

# Partners in Care

By Lisa M. Petsche

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## Don't Let Inclement Weather Get You Down

### *How to Combat Summer Cabin Fever*

When we think of summer time, we usually envision spending plenty of time outdoors, at home and visiting at friends' homes as well as in parks and other public places.

Unfortunately, allergens, poor air quality, intense heat, rain showers and thunderstorms can end up keeping us indoors more often than we would like.

The following are some ideas for warding off cabin fever for you and the person you care for, when the weather is less than favorable.

### Ideas for Enjoyment

- Prepare or purchase special summer treats to enjoy – for example, lemonade, iced tea, strawberry shortcake and blueberry pie.
- Buy colorful, acrylic dishes and matching placemats for serving food and beverages. You don't need to spend much: check out the offerings at the local dollar store or discount department store.
- Snack on fresh fruit and vegetables from your garden or the local farmers' market. Or pick up pre-sliced, ready-to-serve watermelon, pineapple and other refreshing offerings in your supermarket's produce section.
- Enjoy ice cream novelties, such as popsicles and ice cream sandwiches, purchased in bulk from the grocery store or individually from the local convenience store. Or make your own ice cream floats and sundaes.
- Order take-out food for a change of cuisine. Try something different, but not too heavy, such as an apple pecan chicken salad, for example.
- Bring a bit of nature into your home: nurture some plants, keep vases filled with flowers from your garden or buy fresh flowers.
  - Burn candles with novel summer scents, such as raspberry lemonade and peach Bellini.
  - Read a magazine about a favorite summer pastime – gardening or golf, for example.
  - Listen to relaxation CDs that feature your favorite summer sounds – for example, waves lapping at the shore, a babbling brook, a waterfall, birds or other wildlife.
  - Look through photo collections or watch home movies from past summers. Reminisce about family traditions, special people and places and humorous moments.
  - Read a new book or reacquaint yourself with an old favorite you have on hand.
  - Start a daily journal.
  - Watch a summer-themed movie.



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- Try out a new recipe.
- Work on a jigsaw puzzle or word puzzles.
- Play card games or board games together. Go with classic board games such as checkers or chess, or be adventurous and try one of the latest offerings on the market. For even more fun, invite friends over for an afternoon or evening of games and socializing.
- Start a new hobby, such as sketching or scrapbooking, or revive an old pastime – for example, knitting or crocheting.
- Get a bird feeder and seed, binoculars and a bird watching guide.
- Go to the mall, even if you're not looking to buy anything. Window shopping and people watching can be enjoyable pastimes. Have a snack or a meal while you're there.
- Plan an outing to a favorite restaurant or an indoor concert or play. Take a taxi - or book accessible transportation if necessary - to ensure door to door service.

## Practical Activities

Accomplishment, especially when it involves tackling long-postponed projects, brings satisfaction and a sense of renewal. Involve the care receiver as appropriate.

Some ideas for projects:

- Organize your collection of photos, music or movies.
- Do some de-cluttering around your home (kitchen drawers, closets, spare rooms, basements and attics are typical hot spots). Pack up unwanted items for donation to a local charity.
- Organize paperwork – bills, medical documents and so on - in portable file boxes or three-ringed binders equipped with dividers.
- Rearrange the furniture in one or more rooms, or swap furnishings and accessories among rooms. Or start planning a major room redecorating or home renovation project.
- Make an extra effort to look after your health, including exercising regularly – good for both your physical and mental well-being. A stationary bike or treadmill is a good choice — you can use it year-round, regardless of the weather.
- Research community support services, including respite care options, and begin to take advantage of them. Information can be obtained from the local office on aging.