

Can You Get Help If You Need It?

Personal Emergency Response Systems

For older adults living alone in their own homes or apartments, the ability to get medical attention quickly if it is needed is reassuring for both you and your family. Emergency alert response systems can supply this reliable service.

Personal Emergency Response Systems provide monitoring 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through emergency response centers. The systems consist of a base station and a portable alert button that can be worn on a pendant or wrist, which lets you call for help if you can't reach the telephone. They are set up in the person's home by a representative who will also demonstrate its use. Adaptive devices are available for those with disabilities.

Some systems have a reminder service which can record up to 6 messages for daily activity reminders, i.e. medication.

There is an installation fee and a monthly monitoring fee.

Tips for Choosing a System

Here are some tips for finding the best options available to you:

- Check with your local seniors' organization or hospital for the names of reputable vendors. In many areas, one hospital is identified as the Personal Emergency Alert Response location and offers reasonably priced services.
- Talk to friends who have experience with these devices.
- Shop around for services and price. As in any consumer area, some vendors overcharge or offer poor quality devices and service.
- Avoid high initial cost, long-term contracts, and short warranties.

(Adapted with permission from the Practicing Physician Education Project 2006)