

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.
Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a Senior, a parishioner or a neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: Create a separate folder of this information for ease of future reference.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.

http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200922

Home Safety Solutions for Seniors Who Live Alone

Dear Savvy Senior,

I'm interested in getting my mother one of those emergency call systems with a wearable push-button for her home in case she falls or needs help, but could use some help. What can you tell me?

SOS

Dear SOS,

The product and service you're inquiring about is known as a "personal emergency response system" or PERS. But with so many on the market, it can be a bit confusing figuring out which system is best for your parent. Here's what you should know.

Senior Lifeline

Each year, one-third of seniors in the U.S. suffer a fall, often with serious consequences. Add in the fact that 11 million Americans age 65 and older live alone and we've got a serious problem on our hands. The solution: A PERS - which is essentially a wireless hotline to help.

A PERS is a home-based emergency alert service that will connect your mother to a 24-hour call center with the push of a button. The transmitter (SOS button) is typically worn as a neck pendent, wrist band or belt clip. When pushed, it sends a signal to a receiver console that's connected to the home telephone line. They don't work with cell phones. When your mom pushes the button, the dispatcher at the call center evaluates her situation and will notify you, another relative, a caregiver or 911, as needed. With most PERS set-ups, your mom can talk with the dispatcher from anywhere in the house through the system's receiver which works like a powerful speaker phone.

While a PERS can be a wonderful home device for elderly seniors, it does have its drawbacks. Many seniors don't wear their SOS button regularly and if they do have it on and fall, they still have to be alert enough to actually hit the button.

Where to Look

With all the different PERS options available today, the Internet is the best place to start your search. PERS is available through national companies (such as www.lifelinesys.com , www.rescuealert.com , www.lifefone.com

and www.lifestation.com) as well as local or regional providers. Local providers are usually run by hospitals or social service agencies. A typical Internet search will bring up only the national companies. Adding a town, county, or state to your search will help you find local or regional options. Also check with your Area Aging Agency (call 800-677-1116 to get your local number). It's worth checking out both local and national providers because features, pricing and quality will vary.

Options and Costs

In most cases, PERS equipment (receiver console and SOS button) is rented but some companies offer the option to buy. Costs, too, will vary but you can expect to pay a small set-up or activation fee along with a monthly service/monitoring fee, usually around \$1 per day. Most companies give discounts for longer-term agreements, but be careful of contracts that lock you in. Some services may even offer discounted pricing options for lower-income seniors. You'll need to ask. And some companies may provide extra services (in addition to the basic PERS) such as check-in calls, wake-up calls and medication reminders for an additional cost. When choosing a service, pay attention to the small print and always ask for a detailed price quote. Most health insurance plans, including Medicare, don't cover PERS.

Home Monitoring

If you're looking for a more thorough service, check out "home monitoring systems." These services combine the PERS with motion detectors (not cameras), placed in key areas of your mom's home, that will let you know (via phone or e-mail) if something out of the ordinary is happening. For example, if she didn't get out of bed at her usual time, or went to the bathroom and didn't leave, this could indicate a fall or other emergency. The great thing about this type of system is it requires no input from your mother and you can check in on her anytime through their password-protected Web site. These monitoring systems, however, are more expensive than a PERS and are not covered by insurance. To find and compare systems visit QuietCare (www.quietcare.com ; 877-822-2468), Healthsense (www.healthsense.com ; 800-576-1779) and GrandCare (www.grandcare.com ; 262-338-6147).