New Year’s Resolutions For Better Health

Submitted by Janet Butteris - Social Worker

Most people treat the New Year as a fresh start, setting a variety of personal goals for optimum health, wellness and productivity. Although New Year’s resolutions are made with good intentions, they are often unrealistic goals and soon broken by springtime. Many seniors enjoy their daily routines and can benefit from these 5 easy and senior-focused resolutions that will allow them to take small steps towards a better self in the New Year.

1. Take a walk every day, even if it’s short.
   Just 20 minutes of physical activity a day, such as walking, can reap huge health benefits. According to AmericanTrails.org, seniors can decrease risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and more just by staying active. Join or start a walking club at your senior living community with friends to get the added health benefits of staying social at the same time!

2. Skip dessert or opt for the sugar-free option.
   Many senior communities now offer restaurant-style dining, and with this comes the opportunity to choose from a variety of sweet treats to satisfyingly end each meal. Even seniors who consciously watched their diet for years may become comfortable with eating dessert after dinner each night, which can lead to unhealthy weight gain and risk of high blood sugar. In the New Year, make an effort to skip dessert a few times a week, or choose the sugar-free option instead for better health.

3. Visit or write your grandchildren.
   The art of a handwritten letter isn’t lost just yet! If you can’t get out visiting your grandchildren due to locality or mobility reasons, try starting a pen pal system with them. Seniors who stay connected with family and friends are more likely to feel content.

4. Rekindle or find a hobby.
   Whether it is painting or coin collecting, many seniors forget about hobbies they once enjoyed for hours on end. Use the fresh start of the New Year as inspiration to get back to one of your favorite pastimes, which will conjure many good memories. Whether it is painting or coin collecting, many

5. Volunteer.
   Experience a sense of purpose and satisfaction by helping others in need. There are endless opportunities for volunteering these days, be it a local food shelter or simply visiting with a less mobile senior. You don’t have to embark on a month-long fundraising mission to make a difference. Volunteering can be as simple as visiting with a new or shy senior in your community who might appreciate a friendly face.

When writing your New Year’s resolutions, consider taking advantage of Medicare’s Preventative Services and resolve to improve your health! First, consider taking that step to quit smoking! Why? Because tobacco use is the second leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for 1 in every 10 adult deaths. And because Medicare can help you quit smoking! Medicare Part B covers free counseling sessions as a preventive service to help you quit smoking. If you haven’t been diagnosed with an illness caused or complicated by tobacco use, and if the doctor or other health care provider accepts assignment, then you pay nothing for the counseling sessions.

If you’ve already been diagnosed with an illness that was caused or made worse by tobacco use, or you take a medicine affected by tobacco, you can still get up to 8 counseling sessions every 12 months. In this case, you pay your Part B deductible and 20% of the Medicare-approved amount. (If you get counseling in a hospital outpatient setting, you’ll also need to pay the hospital a copayment.)

Second, for all the women out there, resolve to get your mammogram this year. Mammograms are breast cancer screening tests that can often detect a lump before you or your doctor can feel it. This can help detect breast cancer early, when it’s the most treatable. All women over 40 should have a screening mammogram every 12 months — and Medicare covers it at no cost if your doctor accepts assignment.

Third, if you are a man, add a screening for prostate and colorectal cancer to your list of resolutions. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, second only to lung cancer in the number of cancer deaths. Not sure you should get screened? You’re at a higher risk for getting prostate cancer if you’re a man 50 or older; are African-American; or have a father, brother, or son who has had prostate cancer. Screening tests can find cancer early, when treatment works best.

Don’t worry about the cost — if you’re a man 50 or over, Medicare covers a digital rectal exam and Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test once every 12 months. Also, Medicare covers a variety of colorectal cancer screenings, and you pay nothing for most tests.

Colorectal cancer is also common among men — in fact, it’s the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States among cancers that affect both men and women. If everyone 50 or older got screened regularly, we could avoid as many as 60% of deaths from this cancer. In most cases, colorectal cancer develops from precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. Fortunately, screening tests can find these polyps, so you can get them removed before they become cancerous. If you’re 50 or older, or have a personal or family history of colorectal issues, make sure you get screened regularly for colorectal cancer.

This year, take advantage of Medicare’s Preventive Screenings and don’t wait to schedule your next screening. May you have a happy and healthy New Year!

Source: Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services http://blog.medicare.gov/
Published with permission from the Legal Services Team at the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources’ Elder Law & Advocacy Center.
Love Comes In Many Forms

Submitted by Shelley Reukauf - Social Worker

February is traditionally the month associated with love. And although chocolate, roses and even cupid come to mind, I’d like to share four real-life stories of what I believe are true love lived out every day (names have been changed of course) by some of the families I have had the privilege to meet and serve. Two of them are about those folks that have fulfilled their vows, “in sickness and in health…” to each other despite difficult circumstances. The other two are about adult children or other relatives that have accepted the roll of caring for an aging loved one.

Louis and Harriet

When I first met Louis and Harriet, he had already been caring for her a number of years due to her progressive Parkinson’s disease. As with every disease, each person is affected differently, but Harriet had been at an advanced stage for quite a while. Louis had been attentively doing all of her daily care, including bathing and feeding her. They were both so appreciative when arrangements were made for someone to come and give Harriet a bath. It was wonderful to witness the gentleness of Louis as he spoke to Harriet—she was not able to verbally respond, but they definitely connected in their communication to one another.

Melinda and Trudy

Looking back, Melinda had recognized the signs of dementia in her mom Trudy a number of years prior. She had been “filling-in-the-gaps” for her mom’s gradually diminishing abilities to complete a sentence on her own and to care for the house that she had always kept immaculate. As many of us do though, Melinda had respected and honored Trudy’s desire to stay independent and to live alone in her home. It became very apparent though that the issue needed to be addressed when mom got lost one day while she went for a walk and the local police brought her home. Melinda, her family and Trudy made the decision to have mom come and live with them. And although this has been an adjustment for all of them, according to Melinda, it has become a wonderful learning experience for her own children as well. The kids have witnessed the compassion of their mom and dad caring for Grandma and have even learned to have more patience when they need their parents’ attention. They also have fun playing Wii bowling with their “Grammy T”!

Sharon and Harry

Sharon was always close to her Uncle Harry so when the elderly bachelor’s health made it impossible for him to live alone, she and her husband brought him to live with them. Fortunately, Sharon was able to keep working due to Harry attending an Adult Day Service program while she was at work. He loved going there and the staff enjoyed him as well. Harry had quite a number of issues that made him physically dependent on others, but mentally he was still sharp and they were able to have many interesting conversations with him.

Leo and Bonnie

Bonnie and Leo had been the hard working partners of their family farm for many years, so when Leo was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, Bonnie just eased into her role as his caregiver. Actually, she made it look like it was easy, but of course as all caregivers know; the adjustment alone is a challenge. Bonnie had to take on new responsibilities that Leo had always taken care of. However, she even surprised herself with what she was capable of doing. The following quote from the Hoosier Farmer was on their refrigerator door: “Love is the thing that enables a woman to sing while she mops up the floor after her husband has walked across it in his barn boots.” They both had a good sense of humor and a strong faith that definitely helped get them through the most challenging circumstances.

The loyalty and devotion that these families (and many others) have demonstrated in their caregiving situations have been an inspiration to me. And although many of their days have not been easy; there certainly are times that are complicated and challenging, they remain dedicated to the care of their loved one. No relationship is perfect, everyone has disagreements and difficulties, but it truly is heartening to witness when people are committed to one another. All of these life experiences are unique but they do have something in common. Each family, in their own time came to realize that reaching out and asking for help was a good thing. There are resources in our county that can provide assistance and support to you in your caregiving role. Call the Aging & Disability Resource Center at (608) 930-9835 for more information.

Used with permission from: Lori Anderson, Family Caregiver Specialist, Fond du Lac County

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February 2017 - Iowa County News & Views
Your Social Security Benefit Statement

News from Nikki Brennum - Your Disability Benefit Specialist,
Helping Iowa County residents 18-59 years of age with physical, developmental and mental illness disabilities

It’s that time of year again: time to start preparing to file your taxes. If you receive Social Security benefits, one of the documents you will need when filing your federal income tax return is your Social Security Benefit Statement (Form SSA-1099).

Your Social Security benefits may be taxable. This includes monthly retirement, survivor, and disability benefits. About one-third of people receiving Social Security benefits must pay taxes on some of these benefits, depending on the amount of their taxable income. This usually happens only if you have other substantial income — such as wages, self-employment, interest, dividends, and other taxable income that must be reported on your tax return — in addition to your Social Security benefits. You will never have to pay taxes on more than 85 percent of your Social Security benefits, based on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules.

To find out if you must pay taxes on your benefits, you will need your Social Security Benefit Statement (Form SSA-1099). You should automatically receive your 1099 form each January. It shows the total amount of benefits you received from Social Security in the previous year so you know how much Social Security income to report to the IRS on your tax return. The 1099 form is not available for people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), as SSI payments are not taxable.

Whether you file your taxes early or wait until the deadline, Social Security makes it easy to obtain a replacement 1099 form if you didn’t receive one or misplaced yours. You can get an instant replacement quickly and easily by using your secure online my Social Security account. If you don’t already have an account, you can create one in minutes. Follow the link to the my Social Security page, and go to “Sign In” or “Create an Account”. Once you are logged in, select the “Replacement Documents” tab to obtain your replacement 1099 form. If you create a my Social Security account, you can also use it to keep track of your earnings each year, manage your benefits, and more.

You can also obtain a replacement 1099 form by calling Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778), Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., or by contacting your local Social Security office.

Information Provided by the Social Security Administration.

Nikki Brennum

Stepping On

Join other older adults in learning how you can take control of your life to prevent falls! Take control of your life to remain independent in your own home without a fear of falling by enrolling in a Stepping On workshop. You’ll learn strength and balance exercises and how to keep doing the exercises. Learn from local experts about the impact of medication and vision on your risk of falls and about mobility in your community, how to do a home assessment, safe footwear, and improving your sleep. You’ll get the support you need to take charge of your life.

Join Us:

- Wednesdays
- March 8 – April 19
- 1:00 - 3:00 PM
- Health & Human Services Center
- 303 W. Chapel Street, Dodgeville

Space is limited, register early! Call 930-9835.

Cost for 7 Classes: Only $5

www.iowacounty.org • 1-877-794-2372

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Inclement Weather Policy:
When the School closes, SUN closes.
If there is a school delay, check the site.

NUTRITION CENTERS
FEBRUARY 2017 Menus

HIGHLAND Serving at 11:30 a.m.

MONDAY January 30
Hot Pork Sandwich
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- Wheat Roll

TUESDAY January 31
Chicken Salad on a Croissant
- Mayonnaise
- Wheat Roll

WEDNESDAY February 1
Baked Chicken
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- Wheat Roll

THURSDAY February 2
Macaroni & Cheese Salad
- Tomatoes
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

FRIDAY February 3
Beef Stroganoff over Noodles
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- Wheat Roll

MINERAL POINT Delivery Only

MONDAY January 30
Grilled Ham & Cheese Sandwich
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

TUESDAY January 31
Turkey & Swiss Cheese
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

WEDNESDAY February 1
Turkey & Stuffing Casserole
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

THURSDAY February 2
Chicken Pot Pie on a Bun
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

FRIDAY February 3
Spaghetti Casserole
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

ARENA Serving at Noon

MONDAY January 30
Lettuce, Tomato & Onion
- Mayonnaise
- Wheat Roll

TUESDAY January 31
Baked Potato
- Cheddar Cheese
- Buttermilk Sauce

WEDNESDAY February 1
Cod on a Bun
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

THURSDAY February 2
Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

FRIDAY February 3
Roast Pork
- Mixed Peppers
- Tomato
- Lettuce
- Mayonnaise
- White Roll

ARENA: Manor Manor, call Mona at (608) 341-6859.

MINERAL POINT: Delivery Only call (608) 987-2696.

For questions regarding the SUN Program, please call the main office at (608) 930-9845. Comments and suggestions are welcome! See site or have your meal delivered or call for information and recipe at each site.

By phone. call 1:00 p.m.

ARENA: Manor Manor, call Mona at (608) 341-6859.

MINERAL POINT: Delivery Only call (608) 987-2696.

GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE...
and they make great gifts for any holiday!

Call your site or the SUN main office at (608) 930-9845.

Suggested Donations: $4.50 Congregate and 15.00 Home Delivery

HIGHLAND: St. Anthony & Philip Church, call Mona at (608) 925-7482.
DODGEBLEVE: Hidden Valley Community Church, call Sonya at (608) 574-6630.
LINDEN: Municipal Building, call Earline at (608) 623-2800 or (608) 943-8308.
AVOCA: Delivery Only, call Marilyn at (608) 930-9845.

ARENA: Manor Manor, call Mona at (608) 341-6859.

MINERAL POINT: Delivery Only call (608) 987-2696.

For all the upcoming events, feel free to call your site or have your meal delivered. Comments and suggestions are welcome! See site or have your meal delivered or call for information and recipe at each site.

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ARENA: Manor Manor, call Mona at (608) 341-6859.
Canned cherries are red, tart, pitted cherries packed in water. Fruits are naturally sweet and are low in fat and calories making them a great dessert or snack choice.

Nutrition Information; Cherries are part of the fruit group. Foods from the fruit group provide important nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C and potassium. Based on MyPlate, ½ cup of canned cherries provides ½ cup from the fruit group. A typical person should try to eat 2 cups of fruit every day.

Uses; Water-packed cherries are excellent in baked desserts like pies, cobblers, crisps, cakes, cookies and muffins. Canned cherries can be used in dessert sauces for cakes, custards, ice cream and pancakes.

Recipe from Fast Foods, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension.

Adapted from Kayla Colgrove, MS, RD, Extension Educator, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Nutritional Specialist. February Food Calendar.

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Adapted from Kayla Colgrove, MS, RD, Extension Educator, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Nutritional Specialist. February Food Calendar.
Hearts are Not Only for Valentine’s Day, But for American Heart Month

Katie Baton & Brittany Mainwaring Information and Assistance Specialists

Along with Valentine’s Day, February marks American Heart Month, a great time to commit to a healthy lifestyle and make small changes that can lead to a lifetime of heart health.

Did you know that heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States? The good news is that heart disease can be prevented. Here are a few tips to keep a healthy heart:

- Schedule a visit with your doctor to talk about heart health. It’s important to schedule regular check-ups even if you think you are not sick.
- Partner with your doctor and health care team to set goals for improving your heart health, and don’t be afraid to ask questions and trust their advice.
- Add exercise to your daily routine. Start off the month by walking 15 minutes, 3 times each week. By mid-month, increase your time to 30 minutes, 3 times each week.
- Increase healthy eating. Cook heart-healthy meals at home at least 3 times each week and make your favorite recipe lower sodium. For example, swap out salt for fresh or dried herbs and spices.
- Take steps to quit smoking. If you currently smoke, quitting can cut your risk for heart disease and stroke.
- Take medication as prescribed. Talk with your doctor about the importance of high blood pressure and cholesterol medications. If you’re having trouble taking your medicines on time or if you’re having side effects, ask your doctor for help.
- Know the signs of a heart attack.
  - There are five major signs and symptoms of a heart attack in women and men. 1. Chest pain or discomfort; 2. Nausea, feeling light-headed or unusually tired; 3. Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back; 4. Pain or discomfort in the arm or shoulder; 5. Shortness of breath. Other symptoms of a heart attack could include unusual or unexplained tiredness and nausea or vomiting. Women are more likely to have these other symptoms.
- If you notice the symptoms of a heart attack in yourself or someone else, call 9-1-1 immediately. The sooner you get to an emergency room, the sooner you can receive treatment to prevent total blockage and heart muscle damage or reduce the amount of damage. At the hospital, health care professionals can run tests to determine whether a heart attack is occurring and decide the best treatment.

Remember, the chances of surviving a heart attack are greater the sooner emergency treatment begins. We wish you a happy and healthy heart!

Please continue to send in your questions. Information and Assistance Specialists (I&As) help provide information and assistance regarding local services and resources that match your needs.

Services are free and confidential. If you have a question that you would like answered in the News and Views, feel free to send in a letter addressed to:

News and Views Q & A
303 W Chapel St, Suite 1300
Dodgeville, WI 53533

Resource: https://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/

18th Annual Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia

The 18th Annual Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia is Thursday, March 16 at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fred Lenz Conference Center, 1800 Bronson Blvd., Fennimore from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Offering family members, direct care workers and professionals an excellent opportunity to learn the latest information and resources that can help you face this growing health epidemic. Learn more about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and person centered care through informative and interactive presentations.

The day will begin with Art Walaszek, MD, a geriatric psychiatrist and professor of psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin, discussing the ways Alzheimer’s disease leads to changes in cognition and functioning. He will focus on the behavioral and psychological symptoms, including depression, anxiety, hallucinations, paranoia and sleep disturbance. Dr. Walaszek will address assessment of behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia and approaches to managing these symptoms.

Suzanne Bottom-Jones will present on the Sandwich Caregiver, those who are caring for both a younger and older generation at the same time. She’ll look at the effects on a caregiver’s cognitive health and ways to manage these conflicting agendas. Bottom-Jones is the product director and co-owner of ABAIT, LLC, which promotes healthy outcomes and better quality of life for those experiences cognitive changes.

Participants will be revitalized during a presentation called Re-energizing the Energizers presented by Gina Green-Harris, MBA Director, Milwaukee Outreach Program and Services, Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute (WAI), UW School of Medicine and Public Health. This motivational workshop will recharge and encourage participants to “Keep on keeping on”, as you face challenges, setbacks or burnout. After this talk, your flame will be ignited and you will be reminded of the great work you have been assigned. Green-Harris was instrumental in collaboration between the University and Milwaukee Health Services, Inc. (a Federally Qualified Health Center- FQHC) to establish a minority specific memory clinic in the heart of Milwaukee. This is the first of its kind and is being established as a national model for other FQHC’s to replicate.

Registration fee is $25 per person; includes breakfast and lunch.

Thursday, March 16 from 8:30 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fred Lenz Conference Center, 1800 Bronson Blvd., Fennimore

HELP WANTED:
WORK FLEXIBLE HOURS AND MAKE YOUR OWN SCHEDULE!

The Aging & Disability Resource Center is currently seeking volunteer drivers to assist elderly people and people with disabilities get to medical appointments. While this is a voluntary position, you are reimbursed for your mileage. We drive people Monday through Friday. You set your own hours and days. We will reimburse you for your mileage.

Candidates should have a valid driver’s license and feel comfortable driving. The ideal candidate will have a properly working vehicle and the ability to provide car insurance.

This is an extremely rewarding program. If you wish to apply or have questions about the position, please contact us at (608) 930-9835 or email us at adrc@iowacounty.org.

February 2017 - Iowa County News & Views
FEBRUARY 2017 CARE A VAN SCHEDULE
Call (608) 930-9835

NEW RIDERS ALWAYS WELCOME...
we will pick you up at your door, whenever possible.

$5.00 SENIOR TRIP DAYS
Leave from the Health and Human Services Center in Dodgeville at 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, February 1 ............................. TO: RICHLAND CENTER
(Dodgeville, Edmund, Cobb, Highland, Avoca and Muscoda)

Thursday, February 2 .............................. TO: MINERAL POINT
(Dodgeville, Linden, Cobb, Highland and Mineral Point)

Friday, February 3 ................................. SENIOR TRIP DAY

Monday, February 6 ............................... TO: SAUK CITY - Lunch and Shopping

Tuesday, February 7 .................. TO: DODGEVILLE - Dining Center and/or Shopping
(Ridgeway, Barneveld, Hollandale and Mineral Point)

Wednesday, February 8 .......................... TO: PLATTEVILLE
(Dodgeville, Edmund, Cobb, Linden, Mineral Point and Rewey)

Thursday, February 9 ............................ TO: DODGEVILLE - Ride Only. No Shopping

Friday, February 10 ............................... SENIOR TRIP DAY

Sunday, February 12 .............................. Bell Tower Theatre Presents:
"Love, Lies and the Doctor's Dilemma"

Monday, February 13 ............................. SENIOR TRIP DAY

Tuesday, February 14 ............................. TO: MADISON - Lunch and Movie
(Matinees for $2.50. Handicap Accessible and Assisted Listening Devices are Available)

Wednesday, February 15 ........................ TO: RICHLAND CENTER
(Dodgeville, Edmund, Cobb, Highland, Avoca and Muscoda)

Thursday, February 16 ........................... TO: PLATTEVILLE
(Dodgeville, Edmund, Cobb, Linden, Mineral Point and Rewey)

Friday, February 17 .............................. TO: MONROE - Lunch and Shopping

Monday, February 20 ............................. SENIOR TRIP DAY

Tuesday, February 21 ............................. TO: DODGEVILLE - Dining Center and/or Shopping
(Ridgeway, Barneveld, Hollandale and Mineral Point)

Wednesday, February 22 ........................ TO: PLATTEVILLE
(Dodgeville, Edmund, Cobb, Linden, Mineral Point and Rewey)

Thursday, February 23 ..................... TO: MONTFORT - Lunch at Tower Junction
and Rural Route 1 Shopping

Friday, February 24 ......................... SENIOR TRIP DAY
TO: DUBUQUE - Lunch and Casino or Shopping at Kennedy Mall

Monday, February 27 ............................ SENIOR TRIP DAY

TO: MOUNT HOREB - Dining and/or Shopping

Tuesday, February 28 ...................... TO: DODGEVILLE - Dining Center and/or Shopping
(Ridgeway, Barneveld, Hollandale and Mineral Point)

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SHINGLES SHOT
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT - (608) 930-9870

Chances are you or someone you know has suffered from the debilitating effects of shingles. In fact, 1/3 of people will get shingles in their lifetime (Shingles, 2016). Shingles comes from the same virus as chicken pox. If you have ever had chicken pox, you are at risk for a shingles outbreak. The shingles virus can attack at any time, but usually strikes when your immune system is lowered. Shingles is characterized by a rash that lasts 2-4 weeks. Its symptoms include severe itching, tingling, and burning along one side of the body. An individual with shingles may also suffer from flu-like symptoms including fever, chills, upset stomach, and headache (Shingles, 2016). The most common complication of shingles is severe pain that can last long after the rash heals.

Although over 1 million new cases of shingles are diagnosed in the United States yearly (Shingles, 2016), you can decrease your risk of contracting the disease. The only way to prevent shingles and the severe pain associated with it is to get a shingles shot. This immunization is recommended for adults 60 and older because your body’s defense system weakens as you get older. This is a one time shot that is covered by many insurance plans. It can be received locally at your doctor’s office, Walmart, Walgreens, and Corner Drug Downtown Pharmacy. Call your doctor, or go into one of these businesses today to get your shingles shot and prevent the severe pain of shingles.


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Care Talks:
What did our doctor say?

Barb’s husband, James, has always been her best friend and biggest supporter. A few months ago, she noticed some changes in his mood and memory. They both agreed to talk with the doctor about it. Barb likes and respects their doctor, but she left confused about what the next steps were and if they should be worried. She tells herself that everyone gets forgetful when they get older, so maybe it is nothing. Barb is not sure. She would like to go back and ask more questions, but she knows their doctor is very busy. She always feels like a bother when she calls their doctor’s office and often wishes that she could ask her questions in a clearer, faster way.

If you are in a similar situation as Barb — trying to take care of a family member or friend but finding it hard to communicate with health care professionals and navigate the healthcare system — consider joining Care Talks, a new series of communication skills workshops for people who help a friend or family member with their health care.

Workshops cover a variety of topics and can help you learn how to:
• Prepare for doctor visits,
• Ask medical professionals the right questions and get the answers you need,
• Make the most of your time with the doctor,
• Help you find your way in the health care system.

Care Talks is part of a research study developed by Dr. Paul Smith of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and supported by the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Southwest WI - Iowa County.

First meeting is Wednesday, March 29 at 5:00 pm. Health & Human Services Center, Room 1001, Dodgeville.

For more information about Care Talks, please call the Aging & Disability Resource Center at (608) 930-9835.

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