

Healthy LIVING while aging!



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Guardianship and Decision-Making

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Older Americans live longer nowadays. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2020, about one in six people were 65 and older. As our nation's aging population increases, so does the need to understand what could happen to people's rights as they grow older and can no longer care for themselves (or someone determines that they can no longer do so) and explore ways to plan for such circumstances.

Guardianship means obtaining the legal authority to make decisions for another person. Generally, adults have the legal right to make decisions for themselves. Still, when an adult is determined to lack the capacity or ability to make decisions, a court may step in and appoint a guardian to act in that person's best interest. Guardianship is considered the last resort, as it strips away a person's independence and affects their right to vote, drive, manage finances, make health care decisions and determine residency.

In Nevada, a person under guardianship is called a protected person. Nevada is the only state where the court appoints counsel to represent the wishes of a protected person, even if those wishes are not in that person's best interest and protect the person's due process rights. Nevada laws changed due to widespread abuse in the system, where guardians stole money, isolated people and left them with no voice in the process. Nevada also passed a Bill of Rights for Protected Persons, which includes the right to counsel and remain as independent as possible throughout guardianship.

Guardianship can be avoided with alternatives. Planning provides multiple benefits and doing so allows you to choose the person you want to make decisions for you and allows you to discuss those decisions. This is especially true for health care and end-of-life choices. Below are some options:

- **Power of attorney:** This is a legal document where a person ("principal") voluntarily gives another person ("agent") the authority to make health care or financial decisions for them. Nevada law also has a power of attorney for persons with dementia.
- **Representative Payee Program:** A representative payee is someone designated to receive and manage benefits for another person. Applicants must apply for and be appointed by the Social Security Administration.
- **Veterans Affairs (VA) Fiduciary Program:** This program protects beneficiaries who cannot manage their finances by appointing a fiduciary. Applicants apply through the VA and must pass a credit and criminal background check.
- **Bill Pay Services and Joint Bank Accounts:** Some banks offer bill pay services or automatic payments from an account. You can add someone to your account to provide access, but that person should be highly trustworthy.

While guardianship can severely restrict a person's rights, seniors have options to protect themselves and plan for the future so that a court-appointed guardian does not have to decide for them.

Planning for the future is complicated and complex. Please reach out to the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada (702) 386-1070 with any questions or concerns.

Please visit extension.unr.edu/Healthy-Aging to enjoy our accessible, online newsletter and discover additional Healthy Aging education and resources. Or, email HealthyAging@unr.edu.

Honoring Mothers and Older Adults

Mother's Day has been an official U.S. holiday since 1914. However, celebrating Mother's Day has been traced as far back as to ancient Rome and Greece.

The month of May is also **Older Americans Month**. It was established in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy and the National Council of Senior Citizens, to make sure basic needs of older Americans were met.

This month, take time to recognize and honor the moms and older people in your life. And, if you are both, a double hip hip hooray to you!

High Blood Pressure Month

High blood pressure increases your risk for heart disease and stroke. The good news is that there are steps you can take every day to keep your blood pressure in a healthy range. Start by visiting this CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/bloodpressure/>.

Mental Health Awareness Month

You are not alone. Now more than ever, we need to find ways to stay connected with our community. No one should feel alone or without the information, support and the help needed. If you or someone you love is experiencing mental health struggles and behavioral health challenges, visit: <https://www.nevada211.org>.

May 26, 2025



Thank you!

Simple Fish Tacos

This Cinco de Mayo-inspired menu includes fresh, healthy flavors.

Seasoned chunks of white fish filets topped with fresh diced tomatoes, shredded cabbage, a squeeze of lime, and a dollop of cilantro-infused sour cream are all served on top of a warm corn tortilla. Add fiber rich beans and/or any vegetables in place of fish.

Makes 6 servings



Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup sour cream (non-fat)
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise (fat-free)
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro (chopped)
- 1/2 packet taco seasoning (divided)
- 1 pound fish fillets (cut into 1-inch pieces)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 cups red and green cabbage (shredded)
- 2 cups tomato (diced)
- 12 corn tortillas (6-inch, warmed)
- lime wedges (for serving)

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, combine sour cream, mayonnaise, cilantro, and 2 Tbsp. taco seasoning.
2. In a medium bowl, combine cod, vegetable oil, lemon juice, and remaining seasoning mix; pour into large skillet. Cook stirring constantly, over medium-high heat for 4-5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.
3. Fill warm tortillas with fish mixture.
4. Top with cabbage, tomato, sour cream mixture, lime wedges, and taco sauce.

To learn more, visit Simple Fish Tacos at What's Cooking? USDA