High Tech Gadgets Help Seniors Stay Safe at Home

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The list of technologies either currently available or under development include toilets that test for urine sugar levels, body fat, and blood pressure, "smart spectacles" that aid the vision impaired to navigate their homes, beds that monitor a patient's vital signs, video games that detect early signs of dementia, and even stoves that turn off when their owners forget to (http://aginginplace.com/mini-2/technology-for-aging-in-place/3/).
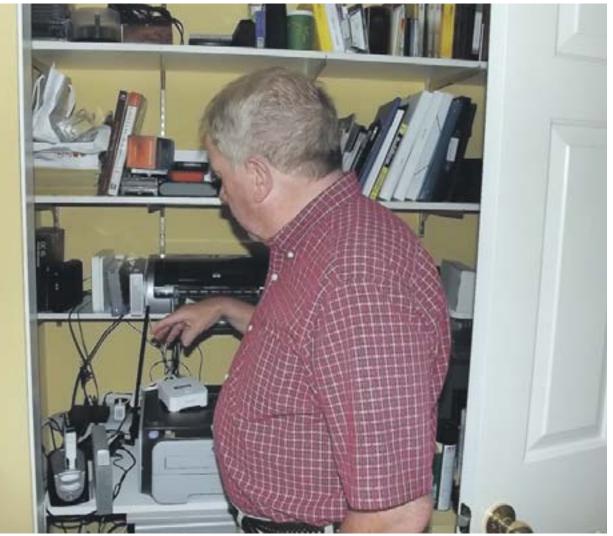
In the Pickering home, ceiling mounted sensors about the size of smoke alarms track Roger's progress throughout the house and notify Justin when anything unusual happens. SafeinHome and similar technologies, including Lively and Quiet Care are passive systems, designed for a caregiver to monitor. Other systems like personal emergency response (PERS) buttons, use a pendant or wristband and require user activation. Gordon said some seniors don't use the PERS button either because they misplace the button or "don't want to bother anyone."

Father and son agree their system gives them peace of mind.

"It's cool," Justin Pickering said. "It takes the worries off my shoulders." Roger Pickering, who used to work in the Information Technology field, likes the system too, and reminds his son to check its operation often.

"It gives me a sense of assurance," the older Pickering said. The possibility of falling or being immobilized without anyone knowing was a regular topic of discussion among the members of Pickering's senior support group, but he said his research on help-in-home systems was limited to reading about them in AARP magazine. Now Roger Pickering uses his system to monitor "comings and goings" at his own house. By consulting his smart phone, for example, he can be away when the house cleaners are working, and know exactly when they leave.

"I didn't know I needed it," Justin Pickering said. "Now I can't live without it."

Roger Pickering points out the black antenna that receives wireless information from the SafeinHome sensors around his house.

High Tech Help

Technological devices and interfaces help seniors age in place, and offer a way for caregivers to monitor loved ones from afar. For example, GrandCare Systems (https://www.grandcare.com/) uses the Internet and the senior's TV to communicate, with wireless sensors to monitor wellness, including motion, body temperature, door position, blood pressure, weight, and other programmed, customized variables. For information about additional resources, visit the following websites:

http://www.safeinhome.com/
http://www.mylively.com/
http://www.careinnovations.com/about/
Rest Assured Telecare: http://www.rescare.com/homecare-services/rest-assured-telecare/
For information about how a PERS works, visit:
http://www.caregiver.com/channels/tech/articles/PERS_faqs.htm.