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Shopping for the Seniors on Your List? Consider These 8 Tech Gifts to Add Convenience, Safety and Fun to Your Loved One's Life

United Hebrew of New Rochelle Shares Their Holiday Gift Picks for the Elderly, From Seniors Living Independently to Those with Alzheimer's or Dementia

From monitors to GPS shoes, these items make life easier and more secure for seniors

(New Rochelle, New York—December 8, 2016...) When it comes to buying holiday presents for seniors, it's good to think outside the gift box. For older adults who have downsized, moved into assisted living, or accumulated more knick-knacks than they could ever need, the perfect gift may seem elusive. With more tech companies designing apps, gadgets, and devices with seniors in mind, this year, tech gifts may be the perfect choice to place under the tree.

From smart phones with simplified interfaces, to smart sensors that help monitor health, there's a plethora of senior tech on the market. The eldercare experts at United Hebrew of New Rochelle, who are dedicated to helping seniors enjoy the highest quality of life, have their top picks for tech gifts that are fun, functional, and will show how much you care. Here are their top picks for tech gifts for the senior in your life:

1. Medication minders: Prevention is the best medicine, says Jerome Bagaporo, RN, chief nursing officer at United Hebrew of New Rochelle. And one of the top reasons seniors end up visiting the hospital is because of missed medications. To help organize daily doses, electronic pill boxes and smart phone apps can automatically dispense the correct medicine at pre-determined times, and text you or a family member if there's a missed dose. "If someone misses their hypertension meds, for example, that can lead to an increase in blood pressure and a trip to the emergency room. So, e-pill boxes and apps can help adhere to a schedule and remind you when it's time to refill."

2. Wireless TV headphones: One of the challenges for aging couples is to be able to continue to do the activities they enjoy together, says Bagaporo, and one of those may be watching favorite TV shows or movies at home. "But if one person's hearing declines while the other's does not, a too-loud television can be a source of irritation. So headphones that amplify the TV dialogue and reduce background noise for the person who is hard-of-hearing helps keep harmony at home."

3. Smart Phones: More than 78 percent of U.S. adults over age 65 have cellphones, but only 30 percent have smart phones, according to Pew research. “We’ve seen a number of new mobile phones that are geared toward seniors,” says Bagaporo. “They come in larger sizes, and have simplified designs that are easy to read and use.” Models such as the Jitterbug Smart by GreatCall Wireless, and the Doro, by Consumer Cellular, are both good options.

4. Brain games: Keeping mental skills sharp is not only fun, but can actually help prevent cognitive decline. Search your smart phone’s app store for “brain-training apps” and you’ll find hundreds of mini-games that test your abilities, keep track of your progress, and can even connect you with others playing the same games. “These apps, many of which are free or inexpensive, can be enjoyed on your own or with members of your family,” says Bagaporo.

5. Digital photo frames: On the low-tech end of the tech gift category, a photo frame pre-loaded with favorite family photos is a heartwarming gift and an easy way to keep seniors connected to favorite family memories. Plus, it’s easily updated. Include a promise to regularly keep the photos fresh with snapshots of new events and celebrations. Another gift option is a photo printer with wireless capability, so your loved one can print the photos emailed to her on her new smart phone.

6. GPS gadgets: “One of the top concerns for family members with loved ones who have Alzheimer’s or dementia is keeping them safe,” notes Bagaporo. “A number of devices help monitor a senior’s location and send alerts when they wander, providing peace of mind, and preventing potentially serious situations.” GPS enabled shoes, smart watches, key rings, and credit cards are all options that help families keep tabs on their loved ones.

7. E-reader: “Many older adults have vision problems as they age, and reading print books can become a challenge,” says Bagaporo. Modern technology can help: today’s e-readers offer large screens, adjustable light and contrast, font magnification, anti-glare screens, and “e-ink” which helps prevent eye fatigue. Pre-load the e-reader with your loved one’s favorite genres, a subscription to a magazine or newspaper they enjoy. Problem solved!

8. Assistive tech for home: Emergency response systems and wireless home monitoring offer safety and security to seniors who want to age in place. “There’s a huge range of products, from one-touch emergency alert buttons that can be worn, to smart sensors placed around the home that monitor movement, appliance usage, vital signs, and the comings and goings of your loved one. They can literally be lifesavers, and help seniors live on their own,” says Bagaporo.

The takeaway? Seniors are embracing technology, and the marketplace is responding in kind. Think about the person you are buying for, whether they live at home, or in senior housing, assisted living, or a skilled nursing facility. With an array of tech gifts to choose from, find something to match the interests and special needs of your elderly loved one—and consider pairing it with a promise to help set up, use, and maintain the device.

“Today’s technology is making it easier for older people to stay connected to family and friends from afar, keep mentally and physically active in entertaining ways, and get help quickly when it’s necessary,” says Bagaporo. “The holidays are a time to be together and show our loved ones how special they are, and time may be the most valuable gift of all. But since it is the season of giving, consider the gift of technology. It is useful, and has the potential to make it easier for seniors to live independently.”

About United Hebrew

United Hebrew of New Rochelle (uhgc.org) is a vibrant not-for-profit, non-sectarian, multi-service campus of comprehensive care nestled on 7.5 acres. United Hebrew has been serving the Westchester metropolitan area since 1919, and today, works with more than 1,000 clients daily. Services include: **Long-Term Skilled Nursing; Burke Rehabilitation at United Hebrew; Willow Towers Assisted Living** (*The Beverly and Alfred J. Green Pavilion*, **Memory Care** at Willow Gardens, The Phoenix Neighborhood and Griffen Program at Willow Towers, and Nightingale Neighborhood at United Hebrew; **Independent Senior Housing** (*Low-Savin Soundview Senior Apartments*); **Health at Home** (AZOR Licensed Home Health Care and a Certified Home Health Agency); and **Private Geriatric Care Management Services** (Raven Care Advocates). For more information, call (914) 632-2804 or visit www.uhgc.org.