

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

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Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

## HOW DO YOU ASSESS WHETHER CHANGES ARE AFFECTING YOUR DRIVING SKILLS?

Most older adults are capable and have a lifetime of valuable driving experience. For these reasons, decisions about a person's ability to drive should never be based on age alone. However, changes in vision, physical fitness and reflexes may cause safety concerns. People who accurately assess these changes can adjust their driving habits so that they stay safe on the road, or choose other kinds of transportation.

The following information outlines the physical effects of aging, as well as tips on coping with them so that you remain a safe driver as long as you can.

**VISION:** Good vision is essential for good driving health. But, as soon as people age, everyone experiences declines in vision. Are you having problems reading highway or street signs or recognizing someone you know across the street? Do you have trouble seeing lane lines and other pavement markings, curbs, medians, other vehicles and pedestrians, especially at dawn, dusk or at night? Do you experience more discomfort at night from the glare of oncoming headlights?

**REACTION TIME:** Driving requires dividing your attention between multiple activities and being able to react quickly to situations that often arise without warning. Do you have these symptoms of decreased attention and reaction time?

- You feel overwhelmed by all the signs, signals, road markings.
- Gaps in traffic are harder to judge, making it more difficult to turn left at intersections or to merge with traffic when turning left.
- You take medication that make you sleepy.
- You often get lost or confused.
- You experience dizziness, seizures or loss of consciousness.
- You aren't confident that you can handle the demands of high speeds or heavy traffic.
- You are slow to see cars coming out of driveways and side streets or to realize that another car has slowed or stopped ahead of you.



**HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU?** A friend or family member has expressed concern about your driving. Have you gotten lost while driving on routes that you were once familiar with? Have you been pulled over by a police officer and warned about your poor driving behavior, even if you didn't get a ticket? Have you had several moving violations, near misses or actual crashes in the last three years? Or, your doctor or other health care provider has advised you to restrict or stop driving.

**IS IT TIME TO GIVE UP DRIVING?** We all age differently, and for this reason, there is not one recommended age to quit driving. If you have recognized that you can relate to the signs mentioned earlier in this article, it may be time to seriously think about giving up your keys. Are you worried you won't be able to do the things you want and need to do if you stop driving? Many people have this concern, but there may be more ways to get around than you think. For example, free or low-cost bus or rideshare for older adults. Be safe, if not for just for yourself, for the safety of others.

### IN THIS EDITION:

- Attention Grandparents!
- Staying Safe When Its Too Darn Hot!
- Living With Gout
- Five Reasons To Add Color
- Sock Hop - Making Memories
- End Elder Abuse - Tell Someone!
- Public Hearing Scheduled
- Junk Or Not? How to Sort Your Medicare Mail



# ATTENTION GRANDPARENTS!



**Do you need assistance with your grandchild?**  
**Are You Currently the Primary Caregiver For Your Grandchildren?**  
**Do Your Grandchildren Live With You In Your Home?**

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging is seeking grandparents who are raising their grandchildren because their biological parents are unable or unwilling to do so.

We understand this important role you have taken on and hope to offer grandparents some additional resources and/or assistance.

**If you are a grandparent (55+) and could use some assistance with your grandchild(ren), contact Linda Ramirez at 913-573-8543.**

## STAYING SAFE WHEN IT'S TOO DARN HOT!

[www.healthinaging.org](http://www.healthinaging.org)

When the temperature climbs above 80°F, older adults need to be proactive and take precautions to avoid ailments due to excessive heat. Keep in mind the following tips when trying to stay cool.

**Stay away** from direct sun exposure as much as possible. If possible, plan your outdoor activities either early in the morning or when the sun starts to set. Adjusting when you go outside could mean a difference of several degrees.

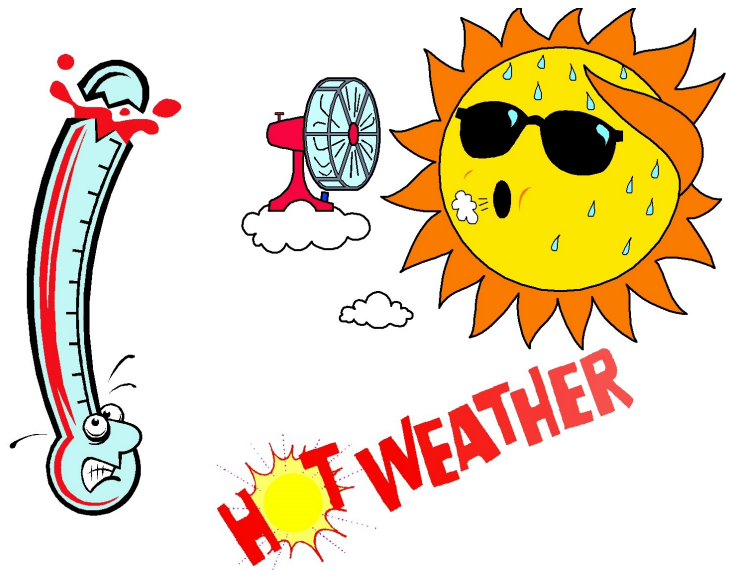
**Air Conditioning** is your friend. Spend as much time as possible in air conditioned spaces. If you don't have an air conditioner, go somewhere that is air-conditioned. Read a book at the library, walk around in indoor malls, watch that new movie in the theater, or meet your friends at the senior center.

**Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of cool water, clear juices and other liquids that don't contain alcohol or caffeine. Alcohol and caffeine can dehydrate you.

**Dress appropriately.** Whenever you can, try wearing loose, light-colored clothes (dark-colored clothes absorb heat). Top it off with a lightweight, broad-brimmed hat. These simple changes will help you both stay cool and avoid sunburn.

**Did someone say sunburn?** Use broad spectrum sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.

**Cool down!** Take tepid (not too cold or too hot) showers, baths or sponge baths when you're feeling warm. Don't have the time? Then wet washcloths or towels with cold water and put them on your wrists, ankles, armpits and neck.



If you're having trouble keeping cool, reach out to the Unified Government 311 Line to assist you with finding a Cooling Center nearest you!

## LIVING WITH GOUT

Information provided by [newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)

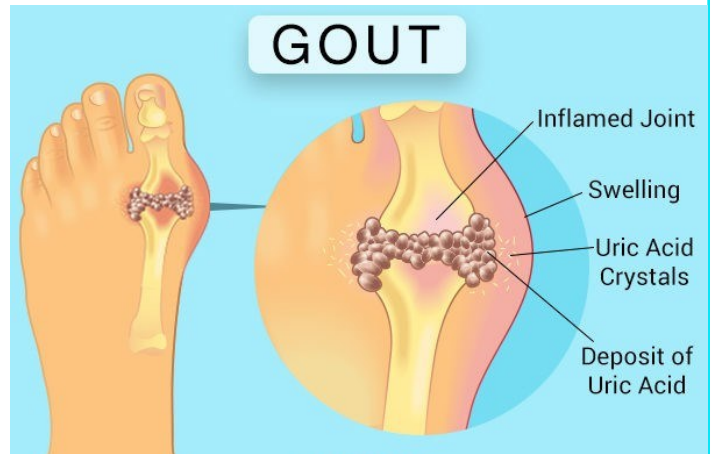
Gout is a common and painful type of arthritis (swelling in one or more of your joints). It usually first appears in a big toe or lower limb. But other joints can be affected. Most types of gout are treatable, especially if caught early.

Gout is more common in men. It tends to first arise for them in middle age. Women usually develop gout only after menopause.

Flares of gout often start suddenly at night, with intense pain that may wake you up. Usually, just one joint is affected. It may feel swollen, red, warm and stiff. Flares usually get better within a couple of weeks.

If left untreated, flares can begin to arise more often and last longer. They may be triggered by certain foods, alcohol, some medications, or illnesses.

Treatment plans are based on symptoms and the cause of your gout. Over-the-counter and prescription medications may help reduce pain and swelling during flares. Lifestyle changes can also help you manage gout and reduce flares. Eating a heart-healthy diet can help. Also, avoid alcohol, red meats, and seafood to reduce the chance of gout flares. Losing excess weight may help minimize the number of flares you have.



## FIVE REASONS TO ADD COLOR

### 1 Lots of the Good

Fruits and vegetables provide many beneficial nutrients. Add fruits and vegetables to meals and snacks for a nutritional power boost.



### 2 Less of the Bad

Fruits and vegetables are typically free of trans fat, saturated fat and sodium. Load up!



### 3 Won't Weigh You Down

Fruits and vegetables are low in calories. They fill you up thanks to the fiber and water they contain, which can help manage your weight.



### 4 Super Flexible Super Foods

All forms of fruits and vegetables - fresh, frozen, canned and dried, can be part of a healthy diet. They are among the most versatile, convenient and affordable foods you can eat. Choose those with little or no added salt or sugar.

### 5 A Whole Body Health Boost

A healthy eating plan full of fruits and vegetables can help lower your risk of many serious and chronic health conditions, including heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and some types of cancer. They're also essential to your everyday health.





# SOCK HOP *Making Memories*



The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center held its Annual Older Americans Month Celebration on May 25, 2023. Here you will find a few photos of the event that included free concessions, health screenings, entertainment, games, door prizes and the infamous dance contest.



The Sock Hop Committee would like to thank the following organizations for sponsoring the Older Americans Month Celebration!

### GOLD LEVEL SPONSORS

- Adult Health Services
- Aquinas Home Health Care
- Aspire Home Health
- Best Choice Home Health
- Emerald Health Care
- Guadalupe Centers
- Kansas City Hospice & Palliative Care
- KS Department for Aging & Disability Services
- Medicalodges - Leavenworth
- Midland Care - PACE
- Riverbend Post Acute Rehabilitation
- Unidos Personal Care LLC
- Windsor Place At-Home Care

### SILVER LEVEL SPONSORS

- Kansas City Kansas Public Library
- KU Alzheimer's Disease Research Center
- Livable Neighborhoods
- Mission Health Communities
- RSVP - Flint Hills Volunteer Center
- State Library of Kansas - Talking Books
- Unified Government Health Department
- Unified Government Transit Department

## HOW'D WE DO?

Provide your feedback for a chance to win either a Sock Hop t-shirt or gift card! A limited supply of each are available. Return your entry by July 18, 2023 to: WY/LV AAA, Attn: Sock Hop Committee, 849 N 47th Street, Suite C, Kansas City, KS 66102

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
(including zip code):

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Provide your feedback:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY PHONE AND ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE COMMUNICATOR!

## END ELDER ABUSE; TELL SOMEONE!

### What is elder abuse?

Abuse typically takes place at home. People who abuse are usually family members (such as an adult child or spouse) who act as caregivers. Paid caregivers may also abuse older people. Most time, victims may be unable or afraid to report the abuse. Others may not recognize signs of abuse. You can put a stop to it! Learn the facts about elder abuse and support efforts to prevent it, **tell someone!**

### How are older people abused?

Neglect is a form of abuse by someone who fails to provide care, including medicine, food and help with hygiene. Victims may have his or her money or property stolen or mismanaged. Emotional or mental abuse may occur when older people are insulted, bullied, threatened or have their actions strictly controlled. Physical abuse occurs when the elder is kicked, punched, slapped, tied up or even over medicated. Some elders are sexually abused by being subjected to forced or unwanted sexual contact. Don't ignore signs that you or someone you know is being abused, **tell someone!**

### Why does elder abuse happen?

Caregivers may abuse because they lack support or training, feel overwhelmed by responsibilities, worry about finances, resent the older person's need for continued care or depend on the older person for money or support. **Tell someone!**

### Why does elder abuse continue?

An older person may not want to believe that he or she is being abused. Physical or mental disabilities often make it difficult for the victim to get help. Older people may wish to protect their caregivers out of family loyalty. When older people have little or no contact with people outside the home, they may feel they have no one else to turn to beside the caregiver and may be afraid of what will happen if they seek help. **Tell someone!**

### What do I do if I recognize abuse?

**Tell someone!** Don't let victims or yourself, suffer in silence. Look for the warning signs, whether you see the signs in others or in your own relationship with those you love. Untreated, unexplained or repeated injuries or health problems (such as bruises, breaks, bed sores or burns); sudden changes in weight behavior or finances; a withdrawal from social activities or poor hygiene, such as dirty clothing or bedding are all signs of abuse. **Tell someone!**

**Report suspected adult abuse, neglect or exploitation to Adult Protective Services at 1-800-922-5330.**



## Town Hall/Public Hearing

### Meeting Scheduled

Public Hearings are a great opportunity to learn about programs and/or give feedback regarding senior services in Wyandotte County.

**August 1, 2023**

**10:00am - 12:00pm**

**Victory Hills Baptist Church**  
2010 N 66th Terrace  
Bonner Springs, Kansas 66104



**Please RSVP by Friday, July 28, 2023**

## NEWSLETTER DONATIONS ENCOURAGED

Help us continue to provide this important publication by becoming a sponsor.

_____ \$100	<b>Advocate</b> <i>defensor</i>
_____ \$50	<b>Benefactor</b> <i>benefactor</i>
_____ \$25	<b>Patron</b> <i>patrón</i>
_____ \$10	<b>Contributor</b> <i>contribuidor</i>
_____	<b>Other</b> <i>otro</i>

Donations should be made payable to:  
Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging  
849 North 47th Street, Suite C  
Kansas City, Kansas 66102.

**Thank You For Your Support!**  
**Annie McMorris**

## JUNK OR NOT? HOW TO SORT YOUR MEDICARE MAIL

Important mail will come your way from Medicare this fall, including an *Annual Notice of Change* from your Medicare Advantage or Part D plan. Other mail and ads touting free benefits are marketing materials from plans themselves - learn to tell the difference!

The start of fall brings welcome changes like cooler days and colorful foliage, but it also brings the deluge of mailings and solicitations from insurance companies touting the benefits of their Medicare plans.

These ads coincide with Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Period, which runs from October 15 through December 7th. If you are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, this is your chance to change plans for the upcoming year. It is important to re-evaluate your plan choices given that Medicare plan costs and coverage change every year.

Be skeptical about ads touting "free" Medicare benefits. You may have seen ads on TV or received mailings and emails that tout free Medicare advice or benefits that appear too good to be true. Ads or mailings from Medicare health plan typically start on or just after October 1 each year. These marketing campaigns are designed to prompt you to call a phone number, enter an email address, or register for an event to learn more about an advertised plan and ultimately sign up for that plan. It's important to be skeptical of these claims, and to know what questions to ask when looking at plan choices.

Learn to recognize important mail from Medicare The Medicare program is administered by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), AND THE Social Security Administration. Below are the Official logos that appear on the return address portion of the envelope which may help identify mail that comes from these three official government agencies.



Additionally, know that it is forbidden by law to use the words or symbols "Medicare," "Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services," "Department of Health and Human Services," or "Health & Human Services" in a way that indicates approval or endorsement on any marketing or non-government correspondence.

Here are some tips to help identify materials that are promotional and do not require your attention:

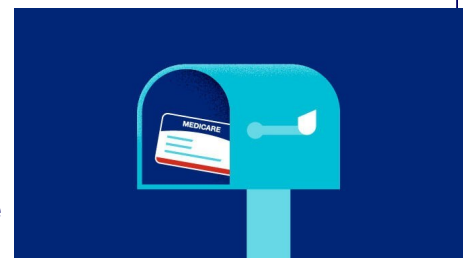
- The material usually asks you to call, email, send a post card or attend a seminar to learn more about a Medicare plan.
- The material may use language filled with superlatives such as the best, the most, the least expensive or sometimes the word "free" which is prohibited and an inaccurate description for Medicare plans.
- The material often includes large colorful graphics to grab your attention.
- The postage area may be imprinted with "PRESORTED" OR "PRST STD" which is commonly used for mailing a large quantity of business or advertising mail.

Always open mail from your current health or drug plan(s). Even if you are looking to change plans for the coming year, it is still important to continue to read the information sent by the plan(s) in which you are currently enrolled. Know the name of your current Medicare plan(s) and be sure to open any mail sent by the plan.

One important notice you will receive during the month of September is the *Annual Notice of Change* (ANOC). The document describes the changes in plan costs, benefits, formulary (approved drug list), and service area for the upcoming year. The ANOC will provide a baseline to compare your current plan to other plans during the open enrollment period.

Seek help before choosing a plan. The Medicare Plan Finder is an online searchable tool on the Medicare.gov website that allows users to compare all Medicare plan options, including Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare Part D plans, and Medigap supplemental policies available in a service area. Users can also enroll into a Medicare Advantage or Medicare Part D drug plan directly from Plan Finder.

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) offers free unbiased Medicare counseling in every state. Counselors are available to help beneficiaries and their caregivers compare Medicare options and plans. Contact your local SHIP office by dialing 1-800-860-5260 to learn how to sign up for assistance.





## 5-INGREDIENT STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKES

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 quart strawberries, quartered and sliced
- 1/2 cup sugar, divided
- 5oz (about 1 cup) self-rising flour
- 1 pint heavy whipping cream

### DIRECTIONS:

- Adjust oven rack to center position and preheat to 450°. Toss strawberries with 6 tablespoons sugar in medium bowl and set aside.
- Place flour in a large bowl. Whisk in 1 tablespoon sugar. Stirring with a wooden spoon, drizzle in 3/4 cup cream. Stir until a lumpy dough is formed. Do not overmix.
- Using a 1-ounce cookie scoop, scoop balls of dough onto a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing them 2 inches apart. Brush tops with cream and bake until golden brown, about 12 minutes.
- Using a wire whisk or an electric mixer, whip remaining cream with remaining tablespoon sugar and vanilla extract until stiff peaks form. Split biscuits, top with strawberries and cream, close shortcakes, top with more whipped cream and serve immediately.



## WORD SEARCH

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- AMERICAN FLAG
- BACK TO SCHOOL
- BALD EAGLE
- BARBEQUE RIBS
- BEACH TOWEL
- BICYCLING
- CAR WASH
- CORN ON THE COB
- FIREWORKS
- FISHING
- FOUNDING FATHERS
- FOURTH OF JULY
- GARAGE SALE
- HOTDOGS
- HUMIDITY
- ICED TEA
- KITES
- LAWN
- LIGHTNING BUGS
- MOSQUITOS
- NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY
- OLD GLORY
- PICNIC
- RED WHITE BLUE
- ROAD TRIP
- SANDALS
- SPARKLERS
- STARS AND STRIPES
- SUN BURN
- SUNGLASSES
- SWIMMING
- THUNDERSTORMS
- TICKS
- VACATION
- WATERGUN
- WATERMELON

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# WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING

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## JULY >>>

### **INDEPENDENCE DAY**

*Tuesday, July 4, 2023*  
**Unified Government Offices Closed**

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Donations are suggested.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, or handicap.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services at 1-800-432-3535.

## AUGUST >>>

### **TOWN HALL/PUBLIC HEARING**

*Tuesday, August 1, 2023*

### **NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY**

*Monday, August 21, 2023*



Linda Ramirez, Editor