

Bullthistle Bulletin



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Area Agency On Aging
Norwich • New York • 13815

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Cranberries aren't just for Thanksgiving anymore

Cran-tastic!

SURVEY SAYS:

Scientists have identified a new kind of cholesterol that might lead to heart disease. This new kind of cholesterol is called ultra-bad cholesterol. It's super-sticky, which means it attaches easily to artery walls and creates fatty plaques, according to researchers at the University of Warwick. The build-up of fatty plaques leads to heart disease and strokes.

Ultra-bad cholesterol forms when sugar is added to normal LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol), making it more likely to build up in arteries. The study, funded by the British Heart Foundation, helps explain the increased number of diabetics who are developing heart disease. The study found that because Type 2 diabetics suffer from an imbalance of blood sugar, they could be more likely to develop ultra-bad cholesterol.

Researchers say the findings could lead to new developments in anti-cholesterol treatments for people affected by ultra-bad cholesterol, such as diabetics and older adults who are at a high risk for heart disease.

BY GRACE FULLER, RD

Traditionally we have associated cranberries with Thanksgiving celebrations and turkey feasts, but these red gem-like berries have become year around staples in many households because of their nutritional and culinary strengths. Cranberries are sold fresh, dried, canned and as a juice in most supermarkets. They can even be found as a supplement, offering health benefits in a convenient pill. Imagine that?!

Interestingly, cranberries are not a recent addition to the American diet. In New England, cranberries have been an important crop for hundreds of years. In fact, cranberries are only one of three commercial fruits native to North America, the other two

being blueberries and Concord Grapes. Native Americans survived on cranberries as a vital food source. They prepared an interesting mixture called pemmican, made of dried fruit (which included cranberries), dried meat and fat that were eaten at ceremonial gatherings, as well as used for traveling. Cranberries were also eaten by early European settlers in the area. It is possible that cranberries were served at the first Thanksgiving, and we have carried on this tradition ever since.

There is a long history of cranberry farming in Massachusetts. Only recently has Wisconsin surpassed Massachusetts as the leading producer of cranberries in the country. Cranberries were traditionally grown in bogs, which were then flooded during the fall harvest. This technique is used

because fresh cranberries contain a pocket of air inside which allows the berries to float when they are ripe, making them easy to gather. Many think that cranberry bogs are always flooded, but they are only flooded during harvesting and in the winters to protect the plants from the frigid winter temperatures. Cranberries that are sold fresh are actually picked dry so that there is less damage to the fruit, but this technique is more labor intensive and yields less.

Since fresh cranberries are naturally high in fiber and low in calories and fat, they fit perfectly into a healthy diet. One cup of fresh cranberries contains merely 51 calories but offers 5 grams of fiber and 1/4th of the daily value of vitamin C. It is the vitamin C that gives them their tart flavor, as

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Area Agency on Aging announces changes to Lifeline Program

Starting in January 2012 any calls made from a Lifeline unit will go to a central monitoring center operated by Philips Lifeline in Framingham, Massachusetts instead of to a local response center in Norwich, NY. Calls will be answered in the name of our program – Chenango County Lifeline – by Lifeline Personal Response Associates, professionals trained to handle “help needed” calls and to respond to a situation. A subscriber’s responder network will remain the same, in our local community, and will continue to be the family, friends and neighbors that have named as respon-

ders. Any call for help will be handled the same way, just from a different location.

The Area Agency on Aging will continue to manage the program locally, providing support to you, just as we currently do, collecting the necessary information, installing the unit, changing batteries when needed, etc.

With this change, Philips Lifeline will be charging a monthly fee per unit and Lifeline clients will be required to pay \$30 per month in order to continue to receive this service. The Area Agency on Aging will send a bill and collect this monthly fee and will maintain a Lifeline in a subscriber’s home as long as payment

is made. Failure to send this payment will result in the Lifeline being removed from the home.

This change is necessary because technological advancements and product development have made our current system outdated. Philips Lifeline, the company that provides our system equipment, can no longer offer nor support a local monitoring system. We look forward to continuing our relationship with current and future Lifeline users and will work with Philips Lifeline to make the transition to the new system as smooth as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns please call 607-337-1770.



What should you know about strokes?

BY THE CHENANGO COUNTY DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A Stroke occurs when the blood supply to a part of your brain is interrupted or severely reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients. Within a few minutes, brain cells begin to die.

Stroke risk can be lowered by making healthy choices and managing any medical conditions you might have.

- Live a healthy lifestyle:
- Eat a healthy diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be active-Exercise regularly
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol use
- Manage Stress

Prevent or Treat your medical conditions:

- Have your cholesterol checked
- Monitor your blood pressure
- Manage your diabetes
- Take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor

Talk with your health care provider to prevent or treat medical conditions

Some possible Stroke Symptoms are SUDDEN:

Trouble with walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

Trouble with speaking or understanding, confusion

Paralysis or numbness on one side of the body(face, arm, or leg)

Trouble with seeing in one or both eyes

Severe headache with no known cause

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you have any of the above symptoms.

Stroke is a medical emergency, and prompt treatment of a stroke is crucial. Early treatment can minimize damage to your brain and potential stroke complications.

Persons with questions or requiring additional information may contact the Chenango County Health Department at 337-1660.

Cranberries –

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

well as play important roles in the body. Did you know that early sailors from New England brought cranberries onboard ships as a source of vitamin C to ward off scurvy? Today we do not worry about getting scurvy, but vitamin C does impact the immune system and helps to build healthy skin and nails.

The potential health benefits of cranberries have been covered by popular media throughout the years. Claims have ranged from decreased risk of heart disease and diabetes to improving oral health, but possibly the best known is that cranberry juice can help cure or prevent urinary tract infections. Today you can find cranberry based supplements marketed as promoting urinary tract health. Lab studies have shown cranberries to prevent bacteria from sticking to cell walls, which could be how cranberry juice acts to prevent or treat infections. Studies have shown some benefit in reducing infections in women, but any positive effects have yet to be found in men, children and the elderly. One positive result from drinking cranberry juice might simply be increased hydration, which definitely benefits the urinary tract. Another huge feature of cranberries is that they are a rich source of antioxidant phytochemicals. To be more precise, cranberries are about the best sources of polyphenols among the commonly eaten fruits. These polyphenols have generated such excitement for their potential health benefits that they are being studied for their effect on lowering the risk of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease.

Even though we do not have definitive proof as to all the potential health benefits from consuming cranberries, there is no question that these berries are delicious and are a healthy addition to a diet. Certainly the American Dietetic Association and the American Heart Association encourage the eating of

cranberries in whole fruit or 100% juice form.

Below are some helpful points to keep in mind when shopping for and preparing dishes with cranberries:

- Read product labels. Since cranberries are by nature very tart, makers of cranberry juice will often add large amount of sugar which is the reason cranberry juice is called a cocktail rather than a juice. An 8 ounce glass of cranberry juice cocktail contains 30grams of sugar and 137 calories! Another method cranberry manufacturers use to counter the tartness is to mix pure cranberry juice with a blend of other juices. This is fine if you are buying the beverage simply as a drink. If you are buying it for the purpose of getting as much of the health benefits from cranberries, the blends will not contain as much as the cranberry juice by itself.

- Some cranberry foods such as sauces and dried fruits can also contain large amounts of added sugar. A cup of dried fruit sweetened contains 78grams of sugar and 370 calories.

- It is always more desirable to depend on the real whole fruit (juice) to get the nutritional benefits, as opposed to using as processed "cranberry-extract-fortified" food or a cranberry supplement.

- Use your imagination when it comes to eating cranberries or cooking with them:

- Fresh or dried cranberries can be tossed into salads, mixed into pancakes, muffins, cakes, cookies and even added to sandwiches.

The tartness of fresh or frozen cranberries complements fish nicely as a perfect topping or as a relish. Chefs have made lemon cranberry sauces for salmon and cranberry mango chutney served with cod or mahi mahi. Again, do not be afraid to experiment so that you can enjoy cranberries year around while reaping all their potential health benefits!

Contribution

Seniors, their families and friends, often find it rewarding to make a financial contribution to the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging, in appreciation for many services that are provided to help our county's seniors. Financial contributions may also be made in memory of a friend or loved one and the acknowledgement will be sent to the family in your name if specified below. Thank you.

Contribution Amount:

Check one below:

Acknowledgement sent to family In Memory Of:

To Help With Agency Programs:

Contributor:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Send to:
 Chenango County Area Agency on Aging
 5 Court Street, Norwich NY 13815
 Phone (607) 337-1770

(Clip & return. Please do not send cash through the mail)

Chenango County Area Agency on the Aging Services

Call the agency at 337-1770 for information and assistance.

- Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)
- Bullthistle Bulletin Senior Newspaper
- Caregiver/Respite Services
- Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)
- Food Stamp and Medicaid application assistance for the homebound
- Health Education & Wellness Programs
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)
- Home Delivered Meals
- Housekeeper/Chore Worker
- Income Tax Assistance (Schedule appointments with AARP during season)
- Legal Assistance
- Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
- Meals, games and other activities at all Senior Centers
- Nutrition Counseling
- Personal Care Services (EISEP)
- Personal Emergency Response System (LIFELINE)
- Real Property Tax Credit and Exemption Services (IT-214)
- School Tax Relief (STAR)
- Speakers on Aging Issues
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Weatherization/Energy Program (WRAP)

Dear Marci: Can I appeal a decision?

Dear Marci,
I got a denial notice in the mail from my Medicare Advantage plan that says the plan won't pay for health care services I received last month. Can I appeal?

- Kevin

Dear Kevin,
When your Medicare Advantage plan won't pay for a service you received, you have the right to appeal. Medicare Advantage plans, also called Medicare private health plans, must mail you a denial notice when they refuse to cover a service. The denial notice tells you what services have been denied and explains your appeal rights.

The first step in the appeals process is asking for a reconsideration. This is when you ask your plan to reconsider its decision and pay for your care. You have 60 days from the date on your denial notice to request a reconsideration. To request a reconsideration, send a letter to your plan explaining why the service was medically necessary. If possible, include a supporting statement from your doctor explaining why you needed the care.

Your Medicare Advantage plan must make a decision within 60 days of receiving your request. If you don't hear back within 60 days, call your plan.

If your plan doesn't change its initial decision, it must automatically forward

your request to the Independent Review Entity (IRE), which is the next level of appeal. The IRE is a company called MAXIMUS Federal Services. It's an independent group of doctors and other professionals that that isn't associated with your plan. MAXIMUS must review your case and make a decision within 60 days of getting your appeal.

If MAXIMUS says your Medicare Advantage plan doesn't have to pay for the care you received, you can continue your appeal to higher levels. The next step is to send your appeal to Administrative Law Judge, then to the Medicare Appeals Council and finally to Federal Court. However, many people win in the first few stages of the appeals

process and don't need to appeal to higher levels to get coverage.

Keep in mind that if your plan won't approve care that you need and haven't yet received, you can request a fast, or expedited, appeal.

As you're appealing, remember to keep all notices you get from the plan. Write down the names of any representatives you spoke to and when you spoke to them. It's also a good idea to keep proof of when you sent each request by saving fax transmission reports or certified return receipts.

Keep in mind that the appeals process is a little different if you have Original Medicare.

Marci

Medicare covers screening and counseling for alcohol misuse and screening for depression

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced two new national coverage determinations that cover alcohol misuse screening and behavioral counseling for Medicare beneficiaries as well as screening for depression. These new coverage policies add to the existing portfolio of covered preventive services, most of which are now available to people with Medicare at no additional cost.

"Preventive services bring relief to Medicare beneficiaries for whom preventive care means early identification of disease and greater opportunity for treatment and recovery," said CMS Administrator Donald M. Berwick, MD. "It's just as important for our elderly beneficiaries to enjoy access to preventive services as it is for any American."

Alcohol misuse puts individuals at risk for ill health as misuse is linked to diseases such as cancer, liver disease and cardiac disease, as well as mental and emotional problems. For society at large, alcohol-related problems include economic losses from illness and injury, and disruption of family and social relationships.

Annual alcohol misuse screening by primary care providers, such as a beneficiary's family practice physician, internal medicine physician, or nurse practitioner, in settings such as physicians' offices are covered under

CMS' new policies. The benefit also includes four behavioral counseling sessions per year furnished by the primary care provider, if beneficiaries screen positive for alcohol misuse.

Depression is a medical disorder characterized by feeling sad, diminished interest in pleasurable activities, feelings of guilt, decreased ability to concentrate and other symptoms experienced nearly every day. Depression may also include thoughts of suicide. Among people 65 years and older one in six suffers from depression.

Annual screening for depression for Medicare beneficiaries is now covered in primary care settings that have staff resources to follow up with appropriate treatment and referrals. The purpose of this screening is to assure accurate diagnosis, effective treatment and follow-up.

"These new coverage policies address important issues related to mental health and prevention of substance abuse," said Patrick Conway, MD, CMS chief medical officer and director of the agency's Office of Clinical Standards and Quality. "We at CMS continue to carefully and systematically review the best available medical evidence to identify those preventive services that can keep Medicare beneficiaries as healthy as possible for as long as possible."

Chenango County Area Agency on the Aging

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Letters to the Editor

The staff of the Area Agency on the Aging would like to hear your comments — good or bad — on our services. This is your column and your chance to comment.

Brian Wessels
Editor

EVENTS

November 2011

ALGONQUIN SENIOR CENTER

The Bainbridge Museum,
38 South Main St., Bainbridge
Phone: 967-8960

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

02-Old Time Shows
04-Games
07-Cake Decorating
09-Celebrate Birthdays! / Bulletin Board Trivia
11-CLOSED-Veteran's Day
14-Cards
16-Thanksgiving History
18-Valley View Manor-Healthy Seniors
Presentation / Thanksgiving Lunch
21-Trivia Plus
23-Movie
25-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Holiday
28-Blood Pressure Readings
30-Games & Puzzles Week



GENEGANSLET ACTIVITY CENTER

West Street Methodist Church
McDonough
Phone: 647-5666

03-Evening Dining w/Cards / Celebrate
Veteran's Day
17-Evening Dining w/Cards / Celebrate
Thanksgiving

WESTSIDE PARK SENIOR CENTER

First Baptist Church
West Park Place, Norwich
Phone: 334-2910

DAILY ACTIVITIES: Cards

SALAD BAR EVERY WEDNESDAY

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

01-Lung Cancer Awareness Month
02-Puzzles
03-Cards
04-Word Search
07-Trivia Plus
08-Puzzles
09-Celebrate Birthdays!
10-Senior Safety
11-CLOSED-Veteran's Day
14-Teddy Bear Day
15-National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day
16-Cards
17-Great American Smoke Out Day
18-Blood Pressure Readings
21-Valley View Manor-Healthy Seniors
Presentation
22-Question of the Day
23-Crossword Puzzle
24-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Day
25-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Holiday
28-Word Search
29-Bring a Friend to Lunch Day
30-Cards

THE WELCOME CENTER

Grace Manor Center
Knapp Street, Sherburne
Phone: 674-4600

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

02-Cards
04-Puzzles
07-Bring a Friend Day
09-Celebrate Birthdays! / Wear Red, White &
Blue Day
11-CLOSED-Veteran's Day
14-Cards
16-Blood Pressure Readings / Cards
18-Puzzles / Thanksgiving Lunch
21-Trivia-Mickey Mouse Birthday
23-Bingo
25-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Holiday
28-Cards
30-Puzzles

PLUM VALLEY FOREVER YOUNG CENTER

Methodist Church
Church Hill Road, South Otselic
Phone: 337-1770

04-NO EVENING DINING
18-Evening Dining w/Entertainment

UNADILLA VALLEY SENIOR CENTER

Terrace Heights
New Berlin
Phone: 847-7037

DAILY ACTIVITIES: 50/50 Raffle; Cards;
Puzzles

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

01-Bingo
03-Person, Place or Thing
08-Celebrate Birthdays! / Birthday Bingo
10-Road Map Quiz
15-Thanksgiving Play
17-Thanksgiving Lunch
22-Fall Crafts
24-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Day
29-Bingo

WINDY HILL SENIOR CENTER

Coventry Town Hall
Route 235, Coventry
Phone: 656-8602

DAILY ACTIVITIES: Bingo

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

01-Bingo / Word Search-"Bread Month"
03- Asst. Attorney General Dennis McCabe &
Assemblyman Cliff Crouch-Scams Targeting
Seniors & Albany Legislative Update at Noon
08-CLOSED-Due to Elections-Lunch Out
10-Bingo
15-Bingo
17-Thanksgiving Lunch / Bingo
22-Bingo / Crossword Puzzle-"Authors"
24-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Day
29-Valley View Manor-Healthy Seniors
Presentation at Noon

BRIGHTMAN SENIOR CENTER

Birdsall Street
Greene
Phone: 656-4789

DAILY ACTIVITIES: Bingo; Cards

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

02-Bingo / Word Search-"Bread Month"
04-Bingo
07-Linda Campbell-RSVP Talk on Volunteers
09-Celebrate Birthdays! / Bingo
11-CLOSED-Veteran's Day
14-Bingo
16-Senior Council Meeting at 10:15 am
18-Bingo / Thanksgiving Lunch
21-Bingo / Crossword Puzzle-"Authors"
23-Valley View Manor-Healthy Seniors
Presentation at Noon
25-CLOSED-Thanksgiving Holiday
28-Bingo
30-Bingo

MENU

November 2011

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY		
Menus Subject to Change Without Notice	1 Sausage w/Peppers & Onions Tater Tots Country Blend Vegetables Hot Dog Roll Butterscotch Pudding (Also for N)	2 Meatloaf w/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Island Blend Vegetables Tossed Salad Multigrain Bread Fresh Fruit	3 Macaroni & Cheese Stewed Tomatoes Peas Tossed Salad Warmed Garlic Bread (Centers) Italian Bread (HDM Only) Pineapple Upside-Down Cake w/Topping (Also for N)	4 Stuffed Pepper Garlic Herb Potatoes Chuckwagon Blend Vegetables Rye Bread Brownie w/Topping (Also for N)	5 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	6 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal		
	7 Salisbury Steak w/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Winter Blend Vegetables Multigrain Bread Fresh Fruit	8 Tuna Noodle Casserole Winter Squash Broccoli Florets Oatmeal Bread Birthday Cake (Also for N) Fresh Fruit (Norwich/HDM Only)	9 Rosemary Lemon Chicken Brown Rice Chateau Blend Vegetables Italian Bread Birthday Cake (Also for N)	10 Creamed Chipped Beef Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes California Blend Vegetables Whole Wheat Bread Oatmeal Raisin Cookie (Also for N)	11 VETERANS DAY HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	12 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	13 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	
	14 Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce Broccoli Florets Extra Vegetables (HDM Only) Tossed Salad (Centers Only) Warmed Garlic Bread (Centers Only) Italian Bread (HDM Only) Fruit Cocktail	15 Ham Loaf Roasted Potato Medley Scandinavian Blend Vegetables Tossed Salad Multigrain Bread Apricot Halves	16 Fish Kieff Sweet Potatoes California Blend Vegetables Oatmeal Bread Fruited Gelatin w/Topping (Also for N)	17 Roast Turkey w/Gravy Stuffing & Cranberry Sauce Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Dinner Roll Pumpkin Pie w/Topping Sugar-Free Pie w/Topping (N)	18 Roast Turkey w/Gravy Stuffing & Cranberry Sauce Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes Green Beans Dinner Roll Pumpkin Pie w/Topping Sugar-Free Pie w/Topping (N)	19 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	20 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	
	21 Breaded Fish Sandwich w/Tartar Sauce Tater Tots Chateau Blend Vegetables Pickled Beets Hamburger Roll Fresh Fruit	22 Eggplant Rollata Linguini w/Marinara Sauce Brussels Sprouts Tossed Salad Rye Bread Sliced Peaches	23 Swiss Steak Garlic Red Skinned Mashed Potatoes Broccoli Florets Whole Wheat Bread Warm Bread Pudding w/Raisins & Topping (Also for N)	24 HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	25 HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	26 HAPPY THANKSGIVING HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	27 HOME DELIVERED MEALS ONLY Pot Luck Meal	
	28 Chicken à la King Egg Noodles Winter Blend Vegetables Whole Wheat Bread Peanut Butter Cookie (Also for N)	29 Vegetable Lasagna Tomato Zucchini Casserole Oriental Blend Vegetables Italian Bread Rice Pudding w/Raisins & Topping (Also for N)	30 Pork BBQ on Bun Garlic Herb Potatoes Country Blend Vegetables Hamburger Roll Pineapple Tidbits	(N) Indicates No Concentrated Sweets/Diabetic			Suggested Contribution per Meal Home Delivered \$3.00 Congregate (Lunch) \$3.00 Breakfast \$2.00 Congregate (Evening) \$3.50 Any contribution you wish to make is voluntary and will be used to support the program. Anyone who does not contribute will not be denied a service. For your convenience, we will be providing self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes each month for the home delivery program participants.	

EVENING DINING MENU

Thursday, Nov. 3

McDonough ONLY
 Macaroni & Cheese
 Stewed Tomatoes
 Peas
 Tossed Salad
 Warmed Garlic Bread
 Pineapple Upside-Down Cake w/Topping (Also for N)

Friday, Nov. 4

South Otselic ONLY
 NO EVENING DINING MEAL

Thursday, Nov. 17

McDonough ONLY
 Roast Turkey w/Gravy
 Stuffing & Cranberry Sauce
 Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes
 Green Beans
 Dinner Roll
 Pumpkin Pie w/Topping
 Sugar-Free Pie w/Topping (N)

Friday, Nov. 18

South Otselic ONLY
 Roast Turkey w/Gravy
 Stuffing & Cranberry Sauce
 Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes
 Green Beans
 Dinner Roll
 Pumpkin Pie w/Topping
 Sugar-Free Pie w/Topping (N)

EMERGENCY FOOD PACKS

Emergency food packs are now available through the Nutrition Program. You may wish to order one, in advance, to keep on hand in the event that Nutrition Sites are closed or the Home Delivered Meals are not delivered due to inclement weather. The pack consists of canned soup, tuna fish, canned fruit, crackers, juice, and a dessert bar. The suggested donation for the pack is \$3.00.

If you would like to receive an emergency food pack, please fill out the form at the bottom of this article and return to your Home Delivered Meal driver or Nutrition Site Manager. If you receive Home Delivered Meals, the pack will be delivered to your home. Otherwise, the Site Manager will receive the pack at the Senior Center for you to pick up there. You may order more than one food pack during the winter months, as needed.

Thank You --- Trudy Harris-Irons, Nutrition Program Coordinator

EMERGENCY FOOD PACK FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

Please check appropriate line below:

Home Delivered Meal Participant _____

Senior Center Participant _____

Center Name _____

Social Security Expands Compassionate Allowances Conditions

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, today announced 13 new Compassionate Allowances conditions involving the immune system and neurological disorders. The Compassionate Allowances program fast-tracks disability decisions to ensure that Americans with the most serious disabilities receive their benefit decisions within days instead of months or years. Commissioner Astrue made the announcement during his remarks at the U.S. Conference on Rare Diseases and Orphan Products in Washington, D.C.

"Social Security handles more than three million disability applications each year and we need to keep innovating and making our work more efficient," Commissioner Astrue said. "With our Compassionate Allowances program, we quickly approved disability benefits for more than 60,000 people with severe disabilities in the past fiscal year. We have made significant improvements, but we can always do more."

The Compassionate Allowances initiative identifies claims where the nature of the applicant's disease or condition clearly meets the statutory standard for disability. With the help of sophisticated new information technology, the agency can quickly identify potential Compassionate Allowances and then quickly make decisions.

Social Security launched the Compassionate Allowances program in 2008 with a list of 50 diseases and conditions. The announcement of 13 new conditions, effective in December, will increase the total number of Compassionate Allowances conditions to 113. The conditions include certain cancers, adult brain

disorders, a number of rare genetic disorders of children, early-onset Alzheimer's disease, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, and other disorders.

The agency announced a small grant program for graduate students that will help Social Security improve its list and has recently awarded an approximately \$1.8 million grant over a five-year period to Policy Research, Incorporated (PRI) through the Disability Determination Process Small Grant Program. This new program aims to improve the disability process through innovative research by graduate students who will receive small stipends for their work. In addition, the agency recently streamlined its online disability application for people who have a condition on the Compassionate Allowances list.

For more information on the Compassionate Allowances initiative, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

New Compassionate Allowances Conditions

- Malignant Multiple Sclerosis
- Paraneoplastic Pemphigus
- Multicentric Castlemans Disease
- Pulmonary Kaposi Sarcoma
- Primary Central Nervous System Lymphoma
- Primary Effusion Lymphoma
- Angelman Syndrome
- Lewy Body Dementia
- Lowe Syndrome
- Corticobasal Degeneration
- Multiple System Atrophy
- Progressive Supranuclear Palsy
- The ALS/Parkinsonism Dementia Complex

Every Woman Counts in Chenango County Campaign

**GET SCREENED
FOR CANCER!**

**BREAST
OVARIAN** **CERVICAL
UTERINE**

call **607-337-4128**



*"Still Looking After Ourselves.
Time for You to Do the Same!"*

with support from:



**CHENANGO
HEALTH NETWORK**

24 Conkey Ave, Norwich

Dedicated to improving access to health services.

HOSPICE HEROES: Pershing Schlafer

Each year Hospice of Chenango County profiles patients so the public has a keener understanding of the end of life care provided to those in our community. We'd like to share a few of these stories before our Annual Dinner & Silent Auction coming up on Nov. 3. If you would like information about the event call the Hospice office at 334-3556 or visit the agency's website at www.hospicechango.org.

Born With a Purpose

Born in 1918, Pershing "Perk" Schlafer, was named after World War I hero General John J. Pershing. It's a unique name for a one of a kind man. Perk has spent his entire life in Guilford living off the land. Perk claims he was a "rather active child" who looked forward to Saturdays when he was free from school and could fish and hunt. Realistically though, farm kids, like their parents, never really have a day off. "From the age of eight you worked," says Perk. "I had to feed the pigs and chickens. Then after high school I started farming and kept at it." Kept at he did. For

the next 65 years he milked cows and raised crops for feed. Those cows kept him close to home and out of World War II. Perk was classified 2C. That means that he served his country out of uniform. "Two government guys came to check me and the farm out," says Perk. "And before they left one inspector said 'you're a hell of a lot more valuable to the Army milking cows right here.'" That suited Perk just fine, "I had two uncles who fought in World War I and they always said 'there's nothing good about war' - and I believed them."

Another thing Perk firmly believes is that everyone has a purpose in life. We may not always know what it is but we're on this Earth until that purpose is fulfilled. He says he knows this because at least two times in his life he should have been taken. The first - when a split second came between him and a speeding train, the other when he altered a lifelong routine of checking in at one barn and then another before heading home for supper. On this particular day, for no particular reason, Perk says he looked in on barn one and skipped barn two. "I was in the house no more than five minutes when a tornado tore the second barn



apart, killing 17 head of cattle. I know someone was looking over me that day because I likely would have been killed too."

That "someone" God or fate, or whatever you wish to call it also brought Perk and Vida together. Vida was a New Jersey girl who headed to the country each summer to visit her uncle who served as pastor of the Guilford Presbyterian church, the very church Perk was baptized in and still visits every Sunday morning. Vida and Perk fell in love and married. And as fate would have it, there was a lot of romance for the Schlafer boys. You see, Perk's brother ended

up marrying Vida's sister. Vida and Perk were married 62 years and had three children, two girls and a boy. And that son runs the family farm to this day. That's what I call a purpose.

Perk is 93 now, and until recently he's been blessed with good health. But if you live long enough some body part is bound to fail. In Perk's case it's his heart and lungs that are beginning to show their age. Perk has COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and congestive heart failure, and despite it all he gets up early every morning and dons the universal farmers' uniform - a pair of denim

overalls. That's how I found him sitting at his kitchen table with caregiver and friend, Barbara. I asked Perk to share his secret to a long and healthy life. "I was reluctant to die," he said. Right then I knew this morning was going to be fun. "How would you describe your personality?" I pressed. "Tolerable," he answered. Barbara chimed in. "You can see Perk has a great sense of humor," she says. But, he's so much more. Perk is like a father to anyone he gets to know. He's also a good listener, gives good advice, and cares about people. I cherish our moments together."

Perk is also a no nonsense kind of guy. This became apparent when the time came take his picture for this story. I asked if he'd rather substitute, the handsome, middle-aged, suit wearing professional photo of himself that Barbara brought to the table earlier. He chuckled and said "No. What you see is what you get." He explains how amused he is when he opens the newspaper to read the obituary of a 90 year old and the face of 50 year old stares back at him. Perk continues to drop pearls of wisdom this morning. When I asked what his favorite season was, he said he couldn't

pick one. "A farmer needs them all," he says. "Each season has its place. You can't have spring without beginning, you can't have summer without growth, and you can't have fall without harvest, and winter is when you get a little rest."

Perk admits he knew nothing about Hospice before his doctor talked about us. He hadn't even heard the word. Now, coming from the patient point of view he credits Hospice for "doing an awful lot for me. More than what I expected." He enjoys when his nurse Diane comes and "checks me out from head to toe. She has a nice bedside manner." In Perk's case that's just an expression, of course, because he doesn't spend his days in bed. When bedtime does come, and Barbara leaves for the day, I wonder out loud - "who stays with you at night, Perk?" He answers in a heartbeat, "Buzz and Red." Are they old friends? I inquire. "Yup, they're my cats." It's clear to me that Buzz and Red have a purpose - to keep Perk company during the night. And Perk's purpose, whether he knows it or not, is to spread the word about Hospice to those who may never have heard of us before.

How the right home updates help seniors age well at home

(ARA) - Whether you are a senior yourself, or have a loved one who is older, living independently in the home is a priority. With the right precautions and a few necessary safety modifications, many seniors can continue to thrive in their own homes.

The room that poses the most danger to seniors is the bathroom. The potential for slips and falls is greater in this part of the home - 75 percent of fall injuries occur in the bathroom -- making it a good place to focus your renovation energy. Have you considered updating these parts of the bathroom?

Flooring: Hard floors are a hazard because even a small amount of moisture can make them very slick. Many people choose to install carpet because it does not lift or move like rugs can, plus it is warmer to walk on and softer if there is a fall.

Bathtub: Walk-in baths and showers like the ones from Premier Care In Bathing are great

for seniors who want to take baths or showers but don't want to risk slipping and falling when stepping over the side of a tub or entering the shower. Look for features like a walk-in door, a powered bath lift, soothing hydrovescent therapy and easy-to-turn faucets.

Higher toilet: These types of toilets sit higher off the floor so that users don't have to bend their knees as much to get up and down.

Good lighting: To help seniors see better, it's important to have well-lit rooms and walkways so that it's easy to get around all areas of the house, including the bathroom.

Now that you have a good idea of what types of things should be replaced to help keep seniors safe, it's time to find the right company who can make the renovation process simple. It's easy to get lost in the sea of options available, so here are some tips to help you find the right one for you.



Tip 1: Good reputation

Reputation means everything when picking out a company that specializes in bathroom updates for seniors. How long has the company been in business? What is their reputation? Can they provide you with references you can contact?

Tip 2: Quality products

A good bathroom renovation is an investment, and that's why you want a

product that works well and is long lasting. After going through a rigorous testing process, Premier Care walk-in baths and easy-access showers were commended as being easier to use and more accessible for people with arthritis by the Arthritis Foundation. These are the first baths and showers to ever receive this prestigious commendation. The company is also recognized as the official specialty bathing partner for AMVETS, the non-profit organization for American Veterans.

Tip 3: Free estimate

Avoid any company who will not send you educational materials such as brochures to review prior to purchase. Also avoid any company who will not come to your home to give you a free estimate on the cost of the renovation. An accurate cost estimate is impossible without seeing a bathroom in person. Premier Care always offers free in home consultations so you can ask questions, get a personalized estimate and a recommendation on

the walk in-bath or shower that is perfect for you.

Tip 4: Specialized contractors

When updating a bathroom, it's wise to choose a company that does it all. If they subcontract the work out, you may not get someone who has the necessary insight specifically needed for senior home design. Look for companies that do it all, from providing the best products to complete installation and renovation. Remember the work shouldn't take too long either. Quality companies can do the work within a day or two and will work around your schedule.

With a few home improvements and modifications, seniors can stay safe at home and live independently for many years. For more information about walk-in baths, showers or ADA compliant sinks and toilets call (800) 313-1694 or visit premiercareonline.com.



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Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15 - December 7

It's Earlier Now

Your health needs change from year to year. And, your health plan may change the benefits and costs each year too. That's why it's important to evaluate your Medicare choices every year. Open Enrollment is the one time of year when ALL people with Medicare can see what new benefits Medicare has to offer and make changes to their coverage.

There's never been a better time to check out Medicare coverage. There are new benefits available for all people with Medicare - whether you choose Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage plan - including lower prescription costs, wellness visits, and preventive care. Take advantage of Open Enrollment and you may be able to save money, get better coverage, or both.

What is the benefit of having an earlier enrollment period?

Starting this year, Open Enrollment starts earlier - on October 15th - and lasts longer (7 full weeks) to give *YOU* enough time to review and make changes to your coverage. But, also starting this year, you will need to make your final selection for next year's Medicare coverage by December 7th. This change ensures *Medicare* has enough time to process your choice, so your coverage can begin without interruption on January 1.

It's worth it to take the time to review and compare, but you don't have to do it alone. If you typically use the December holidays to discuss health care options with family or friends, plan now to move that conversation earlier. And remember that Medicare is available to help.

- Visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan to compare your current coverage with all of the options that are available in your area, and enroll in a new plan if you decide to make a change.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day/7 days a week to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Need More Information?

- Visit www.MyMedicare.gov to see descriptions of covered preventive services and track the services you get.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Visit

This information prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.