

Senior Advice: Sharing the secrets to happy retirement

by *Doug_Mayberry*

Q: We have sold the house, are getting for our "estate sale" and plan to move to an active retirement community July 1. My wife and I have worked hard, we enjoy good health, and the thought of being freed from our career responsibilities is exciting.

For couples like us, what are the secrets for a happy retirement?

A: Based on your outlook, you are well on your way down the road to happiness. In changing your habits, focus on the positives. Begin each day with a smile, a hug and kiss, and say, "I love you." This is a great start.

When you part, bid each other goodbye with another kiss and say, "I hope you have a wonderful day." A cell phone call during the day, even if you lost at golf or tennis match, to ask your honey, "How's your day going?" is a winning habit.

When you reunite, another hug and kiss lets your partner know how much care. Then, hand in hand, walk around the block sharing your day's activities, while enjoying privacy from the television and phone. It will help you both relax and it is good exercise, too.

Invite your new neighbors over for coffee and a piece of cake, which is always a winning start in retirement communities. Find out what you have in common. Amazingly, often you experience unexpected connections you will be able to share.

According to 19th century humorist Josh Billings: "Human happiness consists of having what you want and wanting what you have."

Q: Our wonderful and long-time doctor has announced his retirement. We are beginning our search to replace him. We have met the doctor to whom our doctor sold his practice, but we are not impressed. What is the best way to find a qualified physician.

A: To begin, ask your friends and neighbors about their doctors and their experiences. You are not stuck with a new doctor, and should your selection not work out, you have the right change.

Search for a primary-care physician who is not a specialist. Your general practitioner becomes the gatekeeper who reviews your records on every visit. He or she will recommend tests, coordinate referrals to any specialists and help you to navigate the frustrating health care labyrinth. As a senior, locate a doctor near where you live.

Prepare a list of questions to match your existing health concerns. Wise questions to ask include:

â€” Does the doctor accept Medicare?

â€” Does the doctor accept supplementary insurance plans?

â€” Is the doctor board certified?

â€” Is the doctor part of a group practice?

â€” Who would be responsible for your care if your primary physician is unavailable?

â€” What are the doctor's policies regarding prescription medicines?

â€” What hospital does the doctor recommend?

To some, the bedside manner or sex of a doctor is important. Others prefer a doctor whose bedside manner is gruff and down to earth. Always remember, a doctor is practicing medicine.

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