

**DOODADS, GADGETS, AND THINGAMAJIGS**  
helpful tools for senior citizens

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**



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**This information is available in alternative format, including large print, Braille, audio, or diskette. Call 1-800-265-IPAT (-4728) to request yours today.**

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## Table of Contents

Letter from the Director.....	5
Katherine’s Letter.....	6
Descriptions of Assistive Technology Devices	
Hard of Hearing/Deaf.....	11
Cooking/Kitchen.....	15
Home Safety/Housekeeping/Environmental Controls.....	19
Leisure/Recreation/Exercise/Physical Activity.....	24
Lifelong Learning/Computers/Augmentative Communication...	28
Low Vision/Blind.....	31
Managing Medication/Emergency Assistance.....	35
Positioning/Seating/Mobility/Transportation.....	40
Self-care.....	44
Funding Assistive Devices and Services.....	48
Additional Resources.....	51
Catalog Resources.....	61
Glossary.....	63

August 18, 1998

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to be sharing with you a copy of our book, "Doodads, Gadgets, and Thingamajigs." This publication seeks to inform you of the many uses of assistive technology, as well as to provide you with a list of possible resources that may assist you. A brief discussion on funding for assistive technology is also included.

Please use this book and share it with others who might find it useful. Copies are available in a variety of formats and may be ordered by calling 1-800-265-4728 (-IPAT).

A special thanks to our friends in the Hawaii Assistive Technology Project for providing the idea, photos, and content for us to replicate. Our thanks to the many other individuals who contributed valuable ideas and information to this publication.

Assistive technology helps us do the things we want to do.

Sincerely,

Judie Lee  
Project Director

Dear Katherine,

Since my husband Richard's heart surgery last spring, our children have been worried about "what to do with us" out on the farm. We're happy here and have no intention of moving. We can't do all the things we used to do, but I think we've convinced our kids we can get along just fine. We went to the Senior Center for dinner several months ago and saw a program about special tools designed to help make life easier for people. Ever since then, I have been noticing all kinds of things our friends use to make life easier. Maybe some of them would benefit you and help ease the minds of your own kids!

I've been trying new low-fat, low-cholesterol recipes to keep Dad on the diet the nutritionist at the hospital suggested. I have a new large-print cookbook and a magnifying glass with a light to read recipes I've cut out of the newspaper. There are so many new things to try! I've always loved to make soup, but I've sort of stopped making it in the last few years. I was afraid to try to carry the stockpot from the sink to the stove - and it was just too much trouble to fill the pot with small pans of water. One of the gadgets I saw at the program is called a roll-about. It looks like a ping-pong paddle with wheels. I put the empty pot on it, roll it over to the sink and fill it with water using the sprayer, roll it across the counter to the stove, and ease it onto the burner. Of course we use the ladle to fill bowls and freezer containers when the soup is ready! We also have a new jumbo-digit timer. I couldn't find it the last time I was making bars for Circle. Richard had it - he was using it to time his walks on the treadmill!

Boxes have been another challenge. I used to think nothing of opening three cereal boxes every morning since each of our kids had a different favorite. With my arthritis, even one was a chore. Now I have a little plastic doodad that makes opening boxes, even for the first time, easy as pie.

Richard and I had a good laugh about one of the tools the young man showed us. It was shaped like a long-handled hook. He showed us how to use it to button buttons and pull up zippers, making it especially easy for people who have the use of only one arm. He acted like it was some new invention, but I think all of us remember our mothers using button hooks on their shoes when we were little. I had just never thought about using them on jackets and skirts and trousers!

Richard came back from coffee at the café the other day. He'd been in to town to see his sister, Margaret. She has just moved into those new assisted living apartments they were building last summer. She has a new walker that has skis on the front legs and wheels on the back so it can go easily from tile to carpet. It also has a basket for carrying her knitting, a tray and cup holder so she's never without her coffee, and it even has a fold-out seat in case she needs to stop and rest on her way to the dining room. The woman in the apartment next door has arthritis so badly she uses a three-wheeled battery-operated cart to get

around. She said her son found a used one for her from the AT Swap & Shop, so it cost much less than it would have new.

One of Margaret's greatest problems is that she forgets to take her medication. We saw a special pillbox with an alarm so we got her one. Her healthcare worker fills it each time she visits and Margaret just carries it with her in her walker. She's been feeling much better since she's been taking her medicine on a regular schedule.

Richard said he also ran into Vern at the café. Vern had a stroke around Christmastime last year, but seems to be coming right along. He has lost a lot of weight and was pretty unsteady on his feet - bending over was a real problem for him. His wife, Edna, got him a "reacher." He uses it to pick things up off the floor or get his hat off the shelf in the closet. He calls it his "cherry picker." He even uses it to give their dog, Max, a good scratch behind the ears now and then.

Edna told me that the thing he missed the most was taking Max for a walk. Max was so strong he would pull Vern off balance. Their vet showed them a special collar that fits over Max's nose and behind his ears so Vern controls his head instead of being pulled along. Edna can put the collar on Max and push Vern out the door with Max in one hand and his cane in the other. She can get some things done around the house while Vern and Max get a little exercise. Of course, they had to practice in the beginning, but she doesn't worry now.

Even getting around in the bathroom at their house has become easier. Their son Kevin installed two hand grips on the tile in the shower, and put in one of those hand rails that fits on the side of the tub. He also installed arm rests that fit on either side of the toilet and the special seat that makes the toilet higher so it's easier to sit down and stand up. Of course we all tried them out when we were there for quilting last week. They may be necessary for Vern, but we all agreed they made things much easier for us!

The best part about all these doodads and gadgets is that there are catalogs and vendors and even IPAT right here in North Dakota that can help us figure out what we need and how to get it.

Fondly,

Kay

## Hard of Hearing/Deaf

Assistive technology related to individuals who are hard of hearing or deaf, applies to such areas as: maximizing the listening environment, as well as increasing the independence of deaf people at home and in the community. Such assistive listening devices may include hearing aids, or special telephone systems. Here are a few of the devices that can assist you in your daily life:

### Alarm Systems:

Many alarm clocks, voice monitors, fire alarms, and doorbells are now modified to either emit a flashing strobe light signal, or send a vibrating signal to a pager unit to alert individuals in the home. Telephone monitors can also be hooked up to a flashing light signal that goes off when the phone rings.

### Telephone Modifications:

For those who are hard of hearing, simple attachments can amplify a caller's voice and make it easier for the person to hear. A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) allows you to type your message to another individual, and you can receive a message back. Answering machines are also available with the TDD system. If you sometimes have difficulty hearing the phone, you may want to use an adjustable amplifier that makes the ring as loud as you need it to be.

### Television and Radio:

To better hear the television or radio, amplifiers can be attached to the unit to enhance the sound and to make it easier to hear. Captioning is also available on all television sets made after 1993. If your television was made before this date you may use a converter box that prints the dialogue on the screen for you.

### Things you can do to make life easier:

Pay phones now have TDD boxes so that you can make calls outside of your home. Special buttons on most pay phones also allow you to increase or decrease the volume.

You may want to attach bells or chimes to certain doors to alert you when someone is entering a room.

Hearing aids are often good remedies to individuals with minimal hearing loss.

If you are buying appliances with alarms, make sure that they are loud enough for you to hear.

A few churches in North Dakota now provide headsets that amplify the service for those who are hard of hearing. Check with your church to see if these services are provided

Contact the North Dakota Center for Independent Living nearest you (see Additional Resources section) and ask about the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)

## **Cooking/Kitchen**

Assistive technology relating to cooking and the kitchen applies to such areas as: recipes, tools and appliances, kitchen design and safety, and entertaining guests. Some devices under the category are one-handed food preparation boards and adjustable utensils. Here are a few of the assistive technology devices that can help you with your cooking needs:

### Cutting Boards:

To assist those with the use of only one hand, a variety of cutting boards are available with suction cup feet and "holding nails" to secure food to the board. Raised corners also enable you to cut or butter bread without sliding.

### Jar and Bottle Openers:

For those with the use of only one hand, arthritis, or limited hand mobility, these devices make it easy to open jars and bottles. A variety of styles exist, and the option of manual or electronic operation is available.

### Enlarged Print Digital Timers:

By using enlarged print, these digital timers allow those with limited vision to see how much time their food has left to cook. The alarm must be turned off manually and is loud enough to assist those who are hard of hearing.

### Scooper Dishes:

For those with one-handed capabilities, these dishes make eating easier. The dishes are usually oval-shaped, with a sloping front and a vertical back to make scooping food easier. A variety of styles and dishes are available.

### Utensils:

For those with limited hand function, wrist motion, and range of motion, various utensils are available to better accommodate their needs. Some come with enlarged or weighted grips to make grasping easier, while others are specially shaped to allow a person to eat comfortably. Holders are also available to secure the utensil to a person's hand. These devices may also be covered in a rubber-like substance to protect your teeth and gums.

### Dycem:

Dycem is a non-slip plastic that helps individuals to grasp objects, hold objects in place, and prevent slipping and sliding. It can be used for a better grip on writing

and drawing utensils; on recreation equipment; and under seat cushions and therapy equipment. Dycem comes in a variety of styles and patterns.

What you can do to make cooking easier:

Purchase easy to seal containers for your food.

Food processors may help you in food preparation.

When purchasing kitchen appliances, e.g., can openers, make sure that they are easy to use.

Attach suction cups to the bottoms of scrub brushes and attach them to your counter top. This makes for easy cleaning and scrubbing.

Make an effort to eat low cholesterol, low fat meals. Oftentimes recipes are available in newspapers, magazines, and in your grocery store.

When organizing your shelves and cupboards, place frequently used items on the lower shelves for easy removal.

### **Home Safety/Housekeeping/Environmental Controls**

Assistive technology related to home safety, housekeeping, and environmental controls applies to such areas as: designing a safe home environment to prevent accidents, falls, fires and break-ins, as well as controlling household appliances and other "modern conveniences."

Examples of specific devices are doorknob grips that allow you to open doors with minimal effort, and lightweight sponge cleaners perfect for individuals with limited reach and range of motion. Making your house more accessible can be difficult. For assistance in assessing the layout of your home, call the North Dakota Centers for Independent Living or the Commission on Persons with Disabilities (see Additional Resources section). Here are a few of the assistive technology devices that can help you in your home:

Wall Grab Bars:

These devices can be attached to your bathroom walls and shower to prevent slips and falls. Grab bars can also be placed anywhere in your home where stabilization and support is needed.

Doorknob Extensions:

These devices are perfect for those with arthritis, limitations in grasping or turning, or those who only have the use of one arm. This device is simply an

extension handle that attaches to the knob and allows you to open the door by pushing down on the handle, rather than turning the knob.

#### Gripping Devices:

For those with insufficient hand or finger strength, these devices allow an individual to turn handles, faucets, dials, and sometimes even open childproof bottles. Depending on the model, these devices either automatically conform to the shape of the dial or knob, or can be adjusted to fit the knob.

#### Reachers:

These devices are perfect for those who have difficulty grasping, reaching or bending. With a reacher, you can pick up anything from a pin to a large can or book with minimal reach and effort. Some reachers come with magnets or suction cups on the ends, or with wrist or forearm support braces. Size and length also vary.

#### Long Reach Cleaners:

For those with minimal reach and range of motion, sponges and dusters are available attached to long poles to make cleaning easier. Cleaning can be done from either a sitting or standing position.

#### Overflow Alert:

This device can be attached to a sink, tub, or cooking pot to alert an individual when the liquid has reached a certain level. This is a good safety tool to prevent overflowing.

#### Motion Sensor Lights:

This is a safety feature that can be used both inside and outside of the home. Lights turn on when motion is detected, preventing fumbles or falls while trying to look for the light switch. It also alerts you of any movement outside of the house and deters intruders.

#### Wandering Alert System:

This device is especially useful in caring for persons with Alzheimer's. The person wears a pendant or bracelet which activates an alarm when he/she wanders beyond a certain perimeter around the home.

#### What you can do to make your home safe:

Buy appliances that automatically turn off when not in use.

Attach mats or grips to the shower floor to prevent slipping. You may also want to try putting grips on your porch steps, or any area that may be slippery when wet.

Make sure that carpeting or rugs are securely attached to the floor boards to prevent slips or falls.

When purchasing containers, make sure that they are easy to open and close.

Buy cleaning products that come in squeeze bottles for convenience, as well as to prevent spills.

### **Leisure/Recreation/Exercise/Physical Activity**

Assistive technology related to leisure, recreation, and physical activity applies to such areas as: muscle strength, flexibility and balance, leisure and recreation possibilities, indoor and outdoor activities, and competitive and non-competitive sports. Such devices may include modified exercise equipment for individuals in wheelchairs, or a fishing pole specially designed for use with one arm. Here are a few devices that can help you in your daily life:

#### Fishing Aids:

For people who have trouble using their hands, special fishing poles are available that attach to your body and provide additional support to your wrist and forearm. Other devices attach your fishing pole to a lawn chair or a wheelchair and can even cast and reel in your line automatically.

#### Games:

Giant sized and enlarged print playing cards are available for individuals who have trouble seeing or who may have difficulty using the smaller cards. A variety of card holders can help you to hold your cards if you have difficulty doing so. For those who are blind, playing cards and board games are available in Braille.

#### Exercise Equipment:

For those in wheelchairs, modified exercise equipment is available. These gym style units allow the individual to get a good workout while remaining in a sitting position.

#### Gardening Equipment:

If grasping objects is difficult, you can use special gardening tools that attach to your forearm to provide more support. Some tools also come with enlarged rubber handles to make them easier to grip.

#### Swimming Devices:

These devices allow individuals with limited mobility to remain active in the water. Swim gear, rafts, and floats support the body while in the water. Swim lifts may be used to make swimming pools more accessible.

#### Things you can do to stay active:

Join local senior citizens organizations. Traveling, tours, games, and other fun activities are usually part of their programs.

Many shopping centers now have early morning walking programs. This is a safe way to take your morning walk and it's a great place to meet your friends.

Join a health club to keep in shape.

Volunteer at a local charity. By keeping active you'll be helping yourself and others at the same time!

Call your City and County Parks and Recreation Department for information about their programs.

### **Lifelong Learning/Computers/Augmentative Communication**

Assistive technology relating to lifelong learning, computers, and augmentative communication applies to such areas as: study skills, reading, writing, information gathering, learning, productivity and communication, work station design, hardware adaptations, computer literacy and software. Related devices include large print books, modified computer keyboards for persons with limited hand capabilities, and communication boards for those with speaking difficulties. Here are a few of the devices that can assist you:

#### Reading Aids:

For those with limited hand strength or dexterity, book stands and page turners are available. These kinds of devices position the book at a readable angle and help to keep the pages in place. Weighted bookmarks may also be used to keep pages in place. Magnifiers are used to enlarge the print. These devices come in a variety of styles.

#### Writing Aids:

For those who may have difficulty writing or typing, many tools are available for their use. Pen/pencil grips prevent finger cramping and provide a more secure, comfortable hold. Specially weighted pens also help those with slightly unsteady hands. Another type of writing aid straps the pencil to your hand, allowing you to write using minimal grip.

#### Adaptable Computer Accessories:

Special keyboards can be used for persons with low vision or limited hand dexterity. Keyboards are now available in Braille, enlarged print, as well as in different layouts that are easier to use. Some programs allow you to have your keyboard on the screen and typing can be done by pointing to the desired letter.

For those unable to use a keyboard, voice activated computers are now available. A wide variety of computer accessories exist to make usage easier.

#### Things you can do to continue learning:

Take a few classes at a community college or university. It's never too late to go to school.

Many community centers or craft shops offer workshops and classes for little or no charge.

Subscribe to a senior citizens magazine like *Modern Maturity*. They often have good suggestions on how you can continue to learn and stay active.

Learn how to use the computer with your grandchildren. It's a great way to spend time with them, and everyone will benefit from the experience.

### **Low Vision/Blind**

Assistive technology devices related to individuals who have low vision or are blind, include such things as: assistive devices that magnify or brighten, and products that can be touched, felt or heard. The goal for this type of assistive technology is to maximize the visual environment, and to increase the independence of people who are blind at home and in the community. These devices may be anything from books written in Braille, to magnifiers that enlarge pictures and letters. Here are a few of the assistive devices that can help you in your home:

#### Modified Time Pieces:

For those who are blind or have low vision, special clocks are available with a talking function that announces the time for you. Many time pieces also come in enlarged print for those with low vision. Wristwatches are also available in Braille or with the talking function. Alarm options are included on most of these models.

#### Television and Reading:

Voice narrated videos are available. Between the dialog sections of these videos, a narrator describes the actions and movements of the characters, as well as the setting of the scene. Books and publications of all types are also available in enlarged print or in audio cassette versions. The North Dakota School for the Blind has books and videos available (see Additional Resources Section).

#### Writing Supplies:

When trying to write straight or maintain margins, writing guides are often used. These guides come in various styles. Some conform to checks, envelopes,

signatures, or standard letter format. Special paper and notebooks that have bold black lines also help individuals with impaired vision.

#### Telephones:

Large print phones and flashing light ringing systems can be very helpful for individuals with impaired vision. Braille phones and voice dialing phones are available. A voice dialing phone will automatically dial a number when a specific name is spoken. Speed dialing is available on most models.

#### Magnifiers:

These devices assist people with impaired vision in their daily life by enlarging reading materials or magnifying a given object. Magnifiers are also available for use with your television set.

#### Things you can do to make life easier:

Keep things in a designated place so that you always know where to find them.

Color code items in your home or office with bright colors to make locating things easier. Brightly colored appliances and supplies are also easier to locate.

When purchasing new appliances, look for those with enlarged print writing or talking functions.

You can keep your home safe by using storage units to reduce clutter.

Use a jumbo-sized marker with your message board. It forces people to write larger, making it easier for you to see.

When using Directory Assistance, the number you are requesting can be automatically dialed for a small charge.

Always check to see if materials are available in large print or audio versions. Many businesses and agencies offer these services.

### **Managing Medication/Obtaining Emergency Service**

Assistive technology related to managing medications and obtaining emergency assistance applies to such areas as: organizing and scheduling medications, communicating with your doctor, and calling out for help. Some important devices can be as simple as a pill organizer that dispenses the proper medication, or as complex as an alarm system that alerts either fire or emergency medical teams of your condition. Here are a few of the devices that can assist you:

### Pill Organizers:

For those who take medication on a daily basis, pill organizers can help to keep track of dosages. These organizers are also made in enlarged print and Braille, as well as with alarms that will tell you when it is time for your medication. To assist those who have difficulty using their hands, all organizers come with either easy-opening lids or push buttons.

### Medical Equipment:

To assist those with difficulty seeing, many scales and medical equipment now come in enlarged print. Some devices also have talk functions that announce things like your weight or blood pressure. For diabetics, a wide range of special equipment, such as automatic injectors and magnifiers for syringes, is available.

### Smoke Detectors:

Smoke detectors have been adapted to warn individuals who are hard of hearing as well as those with low vision. For those who are hard of hearing, intense strobe lights will go off to alert the people in the house. If they are sleeping, a vibrating apparatus can be placed under a mattress or pillow to wake them in the event of an emergency.

### Personal Pagers:

These pagers are used to reach individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. The pagers work within a range of 100 feet. These pagers react to a baby's cry, doorbells, and audio alarms by automatically sending a vibrating signal to the pager unit.

### Emergency Alert Device:

When wearing this device you can call for emergency assistance from wherever you are. In some models you may press a designated button to alert emergency medical teams, or you can even talk to someone directly through your unit.

### Things you can do to keep yourself safe:

Keep all medication in order and in a designated place. Make sure that at least one member of your family knows your medication schedule and the proper dosages. It may help to have a calendar on your refrigerator that lists your dosage and times, refill dates, and your doctor appointments.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for a detailed description of your medication. Some medicines do not work well with certain over-the-counter drugs. The foods you eat could also change the effects of the medication.

Check to make sure that all of your appliances are turned off, and that all your windows and doors are locked before you go to sleep. Make it a nightly routine so that you don't forget.

If your phone has a speed dial option, make sure that 911 and your doctor's phone number are programmed in.

In the event of a fire, it's always safe to plan an escape route AND to practice this route at least once a month.

Pharmacists can supply non-child-proof containers to make opening easier.

## **Positioning/Seating/Transferring/Mobility/Transportation**

Assistive technology related to positioning, seating, transferring, mobility, and transportation applies to such areas as: safe, healthy and comfortable practices for lying down, sitting, standing, and transferring, as well as moving safely, efficiently and independently around the house and community. Related devices can be wedge-shaped pillows that relieve respiratory discomfort and allow for easy breathing, or walkers and canes that have pouches for easy storage. Here are a few devices that can help you get around:

### Canes:

These walking devices now come in a wide variety of styles to better fit your needs! Some canes are shaped to help to stand up, while others have wheels on the bottom to make getting around easier. If you need to carry a few personal belongings while walking, you may use an attachable tote bag that fits right onto your cane.

### Walkers:

Like the cane, walkers have also been adapted to better meet your mobility needs. To make standing easier, many walkers now have additional bars or extensions that assist you in getting up. Wheels have also been attached to allow you to walk quicker, and some models even have fold-out seats. If you need to carry items while you are waling, a variety of attachable baskets and tote bags are available. With an attachable food tray, carrying your lunch from one room to another won't be a problem anymore.

### Wheelchair Ramps and Lifts:

To assist persons using wheelchairs, portable ramps can be used to get through those areas that do not have ramp access. These portable ramps can be used almost anywhere, and they are often lightweight and easy to carry. Other ramps are specifically designed to be permanently installed in the home or in the office. To make traveling with your wheelchair easier, special carriers that attach to the back of your vehicle can be used. Like the canes and walkers, attachable accessories such as tote bags and trays are also available.

### Seat Lifts:

For those who have trouble standing, a seat lift can help give them that extra push. As you slowly move to sit up, the cushion reacts by gently raising you upwards until you are able to stand up on your own. These cushions can be used in your home, car, or in an airplane.

#### Emergency Alert System for Cars:

If your hearing isn't quite what it used to be, you may want to use this device to alert you to oncoming emergency vehicles. The emergency alert system is installed in your car and warns you when an ambulance, fire truck, or police car is headed your way.

#### Things you can do to make getting around easier:

Place cushions on chairs to make standing up easier.

If you are going to a new building, call ahead to find out if their building is accessible. Not all buildings have ramps or elevators, so it's better to plan ahead.

When traveling, make sure that your agent makes the appropriate accommodations to fit your needs.

### **Self-Care**

Some aspects of self-care include: dressing, bathing, skin care, grooming and oral hygiene. Assistive technology devices relating to self-care can be as simple as Velcro on a shirt, or as complex as bathing equipment for someone with limited, or no mobility. Here are a few of the many assistive technology devices that can help you in your daily routine:

#### Sock/Stocking Aids:

These devices are perfect for those who have limited use of their hands or back problems; wheelchair users; or those recovering from knee or hip surgery. You simply slip the sock/stocking over the frame, insert foot, and pull handles to raise the sock/stocking. No special type of sock or stocking is necessary and a wide variety of models are available.

#### Button and Zipper Helpers:

These devices are perfect for people who have stiffness in their hands, or have the use of only one hand. With the button helper, you simply push the wire hook through the button hole, catch the button with the wire and pull the button back through the hole. For the zipper helper all you need to do is attach the wire hook to the metal tab and pull up. These devices work on MOST buttons and zippers.

### Adaptive Clothing:

For those with limited mobility, adaptive clothing is available. Instead of buttons or zippers, snaps or Velcro are used to make dressing and undressing easier. For those using wheelchairs, adaptive clothing makes it easy to get dressed in a sitting position.

### Personal Hygiene Helpers:

For those who lack finger or hand dexterity, special holders are designed to attach items like razors, toothbrushes, and hairbrushes to your hand. This allows you to use your hand in an up and down motion without having to grip an object. Special devices also assist in the use of shaving cream and toothpaste by allowing you to dispense the product easily. With the shaving cream dispenser you simply push down on the clamp without having to grip the can or use your fingers to dispense.

### Extended Bath Brushes:

For those with a limited range of motion, sponge and scrub brushes are available. The brush is attached to a long handle that allows an individual to reach his/her shoulders, neck, and back. An extended foot brush is also available. An extended scrub brush allows you to clean your feet, and a sponge tip can be used to get between your toes.

### Shower/Bath Chair:

For those needing assistance in bathing, shower chairs are available to make it easier and more comfortable. These chairs come in a wide variety of styles and can be placed safely in any shower or tub. Depending on individual preference, you may sit up or recline.

### What you can do to make things easier:

Many toothpaste companies now sell their product in a pump dispenser. If you have stiffness or pain in your hands or fingers, this will take the strain off squeezing and rolling the toothpaste tube.

If buttons or zippers are difficult, look for loose clothing that can be slipped on, or clothes that use snaps instead.

You can purchase special grips that attach to the handles of your personal hygiene/grooming items. These are inexpensive and allow an individual to hold the object with minimal effort.

You may also put your personal hygiene products in easy to use containers.

Glue suction cups to the bottom of your dispensers and attach them to your counter top. This will keep the dispenser in place while you are using it.

## **Funding to Assistive Technology Devices and Services**

Many of the devices mentioned in this book are considered “low-tech,” that is, they may not be complex, electronic, or computer-operated items. These low-tech devices, such as reachers and jar openers, are usually fairly inexpensive and are available at local drug stores, through local vendors or through catalog orders. “High-tech” items can be costly, and it is good to know where you can turn for assistance to fund these devices, and the services, like assessment and training, that often accompany them.

### Medicaid:

The Medicaid program, established in 1965 when Title XIX was added to the Social Security Act, is a large source of public funding for assistive technology. Medicaid will not directly supply medical services (assistive technology) nor provide cash grants to its beneficiaries. Instead, it operates by providing reimbursement to providers of covered medical equipment, services and supplies for eligible persons.

In North Dakota, assistive technology is a covered expense under the following optional Medicaid services: prosthetic devices; speech/language/hearing services; occupational therapy; physical therapy; rehabilitation services; preventive services; Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation; and nursing facility services under age 21.

For further information about eligibility and coverage, contact a local county social service office. Phone numbers and addresses for each may be found in the County Government section of local telephone directories.

### Medicare:

Also established under the Social Security Act of 1965, Medicare was established as a federal health insurance program for the aged. Later amendments extended the health care coverage to those under the age of 65 who have disabilities, and to those with end-stage kidney disease. The program was designed to reduce the out-of-pocket expenses for medically necessary health services. In addition to providing coverage for medical devices under certain conditions, Medicare will reimburse for various kinds of services and supplies (including assistive technology devices) as long as they are considered to be “medically necessary.”

Questions regarding Medicare eligibility and entitlement may be directed to your local social security office. The address and telephone number are listed in the telephone directory in the government sections under Social Security Administration.

### Other Assistive Technology Funding Resources:

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) and the North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD) have established North Dakota's Assistive Technology Financial Loan Program. Interested individuals may contact one of the following to request initial loan application:

AT Help-Line 1-800-472-2911

NDAD (701) 775-5577

IPAT Office 1-800-265-IPAT

### **Additional Resources**

Aging Services  
Department of Human Services  
600 S. 2nd St., Suite 1-C  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
1-800-755-8521

Easter Seal Society  
P.O. Box 9376  
Fargo, ND 58109  
1-800-548-1372

Alzheimer's Association of North Dakota

Eastern Chapter:  
P.O. Box 13011  
Grand Forks, ND 58208-3011  
(701) 746-4669

Western Chapter:  
414 N. 7th Street  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 258-0228

Alzheimer's Disease, Education, & Referral Center  
P.O. Box 8250  
Silver Spring, MD 20907-8250  
1-800-438-4380

Alzheimer's Treatment and Research Center  
640 Jackson Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
1-800-229-2872

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders Association

919 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1000  
Chicago, IL 60611-1676  
1-800-272-3900

Alzheimer's Family Relief Program  
15825 Shady Grove Road., Suite 140  
Rockville, MD 20850  
1-800-427-2423

American Association of Retired Persons  
P.O. Box 199  
Long Beach, CA 90848  
1-800-424-3410

American Cancer Society - North Dakota Chapter  
1005 Westrac Drive  
Fargo, ND 58103  
1-800-342-4535

American Diabetes Association  
P.O. Box 5234  
Grand Forks, ND 58206  
1-800-666-6709

American Heart Association - North Dakota Affiliate  
1005-12th Avenue SE  
Box 1287  
Jamestown, ND 58401  
1-800-437-9710

American Lung Association of North Dakota  
212 N. 2nd Street  
P.O. Box 5004  
Bismarck, ND 58502-5004  
1-800-252-6325

Anne Carlsen Center for Children  
301-7th Avenue NW  
Jamestown, ND 58401  
1-800-568-5175

Arthritis Foundation, Dakota Chapter  
115 Roberts Street  
Fargo, ND 58102

(701) 237-3310  
National: 1-800-568-4045

Camps for Children

Easter Seal Society of ND  
P.O. Box 1206  
Mandan, ND 58554  
1-800-247-0698

Minot Branch  
P.O. Box 1801  
Minot, ND 58702  
(701) 838-0669

Vision Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired  
16th Floor, 120 Wall Street  
New York, NY 10005  
1-888-245-8333

Leadership Camp for Deaf/Hearing Impaired High School Students  
National Assn. of the Deaf  
814 Thayer  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
(301) 587-1788

Camp Courageous  
P.O. Box 418  
Monticello, IA 52310  
(319) 465-5916

Camp Sioux  
American Diabetes Association  
P.O. Box 5234  
Grand Forks, ND 58206  
1-800-666-6709

ND School for the Blind  
500 Stanford Rd., Suite A  
Grand Forks, ND 58203  
1-800-421-1181

Elks Camp Grassick  
P.O. Box F  
Dawson, ND 58438  
(701) 235-1988

Muscular Dystrophy Assn.  
3209 Fiechtner Drive  
Fargo, ND 58103  
(701) 327-4251

Dakota Superkids Asthma Camp  
American Lung Association  
P.O. Box 5004  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
1-800-252-6325

Caregiver's Support Kit  
National Caregiving Foundation  
401 Wythe Street, A-3  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
1-800-930-1357

Children and Family Services  
Administrative Offices  
Department of Human Services  
State Capitol, 600 E. Blvd.  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-245-3736

Children's Special Health Services (CSHS)  
Department of Human Services  
State Capitol, 600 E. Blvd.  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-755-2714

Consumer Protection - North Dakota  
Office of the Attorney General  
State Capitol, 600 E. Blvd.  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-472-2600

Dakota Plains Legal Services  
Main Street & Third  
P.O. Box 507  
Fort Yates, ND 58538  
(701) 854-7204

Developmental Center  
R.R. 1, Westwood Park  
Grafton, ND 58237-1399  
1-800-252-4911

(701) 352-4526 TDD

Developmental Disabilities Division  
Department of Human Services  
State Capitol, 600 E. Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-755-8529  
(701) 328-8930 TDD

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Department of Human Services  
600 S. 2nd Street, Suite 1B  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
Administrative: 1-800-755-2745  
(701) 328-3975 TDD  
Client Assistance Program: 1-800-207-6122  
Committee on Employment of People w/ Disabilities: 1-800-880-0382

Easter Seal Society/Goodwill  
211 Collins Avenue  
P.O. Box 1206  
Mandan, ND 58554  
1-800-247-0698

Economic Assistance, Department of Human Services  
State Capitol, Bismarck, ND 58505

Application Support Help Line  
1-800-251-8685

Public Assistance  
1-800-755-2716

Child Support Enforcement Division  
1-800-755-8530

Energy & Nutrition Division  
1-800-251-8684

TEEM Division  
1-800-755-2716

Medical Services Division  
1-800-755-2604

Great Plains Assistance Dogs

P.O. Box 513  
Jud, ND 58454  
(701) 685-2242

Head Injury Association of North Dakota  
2111 E. Main #12  
West Fargo, ND 58078  
1-800-279-6344

Human Resource Division  
Department of Human Services  
State Capitol, 600 E. Blvd.  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-755-2671  
(701) 328-3480 TDD

#### Human Service Centers

Badlands Human Service Center  
Pulver Hall  
Dickinson, ND 58601  
1-888-227-7525  
(701) 227-7574 TDD

Lake Region Human Service Center  
Hwy. 2 West  
Devils Lake, ND 58301-3595  
(701) 662-7581  
(701) 665-2211 TDD

North Central Human Service Center  
400-22nd Avenue NW  
Minot, ND 58701  
(701) 857-8500  
(701) 857-8666 TDD

Northeast Human Service Center  
1407-24<sup>th</sup> Avenue S.  
Grand Forks, ND 58201  
(701) 795-3000  
(701) 795-3060 TDD  
Crisis Center: 1-800-845-3731

Northwest Human Service Center  
316-2nd Avenue West  
Box 1266

Williston, ND 58802-1266  
1-800-231-7724  
(701) 774-4692 TDD

South Central Human Service Center  
520 Third Street NW  
Box 2055  
Jamestown, ND 58402  
1-800-260-1310  
(701) 252-2641 TDD

Southeast Human Service Center  
2624-9th Avenue SW  
Fargo, ND 58102  
1-888-342-4900  
(701) 298-4450 TDD

West Central Human Service Center  
600 S. 2nd Street  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
1-888-328-2662  
1-800-366-6888 TDD

#### Independent Living Centers

Dakota Center for Independent Living  
3111 E. Broadway Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
1-800-489-5013

Dakota Center for Independent Living  
P.O. Box 1495  
Dickinson, ND 58601  
701-225-4363

Freedom Resource Center  
3503 South 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 7  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
or  
P.O. Box 1795  
Fargo, ND 58109  
1-800-450-0459

Freedom Resource Center  
Suite 208A  
Jamestown Mall

Jamestown, ND 58402  
701-252-4693

Independence, Inc.  
900 N. Broadway  
Suite 302  
Minot, ND 58701  
1-800-377-5114

Options IRCIL  
318 Third Street NW  
East Grand Forks, MN 56721  
1-800-726-3692

Indian Agencies, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Indian Affairs Commission  
Judicial Wing, State Capitol  
600 E. Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
(701) 328-2428

Ft. Berthold Standing Rock  
P.O. Box 370

New Town, ND 58763  
(701) 627-4707

Standing Rock  
P.O. Box E  
Fort Yates, ND 58538  
(701) 854-3433

Ft. Totten  
P.O. Box 270  
Ft. Totten, ND 58335  
(701) 766-4545

Turtle Mountain  
P.O. Box 60  
Belcourt, ND 58316  
(701) 477-3191

Indian Health Area Office  
Federal Building  
115-4th Avenue SE

Aberdeen, SD 57401  
(605) 226-7581

Indian Health Services

c/o Belcourt Hospital  
P.O. Box 160  
Belcourt, ND 58316  
(701) 477-6111

Standing Rock Reservation  
Box 879  
McLaughlin, SD 57642  
(605) 823-4458

Tribal Health  
P.O. Box 398  
Fort Totten, ND 58335  
(701) 766-4236

Minni-Tohe Health Center  
Ft. Berthold Service Unit  
P.O. Box 400  
New Town, ND 58763  
(701) 627-4701

Insurance Consumer Hotline  
North Dakota Insurance Department  
5th Floor, State Capitol  
600 E. Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-247-0660

Job Service of North Dakota  
State Administrative Office  
P.O. Box 5507  
Bismarck, ND 58506  
Local Service Office: 1-800-247-0981

Lawyer Referral and Information Service  
State Bar Association  
P.O. Box 2136  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
1-800-932-8880

Legal Aid Association

School of Law, UND  
P.O. Box 9003 University Station  
Grand Forks, ND 58202  
1-800-752-0312

Legal Assistance of North Dakota  
Administrative Offices  
1025 N. 3rd Street  
P.O. Box 1893  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
Bismarck: 1-800-932-8882  
Fargo: 1-800-342-4696  
Devils Lake: 1-800-726-8980  
Minot: 1-800-342-4409

March of Dimes - North Dakota Chapter  
407 State Street, Suite 117  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
1-800-393-4637

#### Medicare

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
Health Care Financing Administration  
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850

Medicare Information  
1-800-247-2267

Medicare for Durable Equipment  
1-800-899-7095

Mental Health Association in North Dakota  
1459 Interstate Loop  
P.O. Box 160  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
1-800-472-2911

Muscular Dystrophy Association  
3209 Fiechtner Drive  
Fargo, ND 58103  
(701) 235-1988  
National Office: 1-800-572-1717

National Institute on Aging Information Center  
330 Independence Avenue SW, Room 4656

Washington, DC 20201  
1-800-222-2225

National Multiple Sclerosis Society - North Dakota  
2801 Main Avenue  
Fargo, ND 58102  
1-800-344-4867

National Parkinson Foundation  
1501 NW 9th Avenue  
Miami, FL 33136  
1-800-327-4545

North Dakota Association for the Disabled  
P.O. Box 1826  
Minot, ND 58702  
1-800-532-6323

North Dakota Association of the Blind  
1422-17th Street S.  
Grand Forks, ND 58201  
(701) 772-7971

North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities  
Minot State University  
500 University Avenue W.  
Minot, ND 58707  
1-800-233-1737  
(701) 858-3580 TDD

North Dakota Legal Services  
Main Street  
P.O. Box 217  
New Town, ND 58763  
(701) 627-4719

ND Parks & Recreation  
1835 E. Bismarck Expressway  
Bismarck, ND 58504-6708  
701-328-5357

North Dakota Silver-Haired Education Association  
316 N. Fifth, P.O. Box 982  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
1-800-642-0065

North Dakota School for the Deaf  
1401 College Drive  
Devils Lake, ND 58301  
(701) 662-9011  
(701) 662-9000 TDD

North Dakota State Council on Developmental Disabilities  
600 S. 2nd Street, Suite 1B  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
(701) 328-8953

North Dakota State Library  
Services for the Disabled  
604 E. Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0800  
1-800-843-9948  
1-800-892-8622 TDD

North Dakota Vision Services  
North Dakota School for the Blind  
500 Stanford Road, Suite A  
Grand Forks, ND 58203-2799  
1-800-421-1181

Protection and Advocacy Project  
400 E. Broadway, Suite 616  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
1-800-472-2670

Relay North Dakota  
1326-25th Street South, Suite D  
Fargo, ND 58102  
1-800-472-2121

Safe Return  
Alzheimer's Association  
P.O. Box A-3956  
Chicago, IL 60690  
1-800-272-3900

Senior Companion Program:

Lutheran Social Services  
1325-11th Street South  
P.O. Box 38  
Fargo, ND 58107

1-800-450-1510

Lutheran Social Services  
615 So. Broadway  
Suite L-3  
Minot, ND 58701  
(701) 838-7800

Senior Health Insurance Counseling  
North Dakota Insurance Department  
State Capitol, Fifth Floor  
600 E. Boulevard  
Bismarck, ND 58505  
1-800-247-0560

Senior Info-Line  
ND Aging Services  
600 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 1C  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
1-888-451-8693

Senior Safety Program  
North Dakota Safety Council  
111 N. 6th Street  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
1-800-932-8890

Social Security Administration  
Baltimore, MD 21235  
1-800-772-1213

Vision Rehabilitation Specialist  
c/o Vocational Rehabilitation Office  
Contact your Regional Human Service Center.

### **Catalog Resources**

Here are just a few resources that may help you in your search for assistive technology. IPAT does not endorse any one vendor and would be happy to provide you with additional vendor and catalog information.

Access to Recreation Inc.  
2509 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 430

Thousand Oaks, CA 91362  
1-800-634-4351  
(adaptive equipment and assistive devices for recreational activities)

Accessible Designs  
Adjustable Systems  
94 N. Columbus Road  
Athens, OH 45701  
(614) 593-5240  
(accessible home products, cabinets, etc.)'

Accessible Work Systems, Inc.  
2295 C.R. 292  
Bellevue, OH 44811  
1-800-344-9301  
(work stations for the disabled)

Adaptivation Inc.  
224 SE 16th Street, Suite 2  
Ames, IA 50010  
1-800-723-2783  
(innovative adaptive devices for persons with severe and profound disabilities; augmentative communication aids)

Braun Personal Mobility Products  
P.O. Box 310  
Winamac, IN 46996  
1-800-843-5438  
(lifts, vans, seats, and carriers)

Dr. Leonard's  
P.O. Box 7821  
Edison, NJ 08818-7821  
1-800-785-0880  
(discount healthcare products)

Enrichments  
P.O. Box 471  
Western Springs, IL 60558  
1-800-323-5547  
(exercise aids, daily living aids, kitchen and dining aids, diabetic care, mobility assists, incontinence and ostomy products)

Harris Communications Inc.  
15159 Technology Drive  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

1-800-825-6758  
(communication aids)

IBM Independence Series  
P.O. Box 1328  
Boca Raton, FL 33429  
1-800-426-4832  
(computers and accessories for the disabled)

Lighthouse Consumer Products  
36-20 Northern Boulevard  
Long Island, NY 11101  
1-800-829-0500  
(vision assistance products)

Maxi-Aids  
P.O. Box 3209  
Farmingdale, NY 11735  
1-800-522-6294  
(aids and appliances for independent living)

The North Dakota Assistive Technology Program (IPAT) has dozens of catalogs on file. These are just a sampling. Call us at 1-888-265-4728, toll-free, for information on products you need.

### **Glossary Terms**

**Alzheimer's Disease:** A progressive and irreversible brain disease. Early symptoms include forgetfulness, impaired concentration, and intellectual deterioration. Later as symptoms worsen, the persons becomes physically and intellectually disabled.

**Arthritis:** Arthritis includes over a hundred different diseases, often involving aches and pains in the joints and connective tissues throughout the body. The most common types of arthritis in older persons are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout.

**Assistive Technology Devices:** Any items or pieces of equipment that enable people to maintain or improve their functioning, and help them to better achieve their goals.

**Augmentative Communication:** People normally interact with one another using speech as their primary mode of communication. Augmentative communication occurs when at least one of these individuals relies primarily on other modes of

communication. Examples of augmentative communication are: sign language, paper and pencil, alphabet letter boards, and computer systems.

**Braces:** An orthopedic appliance or apparatus applied to the body, particularly the torso, arms, and legs. These appliances may support the weight of the body, correct or prevent deformities, or control involuntary movements.

**Braille:** A system of writing for the blind that uses characters made of raised dot patterns.

**Captioning:** Written interpretations of both dialogue and scene that appear at the bottom of the television or video screen.

**Dexterity:** Skill and ease in using one's hands, body, or mind.

**Dosage:** The regulation of the size, frequency, and number of doses.

**Dose:** The quantity to be given at one time, as a specified amount of medication.

**Enlarged Print:** Text increased in size to improve visibility. Large printed text is commonly used by individuals with low or limited vision.

**Environmental Control Units:** Hardware and/or software systems that allow spontaneous and programmed control over remote, electrically operated appliances.

**Hard of Hearing:** Partial loss of the sense of hearing.

**Hearing Aids:** An instrument used to amplify sounds for the hard of hearing.

**Impaired Vision:** Loss of the eye, visual acuity, visual field, ability to distinguish colors, motion, or any other function related to sight.

**Limitation:** Some factor in makeup which restricts the scope of a person's activity or accomplishment.

**Limited Mobility:** The inability to move about physically in some way.

**Manually Operated:** Of or having to do with use of the hands. Without electrical or other power.

**Mobility:** The ability to move in one's environment with ease and without restriction.

**Pager:** An electronic device that sends or receives an electronic signal or vibrating alert.

**Positioning:** The manner in which a person is placed or arranged; posture, seating.

**Range of Motion:** The movement available in a joint.

**Speed Dial:** A telephone function that allows you to automatically dial a telephone number by pressing one or two buttons. Not available on rotary phones.

**Strobe Lights:** An electronically regulated light that can emit extremely rapid, brief, and brilliant flashes of light.

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD):** A telephone system that allows deaf or hard of hearing individuals to communicate by typing and receiving messages through a monitor.

**Transferring:** The moving of a patient from one surface to another. Patients can be taught to transfer safely either independently or with minimal assistance if they can balance in a sitting position.

**Vendor:** A seller of products.