

NEI Aging Today

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NORTHEAST IOWA
**Area Agency
on Aging**

NEI3A helps older persons respond to their evolving needs and choices.

National Family Caregiver Month

Every day, millions of older Americans (those 65 years of age or older) manage basic health and functioning needs with the help of family caregivers. These family caregivers (defined as relatives, partners, friends, or neighbors who provide assistance because of a personal relationship rather than financial compensation) set up medical appointments, coordinate services, help with daily tasks and nutrition, assist with transportation, manage medicines, and handle bills and banking.

Family caregivers encompass more than 1 in 5 Americans. In 2015 43.5 million people were caregivers; in 2020, this number increased to 53 million. These are individuals providing unpaid care to an adult with health or functional needs. (National Alliance for Caregiving). Whether the person they are caring for is living with them or living hun-

dreds of miles away, individuals caring for an older adult sacrifice a lot of their own time and even their wellbeing. Many caregivers are not only caring for their older adult family member or loved one; they are also balancing working outside of the home and caring for their own children as well.

Without a doubt, the services that family caregivers provide are invaluable. During November, we celebrate National Family Caregivers Month to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. It is a time to raise awareness of family caregiver issues and recognize the sacrifices they make for their loved ones. It is also an opportunity to educate family caregivers about self-care and increase awareness about services and supports available to assist in their journey. For more information, call NEI3A at 800-779-8707.



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Do you have what it takes to be a caregiver?

by Carol Nelson, RN, BSN, MBA

The time has come when a family member needs assistance and you're struggling to understand what will be needed of you as you move into the role of full- or part-time caregiver.

Many new caregivers know they will need to rearrange their schedules, juggle doctors' visits and prescriptions, plan shopping trips and perform regular housekeeping chores, but some do not consider what will be needed of them emotionally and functionally before preparing for this new important role.

Things to consider

Caregivers must master a variety of qualities to be successful and provide the best care possible, including interpersonal and management skills that you may have never drawn on before.

Here are three traits you need to consider before becoming a family caregiver:

1. Physical strength and stamina. Caregivers must perform a variety of physical tasks, including housekeeping chores, carrying groceries and lifting a loved one. Be prepared to be on your feet for long periods of time and know that your waking hours will revolve around your family member's needs. Maintaining

your own health through exercise, a balanced diet, a good night's sleep and some recharging time will help you shoulder through the burdens of your daily tasks.

2. Time management and organizational skills. Do you know what medications your loved one takes and when? How much time do you need to allow to get your loved one ready to go to their doctor's appointments? Do you know exactly where their medications are? Being able to manage your time or lay your hands on important medication as needed could be critical when seconds count.
3. Compassion and interpersonal skills. Being able to understand your loved one's discomfort or nurturing a trusting relationship with the person you will be caring for are qualities that

caregivers need to hone to be effective. These are not "hard" skills like organization or time management, but they are necessary when providing care for someone who is suffering from disease, illness or physical distress.

Do you also have support?

Becoming a family caregiver does not mean you need to isolate yourself and your loved one. In fact, having outside support as a caregiver is important when you consider taking on this role.

The number of family caregivers is increasing as the number of Baby Boomers continue to age. According to one report, that number increased by 9.5 million from 2015 to 2020 and continues to grow.

That also means there are more caregiver support groups



you can join to help you improve your skills and outlook. Joining a support group will put you in touch with others who understand your frustrations and know where you are coming from because they experience the same problems.

It also helps to have other family members who can assist. Bringing family members together to discuss long-term care and assist with issues that arise outside of care, such as dealing with legal or financial concerns, is an action that needs to be considered. For example, determine who has the legal power to manage finances. Can the caregiver or someone else write checks to pay bills if your loved one is incapacitated? Legally, decisions should be made when your family member is competent, such as power of attorney, healthcare surrogate, wills, trusts, advanced directives, and end of life decisions.

You will also need to have back-up contingencies when you need to take time off due to your own illness or simply to recharge. Having a network of family, friends or even paid caregivers can provide you with this type of support.

Long-term caregivers are at increased risk of depression because of lack of support, time off and compensation. When considering if becoming your loved one's caregiver is a role you can perform, determining the support you will receive

from other family members and friends is a priority.

The benefits of caregiving

Now that you have considered all the challenges you face should you become your loved one's caregiver, you can also weigh these against the benefits.

For example, many seniors who can stay at home are healthier and happier. Being able to provide your loved one with the ability to stay at home allows for a sense of freedom to do the things you both consider necessary for long-term care.

There are also benefits solely for the caregiver. These include the chance to put your organizational and management skills to good use, to build an even closer relationship with the person you're caring for

and to create memories that last a lifetime for both of you.

Most caregivers would tell you after their loved one has passed, that they would do it all over again without question, despite the challenges, family disagreements, lack of support, lack of sleep and more.

Becoming a caregiver is not something to take lightly and is not always a choice, but there is support available. Just remember you are not alone.

Carol Nelson, RN, BSN, MBA, is Healthcare Solutions Manager for FirstLight Home Care. With more than 35 years of experience in Medicare and private duty home care services, hospice and palliative care, and assisted living management, Carol has a heart for service and a dedication to the health and well-being of older adults. For more articles like this one, visit caregiver.com.

Without a doubt, the services that the family caregiver provides is invaluable. NEI3A is here to help caregivers in many ways!

- Caregiver support groups
- Providing information about assistance for caregivers available in your community
- Assistance with making and setting up referrals, applying for community resources, and receiving education on specific topics related to caregiving
- Providing case management for long-term advocacy
- Offering training and education such as Powerful Tools for Caregivers, a six week class to relieve stress and balance caregiving in your life
- Respite care to allow caregivers a break to rest and recharge
- Grandpad devices to keep caregivers connected with family and their loved one.

If would like more information about the services NEI3A has to offer caregivers call 1-800-779-8707.



November is National Caregiver Month

Being a caregiver is both rewarding and challenging. Make sure to thank those you know who are providing care for a loved one and let them know how much you appreciate what they are doing to help their loved one remain independent.

Supporting You in Your Caregiver Journey

Being a family caregiver can be stressful. We are here to help! Connect with our caregiver professionals and other caregivers to share experiences and learn about available resources at one of our support group options:

Join by phone:

- Each Wednesday from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 - Third Monday of each month from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.
- Dial 1-800-264-8432 and use participant code 961847#.

Attend Virtually:

Meet face to face with other caregivers each Tuesday from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. To join, click on the link on our website at www.nei3a.org/our-services/caregiver-resources.

Meet In Person:

Meetings will be held on the third Monday of each month from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the NEI3A Decorah Regional Office located at 607 Washington Street in Decorah.



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For more information call 1-800-779-8707

Elder Abuse

One of the most overlooked public health hazards in the United States.

The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that between one and two million elderly adults have suffered from some form of elder abuse. To understand how to prevent elder abuse, one must first be able to identify it.

Abuse comes in many forms:

- **Physical Abuse:** Use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind with an elderly person.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Infliction of anguish, pain, or distress through verbal or non-verbal acts.
- **Financial/material exploitation:** Illegal or improper use of an elder's funds, property, or assets.

- **Neglect:** Refusal, or failure, to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elderly person.
- **Abandonment:** Desertion of an elderly person by an individual who has physical custody of the elder or by a person who has assumed responsibility for providing care to the elder.
- **Self-neglect:** Behaviors of an elderly person that threaten the elder's health or safety.

Signs and symptoms of elder abuse can include:

- Injuries such as bruises, cuts, or broken bones
- Malnourishment or weight loss
- Poor hygiene
- Bedsores or other preventable conditions

- Missing medical aids such as glasses, walker, dentures, hearing aid, or medications.
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities
- Symptoms of anxiety, depression, or confusion
- Unexplained transactions or loss of money
- Hazardous, unsafe, or unclean living conditions
- Withdrawal from family members or friends

If you or someone you care about is experiencing elder abuse, report it. To report an incident or concern of abuse or neglect, call Iowa's Adult Protective Services Agency at 1-800-362-2178. To find the reporting number for a different state, call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116.

NEI3A Staffing Announcements



Marilyn Zweibahmer has joined NEI3A as Aging Specialist-Information & Assistance. Marilyn was most recently a program director and support staff at Northeast Iowa Behavioral Health.



Anna Williams has joined NEI3A as an Aging Specialist III in the nutrition program. Anna was most recently a Health & Wellness Director at the YWCA.

HomeMeds Medication Management

Are your medications putting you at risk?

As you get older, the way medications work in your body can change. And while medications are very important in controlling many illnesses, they can also have serious side effects.

Each year, nearly 100,000 older adults go to the ER because of medication-related issues, including falls, dizziness, heart issues, or confusion.

What is HomeMeds?

HomeMeds is a free review of all your medications by a pharmacist. If you answer YES to some or all of these questions, you may benefit from a review:

- You see multiple doctors or fill prescriptions at multiple pharmacies
- You take over-the-counter drugs or supplements
- You have recently experienced a fall, dizziness, or unusual confusion
- You have recently been to the ER or hospital
- You take blood thinners or diabetes medications

Bringing a complete list of your medications to your doctor appointments will help your physician!

How HomeMeds Works:

NEI3A staff provides a virtual visit for medication inventory and assessment



NEI3A staff enters medication information into computerized assessment



Pharmacists review information to find out if any medications taken may cause ill effects.



If any potential problems occur, the pharmacist will contact the consumer's physician for review and discussion



NEI3A staff will provide you a complete medication list that can be taken to doctor appointments or given to family members.



For more information or to schedule a review call 1-800-779-8707.

Medicare Open Enrollment Period

Medicare's Open Enrollment Period runs October 15 through December 7 and is the time of year when you can make certain changes to your Medicare coverage. You can make as many changes as you need to your Medicare coverage during Open Enrollment. The last change you make will take effect on January 1, 2022. Take action during Open Enrollment to make sure your coverage will meet your needs in 2022.

Know the changes you can make during Medicare's Open Enrollment Period

The changes you can make include:

- Joining a new Medicare Advantage Plan or Part D prescription drug plan
- Switching from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan
- Switching from a Medicare Ad-

vantage Plan to Original Medicare (with or without a Part D plan)

Note: Depending on the state in which you live, you may also have rights to purchase a Medigap policy. Contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Review your coverage for 2022

Medicare Advantage and Part D plans usually change each year. Make sure that your drugs will still be covered next year and that your providers and pharmacies will still be in the plan's network.

- If you have Original Medicare, visit www.medicare.gov or read the 2022 Medicare & You handbook to learn about Medicare's benefits for the upcoming year.
- If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D plan, read your plan's Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage (EOC).

o Explore other plans in your area. You may find a cheaper plan that meets your healthcare and prescription drug needs.

o Medicare Advantage Plans have significant flexibility in the supplemental benefits they are allowed to offer their members. This includes the ability to offer benefits to some members that are not directly considered medical care, like nutrition services. This means that there are many factors to consider when comparing Medicare Advantage Plan options during Open Enrollment. Carefully review your plan's EOC and any other plan materials.

For more information call 877-839-2675 and say "Medicare" when prompted, or use the SHIP locator at www.shiphelp.org.

Source: Sept. 21 SHIP Handout Medicare Open Enrollment Period

Take Time to Get A Flu Vaccination

Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever to protect yourself and the people around you from flu, and to help reduce the strain on healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
- Flu vaccines help to reduce the burden of flu illnesses and hospitalizations on the health care system and conserve medical resources.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get annual flu vaccine by the end of October.
- Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions, and people 65 years and older.
- Vaccination also is important for caregivers, and other people who live with or care for people at higher risk to keep from spreading the flu to them.



Craving Comfort Foods

In the fall, we crave warm, hearty foods like cheesy casseroles and hearty soups. Often, though, these “comfort foods” are high in fat, sodium, and calories.

The next time you make your favorite “comfort foods,” try these tips to make them healthier and even more enjoyable:

- Add extra vegetables of all types—dark green; red and orange; beans, peas, and lentils; starchy; and other vegetables—without added sauces, fats, or salt. Double the vegetables in a soup or casserole recipe to add extra vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

- Switch up your grains, making at least half of your grains whole grain. Like rice? Try replacing white rice with brown rice in your recipe. This month’s recipe uses brown rice.

- Choose reduced-fat dairy foods, including fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, in casseroles and cream soups. Reduced-fat cheeses, for example, have less fat but just as much flavor and melt just like full-fat cheese.



- Use lean protein foods, including lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; and nuts, seeds, and soy products. Cooking on a budget? Canned meats are just as nutritious, cheaper, and easier to use in casseroles.

Source: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025*, bit.ly/3kf72S4.

Physical Activity Primer

Feeling tired, slow, and sluggish? People often don’t feel their best when they are not getting enough physical activity. But how much is enough? Experts say, for most of us, at least 150 minutes of physical activity every week promotes health and well-being. For the best results, aim for a combination of aerobic, muscle-strengthening, and flexibility activities each week.

Ideally, we need 150 minutes of aerobic activities weekly. Aerobic activities increase your breathing and heart rate and improve heart and lung fitness. Jogging, brisk walking, biking, and swimming are examples.

Muscle-strengthening activities build and maintain both muscles and bones. Lifting weights, using a resistance band, or doing weight-bearing activities such as push-ups, squats, or yoga are all examples. Aim to do these twice weekly, in addition to your aerobic activity.

Flexibility activities help joints to move through their full range of motion. You should enjoy stretching exercises such as yoga and Tai Chi two to three times weekly.

Source: *Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Spend Smart. Eat Smart.*, spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/physical-activity/.



Source: *Words on Wellness Newsletter* <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/wellness>



Thai Chicken Curry

Serving Size: 1 cup chicken curry, 1/3 cup rice | Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 C instant brown rice
- 1 lb. boneless/skinless chicken
- 1 onion, chopped (1 C)
- 2 carrots, chopped (1 C)
- 1/2 t ground black pepper
- 1/4 t salt
- 2 t Thai red curry paste
- 1 C light coconut milk (1/2 of a 13.5-ounce can)
- 1 C chopped spinach

Directions:

1. Cook instant brown rice according to package directions. Set aside.
2. Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces.
3. Spray a large frying pan with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken, onion, carrots, ground black pepper, and salt. Cook over medium-high heat for 8 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium low. Stir in curry paste and coconut milk. Simmer for 5–10 minutes until vegetables are tender, stirring frequently.
5. Stir in spinach. Simmer for 3 more minutes, stirring frequently.
6. Serve curry over brown rice.

Nutrition information per serving: 290 calories, 7g fat, 3g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 85mg cholesterol, 390mg sodium, 29g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 5g sugar, 28g protein This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website.

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Sudoku Puzzle

3		7				4	5	
8	9	5				7		
2			3	5				
7		2	9		4	1		
	3	1						9
			6		3			4
5						9		
		4		2				8
					1			

Trees Word Find

Find all of the Trees that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message – a Greek Proverb.

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Apple | Elm | Pecan |
| Apricot | Fir | Plum |
| Ash | Ginkgo | Pine |
| Aspen | Goldenrain | Poplar |
| Arborvitae | Hazelnut | Redbud |
| Bald Cypress | Hemlock | Rubber Tree |
| Beech | Hickory | Sequoia |
| Birch | Larch | Spruce |
| Boxwood | Linden | Sycamore |
| Buckeye | London Plane | Tuliptree |
| Butternut | Maple | Walnut |
| Catalpa | Nectarine | Witchhazel |
| Cedar | Oak | Willow |
| Cherry | Palm | Yellowwood |
| Chestnut | Peach | |
| Cottonwood | Pear | |

B G O L D E N R A I N A S O B C M L E
 I I D T T E E T S C Y T G L U R O P H
 W S R O G U R R A P U E E A T T I H S
 W H B C O E N T T L R Z N L T N O E A
 P L A I H W A L I R A U O D E M N M Y
 O E L R N L X P E H E N C H R P A L R
 P L D P P H T O H Z D B C E N A C O R
 L N C A T R I C B O A E B T U T E C E
 A C Y A E N T C N R E H E U T R P K H
 R E P E R I E P K B E S D N R W I H C
 O D R P W B L D O O W N O T T O C F R
 S A E E A A O S N E R H O S H A D E E
 P R S T N L H R R I K Y W E E C D Y T
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 U E E L P A M Y O I S H O C U P N E A
 M E N I R A T C E N T L L D P L L N P
 P E A R C O G K N I G A L L A S P E N
 E V E Y W I L L O W R S E W L A R C H
 I T S S E Q U O I A I E Y E K C U B N

Source: Livewire Puzzles

Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging

Helping older persons respond to their evolving needs and choices



When you need help finding the services you need to remain in your home and community as you age, our experts are here to help, connecting you to the services you need to remain independent.



Being a caregiver is truly a selfless task. Our caregiving experts provide caregiver support through support groups and resources to help you in your caregiving journey.



Staying active helps to keep you healthy and reduces the risk of falls as you age, exercising both your mind and body! Tai Chi, Matter of Balance, and Better Choices Better Health are a few of the health based programs we offer to promote active aging.



Getting the nutrition you need is a key component to remaining healthy and independent. From nutrition education opportunities to help you make healthy decisions or providing nutritious meals, we help to enhance your health with a variety of nutrition services.

Serving Northeast Iowa with regional offices in Decorah, Dubuque, Marshalltown and Waterloo

www.nei3a.org 1-800-779-8707



NEI Aging Today is published quarterly to entertain, educate, and inform our readers. The opinions expressed in **NEI Aging Today** do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Agency on Aging, its governing bodies, or Advisory Councils. Articles and other comments are welcome. NEI Aging Today reserves the right to publish all or part of material submitted. Deadline is the 10th of the month prior to printing.

In accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Aging Discrimination Act of 1975, it is the policy of Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging to provide services to all persons eligible under the provisions of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, or age.



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