

The Bullthistle Bulletin

Quarterly Newsletter October-November-December 2015
Chenango County Area Agency on Aging
5 Court Street
Norwich, NY 13815
607-337-1770



Website: www.co.chenango.ny.us

Email: chenaaoa@co.chenango.ny.us

Lawrence Wilcox, Chair,
Board of Supervisors



Brian Wessels,
Acting Director



Happy Holidays From Everyone at the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging!

Keep The Heat On With HEAP!

HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) helps low-income people pay for their energy bills. If your bills are more than you can handle, HEAP may be able to help you heat your home. The Chenango County Area Aging on Aging handles applications for the 60 and older living in Chenango County.

HEAP may be able to help you if your source of heat is:

- * Electricity
- * Natural Gas
- * Oil
- * Propane
- * Wood/Wood Pellets
- * Kerosene

HEAP will open up November 16, 2015 and run through March 15, 2016.

Emergency HEAP will not open until January 4, 2016 and will also end March 15, 2016.

2015 - 2016 HEAP Monthly Income Eligibility Guidelines

Household Size	Tier 1	Tier II
1	0 - 1,275	1,276 - 2,244
2	0 - 1,726	1,727 - 2,935
3	0 - 2,176	2,177 - 3,625
4	0 - 2,627	2,628 - 4,316
5	0 - 3,078	3,079 - 5,006
6	0 - 3,528	3,529 - 5,697

Heating Equipment Repair and Replace will open November 9, 2015. No close date as of this printing.



Any questions please call Chenango County Area Agency on Aging at 607-337-1770. We will not have new applications until opening day November 16. We can put your name on a mailing list and send one to you when they arrive.

Christmas Word Scramble

- llbes _____
- srcda _____
- sroFty _____
- oihlyad _____
- rryme _____
- ardesap _____
- ocoeSgr _____
- siptri _____
- igtssnock _____
- sanadyccne _____
- turkaeicf _____
- wottesoaetp _____
- tetopiasni _____
- Csmrrrteihaes _____
- Evels _____
- jlylo _____
- dnierer _____



Answers on Page 12

**YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR
ANNUAL PUBLIC HEARING of the CHENANGO COUNTY AREA
AGENCY ON AGING**

JOIN US

**Thursday, November 5, 2015, 10:30 AM
ROGERS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER
2715 NY 80, SHERBURNE, NY 13460**

How will the growing demand for services for seniors be met in future years? Your input about unmet needs and quality of life is important.

This event is free and open to the public. Meeting place is handicapped accessible. Refreshments will be serviced.

EMERGENCY FOOD PACKS

Emergency food packs will be available through the Nutrition Program in November. 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-Alford, Nutrition Program Coordinator

EMERGENCY FOOD PACK FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE#: _____

Please check appropriate line below:

Home Delivered Meal Participant _____

Senior Center Participant _____ Center Name _____

WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

It's that time of year when the MEAL PROGRAM may be closed due to the weather.

Please listen to the Norwich radio station WKXZ FM 94/WCHN AM 970. The closing will be announced as "The Area Agency on Aging Nutrition Program". This includes Senior Centers and all Home Delivery. You may also call the Area Agency on Aging at 337-1770 after 8:30AM if there is a question regarding closures.





Dear Marci

When can I first sign up for Medicare?

I turn 65 in December, and I'm anxious about enrolling in Medicare on time. I do not want to miss my first chance to enroll, because I heard that you pay penalties if you don't enroll right away. What steps should I take to make sure I don't make Medicare enrollment mistakes?

- Lara (Baton Rouge, LA)

Dear Lara,

The step you should take to enroll in Medicare on time will differ depending upon whether or not you already collect Social Security retirement benefits when you turn 65.

If you already receive Social Security when you turn 65, the federal government will automatically enroll you in Medicare. Your Medicare will start on the first of the month you turn 65, which is December. You do not need to sign up for Medicare.

On the other hand, if you do not receive Social Security when you turn 65, you must take action to apply for Medicare. To avoid higher costs down the line, you must enroll during your Initial Enrollment Period (IEP). Your IEP includes the three months before, the month of, and the three months following your 65th birthday. For you, your IEP will span from September 2015 to March 2016, since your 65th birthday is in December. If you enroll in Medicare during this seven month period, you will avoid late enrollment penalties and gaps in health insurance coverage.

The date your Medicare coverage begins depends on when you enroll during your IEP. For your coverage to begin as soon as possible, it is best to enroll in the first three months of your IEP (the three months before the month you turn 65). Your Medicare coverage will then go into effect starting the first day of the month you turn 65. If you enroll during the month you turn 65, your Medicare coverage will go into effect the following month. If you enroll during the fifth month of your IEP, your Medicare coverage begins two months after you enroll. If you enroll during the sixth or seventh month of your IEP, your coverage begins three months after you enroll.

If you enroll in Medicare at any point during your IEP, your enrollment will be considered timely. You will not face any late enrollment penalties. To enroll in Medicare, you can call the Social Security Administration at 800-772-1213 or you can visit your local Social Security office.

When you enroll in Medicare (either actively during your IEP or automatically), you receive Medicare Parts A and B. Most people do not pay for a premium for Part A, but almost all people owe a premium for Part B.

Understand that you will have the option to turn down Part B, but you should use great caution before declining Part B coverage. You should only consider delaying Part B if you confirm two essential things. First, you must have coverage from your or your spouse's current employer. If you are insured by your own or your spouse's current employer, you have special permission, called a Special Enrollment Period, to enroll in Part B later without risking higher costs and periods without coverage. Second, you must verify that your current employer coverage will pay the same amount for your care as it did before you qualified for Medicare. In other words, ensure that your employer coverage pays first on claims before Medicare pays. Insurance that pays first on claims is called primary coverage. You should always enroll in Medicare Part B right away if your employer coverage is not primary to Medicare (meaning it pays after Medicare on insurance claims). If Medicare is supposed to pay first and you fail to enroll, the employer plan may pay little to none of your health care costs.

Keep in mind that how your current employer coverage is affected by your Medicare eligibility largely depends on the size of the employer. If you have current employer coverage, talk to your employer to find out how your coverage works with Medicare. Verify this information with Social Security before making any final decisions about Part B coverage.

-Marci

Hospital Discharge Planning

Discharge planning helps ensure that you and your caregivers have the information, resources, coverage, and care you need as you transition from the hospital. A discharge plan should consider two main elements: first, your need for further care after your hospital stay and second, the availability of such care.

Who qualifies for a discharge plan?

Hospitals are required to provide discharge plans to Medicare inpatients who were found to be at high risk of complications after leaving the hospital without discharge plans. Note that Medicare recommends but does not require hospitals to provide discharge planning for all hospital inpatients. Also, while Medicare encourages hospitals to provide abbreviated discharge plans to certain groups of hospital outpatients, Medicare does not require hospitals to provide these services to outpatients. Note that state law may require hospitals to provide additional discharge planning rights to patients.

What is included in a discharge plan?

The discharge plan is an action plan that works toward your health care goals. A discharge plan is based on input from you and your caregivers, and the results of the hospital's evaluation of your discharge planning needs. As such, the plan should address:

- Your need for follow-up care, including additional medical care, and medications.
- The most appropriate care setting for you after hospital discharge. If you are returning home, you will need to be able to care for yourself reasonably well. If not, the plan will explore the availability and capacity of caregivers or community-based supports to provide adequate assistance.
- Your access to coverage for follow-up care, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy

Medicare covers outpatient physical, occupational, and speech therapy if:

- Therapy is considered safe and effective medical treatment for you
- You need technical skills that a trained therapist can provide or oversee
- Your doctor or therapist sets up a plan of treatment before you get care
- Your doctor regularly reviews your plan of treatment

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) Care

Original Medicare may help pay for skilled nursing facility (SNF) care if:

- You need skilled nursing care seven days a week or skilled therapy services at least five days a week
- You were formally classified as a hospital inpatient for at least three days in a row in the 30 days before going to a Medicare-certified skilled nursing facility
- You have Medicare Part A before you're discharged from the hospital

<u>For Days</u>	<u>Medicare covers</u>	<u>You pay</u>
1-20	Full cost	Nothing
21-100	All but a daily coinsurance	\$157.50 coinsurance per day
Beyond 100	Nothing	Full cost

Hospice Services

Hospice care is palliative care intended to make you physically and emotionally comfortable if you are terminally ill and predicted to have less than six months to live. The hospice benefit is covered under Original Medicare. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan your hospice will be paid for by Original Medicare. Medicare will cover hospice care if:

- You have Part A and receive care from a Medicare-certified hospice agency
- You have a terminal illness and your doctor certifies that you have fewer than six months to live
- You elect to have Medicare pay for palliative care, like pain management
- Your doctor regularly reviews your plan of care

Home Health Care

In order to qualify for Medicare to cover our home health care:

1. **You must be homebound:** It must be extremely difficult for you to leave your home unassisted
2. **You must need skilled care:** This is care that must be provided by a skilled nurse or therapist (physical therapist, speech therapist, or occupational therapist). Your skilled care need must be intermittent, which means you need care no more than once per day.
3. **Your doctor must certify that you need home health care:** Your doctor must sign a home health certification saying that you are homebound, need intermittent skilled care, and have had a face-to-face visit with a health care provider.
4. **You must receive care from a Medicare-certified home health agency:** If you have Original Medicare, find a certified agency by calling 800-Medicare or go to www.Medicare.gov. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, contact your plan to find out which agencies are in network.

Terms to Know

Appeal: A formal request you make to Medicare if you disagree with Medicare's coverage decision on a health care service or item you receive. You always have the right to appeal if Medicare denies coverage or payment of a service you receive.

Original Medicare Appeal: An appeal you make to Medicare if you get your Medicare benefits through Original Medicare and Medicare is denying a health care service or item you receive. There are two types of Original Medicare health appeals if your care is ending. These appeals run on an expedite timeline.

- **Ending Inpatient Hospital Care Appeal Process:** Follow this process if you are currently receiving care at a hospital as a hospital inpatient, and your provider told you that your care will end soon since you are determined to no longer be eligible for continued hospital care under Medicare coverage rules.

Ending SNF/HHA/CORF/Hospice Care Appeal Process: Follow this process if you are currently receiving care at a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), Home Health Agency (HHA), Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility (CORF) or Hospice Agency and your provider told you that your care will end soon since you are determined to no longer be eligible for continued care under Medicare coverage rules.

Post-hospital care (also know as after-hospital care): Healthcare received a facility like a skilled nursing facility (SNF), a nursing home, or in your home with help from a home health agency or outpatient therapy service to help you recover and avoid future hospital readmissions for the same condition or injury.

2015 Medicare Rights Center | www.medicareinteractie.org | National Helpline: 800-333-4114

These materials made possible by support from the Capital District Physicians' Health Plan

CONGRATULATIONS DEB SANDERSON!

On July 30th Deb retired from the Area Agency on Aging after 29 years of service. We would like to thank Deb for her many years of service and wish her well in her future retirement adventures.

With Deb's retirement Brian Wessels has been named Acting Director, Nicole Ross will go from being Outreach Worker to Coordinator of Services taking over for Brian. Her new duties include working closely with NY Connects.

Jane Muserilli has a new job of Senior Outreach Worker she will be mentoring the new outreach workers that will be coming on board as well as assisting the current outreach workers with any issues.



Good Time Bus Tours
6852 Indian Opening Road
Bouckville, NY 13310
Cell 315-729-8323



Fall and Winter Bus Trips!

Tues., Oct. 6: German Oktoberfest at Platzbrauhaus – \$112 -- Enjoy a German band, dancing, food, costumes & decorations for an authentic **German Festival!** At noon, order your choice of sauerbraten, a half- roasted chicken or roast pork with homemade applesauce and dessert. There is a cash bar & gift shop (*Note: no credit cards are accepted at Platzbrauhaus*). Bring a deck of cards to play in the atrium or dance the afternoon away. At 4 pm, line up to make a ham or turkey sandwich for on the way home! A good value for your money.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: **September 16, 2016**

7 am: depart Hamilton
7:20 am: depart Sherburne
7:40 am: depart Norwich
8:10 am: depart Greene
20-min. rest stop
11:15 am arrive Platzbrauhaus, 127 Call Hollow Rd, Pomona, NY
Noon: Lunch
4 pm: Sandwiches to-go offered
4:30 depart for home
20-min. rest stop
8 pm: arrive Greene
8:30 pm: arrive Norwich
8:50 pm: arrive Sherburne

Mon, Oct. 12: Bingo/Slots at Turning Stone Casino -- \$40 – An on-your-own day! Get \$20 Bingo Bucks or \$25 Free Play for the slot machines plus \$5 toward your lunch on the premises. Win big!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: **Oct. 12, 2015**

5218 Patrick Rd., Verona, NY

8 am depart Greene	4:30 pm depart Turning Stone Casino
8:30 am depart Norwich	5:05 pm arrive Hamilton
8:50 am depart Sherburne	5:25 pm arrive Sherburne
9:10 am depart Hamilton	5:45 pm arrive Norwich
9:45 am arrive Turning Stone Casino	6:20 pm arrive Greene

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6852 Indian Opening Road
Bouckville, NY 13310
Cell 315-729-8323



Nov. 11: "A Christmas Miracle" at Sight and Sound Theater, Lancaster, PA. -- \$151 – Buffet lunch at **Hershey Farm Restaurant**, then enjoy a **pre-show and seasonal treats in the lobby** at Sight and Sound. Then, in the theater, go back in time and experience the greatest birth in history. Travel to Nazareth and Bethlehem in a timeless story; be amazed by angels in the heavens proclaiming the birth of the Savior and be captivated as camels, sheep and other delightful animals also join the stage!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Oct. 8, 2015

Pick up at:

7:00 am Big M, Sherburne

7:20 am Howard Johnsons, Norwich

7:40 am Great American, Greene

Allow 20 min. rest stop

Arrive noon at Hershey Farm Restaurant, 240 Hartman Bridge Road, Ronks, PA

Arrive 1:40 pm at Sight and Sound Theater, 300 Hartman Bridge Rd, Ronks, PA

2:00 pm enter showroom

2:45 – 5:15 pm show

5:30 pm Depart Sight and Sound

Stop at fast food place for 40 minutes

10 pm: Arrive Greene

10:30 pm: Arrive Norwich

Dec. 16: Hunterdon Hills Playhouse -- \$125 -for luncheon show, "A Playhouse Christmas 2015". Yuletide skits, dance numbers and traditional carols are all backed by a live onstage orchestra. Lunch selections are prime rib, flounder, chicken, roast turkey, lasagna or roasted vegetable kabobs. An **unlimited dessert buffet** completes the day!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: October 14, 2015

7 am depart Hamilton

7:20 am depart Sherburne

7:40 am depart Norwich

8:15 am depart Greene

11:30 am arrive Hunterdon Hills for lunch and show at 1:15 (2 ¼ hr show)

3:30 pm depart Hunterdon Hills

stop for 40 minute dinner break (not included in price).

6:40 pm arrive Greene

7:15 pm arrive Norwich

7:35 pm arrive Sherburne

7:50 pm arrive Hamilton

**HAPPENINGS AT OUR SENIOR CENTERS
CHENANGO COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015**

GREENE.....(607) 656-4789

Brightman Senior Center
25 Birdsall Street
Greene, NY 13778
Hours: M-W-F 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards, Bingo and Puzzles. Every other week: Crossword Puzzles, Word Searches and Trivia Plus

Special Activities:

- 10/05/15 - Blood Pressure Clinic
- 10/12/15 - Office/Site Closed
Columbus Day
- 10/14/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/11/15 - Office/Site Closed
Veterans' Day
- 11/18/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/26 & 11/27 - Office/Site Closed
Thanksgiving
- 12/09/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 12/25/15 - Office/Site Closed
Christmas Day



NORWICH (607) 334-2910

First Baptist Church
10 West Park Place
Norwich, NY 13815
Hours: M-F 9-1pm
Lunch Served at 11:45AM

Daily Activities: Cards (Tues/Fri), Crossword Puzzles, Word Searches, Trivia Plus and Bingo on Thursday

Special Activities:

- 10/12/15 - Office/Site Closed
Columbus Day
- 10/14/15 - Salad Bar & Celebrate Birthdays!
- 10/28/15 - Salad Bar
- 11/11/15 - Office/Site Closed
Veterans' Day
- 11/18/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/25/15 - Salad Bar
- 11/26 & 11/27 - Office Site Closed
Thanksgiving
- 12/09/15 - Salad Bar
- 12/18/15 - Blood Pressure Clinic
- 12/23/15 - Salad Bar
- 12/25/15 - Office/Site Closed
Christmas Day

SHERBURNE.....(607) 674-4600

The Welcome Center
12 Knapp Street
Sherburne, NY 13460
Hours: M-W-F 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards and Puzzles

Special Activities:

- 10/12/15 - Office/Site Closed
Columbus Day
- 10/14/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/11/15 - Office/Site Closed
Veterans' Day
- 11/18/15 - Blood Pressure Clinic & Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/26 & 11/27 - Office/Site Closed
Thanksgiving
- 12/25/15 - Office/Site Closed
Christmas Day



COVENTRY.....(607) 656-8602

Windy Hill Senior Center
Coventry Town Hall
1839 Route 235
Coventry, NY 13778
Hours: Tues & Thurs 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Bingo and Cards
Every other week: Crossword Puzzles, Word Searches and Trivia Plus

Special Activities:

- 10/13/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/17/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/26 & 11/27 - Office/Site Closed
Thanksgiving
- 12/08/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 12/10/15 - Blood Pressure Clinic

**HAPPENINGS AT OUR SENIOR CENTERS
CHENANGO COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015**

MCDONOUGH (607) 337-1770

Genegantslet Activity Center
McDonough United Methodist Church
County Route 5
McDonough, NY 13801

Hours: Two Evening Dines a Month
3-8pm/ Dinner Served at 5:30PM

- 10/08/15
- 10/22/15
- 11/05/15
- 11/19/15
- 12/03/15
- 12/17/15

SOUTH OTSELIC (607) 337-1770

Plum Valley Forever Young Center
Methodist Church
102 Clarence Church Street
S. Otselic, NY 13155

Hours: One Evening Dine a Month 3-8pm
Dinner Served at 5 PM

- 10/23/15
- 11/20/15
- 12/18/15

NEW BERLIN(607) 847-6350

Unadilla Valley Senior Center
First United Methodist Church
51 S. Main Street
New Berlin, NY 13411

Hours: Tues & Thurs 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards (Pitch & Golf) and
Puzzles

Special Activities:

- 10/13/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/17/15 - Celebrate Birthdays!
- 11/26 & 11/27 - Office/Site Closed
Thanksgiving
- 12/8/15 - Blood Pressure Clinic & Celebrate
Birthdays!

REMINDER!

**THERE IS STILL
TIME!**

Medicare Open Enrollment is
October 15 – December 7.

It's worth it to take the time and compare.
If you have been thinking of changing
now is the time to do it.

**It's easy! Call Chenango County
Agency on Aging at**

**(607) 337-1770 and make an
appointment**



Advice on Coping with Low Vision

If you've recently been diagnosed with advanced age-related macular degeneration (AMD) or low vision, it's normal to feel anger, fear or grief for your loss. Consider allowing yourself to experience and acknowledge these emotions so you can begin to move past them.



It may help to find support from others going through the same experience; ask your doctor about local support groups. Friends and family, too, can offer support, comfort and reassurance, as well as help you implement strategies for easing daily tasks and making your environment more conducive to your needs.

Keep in mind that asking for help isn't a sign of weakness -- in fact, it's a way you can take control of your condition. If lasting sadness has started to affect your day-to-day activities, you may have clinical depression. Medication, talk therapy or both may help you feel like yourself again and may even help with your visual functioning. In addition, these practical tips may help:

- **Consider vision rehabilitation.** These services attempt to enable independent living by teaching adaptive skills and use of assistive devices and suggesting adjustments for your home.
- **Modify your home.** Install brighter lightbulbs, use window blinds to reduce glare and mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape or paint so they're easier to see.
- **Develop shopping techniques.** Consider shopping with a friend or ordering items online so you can control the font size. A small magnifier with a built-in light can help you read labels and price tags at the store. Keep paper money separated by denomination with a bill-folding system or wallet with separate compartments for each type of bill.
- **Adapt your physical activity.** If you enjoy walking, do so with a friend who can watch for safety issues. Try bowling with gutter bumpers or swimming laps.
- Find more tips at the American Foundation for the Blind website at www.visionaware.org.

Answers to Christmas Word Scramble Page

1. bells
2. cards
3. Frosty
4. holiday
5. merry
6. parades
7. scrooge
8. strips
9. stockings
10. candy cane
11. fruit cake
12. sweet potato
13. poinsettia
14. Christmas tree
15. elves
16. jolly
17. reindeer



happy
holidays!

2015 Flu Clinics Coming to a Fire Station Near You!!!

Don't get blown away by the flu!!

The Chenango County Health Department and the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging are co-sponsoring Flu Clinics in various Firehouse locations throughout the County in October and November for Chenango County residents only.

These Clinics are for people age 3 years old and up.

(Please—No children under age 3)

COST:

- ◆ For age 3-18 years—no charge
- ◆ For age 19 years and older **without Medicare B**—\$16 per person, payable at the time of vaccination. Cash or check made out to “Chenango County Area Agency on Aging”
- ◆ For age 19 years and older **with Medicare B**—no charge (must show your Medicare Card)

We cannot accept a Medicare Advantage Plan (such as Today's Options) as payment.

DATE/ TIME/ LOCATION:

October 8—Norwich Firehouse 6-8 pm

October 13—Oxford Firehouse 4-6 pm

October 20—Sherburne Firehouse 4-6 pm

November —Bainbridge Firehouse TBD

November —South Otselic Firehouse TBD

For more information or questions and to register for the Clinic that you wish to attend, please call 337-1660.



A Little Holiday Humor!

Why did the police arrest the turkey?
(They suspected it of foul play)

What do ghosts eat on Halloween?
(Ghoulash!)

How do they fix a jack-o-lantern?
(With a pumpkin patch!)

What is the most musical part of a turkey?
(The drumstick!)

Why does everyone like Frosty
the Snowman?
(Because he is so cool!)

What do you get if Santa goes down the
chimney and the fire is lit?
(Crisp Cringle)



NY Connects Chenango- What is it?



NY Connects Chenango is a trusted place where you can get the information and assistance you need to make informed decisions about long term care.

Long Term Care can be provided at home, in the community, in assisted living facilities, or in nursing homes.

NY Connects Chenango provides free information and help for all long term care services and programs. Information about long term care programs, assistance with referrals to services that will help people of all ages with long term care needs, resources for individuals, caregivers and long term care professionals.

Services that can be accessed from NY Connects Chenango:

Respite care, home care services, counseling and support, home delivered meals, Adult Protective Services, child day care, children with special needs assistance, health insurance, housing and/or independent living programs, medical equipment, support groups and more.

For more information call (607) 337-1659 or check out www.co.chenango.ny.us.

This service is free.

Diabetes Basics: An Introduction to Diabetes

**By Dina Lawson, Registered Dietitian, Chenango County Area Agency on Aging
October-November-December 2015 Bullthistle Newsletter**

What is Diabetes?

- Diabetes occurs when your body has a problem with insulin and the insulin cannot get glucose (sugar) from the blood into your body's cells.
- This causes the amount of glucose in your blood to increase higher than normal.
- Another name for high blood glucose is called hyperglycemia.

Blood Glucose and Insulin.

- When you eat carbohydrate-containing foods, your body breaks these foods down into their simplest form for digestion called glucose. The glucose is absorbed from the small intestine into the blood.
- Once the glucose is in the blood, the insulin moves the glucose out of the bloodstream into the body's cells. The glucose cannot get into the cells without the help of insulin.
- Insulin is a hormone made by the beta-cells in your pancreas. The pancreas is an organ located behind your stomach. The beta-cells secrete insulin into your bloodstream when glucose is present.
- In diabetes, insulin is the problem. Your body either doesn't make enough insulin, can't use the insulin it makes or some combination of both.
- Depending on the problem, diabetes is classified as Type 1, Type 2 or Gestational Diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy).

What is the Difference between Diabetes Type 1 and Type 2?

- Type 1. The beta cells in the pancreas do not make insulin so the person must take insulin in the form of a syringe, insulin pen or insulin pump.
- Type 2. This is called insulin resistance. The beta cells of the pancreas make insulin but the body doesn't use it normally. At first the beta cells make extra insulin to make up for the insulin resistance but then over time the pancreas can't keep up and blood glucose levels rise. Eventually, the person has to be treated with oral medications and/or insulin.

Risk Factors associated with Type 2 Diabetes.

- Overweight and obesity
- Physical inactivity
- History of hyperglycemia or prediabetes
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal Cholesterol
- Age
- Family History & Genetics
- Race and Ethnicity

Symptoms of Diabetes.

- Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes usually occur very quickly and are serious because blood glucose levels run very high. These symptoms include frequent urination, thirst, hungry all the time, feeling tired a lot and blurred vision. Type 1 Diabetics will have weight loss without trying even though they are hungry. They may have nausea and vomiting due to the build-up of ketones in their blood. Type 1 Diabetics can also experience diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) from having very high blood glucose levels.
- Type 2 Diabetics may have these symptoms in common such as hunger, thirst, frequent urination, fatigue and blurred vision as well. Type 2 Diabetics may also experience tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands or feet, and frequent infections or slow healing wounds.
- Type 2 Diabetics may only have mild symptoms for years before diabetes is detected.
- Early detection and treatment of diabetes can decrease the risk of further complications of other chronic conditions.

How is Diabetes Diagnosed?

- There are a few methods used to determine if a person has diabetes. Usually these tests are repeated a second day to confirm diabetes. Testing for diabetes should always be done at a health care facility such as a doctor's office or lab.
- Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG). This is a blood test that is usually done first thing in the morning after an 8 hour fast of nothing to eat or drink, except water. Diabetes is diagnosed at a FPG of 126 mg/dl or higher.
- Random Plasma Glucose Test (also called Casual Plasma Glucose Test). Your doctor may use this test if you show acute signs of diabetes. Diabetes is diagnosed with a blood glucose of 200 mg/dl or higher.
- Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT). This is a 2 hour test that checks your blood glucose levels before and 2 hours after you drink a carbohydrate containing drink. It shows how quickly your body processes glucose. Diabetes is diagnosed if your blood glucose after 2 hours is 200 mg/dl or higher.
- Hgb A1C. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose level from the past 3 months. No special drinks or fasting is required. Diabetes is diagnosed with an A1C of 6.5% or higher. 6.5% = 140 mg/dl average blood glucose for the past 3 months. (6% = 126 mg/dl. 7% 154 mg/dl.)

Treatments for Diabetes.

- Plan your meals. Choose what, how much and when to eat.
- Exercise. Be physically active.
- Insulin and/or Oral Medications. Take medications as your doctor prescribes them.

More on Meal Planning.

- Make healthy choices every day. Start with small steps.
- Cut down on sugared beverages and have more water.
- Choose fruit instead of high calorie high fat cake, pie or cookies.
- Cut calories by cutting back on portion sizes. Eat smaller serving sizes.
- Learn about Carbohydrate Counting to help with meal planning. Along with the right balance of insulin, carbohydrates can help manage your blood glucose.