Participate in Activities You Enjoy As You Age

There are many things you can do to help boost your health as you age, including making healthy food choices and not smoking. But did you know that participating in social and other activities you enjoy can also help support healthy aging?

As you grow older, you may find yourself spending more time at home alone. Being lonely or socially isolated is not good for your overall health. For example, it can increase feelings of depression or anxiety, which can have a negative impact on many other aspects of your health. If you find yourself spending a lot of time alone, try participating in activities you find meaningful — those that create a sense of purpose in your daily life.

Benefits of an active lifestyle
Engaging in social and productive activities you enjoy, such as taking an art class, joining a hiking club, or becoming a volunteer in your community, may help to maintain your well-being and independence as you age. An active lifestyle is more than just getting your daily steps in. It includes doing activities that are meaningful to you and benefit your mind, spirit, and body.

Research has shown that older adults with an active lifestyle:
- **Are less likely to develop certain diseases.** Participating in hobbies and other social activities may lower risk for developing some health problems, including dementia, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer.
- **Have a longer lifespan.** Studies looking at people’s outlooks and how long they live show that happiness, life satisfaction, and a sense of purpose are all linked to living longer. Doing things that you enjoy may help cultivate those positive feelings.
• **Are happier and less depressed.** Studies suggest that older adults who participate in activities they find meaningful, such as volunteering in their communities or being physically active, say they feel happier and healthier.

• **Are better prepared to cope.** When people feel happier and healthier, they are more likely to be resilient, which is our ability to bounce back and recover from difficult situations. Positive emotions, optimism, physical and mental health, and a sense of purpose are all associated with resilience.

• **May be able to improve their thinking abilities.** Research suggests that participating in certain activities, such as those that are mentally stimulating or involve physical activity, may have a positive effect on memory — and the more variety the better. Other studies are providing new information about ways that creative activities, such as music or dance, can help older adults with memory problems or dementia.

**Activities to consider:**
There are plenty of places to look for opportunities to engage in activities you enjoy, depending on your interests and ability. Following are ideas that might work for you. Some of these include activities that can be enjoyed even from a distance using phones, computers, and other devices. Others can be done alone. So even if you’re in a rural area or have other restrictions, you can still find ways to engage in activities you like.

**Connect with family and friends:**
- Play cards or games with friends or online
- Travel with a group of older adults
- Video chat or call your friends and family.
- Try different restaurants with your friends.
- Join a group interested in a hobby, such as knitting, hiking, birdwatching, painting, or wood carving
- Reconnect with old friends through your high school or college alumni association.

**Go out and get moving**
- Garden (indoors or out) or do yard work
- Take an exercise class or do home exercises
- Go dancing
- Join a sports club for older adults, like a bowling club or bocce league
- Walk or bicycle with a friend or neighbor
- Take a swimming class
- Play with your grandchildren
- Take a stroll around the neighborhood or on nature trails

**Learn something new**
- Take a cooking, art, dance, or computer class
- Form or join a book or film club
- Try yoga, tai chi, or another new physical activity
- Learn to play a musical instrument
- Visit local museums

**Become more active in your community**
- Visit a community or senior center and take part in its events and activities
- Serve or deliver meals at a local center
- Join a committee or help out with an activity at your place of worship
- Volunteer at a school, library, museum, hospital, or animal shelter

**Adopt healthy stress-relieving habits**
- Read a book, magazine, or newspaper
- Practice gratitude and mindfulness
- Do tai-chi or yoga
- Cook your favorite healthy meal

*Source: National Institutes of Health - nih.gov*
Farmers markets are becoming more popular, serving not only as a way for people to purchase locally grown produce, but also a way for them to connect and socialize with others in their community. Are you shopping at your local farmers market? If not, here are some reasons you should!

**Farm Fresh:** The fruits and vegetables at the farmers market are the freshest and tastiest available. Fruits and vegetables you find at the grocery store are often several days old before they reach the produce aisle sometimes going through processes to stimulate ripening. Farmers market foods are as real and fresh as it gets – fresh from the farm!

**Enjoy the Season:** The food you buy at a local farmers market is seasonal, reflecting the truest flavors. Some nutritionists suggest eating seasonally available foods is better for your body, because that was the way humans ate for thousands of years before refrigeration.

**Peak Nutrition:** Farmer’s market food is generally picked at the peak of their ripeness when the plants’ natural sugars are at their peak. Eating produce when it is ripe not only tastes better, but it also provides the best nutrition possible.

**Variety to Spice up Your Life:** At the Farmer’s Market you will find many different types of fruits and vegetables that you won’t find in your local supermarket. And that’s not all! Many times the farmers will give you tips on how to cook the items they are selling.

**Affordable:** You can find a variety of fresh, great tasting produce at more affordable prices than a supermarket.

**Connect with Your Community:** The Farmers Market is a great place to gather and feel connected to your community. To find a local farmers market in your area visit: tinyurl.com/iowafarmersmarkets

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**Visit your Local Farmers Market**

**Farmers Market Checks**

The Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program provides qualified seniors aged 60 and over with coupons (checks) to use at farmer’s markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs for unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey. Ten checks totaling $50 are given to each eligible participant once each program year. The checks are valid through October 31.

Eligible participants must:
- Be 60 years of age or older, born in or before 1963.
- Live in the NEI3A service area
- Gross household income (i.e., before taxes) must be no more than $26,973 for a household size of 1 and $36,482 for a household size of 2.

If you received an application for farmers market checks last year, you will automatically be mailed an application this year.

If you would like to download an application, use your phone’s camera to scan the QR code, visit our website https://www.nei3a.org/our-services/farmers-market-checks.aspx, or call 1-800-779-8707 and follow the prompts.
Medicare Fraud Prevention Week focuses on the actions everyone can take to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. Medicare Fraud Prevention Week starts on June 5, or 6/5, because most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65. Medicare Fraud Prevention Week is hosted by the Senior Medicare Patrol, known as the SMP.

SMP is a national program that educates Medicare beneficiaries about Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. Learn how you can protect yourself and your loved ones from Medicare fraud by joining us on 6/5 to kick off this week of celebration and education!

Why is this week important? Medicare loses an estimated $60 billion each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse. Every day, issues related to these concerning matters affect people across the country, often costing them money, time, and well-being. Medicare-related errors contribute to this annual loss even though errors can be honest health care billing mistakes. However, a pattern of errors committed by a physician or provider could be considered a red flag of potential fraud or abuse if not corrected. When people steal from Medicare, it hurts us all and is big business for criminals. Some common examples of fraud or abuse could include:

- Charging for services or supplies that were not provided
- Misrepresenting a diagnosis, a person’s identity, the service provided, or other facts to justify payment
- Prescribing or providing excessive or unnecessary tests and services

Falling prey to consumer scams or health care fraud may mean that your Medicare number has been “compromised” as a result of medical identity theft. Theft from Medicare leaves less available funds for those needing services now as well as those needing Medicare in the future.

How will this week be celebrated and observed? The most effective way to stop fraud from occurring is to prevent it in the first place. Educating yourself and your loved ones on how to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse is the best place to start.

If you are a Medicare beneficiary, start the week by learning how to read your Medicare statements! Read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) in the paper form that is mailed to you or go online to Medicare.gov and review claims digitally.

Caregivers, help by educating yourself and your clients or loved ones on how to prevent and detect health care fraud, errors, and abuse. Be on the lookout for things like boxes of knee braces (known as durable medical equipment, or DME) lying around the house. This is a common scam and may mean your client or loved one has been a victim. Remind your clients or loved ones to never give out their Medicare number or other personal information over the phone.
Families, help by talking to your loved ones about protecting their Medicare number just as they would a credit card number. Encourage them to check their Medicare statements for fraud, errors, or abuse and never give out their Medicare number over the phone for any reason. Help your loved ones create a Medicare.gov account to access their Medicare claims online or remind them to open and review their statements when they come in the mail every three months. You can also register their phone number on “do not call” lists and go to optoutprescreen.com to opt out of marketing mailings.

Partners and professionals, help by sharing SMP information on social media, referring clients and consumers to the SMP, and inviting the SMP to speak during a shared event. Identify ways to collaborate on mission-related topics and information.

Health care providers, help by talking to patients about health care-related scams such as those related to durable medical equipment, genetic testing, or new, plastic, or chipped Medicare cards. Reassure them that your office and their other doctors’ offices are not going to call to offer them services or equipment. Teach them that products and services should only be ordered by doctors they regularly see, like you, and that needed medical items should never be ordered through TV ads or unsolicited calls.

Lastly, as a community, help by looking out for your older neighbors. If you overhear someone talking about Medicare, don’t be afraid to give information about the local SMP and SHIP. Encourage those you know to talk to a trusted source about their Medicare questions and tell your neighbors about the most recent Medicare scams. Consider volunteering with your local SMP!

To learn more, visit smpresource.org or follow the Iowa SMP and the SMP National Resource Center on Facebook.

NEI3A Adds New Board of Director Members

We are proud to announce the addition of four new members to our Board of Directors. In April, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to add the following members to begin serving a three-year term:

- Jessie Tibbott, Community Development Director at Good Neighbor Society in Manchester
- Kari Harbaugh, Family Resource Center Coordinator, Guttenberg Municipal Hospital in Guttenberg
- Amanda Stahley, Community Relations Coordinator at Arlington Place in Oelwein
- Janell McElree, Discharge Planner at Gundersen Palmer Hospitals and Clinics in West Union

These four will be joining the remaining board members, which include:

- Les Askelson (Winnebago County)
- Jacob Bates (Black Hawk County)
- Dan Byrnes (Allamakee County)
- Sally Davie (Jackson County)
- Diana Dawley (Poweshiek County)
- Julie Hinders (Black Hawk County)
- Jean Maddux (Black Hawk County)
- Patrick Murray (Howard County)
- Greg Orwoll (Dubuque County)
- Connie Perry (Hardin County)
- Chelsea Petersen (Bremer County)
- Kayla Reyes (Black Hawk County)
- Valerie Schwager (Black Hawk County)
- Katie Thornton-Lang (Grundy County)
- Shannon Zoffka (Tama County)

The Board of Directors are chosen from various counties throughout NEI3A’s service area to ensure older individuals are represented.

NEI3A’s Board Meetings are open to the public. Meetings will be held at 11:00 a.m. on June 22, August 24, October 26, and December 21. If you want to attend a meeting, please contact Vicki Hyke at 319-874-6874 or vhyke@nei3a.org.
Plan Your Move

The health benefits of regular physical activity are well known, but many of us do not make it a part of our daily routine. Are you active for at least 30 minutes 5 days a week, or 150 minutes a week? Do you engage in muscle strengthening activity 2 days each week? If not, check out these tips:

- **Keep track!** Schedule time on your calendar for at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days each week. Find activities you enjoy like taking a walk outside or going for a swim.
- **Ask for a partner to join you.** Enjoy time with friends and family when you are active. Find an exercise partner to support you and hold you accountable.
- **Join a fitness class.** Joining a class can help you stick with it.
- **Find activities you can do all year.** Find an indoor place to walk like the grocery store or Walmart or watch an online exercise video when it isn’t nice outside.

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach - extension.iastate.edu

Elder abuse is often referred to as the "silent problem" because many people experiencing it are reluctant to report the abuse. Often they feel ashamed or embarrassed, afraid of their perpetrator or that the abuse will worsen if reported, and even guilty that they are somehow to blame. In some instances, they cannot speak out due to impairments.

It is up to all of us to stop elder abuse. Some signs to watch for include sudden changes in behavior, changes in spending or money management, unexplained physical injuries, and unhealthy or unsafe living conditions.

If you suspect mistreatment, contact your local adult protective services, long-term ombudsman, or law enforcement, who can investigate. If you have questions about local community resources, contact NEI3A at 1-800-779-8707.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

Approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older are abused or neglected yearly. Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, financial, and sexual. It also includes neglected people and those who neglect themselves (self-neglect).

The offenders are not always strangers preying on the vulnerable – often, abuse comes from people seniors trust the most. Abusers may be spouses, family members, or professionals in a position of trust.

June 15, 2023

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) Building Strong Support for Elders

June 15, 2023
Diet and Inflammation

A diet focused on eating more plant-based foods and less saturated fats will help lower chronic inflammation. Chronic inflammation can lead to disease. Choose anti-inflammatory foods to improve your health and well-being, lower your risk for disease, and improve your quality of life. Plant-based foods, such as berries and dark leafy vegetables, have anti-inflammatory properties. Base your diet on whole, nutrient-dense foods that contain antioxidants, and avoid highly processed products high in added sugar and fat. Your anti-inflammatory diet should provide a healthy balance of protein, carbohydrate, and fat.

Easy Roasted Veggies

Serving Size: 1 cup | Serves: 5

Ingredients:
• 5 cups of vegetables cut into uniform sized pieces (carrots, mushrooms, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, winter squash)
• 1 tablespoon oil (canola or vegetable)
• 2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning
• 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
• 1/8 teaspoon salt

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.
3. Spread vegetables evenly in a single layer on the pan.
5. Sprinkle with Italian seasoning, ground black pepper, and salt. Stir.
6. Bake for 20-40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Bake until vegetables are tender.

Nutrition information per serving:
Nutrition Information per serving: 90 calories, 3 g total fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 95 mg sodium, 16 g total carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 2 g protein.

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu
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 reviews 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.
This question, while so simple, receives a different answer matter who you ask. And as we age, our immune systems don’t respond as well to illnesses making it essential to stay up to date with recommended vaccines, including boosters for enhanced protection.

One major challenge for immunizing older adults is the misconception that vaccines are only for children. However, older adults face a higher risk of complications from vaccine-preventable diseases, and there are now 15 diseases that adults age 65 and older should get vaccinated against.

The Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging and six of the state’s Area Agencies on Aging have launched a campaign to increase the understanding of the importance of vaccinations and dismiss common misinformation about vaccinations. Use your phone’s camera to scan the QR code above for more information.
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:

Attend Virtually:
Meet face-to-face with other caregivers each Monday 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 or use your phone’s camera to scan the QR code to the right.

Meet In Person:
- **Decorah**: Third Monday of each month from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the Decorah Regional Office located at 607 Washington Street in Decorah. For more information contact Kelly Kuennen at 563-277-6024
- **Dubuque**: Last Monday each month from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEI3A Office - 2728 Asbury Road in Dubuque. For more information, please contact Carol Hughey, at 563-587-4983
- **Waterloo**: First Tuesday of each month from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. location to be determined. For more information contact Anne Marie Kofta at 319-287-1166.

For more information about caregiver services please call 1-800-779-8707
**Sudoku Puzzle**

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 1 4 9
6 3 9 5
9 2 4
6 2 8
5 3 6 9
4 9 5 1
6 7 8
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**Summer Word Find**
Find and circle all of the summer words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional summer item.

- Ants
- August
- Barbecue
- Baseball
- Beach
- Bees
- Bicycle
- Blue Sky
- Boating
- Breeze
- Camping
- Fishing
- Flies
- Flowers
- Gardening
- Golf
- Green Grass
- Hat
- Hiking
- Ice Cream
- July
- June
- Mosquitoes
- No School
- Picnic
- Roller Blades
- Sandals
- Skateboard
- Soccer
- Solstice
- Sprinklers
- Sunburn
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Sunshine
- Suntan
- Sweat
- Swimming
- UV Rays
- Wasps
- Water Fights
- Watermelon

**Source:** Livewire Puzzles
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.

Donate Today!
You can help older adults in your community get the services they need to age with dignity and respect.

Use your phone’s camera to scan the QR code or visit https://www.nei3a.org/support-nei3a/

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