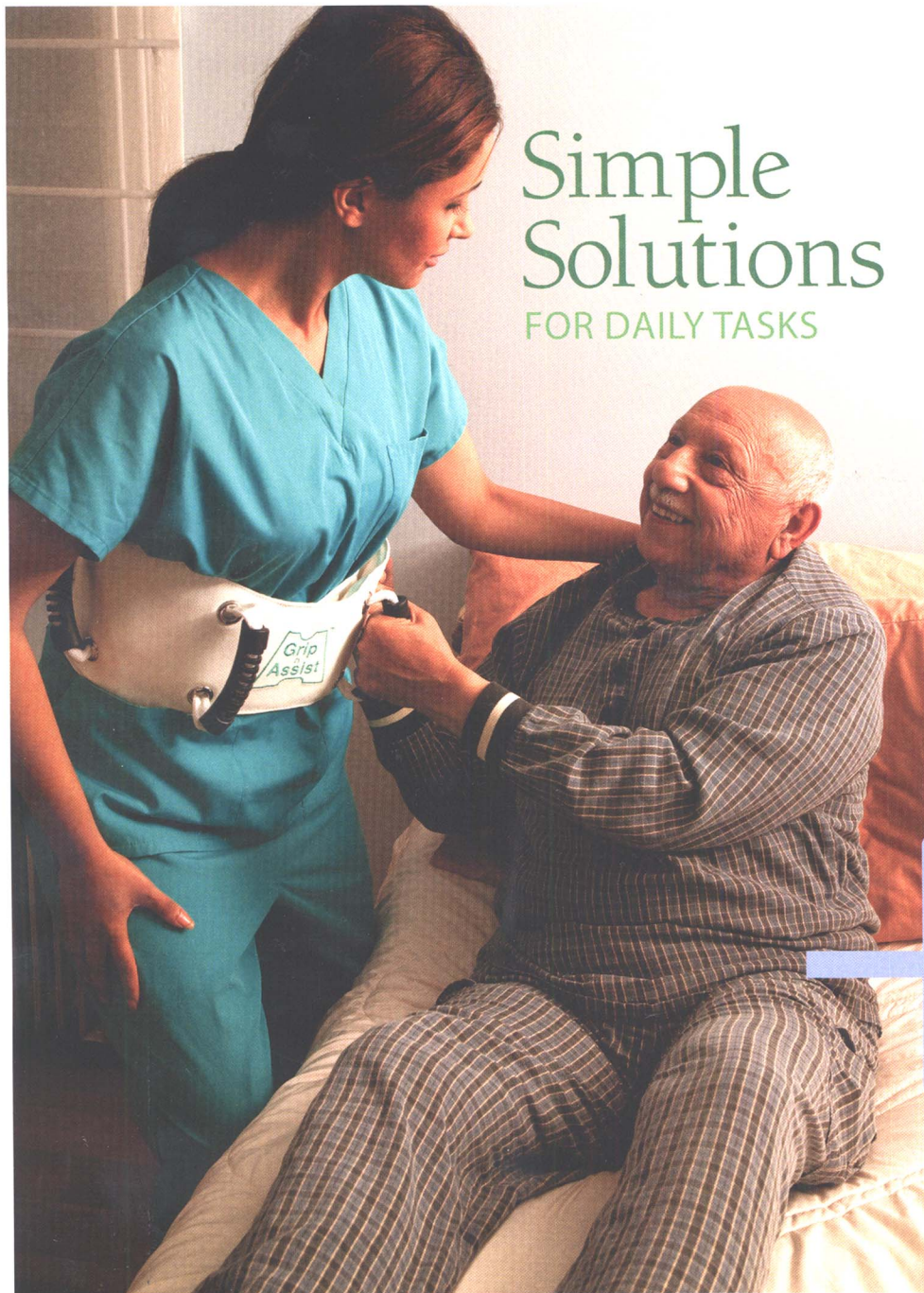


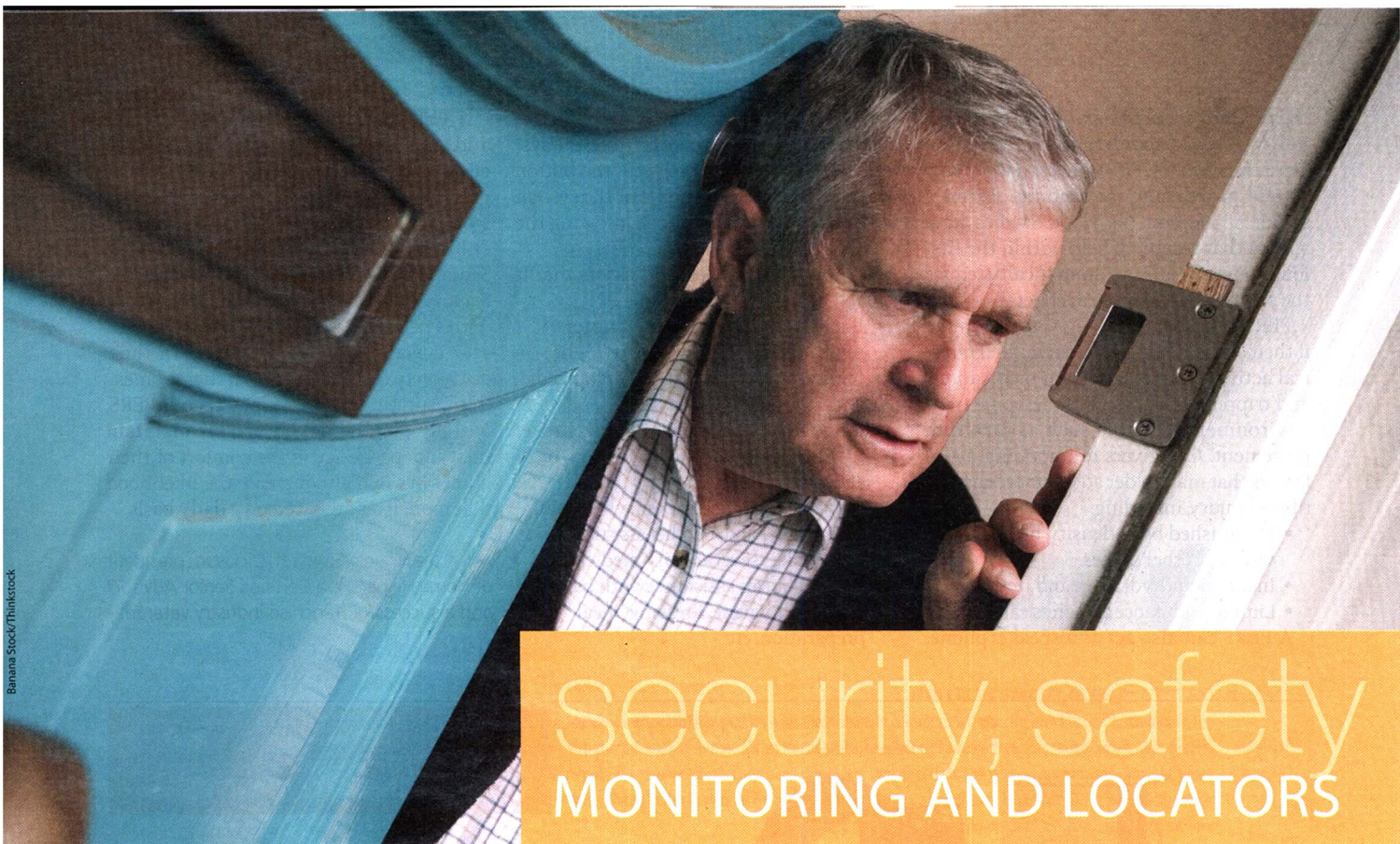
# SENIOR CARE PRODUCTS

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## security, safety MONITORING AND LOCATORS

# technology of the future

## Personal emergency response systems help seniors maintain independence.

story by  
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According to a recent study (Aging in Place in America), “Senior citizens fear moving into a nursing home and losing their independence more than they fear death.” The study also indicated that while 89 percent of seniors want to age in place, more than half (53 percent) are concerned about their ability to do so.

New trends in technology, such as personal emergency response systems (PERS), are playing a tremendous role in helping senior citizens maintain their independence. According to the AC Nielson Study, seniors who have a PERS are able to stay in their homes an average of six years longer than those who do not.

A PERS is an electronic pendant worn around the neck or wrist or secured to the wall that allows the client to connect with trained staff, 24 hours per day, 365 days per

year, simply by pushing a button. In the event of an emergency, the user activates the PERS and a call is automatically directed to the call center.

A trained staff member responds and takes action based on the client’s prior instructions. Depending on the situation, an ambulance will be dispatched when necessary, a neighbor will be called to check on the client in a non-emergency situation and a family member will be notified.

Many national home-care companies, such as Home Helpers, are affiliated with PERS providers, such as Direct Link, because it is a natural extension of the companion and homemaker services that Home Helpers provides to help its clients maintain their independence.

Some brands, like Direct Link, also disclose medical history to the call center.

When the senior suffers a medical emergency and activates the PERS, his/her medical history is displayed on the screen of the call center staff member. The amount of medical history displayed is dependent on how much information the client wishes to reveal upon purchasing the system. This feature enhances a paramedic’s ability to provide care at an efficient rate in an emergency situation and cuts down on the number of mistakes pertaining to medication administration.

As PERS play a larger role in the day-to-day lives of aging seniors, they are also helping further educate caregivers about fall prevention. While falls are among the most common and serious problems facing older adults, seniors tend to conceal falls from their families due to embarrassment and fear that they will have to move to an assisted living community or nursing home.

One-third of people age 65 and older will fall each year, according to the American Geriatrics Society. PERS are extremely successful in reducing the amount of time a senior spends on the floor. Studies have shown that receiving help within the first four hours of a fall can dramatically reduce the severity and long-term effects.

PERS can also help caregivers determine if their client is suffering from limited physical activity, side effects from medications and tripping or slipping in the home from environmental factors such as furniture placement. Caregivers are noticing a few factors that make older adults more susceptible to injury, including:

- Diminished bone density, hearing, vision or other senses
  - Insufficient hydration and nutrition
  - Limited endurance and physical strength
- A PERS can also act as a speakerphone.

For example, if the phone rings, and the client is unable to get there on time, the system enables him or her to press the button on the pendant, and the base of the system will serve as a speakerphone allowing the client to answer.

The following are key indicators that it may be beneficial to invest in a PERS:

- If an elderly loved one is alone for several hours per day and/or night
- If one has fallen or been hospitalized in the past year
- If one suffers from heart disease, stroke, COPD, osteoporosis, diabetes and/or arthritis
- If one uses a cane, walker, wheelchair, stair climber and/or other assistive device
- If one takes several daily medications
- If one requires assistance with bathing, personal hygiene, dressing, meal preparation, etc.

A PERS can provide a sense of comfort and confidence that is invaluable to both clients and their families. It also alerts caregivers to health and safety complications stemming from medical conditions and fall hazards. According to the book, “The Senior Solution, A Family Guide to Keeping Seniors Home for Life,” 87 percent of people with a personal emergency response system said it was an important factor in their decision to continue living in their homes.

Investing in new technology, such as PERS, will not only help more seniors maintain their independence in the comfort of their homes but will also increase the likelihood that more lives are saved on a daily basis.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Emma R. Dickison, president of Home Helpers, is a Certified Senior Advisor® and a successful franchise industry veteran.