

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of February 6th

SIX COMBINED HEALTHY CHOICES

How many of these six contributing factors to successful aging can you check off right now?

- a healthy diet;
- regular exercise;
- active social contact;
- cognitive activity;
- non-smoking; and
- not drinking alcohol.

There's good news if you didn't go six-for-six. To reap the benefits and delay mental decline, meeting four or more goals will do, according to the authors of a ten-year study published in the British Medical Journal.

Memory does decline as we age, but the study suggests that combining healthy

physical, mental and social choices can hold off the decline at least somewhat.

The study measured changes over time in people with and without the “APOE” gene that is considered the strongest genetic risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease.

What counts as a healthy diet? For the purposes of this study, it’s defined as eating the recommended intake of seven out of 12 food groups: fruits, vegetables, fish, meat, dairy, salt, oil, eggs, cereals, legumes, nuts and tea.

As for “regular” exercise, that’s defined as at least 150 minutes a week at moderate intensity, or 75 minutes at vigorous intensity. If that sounds like a bit much for your stage of life, remember that any physical activity is better than none. Consult your doctor before starting an exercise program; and, having done so, one excellent follow-up step is to get your doctor’s approval to take an Office for the Aging Exercise Program class. We offer opportunities in general exercise, tai chi, Bingocize, and A Matter of Balance, as well as a remote exercise option.

Contact OFA for details or visit www.dutchessny.gov/SeniorExercise.

NYSOFA SURVEY MAILERS – NOT A SCAM

If you receive a card in the mail with an Albany return address from the New York State Office for the Aging, asking you to respond to the 2023 New York

Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults, it's legitimate. Be sure the following link is included: <https://polco.us/nyalbany23>, which takes you to the survey page.

If you received the card in the mail, type the URL (the website address) carefully. The company conducting the survey is spelled POLCO. A few people who received the card have reported that the URL was smudged on the card, making it difficult to read.

If you're not online, the card also comes with the toll-free number to call New York's NY Connects hotline with questions about the survey, at 1-800-342-9871.

FEBRUARY HOLIDAYS

Dutchess County Government observes the Lincoln's Birthday holiday, which falls on Monday, February 13th this year. Dutchess County offices, the Office for the Aging, and all OFA Friendship Centers will be closed on February 13th, as well as the national President's Day holiday, February 20th.

Clients of OFA's Home Delivered Meals program will receive shelf-stable meals in advance of each holiday.

*Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114
Delafield St., Poughkeepsie, New York 12601, telephone 845-486-2555, email:*

ofa@dutchessny.gov website: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

WIND CHILL WARNING FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3RD

Depending on when you read this newsletter, air temperatures could be in the single digits, with wind chills well below zero.

The National Weather Service issued a Wind Chill Warning for eastern Dutchess, and a Wind Chill Advisory for western Dutchess, both through Saturday morning. Gusts are expected to reach between 30 to 45 mph during the windiest period Friday night into Saturday morning.

Get ready with help from www.dutchessny.gov/winterpreparedness.

SNAP EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS END IN FEBRUARY

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Emergency Allotment benefits that have been provided throughout the pandemic are ending in February, due to federal rules. These temporary benefits have provided an extra

payment each month to ensure all SNAP households received at least the maximum monthly benefit.

The last month that SNAP Emergency Allotments will be issued is February. Beginning in March, only regular monthly SNAP benefits will be issued to all eligible households.

A regular monthly SNAP benefit is based on household size, income, and other factors.

As a beneficiary, what do I need to do?

Most households do not need to do anything. However, if your household has a loss of income or an increase in housing costs, childcare fees, or child support payments since your last recertification, report those changes to your local district. You should also report any medical expenses over \$35/month (if you are age 60 or older or disabled). These changes may result in an increase in your normal monthly SNAP benefit. Contact OFA if you have any questions.

What else do I need to know?

Emergency Allotment benefits have been eliminated under federal law, and this decision cannot be changed by a fair hearing if you request one. SNAP

benefits do roll over month to month and will remain on your card if you use your benefits any time within 274 days from when they are issued.

Keep your benefits safe – change your PIN often, and never give your card number or PIN to anyone. For more information, visit otda.ny.gov/EA-SNAP.

NYSEG UTILITY ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP (Mon 2/27)

The Amenia Wassaic Community Organization (AWCO) and NYSEG are holding a Utility Assistance Workshop for NYSEG customers on Monday, February 27th at Amenia Town Hall at 5:30 pm.

Topics include but are not limited to: HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program), Electric and Gas Bill Relief Programs, Bill Assistance during hardship, energy saving tips and much more.

For more information, call 845-863-4862 or email dmollica@siloridge.com.

WOMEN'S VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP MEETS IN PLEASANT VALLEY (Fri 2/10)

The Vet2Vet veterans' organization is hosting a Women's Veterans Support Group on Friday, February 10th from 12 noon to 1 pm at 1335 US 44 in Pleasant Valley. A remote option for the meeting is available at <https://zoom.us/j/94564753775>.

For more information, contact Alyssa Carrion at 845-473-2500 ext 1306.

MEDICARE SAVINGS PROGRAM ENROLLMENT CLINIC AT OFA (Wed 2/8)

*** A few spots are still available! ***

If you're covered by Medicare, there's a new eligibility change that could mean considerable savings for you.

Starting this year, eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) in New York State expanded to single individuals with Medicare who have a gross income up to \$2,107 per month and couples with monthly gross incomes up to \$2,839.

New York State does NOT look at your assets for this program.

In New York State, MSP helps older adults and people with disabilities living on low incomes by paying their Medicare Part B premiums (\$164.90 each month) and enrolling them in Extra Help, the federal prescription drug subsidy program that the Social Security Administration estimates is worth about \$5,100 per year. This program lowers prescription costs and gets rid of the deductible and the

“donut hole”, or gap coverage. The financial assistance can be a lifeline, allowing enrollees to maintain their Medicare coverage, access needed care, and afford other necessities, like food and rent.

If this is the first you’re learning of this, you can find out more about your potential savings. The Office for the Aging is hosting Medicare Savings Program Enrollment Clinics for Dutchess County resident older adults during the Open Enrollment period, which continues through March 31st. Please call ahead to reserve a time to meet with a trained counselor.

- Wednesday, February 8th from 10 am to 2 pm at the Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie. To reserve a spot at this event, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

Be sure to bring the following information with you to your appointment:

- Proof of income;
- Proof of age (driver’s license and/or birth certificate);
- Your Medicare card;
- If you pay for dental insurance or Medicare Supplement, bring a bill;
- Proof of address, like a current utility bill.

For older adults who are homebound or whose schedules conflict with MSP enrollment clinics, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555 and we'll connect you with the resources you need.

INTERESTED IN BEING AN OFA “FRIENDLY CALLS” VOLUNTEER?

We have room for six more “Friendly Calls” volunteers to attend an orientation on Thursday, February 9th. Space is limited, so contact OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones at bjones@dutchessny.gov to reserve a seat. If you aren't available on that date, don't worry – there will be other orientation opportunities in the weeks to come.

Other news:

Earlier COVID-19 variants that don't circulate among humans any more are now [present in deer](#).

[Taking good care of your teeth and gums](#) may help your brain as well.

Has [the first person to live to 150](#) already been born?

Anybody a fan of pinball? It may surprise you to know that some of the first machines that incorporated synthesized sounds [are now over 40 years old](#).

This week's birthdays:

2/5: Race car driver/sportscaster [Darrell Waltrip](#) (76)

2/6: Journalist/author [Tom Brokaw](#) (83)

2/7: Journalist/author [Gay Talese](#) (91)

2/8: Journalist [Ted Koppel](#) (83)

2/9: Singer/songwriter [Carole King](#) (81)

2/10: Opera legend [Leontyne Price](#) (96)

2/11: Actress/singer [Tina Louise](#) (89)

And the Bad Joke to conclude things for the week:

Two fish are in a tank. One turns to the other and says “Do you know how to drive this thing?”