

Aging is a very difficult thing. My father dies from heart disease when he was seventy six years old. My mother was seventy two at the time. She wanted to stay in the farm house that the two of them had lived in for forty seven years. We all helped her as much as we could to take care of the yard and to keep up the big old house. As time passed mom began having dizzy spells that caused her to fall. The dizziness came on with no warning. Once she fell on a side walk and broke her nose and had two black eyes. Once she fell up to steps and broke out a tooth and re-injured the nose. We started talking to her about moving into an apartment.

My mother was very adamant about wanting to stay in her house. She agreed that we could move the laundry facilities up stairs so she would not be going up and down stairs with a basket of clothes in her arms. I also told her I wanted to look into different nurse call systems that would get her help in case of an emergency. Because she lived out in the country the different alert systems were not as readily available as in metropolitan areas. I called the local social services agency and asked if they knew of nurse call systems that operated in my mother's area. They told me that the hospital in the city located eighteen miles from mom's house would provide a service for her. The hospitals nurse call systems extend out twenty-five miles from the hospital. The nurse call systems include a monitor that is hooked to the telephone and also a pendant or wristband for the person to wear. If the person falls or needs help and cannot get to a telephone, they push the button located on the pendant or wristband and the hospital is alerted. They immediately call the person. If they do not get an answer they call the first emergency contact that is listed. Mom had to give three emergency contact numbers. They advised us that the emergency contacts should be within a close proximity. If no one on the list responds then the sheriff's department is dispatched. I felt much better knowing that mom had a way of accessing help when she needed it.

After a period of time we all agreed that it was no longer safe for mom to live isolated in the farm house. She reluctantly agreed to move into an apartment building that was connected to the nursing home. The apartment is staffed to offer services to people as they need them. Mom's nurse call system was able to go with her to the apartment. Mom is finding she likes having people around her. I know she is safer.