

Office for the Aging News

Niagara County Office for the Aging

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438-4020

www.niagaracounty.com/ofa

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Director's Column

At the May 1st meeting of our Niagara County Legislature, it was my distinct pleasure to first assist in the proclamation declaring it "Older American's Month," and then immediately after to present the award for 2007 Niagara County Senior Citizen of the Year to Dorothy Curtis of North Tonawanda. It was a night for the seniors of Niagara County to take just a small piece of the spotlight, in their usual dignified, humble fashion.

With summer now comes plenty of opportunity to be out and about and active, and we are looking forward to serving the needs of our seniors through the summer months. You will find us at the County Fair in early August, and all sorts of other summer events throughout July and August. Our staff will be front and center, telling you about the changes in Medicare D and EPIC, the new Long Term Care Point of Entry, the Farmer's Market coupon program, and many, many other things of interest to the seniors of our fair county and those who love them. Whenever you see an OFA display somewhere, stop and say hello. And if you need assistance or have questions related to being or caring for a senior in Niagara County, call our office at 438-4020.

Thank you.

Chris Richbart, Director



Protect Your Self

Warm weather means activities and fun under the sun! Whether you love putting on shorts and feeling the warm outdoors, or finding it hot and sticky, everyone must be careful not to let a heat-related illness spoil the day.

- ❖ **Dress for the Heat.** Wear lightweight, light colored clothing. Light colors reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or use an umbrella.
- ❖ **Drink water.** Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- ❖ **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase metabolic heat.
- ❖ **Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.**
- ❖ **Slow down.** Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- ❖ **Stay indoors when possible.**
- ❖ **Take regular breaks** when engaged in physical activity on

warm days. Take time out to find a cool place.

Remember, have fun, but stay cool!

What's so unusual about this sentence?

Was it a car or a cat I saw?

Answer appears on page 6.



Understanding Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe the symptoms that accompany the loss of cognitive or intellectual function; in other words, dementia means memory loss. There are over 60 different types of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form, comprising 50% to 70% of all cases. Some forms of dementia are treatable. Anyone who is experiencing memory loss should seek the care of a geriatric healthcare professional to receive a thorough assessment and diagnosis.

All types of dementia involve a mental decline that is severe enough to interfere with daily activities and affects more than one of the following core mental abilities:

- * Recent memory(the ability to learn and recall new information)
- * Language (ability to write or speak, or understand the written or spoken word)
- * Visuospatial function (the ability to understand and use symbols, maps, etc., and the ability to translate visual signals into a correct impression of where objects are in space)

- * Executive function (the ability to plan, reason, solve problems and focus on a task)

Some treatable causes of memory loss include, but are not limited to: Dehydration, thyroid deficiency, medication combinations, poor nutrition, stress, infection, depression, and toxic house (e.g. Carbon monoxide).

Other types of dementia include:

- * Vascular dementia (multi-infarct dementia) is a series of mini-strokes. The symptoms can vary, depending of the brain regions involved.
- * Mixed dementia can occur when Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia occur at the same time in an individual.
- * Lewy body disease is caused by a protein deposit referred to as "lewy bodies." Individuals affected by this disease often experience visual hallucinations as well as muscle rigidity and tremors.
- * Parkinson's disease damages and destroys cells in the brain area responsible for controlling movement. Symptoms include tremors and shakiness; stiffness, difficulty with walking, muscle control and balance; lack of facial expression; impaired speech. Many individuals with Parkinson's develop dementia in later stages of the disease.
- * Frontotemporal dementia (Pick's disease) is caused by abnormal microscopic deposits, called Pick bodies, in the brain. First

symptoms include personality changes and disorientation before memory loss occurs.

- * Normal pressure hydrocephalus is caused when fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord is unable to drain normally. It can sometimes be corrected with surgery to drain the excess brain fluid.
- * Huntington's disease is an inherited, progressive disorder that causes irregular movements of the arms, legs and face, personality changes and a decline in the ability to think clearly.
- * Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome is caused by a deficiency of thiamine (vitamin B-1). The most common cause is alcoholism. If the condition is caught early and drinking stops, high doses of thiamine may reverse some, though not all, of the damage.



*To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
 Police were called to a daycare where a
 three-year old was resisting a rest.*

*What's the definition of a will?
 (It's a dead giveaway.)*

A bicycle can't stand alone: it's two tired.

Squirrel Away



*To keep squirrels away from eating your
 plants, sprinkle them with cayenne pepper.
 The cayenne pepper doesn't hurt the plants
 and the squirrels won't come near it.*



Easy French Toast (for one or two)

1 egg

¼ cup milk

2 piece Whole Grain Bread

It is easy to expand this recipe if you are making breakfast for the whole family, or make it as it is if it is just for you! Simply mix the egg and milk together with a fork in a shallow bowl, then dip the bread into it, turn it over so it soaks in enough of the mixture. Place on a hot griddle or frying pan. Turn when browned on one side. Serve on a plate with real maple syrup, blueberry syrup, powdered sugar or strawberry jam. Sprinkle with cinnamon if desired. Fresh fruit, cut up, is great instead of syrup.

Health and Nutrition Update



Nutrition Information: Consider the Source

Diet and Nutrition information is everywhere – on television and the Internet, in newspapers and magazines. But the nation's dietitians warn that much of what we hear and read is misleading or just plain wrong. Knowing what to look out for will help you evaluate nutrition claims.

An insatiable appetite

Many Americans are hungry for the latest news about popular diets, nutrition supplements, and

“superfoods” that supposedly ward off disease. This intense public interest in the links between nutrition and health has triggered a flood of health claims and new food products. It has also opened the door to misinformation that can lighten your wallet or even harm your health.

According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA), this misinformation is transmitted through various means.

- ☉ Food fads are unreasonable or exaggerated beliefs that specific foods, dietary supplements, or food combinations will deliver special health benefits, promote rapid weight loss, or cure certain health conditions.
- ☉ Health fraud is similar to food fads, but it is deliberate effort to make money. Individuals or companies that promote unproven or ineffective remedies with promises of better health, well-being, or appearance are committing health fraud.
- ☉ Misdirected claims are statements that lead consumers to believe that a food is more beneficial than it really is. Good examples are low-fat or low-carb products that are promoted as being healthy yet are high in calories.

Seeds of misinformation

Misinformation about food and nutrition may stem from several sources. The media’s presentation of scientific research may be inaccurate, based on preliminary findings, or lacking in context.

Inaccuracies in news stories on nutrition can result from reporting an association between a particular food and reduced risk of a disease as an actual cause-and-effect; generalizing findings from a group of people to the population as a whole; or exaggerating the size of the effect or benefit. An example of the latter is saying that consuming a certain food cuts the risk of a particular disease in half – which sounds more impressive than reporting that the risk is reduced from 2% to 1%.

Health information pulled from the Internet can be a significant problem. It’s important to remember that Internet content can come from any source and that much of it is aimed primarily at promoting a particular product or company. Health information that is found in chat rooms, blogs, and bulletin boards is often inaccurate.

Infomercials and celebrity testimonials are another nutrition information minefield. They can be quite convincing, but keep in mind that these products are thinly veiled advertisements designed to entice you to buy a product. The information they provide may be incomplete or misleading.

Friends and family members trying to be helpful may also pass along inaccurate information about food and nutrition. Some of the misinformation comes from deeply rooted cultural beliefs about certain types of food.

Red Flags

The Food and Nutrition Science Alliance has identified warning signs of questionable or misleading nutrition information. Here are a few of the red

flags to watch for:

- ◆ Promises of a quick fix
- ◆ Claims that sound too good to be true
- ◆ Statements that are contradicted by reputable scientific groups
- ◆ Urgent warnings about the dangers of a single product or regimen
- ◆ Advise based on a single study
- ◆ Simple conclusions drawn from complex research
- ◆ Labeling certain foods as “good” or “bad”

The ADA notes that inaccurate nutrition information can pose a serious threat to health. For example, people who put their faith in unproven nutrition products or diets may gain a false sense of security about their health-and that may lead them to delay or avoid seeking needed medical care.

To obtain accurate nutrition information, turn to organizations like the ADA, government agencies like the Food & Drug Administration, and government resources such as the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* or MyPyramid (www.mypyramid.gov). The ADA website (www.eatright.org) also has links to other sources of reliable nutrition information.



Information and Assistance – Call 438-4020

The Office for the Aging Information and Assistance staff are available at many locations across the county on a regular basis. They visit all of the senior centers

and nutrition sites, and are available at some large club meetings and special events. If a home visit is needed an appointment can be made and someone will come to the home. To find out how to contact the Information and Assistance worker serving your area or schedule a home visit call Susan Christian at 438-4023 at the Office for the Aging.

Most Information & Assistance employees work part time. Call the Office of the Aging at 438-4020 for their schedules. They are located at the following sites: John Duke Center, North Tonawanda Senior Center, Bishop Gibbons, St. John’s AME, Family Resource Center, Niagara Towers, LaSalle Nutrition, Summitview Senior Housing, Sanborn Seniors at Sanborn Fire Hall, Wheatfield Seniors, Lewiston Seniors, Wilson Seniors (Fire Hall) , Barker Fire Hall, Lockport Senior Center, Gasport Seniors, Newfane Seniors (Faith Luth. Church), Olcott Fire Hall. Information and Assistance workers also visit others sites in the county.

Questions regarding health insurance can be answered by Information and Assistance staff at the locations mentioned above.

Reminder

Call for appointments – OFA 716-438-4020. We know many folks like to drop by the office when they have a question or a concern. However, we would appreciate it if you would call to set up an appointment if possible. In this way it allows us to better prepare for your visit in getting the necessary paperwork or

records pulled together. Further, it allows us to estimate the time necessary for the particular reason for your visit. That way we can give you the fullest attention to the matter and not be rushed by the clock. Therefore, it's always best to call and make an appointment so that we can give you the time and attention to serve you better.

Answer to page 2:

The sentence is a palindrome: It reads the same forward and backward.



Medicare Strives to Help You Stay Healthy *A healthier US Starts Here*

If you have Medicare, three important steps can help put you on the road to better health:

- STEP 1: Know your health history
- STEP 2: Talk to your Doctor about the Medicare preventive services that are right for you
- STEP 3: Register for MyMedicare.gov on any computer

These three easy steps can take you towards a healthier life.

Being physically active, eating a healthy diet, staying at a healthy weight, and not smoking all work to keep you healthy and help you to live longer. But there is more you can do to protect your health and prevent disease.

Don't overlook routine preventive services such as cancer screenings (mammogram, colorectal, prostate) and cardiovascular screenings, and simple things such as getting a flu shot. These tests and services are critical to your overall health and can help you prevent

diseases or detect them early, when treatment works best.

If you need help remembering the services you received and the tests you need each year, you can use MyMedicare.gov web tool to help you (1) track the preventative services you used and (2) remind you about other covered services that are right for you. You can visit the MyMedicare.gov website from any computer with Internet access to take advantage of these benefits. If you don't have a computer with Internet access, ask a family member or loved one if they do. Or, visit your local library, where there are usually public computers with Internet access.

Start taking your three steps to prevention today. Know your health history, talk to your doctor about the screenings and services that are best for you, and register for MyMedicare.gov. Set an example for your family and friends. Taking these steps can lead to a better health and quality of life for you and those you love.

Look for a "Healthier US Starts Here" event in your area to learn more about Medicare preventive services. Or, visit www.medicare.gov on the web or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get a free copy of "Your Guide to Medicare's Preventative Services". On the web select "Find a Medicare Publication" under "Search Tools".

When planting small seeds, such as carrot or lettuce seeds, put them in an old salt shaker with holes large enough for the seeds to fall through and shake in garden.

Bakers trade bread recipes on a knead to know basis.



The Legal Corner

The Office for the Aging has a legal assistance program for anyone 60 and over living in Niagara County. There are no fees, but contributions are accepted. There are many legal topics that our legal program addresses on a regular basis including wills, estate planning, tenant/landlord problems, and consumer fraud. Our lawyer, Gary Billingsley, is available at various locations in the County on a regular basis, including the Office for the Aging office on 111 Main Street in Lockport on Wednesday afternoons. Call the Office for the Aging for his schedule.

The Right and Proper Way to Complain

Now and then it happens to all of us. Something goes wrong with a product or services and we feel as though we've been ripped off. And when that happens, you need to know how to complain. The secret is to do so with such style and grace that your opponent is promoted to act not out of duress but because you present a compelling case and make it possible for him to remediate the circumstance with dignity...

Just the facts. While the details are fresh in your mind, write down what happened. Include as many details as possible so you don't have to rely on your memory.

Start easy. Make a least one good-faith attempt to reach a resolution at the

customer-service level. Don't threaten; simply state your case and the resolution you expect.

Take Notes. Keep a paper trail with all the names of the people you speak with, including their titles, phone numbers and date of contact.

Be Nice. No matter your method of communication, do not make threats or use foul language. Wait until your anger subsides. Stay calm: keep it professional.

Write to the Top. If you cannot reasonably resolve the issue, head straight for the top. Find the name and address of the highest level person in the company, the president or CEO. Don't waste your time working up the ladder. Go to the company's website or call the corporate office to find the name and mail address of the president. State your case clearly.

Use Strong Language. Words like shocking, appalled, egregious, outraged, and reprehensible get their attention. Use these words if they fairly describe the situation.

Know What You Want. What will make you feel better and relieve the bitter taste you have in your mouth for this company? Explain this to the President in clear and precise terms.

Name the Date. Give a specific date two to three weeks hence by which you expect this matter to be resolved.

Keep it Brief. Don't go on and on for many pages. Get to the point, and delete all unnecessary words. Use exclamation marks and other emphases with extreme

caution, if at all. Let your choice of words deliver the tone you desire. Try to keep your letter to a single page.

Proofread. Some of us can't see our own spelling and grammatical errors. Find someone willing to proof your finished letter.

Attach Documentation. Makes copies of the items that support your claim and prove your situation. Do not send original receipts, claim tickets or photos. Keep those originals in a safe place.

Get a signed receipt. You have many options for sending your letter. It's best if you select a method that gives you a signed receipt. Certified U.S. Mail with a return receipt (available at the post office) is the cheapest option; FedEx or Express Mail will get greater attention.

Say thank you. Assume the best and thank the president in advance for his or her attention and for resolving this matter for you.

Now that you've done the work, stay alert.

Expect the best but be prepared to follow up if the date you specify comes without a response. And what ever you do, don't give up.

Low Carb Oatmeal Pancakes

½ cup oatmeal

¼ cup cottage cheese

2 eggs or egg substitute

1 teaspoon sugar or sugar substitute

Mix ingredients together in a food processor or blender. Cook on hot griddle until one side is brown and then turn with a spatula. Add raisins if desired or dried blueberries. Serve with syrup of your choice, strawberry jam or other jam.



Who to call at the Office for the Aging

Do you ever wonder who to ask for when you call the Niagara County Office for the Aging? You can always call our main number, **438-4020**, and ask who can best answer your question, or you can call the same number and ask for one of the people below. Also you can go to our web site at www.niagaracounty.com/ofa.

Director, Christopher Richbart 438-4021
Information and Assistance Program, Susan Christian 438-4023

Health Insurance Counseling (HIICAP), Susan Christian 438-4023

Expanded In-home Service to the Elderly Program (EISEP), Tim Sexton 438-4039 or 278-8612

Legal Services, Gary Billingsley
Home Delivered Meals, Thomas Chapman 438-4031

Congregate Meal Program, Nutrition Education and Counseling, Glenda Reardon 438-4030

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Lee Puzan 438-4036

Weatherization, Referral and Packaging (WRAP), Lee Puzan 438-4036

Caregiver Program, Nancy Smegelsky 438-4033

Newsletter Editor, Nancy Smegelsky
Senior Van, Jennifer Schumacher 438-4038