



**What You
Need to Know
About a Reverse
Mortgage**
see inside

Living WELL

A newsletter of
Family and Consumer Sciences
<http://sites.ext.vt.edu/livingwell/>

**Virginia
Cooperative
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VIRGINIA STATE

Volume 7, Issue 2

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) provides an extensive list of fact sheets and presentations in both English and Spanish on preventing and controlling bed bugs including "Bed Bug Prevention Methods," "How to Identify a Bed Bug Infestation," "Non-Chemical Bed Bug Management," and "Bed Bug Treatment Using Insecticides." See <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides/bedbugs.shtml>.

Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/>

National Institutes of Health
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bedbugs.html>

BED BUGS MAKE A COMEBACK



What is a bed bug?

A bed bug is a small rust-colored insect about the size of an apple seed that cannot fly. They feed on human blood and produce small red, itchy welts. Because of their size and ability to hide in crevices, mattresses, and cushions, bed bugs are difficult to see. Use a flashlight to look for small black blood stains or molted skins in or around seams or tags of mattresses or cloth furniture. Use a hot hair dryer to force them out of hiding spaces behind the headboard or along baseboards.



Image of Bed Bug Bites.

How can I keep bed bugs out of my home?

- ◆ When travelling, inspect the bed frame and mattress in your room.
- ◆ When returning, inspect your luggage in the garage first and wash all clothing.
- ◆ Avoid purchasing used furniture.
- ◆ In laundromats, don't fold clean laundry on tables also used to sort dirty laundry.
- ◆ In theaters keep your handbag on your lap, not on the floor or empty seat.

How do I get rid of bed bugs? (No one method is effective)

- ◆ Wash bedding and clothing with a strong detergent and dry at a high temperature (130° F) in a dissolvable laundry bag.
- ◆ Steam clean mattresses and box springs and enclose in a bed-bug proof mattress encasement.
- ◆ Hire a pest management professional.

Pesticides can be extremely harmful to people and pets when used incorrectly. Dini Miller, pest management expert at Virginia Tech notes that "insecticide bombs and commonly used repellants or antibacterial sprays are not effective against bed bugs." Seek the help of a reputable pest management company for ridding your home of this problem.

Bed bugs "hitchhike" from place to place on luggage, furniture, and clothes. A clean house is no guarantee against bed bugs, although clutter makes it more difficult to identify and get rid of them.



What You Need to Know About

REVERSE MORTGAGE



If you have heard about reverse mortgages but are not sure what they are or if they are right for you, here are some things you need to know or to ask. A reverse mortgage is simply a loan homeowners make on the equity in their home that does not have to be paid back for as long as they live in the home. The

Questions potential borrowers should consider are:

- Do you really need a reverse mortgage – what are you going to do with the money obtained?
- Can you afford one? Upfront costs can be high.
- Can you afford to start using your home equity now? The more you use now, the less that will be available for future emergencies.
- Do you have less costly options – what other resources do you have?
- Do you fully understand how these loans work? A reverse mortgage is a major financial decision so you need to do your homework.

money can be received as a lump sum, as a regular payment, as a “credit line” or as a combination of these payment methods - and the loan is tax free. However, when you receive the funds does make a difference as to how much interest accrues on the loan. If you take a lump sum, the entire amount will start accruing interest from the day you take out the funds.

No matter how this loan is paid out to you, you usually do not have to pay anything back until you die, sell your home, or permanently move out of your home. Be sure that your loan contract states that even if the amount due is more than the value of the home when the note becomes due, the lender can receive no more than they get for the sale of the home providing the home is in good condition at the time of the sale.

To be eligible for most reverse mortgages, you must own your home and all parties must be 62 years of age or older.



National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences

The *Living Well* newsletter was developed by the Family and Consumer Sciences program. Dr. Brian Calhoun is the associate director. The *Living Well* Editorial Board – chaired by D. Baskfield-Heath,

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Help with the answers to these questions can be obtained by working with a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development approved housing counselor that is specifically certified to counsel on reverse mortgages. This counseling is a mandatory requirement for all applicants before obtaining a reverse mortgage. After the counseling, the homeowner can choose to go ahead with the reverse mortgage loan or decline it.

An ideal candidate for a reverse mortgage is a homeowner in his or her 70's who has few resources and needs cash for medical expenses, food, and other life necessities. There are drawbacks to reverse mortgages. They frequently have high fees and the loan must be paid back at the homeowner's death, reducing the value of the estate that can be passed on to heirs.

For more information, please contact Marjorie Leon, who works as a certified reverse mortgage counselor with the Prince William County Office of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Marjorie can be reached at 703-792-4713 or mleon@vt.edu.

Joe Botta, retired manager, VCE Prince William County Financial Education Program



Clip and Save

For additional information on reverse mortgages including benefits and cautions, see the suggested resources below:

“Top Ten Things to Know if You Are Interested in a Reverse Mortgage” – available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/sfh/hecm/rmtopten or call 1-800- 569-4287 for the name and location of a HUD-approved housing counseling agency near you.

“Use Your Home to Stay at Home” – available from the National Council on the Aging at http://www.ncoa.org/news-ncoa-publications/publications/ncoa_reverse_mortgage_booklet_073109.pdf or call 1-800-510-0301.

Reverse Mortgages “Get the Facts Before Cashing in on Your Home,” available from the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/homes/rea13.shtm or call 1-877-382-4357.

Welcome to Living Well

Welcome to the Fall 2011 issue of *Living Well*, coming to you from Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) of Virginia Cooperative Extension. This issue includes articles on bedbugs, reverse mortgages, and family mealtime. We hope this information will help you and yours "live well." If you have comments or suggestions about this newsletter, you can reach us at 540- 231-2450; livingwell@vt.edu, or Editor, 110 Hutcheson, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0908. We would love to hear from you.

We wish to acknowledge funding received from the Healthy Homes Partnership of the U.S. departments of Agriculture and Housing and Urban Affairs that made this issue possible.

NOTE: Rising postal rates continue to erode the budget for *Living Well*. If you have access to e-mail and the Internet and could receive your copy of *Living Well* electronically, we would appreciate hearing from you. To change your subscription from postal mail to e-mail, call, write, or e-mail the Virginia Cooperative Extension office in your county. You can find their contact information at www.ext.vt.edu/offices. If you currently receive your subscription by e-mail, there's no need to be in touch with us.

Correction: In the previous issue, we incorrectly stated that energy usage monitors are available to be borrowed from local Extension Offices. We are not aware of any offices offering this service. However, energy usage monitors can be purchased from retailers at prices ranging from \$30 to \$60.

Would you like to be a corporate sponsor or private donor for the Living Well newsletter?

Contact Dr. Brian Calhoun at dcalhoun@vt.edu.

Family Mealtime

Do you sit down with your family to eat dinner? According to research done at Ohio State and Columbia University, you should. **Why?** By eating together three or more times a week, kids are more likely to get better grades in school and less likely to do drugs or drink alcohol. Kids are also more likely to eat nutritious foods and try new things. **What parent wouldn't want those things for their kids?**

Having dinner together doesn't have to be a major production. Simple meals that allow everyone to sit down together to eat will work just fine. Have family members plan the meal together. Kids can even help cook part of the meal. And everyone can help set the table and clean-up afterwards.

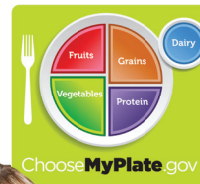
Turn off the television and other electronics and talk about your day. Have everyone take turns talking about a



favorite vacation, a favorite season, what they would do with a million dollars, or what they would plan for the family on a Saturday if they were in charge. Parents can share stories of when they were young and kids can share stories about what they want to do when they grow up. Everyone could answer the question "if I could be anyone in the world I would be..." and tell why.

Families are busy with school, work, and activities, but taking the time to eat together can make a big difference in the lives of kids. Make family mealtime a pleasant time that everyone looks forward to having.

*Cristin L. Sprenger, M.S., AFC**
Extension Agent, Family and Consumer Sciences



For more information, contact your local Extension office.
www.ext.vt.edu