PROJECT LENS

RESOURCE GUIDE 06 OF 06

AI for Older Adults

See AI clearly.

Think clearly in an AI-powered world.

L	Learn	Understand AI.
E	Evaluate	Question and verify.
N	Navigate	Know when and how to use it.
S	Secure	Protect yourself and others.

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01

Welcome

AI is a new kind of tool, and you get to decide how, when, and whether to use it. This guide shows you how to try it safely and get real value from it.

You don't need to be good with computers. If you can send a text message or an email, you can use an AI chatbot.

Three things to remember

- **You're in charge.** AI can help you think. It should never decide for you.
- **It can be wrong.** AI sometimes sounds sure about things that aren't true. Check anything important.
- **Keep private things private.** Never type passwords, Social Security, Medicare, or bank numbers into a chatbot.

Good AI literacy isn't about using AI for everything. It's about knowing when, why, and how to use it.

02

What AI can help with

AI chatbots are best at explaining, organizing, and brainstorming. Big decisions still belong to you and the people you trust.

AI can help you...	Example	Keep for people
Understand confusing letters or forms	"Explain what 'explanation of benefits' means in plain words."	Questions about your own bills: call the company or SHIBA
Learn your phone or tablet	"How do I make the text bigger on my iPhone?"	Anything that asks for your password
Plan meals and recipes	"Three easy dinners for one with what's in my fridge."	Special diets: your doctor or dietitian
Write a first draft	"Help me write a thank-you note to my neighbor."	Heartfelt messages: add your own words
Explore a hobby or topic	"Tell me about the history of the Oregon Trail."	Checking facts: a librarian or trusted site
Prepare for appointments	"What questions should I ask about a new prescription?"	Medical decisions: your doctor or pharmacist
Plan outings	"Easy walking trails near Salem with benches."	Confirming hours and access: call ahead

03

Getting started safely

Ask a family member, friend, or librarian to sit with you the first time. It goes faster with a buddy.

1. **Choose one well-known chatbot.** Popular ones include ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, and Meta AI. Many phones also have an assistant built in. You only need one to start.
2. **Get the real app.** Download it from your phone's official app store (App Store on iPhone, Google Play on Android), or type the company's web address yourself. Don't use links from ads, texts, or emails.
3. **Be careful with payment screens.** The basic version of most chatbots is free. You never need to enter a card to get started. If an app demands payment right away, close it.
4. **Turn on privacy settings.** Look for "Settings," then "Privacy" or "Data controls." Turn off chat history or "improve the model" if you'd like your conversations kept out of training.
5. **Make the text comfortable.** Most apps follow your phone's text size setting. Some also let you speak your question out loud and hear the answer read back.
6. **Prefer talking to typing?** ChatGPT has a phone line, 1-800-ChatGPT (1-800-242-8478), free for 30 minutes a month from US and Canadian numbers. OpenAI calls it experimental. Look up the number yourself on OpenAI's official help page before you dial, the same way you would any number.
7. **Write down your two golden rules** and keep them by your device: *Never type private numbers or passwords. Never trust phone numbers or links from AI.*

04

Your first conversations

Use the Project LENS recipe: **START** with a clear question, **IMPROVE** it to get a better answer, and **CHECK** anything important.

Start with...	Then improve it with...	Check by...
"How do I video call my grandchildren on my phone?"	"Use five simple steps. I have an Android phone."	Trying it, with family on the other end
"Give me three easy, healthy breakfast ideas."	"Make them low in sugar and ready in 10 minutes."	Checking with your doctor if you have a special diet
"What's a good book like the ones by Louise Penny?"	"Only ones available at the library, please."	Searching your library's catalog
"Explain what a 'Medicare Advantage plan' is."	"Explain it like you're talking to a friend, in short sentences."	Calling Oregon SHIBA free at 1-800-722-4134
"Help me write a birthday note for my sister."	"Make it warm and funny, and keep it short."	Reading it over and adding your own words

Helpful phrases

- "Explain that more simply."
- "Ask me questions first."
- "Where did you get that information?"

05

Five rules to stay safe

1. **Keep private numbers private.** Never type Social Security, Medicare, bank, or card numbers, or passwords, into any chatbot.
2. **Get phone numbers and links yourself.** AI can make up numbers. Use the number on your card, a bill, or the official website.
3. **Check before you act.** For anything about money, health, or legal matters, confirm with a real professional or an official website.
4. **Only use apps you opened yourself.** Ignore "AI helpers" that pop up in ads, texts, or emails.
5. **Ask someone you trust.** If something feels confusing or urgent, stop and talk to family, a friend, or a librarian before you do anything else.

06

Fake voices, videos, and messages

Scammers now use AI to copy the voices of people you love and to make fake videos of celebrities and officials. You don't have to spot the fake. You just have to check before you act.

SCAM SAFETY

When something feels off: PAUSE. VERIFY. ASK.

1. **PAUSE.** It's always okay to hang up or close a message. Say: "I'll call you back." A real emergency will still be real in ten minutes.
2. **VERIFY.** Call the person or company back on a number you already have. Ask family callers for your family safe word.
3. **ASK.** Talk to someone you trust before you send money or share information.

Warning signs

- Someone you love calls in a panic and asks you to keep it secret
- A caller says you owe money or will be arrested
- Anyone asks for gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency, a Bitcoin ATM, or cash handed to a courier
- A video of a famous person promises a miracle cure or a sure investment

The *Project LENS Scam Prevention Guide* has much more on spotting and stopping scams.

07

AI and your wellbeing

Health questions

AI can help you understand a medical word or prepare questions for your doctor. It can't examine you, and it doesn't know your history. Never change a medicine, dose, or

treatment based on a chatbot. For reliable health information, try MedlinePlus from the National Library of Medicine, and always check with your doctor or pharmacist.

Company and conversation

Some people enjoy chatting with AI about books, history, or hobbies. That's fine. But AI is not a friend, and it's not a substitute for real relationships. It doesn't care about you the way people do, and it can tell you what you want to hear.

Staying connected

Use AI to help you connect with people, not replace them:

- Ask it to help you plan a call or visit with family
- Find local classes, clubs, or events at your library or senior center
- Learn to video chat with grandchildren

If you feel lonely or low, reach out to someone you trust. Dial **211** to find local programs and support in Oregon.

08

Where to get help

Help learning technology (free)

Who	How they help	How to reach them
Your local library	Free tech help and classes at many Oregon branches	Call or visit your branch
Answerland (State Library of Oregon)	Librarians answer questions, 24 hours a day, in English and Spanish	Live chat at answerland.org
ADRC of Oregon	Finds local senior services and programs	1-855-673-2372
211info	Any local help; interpreters available	Dial 211

If you think you've been scammed

It is not your fault. Call your bank first if money or cards are involved. Then:

Who	Help with	Phone
Oregon DOJ Consumer Protection	Scams and fraud	1-877-877-9392
National Elder Fraud Hotline	Help reporting fraud, for people 60+	1-833-372-8311
AARP Fraud Watch Helpline	Free support, no membership needed	1-877-908-3360
ODHS Abuse Reporting	If someone is taking advantage of you	1-855-503-7233
Oregon SHIBA	Medicare questions and Medicare fraud	1-800-722-4134

> **In an emergency or if you feel unsafe, call 911.**

Phone numbers verified on official websites, October 1, 2026.

09

My AI quick card

Cut out and keep by your phone or tablet.

Project LENS My AI Quick Card

START with a clear question. **IMPROVE** it: "Explain more simply." **CHECK** anything important.

Never type: passwords, Social Security, Medicare, bank, or card numbers

Never trust from AI: phone numbers or links. Find them yourself.

Health, money, legal: check with a real professional

If a call or message feels off: PAUSE. VERIFY. ASK.

We have a family safe word: ☐ Yes (keep it in your head, not on paper)

My helper for tech questions: _____ Phone: _____

Free help from a librarian, 24/7: answerland.org

Oregon scam help: Oregon DOJ 1-877-877-9392

National Elder Fraud Hotline: 1-833-372-8311

Emergency: 911

Project LENS: Learn. Evaluate. Navigate. Secure. projectlensai.org

This guide is for education only. It is not legal, financial, or medical advice.

AI changes quickly. We review this guide every six months. For the newest version, visit projectlensai.org.

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