, focusing on wellness becomes even more important. This December, our theme is Winter Wellness. At SmithLife Homecare, we're dedicated to helping you stay healthy, warm, and emotionally balanced throughout the colder months. Dive into this month's tips to maintain your well-being this winter.

**Keep Warm Safely:** Maintain indoor temperatures at a comfortable level. Use space heaters with caution, ensuring they are placed away from flammable materials and turned off when not in use or before sleeping.

**Stay Hydrated:** Cold weather can reduce the body's thirst response, which increases the risk of dehydration. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, throughout the day to stay hydrated.

**Manage Winter Blues:** Shorter days and less sunlight can lead to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or general feelings of sadness. Consider light therapy, and try to expose yourself to natural sunlight whenever possible.

**Dress Appropriately:** Layer clothing to stay warm and dry. Be sure to cover all parts of your body when going outside, using hats, scarves, gloves, and water-resistant coats and boots.

**Eat Nutritiously:** Focus on a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Winter is a good time for warm, nutritious options like soups and stews that also help maintain body temperature.

**Stay Active:** Physical activity can help combat the winter blues and keep you healthy. If it's too cold outside, find ways to be active indoors, like stretching, yoga, or simple home exercises.

**Get Your Flu Shot:** Winter is flu season, so getting a flu shot is a key step in illness prevention. It's especially important for the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

**Practice Good Hygiene:** Prevent colds and other illnesses by washing your hands regularly and avoiding close contact with anyone who is sick. Keep common surfaces clean and sanitized.

Embracing these winter wellness tips can help you enjoy the season safely and healthily. At SmithLife Homecare, we care about your well-being all year round and are here to support you through the unique challenges of winter. Stay warm, stay well, and remember, we're just a call away if you need us.

## Caregivers of the Month

### □ Congratulations □

Kofoworola 'Kadi' Davies, Tigist Tolosa, Sichale Jaleta & Shaniel Garricks!

At SmithLife Homecare, we take immense pride in recognizing the hard work, compassion, and dedication of our caregivers who go above and beyond for our clients and their families. This month, we are thrilled to honor Kofoworola 'Kadi' Davies, Tigist Tolosa, Sichale Jaleta, and Shaniel Garricks as our Caregivers of the Month!

These outstanding individuals have consistently exemplified the highest standards of care, earning the admiration of clients and their loved ones alike. Here's what some family members had to say:

*"Both Tigist and Kadi were extraordinarily helpful; highly recommend them both and would be happy to work with both again!"*

Their exceptional teamwork and compassion have left a lasting impression on the families you've served.

*"I've been super happy with the care my father is receiving from his aides: Shaniel and Sichale. I know he's a handful, and they've gone above and beyond to try and help him."*

Their patience, kindness, and willingness to go the extra mile have made a meaningful difference in the lives of your clients.

Congratulations, Kadi, Tigist, Sichale, and Shaniel! Your unwavering commitment to delivering outstanding care is truly inspiring. Thank you for embodying the values that make our agency a trusted and compassionate partner for our clients. We are incredibly proud to have you on our team!



## Nurse's Corner

### Understanding the Winter Blues

By: Essy Gurevich, DON, BSN, RN

Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, affects millions of people each year, often emerging in the colder, darker months. Commonly referred to as "winter depression," this condition is more than just feeling "down" as the days get shorter. Symptoms are often a persistent feeling of sadness, changes in sleep and eating habits, and a lack of interest in usual activities. Typically, the signs and symptoms of this condition start in the fall or winter and start to lift as the spring arrives, although some people experience a less common form of SAD that peaks during the summer.

Researchers believe that factors like reduced sunlight, which affects serotonin and melatonin levels, play a major role in SAD's onset. Low serotonin can impact mood, while melatonin changes may disrupt sleep patterns. Fortunately, several effective treatments are available. One of these treatments is light therapy, which involves daily exposure to a lightbox that mimics natural sunlight. I encourage you to read the Mayo Clinic article "Seasonal affective disorder treatment: Choosing a light box" referenced below. This article describes different types of lightboxes and how to use them.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or "talk therapy" is another tool that we can all use, especially in the dark winter months. Vitamin D supplementation has also been shown to have a

positive effect on our mood.

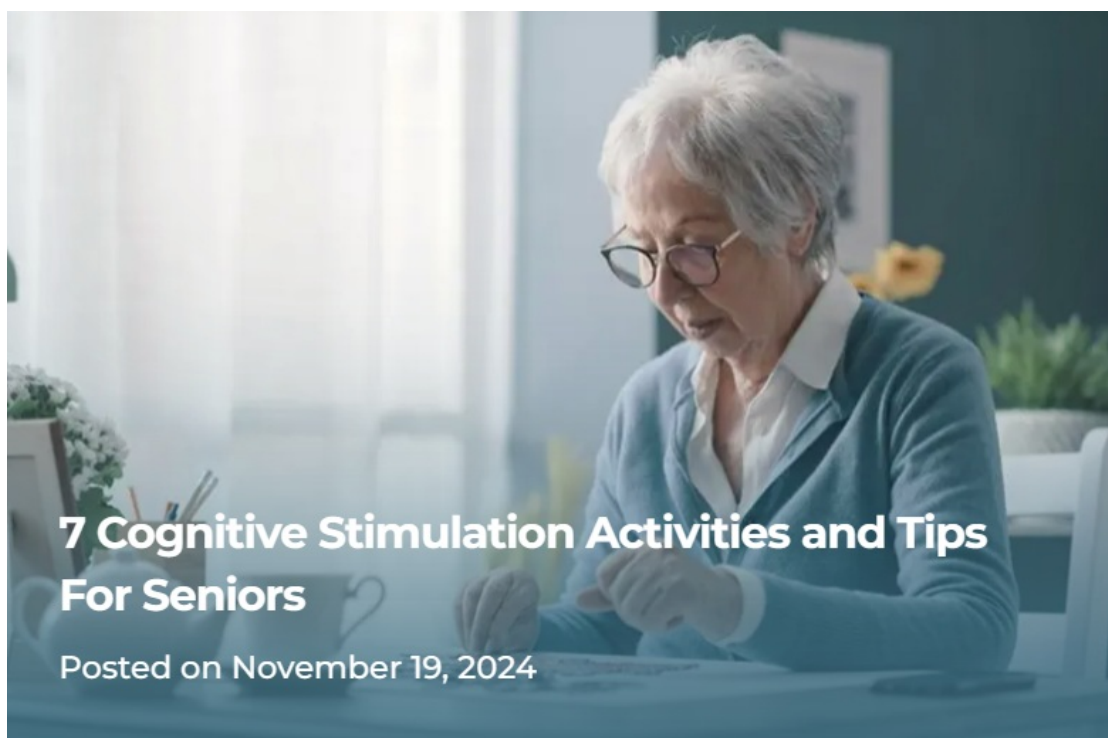
Sometimes, neither one of the mentioned interventions helps and you might be advised to start taking antidepressants. Antidepressants can normalize the chemical imbalances, but they work best when used in conjunction with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. It is important to keep in mind that we all require an individualized approach, and what works for one person may not work for others. If you or someone you know are feeling down, please do not wait for the symptoms to exacerbate – speak with a therapist or your primary care practitioner and explore the options.

**References:**

Mayo Clinic. "Seasonal Affective Disorder Treatment: Choosing a Light Therapy Box." *Mayo Clinic*, 2016, [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/in-depth/seasonal-affective-disorder-treatment/art-20048298](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/in-depth/seasonal-affective-disorder-treatment/art-20048298)

National Institute of Mental Health. "Seasonal Affective Disorder." *Www.nimh.nih.gov*, National Institute of Mental Health, 2023, [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/seasonal-affective-disorder)

## Latest Blog



### 7 Cognitive Stimulation Activities and Tips For Seniors

Posted on November 19, 2024

The golden years of life bring countless opportunities to enjoy retirement, family, and friends. However, maintaining cognitive health, whether receiving caregiver services or not, is crucial for seniors to fully enjoy these moments. [\[Read More\]](#)

## Ask the Expert - Special Edition: National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners

In our latest "Ask the Expert" episode, Renan Augusto, Director of Digital Marketing at SmithLife Homecare, hosts an insightful conversation with Patrick Smith, CEO of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP). Together, they discuss the importance of Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP) certification and how specialized training can



enhance caregiver skills in supporting individuals with dementia. Whether you're a caregiver or advocate, this episode provides valuable guidance on why CDP certification matters for quality dementia care.

Watch now to learn more about elevating dementia care through certification and training!

Please don't forget to like, subscribe, and turn on notifications to stay updated with our latest content! [Watch below!](#)



## Highlights from Recent Events



## What's Happening Soon

### **GROWS Annual Breakfast**

**Thursday, December 5, 8:00am-10:30am, In-person**

Save the date for the GROWS Annual Breakfast, hosted by Charles E. Smith Life Communities, on Thursday, December 5, 2024, from 8:00–10:30 AM. This special event will honor the outgoing Board of Directors, welcome the new Board, and present the Annual Debra Levy Humanitarian Award.

Attendees are encouraged to bring donations of new hats, gloves, and scarves to support less-advantaged seniors.

The event will be held at the Social Hall of the Smith-Kogod Residence at Hebrew Home of Greater Washington, 6105 Montrose Road, Rockville, Maryland. Tickets are \$40 for GROWS members and \$60 for guests.

[Register here](#)

## Keeping Seniors Safe

**Thursday, December 12, 11:00am-12:30pm, In-person**

Millions of older adults fall victim to financial fraud each year. Join us for an informative webinar featuring Sally Pessin, a financial planner and retirement counselor, to learn how to recognize common scams and fraud tactics. Gain valuable knowledge to protect your financial independence and avoid predatory practices.

This event is located at: Ring House, 1801 East Jefferson St. Rockville, Maryland 20852

Don't miss this opportunity to stay informed and safeguard your finances!

[Register here](#)

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## Building a Resilient Immune System: Essential Tips for Winter Health and Respiratory Wellness

**Tuesday, December 17, 12:00pm-1:00pm, In-person**

Winter is just around the corner—now is the time to ensure you're prepared to stay healthy this season. Join our partners at CESLC for an informative in-person session led by Dr. Elisa Gil-Pires, MD, FACP, CESLC's Executive Vice President of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Gil-Pires, dual board-certified in geriatric medicine and palliative care, will provide expert tips to help you maintain your health throughout the winter months.

This event is located at: Ring House, 1801 East Jefferson St. Rockville, Maryland 20852

Don't miss this valuable opportunity to learn from a leading medical expert!

[Register here](#)

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## Want Your Event Featured in Our Newsletter?

Do you have an upcoming event that you'd like to share with our community? We'd love to help spread the word! If you'd like your event to be featured in an upcoming edition of our newsletter, please send us an email to [info@smithlifehomecare.com](mailto:info@smithlifehomecare.com) with all the details. This is a great opportunity to connect with our audience and highlight the amazing work you're doing to support the community.

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Newsletter Poll: Help Shape Our 2025 Online Events!

We're excited to start live online events in 2025, but we need your help to make them meaningful! What topics and formats would you find most helpful—tech tips, caregiver support, support groups, podcasts, or a mix?



Your feedback will shape events that are useful, engaging, and tailored to you.

What types of online events would you be most interested in?

Technology-focused events (e.g., tech tutorials or digital tools for seniors)

Caregiver support (e.g., improving caregiving skills, managing challenges, self-care tips)

Support groups (e.g., dementia support, caregiving resources)

Podcasts featuring expert discussions and inspiring stories

A mix of all these options

## Mark Your Calendars



### This month is:

- National Human Rights Month

### Weeks

**Dec. 1-7** - Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Week

**Dec. 1-7** - Influenza Vaccination Week

**Dec. 2-8** - Handwashing Awareness Week

### Dates

**Dec. 1** - World AIDS Day

**Dec. 3** - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

**Dec. 10** - Human Rights Day

**Dec. 25 - Jan 2** - Hanukkah

**Dec. 25** - Christmas

**Dec. 31** - New Year's Eve

### SmithLife Homecare Celebrates

- Happy birthday Steve Vasquez!
- Happy workiversary to Jihan Eltoum!

## Resource Corner

# State of Maryland Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use


If you or someone you know needs any of the following equipment:


- Manual wheelchairs
- Home hospital beds
- Shower chairs
- Walkers and rollators
- Power wheelchairs and power scooters
- Hoyer lifts
- Knee scooters
- Tub transfer benches
- Bedside commodes and toilet safety rails
- Canes and crutches



## CONTACT US!

We have new and gently used durable medical equipment available to Maryland residents of all ages free of charge!

 [dme.maryland.gov](http://dme.maryland.gov)

 240-230-8000

 [dme.mdoa@maryland.gov](mailto:dme.mdoa@maryland.gov)



## SmithLife Homecare's Trusted Resources

We understand the importance of having access to reliable and informative resources for caregivers, patients, and their families. That's why we've curated an extensive list of resources, designed to support you through every step of your caregiving journey. Click below to learn more about our suggested resources.

[View Resources List](#)



SmithLife Homecare is a leading provider of in-home care services in Maryland and Washington, D.C., specializing in senior care, dementia and Alzheimer's care, companion services, support for aging-in-place and support for complex medical recovery.

We are also the premier agency for nurse staffing, serving hospitals, rehabilitation centers, memory care facilities, and assisted living communities.

Contact us today to learn how we can help you or your loved ones.

Rockville, MD: **(301) 816-5020**

Chevy Chase, MD: **(301) 615-0506**

Washington, D.C.: **(202) 221-7503**

Website: [smithlifehomecare.com](http://smithlifehomecare.com)

Email: [info@smithlifehomecare.com](mailto:info@smithlifehomecare.com)



SmithLife Homecare is a joint venture of Charles E. Smith Life Communities and Augustine Home Health Care. SmithLife Homecare combines the services and capabilities of these two respected providers.

Licensed as a residential service agency by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Health Care Quality and Washington DC Department of Health as a Home Support Agency.

MD #RSA-01265 | DC #HSA-0014



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