

# Office for the Aging News

Niagara County Office for the Aging

111 Main Street, Suite 101, Lockport, N.Y. 14094 438-4020

[www.niagaracounty.com/ofa](http://www.niagaracounty.com/ofa)

September – October 2006

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## Director's Column

I've read that in 1901 it was 49. When I was in school in the 1970's, I remember learning that it was 72. By 2001 it was 77 and now today, in 2006 it is 77.9. – almost 78!

What is it? That's right - Average Life Expectancy in the United States. Why am I bringing it up? Because we all need to be aware of the facts so that we can plan for them and not be taken by surprise. You know the old saying: "If you're failing to plan, you're planning to fail."

Think about what it means to be able to plan to live to nearly 80 years old. Once upon a time, people didn't live to see retirement, and if they did, those years were relatively few in number. Today, people are retiring in their 50's, with probably as much as 30 years of life still ahead of them. It can be a wonderful prospect, IF you've planned for it.

As we live longer and grow older our bodies still age and require medical attention. Long Term Care can become very expensive very fast. We have to have a plan if we are going to enjoy our golden years, and we have to take responsibility for ourselves and be there for our loved ones. The government will do the best it can and help out as much as it can, but if we count on it to be

enough we run the risk of a very rude awakening.

Call our office anytime to discuss your life expectancy and Long Term Care issues. Our Information and Assistance staff is trained to listen to your needs and provide unbiased advice. Our office number, as always, is 438-4020. We look forward to being of service.

Sincerely,

Chris Richbart, Director

- 
- **Fresh Mango Cucumber Salsa** - use
- as a dip with chips, or as a topping for
- grilled chicken or fish or to accompany
- any kind of grilled meat
- 
- 1 cucumber, peeled & diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 clove garlic, diced
- 1 Mango (or you may use 2 peaches,
- peeled), peeled and chopped
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar
- 2 T. parsley, chopped finely
- 2 T. fresh basil, chopped finely
- 2 T. Lime or Lemon Juice
- 1 chopped fresh scallions or chives
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 
- Mix ingredients together and marinate.
- If you prefer, you can use cilantro
- instead of parsley for a different taste.
- 
- This will keep a week in the refrigerator.
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## Health and Nutrition Update

### “Get a Taste for Nutrition”

#### Healthier Salads

What is your concept of a lettuce salad? Do you like salad bars? How can you create a healthier salad at home? Lettuce salad can and should be so much more than a piece of lettuce on a plate.

#### ADD FIBER and Healthy Oils

##### Protein Sources

Garbanzo beans  
 Black Beans  
 Pumpkin Seeds  
 Sunflower Seeds  
 Flaxseed  
 Slivered Almonds  
 Walnuts  
 Pecans  
 Pine Nuts  
 Olives

**Tip: Keep seeds and nuts in the freezer in small containers with tight-fitting lids for freshness and for easy access. Buy items in the bulk section of the store.**

#### Add Vitamins and Antioxidants

Dried Blueberries or Fresh Blueberries  
 Dried Cranberries  
 Dried Cherries  
 Apple slices  
 Mandarin Oranges  
 Mango  
 Tomatoes  
 Green or red sweet peppers  
 Carrots  
 Green or Red Cabbage  
 Broccoli  
 Cauliflower

**Types of Lettuce** – More nutritious than iceberg lettuce

Spinach  
 Romaine  
 Leaf Lettuce  
 Endive  
 Boston Lettuce

#### Protein Sources

Chicken  
 Lean Beef or Steak  
 Tuna  
 Tofu (Sauté in olive oil)  
 Salmon or other baked fish  
 Imitation Crab  
 Lean Ground Beef – taco salad  
 Low-fat Cheese  
 Feta Cheese  
 Olives

#### Healthy Dressing

Make homemade salad dressing with olive oil, canola and flavored vinegars

Use plenty of herbs for seasoning homemade dressings

Buttermilk with Low-fat mayonnaise with parsley, garlic powder, onion powder and/or dill makes a great Ranch style dressing or dip for veggies.

#### **Information and Assistance – Call 438-4020**

The Office for the Aging Information and Assistance staff are available in many locations in 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 438-4020 at the Office for the Aging.

Most Information & Assistance workers work part time. Their schedules and locations are as follows:

Marie Conde: John Duke Center – Monday through Friday.

Donna Miller: North Tonawanda Senior Center, Wednesday and Thursday from 10 to 12; Bishop Gibbons, Friday from 10 to 12.

Keesha Fields: St. John's AME, Tuesday from 11 to 1; Family Resource Center, 3001 9<sup>th</sup> St, Thursday from 11 to 1.

Wenonia Myles: Niagara Towers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 11 to 12; LaSalle Nutrition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00.

Janice Williams: Sanborn Seniors at Sanborn Fire Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday every 3 months from 10:30 to 12:00; Wheatfield Seniors, every other month the last Wednesday; Lewiston Seniors the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 10:30 to 12:00.

Tina Cur: Barker Fire Hall, quarterly; Lockport Senior Center, 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday from 10:00 to 12:00 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday from 10:00 to 12:00; Gasport Seniors last Wednesday every other month from 10:30 to 12:00; Newfane Seniors (Miller Hose) the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday from 10:30 to

12:00; Olcott Fire Hall, quarterly 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday from 10:30 to 12:00; Wilson Seniors (Fire Hall) 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30.

Information and Assistance workers visit others sites in the county. To find further information please call the Office at 438-4020.

Questions regarding health insurance can be answered by Information and Assistance staff at the locations mentioned above or by HIICAP volunteers by appointment, and at the Lockport Senior Centre, North Tonawanda Senior Center and John Duke Center. (Call 438-4020 for times).

### **Scrambled letters**

#### **DORMITORY:**

**When you rearrange the letters:  
Dirty Room**

#### **DESPERATION:**

**When you rearrange the letters:  
A Rope Ends It**

#### **THE EYES:**

**When you arrange the letters:  
They See**

#### **THE MORSE CODE:**

**When you rearrange the letters:  
Here come dots**

#### **SLOT MACHINES:**

**When you rearrange the letters:  
Cash lost in me**



### Attention EPIC enrollees

Watch your mail! EPIC is sending letters out to members who meet low income guidelines that would qualify them for Medicare Part D “Extra Help”. EPIC is asking members to provide information about income and assets to determine eligibility for the “Extra Help”. Make sure you open your EPIC mail and respond quickly to avoid interruption in coverage. If you need assistance with the form contact the Office for the Aging HIICAP program at 438-4020.

### New Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Contractor

Effective July 1, 2006, there is a new Medicare contractor on Summary Notices for claims for durable medical equipment (DME), prosthetics, orthotics and supplies. The new DME Medicare contractor will be National Heritage Insurance Company (NHIC), replacing HealthNow NY.

The web site for NHIC is [www.medicarenhic.com/dme](http://www.medicarenhic.com/dme).

Questions on claims or coverage for DME should continue to be directed to 1-800-MEDICARE.

### Quarterly MSNs

Starting in June and July Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) are going to be sent out every three months, instead of every month. This new quarterly

schedule will be for claims in which Medicare did not issue payment to the person with Medicare.

If needed, people with Medicare can still request MSNs by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

### My.Medicare.Gov

You may not have noticed [my.medicare.gov](http://my.medicare.gov) on the [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) web site. This new service allows persons with Medicare to enroll to view their Medicare information on-line.

You may use [my.medicare.gov](http://my.medicare.gov) to view enrollment information and deductible status, address of record and claim status (excluding Part D claims) and to order duplicate MSNs, without having to call 1-800-MEDICARE.

If you are a person with Medicare try using this service. Go to [my.medicare.gov](http://my.medicare.gov) to register or link to there from the [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) web site.

### Reminder

The end of the open enrollment period (OEP) for Medicare Advantage (MA) plans was June 30<sup>th</sup>. However both the dual-eligible and those in a Medicare Savings Program are not locked in to a Medicare Advantage plan after June 30<sup>th</sup> and in fact, can switch plans at any time in 2006, to be effective the first of the following month.



## The Fraud Corner

Medicare beneficiaries should pay particular attention to Medicare statements of services by a provider who is not in your area! Pay close attention to Medicare statements from providers from another **state**.

### Did You Have These Services?

The provider may be fraudulently billing Medicare assuming you won't report it because it is from another area or out of state. You may just think it was a mistake – but even mistakes can result in a loss of Medicare dollars.

Check your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) carefully – your Medicare Number should match the number on your Medicare card.

If you notice any discrepancies – contact Operation Restore Trust at 1-877-678-4697. Your concerns will be courteously and professionally addressed.

Don't let unscrupulous individuals rob the Medicare system – remember, when Medicare pays we all pay.



## 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.



## Cyberthieves Want Your Identity

Thieves you can't see may be snooping through your personal information with one goal in mind: to steal your identity through your Internet use.

Every time you download free computer programs, games, music or screen savers on the Internet, or visit certain websites, there's the risk of spyware coming along for the ride and infecting your computer.

Spyware is any program that monitors your activity on the Internet without your knowledge and transmits that information to someone else. According to an AARP Public Policy Institute report that was released in May, Cyberthieves are using spyware more and more to steal identities.

“We can expect spyware to continue proliferating because it is so lucrative” for

criminals, says AARP's Neal Walters. "You have to be careful."

Some tips to protect yourself :

- Do not download programs you're not familiar with.
- Do not open e-mail or attachments if you do not know the sender.
- The Consumers Union suggests placing a security freeze on your credit report and credit score, information businesses seek before they will issue new credit. A freeze prevents identity theft by blocking access to the reports – but you are able to open your report with a PIN number or a password. One caveat: Only 23 States currently allow consumers to put freezes on their reports and New York is one.



### **Driving when you are taking medications**

For most people, driving represents freedom, control and independence. Driving enables most people to get to the places they want or need to go. For many people, driving is important economically – some drive as a part of their job or to get to and from work.

Driving is a complex skill. Our ability to drive safely can be affected by changes in our physical, emotional and mental condition. The goal of this article is to help you and your health care professional talk about how your

medicine may affect your ability to drive safely.

### **How can medications affect my driving?**

People use medicines for a variety of reasons including:

- Allergies
- Anxiety
- Cold
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Heart & cholesterol conditions
- High blood pressure
- Muscle spasms
- Pain
- Parkinson's disease
- Schizophrenia

Medicines include medications that your doctor prescribes and over the counter medications that you buy without a doctor's prescription. Many individuals also take herbal supplements. Some of these medicines and supplements may cause a variety of reactions that may make it more difficult for you to drive a car safely. These reactions may include:

- Sleepiness
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness
- Slowed movement
- Fainting
- Inability to focus or pay attention
- Nausea

Often people use more than one medicine at a time. The combination of different medicines can cause problems for some people. This is especially true for older adults because they use more

medicines than any other age group. Due to changes in the body as people age, older adults are more prone to medicine related problems. The more medicines you use, the greater your risk that your medicines will affect your ability to drive. To help avoid problems, it is important that at least once a year you talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about all the medicines – both prescription and over the counter- you are using. Also let your doctor know what herbal supplements, if any, you are using. Do this even if your medicines and supplements are not currently causing you a problem.

### **Can I still drive safely if I am taking medications?**

Yes, most people can drive safely if they are using medications. It depends on the effect those medicines – both prescription and over the counter – have on your driving. In some cases you may not be aware of the effects. But, in many instances, your doctor can help you to minimize impact of your medicines on your driving in several ways. Your doctor may be able to:

- ✿ Adjust the dose
- ✿ Adjust the timing of does or when you use the medicine
- ✿ Add an exercise or nutrition program to lessen the need for medicine and
- ✿ Change the medicine to one that causes less drowsiness

### **What can I do if I am taking medications?**

Talk to your doctor honestly. When your doctor prescribes a medicine for you, ask about the side effects. How should you expect the medicine to affect your ability to drive? Remind your doctor of other medicines – both prescription and over the counter – and herbal supplements you are using, especially if you see more than one doctor. Talking honestly with your doctor also means telling the doctor if you are not using all or any of the prescribed medicines. Do not stop using your medicine unless your doctor tells you to.

Ask your doctor if you should drive- especially when you first take a medication. Using a new medicine can cause you to react in a number of ways. It is recommended that you do not drive when you first start using a new medicine until you know how the drug affects you. You also need to be aware that some over the counter medicines and herbal supplements can make it difficult for you to drive safely.

Talk to your pharmacist. Get to know your pharmacist. Ask them to go over your medicines with you and remind you of the effects they may have on your ability to drive safely. Be sure to request printed information about the side effects of any new medicines. Remind your pharmacist of any medicines and herbal supplements you are using. Pharmacists are available to answer questions whenever you get medicine. Many people buy medicine by mail. Mail order pharmacies have toll-free numbers you

can call and a pharmacist is available to answer your questions.

Monitor yourself. Learn to know how your body reacts to the medicine and supplements. Keep track of how you feel after you use the medicine. For example, do you feel sleepy? Is your vision blurry? Do you feel weak and slow? When do these things happen?

Let your doctor and pharmacist know what is happening. No matter what your reaction is to using a medicine – good or bad – tell your doctor and pharmacist. Both prescription and over the counter medicines are powerful – that’s why they work. Each person is unique. Two people may respond differently to the same medicine. If you are experiencing side effects, the doctor needs to know that in order to adjust your medicine. Your doctor can help you find a medicine that works best for you.

What if I have to cut back or give up driving?

You can keep your independence even if you have to cut back or give up on driving due to your need to use a medicine. It may take planning ahead on your part, but it will get you to the places you want to go and the people you want to see. Consider:

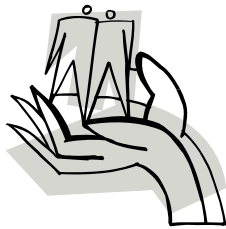
- ☀ Rides with family and friends
- ☀ Taxi cabs
- ☀ Shuttle buses or vans
- ☀ Buses
- ☀ Walking
- ☀ The Office for the Aging Medical van call 438-4020 for information



### Quiz for People Who Know Everything

1. There’s one “sport” in which neither the spectators nor the participants know the score or the leader until the contest ends. What is it?
2. What famous North America landmark is constantly moving backward?
3. In many liquor stores, you can buy pear brandy, with a real pear inside the bottle. The pear is whole and ripe, and the bottle is genuine; it hasn’t been cut in any way. How did the pear get inside the bottle?
4. Only three words in standard English begin with the letters “dw”. They are all common. Name two.
5. Where are the lakes that are referred to in the “Los Angeles Lakers?”
6. It is the only vegetable or fruit that is never sold frozen, canned, processed, cooked, or in any other form but fresh. What is it?
7. Name six or more things that you can wear on your feet that begin with “S.”

See page 10 for answers



### Caregiver's Corner

Caregiving is an important role that many of us perform. Whether it is for a parent, spouse, grandparent, child, or grandchild, caregiving is a job that requires a great deal of time and energy. While caregiving can be very satisfying and rewarding, you may also feel pressure from your job or family.

Know the warning signs:

- ☆ shortness of temper
- ☆ restlessness and/or sleeplessness
- ☆ loss of appetite, fatigue or headaches
- ☆ withdrawal from those close to you
- ☆ financial problems
- ☆ lack of interest in normal activities or hobbies
- ☆ inability to accept help from others

Remember, another person depends on you. You are only as good to others as you are to yourself. For further help call the Office for the Aging at 438-4020.

#### Trivia

The first lighthouse to use electricity was the Statue of Liberty in 1886.

Despite its hump, the camel has a straight spine.



### Your Life Depends on Quick Response

Fast action is your best weapon against a heart attack, Clot-busting drugs and other artery-opening treatments can stop a heart attack in its tracks, preventing or limiting damage to your heart, if given immediately, ideally within one hour of the start of heart attack symptoms. The sooner treatments are started the greater your chances are for survival and a full recovery.

What does a heart attack feel like?

Many heart attacks start slowly as a mild pain or discomfort. If you feel such a symptom, you may not be sure what's wrong. Your symptom may even come and go. Even those who have had a heart attack in the past may not recognize the symptoms, because the

next attack can be an entirely different experience.

It's vital to know the warning signs of a heart attack:

- ♥ Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that last for more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- ♥ Discomfort in other areas of the upper body including pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- ♥ Shortness of breath often comes with the chest discomfort or can occur before chest discomfort.
- ♥ Other symptoms may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light headedness.

Learn the signs and remember: even if your not sure still have it checked out. Fast action can save lives, maybe your own.

Answers for those who know everything:

1. Boxing
2. Niagara Falls. The rim is worn down about 2 ½ feet each year because of the millions of gallons of water that rush over it every minute.
3. The pear grew inside the bottle. Bottles are placed over buds when small, wired and left in place until ripe.
4. Dwarf, dwell, and dwindle.
5. Minnesota. The team was originally the Minneapolis Lakers and kept the name when they moved west.
6. Lettuce.
7. Shoes, socks, sandals, sneakers, slippers, skis, snowshoes, stockings.



### Who to call at the Office for the Aging

Did 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](http://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