

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of August 3

Teeth Wisdom

How many of your natural teeth do you still have?

On average, according to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, American adults age 65 and up still have 21 of their 32 natural teeth as of 2020, the most recent year for which we have complete data.

Meanwhile, 15 percent of that group no longer have any natural teeth. Those who currently smoke or previously smoked cigarettes or used chewing tobacco, and those with lower levels of income and education have statistically significantly fewer remaining teeth.

While 21 remaining teeth is an improvement over the US average of just under 19 teeth during the 1999-2004 measurement period, it's still less than the 22 recommended by the Centers for Disease Control as the minimum needed to properly chew food without dentures.

Although better than in years past, the typical aging patient's oral health can be complicated conditions like hypertension and diabetes, along with physiological changes associated with aging.

Adults who've had all their wisdom teeth pulled are operating with 28 natural teeth. How can we stay as close to 28 as possible?

The CDC's recommendations for improved oral health include continued careful daily brushing and flossing. For caregivers, it's important to reinforce the daily oral hygiene routines of older adults who are unable to brush and floss independently. Regular visits to a dentist are also important, even for those who have lost their teeth. Regular exams can help catch oral cancers and pre-cancerous lesions in their early stages.

As for which type of toothbrush – electric or manual – works best, the American Dental Association says both types work equally well, although electric models may be more suitable for people with arthritis and other conditions that limit movement and dexterity.

Do A Med Check

Dental experts also point out the medications commonly taken by older adults often come with side effects like “dry mouth,” a reduction in saliva production which contributes to tooth decay and gum disease if not counteracted with good oral self-care, including regular brushing. The CDC reports that there are over 400 common medications which list dry mouth as a side effect, but that dry mouth can be counteracted by drinking plenty of water, chewing sugarless gum, and avoiding both alcohol and tobacco.

A Surprising Factor To Watch For

If you or a loved one will be undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment involving the head and neck, the CDC strongly recommends a dentist visit before any such procedure. That's because chemo and radiation therapies can damage or destroy oral tissues and can result in severe irritation of the oral tissues, along with mouth ulcers, loss of salivary function, tooth decay, and destruction of bone.

Older Adults Skills Fair – Thursday 8/13 at John Jay High School

(Vendor Signup Deadline Thursday 8/6)

Older adults (55+) who are looking for full- or part-time employment, or volunteering opportunities, will want to set aside the afternoon of Thursday, August 13th for County Executive Sue Serino's second free Older Adults Skills Fair.

It's taking place from 2-4pm on Thursday, August 13th at John Jay High School, 2012 NY 52 in Hopewell Junction.

This event will include opportunities to:

- Meet local employers offering flexible, part-time positions;
- Connect with nonprofit organizations;
- Socialization with fellow older adults; and
- Enjoy complimentary light refreshments.

No advance guest registration is required. Employers and other prospective vendors looking for a tabling opportunity can contact the county executive's office at 845-486-2000 or visit dutchessny.gov/senior-skills to sign up while space lasts, or before August 6th, whichever comes first.

Transportation Council Meeting on Transportation Plan (Thu 8/6)

The [Dutchess County Transportation Council](#) (DCTC) will host a public meeting on Thursday, August 6, at 1:30 pm at the Henry A. Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home, 4079 Albany Post Rd (Route 9) in Hyde Park. At the meeting, the DCTC is expected to act on its latest update to "[Moving Dutchess Forward](#)," its 25-year plan to make the County's transportation system safer and more reliable. More information is available

at dutchessny.gov/dctc, by emailing dctc@dutchessny.gov or calling (845) 486-3600.

Other news:

[Start in middle age if a long life is your goal](#) (and there's still time to catch up if you're older than middle age).

Even the Pope's official prayer app can be [vulnerable to computer security flaws](#).

Why are there [so many bears around](#) this year?

This week's birthdays:

8/1: Blues musician [Robert Cray](#) (73)

8/2: Actor [Butch Patrick](#) (73)

8/3: Businesswoman/publisher [Martha Stewart](#) (85)

8/4: Former Mets outfielder [Cleon Jones](#) (85)

8/5: NBA Hall-of-Famer [Patrick Ewing](#) (64)

8/6: Actress [Michelle Yeoh](#) (64)

8/7: Actor/director [David Duchovny](#) (66)

Bad Joke time!

What do you call a row of rabbits hopping away?

A receding hare line.