



# LIFEWISE

Jefferson County Office for the Aging

175 Arsenal Street

Watertown, New York 13601

Vol. 23 No. 54

Fall/Winter 2015

## A Message from the Director

**Peter J. Fazio**

Technology, love it or hate it, is becoming more commonplace in all aspects of our lives.

And, it will continue to become more prevalent in everything we do.

So, ask yourself, are you behind on your automation skills? I know I am.

If you are, there's a couple of options. First, you can just ride it out because nothing says you have to have any technology skills.

Second, depending on your family dynamic, you can ask a sibling, child or grandchild for help in bringing you up to speed.

Or, you can check out a new program we just learned about called the SUNY ATTAIN Lab at the Flower Memorial Library in Watertown.

The staff was very helpful in providing me information for this article and seemed very anxious to welcome new clients.

So, what's the catch? Well, frankly, I don't think there is one.

If you're interested in NO COST access to computers and various computer programs, and want to "increase your comfort level with computers," consider calling Cathy or Mary Ellen at 315-785-7712.

## MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

October 15<sup>th</sup> – December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Medicare Open enrollment is almost here. This is your opportunity to shop around for a new Medicare Part D or Medicare Advantage Plan. Any changes you make during this period will take effect January 1, 2016.

Please contact SHIP Counselor at OFA  
Matt Wiley at 315-785-3191.

**APPOINTMENTS ARE  
STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!**

## JEFFERSON COUNTY SENIOR

### HEALTH FAIR!!!

**Date:** October 21, 2015

**Place:** Bruce Wright Memorial  
Conference Center  
1291 Faichney Dr., Watertown

**Time:** 10am-2pm

The free event—which includes lunch—features dozens of local vendors offering tips for seniors on living healthy and active lifestyles, as well as music and fun!



## Yogurt: What to Buy, What to Ignore

With so many different types of yogurt these days, it is hard to know which one is the best to buy. These tips can help you understand what to look for and what to ignore.

### **Probiotics**

Look for a statement that reads “contains live and active cultures” to guarantee that your yogurt contains gut-friendly probiotics.

While probiotics are very likely to help improve gut health, they are not a “cure” for digestive problems. Experts point out that fluid consumption, total fiber intake, physical activity, and stress reduction also are important for a healthy digestive tract.

Not all yogurts are fortified with vitamin D, as milk is. It is important to read the label carefully.

### **Fruit-flavored yogurt**

Many fruit-flavored yogurts contain no actual fruit at all. The healthiest form of yogurt is plain. Just add your own fruit to sweeten plain yogurt to your liking.



### **Best bites**

The much-respected Center for Science in the Public Interest states that the “best bites” in yogurt contain 180 calories or less, 1.5 grams (g) of saturated fat or less, 30 g or less of sugar, more than 5 g of protein, and more than 20% of your Daily Value for calcium in a 6-ounce cup.

By Gloria Tsang. “What to look for in a Yogurt” Available at: <http://www.healthcastle.com/yogurt.shtml>. Accessed September 30, 2009. Review Date 12/09

## 2015 OFA PUBLIC HEARING

The Older Americans Act of 1965 requires that each Area Agency on Aging (AAA) conduct an Annual Public Hearing. We are interested in your comments about existing services and what other services would be helpful. You can get a copy of the abstract at the Public Hearing, at [www.co.jefferson.ny.us](http://www.co.jefferson.ny.us) (Aging) or by calling OFA at 315-785-3191. We'll gladly accept comments from individuals unable to attend by phone, in writing or emailed to [ofa@co.jefferson.ny.us](mailto:ofa@co.jefferson.ny.us).

The Public Hearing will be held on October 27, 2015 at the Italian-American Civic Association, 192 Bellew Avenue in Watertown as part of the AARP meeting and luncheon.

A \$10.00 luncheon will be served at 12:00 p.m.; however, this is optional. You are welcome to just attend the Public Hearing at 12:30 p.m.

Individuals wishing to attend either the Public Hearing and/or the luncheon need to make reservations by calling Betty Reff at 315-782-1477 by October 23, 2015 at 12pm.

## Agency Spotlight!!

### FLU SEASON!!

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) says flu season can be as early as October and as late as May.

**GET IMMUNIZED NOW!!**

### 2015 HEAP UPDATE!!!

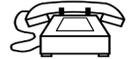
HEAP is a federally funded energy program that assists low income families with their home energy bills.



If you would like to find out the income guidelines and the date that HEAP opens, please contact Sabrina Cummins at OFA at 315-785-3191.

*Do you speak a language other than English and need assistance???*

**WE CAN HELP!**



*OFA has no cost language interpretation services available.*

### Cold, Flu or Allergy?

Treatment depends on which you have. A health professional can help you choose the best therapy.

- ◆ Common Cold
  - Symptoms last up to 2 weeks
  - Stuffy, runny nose; sore throat, cough
  - Treated with rest, fluids and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines
- ◆ Seasonal Flu
  - Symptoms usually last 1-2 weeks
  - High fever (100-102 °F, or higher in youngsters), headache, aches and pains, weakness, exhaustion, cough and chest discomfort.
  - Treated with rest, fluids, OTC medicines and prescription antiviral drugs.
- ◆ Airborne Allergy
  - Lasts as long as allergens (such as pollen, pet dander) are present.
  - Stuffy, runny nose; itchy, watery eyes
  - Treated with antihistamines, decongestants and nasal steroids.



Source: [www.newshealth.nih.gov](http://www.newshealth.nih.gov)

## 6 Steps to Prevent a Fall

Every 13 seconds, an older adult is seen in an emergency department for a fall-related injury. Many falls are preventable. Stay safe with these tips!

- 1) **Find a good balance and exercise program.** Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility. Find a program you like and take a friend.
- 2) **Talk to your health care provider.** Ask for an assessment of your risk of falling. Share your history of recent falls.
- 3) **Regularly review your medications with your doctor or pharmacist.** Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling. Take medications only as prescribed.
- 4) **Get your vision and hearing checked annually and update your eyeglasses.** Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.
- 5) **Keep your home safe.** Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.
- 6) **Talk to your family members.** Enlist their support in taking simple steps to stay safe. Falls are not just a seniors' issue.

Source: [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org)

## Syphilis Cases Rise by 60% in Jefferson County

Yes, syphilis is making a comeback all over the nation and Canada. So you ask, "why is this a concern for me?" In Jefferson County, 50% of people infected with syphilis are over 45.

Syphilis begins as a painless sore called a chancre. Without treatment the sore goes away in a few weeks but turns into secondary syphilis which causes a rash. This non-itchy body rash can show up on the palms of your hands and soles of your feet, all over your body, or in just a few places. It is important to get treatment with antibiotics to stop the progression on the infection. If left untreated, syphilis can lead to blindness, dementia, and even death.

No matter the age, practice safe sex habits 100% of the time. If you are sexually active (vaginal, anal, oral) you can do the following things to lower your chances of getting syphilis.

Being in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and has negative STD test results.

Using latex condoms the right way every time you have sex. Condoms prevent transmission of syphilis by preventing contact with a sore. Sometimes sores occur in areas not covered by a condom. Contact with these sores can still transmit syphilis.

Consider your sexual history and that of your partner to determine your risk. If you are concerned, the Jefferson County Public Health Service has a walk-in clinic every Tuesday, 12:30-3:30pm. You can receive testing for all sexually transmitted diseases free of charge.

## **Is Prostate Cancer Screening Right for You??**

*Talk to your doctor about whether you should get screened for prostate cancer.*

The chance of having prostate cancer rises rapidly after age 50. About 6 in 10 cases of prostate cancer are found in men over the age of 65. Talk with your doctor and discuss the risks and benefits of testing and treatment so you can make an informed decision about whether or not you should get screened for prostate cancer. After this discussion, men who want to be screened should be tested with the PSA blood test. The digital rectal exam (DRE) may also be done as part of the screening. For more information call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

## OFA Advisory Council Update

The OFA Advisory Council meets 4 times per year in the Conference Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the County Office Building at 175 Arsenal St., Watertown, NY.

The council advocates for the needs of older adults and helps identify and address gaps in services.



The meetings are open to the public and you can just walk in. The next meeting will be held 12/1/15 and everyone is invited to attend.

### “R•E•S•P•I•T•E”

#### The theme for National Family Caregivers Month November 2015 is “Respite: Care for Caregivers”

Respite – the chance to take a breather, the opportunity to re-energize – is as important as any other item on your caregiver’s to-do list. People think of respite as a luxury, but considering caregivers’ increased risk for health issues from chronic stress, those risks are a lot costlier than some time away to recharge. Respite is the key to your own well-being. Respite protects your own health, strengthens family relationships, prevents burn-out and allows your loved one to stay at home up to three times longer. No wonder respite is one of the most frequently requested support services for family caregivers.

#### **R** is for “Rest and Relaxation”

Everyone needs a little “R and R” – especially family caregivers. Relaxing is the best way to return refreshed to handle your many responsibilities as a caregiver.

#### **E** as in “Energize”

Caregiving is often round-the-clock 24/7. Respite isn’t simply “getting a few hours off.” It’s necessary to help you reenergize, reduce stress and provide care for your loved one.

#### **S** as in “Sleep”

Caregivers often have sleep problems. Address sleep problems and insomnia before they take too great a toll on your health.

#### **P** is for “Programs that can help you”

Respite – which can be in the home or out of the home – can be hard to find but there are programs available to help you.

#### **I** as in “Imagination”

Let your mind run free; read a book; see a movie. You have been so occupied with the nuts-and-bolts of caregiving that refreshing your mind will actually help you be a better caregiver.

#### **T** as in “Take Five

...or better yet, take ten. Do you find yourself saying, “I wish I had just ten minutes to myself”? Don’t feel guilty. You need a reprieve – a few minutes to temporarily disengage.

#### **E** is for “Exhale”

A simple breath in and then a long exhale can help you focus and increase your vitality. A few deep breaths can give you more energy, reduce stress, and lift your mood.

**NATIONAL  
FAMILY CAREGIVERS  
MONTH**  
November 2015

*During National Family Caregivers Month, remember... “Respite: Care for Caregivers”*



## Veteran's Corner

By: Peter J. Fazio

### "VA Expenditures"

Annually, the VA releases the Geographic Distribution of Expenditures (GDX). Recently, we received the FY14 report.

The report shows the annual VA payments, by categories, to each County in the State and it includes the veteran population for each County.

For FY14, it was reported Jefferson County had 13,818 veterans. The total VA expenditures in Jefferson County were \$102,541,000. That total is broken down in to:

- Compensation & Pension—\$56,168,000
- Education—\$20,509,000
- Insurance—\$347,000
- Medical Care—\$25,517,000

The FY14 total of \$102 million represents more than a doubling of the FY09 total of \$49 million.

To learn if you might be eligible for VA benefits, call the Veteran's Service Agency at 315-785-3086 or come see us at 175 Arsenal St., Watertown.

### Dates To Remember

October 15	Open Enrollment Begins
October 31	Halloween
November 1	Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 11	Veteran's Day
November 25	Thanksgiving Day
December 7	Open Enrollment Ends
December 25	Christmas Day
January 1	New Years Day
January 18	Martin Luther King Day

The NY StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc. advocates to improve "the quality of life of seniors and families" in New York State. Organized in 1972, StateWide is a grass roots membership organization made up of individual senior citizens and senior citizen clubs from all parts of NY State. If you have questions, or would like more information about getting involved, go to [www.nyseniors.org](http://www.nyseniors.org) or call 1-800-333-4374.



## NEED A LAUGH???????

### "I Am Not Forgetful"

Three ladies were discussing the travails of getting older. One said, "Sometimes I catch myself with a jar of mayonnaise in my hand, while standing in front of the refrigerator, and I can't remember whether I need to put it away, or start making a sandwich."

The second lady chimed in with, "Yes, sometimes I find myself on the landing of the stairs and can't

remember whether I was on my way up or on my way down."



The third one responded, "Well, ladies, I'm glad I don't have that problem. Knock on wood," as she rapped her knuckles on the table, and then said, "That must be the door, I'll get it!"

## Don't Let Back Pain Knock You Flat

Is your back hurting? You're in good company. In any 3-month period, about 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. has at least one day of back pain, mostly in the lower back.

The back is a complicated structure. Its center is the spine, which is made up of 33 bones called vertebrae, stacked in a column. The nerves of the spinal cord run in a tunnel through the middle of these bones. Spongy discs between the vertebrae act as cushions. Ligaments and tendons hold everything together. A lot of things can go wrong with your back. A strained muscle or a problem with a disc or a bone can cause pain. Back pain might also arise from a fracture or tumor. Much of the time, though, it's impossible to tell what's making your back hurt.

Listed below are some wise choices for a healthier back:

- ◆ Stay active and maintain a healthy weight
- ◆ Don't slouch with standing or sitting
- ◆ Make sure your work surface is at a comfortable height for you
- ◆ Wear comfortable, low-heeled shoes
- ◆ If you must lift something heavy don't bend over the item; instead, keep your back straight, bend at the knees, and lift by putting the stress on your legs and hips
- ◆ Talk with your health care provider to make sure you are getting enough calcium and Vitamin D
- ◆ Don't smoke



Source: NIH News in Health December 2014 issue

## LGBT Seniors Have Less Support than General Senior Population

**“Care giving, and access to care supports, is a major health issue facing growing numbers of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBT) older adults in this country,”** said Hillary Meyer, Director of National Resource Center on LGBT Aging.

LGBT seniors are much more likely to age as a single person, have no children to call in need, and also more likely to live alone. Almost 80% of long-term care in the U.S. is provided by family members. However, many LGBT older adults, who are often estranged from families or origin, rely on partners, friends and families of choice. Because these relationships are not recognized under federal and some state laws, LGBT care givers are often denied the resources, medical decision – making authority, and support extended to their heterosexual counterparts.

In addition, a lifetime of social stigma causes many LGBT older adults to fear that they will face hostile or unwelcoming health care providers, or might encounter care workers who are unfamiliar with the needs of the LGBT community — pushing them back in the closet and preventing them from receiving quality care.

Jefferson County Office for the Aging provides support to older adults (regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity), age 60 and over. If you are interested in finding out about programs and services available within Jefferson County, call our office at 315-785-3191.

Source: National Resource Center on LGBT Aging

*Funding Provided in Part By The NYS Office for the Aging, the U.S. Administration on Aging and Jefferson County.*

PRST STD  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Watertown, NY  
Permit 40

**Jefferson County Office for the Aging**

**175 Arsenal Street**

**Watertown, New York 13601**

[www.co.jefferson.ny.us](http://www.co.jefferson.ny.us) (Aging)

**(315) 785-3191**

**Email: [OFA@co.jefferson.ny.us](mailto:OFA@co.jefferson.ny.us)**

**OFA Staff**

Penny Avenengo  
Megan Carmon  
Sabrina Cummins  
Peter J. Fazio  
Dori-Ann Froelich  
Louise J. Haraczka  
Sheila Kehoe  
MaryBeth Knowlton, R.D.  
Michele Mahon  
Michelle Malbouf  
Sherry Parker  
Sharon Snyder  
Linda Unrue  
Matthew Wiley

**OFA Advisory Council**

Holly Armstrong  
Max Bovee  
Lisa Cooley  
Dwight Doane  
Sister Mary Louise Fiedler SSJ  
Douglas Gleason  
Ora Hawkins  
Nina Hershey  
Karen Norton  
Wanda Phelps  
Betty Redden  
Betty Reff  
Vera Thornton  
Barbara Webber  
Diana Woodhouse



**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term  
Services and Supports

By: Sheila Kehoe, Long Term Care Coordinator

NY Connects new statewide resource directory is now available for you to find information about long term care services and supports in New York! Visit this website at <http://www.nyconnects.ny.gov/>

This will enable individuals to directly search for and learn about applying for public benefits, available home care services and much more.

Also available is a new toll free phone number 1- 800-342-9871, which will route callers to the appropriate county to obtain the necessary information on available long term services and supports.

You can always call us directly at 315-785-5081 or 315-785-3191.