

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

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Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

## BEAT THE HEAT: Summer Tips for Seniors

[www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)

Every summer, thousands of Americans suffer from heat stroke, heat exhaustion and dehydration. Seniors are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses as their bodies do not effectively cool down and it takes longer to recover when they get overheated. As the temperature starts to rise, it is important to take a moment to think about ways to beat the heat and avoid unnecessary illness.

Excessive heat, when temperatures and humidity reach 90° or above, can be dangerous, especially to those who are home without air conditioners or fans. Some will sacrifice a cool breeze from an open window due to security concerns.



Not everyone has air conditioning in their home and there is a point at which fans can't combat the summer heat. When this occurs, visit public places such as local shopping malls, libraries, restaurants, or visit with family or friends for a welcome break from the heat.

Beware of medication and/or diets that can increase risk. Hot weather can accelerate dehydration, especially in people who are taking medications that have the side effects of fluid and electrolyte loss. Many medications, particularly antibiotics and diuretics, can block the body's natural ability to cope with the sun and heat. If you are on a low carbohydrate diet, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, as the additional proteins in this diet can cause the body to heat up more quickly.

Alcoholic beverages and caffeine should be avoided since they can cause dehydration. Water is a great option, but does not effectively replace the potassium and sodium (electrolytes) that we lose when perspiring. Popular "sports drinks" such as Gatorade are a great choice for rehydrating the body.

Always be on guard for symptoms of heat exhaustion, which include pale, cold or clammy skin, extreme thirst, light-headedness, fainting, mild nausea, vomiting, and excessive sweating. Signs of heat stroke include hot, dry skin, a fast strong pulse, confusion, and a body temperature of 104 degrees or higher. If you exhibit signs of heat stroke, this is a medical emergency and you should get help immediately.

The good news is heat-related illnesses and injuries are preventable. If you understand the signs and watch out for the symptoms, you too can beat the heat of the summer season.

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## ELDER FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

*Information provided by the Wyandotte County District Attorney's Office*

Elder financial exploitation is the illegal or improper use of an older adult's funds, property, or assets. It is the most common form of elder abuse, but only a small fraction of incidents are reported. Losing money or possessions to scams, fraud and exploitation can be especially devastating to older adults who may not be able to earn back what they lost.

The perpetrators can be strangers who gain the trust of older adults, but they can also be family members or friends. It is important to know the warning signs.

- Sudden changes in bank accounts or banking practices
- Unusual use of credit cards
- Telephone, water, electricity or other utilities being shut off
- Unpaid bills, liens or foreclosure notices despite sufficient income
- Checks written to "cash" or unauthorized ATM withdrawals
- Turning over finances or transferring assets to others without explanation or consent
- Disappearance of cash, valuable objects or financial statements
- Unexplained changes to wills or other financial documents
- Sudden changes in an elder's mood or demeanor.



However, older adults can fight back by putting a few things in place before financial exploitation happens to them, such as choosing a trusted contact person who can help you protect your money. Work with your bank or credit union to protect older adults from financial exploitation and planning ahead for diminished capacity and illness.

## 50th BIRTHDAY OF THE AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

Fifty years ago, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) were formerly established as part of the 1973 Older Americans Act reauthorization. Since then, AAAs have established themselves as the local leaders in aging well at home. And as part of their continued evolution, AAAs have launched and coordinated a growing range of innovative services and supports that help enable older adults to age well at home and in their communities.

On May 10, 2024, the staff of the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging made a trek to Topeka, Kansas to celebrate 50 years with other Area Agencies on Aging across the state.



Pictured (left) is the staff of the Area Agency on Aging. In the center, Ruth Jones, Executive Director of the Wyandotte/Leavenworth AAA with Kathy Greeley, former Kansas Secretary on Aging who then was appointed as the 4th Assistant Secretary for Aging by Former President Barack Obama. Pictured (far right) is Randall Hardy, Speaker for the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature.



# MEDICARE MOMENT

Did you know that in Kansas, you can receive both Medicare and Medicaid (KanCare)? If you have limited income and assets and are seeking nursing home care, long-term care, or home health care services,



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**SHIP**  
State Health Insurance  
Assistance Program



you may be able to enroll in both Medicare and KanCare. Those who qualify for both programs, known as dual eligibles, can potentially receive help for items or services that Medicare does not cover, such as:

- Physical, occupational, or speech therapy
- Hospice Care
- Optometry/eyeglasses
- Dental services/dentures
- Personal care
- Prescription drugs

Not only are these costs potentially covered, but other Medicare Part A and Part B costs may as well. These include:

- Deductibles
- Coinsurances
- Copayments

Extra Help, a program designed to help cover Part D prescription drug costs, is another option available to those who qualify for Medicare and KanCare.

Guidelines established by the federal government are used to determine whether an individual is eligible for coverage from KanCare. These include an individual's income and assets being below a certain amount to qualify, but these amounts vary from program to program. To see these guidelines and to find out how to apply for KanCare, you can go to [www.kancare.ks.gov/consumers/apply-for-kancare](http://www.kancare.ks.gov/consumers/apply-for-kancare). If you have questions about your Medicare options, you can call the SHICK Hotline at **800-860-5260**.

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## COPING WITH FOOD ALLERGIES

LuAnn Soliah

What is the definition of a food allergy? Why do so many people have this problem? Is it dangerous? What are the symptoms? Which foods are most likely to create the allergy? How are allergies diagnosed?

### Definition of food

**allergy** - whenever the body's immune system is alerted to act against a food or a food substance. Generally, this occurs from a reaction to a food protein. The symptoms are very annoying and the reactions can be serious, possibly fatal. The immune system reacts even though the culprit is food, not a poison.



**Populations at risk for a food allergy** - anyone, any age, any race/ethnic group. However, small children and infants are at the greatest risk. Another common risk factor is family genetics. About 15 million Americans have food allergies, and they have to learn to deal with this medical problem.

**The dangerous side of food allergies** - Most of the time food allergies are uncomfortable, unsettling, and inconvenient, but in rare instances, they can be extremely dangerous. When several different body systems act together - they can create a harmful reaction called an anaphylactic shock. This is why individuals with this fear may wear a medical identification and they may carry an injectable pen of epinephrine with them at all times.

**What are the symptoms?** Swelling, nausea, itching, sneezing, tingling, vomiting, sweating, or breathing difficulty. The symptoms often start out mild and worsen as time goes by. The good news is - most children outgrow most allergies by age ten. The bad news is - most peanut, fish, shellfish, and tree nut allergies are permanent.

**Which foods are most likely to cause allergies?** The most common foods are: milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish, peanuts, and tree nuts (pecans and walnuts). Even tiny amounts of these foods can create problems for highly sensitive people. Food allergies have also been reported from sesame, corn, gelatin, sunflower seeds, and even some spices.

**Allergy diagnosis** - A trained allergist (medical professional) makes the diagnosis. Genuine food allergies are diagnosed by a complete medical evaluation. This involves a physical exam, blood tests, food journals, elimination trial diets, and medical/family history of allergies. Some allergists conduct a skin-prick test to determine allergic reactions. Oral food challenge tests and blood antibody testing are also used in allergy diagnostic testing.



# PUBLIC HEARING/TOWN HALL MEETING

You're invited to participate in a Town Hall/Public Hearing hosted by the Area Agency on Aging and the Shepherd Center.

**AUGUST 8, 2024**  
**10AM - 1PM**

The purpose of the event is for citizens to meet elected officials and share ideas and concerns with the focus on issues impacting older citizens.

The Silver Haired Legislators have been coordinating the invitations to our State and Local Legislature.

**VICTORY HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**2010 N 66TH TERRACE**  
**KANSAS CITY, KS 66104**

*Lunch will be served if RSVP is made by Monday, July 20, 2024.*

# NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY

You're invited to join the Area Agency on Aging in celebration of National Senior Citizens Day!

— AUGUST 21, 2024 —  
**11AM - 2PM**

National Senior Citizens Day recognizes the achievements of the more mature representatives of our nation. The day provides an opportunity to show our appreciation for their dedications, accomplishments, and services they give throughout their lives.

Stop by the Area Agency on Aging located at 849 North 47th Street, Kansas City, Kansas for an Open House and learn about programming, enjoy a bag of hot popcorn, a drink and/or a scoop of ice cream.

# SENIOR FUN FACTS

- Senior citizens are the fastest growing demographic on Facebook.
- Your brain never stops growing: We grow new neurons with time, and the brain is constantly reshaping itself in response to learning.
- 15 million older persons volunteer - nearly half of all adults 65 and older volunteer in some form.
- The average age of senior center participants is 75.
- Elderly people occupy over 1/3 of all federally subsidized housing.
- Compared with their peers, senior center participants have higher levels of health, social interaction, and life satisfaction and lower levels of income.
- Only 3.6% of people over 65 years old are in nursing homes. Elderly men are likely to live with a spouse, while elderly women are more likely to live alone.
- 4 in 5 older adults will battle at least one chronic condition or illness such as heart disorders, arthritis, or osteoporosis. 50% will battle at least two.
- Minorities make up almost half of the older population: 42% of people 65 and older in the US are part of minority groups.
- Social isolation makes seniors more vulnerable to elder abuse.

## PRESIDENTIAL GREETINGS FROM THE KANSAS SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE

Greetings to the Silver Haired Legislature and Friends, The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (KSHL) salute the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) on their 50 years of service and endeavoring mission; to Protect Kansans;



Promote Recovery; and Support Self-Sufficiency. We the KSHL remain steadfast in our commitment to the ongoing growth and development of our organization to advocate for Legislation that support the mission and endeavors for all the agencies associated with protecting Kansans.

Affably & Sincerely,  
Thomas H. Gordon  
SHL President

## ALLERGIES IN SENIORS

As we age, our bodies undergo numerous changes, and so does our response to allergies. Allergies in seniors, especially those over 55, can present unique challenges. Understanding these challenges, identifying symptoms, and managing allergies effectively are crucial for maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle.



Traditionally, allergies have been associated with children and younger adults. However, recent studies suggest that seniors are just as prone to allergies, if not more so in some cases.

Seniors are not exempt from sneezing, runny nose, and itchy eyes that accompany seasonal allergies. However, they might mistake these symptoms for a persistent cold or simply a part of aging, hence overlooking the potential relief that appropriate allergy treatments can offer.

Often, allergy symptoms can easily take a backseat to more weighty symptoms like pain, depression and changes in mental state.

Allergies should be treated as rapidly and aggressively as possible. If you suspect that you have allergies, don't hesitate to inform your doctor of your concerns.

## 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

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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.*

**PAULINE ESTELL**

## 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

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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.wycockc.org/Home>
- Select the Departments Tab
- Click Area Agency on Aging



# OLDER AMERICANS MONTH CELEBRATION A SUCCESS!

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center held its annual Sock Hop themed event on May 23, 2024. The event was well attended and everyone enjoyed an afternoon of camaraderie.

The event is held in honor of Older Americans Month and is funded solely by its sponsors.

The celebrity judges for the ever popular dance contest were Mayor Tyrone Garner, County Administrator David Johnston, Commissioner Melissa Bynum, Police Chief Karl Oakman, and Under Sheriff, Emmitt Lockridge. The seniors appreciated the leadership team giving of their time to share in their special day.



The Staff and Community of the Area Agency on Aging send a sincere "Thank You" to the following Sponsors of the 2024 Older Americans Month Celebration!

## GOLD LEVEL SPONSORS

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- KANSAS CITY HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE
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## IN ATTENDANCE

- ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES
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- KCK PUBLIC LIBRARY
- K-STATE EXTENSION NUTRITION SERVICES
- NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE CENTER
- UNIFIED GOVERNMENT HEALTH DEPT.
- UNIFIED GOVERNMENT TRANSIT DEPT.

## 5-INGREDIENT STRAWBERRY PIE

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pint strawberries, washed and hulled
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 prebaked pie shell

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix water, sugar and cornstarch in a small saucepan.
2. Bring to boil stirring often. When mixture thickens and turns transparent, remove from heat, add strawberries and pour into baked pie shell.
3. Chill and top with Cool Whip and eat.



## WORD SEARCH

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- AIR CONDITIONER
- BACK TO SCHOOL
- BALD EAGLE
- BARBEQUE
- BICYCLING
- CAR WASH
- FAMILY REUNION
- FIRE FLIES
- FIREWORKS
- FISHING
- FOUNDING FATHERS
- FOURTH OF JULY
- FREEDOM
- GARAGESALE
- GEORGE WASHINGTON
- GRILLING
- HEATWAVE
- HYDRATE
- ICED TEA
- KITES
- LAWN
- OLD GLORY
- RED WHITE BLUE
- ROAD TRIP
- SANDALS
- SEEDS
- SENIOR CITIZENS DAY
- SPARKLERS
- STARS AND STRIPES
- SUMMER
- SUNBURN
- SUNGLASSES
- SWIMMING
- THUNDERSTORMS
- WATERMELON

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**WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH  
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**JULY >>>**

**FOURTH OF JULY**

*Thursday, July 4, 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.



Linda Ramirez, Editor

**AUGUST >>>**

**NATIONAL SENIOR CITIZENS DAY**

*Wednesday, August 21, 2024*

NATIONAL  
**SENIOR CITIZENS DAY**

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