

NEI Aging Today

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NORTHEAST IOWA
Area Agency
on Aging

NEI3A helps older persons respond to their evolving needs and choices.



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Powered by Connection

Established in 1963, Older Americans Month (OAM) is celebrated every May. Led by a federal agency, the Administration for Community Living (ACL), OAM is a time to recognize older Americans' contributions, highlight aging trends, and reaffirm commitments to serving the older adults in our communities.

This year's theme, "Powered by Connection," focuses on the profound impact that meaningful connections have on the well-being and health of older adults — a relationship underscored by the U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community. (<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>)

"It's not just about having someone to chat with," said Mike Donohue, NEI3A CEO, "It's about the transformative potential of community engagement in enhancing mental, physical, and emotional well-being." According to Mike Donohue, by recognizing and nurturing the role that connectedness plays, we can mitigate issues like loneliness, ultimately promoting healthy aging for more Americans.

What can individuals do to connect?

- Invite more connection into your life by finding a new passion, joining a social club, taking a class, or trying new activities in your community. A list of upcoming classes offered by NEI3A can be found on page 2.
- Stay engaged in your community by giving back through volunteering, working, teaching, or mentoring. More information on the NEI3A Volunteer Connection program can be found on page 3.
- Invest time with people to build new relationships and discover deeper connections with your family, friends, colleagues, or neighbors.

Stay engaged with your community: The Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteering can be a rewarding experience and a great way to give back to your community. But did you realize that volunteering can also improve your physical and mental health? Volunteering can reduce stress, combat feelings of loneliness and depression, and contribute to overall well-being. Additionally, volunteering may lower the risk of certain health problems and increase longevity.

NEI3A's Volunteer Connection program is not just about volunteering; it's about making a meaningful connection with older adults in your community. By helping with simple tasks and providing a friendly visit, you're not only assisting them but also serving as a critical check-in to ensure their well-being. For some older homebound individuals, your visit could be the highlight of their day, providing much-needed socialization and companionship.

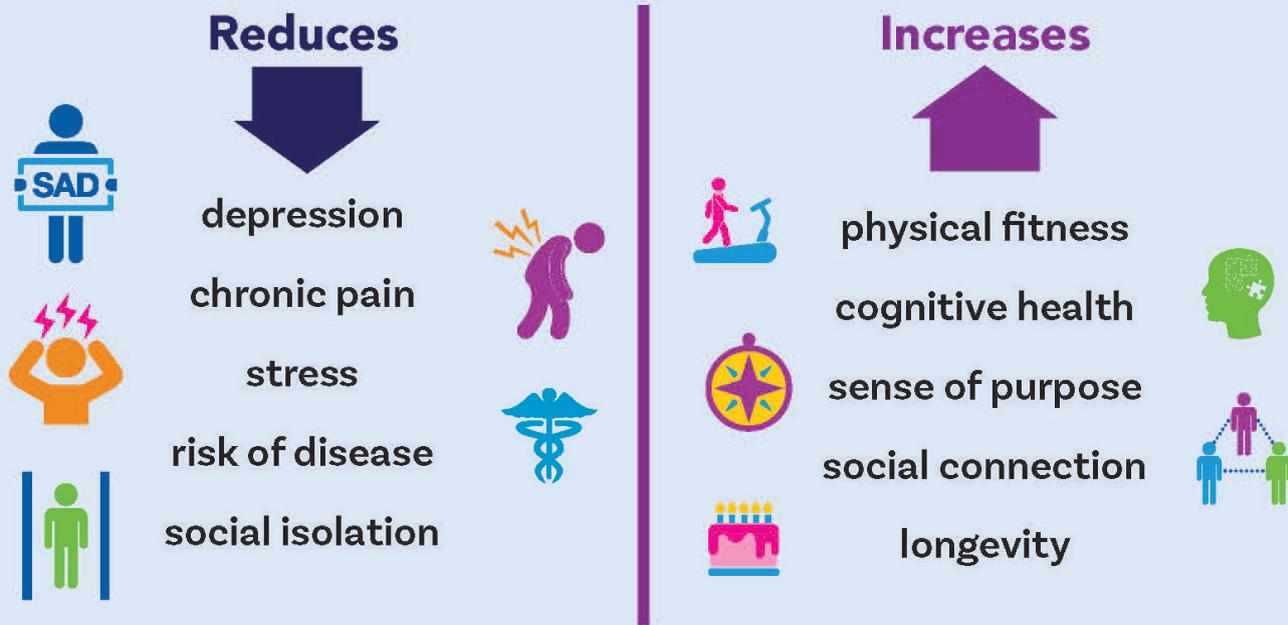


NEI3A's Volunteer Connection program offers a wide range of tasks that you can help with, depending on your interests and abilities. From assisting with meals to helping with yard work, there's something for everyone.

For more information about NEI3A's Volunteer Connection program, please contact Elise Bovy at ebovy@nei3a.org or email ebovy@nei3a.org.

If you would like to learn more about other volunteer opportunities call 1-800-779-8707.

Doing Good is Good for You Volunteering



Corporation for National & Community Service, *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*, May 2012, www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/healthbenefits_factsheet.pdf. Graphic from eldercare.acl.gov



Invite More Connection in Your Life: Try Tai Chi

Connecting with others in a common activity provides a social boost for individuals. Tai Chi for Arthritis & Fall Prevention is a great way to connect with others while enjoying the physical and mental benefits this activity provides. Some of the benefits of Tai Chi include:

- Reduction of stress and anxiety
- Improved cardiovascular health
- Enhanced flexibility and balance
- Alleviation of pain and improved joint mobility
- Boosted immune function

How does exercise improve brain power? When your heart rate rises, more oxygen and essential nutrients reach your brain, encouraging new neuron formation and connections. Focusing on executing each Tai Chi movement helps to exercise and strengthen the muscles of the mind, enhancing cognitive performance.

Give Tai Chi a try! Join one of our upcoming classes:

Grundy Center: Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:00 am, April 17 - June 7 at the Grundy Center City Hall (705 F. Ave.). Call Rose at 641-752-1638 to register.

Bellevue: Tuesdays and Fridays at 12:30 pm, April 30 - June 21 at the Bellevue Senior Center (1700 State St.). To register contact Kimberly at 563-202-3002.

West Union: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 a.m., May 14 - July 9 at Gundersen Palmer Hospital (112 Jefferson St., West Union). To register contact Missy at 319-874-6893.

Become a Dementia Friend

Join a growing movement of people like you who are helping fellow community members live with dementia.

Become a Dementia Friend by attending a one-hour informational session to learn about living with dementia and the simple things you can do to support someone living with the disease. You don't need to be a dementia expert or know someone with dementia to become a Dementia Friend.

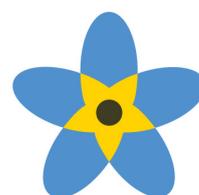
What Happens at the Information Session?

- Free one-hour session is a discussion led by a Dementia Friends Champion.
- Learn some basics of dementia, tips for communicating with people who have dementia, and community resources
- Find out how to be supportive of people with dementia in your community.
- Join in on a session or schedule one for your group/organization

Upcoming Sessions

- Zoom – Friday, April 26 (10-11am)
- Zoom – Thursday, May 23 (9-10am)
- Zoom – Wednesday, June 26 (2-3pm)

Don't see a time that works for you? Contact Megan Zimmerman (31-287-1182; mzimmerman@nei3a.org) to inquire about scheduling a special session (in-person or virtual)!



**Dementia
Friends
Iowa**

A Dementia Friendly America initiative

MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK

6/3-6/9



SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPCD002 FROM ACL

NEI3A's SMP Resource Center is Kicking Off Medicare Fraud Prevention Week

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week focuses on the actions everyone can take to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week runs the week of June 5, or 6/5, because most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65. Medicare Fraud Prevention Week is hosted by the Senior Medicare Patrol, known as the SMP.

SMP is a national program that educates Medicare beneficiaries about Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. Learn how you can protect yourself and your loved ones from Medicare fraud during Medicare Fraud Prevention Week, 6/3 -6/9!

Why is this week important?

Medicare loses an estimated \$60 billion each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse. Every day, issues related to these concerning matters affect people across the country, often costing them money, time, and

well-being. Medicare-related errors contribute to this annual loss even though errors can be honest health care billing mistakes. However, a pattern of errors committed by a physician or provider could be considered a red flag of potential fraud or abuse if not corrected.

When people steal from Medicare, it hurts us all and is big business for criminals. Some common examples of fraud or abuse could include:

- Charging for services or supplies that were not provided
- Misrepresenting a diagnosis, a person's identity, the service provided, or other facts to justify payment
- Prescribing or providing excessive or unnecessary tests and services

Falling prey to consumer scams or health care fraud may mean that your Medicare number

has been "compromised" as a result of medical identity theft. Theft from Medicare leaves less available funds for those needing services now as well as those needing Medicare in the future.

How will this week be celebrated and observed?

The most effective way to stop fraud from occurring is to prevent it in the first place. Educating yourself and your loved ones on how to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse is the best place to start.

As an employee of NEI3A you may be a beneficiary, caregiver or family member of someone who has Medicare Coverage.

If you are a Medicare beneficiary, start the week by learning how to read your Medicare statements! Read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) in the paper form that is mailed to you or go online to Medicare.gov and review

claims digitally.

Caregivers, help by educating yourself and your clients or loved ones on how to prevent and detect health care fraud, errors, and abuse. Be on the lookout for things like boxes of knee braces (known as durable medical equipment, or DME) lying around the house. This is a common scam and may mean your client or loved one has been a victim. Remind your clients or loved ones to never give out their Medicare number or other personal information over the phone.

Families, help by talking to your loved ones about protecting their Medicare number just as they would a credit card number. Encourage them to check their Medicare statements for fraud, errors, or abuse and never

give out their Medicare number over the phone for any reason. Help your loved ones create a Medicare.gov account to access their Medicare claims online or remind them to open and review their statements when they come in the mail every three months. You can also register their phone number on “do not call” lists and go to optoutprescreen.com to opt out of marketing mailings.

Partners and professionals, help by sharing SMP information on social media, referring clients and consumers to the SMP, and inviting the SMP to speak during a shared event. Identify ways to collaborate on mission-related topics and information.

Talk with any Health care providers, about how they can

prevent Medicare fraud. They can talk to patients about health care-related scams such as those related to durable medical equipment, genetic testing, or new, plastic, or chipped Medicare cards.

Lastly, as a community, help by looking out for your older neighbors. If you overhear someone talking about Medicare, don't be afraid to give information about the local SMP and SHIP. Encourage those you know to talk to a trusted source about their Medicare questions and tell your neighbors about the most recent Medicare scams. Consider volunteering with your local SMP!

To learn more, visit smpresource.org or follow the Iowa SMP and the SMP Resource Center on Facebook.

GRANDPAD IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH NEI3A

Together we support you in aging with confidence

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GrandPad

**YOU'VE
GOT THIS.**
We've got you.

Vaccine Facts



What Vaccines Should I Get?

Most people should get vaccinated for:

- **Seasonal Flu (Influenza):** Get by the end of October or soon after.
- **COVID-19:** Everyone aged 5 years and older should get 1 updated COVID-19 vaccine, at least two months after getting the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine. People who are immunocompromised may get additional doses of updated COVID-19 vaccines and should talk to a healthcare professional about additional updated doses.

Check with a healthcare professional to see if there are additional vaccines that are right for you.

Most people over age 50 should also get vaccinated for:

- **Shingles:** Get 2 doses within 2 to 6 months.
- **Pneumonia (over age 65):** Get 1-2 doses one year apart depending on your age and whether you have already had 1 dose. Talk with a trusted healthcare professional to find out what is best for you.
- **TDAP (Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis) (over age 7):** Get TDAP or TD every ten years after an initial shot.
- **RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) (over age 60):** Talk to your healthcare provider about getting a single dose of the RSV vaccine.



Visit your Local Farmers Market

Farmers markets are becoming more popular, serving not only as a way for people to purchase locally grown produce, but also a way for them to connect and socialize with others in their community. Are you shopping at your local farmers market? If not, here are some reasons you should!

Farm Fresh: The fruits and vegetables at the farmers market are the freshest and tastiest available. Fruits and vegetables you find at the grocery store are often several days old before they reach the produce aisle sometimes going through processes to stimulate ripening. Farmers market foods are as

real and fresh as it gets – fresh from the farm!

Enjoy the Season: The food you buy at a local farmers market is seasonal, reflecting the truest flavors. Some nutritionist suggest eating seasonally available foods is better for your body, because that was the way humans ate for thousands of years before refrigeration.

Peak Nutrition: Farmer's market food is generally picked at the peak of their ripeness when the plants' natural sugars are at their peak. Eating produce when it is ripe not only tastes better, but it also provides the best nutrition possible.

Variety to Spice up Your Life:

At the Farmer's Market you will find many different types of fruits and vegetables that you won't find in your local supermarket. And that's not all! Many times the farmers will give you tips on how to cook the items they are selling.

Affordable: You can find a variety of fresh, great tasting produce at more affordable prices than a supermarket.

Connect with Your Community:

The Farmers Market is a great place to gather and feel connected to your community. To find a local farmers market in your area visit: tinyurl.com/iowafarmersmarkets

Farmers Market Vouchers Available After June 1

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides qualified seniors aged 60 and over with vouchers to use at farmer's markets, roadside stands, and community-supported agriculture programs for unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey. Ten vouchers totaling \$50 are given to each eligible participant once each program year. The vouchers are valid through October 31. Eligible participants must:

- Be 60 years of age or older, born in or before 1964.
- Live in the NEI3A service area
- Gross household income (i.e., before taxes) must be no more than \$27,861 for a household size of 1 and \$37,814 for a household size of 2.

Applications will be mailed out by May 1. If you received an application for farmers market vouchers last year, you will be mailed an application this year. If you would like to download

an application, use your phone's camera to scan the QR code, visit our website <https://www.nei3a.org/our-services/farmers-market-checks.aspx>, or call 1-800-779-8707. You are only able to submit one application per year.



Good Gut Health

Did you know that your digestive system plays an essential role in your overall health? Nurturing a population of good gut bacteria is good for your health. What you eat may encourage the growth of good or bad bacteria. For example, avoiding processed foods, high-fat foods, and foods high in added sugars is important for maintaining a healthy gut. Eating high-fiber and fermented foods actively promotes the growth of good gut bacteria.

High-fiber foods are a good source of prebiotics. Prebiotics are the fuel for your good gut microbes. High-fiber foods include legumes, like black beans and chickpeas; whole grains, including whole wheat and oatmeal; vegetables; nuts; and fruits. Eating high-fiber foods may help build a strong immune system; improve



digestion, sleep, and brain health; and support heart health.

Fermented foods are great sources of probiotics. Probiotics are living friendly bacteria. The goal is for these helpful organisms to take up residence in your gut and replace other less helpful or even harmful bacteria. Fermented foods include yogurt, sauerkraut, kefir, and kimchi.

The Berry and Greens Smoothies recipe on the next page, has both high fiber and fermented foods. Bananas, frozen berries, and greens are high in fiber and yogurt is a fermented food; try it today!

*Sources: Healthline, www.healthline.com/health/gut-health
Tufts University Health and Nutrition Letter, nutritionletter.tufts.edu/*

Strategies to Help When Cooking for One or Two

1. Prepare Semi-homemade Meals. Semi-homemade is a combination of packaged foods and unprocessed foods. For example, you can use frozen stir-fry mix with canned chicken and instant rice. Grab a frozen chicken alfredo dinner and pair it with a salad and a cup of milk.
2. Choose Simple Recipes. You can make delicious meals with just 5 ingredients for a quick meal. Benefits of choosing simple recipes include that they are easy, they take less time to prepare, and there is less food waste.
3. Cut Recipes in Half. Cutting a large recipe in half is a great way to make cooking and preparation easier. Soups and casseroles are recipes that are easy to cut in half.
4. Use Canned and Frozen Food. Choosing canned or frozen food is a quick addition to any meal. Add canned chicken in a chicken salad sandwich or prepare frozen veggies by microwaving them. Canned and frozen food items are budget friendly, provide smaller portions, have a longer shelf life, and reduce food waste, making them just as nutritious as fresh food items.
5. Enjoy Leftovers. You can also cook once and enjoy a second meal later. Recipes serving more than two can be easily prepared, divided in half, and frozen to enjoy later. Sloppy Joes is an example of a recipe that freezes well.

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humanosciences/>



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Building Strong Support for Elders

June 15, 2024

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

Approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older are abused or neglected yearly. Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, financial, and sexual. It also includes neglected people and those who neglect themselves (self-neglect).

The offenders are not always strangers preying on the vulnerable – often, abuse comes from people seniors trust the most. Abusers may be spouses, family members, or professionals in a position of trust.

Elder abuse is often referred to as the "silent problem" because many people experiencing it are reluctant to report the abuse. Often they feel ashamed or embarrassed, afraid of their perpetrator or that the abuse will worsen if reported, and even guilty that they are somehow to blame. In some instances, they cannot speak out due to impairments.

It is up to all of us to stop elder abuse. Some signs to watch for include sudden changes in behavior, changes in spending or money management, unexplained physical injuries, and unhealthy or unsafe living conditions.

If you suspect mistreatment, contact your local adult protective services, long-term ombudsman, or law enforcement, who can investigate. If you have questions about local community resources, contact NEI3A at 1-800-779-8707.

Berry and Greens Smoothies

Serving Size: 8 ounces | Serves: 8

Ingredients:

- 2 medium bananas
- 2 containers (6 ounces each) nonfat vanilla yogurt
- 3 cups leafy greens, washed (kale or spinach)
- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen berries
- 1 cup nonfat milk

Directions:

1. Put bananas, yogurt, and greens in the blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Add berries to blender. Blend until smooth.
3. Add milk to blender. Blend until smooth.
4. Serve immediately or freeze in individual servings.



Nutrition information per serving:

100 calories, 0g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 50mg sodium, 23g total carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 12g total sugar, 4g protein

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

Powerful Tools FOR Caregivers

Empower yourself with the six-week Powerful Tools for Caregivers series, offering essential skills to manage stress, improve communication, and navigate challenging caregiving situations.

June 3 - July 8
Mondays 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Gutekunst Public Library
309 2nd Street SE, State Center, IA 50247

There is not cost to attend - thank you to the Gutekunst Public Library

Contact: Malisa Rader to register or for more information. Call 515-708-0622 or email mrader@iastate.edu



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Access free training and resources to help you build skills and confidence to provide care at home.



TRUALTA

Trualta is an online platform designed to help families build skills to manage care at home for their aging loved ones. Improve confidence, reduce stress and prevent burnout by learning care skills. Once you are registered, you have unlimited access to their articles and tips about caring for your loved one.

Trualta is really easy to use. All you will need to start is a computer, tablet, or smartphone. With lessons ranging from 5 minutes to 2 hours, Trualta makes it easy for you to fit caregiver training in whenever it works for you.



Register Today!
nei3a.trualta.com

Scan me with your camera to visit!



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- Reduce stress and potential family conflict



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Sudoku Puzzle

1		4	9					
				6		3	9	5
9	2			4				
		6	2				8	
				5	3		6	9
	4	9			5			1
					6			
		7			8			

Spring Word Find

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Allergies | Lilies |
| April | March |
| Baseball | May |
| Bees | New Leaves |
| Crocuses | Planting |
| Cyclamens | Rain |
| Daffodils | Renewal |
| Dandelions | Robins |
| Easter | Season |
| Equinox | Snowmelt |
| Flowers | Softball |
| Frogs | Spring Break |
| Golf | Spring Cleaning |
| Grass | Tulips |
| Green | Warmer |
| Growth | Wet |
| Irises | |

Source: Livewire Puzzles

T L E M W O N S S S A R G L A
 G C Y C L A M E N S A L I L P
 G N G R O W T H R L L L L R S
 O Y I I D L S A R A I E S N N
 L A L N K A I E B E R R O H E
 F M L O A N F E S G M I P W W
 E N A E E E S F I U L R R A L
 I O B Q R A L E O E C S A B E
 R S T U B E S C D D F O S W A
 I A F I G R N N G L I N R H V
 S E O N N R A E O N I L C C E
 E S S O I D E W W B I R S B S
 S I N X R G E E O A A R M E G
 A Y F L P R O R N M L W P E O
 E T E W S S P I L U T R S S R
 R E T S A E P L A N T I N G F

NEI Aging Today is published quarterly to entertain, educate, and inform our readers. The opinions expressed in NEI Aging Today do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Agency on Aging, its governing bodies, or Advisory Councils. Articles and other comments are welcome. NEI Aging Today reserves the right to publish all or part of material submitted. Deadline is the 10th of the month prior to printing.



In accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Aging Discrimination Act of 1975, it is the policy of Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging to provide services to all persons eligible under the provisions of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, or age.



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Supporting You in Your Caregiver Journey

Being a family caregiver can be stressful. We are here to help! Connect with our caregiver professionals and other caregivers to share experiences and learn about available resources at one of our support group options:

Attend Virtually:

Meet face-to-face with other caregivers each Monday from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. To join, click on the link on our website at www.nei3a.org/our-services/caregiver-resources or use your phone's camera to scan the QR code.

Meet In Person:

- **Decorah:** Third Monday of each month from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. at the Decorah Regional Office located at 607 Washington Street in Decorah. For more information contact Kelly Kuennen at 563-277-6024.
- **Dubuque:** Last Monday each month from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. NEI3A Office - 2728 Asbury Road in Dubuque. For more information, please contact Carol Hughey, at 563-587-4983.
- **Elkader:** Second Wednesday of each month from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Elkader Public Library - 130 N. Main Street in Elkader. For more information, please contact Kelly Kuennen at 563-277-6024.
- **Waterloo:** First Tuesday of each month from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Waterloo Regional Office located at 3840 W. 9th Street in Waterloo. For more information contact Anne Marie Kofta at 319-287-1166.



For more information call 1-800-779-8707