



Tuesday Tech Talk

Smart Home Devices

September 17, 2019

The development of the “Internet of Things” or IoT has led to network of connected devices that include vehicles, household appliances, medical devices, electric meters and controls, street lights/traffic controls, Smart TV’s and digital/voice assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Home. Not all are voice controlled, but things are moving in that direction. Industry analysts estimate there are more than 10 billion such devices connected to the network and growing. Some of these Smart Home devices will make the lives of older adults easier (or more complicated, depending upon your level of comfort with using technology). The following devices may be helpful to you or a loved one.

Voice Assistants/Hubs

Amazon Alexa, Google Home— Can provide information and perform other tasks using “skills” (Alexa) or “actions” (Google Home) set up via the online app.

LifePod - \$170 - <https://lifepod.com/meet-lifepod-your-amazon-alexa-powered-virtual-caregiver/> Uses Amazon Echo/Alexa to provide proactive voice caregiving. Using an intuitive, online portal and dialogue management platform, LifePod simultaneously monitors and supports aging family members via personalized voice prompts, while also providing real time alerts, daily reports, periodic voice check-ins and more. This is a subscription service. Initial fee includes iHome Speaker System. Caregiver configures check-ins, questions/surveys, and easy access to online services for the person under care.

Samsung SmartThings Wifi is also a smart home hub, which can connect sensors and other devices and can be checked remotely. Uses the SmartThings app.

Best Buy – Assured Living – a safety monitoring system built around sensors professional installed and set up.

Walbot Home – placed on bathroom wall and scans for movement. Can detect a fall and notify contacts for two –way communication.

Safety in the Home

Stove Auto-turnoff devices

Article about auto-turnoff devices - <https://www.thiscaringhome.org/products/auto-stove-turn-off-devices.php>

IGuardStove – www.iguardfire.com – uses motion sensors to turn off stovetops when left unattended for certain period of time.

The “June oven” is toaster oven, convection oven, air fryer and slow cooker in one. Includes camera to check on food, alerts you when ready by phone with touchscreen controls.



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Smart Lighting

Smart lighting can help reduce falls in dark rooms or when someone is up in the night.

Smart plug paired with Alexa or Google Home – synch a smart plug to a lamp so it can be activated by voice when someone enters a room or gets up in a dark room. Many Smart plug options are available

Philips Hue – www.meethue.com can turn lights on and off by voice (Alexa), Smartphone or tablet. You can set up a Hue Bridge and connect up to 50 hue lights and accessories to one Bridge. Lights can be put on timer, can be managed remotely when away, create ambiance lighting, etc.

WeMo Mini Smart Plug – \$29.99 – www.belkin.com - uses the existing Wi-Fi network to provide wireless control over lights and appliances. No subscription or Hub is required. Plug into an outlet, connect the device to the plug and then wirelessly control the device using the app on a Smartphone or tablet. Works with Siri, Alexa or Google Assistant if you want voice control.

Aladin by Domalys – www.domalys.com/en/pro - smart lamp for nighttime bathroom visits. Also detects falls and alerts caregivers.

Security Systems/Home Access

Ring.com video doorbell (\$199) allows you to “answer the door” without going to the door and monitor movement on your porch. Variations available with spotlight, etc.

Fibaro.com has a variety of plugs, motion sensors, and switches. Use “The button” to activate systems manually (once “scenes” are set up in the app).

Abode Iota – goabode.com – \$229 - provides an all-in-one security kit that connects to Wi-Fi and includes HD camera, motion sensor and two-way voice. Can connect to other smart devices.

Smart door locks – Kevo by Kwikset.com – touch to open (keys in purse-bluetooth), provide access remotely via phone, tracks who has unlocked/locked the door.

Passive monitoring – mytrusense.com – Hub controls water sensor for any flooding and motion sensor to confirm movement, doors open too long. No cost listed on website.

Medication Monitoring

Medminder - <https://www.medminder.com/> - Medications filled by their pharmacy at the cost of your co-pay and arrive prepared for insertion into the dispenser. Also has SureMed, weekly pill pack. Dispenser rental fees vary from \$39.99 to \$64.99 and can include Medical Alert integrated.



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Reminder Rosie - <https://smpltec.com/reminder-rosie> - \$79.95-99.99 - Reminder Rosie alarm clock is hands-free, voice activated low tech memory aid and daily organizer. It provides medication reminders, appointment information, activities calendar, meal reminders, etc – all provided in the voice of a loved one or caregiver.

Pillo – www.pillohealth.com – AI device with carousel that will dispense pills when the correct person is in front of the device. Also possible to video chat with family and friends. \$499 for device and monthly fee of \$39. Pila is second generation device by Black and Decker that also offers fall detection.

Pill Drill – www.pilldrill.com - \$279 and no monthly fee. This smart medication tracking system provides a reminder, tracks and then notifies others of pill taking. The clock like pod provides a reminder of the pill to take, allows you to scan the container to indicate it was taken, and can notify caregivers if they want to know if taken. Weekly pill organizer can also be used. Mood cube can be scanned to let caregivers know how you feel.

Medication Management Apps

Free to download but requires fee or subscription for advanced features

Medisafe Medication Management and Pill Reminder App – 4.6 rating

CareZone Health Info Organizer App – 4.6 rating

DoseCast – 4.1 rating

MangoHealth – 4.4.rating

Low Vision apps

Glucose Buddy – diabetics sometimes have vision problems. 4.1 rating

ViaOpta Simulator – mimics eye conditions to others can relate. 4.5 rating

Brighter and Bigger – to turn device into a magnification device that will make reading materials bigger, brighter and higher contrast. 4.0 rating

Low Tech

Invest in OXO Good Grips line of home products - low tech and good!