

THE COMMUNICATOR

A WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING PUBLICATION

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

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HEALTHY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Making a New Year's resolution to eat better, exercise, watch your weight, see your healthcare provider regularly or quit smoking once and for all can help you get healthier and feel better for many more years to come.

Eat fruits, vegetables, whole grain, fish, low-fat dairy and healthy fats. Later in life, you still need healthy foods, but fewer calories. Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Choose a variety with deep colors: dark green, bright yellow and orange. Choices like spinach, collard greens, carrots, oranges and cantaloupe are especially nutritious. Include nuts, beans and/or legumes in your daily menu. Choose fiber-rich whole grain bread, brown rice and whole grain pastas.

Be active. Physical activity can be safe and healthy for older adults - even if you have heart disease, diabetes, or arthritis. In fact, many of these conditions get better with mild to moderate physical activity. Exercises such as tai chi, water aerobics, walking and stretching can also help you control your weight, build your muscles and bones, and improve your balance, posture and mood.

See your provider regularly. You should schedule an annual wellness visit with your healthcare provider around your birthday month to discuss health screenings and any changes in your advance directives. Screening tests might include checking your vision, hearing and for other conditions such as breast cancer, colon cancer or osteoporosis. At each visit, talk to your provider about all the medications you're taking and whether or not you still need them. Find out if you should be getting any new or booster immunizations or shots.

Toast with a small glass. Excessive drinking can make you feel depressed, increase your chances of falling, cause trouble sleeping, interact with your medication and can contribute to other health problems. The recommended limit for older men is no more than 14 drinks per week and for older women, no more than 7 per week.

Guard against falls. Exercises such as walking or working out with an elastic band can increase your strength, balance, and flexibility and help you avoid falls.

Give your brain a workout. The more you use your mind, the better it will work. Read. Do crossword puzzles. Try Sudoku. Socializing also gives your brain a boost, so join a library or senior center. Or take a course at your local community college, some offer free classes for older adults.

Quit smoking. Its never too late to quit. You can still reduce your risk of many health problems, breathe easier, have more energy, and sleep better if you quit smoking. Don't lose hope if you failed to quit in the past. On average, smokers try about four times before they quit for good.

Speak up when you feel down or anxious. About 1 in 5 adults suffer from depression or anxiety. Some possible signs of depression can be lingering sadness, tiredness, loss of appetite or displeasure in doing things you once enjoyed. You may also have difficulty sleeping, worry, irritability and wanting to be alone. If you have any of these signs for more than two weeks, talk to your healthcare provider and reach out to friends and family.

Get enough sleep. Older adults need less sleep than younger people, right? Wrong! Older people need just as much - at least 7 to 8 hours of sleep a night. Avoid daytime naps, which can keep you up in the evening.

As you can see, resolutions are not just for the young. Anyone can set practical goals for the new year that will impact your overall health.



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SENIORS AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

Article written by Loren Stein, M.A. - Healthyday.com

If you're over 60, you may use alcohol in much the way you did when you were younger. You may have a glass of wine at a meal, a beer or



two at a ball game, or a gin and tonic at a party with friends. And if your doctor says it's fine for you to drink, there's probably nothing wrong with it.

But if you've found yourself feeling tense and irritable when you're not drinking, you may have a problem. Studies show, an estimated 80,000 of this country's nearly 8 million alcoholics are seniors. It's a problem that's often hidden. Problem drinking often goes undiagnosed for the simple reason that people tend to live less public lives as they grow older. Furthermore, doctors may not link symptoms that are also common signs of aging -- falls, loss of appetite, failing memory, sleep problems, or depression -- to alcohol abuse.

Not everyone who drinks has an alcohol problem. Below you will find some guidelines to help determine whether you or someone you care about may be abusing alcohol. You might want to get help if you notice any of the following:

- Drinking to calm the nerves, forget worries, or reduce depression
- Loss of interest in food
- Gulping drinks down too fast
- Lying or trying to hide drinking habits
- Hurting yourself or others while drinking
- Frequently have more than one drink a day
- Needing more alcohol to get "high"
- Feeling irritable, resentful, or unreasonable when not drinking
- Developing medical, social, or financial problems caused by drinking

If you recognize these symptoms, it may time to get help. You may contact Alcohol Anonymous at 816-471-7229. Or talk with your physician to discuss ways to overcome this problem.

COLD WEATHER RULE

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) wants Kansans to have electric and gas service needed to keep their homes warm during the winter. The KCC also recognizes the customer's responsibility to make arrangements to pay for that service.



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

A utility cannot disconnect you when the local weather forecasts that the temperature will be below 35 degrees within the following 48-hour period. To prevent disconnection when its 35 degrees or above, or to be reconnected regardless of temperature, you must make pay arrangements with your utility.

Should you have questions about the Cold Weather Rule, you may call the KCC at 1-800-662-0027.

KANSAS LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

LIEAP is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay for home energy costs. The application period is from January 21, 2020 to March 31, 2020. In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for purchasing heating costs incurred at the current 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 persons living at the



LIEAP

1-800-432-0043

address, type of dwelling, type of heating and heating rates. You may request an application by dialing 1-800-432-0043.

TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR WINTER BILL

High home-heating bills pack a real punch into household budgets each winter. They consistently pose a special challenge for people who rely on fixed incomes or live paycheck to paycheck.

1) Lower your thermostat and wear socks and a sweater in doors. Lowering the thermostat by just one degree can reduce energy use by 3 percent.

2) If you have a forced air furnace, inspect your filters at the beginning of the heating season and monthly as you run the system. Clean or replace them if significant build up is in the ducts.



3) Install do-it-yourself plastic film on your windows.

4) Weather strip and caulk windows. Check window frames for cracks and fill them with caulk that contains silicon. Puttylike "rope caulk" can help seal large cracks and save you up to 5 percent on your energy bill.

5) Close the fireplace damper and seal the opening shut when not in use. Never use a traditional fireplace for supplemental heating. A fireplace sucks heated air out of your home to fuel the fire; then your furnace has to turn on to replace that warm air.

6) Close off any unused rooms. Shut the doors to them, but also close the heating vents. If the room is closed off, it will not need to be heated as much. The exception to this is if the room is where the thermostat is located.

By following these steps, you can put a major dent in your monthly heating bill. Even better, since most of them cost little to nothing to put into place, all your savings can stay in your wallet.

SUPPORT THE MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM



The Senior Citizens Meals on Wheels Contribution Program allows taxpayers to make voluntary donations to support home-delivered meals.

Any individual receiving a state income tax refund can indicate in the designated space on the tax form an amount of their refund they would like to contribute to the Meals on Wheels Program. Contributions can range from \$1 to all of their refund.

The federally funded Nutrition Program for the Elderly, which provides meals to older adults in senior centers, nutrition sites and in their own home began more than 30 years ago.

If you would like more information about the Meals on Wheels Program or would like to make a donation, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531.

TAKE THE NIGHT OFF PROJECT

In honor of National Caregiver's Month in November, the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging recognized select caregivers who provide daily care to their loved one.

The "Take the Night Off" Project provided delicious dinners for two that were delivered to the caregiver's home every night during the week of November 18 - 22.

This special recognition allowed the caregiver a break from all the hassle of cooking, shopping, meal planning and cleaning involved with evening daily meals.



This care recipient enjoyed the nightly meals with his mother, a 90 year old Caregiver.

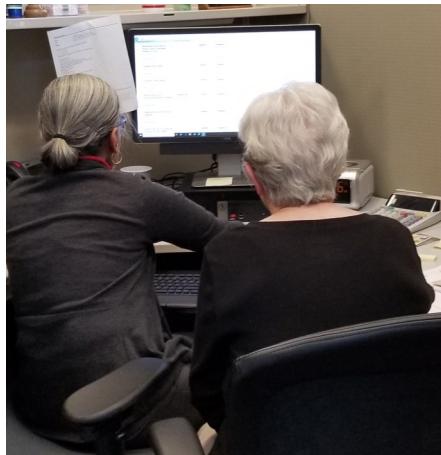
2019 MEDICARE FAIR

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging held its Annual Medicare Fair on November 14, 2019. The fair provided Medicare recipients an opportunity to learn about changes coming in 2020.

The guest speaker, Chris Meriweather shared a wealth of information regarding Medicare. He discussed the importance of creating a Medicare account online. The ac-

count will store your information for the following years and simplify the process of making changes in the future. Participants were given the opportunity to create their accounts while at the fair, sit down with a trained Medicare counselor to discuss plans and costs and given the opportunity to enroll in a plan if they felt they were ready to do so.

Other vendors were also in attendance, Midland PACE, Kansas City Hospice, RDADS and the Kansas City Medicine Cabinet. Each provided information regarding the services they provide, giveaways and answered questions.



LINDBERGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DONATES TO THE MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM

Students at Lindbergh Elementary School raised \$225 to support the Meals on Wheels program in Wyandotte County. The Meals on Wheels program provides daily meals to hundreds of seniors 60 years of age and older who are temporarily or permanently home bound due to physical or mental impairment.

MEALS ON WHEELS

The Meals on Wheels Department has an email account if you have any questions or concerns regarding the application process or meal delivery.

MealsOnWheels@wycokck.org

Should you need to speak to a live person, call the Meals on Wheels Department directly at:

913-573-8546

AAA CALENDARS ARE IN!

The 2020 Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging calendars are in! You may stop in the office located at 849 North 47th Street, Suite C, KCK 66102 for your copy. A suggested donation of \$3 is appreciated, but not required.

Wyandotte/Leavenworth
AREA AGENCY ON AGING & DISABILITY
RESOURCE CENTER



2020

Back Row: Lynn Randle, Yarely Zavala, Ruth Jones, Bobbie Lane, Karina Cole and Linda Ramirez.
Front Row: Kim Van Dyke, Lisa Wilson, Jocquel Watts, Errinda Fonseca and Betty Swell.

SENIOR CITIZEN UTILITY TAX REBATE

The Senior Citizens Utility Tax Rebate is a program servicing low-income, elderly citizens of Kansas City, Kansas. The program helps them recover a portion of taxes paid in the previous year (up to \$300). To qualify for the refund, you must be a Kansas City, Kansas resident, be 65 years of age or older for the entire previous calendar year and have a gross income from all sources (including that of a spouse) less than \$25,000 per year.

To apply for the refund seniors must provide proof of income for 2019 and their 2019 utility bills, which include electric, gas and ATT telephone services.

Seniors can visit the Clerk's office at 701 North 7th Street, Suite 323 on a first come, first served basis from 8:30am to 4:00pm, Monday thru Friday beginning January 2, 2020 until March 31, 2020.

Seniors may also make appointments at the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) located at 849 North 47th Street, Suite C, Kansas City, Kansas 66102 by calling 913-573-8531 for a Tuesday or Thursday appointment. **The AAA will begin assisting seniors in February 2020 until March 31, 2020.**



Taxpayer Advocate Service

We Are Here To Help You

This is an independent organization within the Internal Revenue Service. The advocate protects the taxpayer's rights seeking fair treatment. They



can help resolve problems that the taxpayer can't resolve with the IRS. Always try to resolve the problem first with the IRS, but if you can't, contact the Taxpayer Advocate Service office.

Visit taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov or call at 1-877-777-4778 for more information, your rights as a taxpayer and how they can help in some specific situations you might encounter with the IRS.

THANK YOU!

**Thank you to the following who
donated to the cost of this
newsletter!**

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Edna Rogers

Norma Steele

\$100

Advocate

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Donations can be sent to:

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging
Attn: Newsletter Committee
849 N 47th Street - Suite C
Kansas City, Kansas 66102

Homestead Refund

The Homestead Refund is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's home. The maximum refund is \$700.

To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be \$35,000 or less.

You must also meet one of the following requirements:

- You were born before Jan. 1, 1963; OR
- You must have been totally and permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age; OR
- You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born before Jan. 1, 2018 and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

You may file your Homestead by utilizing the link to Homestead WebFile. It's a FREE way to file Homestead claims. Like KS WebFile, refunds can be deposited directly into your bank account or of course, you still have the opportunity to send your refund directly toward your tax bill. While all claim requirements must be met and information verified, filing electronically can speed up the refund process and is safe and secure.

YOGA FOR HEALTH - Positioning Your Body and Mind

Have you rolled out a yoga mat lately? If so, you're among many who have taken up yoga to relax and stay fit. One in seven adults in the U.S. has practiced yoga in the past year. Yoga may help bring several health and wellness benefits.

Based on Indian philosophy, yoga involves both the body and mind. It began as a spiritual practice. Modern yoga focuses more on physical poses, breathing techniques and meditation. Meditation involves exercises that help you clear and calm your thoughts.

With practice, you can learn to direct the mind on a single object. It involves a lot of practice, but with time, the meditation part becomes easier.

There are many types of yoga. Some are slower and focus on holding poses. Others involve flowing movements that connect to your breathing.

Research suggests that yoga may help improve general wellness. In studies, yoga has helped some people manage stress, improve mental health, lose weight or quit smoking.

There's also evidence that yoga may be helpful for some medical conditions. Yoga may help lessen pain and menopause symptoms. It improved sleep in studies of older adults and people with cancer.

Several studies have shown that yoga can help those with chronic low back pain. Some experts now recommend it as a first-line treatment for low back pain, among other non-drug treatments.

More high quality research is needed to confirm yoga's health benefits. There's a lot of research out there for different health conditions, but there's not enough to say for sure if Yoga should replace treatment from your health care provider. It's also unclear what it is about yoga that helps. The practice combines physical elements.

Research into yoga is ongoing. Studies are now looking at whether yoga is helpful for specific groups of people. For example, whether it can reduce chronic pain for military veterans or improve quality of life for people who have had breast cancer. New studies are also looking into whether yoga may help mental health conditions like anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

What should you know if you're thinking about starting yoga? Start slowly and carefully in order to avoid any sort of injury. If you have a medical condition, talk with your health care provider before getting started.

Everyone's body is different. Yoga postures should be modified based on your abilities. If you want to try yoga, choose an instructor who is experienced and attentive to your needs.

You may also want to seek out a yoga therapist. Yoga therapists have more extensive training than that required of a regular yoga teacher. They're trained to work with different conditions and mostly work one-on-one or in small groups. As always, consult your physician before starting a work-out regimen.



KIELBASA WITH PEPPERS AND POTATOES

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 (16 ounce package smoked kielbasa sausage, diced
- 6 medium potatoes, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, sliced

DIRECTIONS:

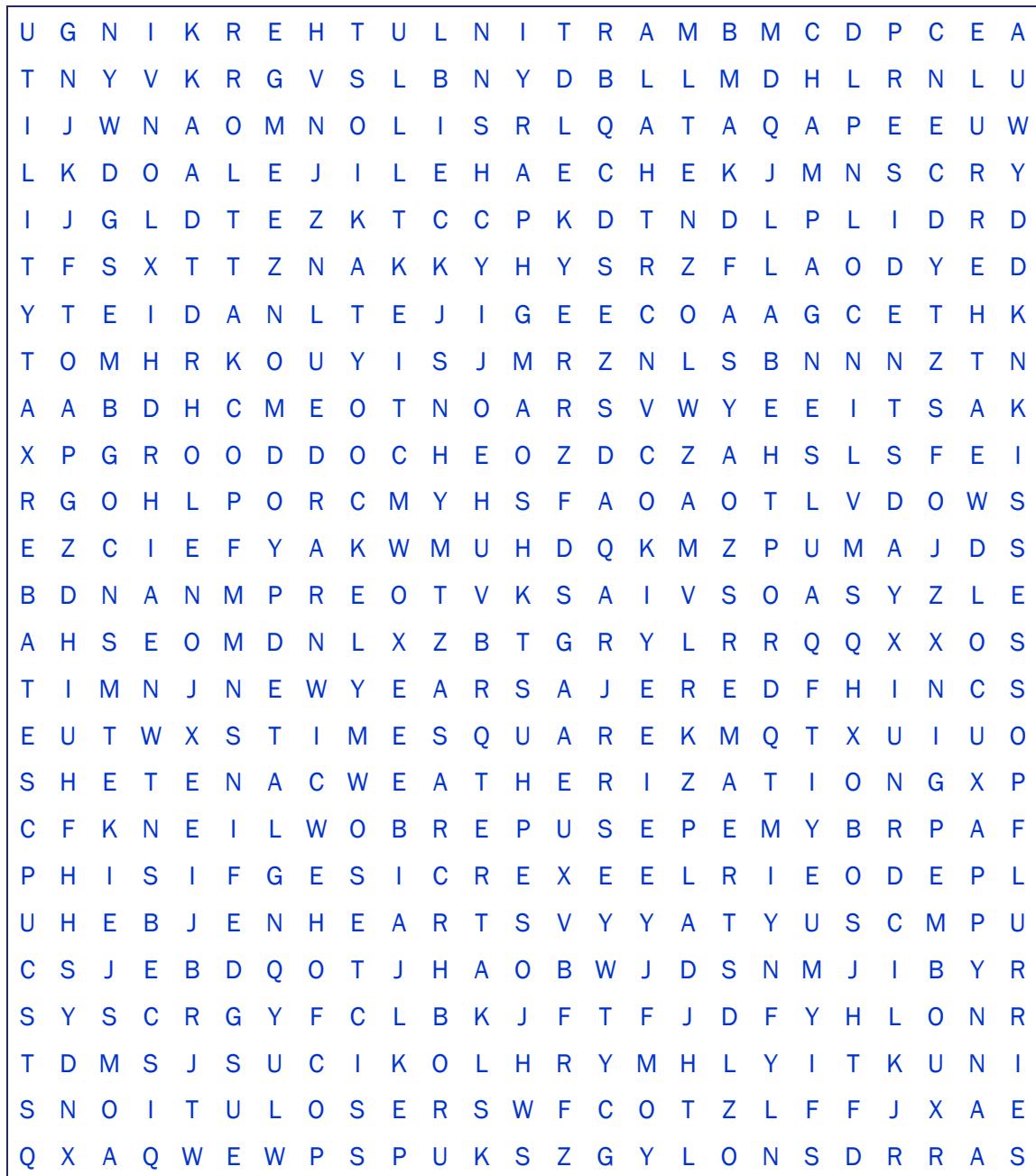
1. Heat the oil in a sauce pan over medium heat. Place kielbasa and potatoes in sauce pan. Cover and cook 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender.
 2. Mix red and yellow bell peppers into the saucepan and continue cooking 5 minutes until peppers are tender.
- Foil can be used to keep food moist, cook it evenly and make clean-up easier.



RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- BLACK EYED PEAS
- BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- BLIZZARD
- CHAMPAGNE
- CHEERS
- CHINESE NEW YEAR
- CHOCOLATES
- COLD WEATHER RULE
- CONFETTI
- COUNTDOWN
- DIET
- DROP THE BALL
- EXERCISE
- FLURRIES
- GOALS
- GROUNDHOG
- HEARTS
- HOMESTTEAD
- KISSES
- LINCOLN
- LOVE
- MARTIN LUTHER KING
- MITTENS
- NEW YEARS
- NOISEMAKERS
- PRESIDENTS DAY
- PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL
- RED ROSES
- RESOLUTIONS
- STREAMERS
- SUPERBOWL
- TIMESQUARE
- UTILITY TAX REBATES
- VALENTINES DAY
- WEATHERIZATION
- WEIGHT LOSS



Wyandotte/Leavenworth

Area Agency on Aging

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DisABLED or 60PLUS?...Call on Us!

PRESORTED STANDARD

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JANUARY >>>

NEW YEARS DAY

*Wednesday, January 1, 2020
Unified Government Offices Closed*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY

*Monday, January 20, 2020
Unified Government Offices Closed*



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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

FEBRUARY >>>

GROUND HOG DAY

Sunday, February 2, 2020

SUPERBOWL SUNDAY

Sunday, February 2, 2020

PRESIDENTS DAY

*Monday, February 17, 2020
Unified Government Offices Closed*