



MOVING FORWARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING
ED DAY, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2024



Hello Friends!

As the summer winds down, I hope this message finds you safe and in good health. With the changing of the seasons, we bid farewell to the summer heat and look forward to the refreshing crispness of fall. I want to take a moment to commend our dedicated team at the Office for the Aging for their outstanding work in supporting those in need. Their efforts have been truly remarkable, and I encourage you to reach out to them if you require assistance.

As we approach this time of year, we solemnly reflect on the significance of September 11th. It is a moment to

honor and remember the lives lost, the families forever impacted, and the courageous men and women who have made profound sacrifices since that tragic day. Although twenty-three years have passed, the pain of that loss remains, yet our faith and resolve are as strong as ever.

Please remember that the Office for the Aging is here to support you. Wishing you all a wonderful fall season.

All the best,

Ed

Ed Day,

Rockland County Executive



OFFICE FOR THE AGING UPCOMING EVENTS:

“FALL” FITNESS EVENT

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 25 · 11am - 1pm

HAVERSTRAW BAY PARK PAVILION · Call to register 845-364-2100

(see back page)

MEDICARE 2025

A HIICAP (Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program) Counselor will offer presentations on Medicare with a focus on upcoming changes to Medicare for 2025.

The program will include a review of the various financial assistance programs available for eligible Medicare recipients. HIICAP & NY Connects Staff will be on-site to assist with EPIC, Medicare Savings Program, Medicaid, HEAP, and SNAP applications.

Programs are subject to change; registrants will be notified of any change.

Oct 22 · 2:30-3:30pm

An in-person presentation in partnership with NEW CITY LIBRARY

Call the library to register 634-4997 x139 or register online at <https://newcity.librarycalendar.com/>

Oct 30 · 11am-12pm

An in-person presentation at ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING
Call us to register 364-2100

Nov 14 · 11am-12pm

An in-person presentation in partnership with ROSE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Call the library to register 786-2100 or register online at <https://rmla-ny.whofi.com/calendar/embed>

HAPPENINGS AT THE OFA!

SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

GAME DAY

2:00-4:00pm

Join us for board games, conversation, refreshments, and FUN!

OCTOBER 9, 2024

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS

11:00am-12:30pm

A panel of experts shares how to protect yourself online and informs us of the latest scams to avoid.

Programs are for Rockland County residents, 60 years and over. Registration is required for all events. Please call 845-364-2100.

News From the OFA!

The end of summer is upon us, and we welcome the fall season with its brilliant colors and whirling leaves, and marvel at the wondrous changes in nature that surround us!

Our Zumba and Chair Yoga series this summer have provided the county's older adults with opportunities for enjoyable exercise and socialization. We plan to continue these popular programs, so give us a call if you are interested, and make sure you're on our mailing list!

On September 25th we will hold our annual "Fall" Fitness event at Haverstraw Bay County Park. Join us as we address falls prevention awareness with presentations on the topic and a walk by the beautiful river (details on back page). Additionally, we will hold "Game Day at the OFA" on September 27th, where we will offer board games, companionship, and refreshments. And on October 9th, it's Cybersecurity Awareness, an event to learn about the latest in digital security, and how to prevent falling victim to attacks and scams.

As you may know, Medicare open enrollment time is just around the corner, so be sure to join us for one of our informational sessions (schedule is on the front page). Open enrollment is October 15th to December 7th. This is the time to make any necessary changes.

Enjoy this issue's articles and information, and don't hesitate to reach out to us with your questions and feedback at 845-364-2110 or 845-364-2100.

~ Best Regards From the OFA Team!




NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

NY Connects is a service that provides information and assistance about long-term services and supports in Rockland County. This includes a child or an adult with a disability, an older adult, a family member or caregiver, a friend or neighbor, and helping professionals.

CONTACT NY CONNECTS:
Rockland County Office for the Aging
845-364-3444 or 800-342-9871

Westchester Independent Living Center
914-682-3926



OFA's NY Connects team at the Nyack Farmers' Market.



Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) job seekers at an OFA training session.



Chair yoga at the OFA.



Chair yoga instructor Mira with happy attendees.



Zumba instructor Dolan leading a class at Palisades Center.

**SAVE
THE
DATE!**

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

October 15th-December 7th

The Medicare Open Enrollment is quickly approaching.

As we do every year, we want to stress the importance of reviewing your Medicare coverage for the upcoming year. If you have had the same plan for several years, you may not be taking advantage of the best rates or coverage options. New Medicare Advantage plans will be coming out, and provider networks and additional benefits will change. Medigap policy pricing may increase, and your prescription needs may have changed. We can

enter your prescription drugs through the medicare.gov system to see if there is a more affordable plan for 2025.

If you are eager to review your coverage with us, please call ahead to schedule as appointments will book quickly.

If you would like to receive the Rockland County Medicare Options Packet which contains updated plans and pricing for 2025, please call 845-364-2118 or email ofa@co.rockland.ny.us and leave your name – with spelling, phone

number, mailing address, and/or email address so that we can add you to our mailing list.

Please be patient with response times as we experience a very high call volume during the Medicare Open Enrollment season. 1-800-Medicare is available 24/7 for clients who would like a consultation right away.

We look forward to assisting you.



**Reserve
la fecha**

Inscripción abierta de Medicare

15 de octubre-7 de diciembre

La Inscripción Abierta de Medicare rápidamente se aproxima.

Como hacemos todos los años, queremos enfatizar la importancia de revisar su cobertura de Medicare para el próximo año. Si ha tenido el mismo plan durante varios años, es posible que no esté aprovechando las mejores tarifas u opciones de cobertura. Saldrán nuevos planes Medicare Advantage y las redes de proveedores y los beneficios adicionales pueden cambiar. El precio de la póliza Medigap puede aumentar y sus necesidades de medicamentos recetados pueden haber cambiado.

Podemos ingresar sus medicamentos recetados a través del sistema medicare.gov para ver si existe un plan más asequible para 2025.

Si usted está ansioso por revisar su cobertura con nosotros, llame con anticipación para reservar su cita, ya que las citas se llenan rápidamente.

Si desea recibir el paquete de opciones de Medicare del condado de Rockland que contiene planes y precios actualizados para 2025, llame al 845-364-2118 o envíe un correo electrónico a ofa@co.rockland.ny.us y deje su nombre, con la ortografía, el número de teléfono,

dirección postal y/o dirección de correo electrónico para que podamos agregarlo a nuestra lista de correo.

Tenga paciencia con los tiempos de respuesta, ya que experimentamos un volumen de llamadas muy alto durante la temporada de inscripción abierta de Medicare. El 1-800-Medicare está disponible las 24 horas del día, los 7 días de la semana para los clientes que deseen una consulta de inmediato.

Esperamos poder ayudarlo.



Four Things YOU Can Do to Prevent Falls

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Talk openly with your healthcare provider about fall risks & prevention.

Tell a provider right away if you fall, worry about falling, or feel unsteady. Have your doctor or pharmacist review all the medicines you take, even over-the-counter medicines. As you get older, the way medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you sleepy or dizzy and can cause you to fall. Ask your provider about taking vitamin D supplements to improve bone, muscle, and nerve health.

Exercise to improve your balance and strength.

Exercises that improve balance and make your legs stronger, lower your chances of falling. It also helps you feel better and more confident. An example of this kind of exercise is Tai Chi. Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling. Ask your doctor or healthcare provider about the best type of exercise program for you.

Have your eyes and feet checked.

Check with your eye doctor once a year, and update your eyeglasses, if needed. You may have a condition like glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision, which can increase your chances of falling. Also, have your healthcare provider check your feet once a year. Discuss proper footwear, and ask whether seeing a foot specialist is advised.

Make your home safer.

- Remove things you can trip over (like papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk.
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- Have grab bars put in next to and inside the tub, and next to the toilet.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to see well. Hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.
- Have handrails and lights installed on all staircases.
- Wear well-fitting shoes with good support inside and outside the house.



Are you concerned about falling? [A Matter of Balance Fall Prevention Program](#) is a free, award-winning program that can help you reduce your fear of falling, improve your balance, and feel better. The 8-week program meets once a week for two hours. Learn practical coping strategies to reduce your fear of falling and increase your activity level by doing strength and balance exercises. Call the Rockland County Department of Health at (845) 364-2500 for more information about the program, upcoming classes, and to register.

Take Advantage of Our Free Classes!

The Rockland County Department of Health offers the following free or low-cost programs to help you feel better, take charge of your life, and connect with others. Call (845) 364-2500 to find out which is right for you!

A Matter of Balance: Learn to reduce your fear of falling and improve your strength and balance.

Tai Chi for Arthritis: Learn the ancient Chinese practice to increase strength, balance, posture, prevent falls and improve mind, body, and spirit.

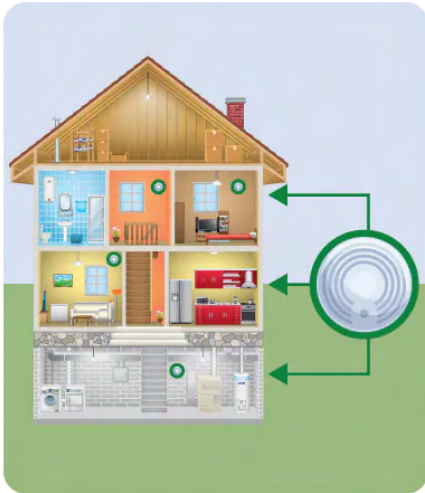
Put It Out Rockland: Get help to quit smoking or vaping.

Better Choices, Better Health: Learn ways to better manage your health conditions.

Living Well with Diabetes Program: Learn to manage your diabetes and prevent complications.

Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW™) is October 6-12, 2024

The theme this year is “Smoke alarms: Make them work for you!™” See below for key smoke alarm safety tips and guidelines.



INSTALL

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area (like a hallway), and on each level (including the basement) of the home.

Unfortunately, your risk of dying in a home fire is greater as you get older. Find out about [fire safety for older adults](#).

Rockland County’s [Healthy Neighborhoods Program \(HNP\)](#) offers home visits to identify and discuss health and safety issues in the home for eligible residents, including low-income residents, seniors, and at-risk families. They discuss fire safety, carbon monoxide safety, and cooking safety, and they provide free products to help address these issues, such as smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. For more information, call 845-364-3290.



TEST

Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.



REPLACE

Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or stop responding when tested.

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT!

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/rockhealth
Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/rockhealth
Follow us on Instagram: www.instagram.com/rocklandhealth
Visit us on our website: www.RocklandCountyNY.gov

Be an Election Inspector

- When:** General Election – November 5th
 - Where:** A Polling Place Near You
 - Who:** Must be a Registered Voter in Rockland County, enrolled in one of the two major political parties
 - What:** \$300 for each Election and \$25 per Training Class
- FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: 845-638-5172



SHOW YOUR PATRIOTISM AND GET PAID AT THE SAME TIME!

Taking a quick exercise break? Try one of these ideas!




Endurance

Endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system.



Flexibility

Stretching can improve your flexibility to make everyday activities easier.



Balance

Balance exercises help prevent falls and can improve balance.



Strength

Strength exercises can help you stay independent and prevent fall-related injuries.

➔ To learn more about exercise, visit: www.nia.nih.gov/exercise.

United by Challenges: Louise and Fatou's Bond

by Emma McCabe, Meals on Wheels Rockland

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SENIOR CENTER MONTH

Louise joined the Nyack Senior Activity Center in September 2023, deciding “just to try it” and for something to do. On her first day, she asked the woman sitting next to her to read something on her phone, as she couldn't see it due to a rare eye condition. The woman, Fatou, handed the phone back, explaining that she couldn't read it either because she also had a rare eye condition.

Both women have retinitis pigmentosa, a condition affecting about 1 in 4,000 people globally, with an estimated 100,000 cases in the United States. From that moment of mutual recognition, Louise and Fatou became best friends. They bonded over shared experiences and challenges that others couldn't understand. With the Nyack Senior Activity Center providing a space for them to connect and support each other, they feel more like sisters than friends.

Louise and Fatou appreciate the center's helpful staff, its transportation option, and the presentations and entertainment provided—“Dance with Rafael” is a favorite. A visiting audiologist and optometrist also introduced them to new programs and phone apps using Seeing AI and voice-over technology to assist with reading.

Before joining the Senior Activity Center, Fatou's impaired vision had slowed her down significantly. Unable to read, she felt her mind wasn't getting the exercise it needed, but she refused to give up. The center now provides her with



the opportunity to stay active and socialize. She says, “the center is a place where you get encouragement to live on.”

At the Meals on Wheels Senior Activity Centers, each participant has a unique story and reason for joining. Some come for a nutritious meal and engaging activities, while others, like Louise, seek a way to pass the time. Many find themselves yearning for companionship to overcome feelings of isolation. What keeps people returning are the meaningful friendships they form with fellow participants. The diverse and enduring friendships that emerge from the Meals on Wheels Senior Activity Centers are a testament to the community's spirit, with many more connections yet to be made.

Services are funded in part by the Administration for Community Living, New York State Office for the Aging and the Rockland County Office for the Aging. Contributions are voluntary and confidential and are used to expand the services for which they are received. No one will be denied services because of an inability or unwillingness to contribute.

NUTRITION

Reasons to Add Fall Produce to Your Cart

Cool, crisp mornings and colorful, changing leaves are a few of the signs that fall is here. The piles of gourds, apples, and hearty greens at the grocery store are a reflection of the changing seasons and a reminder that Mother Nature has plenty of good food in store for us for the next few months. It's time to swap berries with apples and summer squash with winter squash.

As the seasons change, you'll notice changes in the produce section at your grocery store. This is the time when winter squash (think acorn, butternut, kabocha, and spaghetti) replace melons and root vegetables like carrots and parsnips are plentiful. Grab these items and enjoy them while they're at their peak.

They Taste Better. Consuming fruits and vegetables soon after harvest means you're getting the best quality. While fresh is a great option, don't forget to check the freezer and canned food aisles too. Canned and frozen varieties of fall produce are just as delicious and nutritious as fresh.

They're Full of Phytochemicals. Phytochemicals help strengthen our immune system and come in a variety of

different colors. Color is a great indicator of what nutrients the produce contains. Just look at the spectrum of colors in fall produce and you know this season offers the variety we need to comfortably meet our nutrition needs. Think of the deep reds of late-season tomatoes and apples (that's lycopene!), purple of figs and eggplants (anthocyanins!); orange and yellows of carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin (beta carotene!); and dark green of broccoli, brussels sprouts, and kale (lutein and folates among others!). So while 'eat the rainbow' sounds like dated, overly simplistic advice, it's actually gold standard.

They're Packed with Health Benefits. Don't forget that including more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks, in general, is a great way to improve health. Research shows that eating more fruits and vegetables offers multiple health benefits, including lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Consuming more produce provides increased opportunities for more nutritional benefits like vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber, to name a few. Don't forget to stop by your local farmer's market and see what seasonal produce is available.



Razones para agregar productos de otoño a su carrito

Mañanas frescas y frescas y hojas coloridas y cambiantes son algunas de las señales de que el otoño está aquí. Los montones de calabazas, manzanas y abundantes verduras en el supermercado son un reflejo del cambio de estaciones y un recordatorio de que la Madre Naturaleza tiene mucha buena comida reservada para nosotros durante los próximos meses. Es hora de cambiar las bayas por manzanas y la calabaza de verano por la de invierno.

A medida que cambian las estaciones, notará cambios en la sección de productos agrícolas de su supermercado. Este es el momento en que las calabazas de invierno (piense en bellotas, nueces, kabocha y espaguetis) reemplazan a los melones y abundan los tubérculos como las zanahorias y las chirivías. Toma estos artículos y disfrútalos mientras están en su mejor momento.

Saben mejor. Consumir frutas y verduras poco después de la cosecha significa que obtendrás la mejor calidad. Si bien los productos frescos son una excelente opción, no olvide revisar también los pasillos de alimentos enlatados y del congelador. Las variedades de productos de otoño enlatadas y congeladas son tan deliciosas y nutritivas como las frescas.

Están llenos de fitoquímicos. Los fitoquímicos ayudan a fortalecer nuestro sistema inmunológico y vienen en una

variedad de colores diferentes. El color es un gran indicador de los nutrientes que contiene el producto. Basta con mirar el espectro de colores de los productos agrícolas del otoño y sabrá que esta temporada ofrece la variedad que necesitamos para satisfacer cómodamente nuestras necesidades nutricionales. Piense en los rojos intensos de los tomates y las manzanas tardías (¡eso es licopeno!), el morado de los higos y las berenjenas (¡antocianinas!); naranja y amarillo de zanahorias, batatas y calabazas (¡betacaroteno!); y el verde oscuro del brócoli, las coles de Bruselas y la col rizada (¡luteína y folatos, entre otros!). Entonces, si bien 'comer el arcoíris' suena como un consejo anticuado y demasiado simplista, en realidad es el estándar de oro.

Están llenos de beneficios para la salud. No olvides que incluir más frutas y verduras en las comidas y meriendas, en general, es una excelente manera de mejorar la salud. Las investigaciones muestran que comer más frutas y verduras ofrece múltiples beneficios para la salud, incluida la reducción del riesgo de enfermedades cardiovasculares y cáncer. Consumir más productos ofrece mayores oportunidades de obtener más beneficios nutricionales, como vitaminas, minerales, antioxidantes y fibra, por nombrar algunos. No olvide pasar por el mercado de agricultores local y ver qué productos de temporada hay disponibles.

- ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION -

Airline Customer Service Scams

by Michele C. Durso, Consumer Protection Coordinator

In the news lately, there have been more incidents of scams involving customer service numbers for airlines. Social media platforms have led to advancements in more sophisticated scams. If you fail to verify that you are calling the official airline customer service line, you could lose money to a scammer.

How does it work?

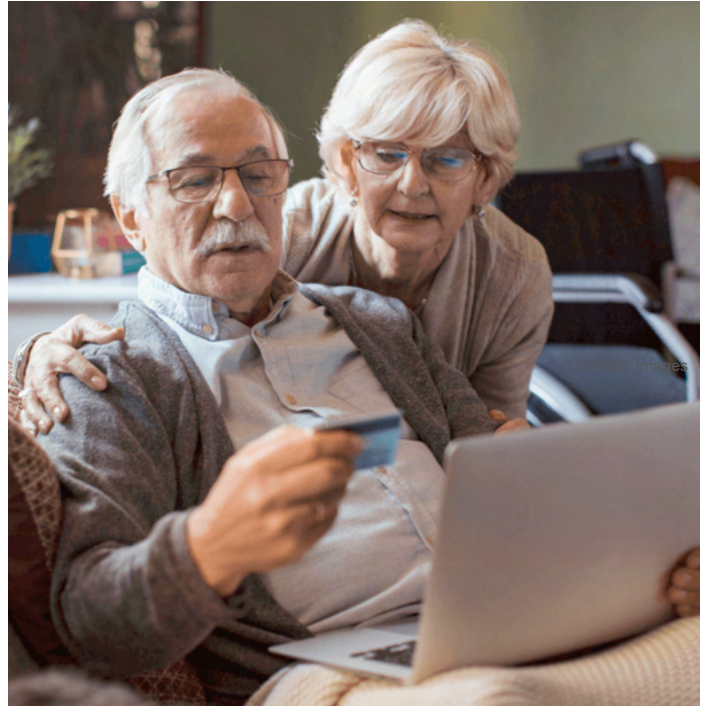
You want to travel. You want to save money on your airfare. You may conduct an online search for the cheapest flight to your destination. You find what seems like a great deal and you book the flight through the website or by calling a customer service number.

After you pay, you receive a phone call from the company informing you of a price change or an extra charge to finalize your booking. This phone call is a red flag; no legitimate company would call you after you booked. The website you used was set up by scammers to look legitimate, but both the website and customer service number were fake. The price increase is a request for more money from you.

Scammers will also check social media for posts from upset travelers. Sometimes they will directly reach out to them through a fake account pretending to be an airline customer service representative wanting to assist them. They use that opportunity to request personal information such as banking details, credit card numbers, booking confirmation number, phone number and name on reservation or they will send the passenger a fake link that will harvest all that information when the passenger inputs it directly. It can be used later for identity theft or for charges on their accounts.

Anti-scam software can be installed on your device to identify and protect against digital intrusions. Check with the technical support for your device's operating system to pair it with the appropriate software.

Double-check flight details before calling customer service. Scammers will blast fake cancellation notification emails and texts that can be mistaken for real alerts. Confirm the information is correct before calling customer service. Do not call the customer service number in the message — it may not be legitimate.



Make any online purchases with a credit card which can be disputed later with your bank. Unfortunately, any personal information you share cannot be retrieved. Always check the URL on a website and that the link is secure before entering any information. A secure link begins with “https//” and will include a lock icon on the purchase page.

Be careful when searching online for airline customer service numbers. Some have been diverted by scammers. Visit the airline's official website, download the airline's official mobile app, or use the airline's official chat. If you are already at the airport, speak to the airline's employee at the gate.

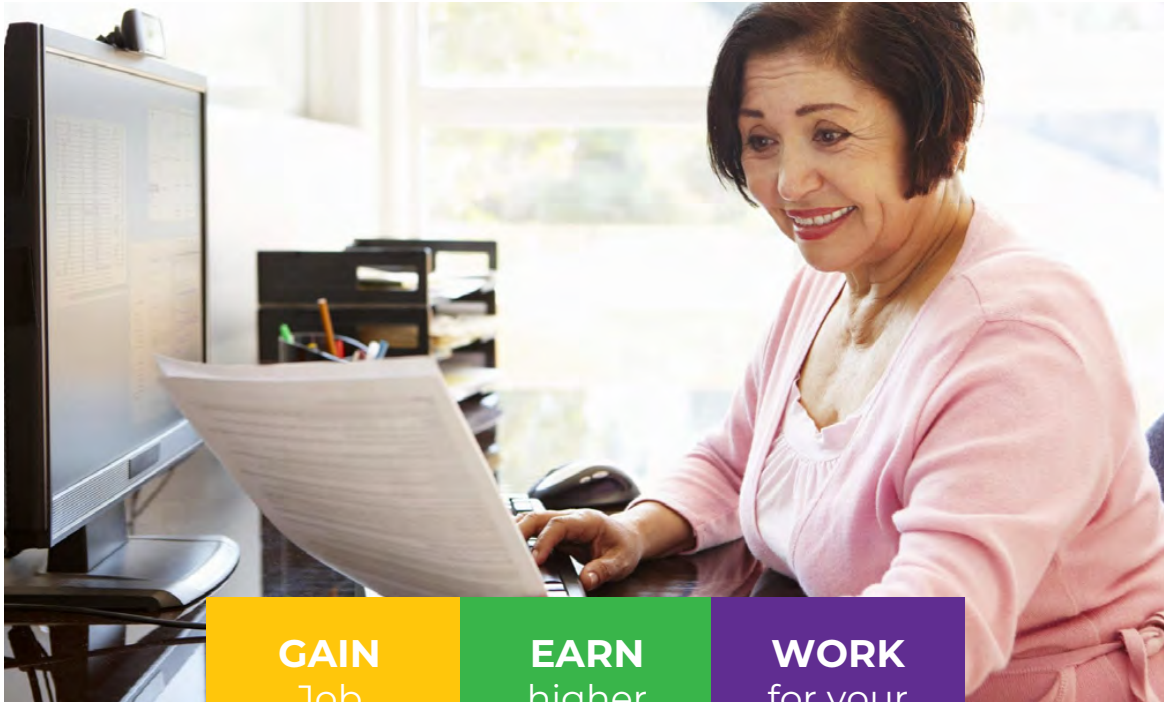
Visit [FlightRights.gov](https://www.flightrights.gov) for information about your protections as an airline passenger. If your personal information was stolen, go to [IdentityTheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) to file a report.

For additional resources:

- [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.ftc.gov)
- [Better Business Bureau](https://www.bbb.org)
- [Motley Fool](https://www.motleyfool.com)
- [Bitdefender Blog](https://www.bitdefender.com)

SEEKING EMPLOYMENT?

TRAINING AVAILABLE

SCSEP

GAIN
Job
Skills

EARN
higher
wages

WORK
for your
community

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

We provide paid part-time temporary work experience assignments with non-profit or government organizations to assist job seekers develop and utilize skills relevant to finding permanent employment in today's job market.

Program Requirements

Job seekers must:

- Be at least 55 years or older
- Be unemployed
- Have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level

The Center for Workforce Inclusion's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. SCSEP is an equal opportunity program. Auxiliary aides and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Contact Us



PLEASE CALL:
(845) 364-2116

EMAIL:
OFA-SCSEP@co.rockland.ny.us

Effect of Diabetes on Brain Function

by Raghunath M. Mehta, M.D.

Approximately 40 million Americans have diabetes. This includes both diagnosed and undiagnosed cases. Each year around 1.2 million Americans are newly diagnosed. Incidence is particularly high among seniors, with 30% of Americans aged 65 and older affected.

Diabetes can significantly impact brain function in several ways.

Blood vessel damage: High blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels in the brain reducing the amount of oxygen and nutrients reaching brain cells. This can lead to problems with memory, thinking and even increase the risk of stroke. Stroke is twice as common in people with diabetes than those without diabetes.

Nerve damage: Just as diabetes can damage nerves in other parts of the body, such as causing diabetic neuropathy, it can also affect nerves in the brain. This can create issues with memory and learning.

Cognitive decline:

Research has linked type 2 diabetes to decline in mental functioning particularly effecting neurocognitive speed and executive functioning. This means that people with diabetes might experience slower thinking, need longer time to process the information, and experience difficulty with planning and organizing their day-to-day activities.

Increased risk of Alzheimer's disease: Studies have shown that having diabetes especially in middle-age can increase the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease later in life. Alzheimer's disease is sometimes called type 3 diabetes.

Brain atrophy: Long-term diabetes can cause the brain to shrink or atrophy over the years, affecting its functional connectivity and overall brain health.

Preventing cognitive decline in diabetes involves a combination of lifestyle changes, medical management and regular monitoring of blood sugar. Here are some strategies that can help.

Monitor blood sugar levels: Keeping blood sugar levels within the normal range is crucial. Regular monitoring and adjusting medications as needed can help prevent complications. Both low and high blood sugar levels can cause problems.

Healthy diet: Eating a balanced diet rich in vegetables, fruits and whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats can support brain health. The Mediterranean and DASH diets are particularly helpful in this regard. Generally speaking, it is best to keep sugar intake to a minimum.

Physical activity:

Regular exercise improves blood flow to the brain and can help management of blood sugar levels. An average 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week is generally recommended.

Mental stimulation:

Engage in activities that challenge your brain such as reading, solving puzzles and learning new skills. This can help maintain cognitive functioning.



FG Trade/Getty Images

Social engagement: Staying socially active can reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Participate in social activities and maintain good relationships with friends and family. Loneliness and boredom often lead to depression.

Medical management: It is very important to control diabetes with the use of appropriate medications. Maintaining a normal range of blood sugar helps to reduce cognitive decline.

Treatment for depression is important. Almost 30% of people suffering from diabetes have depression compared to 15% of people without diabetes. When people are depressed, they give up taking care of themselves, such as maintaining their diet, taking medications on time, and monitoring their blood sugar levels.

Regular check-ups with your physician are very important in staying healthy.

Implementing these strategies can help improve overall quality of life and maintain optimum cognitive functions.

Caring for the Caregiver: Gifts, Support, and Help to Relieve Stress

by Susan Stiles, National Council on Aging



Holidays happen once a year, but caregiving is year-round. Why wait until a special holiday to give a gift to a family caregiver in your life? Instead, look for ways to incorporate caring for the caregiver as part of your daily or weekly routine. Caregivers play a vital role in society's well-being and helping them helps us all.

Why is it important to support caregivers?

Caregivers are all around us. In fact, the number of family caregivers is increasing. Over 50 million adults provide care to an adult or a child, with nearly 80% of them providing care to someone over the age of 50. Over half of all caregivers are over the age of 50 themselves. Most caregivers are female (61%), while 39% are male.¹

Supporting caregivers with gifts and assistance is important for many reasons. For one, it helps maintain overall quality of care for the care recipient. By assisting caregivers and honoring what they do, we ensure that those in need receive high-quality care. Support also means that caregiver burnout can be eased. Caregiving is both physically and emotionally demanding, often leading to stress, burnout, and health problems for the caregiver.

Additionally, being there for the caregiver in your life—even doing something as simple as calling them once each week—can help prevent the social isolation that comes with caring all day for a loved one. Finally, supporting caregivers can provide you with the tools and training that you may someday need to be a caregiver yourself.

There are an infinite number of ways that you can help the caregiver in your life with small gifts. Whatever you give to your caregiver doesn't have to be expensive or elaborate.

Here are 8 caregiver gift suggestions to get you started:

1. Time. This is perhaps the most precious gift of all. Offer to provide respite care or arrange for professional caregivers to step in temporarily so that the caregiver can

have some time off to take a break and focus on their own needs.

2. Self-care. Caregivers often neglect their own well-being while focusing on others. Gift them items that encourage relaxation and self-care such as scented candles, special lotions, or a cozy blanket. A spa gift certificate could also provide them with a well-deserved break (and remember to include respite care so they can go without worrying about scheduling around their caregiving responsibilities).

3. Specialty care. Has your line of work or your personal experience given you a skill that could benefit the caregiver? Offer that skill to them or teach them what you know.

4. Audiobooks or podcasts. A caregiver doesn't always have time to sit down and read a book, but they can have one read aloud for them—or listen to a podcast—while they are doing other things. Choose titles that cater to their interests, whether it's fiction, history, or a subject they're passionate about.

5. Meals. If you love cooking, consider taking the caregiver a meal occasionally or joining a meal train that is already set up for them. If cooking is not your thing, gift a subscription to a meal delivery service that offers nutritious, pre-prepared meals.

6. Rides. Getting to appointments, either for themselves or their care recipient, can be complicated for the caregiver. If you are able to, offer to drive them to their scheduled appointments. If you are not able to drive, provide them with taxi or rideshare credits that they can use themselves.

7. Gift cards. Gift cards to their favorite restaurant, grocery store, coffee shop, or drug store allow caregivers to treat themselves to something they enjoy without worrying about the expense.

8. Touching base. Set reminders to touch base with the caregiver via regular calls, e-mails, and text messages, or by dropping by their home if you live nearby. This simple gift helps maintain your close bond, lets them know that you're thinking of them, and also may alert you to a more pressing need that you can assist with.

By offering support and valuing caregivers, we acknowledge the importance of their role and we help contribute to the social fabric. And while it's wonderful to acknowledge caregivers on special occasions, contributing small gifts and assistance year-round reaps the biggest rewards by helping them maintain their own well-being as well as that of their care recipient all of the time. If you have a caregiver in your life, reach out to them today with a simple gift.

1. National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP. Caregiving in the U.S. 2020. Washington, DC: May 2020. Found on the Internet at <https://www.caregiving.org/caregiving-in-the-us-2020/>.



PRESENTS

“Fall” Fitness

Rockland County Office for the Aging
#FallsPreventionAwarenessWeek



**FEATURING
GUEST SPEAKERS,
FITNESS DEMONSTRATIONS &
A WALK ON THE BEAUTIFUL NATURE TRAIL**

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Haverstraw Bay Park Pavilion
21 Gagan Road
Haverstraw, NY 10927



***Reservation required.
Space is limited.***

Call **845-364-2100**
to reserve your spot!



For Rockland County residents, 60 years of age and over.

If you would like to request a reasonable accommodation to participate, please let us know.