



The Senior Sentinel

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Happy Father's Day June 21st

What is and How Can I Qualify for Extra Help?

Extra Help is a federal program that helps people with limited incomes to pay the costs associated with Medicare prescription drug coverage (Medicare Part D). Extra Help is administered by the Social Security Administration. To qualify, you must meet income and asset guidelines that are determined by the federal government each year. If you are single in 2015, your monthly income must be below \$1,471 (\$1,991 for couples), and your assets must be up to \$13,640 (\$27,250 for couples) in order to qualify for Extra Help.

In order to have Extra Help, you must get your prescription drug coverage through Medicare Part D. You can get this coverage through a stand-alone Part D plan that works with Original Medicare, or through a Medicare Advantage plan that includes prescription drug coverage. Extra Help does not work with other forms of prescription drug coverage, such as coverage from an employer. If you do not have a Part D plan, Extra Help gives you a Special Enrollment Period to enroll in a Part D plan outside of typical enrollment periods.

Depending on your income and assets, you may qualify for either full or partial Extra Help. With either program, you will never have to pay the full cost of your drugs as long as you take medications that are on your plan's formulary—its list of covered drugs—and you buy them at a pharmacy in your plan's network. You also can use a mail-order pharmacy with Extra Help. Extra Help can also assist with your monthly Part D premium and annual deductibles.

Apply for Extra Help through the Social Security Administration. You can call the National Hotline at 800-772-1213, or visit your local Social Security office. You also can apply online at <http://www.ssa.gov/medicare/prescriptionhelp/>.

Know that some people may get Extra Help automatically; people who have a Medicare Savings Program, receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or have Medicaid all receive Extra Help.

If you do not qualify for Extra Help, your state may have a State Pharmaceutical Assistance Program (SPAP) that can assist with prescription drug costs. Eligibility requirements and program benefits may vary, depending on the program. Contact your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to see if there is one available in your state. To find your SHIP, visit www.shiptacenter.org or call 877-839-2675.

Berry Nutritious

Soon to be that time of the year when local berries are in season and ripe for the picking. From strawberries, available in June, to some varieties of raspberries and blueberries; that start in July and are available until the fall. Besides tasting great they are a nutritious enhancement to summer eating.

Strawberries: Members of the rose family and one of the most popular berries in the world. They are unique in that they are the only fruit to wear their seeds on the outside rather than the inside. Strawberries are rich in folate, potassium, and fiber. A serving of just 8 strawberries has more vitamin C than an orange. Strawberries are rich in antioxidants and phenolics and they are especially high in heart and cancer fighting flavonoids and anthocyanins. Studies have linked strawberries to improved circulation. In addition to that must have strawberry shortcake, add sliced strawberries to a salad, breakfast cereal, yogurt or blend into smoothies for added nutrition and taste.

Blueberries: Blueberries belong to a group of flowering plants. The 2 major types available in the U.S. are low bush or wild blueberries and high bush or cultivated blueberries. Although both types are highly nutritious, wild blueberries are more nutrient dense due to their small size and lower water content. Blueberries are rich in phytochemicals such as anthocyanins, phenolic acid and ellagic acid. Research studies are suggesting that the antioxidants in blueberries may boost brain functions that weaken with age. Blueberries may also help lower blood cholesterol levels. Like cranberries, blueberries contain compounds that prevent bacteria that cause urinary tract infections from clinging to the bladder wall. Blueberries are a good source of vitamin K which may play a role in preventing hardening of the arteries and osteoporosis. Toss some blueberries in your salad, cereal or yogurt. Eat them as a snack or make a pie or fresh delicious smoothie.

Raspberries: There are over 200 known species of raspberries that range in color from ruby red to black to less familiar yellow, orange and purple varieties. Raspberries are a good source of fiber, selenium, phosphorus and an excellent source of vitamin C. Like other berries, raspberries contain antioxidants and phytochemicals associated with fighting disease. Xylitol, a popular sugar alternative is made from raspberries. Raspberries are a great addition to a fruit smoothie. Consider making a shortcake using raspberries or making a sauce to not only top off waffles, pancakes or ice cream but to drizzle over grilled chicken. Fresh raspberries are delicious in cereal, yogurt, and salads.

Blackberries: Shrubs that also belong to the rose family. High in antioxidants as well as vitamin C, fiber, and phytochemicals that have anti cancer properties. Like blueberries, blackberries also deliver vitamin K to the diet. In addition to adding to cereal, yogurt and salads, blackberries are great for adding to cookies, bars and for making pies and jam.

The Fraud Corner **Prescription Shorting**

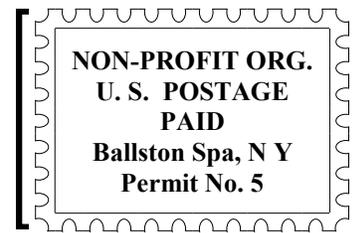
This is where a pharmacy routinely dispenses prescriptions a few pills short. In a large prescription the pharmacist hopes the beneficiary will not notice. If the pharmacist does this repeatedly, the pharmacy can steal a lot of money from Medicare because Medicare is billed for the full amount.

Although time-consuming, people with Medicare should consider counting their pills when they get a prescription to make sure they received the correct amount.

Remember—the toll-free number to report allegations of Medicare fraud and abuse is 1-877-678-4697.

Saratoga County Office for the Aging
152 West High Street
Ballston Spa, N. Y. 12020

Return Service Requested



*Saratoga County Office for the Aging is funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act,
New York State Office for the Aging, the County of Saratoga and local Municipalities*

Spring is here and so are ticks!

It's time to take precautions to protect yourself from ticks which can carry Lyme disease & other serious infections. Ticks become active as soon as the ground is no longer frozen & snow covered. Ticks can't fly or jump. They rest on vegetation & attach to a passing animal or person. Once on a body ticks often crawl & attach to the more hidden areas such as the groin, armpits and scalp.

The risk of exposure to ticks is greatest along trails in the woods & on the edges of properties with tall vegetation, but ticks may also be carried by animals & pets into lawns & gardens.

By following a few precautions when in wooded or grassy areas where ticks are more common you can decrease your chances of being bitten by a tick. Wear light colored clothing (to spot ticks) & tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants.

Check frequently for ticks on clothing or skin and brush them off before they attach. Also, check your children and pets for ticks. At the end of the day do a thorough tick check of your entire body, your children's bodies & pets bodies.

If using tick repellent follow the label's directions carefully.

Do NOT apply repellents directly on children. Apply to your own hands and then put it on the child.

Never apply to the hands of a small child.

Do NOT apply repellents near your nose, eyes or mouth.

When ticks are found attached to a body they should be removed immediately using fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible & then gently & steadily pull the tick straight out without twisting or squeezing. Then wash the area thoroughly and apply an antiseptic. NEVER use gasoline, kerosene, petroleum jelly or hot matches to remove ticks. Visit www.health.ny.gov/tickfree for more detailed instructions.

Saratoga County Public Health and the Office for the Aging Health Screening. There are no screenings scheduled for **July 2015**.