

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

2024 - January/February

Volume 32, Issue 1

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

## EIGHT HEALTHY AGING RESOLUTIONS FOR 2024

[HealthconceptsLtd.com](http://HealthconceptsLtd.com)

The New Year is the traditional time when many of us are motivated to make positive changes in our lives. Why not add a few resolutions that can impact your health and well-being throughout the New Year and beyond?

**Resolution #1: Increase physical activity in your daily routine.** No matter what a senior's health status, there is some form of exercise almost everyone can do. Talk to your healthcare provider about an exercise program that is right for you.

**Resolution #2: Give your brain a workout by learning a new skill.** Experts say that activities that stimulate the brain in a new way are especially effective. Take a class, or improve your computer skills. It's never too late to learn.

**Resolution #3: Discover a great new walking path.** Walking is one of the best forms of exercise, but we can lose motivation and become bored with our same old routine. Check out local parks, neighborhoods, even shopping malls when the weather is bad.

**Resolution #4: Ask your doctor about vaccines.** The Food and Drug Administration has recently approved a new vaccine for RSV, a respiratory infection that can be particularly harmful to babies and older adults. Individuals age 60 and older are approved for this vaccine. While you're at it, ask your doctor if you are up to date on COVID-19 boosters and flu shots.

**Resolution #5: Watch a funny movie.** Laughter is good for the heart and immune system. It relieves depression, and is a great social "icebreaker." Your public library probably has a good collection of comedy films that you can borrow at no cost or check out the latest offerings on YouTube.

**Resolution #6: Take a fall prevention tour of your home.** Look for situations and conditions that could be hazardous as you move from place to place. Removing clutter and fixing unsafe conditions helps older adults avoid falls and live more confidently.

**Resolution #7: Ask your doctor to review your medications.** During your next appointment, arrange in advance to bring in a list of all the drugs you take, both prescription and over-the-counter. Ask about side effects, possible interactions and whether switching to a generic might save you money.

**Resolution #8: Spend more time with other people.** The effects of loneliness can damage both our bodies and minds. Good relationships are one of the top ways to stay active and achieve emotional well-being.



### IN THIS EDITION:

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## MEDICINE SAFETY FOR OLDER ADULTS

POISON HELP - *The Kansas Poison Center*

Most adults ages 65 and older regularly take at least 5 different medicines. More medicines can mean more mistakes. And, as we age, physical changes can affect the ways medicine works in our body, leading to potential complications. Medicines can help us live longer and healthier lives, but taking them in the wrong way or wrong amount can be dangerous. Follow these important medicine safety tips:



- When starting a new medicine, make sure you understand why it was prescribed to you. Make note of any special instructions for how to take the medicine. Here are some questions to ask your doctor or pharmacist when prescribed a new medicine:
- What is the name of the medicine and why am I taking it?
- How much and how often do I take this?
- What if I miss a dose or double the dose of my medicine?
- What side effects could I have?
- While taking this medicine, should I avoid any activities, foods, drinks, alcohol or other medicines?
- Keep a current medicine list including all prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements. This list should include the name of each medicine, amount you take and times you take it. Bring this list with you to all healthcare visits.
- Always turn on lights and put glasses on before taking or giving medication.
- Read and follow the medicine label to make sure you are taking the right medicine, in the right amount, at the right time.
- Do not share your medicine and only use medicine that is prescribed to you.
- Take your medicine as directed – do not take it more frequently or in higher quantities.
- Use just one pharmacy so that your prescription records are all in one place. This enables your pharmacist to regularly monitor the medications you take and let you know about potential drug interactions.
- Store all medicines up, away and out of sight, especially if small children are around.

Be sure to safely dispose of all expired and unused medicines.

If you have questions or think you made a medication mistake, call **1-800-222-1222**.

## STAY WARM. STAY CONNECTED.



### Cold Weather Rule | November 1 – March 31

The **Cold Weather Rule** is designed to keep your utilities connected during the winter months, even when you're unable to pay your bill in full. Contact your utility company to see if you qualify to make payment arrangements under the Cold Weather Rule.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
KANSAS

JANUARY 29, 1861



## SORE, SCRATCHY THROAT? Soothing Pain From Illness or Allergy

*newsinhealth.nih.gov*

It's a familiar sensation as the days grow shorter and colder: a scratchy, painful feeling when you swallow, talk or even just breathe. Sometimes, a sore throat is a little more than a nuisance. It can also be a sign of serious infection. So how do you know which is which? And what can you do to soothe a sore throat?

Many things can trigger a sore throat. It can be an infection, like a virus or bacteria. Sometimes, it's even just dry air.

So when should you call your health care provider? That depends on how bad the sore throat is and what symptoms come with it.

If it's a mild sore throat and a runny nose or some congestion, that's probably a typical cold. But severe pain plus symptoms like a high fever and a loss of interest in eating or drinking may be serious.

How long a sore throat lasts matters. If it's been more than three days, then you might want to seek medical advice. But at any time, it's always reasonable to call your doctor and get an opinion.

There is no treatment for the common cold, but over-the-counter products for symptom relief may help.

For most causes of sore throat, time is the best healer. Lozenges, lollipop's, or other hard candies can help soothe your throat.

The best way to prevent a sore throat is to avoid the germs that cause them. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer often. Steer clear of other people who are sick and stay up to date with the vaccines recommended for your age group.



## THE KANSAS LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a Federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.



The 2024 LIEAP application began December 18, 2023 and ends March 29, 2024.

To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
2. Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

Benefit levels vary according to the following factors:

- Household income
- Number of persons living at the address
- Type of dwelling
- Type of heating fuel

Inquiries may be directed to the Division of Children and Families by dialing toll free 1-800-432-0043.

## STAY WARM. STAY CONNECTED.



### Cold Weather Rule

November 1 - March 31



## COLD WEATHER RULE

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) wants Kansans to have electric, gas and water services needed to keep their home warm during the winter. The KCC also recognizes the customer's responsibility to make arrangements to pay for that service. The Cold Weather Rule was designed in 1983 to ensure both goals are met.

You must make pay arrangements with your utility company to use the Rule and pay your current bill in full while paying off the overdue amount.

**For more information, call your utility company or the Kansas Corporation Commission at (800) 662-0027.**

## BRINGING EXERCISE TO DEMENTIA CARE

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

As caregivers, it can be challenging to keep a loved one engaged in healthy activities because of lack of endurance, soreness or general lack of interest. Yet encouraging loved ones to participate in these activities can be important to improving their health and wellness. Staying active has numerous benefits for people with dementia including:



- Reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Improving stamina
- Helping to reduce blood pressure
- Reducing joint swelling associated with arthritis
- Improving balance and coordination, reducing the risk of falls
- Increasing self-esteem
- Improving sleep
- Maintaining motor skills

According to the World Health Organization, all older adults who are physically capable including those with dementia should do at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise during the week. If a loved one is not yet physically active, we should consult with their physicians about having them begin to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, with an ultimate goal to engage our loved ones in physical activity for 30 minutes, 5 days a week. If we are able to, participating in these activities with our loved ones can encourage them to stay on schedule, and may be beneficial to our own health as well.

When choosing an activity, you should take into account a loved one's interests and physical abilities. Encourage participation in fulfilling activities that they used to enjoy, or enjoy doing and emphasize on how participating in these activities now can be important for both the person living with dementia, as well as for the caregiver. If a loved one is unsure what physical activities they may enjoy, start by going through a list of activities and check off which ones you would like to do together. Then, brainstorm ways to remove any possible barriers that may prevent our loved ones from participating in the activity. Start slow and try different activities until you find something they enjoy. Some activities we may want to consider trying include:

- Walking
- Gardening
- Tai Chi
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Chair exercises
- Grocery shopping
- Pilates
- Everyday chores: making the bed, watering plants, sweeping

If you are struggling to keep up with activities at home, physical therapy may be a beneficial way to ensure a loved one is maintaining their health. A licensed physical therapist will focus on an individual's specific physical needs and engage them in activities that are enjoyable and meaningful to them.

## KANSAS FUN FACTS

- A hailstone weighing more than one and a half pounds once fell on Coffeyville.
- The official state motto of Kansas is "Ad astra per aspera" which translates to "To the stars through difficulties."
- The first black woman to win an academy Award was Kansan Hattie McDaniel. She won the award for her role in "Gone With the Wind."
- At one time, it was against the law to serve ice cream on cherry pie in Kansas.
- The world famous fast-food chain Pizza Hut restaurants opened its first store in Wichita.
- Dodge City is the windiest city in the United States.
- Silent comedian Buster Keaton, of early film success, was from Piqua, Kansas.
- Amelia Earhart, first woman granted a pilot's license by the National Aeronautics Association and the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean was from Atchison, Kansas.
- Hutchison is nicknamed the Salt City because it was built above some of the richest salt deposits in the world. Salt is still actively mined, processed and shipped from Hutchison.
- Morton County sells the most trout fishing stamps of all the Kansas Counties.

# Area Agency on Aging Media Relations



## Join our Facebook Group!

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

- Find Out About Upcoming Events
- See Flyers on Our Services
- Learn Fun Facts About Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

Topics Covered on Our YouTube Channel:  
Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

- Medicare vs. Medicaid
- Social Security Disability in Kansas
- Introduction to the SHICK Program
- Identity Theft

Go to Unified Government's YouTube Channel

- Select Playlists Tab
- Click Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

Want to learn more about our services?

- Go to <https://www.wycokck.org/Home>
- Select the Departments Tab
- Click Area Agency on Aging

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Donate to Meals on Wheels!  
<https://pay.payitgov.com/wyco>

## NEWSLETTER DONATIONS ENCOURAGED

For years "The Communicator" has served as a vital means for providing seniors in Wyandotte County important information regarding aging news, events, programs, services and much more! The newsletter's continuity depends on your donations for its existence.

Donations should be made payable to:

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging  
849 North 47th Street, Suite C  
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Advocate
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Benefactor
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Patron
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Contributor
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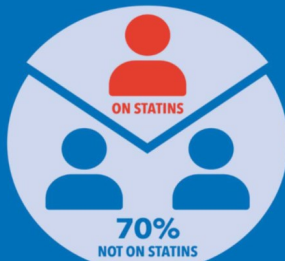
Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter.

Names are listed in alphabetical order.

Jean Eklund

Starting a statin even after age 75 may lower the risk of developing dementia.

BUT WE DON'T REALLY KNOW.  
Results from PREVENTABLE will help us understand.



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

The #PREVENTABLEtrial is one of the largest research studies in adults 75 years or older. The study will test if taking a statin could help prevent dementia in older adults. Study participants will contribute valuable information on how we age and may benefit from additional memory and physical function monitoring.

Compensation is available for those who participate!

### Who is eligible?

- Adults over 75 years of age
- Those NOT currently taking statin medication.
- Those without a history of stroke or heart attack.

Find out more by contacting Erica Lower, Project Coordinator at [elower@kumc.edu](mailto:elower@kumc.edu) or 913-588-6052.

## OLDER KANSANS DAY

Plan now to join your friends at the Kansas Statehouse on Monday, January 22, 2024 for Older Kansans Day.

This day long event provides you an opportunity to speak directly with your legislators regarding topics that are specific to seniors.

If you'd like to join us for this day long event, please reach out to Linda Ramirez by January 17, 2024 at 913-573-8543 to reserve your spot.



If you are 65 years old or older on January 1, 2024 OR disabled with an annual income of \$40,500 or less....

# You may be eligible for a tax rebate.



**BPU PILOT Relief**  
for Wyandotte County residents with a BPU Account.



**Property Tax Rebate**  
for Wyandotte County residents who own property.



**Utility Tax Rebate**  
for KCK residents who pay franchise fees on utilities such as gas, Internet, cable, and phone.

**\$200 Sales Tax Rebate**  
for KCK residents.

## Apply for your rebates January 2 - April 15, 2024.

Start gathering your 2023 income statements and utility bills now. Income can include your 2023 Social Security statement, W-2, interest statements, pension statements, retirement income, and/or disability income. You'll need proof of disability, if applicable.

If you're applying for the Property Tax Rebate, collect your 2023 real estate tax statement too.

**Call 3-1-1 for more on how to qualify and schedule an appointment.**

[wycokck.org/taxrebates](http://wycokck.org/taxrebates)

## UPCOMING CHANGES TO THE MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERY

According to a memo received by the Unified Government Transit Department on December 7, 2023, they have decided to transition hot meal delivery back to the Area Agency on Aging Administration by March 31, 2024 and frozen meal delivery by September 30, 2024.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) plans to go out for RFP in search for a new meal delivery provider and vendor in 2024. The AAA will implement a temporary meal plan to transition all meal participants, so that this critical service can continue to meet its mission.



K-State Research and Extension presents:

# Dining with Diabetes

This online course is designed for adults with type 2 diabetes, pre-diabetes, and family members, caregivers and support persons. Dining with Diabetes helps individuals learn strategies to manage their diabetes through menu planning, carbohydrate counting, portion control and label reading.

Contact the K-State Research & Extension office at 913-299-9300 for more information.

**January 8 - February 5, 2024**  
**Registration Fee: \$25**

## SHRIMP FRIED RICE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 tablespoons butter, divided
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 cups cold cooked rice
- 1 package (16z) frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 pound uncooked medium shrimp, peeled & deveined
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 8 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled, optional

### DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium-high heat. Pour eggs into skillet. As eggs set, lift edges, letting uncooked portion flow underneath. Remove eggs and keep warm.
2. In the same skillet, melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter. Add the rice, vegetables and shrimp; cook and stir for 5 minutes or until shrimp turn pink. Meanwhile, chop eggs into small pieces. Return eggs to the pan; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook until heated through, stirring occasionally. Top with bacon if desired.



Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- ASH WEDNESDAY
- BALL DROP
- BLACK EYED PEAS
- BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- BLIZZARD
- CALENDARS
- CHAMPAGNE TOAST
- CHEERS
- CHOCOLATES
- CONFETTI
- CUPID
- DIET
- FAT TUESDAY
- GROUNDHOG DAY
- HEARTS
- HOMESTEAD
- HORNS
- ICICLES
- KISSES
- LINCOLN
- LOVE
- MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
- NEW YEARS
- NOISEMAKER
- PRESIDENTS DAY
- PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL
- REFUND
- RESOLUTION
- SALES REFUND
- SNOWFLAKES
- STREAMERS
- SUPERBOWL
- VALENTINES DAY
- WASHINGTON
- WEATHERIZATION
- WINTER STORM

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# WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING

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## JANUARY >>>

### NEW YEARS DAY

*Monday, January 1, 2024*  
*Unified Government Offices Closed*

### MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

*Monday, January 15, 2024*  
*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.

## FEBRUARY >>>

### GROUNDHOG DAY

*Friday, February 2, 2024*

### VALENTINE'S DAY

*Wednesday, February 14, 2024*

### PRESIDENTS' DAY

*Monday, February 19, 2024*  
*Unified Government Offices Closed*



Linda Ramirez, Editor