



Family and Friends Newsletter

Medicare Part D: Strategies for Addressing the Problems



Prescription drug coverage through Medicare Part D is not happening smoothly for many beneficiaries. People enrolled in Medicare Part D have been encountering a variety of problems when trying to fill prescriptions at the pharmacy. Coverage issues, computer glitches, and misinformation have been plaguing both beneficiaries and pharmacists since January 1 when Part D coverage started. Beneficiaries can use these tips and strategies for addressing the various problems occurring at pharmacists' counters.

Enrollment Problems

Beneficiaries might not know which plan they are enrolled in or even that they are enrolled in a plan. This problem is more common among people who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. These people should have been automatically enrolled in a plan before January 1 so that coverage would begin on January 1, 2006. Beneficiaries with questions about their enrollment in plans can consult Medicare's Plan Finder at www.medicare.gov and conduct a personalized search for plan information. Beneficiaries who are dual eligible for Medicare and Medicaid can call Wisconsin Medicaid Recipient Services at 1-800-362-3002 to determine their plan. Pharmacists can help beneficiaries at the pharmacy by performing an E1 query to Medicare's TrOOP facilitator or calling Medicare's dedicated pharmacy line at 1-866-835-7595.

Beneficiaries might know which plan they are enrolled in but might not have their insurance card from that prescription drug plan. Many people have been experiencing delays in receiving their insurance cards

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Pork in Apple-Brandy Glaze

Number of Servings: 4
Serving Size: 1 medallion of pork

Ingredients

- 1 lb pork tenderloin
- 2 tbsp apple jelly
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp ground white pepper
- 2 tbsp brandy or cognac
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley



Preparation Instructions

1. Make medallions by cutting the pork tenderloin across the grain into 4 pieces (about 4 ounces each). Pound the pieces between sheets of wax paper to thickness of 1/2 inch. If the tenderloin is in 2 smaller pieces, cut into 8 pieces (2 ounces each).
2. Brush each medallion with apple jelly and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Prepare a large nonstick skillet with nonstick pan spray, and heat over medium heat. Add the pork and cook 5 minutes per side, or until the meat is cooked through. Remove to a warm serving platter.
4. Add the brandy to the skillet; deglaze by stirring the browned bits from the bottom of the skillet into the brandy. Cook and stir 2 minutes. Drizzle the sauce over the pork; sprinkle with parsley.

Exchanges Per Serving

- 1/2 Other carbohydrate
- 4 Meat Very Lean

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from their prescription drug plans. People who are enrolled in a plan but who have not received their insurance cards can go to the pharmacy, order their prescriptions, and have the pharmacist call the plan for billing information. The plan will provide the pharmacist with the beneficiary's ID and BIN numbers and can use that information to bill the correct plan.

Cost Sharing Problems



Beneficiaries, particularly those eligible for the Part D low-income subsidy or extra help, may encounter problems at the pharmacy involving incorrect co-pays or deductible amounts. Beneficiaries who are not eligible for the low-income subsidy and who are not dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid should contact the plan directly to address incorrect cost-sharing problems. Participants who are eligible for the subsidy, including those who are dual eligible, have low cost-sharing requirements and have either a small deductible or no deductible at all. Those who are being charged too much should show the pharmacist proof of eligibility for the low-income subsidy or proof of dual eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid. This may include the Forward card, letters from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or letters from plans showing automatic enrollment. Once the pharmacist determines that a person is being charged incorrectly, the pharmacist can contact the plan and learn how to do an over-ride pricing procedure. If this is not successful, the beneficiary can be reimbursed by filing a grievance and requesting reimbursement from the plan.

Coverage Problems

People who are experiencing coverage problems at the pharmacy can contact the plan directly to find out why a particular drug is not being covered or is being covered with a high cost share. Beneficiaries who are having prescriptions filled for the first-time with their new Part D plan can get a transition fill of non-covered drugs. A transition fill is a 30-day supply during the first month of coverage. If the beneficiary is improperly denied a transition fill, the problem should be reported to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Pharmacists providing transition fills may need to contact the plan to learn how to do and override.

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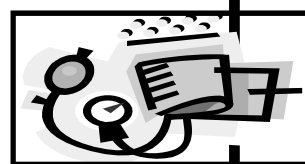
Medicare Part D plans are prohibited from covering certain medications including prescription vitamins, over-the-counter medications, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and weight control medications. A person who is eligible for Medicaid can have the pharmacist bill Medicaid for these medications. People who are not eligible for Medicaid will have to pay out of pocket.

The most important tip for Medicare Part D participants is that there are developing strategies for dealing with the glitches. At no time should beneficiaries be leaving the pharmacy without their prescriptions because of Medicare Part D implementation problems. For further assistance contact the Richland County Benefit Specialist at 647-6226.

Cleaning Tips - Vinegar

Vinegar is a wonderful, economical, all-purpose cleaner. You can use it to wash windows, cut grease, and to freshen the air. It is particularly effective in removing soap residue on just about all surfaces. Brighten up your floors by washing with a solution of vinegar and water, or add 1/2 cup to the rinse cycle of your wash to remove odors and leave your clothes soft (a great alternative to fabric softener).

Vinegar is also great for taking pet stains out of carpet, or removing perspiration stains in clothing. To remove household odors, simply place a few small bowls of vinegar throughout the house, and it will absorb the odors (particularly effective for cigarette smoke), or, dampen a tea towel with vinegar and wave it around the room.



FREE Blood Pressure Clinics

Blood pressure clinics will be held at 11:30 a.m. on the following Tuesday dates:

Town and Country Church—

Viola Meal Site @ old grade school

For more information on the nutrition site blood pressure clinics, contact the:

Health, Aging and Disability Resource Center at 608-647-4616

Upcoming Alzheimer's Association Events



The ABC's of Alzheimer's and Dementia

Tuesday, March 14, 21, 28,
6 - 8:15 PM,
St. Clare Hospital (Ho-
Chunk Room),
Baraboo

The "ABC's of Alzheimer's and Dementia" is a three part educational series for families of persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Join us on Tuesdays, March 14, 21 and 28, 6-8:15 p.m. at St. Clare Hospital (Ho Chunk Rm.), Baraboo. Free and open to the public, but space is limited. Call the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900 or 232-3400 to reserve a seat.

Seventh Annual Understanding Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Memory Loss

Workshop

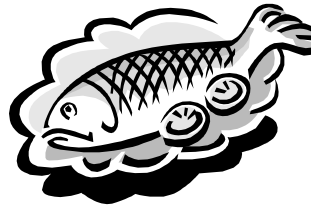
Friday, March 24, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.,
Southwest Technical College, Fennimore

This full day educational event is for family members, direct care workers and professionals to learn the latest information and resources that can help you face this growing health epidemic. Topics include Alzheimer's Progression: A Breakdown of Stages by Dr. TJ Norton, End of Life Issues for People with Dementia by Drs. Kim and Gail Petersen, Sharing Lessons Learned: A Conversation with Caregivers by former family caregivers, Dale Bruhn and Patricia Wilson and Meaningful Activities presented by Becky Rogers, Alzheimer's Association Training Specialist. Learn more about Alzheimer's disease and person centered care through these informative and interactive presentations.

Registration fee is just \$10 and includes lunch, refreshments and handouts. Hosted by the Grant County Dementia Care Network. For more information and to receive a detailed brochure, please call the Grant County Center on Aging at 608-723-6113 or the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900.

Scholarships and respite care for family caregivers are available.

Salmon Patties (Cooking for 2)



*Bisquick Heart Smart™ recipe!
Fishing for a twist on loaded burgers? Try salmon with all the trimmings!*

1/2	cup soft bread crumbs (about 1 slice bread)
1/4	cup Bisquick Heart Smart™ mix
1 1/2	teaspoons Dijon mustard
1/8	teaspoon pepper
4	medium green onions, finely chopped (1/4 cup)
1	egg, slightly beaten
1	can (7 1/2 oz) red salmon, skin and bone removed, drained and flaked
1	tablespoon margarine or butter
2	whole wheat burger buns, split

1. In medium bowl, mix all ingredients except margarine, buns, lettuce and dill dip. Shape mixture into 2 patties, using heaping 1/2 cupfuls for each patty.
2. In 8-inch nonstick skillet, melt margarine over medium heat. Cook patties in margarine over medium heat 10 to 12 minutes, turning once, until brown and cooked through.
3. Fill buns with lettuce, salmon patties and dill dip.

Quotable Quotes

"Keep a smile on your face till 10 o'clock and it will stay there all day. --Douglas Fairbanks"

"Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out--it's the grain of sand in your shoe." --Service

Do you have a friend who cannot read this newsletter because of poor eyesight?

This newsletter is available on cassette tape and may be borrowed from the Elderly Services Unit.

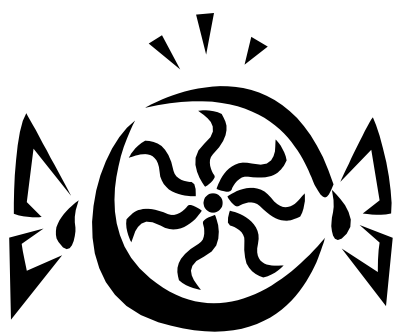
**For more information, call
608-647-6226**

DIABETES: To Sweet or Not to Sweet

If you have diabetes, that doesn't mean you can't eat sweets. People with diabetes can eat desserts, use sweeteners, and still keep their blood glucose (sugar) levels in their target range. These options are available for sweetening your foods:

- Sugar and other sweeteners with calories including honey, brown sugar, molasses, fructose, cane sugar, and confectioners sugar
- Reduced-calorie sweeteners including erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, isomalt, lactitol, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, and xylitol
- Low-calorie sweeteners such as acesulfame potassium, aspartame, saccharin and sucralose

Sugar and Other Sweeteners with Calories



In the past, people with diabetes were warned to avoid sugar. Experts believed eating sugar would rapidly increase blood glucose, resulting in levels that were too

high. Some people even thought eating sugar caused diabetes, an idea that we know now isn't true. Research has shown that sugar has the same effect on blood glucose levels as other carbohydrates, also called carbs, such as bread or potatoes. Calorie for calorie, sugar raises blood glucose about the same amount as other carbohydrates. Now experts agree you can eat foods with sugar as long as you work them into your meal plan as you would any other carb-containing food. The same guidelines apply to other sweeteners with calories, including brown sugar, honey, and molasses.

Of course, most sweets and desserts don't provide the important vitamins and minerals found in more healthful foods, so you'll want to make sure you're still getting the nutrients you need. Many sweets, in addition to having carbs, are also high in fat and calories.

If you like sweets, but also want to lose weight, you can try these tips:

- Satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh or dried fruit

- Eat a small serving of your favorite dessert, instead of something ordinary
- When you are eating out, split desserts with a friend or family member
- Cut back on the amounts of sugar and fat in your recipe favorites
- Try new recipes for lower-calorie sweets
- Choose lower-calorie, lower-fat versions of your favorite desserts
- Use a low-calorie sweetener instead of sugar for your coffee or tea

How can I have sweets and still keep my blood glucose on target?

The key to keeping your blood glucose on target is to substitute small portions of sweets for other carb-containing foods in your meals and snacks. Carb-containing foods include bread, tortillas, rice, crackers, cereal, fruit, juice, milk, yogurt, potatoes, corn, and peas. For many people, having about 45 to 60 grams at meals is about right. Serving sizes make a difference. To include sweets in your meal, you can cut back on the other carb foods at the same meal.

For example, you'd like to have cookies with your lunch. Your lunch is a turkey sandwich with two slices of bread. Your first step is to identify the carb foods in your meal. Bread is a carb. You decide to swap two slices of bread for two slices of

Lunch <u>without</u> cookies	Grams of carb	Lunch <u>with</u> cookies	Grams of carb
Turkey sandwich with 2 slices of bread	30 grams	Turkey sandwich with 2 slices of low-calorie bread	15 grams
		2 small chocolate chip cookies	15 grams
Total: 30 grams		Total: 30 grams	

low-calorie bread and have the cookies -- it's an even trade. Your total amount of carbs remains the same for the meal.

What to Check in the Nutrition Facts

You can also use the Nutrition Facts Label on foods to guide you. The first thing to check is the serving size. The second is the total carbohydrate. The total carbohydrate tells you how much carbohydrate is in one serving of the food.

What else can I learn from food labels?

Foods labeled as sugar-free, no sugar added, reduced sugar, and dietetic still con-



tain carbohydrate. To check the amount of sugars (listed as "Sugars" under "Total Carbohydrate") in the Nutrition Facts Label, keep in mind that it includes both added sugars and naturally occurring sugars, such as the natural sugar in raisins. It is more helpful to check the total carbohydrate because it gives a better picture of all the carbohydrate in a single food.

Reduced Calorie Sweeteners – Sugar Alcohols

Sugar alcohols are one type of reduced-calorie sweetener and are used in sugar-free candies, chewing gum, and desserts. They provide about half the calories of sugars and other carbohydrates. Isomalt, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, and xylitol are examples of sugar alcohols. Even though they are called sugar alcohols, they do not contain alcohol. Sometimes sugar alcohols can cause diarrhea, especially in children. Many people think that foods with sugar alcohols are "free foods." This is not true!

Tips for Carb Counting and Sugar Alcohols

Sugar alcohols don't raise blood glucose as much as the same amount of other carbohydrates. To figure out the amount of other carbohydrate you should count for a food with sugar alcohols, follow these tips:

- Subtract half of the sugar alcohol grams from the total carbohydrate
- Count the remaining grams

For Example:

Serving Size: 1 bar

Total carbohydrate 15 grams -- Sugar alcohol 6 grams

One bar counts as 12 grams carbohydrate (15 - 3 = 12)

Low Calorie Sweeteners

Don't throw away your low-calorie sweeteners just because sugar is safer than you thought. Low-calorie sweeteners are "free foods." They make food taste sweet, and have no calories and do not raise blood glucose levels. They do not count as a carbohydrate, a fat, or any other exchange. They can be added to your meal plan instead of substituted.

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of these low-calorie sweeteners. The American Diabetes Asso-

ciation accepts the FDA's conclusion that these sweeteners are safe and can be part of a healthy diet.

Saccharin (Sweet N Low, Sugar Twin)

Saccharin can be used in both hot and cold foods to make them sweeter. You may recall that some studies giving very large quantities of saccharine to rats raised concerns that saccharin could cause cancer, but many studies and years of use have shown saccharin to be safe in the quantities used by consumers.

Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal)

Aspartame is another low-calorie sweetener. Because high temperatures can decrease its sweetness, check the manufacturer's Web site or call their toll-free number for guidelines when using aspartame in recipes.

Acesulfame potassium (Sweet One, Swiss Sweet, Sunett)

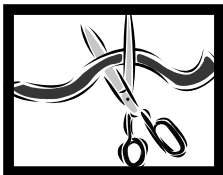
Another low-calorie sweetener on the market is acesulfame potassium, also called acesulfame-K. This sweetener is heat stable and can be used in baking and cooking.

Sucralose (SPLENDA)

Sucralose is the newest low-calorie sweetener on the market. Sucralose is not affected by heat and retains its sweetness in hot beverages, baked goods, and processed foods.

If you like to cook, you know that sugar does more in hot foods, especially baked goods like cookies and cakes, than just add sweetness. It also affects the way the foods cook and the final texture. Substituting a low-calorie sweetener may affect the texture and taste. Many people use a combination of sugar and a low-calorie sweetener to reduce overall calories and sugar while still producing acceptable results.

All of these low-calorie sweeteners may help people who are overweight or have diabetes to reduce calories and stick to a healthy meal plan. In addition, these sweeteners are useful for reducing calories and carbohydrates when used instead of sugar in coffee, tea, cereal, and on fruit.



“Red Tape Cutter” Pages

Presented by your local Elderly Benefit Specialist—Joanne Welsh with the Richland County Health & Human Services—Elderly Services Unit.

Social Security Can Be Financially Critical for Widows



By: Bruce W. Schultz
Social Security Public Affairs
Specialist

www.ssa.gov Oftentimes government statistics can simply bore you; but there are some statistics that may surprise you. Here is one example.

The Administration on Aging reported that in 2004 there were more than four times as many widows as widowers. And, perhaps even more surprising, the statistics show that almost half of all older women are widows.

As a Social Security Public Affairs Specialist, those statistics remind me why it is vitally important for all women to understand at least the basics of the Social Security survivors insurance program.

Here are four of the most important facts about Social Security survivors insurance that every woman should know.

- If your husband dies and you are age 60 or older, you can receive widow's benefits. If you are disabled, you can get widow's benefits as early as age 50. The amount of your monthly payment will depend on how old you are and on how much your deceased husband would have been entitled to, or was receiving, when he died.
- If you remarry before reaching age 60, you cannot receive widow's benefits based on your late husband's earnings record as long as that marriage remains in effect.
- If you remarry after age 60, you will continue to receive benefits on your deceased husband's Social Security record. However, if your current husband is a Social Security beneficiary, you may want to apply for a wife's benefit on his record if it would be larger than your widow's benefit. You cannot get both.
- If you are a widow with children, you may be eligible for a widow's benefit at any age when you are caring for a

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If you work and also get Social Security retirement benefits



By: Bruce W. Schultz
Social Security Public Affairs
Specialist

www.ssa.gov Surveys show that an increasing number of older Americans want to retire from their jobs, but not retire from the workforce. They want to retire from the work that they have done for most of their lives for 40 hours a week, but they also want to take up a second, perhaps part-time, career. If you are or expect to be one of these 'semi-retirees' there is some important Social Security information you should keep in mind.

The relationship among your work, earnings and eligibility for Social Security benefits depends largely on your age. You probably will fit into one of the following age groups.

You are full retirement age or older.

This is the easy one. If you are “full retirement age” or older, your earnings will not reduce your Social Security benefits. Or to put it another way, once you reach that magic age, you can collect all the Social Security retirement benefits you are due no matter how much money you earn from working. You can find a chart explaining full retirement age at www.socialsecurity.gov/retirechartred.htm.

You are between age 62 and the year that you will reach full retirement age.

The earliest you can apply for Social Security retirement benefits is age 62. In 2006 you can work and earn up to \$12,480 with no reduction in your benefits. But for every \$2 you earn over that, Social Security must hold back \$1 in benefits. (Note: In the first year you receive Social Security benefits, you are guaranteed that benefit for any month you earn less than \$1,040. And we do not count pensions, savings or investment income toward these threshold amounts – only wages or self-employment income.)

You are not yet full retirement age, but will reach full retirement age this year.

The earnings threshold is more lenient in the year you reach your full retirement age. Beginning in January of that year and until the month before you reach full retirement age,

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Utility Companies' Winter Shut-Off Safeguards No Longer in Effect After April 16th

Effective April 16th, utility customers with overdue bills lose the protection from service disconnection that applies from November 1st through April 15th every year. If your gas and/or electric service remained connected during heating season due to these safeguards, your utility company can now proceed with disconnection if unpaid bills remain.

Your utility service can be disconnected if you don't pay your bill or if you don't pay installments on your bill as you have agreed with the company. Also, the utility company can disconnect service if a previous customer living at your address has an outstanding bill. At least ten days prior to service disconnection, the utility must send you a notice stating the reason for the shut-off, the date when service will be disconnected, and how to contact the utility to discuss the situation.

You should first contact the utility company to try to resolve the problem. If you are experiencing a medical problem or other crisis and you need extra time to make payment arrangements, the utility can delay service disconnection or restore service that already was disconnected for up to 21 days. The company may request a letter from your doctor, a public health or social services official or a law enforcement official concerning the crisis to obtain this postponement. Service must be continued during this 21-day period.

If you are unable to pay the outstanding bill in full, the utility company must offer a deferred payment arrangement. You should try to negotiate the terms of the arrangement according to your individual circumstances. The agreement should provide that service will not be discontinued if you pay a *reasonable* amount of the outstanding bill and agree to pay the remaining balance in *reasonable* installments.

To determine *reasonableness*, the company must consider your ability to pay, including these factors: 1) size of the delinquent account; 2) your payment history; 3) how long the debt has been outstanding; 4) reasons why the debt has been outstanding; and 5) any other relevant factors concerning your circumstances such as household size, income and expenses.

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A deferred payment agreement does not eliminate the outstanding bill. Unless you can demonstrate a significant change in your ability to pay, the company is permitted to disconnect service if payment is not made according to the agreed terms. The company is not required to enter into a subsequent deferred payment agreement.

If the company cannot help resolve the problem, you can contact the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin at (800) 225-7729. If you are speech, hearing, or visually impaired and need assistance from the Public Service Commission, call (608) 266-5481 or TTY (608) 267-1479.

If you are having difficulty meeting your utility and/or other monthly expenses, you may want to consult your local elderly benefit specialist at 647-6226 to find out whether you are eligible for additional benefits or services.

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child who is under age 16 or who is disabled and entitled to benefits. Unmarried children may receive survivors benefits on your husband's record until they are age 18, or until 19 if they go to school full time. If your child's 19th birthday occurs during a school term, benefits will usually continue until completion of the term, or for two months following the 19th birthday, whichever comes first. Also, benefits to your children will continue as long as they are eligible, even if you remarry.

For more information about Social Security survivors benefits, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/women/, or call our toll free number, 1-800-772-1213, and ask for the booklet, *Survivors Benefits*.

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Social Security would withhold \$1 from your benefits for every \$3 you earn over the earnings limit (\$33,240 in 2006). Of course, the earnings thresholds are indexed for inflation, so they are updated yearly. And remember that beginning the month that you reach full retirement age, there would be no earnings limits.

You can learn more about Social Security and retirement benefits during a "semi-retirement" by reading the pamphlet, *How Work Affects Your Benefits*. You can request a copy online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10069.html. Or you can call 1-800-772-1213 to request a free copy.

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Are low-calorie sweeteners safe?

The low-calorie sweeteners in the United States all underwent extensive testing before they were approved. Results showed that low-calorie sweeteners are safe for everyone, including children and pregnant women. However, people with a rare condition called phenylketonuria (PKU) should limit their intake of aspartame, one type of low-calorie sweetener.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of reduced-calorie or low-calorie sweeteners?

Foods with low- or reduced-calorie sweeteners can have fewer calories than foods made with sugar and other caloric sweeteners. That can help if you're trying to lose weight or even prevent weight gain. However, some sugar-free foods or products that use low-calorie sweeteners actually have more calories than, and may have more fat than, the sugar sweetened versions.

When you're considering foods with low- or reduced-calorie sweeteners, always check the Nutrition Facts on the label. By comparing the calories in the sugar-free version to the regular version, you'll see whether you're really getting fewer calories. You'll also want to compare the fat content of the labels. Some people choose the regular version of a food and cut back on the serving size instead of buying the sugar-free version. Consider price as well. Sometimes sugar-free versions cost more.

Low-calorie sweeteners are useful for adding extra flavor or sweetness to your food, with few if any extra calories. You can experiment with your own recipes to include re-

Small Changes, Big Results

Even small differences can have big health payoffs. Cutting a few calories and adding physical activity into your day is easier than you think. Consider some of these doable lifestyle changes that can help your heart:

- Do yard work.
- Eat from smaller plates.
- Get off a stop early and walk.
- Don't eat late at night.
- Skip seconds.
- Work around the house.

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- Skip buffets.
- Grill, steam, or bake instead of frying.
- Bicycle to the store instead of driving.
- Take dog to the park.
- Ask your doctor about taking a multi-vitamin.
- Go for a half-hour walk instead of watching TV.
- Use vegetable oils over solid fats.
- More carrots, less cake.
- Fetch the newspaper yourself.
- Sit up straight at work.
- Wash the car by hand.
- Don't skip meals.
- Eat more celery sticks.
- Run when running errands.
- Pace the sidelines at kids' athletic games.

Seniors Surfing the Web? Here are some senior friendly sites!

Suddenly Senior—A place for everyone who's become senior before their time
<http://www.suddenlysenior.com>

Senior Resources—Wisconsin's complete senior resource listing
[http://
magazine.seniorresourcesonline.com](http://magazine.seniorresourcesonline.com)

**Welcome to Richland County
Government Online**
<http://www.co.richland.wi.us/>

**WELCOME To The CITY OF RICHLAND
CENTER! - 450 South Main Street**
<http://www.ci.richland-center.wi.us>

Wisconsin AARP Home Page
<http://www.aarp.org/states/wi/>

**The Official U.S. Government Site for
People with Medicare**
<http://www.Medicare.gov>

**Welcome to Medicaid Site for Consumer
Information**
[http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/
consumer.asp](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/consumer.asp)

Taking Your Blood Pressure Medications

It's easy to forget to take medications. But just like putting your socks on in the morning and brushing your teeth, taking your medicine can easily become part of your daily routine. Drugs can prevent a heart attack, stroke, or congestive heart failure.

It's important that you take your blood pressure drugs as prescribed. When you first start using a medication, work with your doctor to make sure that it's the right drug for you, and the right dosage. If you have any side effects, tell your doctor so he or she can make the proper adjustments. If you're worried about cost, ask your doctor to prescribe a less expensive medication or a generic form that you can use instead.

Everyone — older Americans in particular — must be careful to keep his or her blood pressure below 140/90. If your blood pressure is higher than that, talk with your doctor about adjusting your drugs or making lifestyle changes to bring your blood pressure down. Be sure to tell your doctor about any nonprescription drugs that you're taking — some over-the-counter drugs, such as pain drugs, and dietary supplements, such as ephedra, ma haung, and bitter orange, can raise your blood pressure.

Tips to help you keep taking your meds:

- Put a favorite picture of yourself or a loved one on the refrigerator with a note that says, "Remember To Take Your High Blood Pressure Drugs."
- Take your high blood pressure drugs right after you brush your teeth, and keep them with your toothbrush as a reminder.
- Put "sticky" notes in visible places to remind yourself to take your high blood pressure drugs. You can put notes on the refrigerator, on the bathroom mirror, or on the front door.
- Set up a buddy system with a friend who also is on daily medication and arrange to call each other every day with a reminder to "take your blood pressure drugs."
- Ask your child or grandchild to call you every day with a quick reminder. It's a great way to stay in touch, and little ones love to help the grown-ups.
- Place your drugs in a weekly pillbox, available at most pharmacies.

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- If you have a personal computer, program a start-up reminder to take your high blood pressure drugs, or sign up with a free service that will send you a reminder e-mail every day.
- Remember to refill your prescription. Each time you pick up a refill, make a note on your calendar to order and pick up the next refill 1 week before the medication is due to run out.

Many with Alzheimer's Do Just Fine

Diagnosed with Alzheimer's when he was 61, William Utermohlen continued painting, a passion he developed as a young child. Most of his later artwork concentrated on self portraits, which had precise, accurate depictions of his physical appearance, often set to a stylized background.

Over the course of his disease, the paintings became increasingly abstract. Arms and legs were hard to recognize, and the sense of proportion that marked his early work was lost.

To art critics in France, these later portraits revealed a state of mind that seemed sad, angry and resigned. But to a group of Alzheimer's specialists who compared them to Utermohlen's earlier work, such themes were present throughout his career, suggesting little emotional change in the artist, despite a clear decline in his ability to paint.

"When you are painting it is always about how you feel," Utermohlen told the researchers.

The examination of Utermohlen's artwork, published in the journal *The Lancet*, offers a rare glimpse into the psychological health of those living with Alzheimer's. Depression and agitation are commonly seen in patients, who must struggle with forgetting once-familiar faces and the ability to do even simple tasks.

Strong Willed

But as doctors are finding from Utermohlen's paintings and various surveys, Alzheimer's is not automatically associated with the type of distress many seem to expect. Despite all the importance we place on memory, the disease may cause an unpleasant disruption at first, which fades in recognition as memories do. Those with Alzheimer's spend their remaining life possibly no worse or better off emotionally than before.

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Getting to Know Unsaturated Fats

Getting rid of the trans fats and saturated fats in your diet is a healthy decision. Since not all fats are bad for you, learning about naturally occurring fats will help you to make sound food decisions. Replacing those bad fats with unsaturated fats — monounsaturated and polyunsaturated — can help to lower your blood cholesterol levels.

Unsaturated fat is usually liquid at room and refrigerator temperatures. This type of fat occurs in vegetable oils, most nuts, olives, avocados, and fatty fish such as salmon.

Monounsaturated fat is found in greatest amounts in foods from plants, including olive, canola, sunflower, and peanut oils. Polyunsaturated fat is also found in greatest amounts in foods from plants, including safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean, and cottonseed oils, and many kinds of nuts.


One type of polyunsaturated fat is called omega-3 fatty acids, which are being studied to see if they help guard against heart disease. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids are some fish, such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel. Use moderate amounts of food high in unsaturated fats, and take care to avoid excess calories.

Ole and Lena Jokes...

Ole went to the Doctor because he was feeling a little sick. After a few tests the Doctor told Ole, "I'm sorry to tell you that you have a rare disease that is incurable and you are going to die in 6 months. But to help you out I'm going to prescribe that you move in with your mother-in-law."

Ole replied, "That's terrible Doc, but why should I move in with my rotten mother-in-law."

The Doc said, "Because that will be the longest 6 months of your life."



When Ole went to play cards with dah boys his friend Lars asked him, "Why is it ven we play cards you bring dah wife, ven we go fishing you bring dah wife, and when we go bowling you bring dah wife."

Ole replied, "Vel Lars, Have you noticed dat Lena is kinda ugly. Dis vay I don't have to kiss her goodbye."

"They adapt surprisingly well," says Dr. Peter Rabins, a leading Alzheimer's expert at Johns Hopkins University.

The inability to answer complex questions makes it hard to tell if changing moods are normal or the result of Alzheimer's, but Rabins says that simple questionnaires are good at judging how a patient truly feels. Like plenty of others who face a debilitating disorder, those with Alzheimer's often express a resilient attitude about their fate.

"When bad events happen, most do their best to get by," says Rabins.

Alzheimer's, however, is unique in that it damages areas of the brain responsible for awareness and complex thoughts, raising difficult questions on how to best handle each individual patient. The reason why some might seem content is that they no longer comprehend what is going on around them. Do you confront your loved one with the truth, or leave them kindly in the dark?

Dr. Jason Karlawish, a dementia expert at the University of Pennsylvania, argues for honesty.

"Don't hide the diagnosis," he says. "Patients often want to know."

Part of the reason that people with other diseases do so well, he adds, is that they are aware of what they are up against and are compelled to make tough choices.

"Ignorance is not bliss," Karlawish says

Not Thinking the Worse
Even so, many Alzheimer's patients say that their lives are going fairly well. In a recent study Karlawish helped conduct, nearly 200 people with mild-to-severe Alzheimer's were asked to rate their quality of life. Out of the 181 patients who could confidently answer the survey, more than two-thirds viewed their lives as "good" or "very good," according to results published in the *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

Such optimistic assessments are not always shared by families and caregivers. In a separate study published in the same journal, researchers from Brown University found that people in various stages of Alzheimer's all rated their quality of life as relatively decent. Yet caregivers had a significantly poorer outlook on how their loved one was doing, especially if they looked after a patient who had severe memory loss.

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"Many think that losing your memory is one of the worst things that can happen," says Rabins. But as long as patients are being cared for in the appropriate way, he says that the disease isn't "necessarily bad" on the way they view their life.

Part of the right care is paying attention to real changes in mood. As many as 25 to 35 percent of Alzheimer's patients suffer from depression, which can be helped with treatment and group therapy.

Karlawish says that families should be open about the disease and discuss how a patient is feeling.

"If someone says they are fearful of losing their memories, go there," he says.

Rabins recommends plenty of stimulation and quality family time. Though it may be frustrating to watch a loved one suffer from Alzheimer's, everyone can benefit from spending more time together.

"Even if you can't remember your grandchild's name, you can enjoy being around children," he says.

The feeling is often mutual, Rabins adds. "You can have Alzheimer's and still be a wonderful grandparent."

Get Label Savvy

A healthier diet can help your heart, but don't focus all your attention on cutting fat and controlling your weight. Those things are important, but you should also be monitoring the amount of sodium you consume, since high levels of sodium can raise your blood pressure. Doctors recommend that you begin by limiting your sodium intake to 2400 mg daily, and eventually work your way down to 1500 mg.

While only small amounts of sodium occur naturally in food, processed foods account for most of the salt and sodium in your diet. Look for the following phrases on food packaging. They can help you determine exactly how much sodium you're consuming.

- **Sodium-free or salt-free:** Less than 5 mg per serving
- **Very low sodium:** 35 mg or less of sodium per serving
- **Low sodium:** 140 mg or less of sodium per serving

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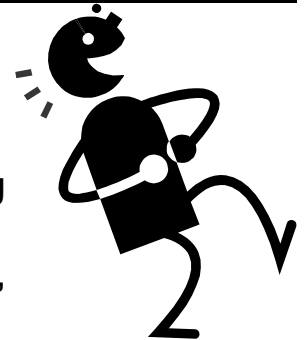
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- **Low-sodium meal:** 140 mg or less of sodium per 3 1/2 oz (100 g)
- **Reduced or less sodium:** At least 25 percent less sodium than the full-sodium version of the same food
- **Light in sodium:** 50 percent less sodium than the full-sodium version of the same food
- **Unsalted or no salt added:** No salt added to the product during processing

If you have trouble controlling your sodium intake, talk to your doctor or nutritionist. He or she can help you with your dietary needs.

More Ole and Lena Jokes...

Ole and his brother Sven grabbed their poles and headed out to do some ice fishing. As they were cutting a hole in the ice they heard a loud voice from above say, "There's no fish under the ice."



Well Ole and Sven thought about it and moved about 25 feet over and started to make another hole. The voice said a little stronger, "There's no fish under the ice." Confused, they both looked around and then looked up.

Ole said, "Are you God?"

The voice spoke back, "No, the ice rink attendant."

The judge had just awarded a divorce to Lena, who had charged for support. He said to Ole, "I have decided to give your wife \$400 a month for support." "Vell, dat's fine, Judge," said Ole. "And vunce in a while I'll try to chip in a few bucks myself."

This newsletter is prepared and submitted six times yearly to the residents of Richland County by Health and Human Services.

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To view this newsletter as well as past editions of this newsletter go to our website.

<http://co.richland.wi.us/departments/hhs/newsletter/index.html>

MARCH, 2006

Occasionally, it is necessary to make changes in the menus. All meals are served with bread and milk. Please call the meal site for reservations at least one day in advance.

Tip of the Month –Chopped roasted garlic adds a rich note to salad dressings, stir fries, and dips. Look for it in resealable plastic containers of already-roasted garlic in the produce section, next to the packaged fresh herbs.		1 <u>Ash Wednesday</u> Baked Fish, Hash Brown Casserole, Carrots, Rye Bread, Lemon Bar	2 Beef Stew/Veg., Baking Powder Biscuit, Honey, Cabbage Salad, Mandarin Oranges	3 Tuna Casserole, Peas, Cottage Cheese, Pineapple, Cherry Cheesecake
6 Chicken Filet/Bun, Potato Wedges, Baked Beans, Cookie	7 Pork Chop, AuGratin Potatoes, Green Beans, Spice Cake	8 Roast Beef, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, California Blend Veg., Jell-O w/Fruit & Topping	9 Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Soft Bread Sticks, Tossed Salad, Fruit Crisp	10 Crispy Baked Fish, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Beets, Striped Delight Torte
13 Ham Slice, Sweet Potatoes, Peas, Pineapple	14 Beef Stroganoff, Buttered Noodles, Corn, Mixed Fruit	15 Roast Turkey, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Mixed Vegetables, Cranberries, Pumpkin Dessert	16 B-B-Q Ribs, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Green Beans, German Chocolate Cake	17 <u>St. Patrick's Day</u> Irish Stew (Cabbage, Corned Beef, Potatoes, Carrots), Rye Bread, Lime Jell-O w/Pears & Topping
20 <u>1st Day of Spring</u> Chili/Goulash, Corn Bread/Honey, Cottage Cheese, Peaches	21 Meat Loaf, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Stewed Tomatoes, Custard	22 Roast Pork, Cheesy AuGratin Potatoes, Peas & Carrots, Applesauce Gelatin	23 Chicken & Noodles, Mixed Vegetables, 7-Layer Salad, Sugar Cookie	24 Baked Fish, Parsley Buttered Potatoes, Peas, Gingerbread w/Topping
27 Hamburger/Bun, Cheese, Pickles, Potato Salad, Baked Beans, Tropical Fruit	28 B-B-Q Chicken, Baked Potato & Sour Cream, Green Beans, Pudding Torte	29 Swiss Steak, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, California Blend Vegetables, Birthday Cake	30 Pork Chop, Seasoned Rice, Squash, Cabbage Salad, Brownie	31 Vegetable Lasagna, Cheese Bread, Tossed Salad, Mixed Fruit

Richland County Health & Human Services

For information (or reservations) about the Nutrition Program, please call:
Germantown - Judy Thompson @ 983-2786 @ 11:45 am; **Richland Center**—**Town & Country Presbyterian Church** - Paula White @ 647-2323 @ 11:45 am; **Viola** - Lorraine White @ 627-1869 @ 11:30 am;
Boaz - **Karen's Supper Club** - Serve on Wednesdays ONLY at 11:30 am - 536-3792

APRIL, 2006

Occasionally, it is necessary to make changes in the menus. All meals are served with bread and milk. Please call the meal site for reservations at least one day in advance.

Tip of the Month – Make your own delicious lower-fat blue cheese dressing by combining half a cup of blue cheese with half a cup of low-fat cottage cheese in a blender or food processor and blending until smooth.				
3 Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans, Applesauce	4 Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Garlic Bread, Tossed Salad, Apricots	5 Baked Chicken, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Carrots, Angel Food Cake w/Strawberries & Topping	6 Chili/Goulash, Cornbread/Honey, Cabbage Salad, Peaches	7 Crispy Baked Fish, Potatoes, Peas, Lemon Bar
10 Ring Bologna, Macaroni & Cheese, Italian Blend Vegetables, Pears	11 Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes, Beets, Oatmeal Raisin Cake	12 Roast Pork, Rice, Green Beans, Apple Crisp	13 Chicken & Noodles, Mixed Vegetables, Cheese Bread, Fruited Jell-O w/Topping	14 <u>Sites Closed</u> GOOD FRIDAY
17 B-B-Q Beef/Bun, Potato Salad, Baked Beans, Mixed Fruit	18 Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Peas & Carrots, Pineapple Upside Down Cake	19 Lasagna, Soft Bread Sticks, Tossed Salad, Peaches	20 Swiss Steak, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, California Blend Veg., Toll House Bar	21 Chicken ala King, Baking Powder Biscuit, Peas, Cottage Cheese/Peaches
24 Pork Chop, AuGratin Potatoes, Beets, Apricots	25 Meat Loaf, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Green Beans, Tropical Fruit	26 Roast Turkey, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Stuffing, Carrots, Cranberries, Birthday Cake	37 Spanish Rice w/Beef, Cornbread/Honey, Cabbage Salad, Pudding w/Bananas	28 Baked Fish, Potato Wedges, Broccoli, Sugar Cookie