

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of April 27th

Important Notices:

Our offices remain open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday – Friday. **We remain able to accept visitors only under strict limitations. Call or email before visiting. Many issues can be resolved without having to leave the safety of your home:**

845-486-2555, ofa@dutchessny.gov.

Golden Living . . . News for Seniors, Their Families and Caregivers

Todd N. Tancredi, Director

Dutchess County Office for the Aging

WITHIN THE CRISIS, AN AGING IN PLACE OPPORTUNITY

Many adults want to stay in their own homes as they get older. They've put a lot of sweat and money into their home and want to enjoy it for as long as it's possible to do so safely. "Aging in place" is the term you may have heard used to describe this.

Now, more of us than ever before are "in place," whether or not we wanted to be. Let's treat the situation as an unexpected opportunity for people of all ages to plan for aging in place. A few well-planned changes made now could make it possible to live independently for decades to come.

Some changes can be made right away. Others will require some do-it-yourself skills – or a handyman or contractor, at such time that state and local law once again indicate it's safe to proceed with larger projects. As that time gets closer, we'll cover this part of the topic of falls prevention in greater detail.

SIMPLE FIRST STEPS THAT DON'T COST A DIME

Area rugs can be a fall hazard, especially when not fixed firmly to the floor with a non-slip backing. Move these rugs to low-traffic areas, and make sure they're kept in place with rug-gripping tape. If the rug has sentimental value, find a place to store it until you can find a safe place to use it.

Clutter is also a fall hazard. To prevent clutter from becoming too much to handle, do what we'd like our kids and grandkids to do – put one toy away before you take another toy out. If your pet has left a toy behind, move it to a spot where it won't be a tripping hazard. Make sure power cords, books and newspapers, plant stands and furniture are away from spaces designed for walking.

Physical activity can go a long way toward fall prevention. With your doctor's OK, and while maintaining proper social distancing, consider outdoor activities such as walking. Indoors, consider tai chi — a gentle exercise that involves slow and graceful dance-like movements. Such activities reduce the risk of falls by improving strength, balance, coordination and flexibility. The Office for the Aging's Senior Exercise, Tai Chi and "A Matter of Balance" coordinators are working on producing a video version of some OFA wellness programs. We'll let you know when it's ready.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114

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BEFORE HEADING OUT ON A HIKE OR A WALK...

On one hand, getting outside for exercise is a good way to stay active; on the other hand, social distancing and safety become issues when too many people get outside for exercise in the same place at the same time. In many cases, it's simpler and safer to simply get in a walk in your own neighborhood.

An example: due to difficulties in maintaining social distancing and safe parking, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has closed the parking areas and trails in the Town of Fishkill at Breakneck Ridge, Wilkinson Trailhead and Notch Trail. For more information on the closures, visit <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/9/details.aspx>

MASSIVE GROWTH IN TELEHEALTH INTEREST DURING THE OUTBREAK

With most physicians stopping in-person consultations during the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, telehealth services are attempting to fill the gap.

Telehealth is defined by the US Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) as “the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support long-distance clinical health care, patient and

professional health-related education, public health and health administration.

Technologies include videoconferencing, the internet, store-and-forward imaging, streaming media, and terrestrial and wireless communications.”

The terms “telehealth” and “telemedicine” overlap but are not quite interchangeable. As the HRSA puts it, “Telehealth is different from telemedicine because it refers to a broader scope of remote healthcare services than telemedicine. While telemedicine refers specifically to remote clinical services, telehealth can refer to remote non-clinical services, such as provider training, administrative meetings, and continuing medical education, in addition to clinical services.”

Many seniors have contacted OFA with questions about whether telehealth services are suitable for them. If you have questions, you can contact us at (845) 486-2555 or ofa@dutchessny.gov. In the meantime, while there’s no one-size-fits-all answer to telehealth questions, we’ve found a few introductory links that could prove helpful.

Medicare and telehealth: <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/telehealth>

How various insurance providers are addressing telehealth and its related claims: <https://www.ahip.org/health-insurance-providers-respond-to-coronavirus-covid-19/>

More on telemedicine and telehealth: <https://khn.org/news/telemedicine-surges-fueled-by-coronavirus-fears-and-shift-in-payment-rules/>

USEFUL LINKS

[Centers For Disease Control](#)

[Coronavirus Testing Sites in Dutchess County](#)

[New York State Government](#)

[Dutchess Tourism Open Restaurant List](#) (Takeout/pickup/delivery only)

IRS Coronavirus Tax/Refund Information: www.irs.gov/coronavirus

[Office for the Aging Senior Friendship Center Contact Information](#)

Note: Friendship Centers are operating only as distribution hubs for the Home Delivered Meals program. They are not currently open to senior clients or the general public.

(NEW) [Other Community Resources in Dutchess County](#) – this covers a little bit of everything, including a listing of what’s available in each municipality in Dutchess County.

[Scam Prevention Resources from the Office for the Aging](#)

[Spanish Language Coronavirus Information](#)