

# NEAging Today

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NORTHEAST IOWA  
**Area Agency  
 on Aging**

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

## Preventing and Managing the “Winter Blues”

Many people struggle to get through the winter season. The weather is often cold and gloomy, causing many to spend more time indoors. While many chalk the mood change up to the “winter blues,” it could be attributed to a seasonal depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

While scientists do not fully understand what causes SAD, it is believed to be brought on by the earlier sunsets and colder winter weather, affecting the body’s natural circadian rhythm (body clock) and changes in brain chemistry. These biochemical changes can cause symptoms of depression. SAD can affect people differently, and the severity of the symptoms can vary. While we mainly associate SAD with the winter months, typically starting late fall or early winter and going away in the spring or summer, there is also a summer SAD that is far less common.

### Symptoms of SAD include:

- Loss of interest in activities
- Feeling agitated
- Low energy/feeling sluggish
- Issues with sleeping
- Difficulty concentrating
- Wanting to be alone
- Appetite changes/weight gain
- Feeling of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Frequent thoughts of death or suicide

### SAD Affects on Seniors and Caregivers

Many caregivers already deal with chronic caregiver stress, which can include symptoms of depression. SAD can intensify these symptoms and worsen depression. In addition, many older adults who require caregiving also have symptoms of depression. According to the CDC, 15-20% of older adults over 65 experience depression.

It is important to watch for warning signs of SAD and take action to prevent deeper depression. While it is normal to feel down occasionally, when these feelings last for days at a time and not being able to be motivated to do enjoyable activities, it is a sign to see a doctor.

## Ways to Prevent or Manage SAD

### Increase Light Exposure

It seems easy enough, but getting more exposure to natural light is one of the first steps in preventing and managing SAD symptoms. Opening window coverings, spending the majority of time in the brightest room of the home, or getting outside in the sun every day – even for a 10-minute walk or just sitting on the deck are a few ways to increase your natural light exposure. Light therapy is another way to increase light exposure without going outside and is a good option when mobility is an issue.

### Get Regular Exercise

Exercise is widely known to help reduce overall stress and anxiety, so it is no surprise that the benefits would also help reduce SAD symptoms. In addition, increasing physical activity can also help tire the body, which helps improve sleep quality.

NEI3A offers some exercise classes, including Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention and Seniors in Motion, with modifications for performing the activities while seated. There are also simple exercise programs offered through YouTube and free exercise apps that can be downloaded on your phone. While caregivers' time to exercise can be limited, there are even some quick four or five-minute workouts available. For example, simply doing squats and lunges while waiting for the microwave would help with symptoms of stress and anxiety.

Awareness of the symptoms and risk of developing SAD can help you be more proactive in mitigating the symptoms or realizing when it is time to reach out for help. (*National Institute of Mental Health*)

# NEI3A Board of Directors Elects Officers and New Members

Each year, in October, the Board of Directors holds an Annual Meeting to determine the new slate of officers for the upcoming year. The 2023 Board of Directors officers include:

- Dan Byrnes – President
- Jacob Bates – Vice President
- Greg Orwoll – Treasurer
- Valerie Schwager – Secretary
- Patrick Murray – Past President

During the Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors votes on new board nominations presented to them by the Board Governance Committee. Two new board members were accepted to begin serving a three-year terms beginning January 1, 2023. The new board members include:

- Julie Hinders, Professor and MHA Program Director at Upper Iowa University
- Kayla Reyes, Community Representative with Care Initiatives Hospice

In addition, Diana Dawley and Jean Maddux, were reelected to serve another three-year term on the board.

The Board of Directors also recognized two dedicated board members who have completed their final three-year term.

- Kathy Babcock has served on the board for 12 years serving on the Care Management Committee, Personnel Committee, and Advisory Committee.
- Elaine Eshbaugh has served on the board for 12 years serving on the Senior Services Committee, Personnel Committee, Nominating Committee, and Board Governance Committee.

Below is a complete list of the 2023 NEI3A Board of Directors:

- Les Askelson
- Mike Holmen
- Kayla Reyes
- Jacob Bates
- Jean Maddux
- Valerie Schwager
- Dan Byrnes
- Patrick Murray
- Katie Lang
- Sally Davies
- Greg Orwoll
- Shannon Zoffka
- Diana Dawley
- Connie Perry
- Chelsea Petersen
- Julie Hinders

NEI3A's Board Meetings are open to the public. Meetings will be held at 11:00 a.m. on February 23, April 27, June 22, August 24, October 26, and December 21. If you would like to attend a meeting, please contact Vicki Hyke at 319-874-6847 or email [vhyke@nei3a.org](mailto:vhyke@nei3a.org).

# Scammers Try to Convince Beneficiaries that ‘New’ Medicare Cards are Coming

By: Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center



There are usually changes to Medicare each year but one thing that is **NOT** new this year for Medicare beneficiaries: a Medicare card. Scammers may try to convince you otherwise.

They may falsely tell you that Medicare is issuing plastic, metal, or chipped cards or even black and white COVID-19 cards. The scammers may tell you that in order for them to send your new card, you will need to verify your identity, which could include your Medicare number. This is an attempt to get your personal or financial information.

## Red Flags to Notice Are Anyone

- Calling, unsolicited, and claiming to be from Medicare
- Needing your personal information, such as your Social Security or credit card numbers, so that they can send you an updated Medicare card
- Saying your card is expiring and unless they send you a new one you:
  - Will be charged a fine
  - Can't get medical products or services
- Wanting to verify your number to get a new card

Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse. If you think you may have experienced potential Medicare card fraud or abuse or think your medical identity has been compromised, please contact your local SMP by calling 1-877-808-2468 or visiting [www.smpresources.org](http://www.smpresources.org) and clicking “Find Help in Your State.”

## Simple Steps to Help Prevent Falls This Winter

Simple everyday actions such as stepping out of a car in a parking lot, going for an afternoon walk, or stepping outside to get your mail can suddenly become treacherous in the dead of winter, leading to falls and injury. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of nonfatal trauma-related hospital admissions for older adults. Here are some simple tips to help reduce your risk of falling.

### Tips for Walking

- Inspect the soles on your shoes - choose shoes with rubber soles or attach cleats.
- Keep walking paths clear of snow and ice. Be aware and be cautious.
- Take slower, smaller steps, especially when turning.
- Wear gloves to keep hands free (not in your pockets) to help balance yourself.
- If you have one, bring your cellphone in case you do fall and need to call for assistance.
- When you have a choice, travel on pathways that are in direct sunlight since they are often less icy.
- If snow and ice cannot be removed from a particular area, spread ice melt or sand to improve traction. Oil absorbent and paver base are great alternatives to sand.
- Carry a zip plastic bag in your pocket filled with kitty litter to spread out ahead of your path if there is an unavoidable icy area.
- If a sidewalk is icy, consider walking on the ground next to it. Be alert for holes/uneven surfaces though.

# Dementia Friendly Iowa Welcomes Dubuque and Johnson County

Johnson County and Dubuque were recently recognized as Dementia Friendly Community initiatives through Dementia Friendly America, which equips communities in becoming dementia friendly and supporting people living with dementia. Five Iowa communities have now officially been accepted by Dementia Friendly America.

## Dubuque

Dementia Friendly Dubuque promotes community change and education to create a more informed, safe, and respectful place for people living with dementia and their care partners. The community of Dubuque has a history of providing strong support for families impacted by dementia and wants to expand its programming from serving smaller advocate groups to serving the community at large.

The Dubuque Action Team is comprised of individuals who have played a key role in establishing the local memory café, dementia-specific music groups, and a variety of caregiver support groups. As the team continues to grow, members will be trained as Dementia Friends Champions and will continue offering regular Dementia Friends community informational sessions in addition to specialized dementia-friendly business trainings. Partnering with NEI3A, the local Alzheimer's Association chapter, and community members living with dementia and/or providing care

for someone living with dementia, Dementia Friendly Dubuque focuses on increasing community investment and promoting inclusivity. The local effort is co-lead by Stacie Speirs of NEI3A and Laura Nissen of Mount Carmel Bluffs.

## Johnson County

The Dementia Friendly Johnson County Action Team is a collaborative effort consisting of local government, Heritage Area Agency on Aging, Alzheimer's Association-Iowa Chapter, agencies serving older adults, and older adult community members, including those living with dementia. Johnson County, already well versed in offering Dementia Friends sessions, plans to also conduct dementia-friendly trainings for businesses,

community organizations, government entities, local school districts, and the University of Iowa. Dementia Friendly Johnson County created subcommittees focused on four priority areas: training, recruitment/outreach, research, and marketing. The team's mission is to break the stigma surrounding dementia by creating awareness, educating community members and businesses, and growing Iowa's network of Dementia Friends. The local effort is co-lead by Jeff Kellbach ([jkellbach@johnsoncountyiowa.gov](mailto:jkellbach@johnsoncountyiowa.gov)) and Kim Bergen-Jackson.

For more information about Dementia Friendly Iowa or Dementia Friendly Communities, please contact Megan Zimmerman 319-239-2902.



# Dangers of Hoarding Behavior in Older Adults

Hoarding behaviors, and the potential dangers that these behaviors can cause for older adults, account for a significant number of referrals to the Elder Abuse Prevention and Awareness Program every year. A hoarding disorder is a mental health condition where someone acquires an excessive number of possessions, regardless of their actual value, and stores them in a chaotic manner that often results in an unmanageable amount of clutter. While hoarding behaviors can be found in people of all ages, the prevalence of hoarding increases for individuals 55 and older.

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to the dangers that

hoarding can cause including:

- Greater risk of falling – an excessive accumulation of clutter makes it difficult to maneuver around items; therefore, increasing the likelihood of trips and falls.
- Fire Hazards – when homes are not maintained regularly, fire hazards can go undetected making a fire more likely to occur. Piles of newspapers, magazines, or other materials can easily burn, spreading fire throughout a home quickly.
- Prevention from emergency care – hoarding can make it difficult for an emergency worker to get to an individual in need of immediate care. The delayed response could mean the difference between life and death.

- Unsanitary conditions and health issues - mold or bacteria growth that can cause serious health issues that can result in serious illness or death.

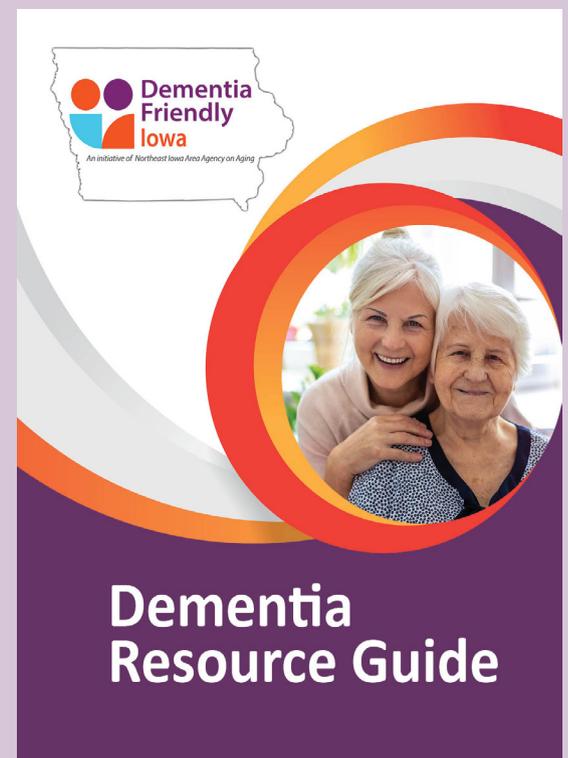
If you, or someone you care about is exhibiting hoarding behaviors, call LifeLong Links at 1-866-468-7887 and ask to speak to an Elder Rights Specialist. Our team can provide consultations, and if appropriate, conduct home assessments, coordinate, and fund services to clean and maintain the living environment, and provide referrals to mental health specialists to address the root causes of the hoarding behaviors.

## Dementia Resource Guide Released

Dementia Friendly Iowa is proud to announce the official release of their new Dementia Resource Guide. This guide was created to help point people living with dementia and their caregivers to the available resources in Iowa. It is organized by topics related to dementia and caregiving. View or download the full guide by using your phones camera to scan the QR code or visiting <https://dementiafriendlyiowa.org/iowa-dementia-resource.../>

Dementia Friendly Iowa, the Area Agencies on Aging, Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the Iowa Department on Aging have collaborated on this exciting project.

View or download the full guide by using your phones camera to scan the QR code or visiting <https://dementiafriendlyiowa.org/iowa-dementia-resource.../>



# Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers

## Feeling stretched caring for an adult with chronic conditions?

Powerful tools for Caregivers is a class designed to provide you – the family caregiver - with the skills you need to take care of yourself.

The series of six classes, held once each week, offers tools and support to help you reduce personal stress, change negative self-talk, communicate your needs to family and healthcare or service providers, communicate effectively in challenging situations, recognize the messages in your emotions, deal with difficult feelings, and make tough caregiving decisions.

## When you take care of yourself, everyone benefits.

**Date:** Thursdays  
March 2 - April 6

**Time:** 1:00 – 3:30 p.m.

**Location:** Stonehill Communities Campus  
3485 Windsor Ave.  
Dubuque IA 52001

## For more information or to register:

**Jolene Koopmann**  
jkoopmann@stonehilldbq.com  
563-690-9679

**Carol Hughey**  
chughey@nei3a.org  
319-215-5615



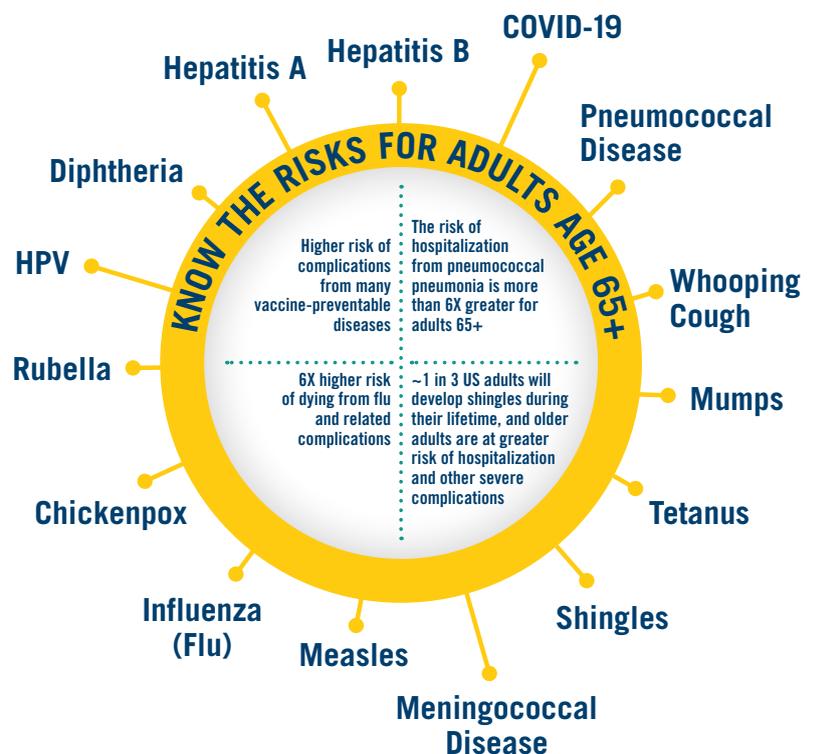
# What are You Living For?



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.



Source: National Foundation for Infectious Diseases [nfid.org](https://www.nfid.org)

# What You Eat Matters!

*Researchers found that the consumption of ultra-processed foods was significantly associated with a 14% higher risk of death from all causes.*

It's the 1950s. World War II has ended and technology is rapidly changing. Money is tight and families are looking for affordable and convenient foods. A demand for frozen meals, canned goods and other processed foods is on the rise. The way Americans eat is changed forever.

"I'm late—but dinner won't be." This tagline helped to transform TV dinners into an American household staple. Maybe you remember this change in eating in your household.

Maybe these meals include fun memories of watching your favorite show while eating on TV trays. Or maybe these were staple meals in your home with both of your parents in the workforce. Possibly these frozen meals bring back memories of pastimes with our grandparents. Whatever your past may be, processed foods likely held a place in your history.

Fast forward to today, approximately 60% of the American diet comes from processed foods. With processing often comes the dreaded added salt, sugar and calories (Oh my!) - those nutrients in excess have been shown to lead to diabetes, hypertension and weight gain.

One study done at the National Institutes of Health found that people ate about 500 more calories when they ate an ultra-processed diet versus those who ate an unprocessed diet. And more bad news, the ultra-processed foods didn't decrease any levels of hunger.

There's no doubt you will find some form of processed foods in almost anyone's kitchen. While it may be out of the question to avoid all processed foods, it may be more important to focus on how to avoid ultra-processed foods. So how do you know which ultra processed foods to avoid? First, you need to understand what makes a food "processed." And second, you need to have the knowledge and confidence to make the best choice for you.

## What exactly is "Ultra-Process?"

A processed food is any food that has been altered in some way through preparation or cooking. Food processing might mean just simple things like cutting and cooking. Or it could mean doing more complicated things like pasteurizing or refining. It can make raw foods more tasty, reduce waste and also make them more convenient to use. There are three categories that experts use to describe processed foods.



**Unprocessed or Minimally Processed Foods:** think whole vegetables, fruits, nuts, meats, eggs and milk.



**Processed Foods:** think whole foods that have been changed, but not in a way that is detrimental to your health. This could be canned tuna, beans, cheese or whole wheat bread.



**Ultra-Processed Foods:** these go through multiple processes. They contain many added ingredients and are highly altered. Examples of this are soft drinks, chips, candy, sweetened breakfast cereal, packaged soup and hot dogs, to name a few.

*Article from Fresh Conversations, a free nutrition and physical activity program for adults 60+, offered by the Iowa Department*

# Handling Leftovers and Food Safety

Often when we cook at home or eat in a restaurant, we have leftovers. To ensure that leftovers are safe to eat, make sure the food is cooked to a safe temperature and stored correctly. Safe handling of leftovers is important to reduce foodborne illness. Use these tips to store leftovers:

- Freezing. Almost any food can be frozen. Freezing leftovers is easy to do and simplifies meal planning and preparation. If you know you will be short on time next week, freezing your favorite recipe this week is a good option.
- Wrap leftovers well. You can wrap food in freezer paper; place in freezer bags, making sure to let all the air out; or place in freezer-safe storage containers. This helps keep bacteria out and preserve moisture.
- Label and date. Label and date all leftovers so you know what is in the package and how long you can safely store it before throwing it away.
- Storage. Leftovers should be eaten, frozen, or thrown away after four days. If frozen, use leftovers within three to four months for the best quality.
- Thaw. Safe ways to thaw leftovers include the refrigerator, cold water, and the microwave oven.
- Reheat. Reheat leftovers in the microwave to 165°F in a microwave safe container and add liquid if needed. Stir the food halfway through the reheating process. Check the temperature of the food in several places before serving it as dense food needs more time to cook.

For more information watch *How to Freeze Leftovers*, [go.iastate.edu/VT3C71](http://go.iastate.edu/VT3C71), or download the *How to Freeze Leftovers Handout*, [go.iastate.edu/VA6EY2](http://go.iastate.edu/VA6EY2).



## Chocolate Chip Oatmeal Muffin

Serving Size: 1 muffin | Serves: 12

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats
- 1 cup milk
- 1/3 cup oil (canola or vegetable)
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup white all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/3 cup mini chocolate chips

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a muffin tin with cooking spray or line it with muffin liners.
2. Stir oats, milk, oil, and brown sugar together in a medium bowl. Let oats soak in wet ingredients for 10 minutes.
3. Stir flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda together in a small bowl. Stir dry ingredients into wet ingredients until just combined.
4. Stir in chocolate chips.
5. Divide the batter into the muffin tins.
6. Bake until the muffins are golden and a tester inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, about 14–16 minutes.
7. Store leftovers in an airtight container.

### Nutrition information per serving:

170 calories, 8g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 200mg sodium, 23g total carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 10g sugar, 3g protein.

*This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's SpendSmart. EatSmart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit [spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu](http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu)*

# We Appreciate Your Support!

*Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging would like to thank our supporters. The donations and grants we receive allow us to live out our mission of helping older persons respond to their evolving needs and choices. Thank you to the following 2022 supporters!*



## Donations:

- Anonymous Donor Fund Community Foundation NE Iowa
- CBE Casual for a Cause
- Cynthia Dunn
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- Doug and Anne Lampe
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- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sloan Family
- Stanley and Linda Schneider
- Susan Ramfjord
- Veridian Credit Union
- West Minster Presbyterian

## Dementia Friendly Donations

- 1850 Grill
- The Abrahams Family
- Amy Wienands Real Estate
- Ball, Kirk, & Holm, P.C.
- Lincoln Savings Bank
- Better Health Chiropractic
- Brilliant Reflection Farm
- Theresa Britt
- Cido Cuautle & Kayla Carter
- Cedar Valley Hospice
- Clark & Associates Prosthetics & Orthotics
- Cognitive Neurology Faculty at U of I
- Coloff Media
- Combat Vets Motorcycle Assoc.
- Community Foundation of NE Iowa
- Connorridge Farms
- Denver Volleyball Club
- Kevin and Tammy Dill
- Mary Dutton

- Eye Care Associates
- Ted and Tabeth Gehrke
- Tim & Debby Gerhke
- Golf Headquarters
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- Alice & Chuck Shirey
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- Steve Hubbard Insurance LLC
- Ted's Home & Hardware
- Teresa Tjaden
- Transport Permits
- Untitled Tattoo and Barbershop
- VGM
- Waterloo Public Library
- Julia Watt
- Waverly Senior Center Staff

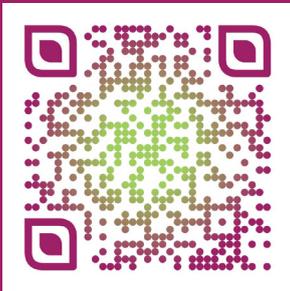
- Wayne MaGee Construction Company
- Becky Weiss
- Willow Winds Assisted Living
- Women's Fellowship- St Paul's United Church of Christ
- Steve and Michelle Wright
- Sandra Yanke
- Rachel Zaputil

## Grants:

- Bremer County Community Foundation
- Buchanan County Community Foundation
- Butler County Community Foundation
- Clayton County Foundation For the Future
- Community Foundation Dyersville
- Community Foundation Jackson County
- Dubuque ARPA
- Dubuque UW FEMA EFSP funds
- East Central Region Fund 10 Brain Health
- Gemini #1
- Gemini Inc
- Grundy County Community Foundation
- Otto Schoitz Foundation
- Thiesens More For Your Community
- United Way Cedar Valley Transportation
- United Way Dubuque
- United Way Home Mod/ Material Aid Cedar Valley
- United Way Marshall County
- United Way Winneshiek
- United Healthcare
- Walgreens
- Waterloo Community Development CDBG- Home Mods
- Waterloo Community Development CDBG-Iowa Café
- Waterloo Housing Trust Fund
- Winneshiek County Community Foundation

# Donate Today!

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/>



## Sudoku Puzzle

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

## Fruit Word Find

In honor of Nutrition Month in March this newsletters word find features different kinds of fruit. Find all of the fruits hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional fruit.

- |             |            |             |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Apples      | Date       | Orange      |
| Apricot     | Fig        | Papaya      |
| Avocado     | Grapefruit | Peach       |
| Banana      | Grapes     | Pear        |
| Blackberry  | Kiwifruit  | Persimmon   |
| Blueberry   | Kumquat    | Pineapple   |
| Cantaloupe  | Lemon      | Plum        |
| Cherries    | Lime       | Pomegranate |
| Chokecherry | Lychee     | Raspberry   |
| Coconut     | Mango      | Rhubarb     |
| Crabapple   | Mulberry   | Strawberry  |
| Cranberry   | Nectarine  | Watermelon  |

Source: Livewire Puzzles

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

**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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# 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](http://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.
- **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*