



# The Senior Sentinel



We will be closed on the following dates:  
Friday November 10th in observance of Veterans Day and  
Thursday and Friday November 23 & 24 in observance of Thanksgiving.  
To those who served and those who are serving, Thank You for Your Service!  
and to all of you Have a Very Happy Thanksgiving!



## Home Energy Assistance Program

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally funded program that *assists* low income households with the cost of heating their homes during the winter months. **The 2023- 2024 Regular HEAP program opens on November 1, 2023. Emergency HEAP will open on January 2, 2024.** The Saratoga County Department of Aging & Youth Services will be accepting applications for persons 60 years of age and older as well as those under 60 and are disabled. You may drop-off your application in person or send it by mail. Households that received a HEAP benefit last year will automatically be mailed an application for this year's program. If you would like to receive an application you may call the HEAP desk at (518) 884-4111. If *any member* of your household is on SNAP (formally known as food stamps), please contact your SNAP case worker at (518) 884-4155. The HEAP program provides a *once a year benefit* which is credited directly to your heating account. Regular benefit amounts are based upon the households gross monthly income and commodity used to heat your home.

This year's guidelines are as follows:

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$3,035
2	\$3,970
3	\$4,904

## When to join a Medicare Health or Drug Plan

You can only join, switch, or drop a Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C) or a Medicare Drug Plan (Part D) at certain times, called enrollment periods.

### Open Enrollment Period is:

**October 15th -December 7th**

During this time you can:

- Join, drop, or switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan (or add or drop drug coverage).
- Switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Join a Medicare drug plan if you're in Original Medicare.
- Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another if you're in Original Medicare.

### Coverage Starts:

**January 1st of the next year.**

### Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (only if you're already in a Medicare Advantage Plan)

Enrollment period is:  
January 1 - March 31

Within the first 3 months you get Medicare

During this time you can:

- Switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan with or without drug coverage
- Drop your Medicare Advantage Plan and go back to Original Medicare
- Join a Medicare Drug Plan.

### Coverage Starts:

**First of the month after the plan gets your request.**

For more information contact: Saratoga County Department of Aging and Youth Services at 518-884-4100

## Fill up on Fiber to Prevent and Manage Diabetes

November is Diabetes Awareness Month! When we think about Diabetes, we do not necessarily think about fiber however, fiber can have a big impact in the prevention and management of diabetes. While there are many contributing factors to developing diabetes, and not all types of Diabetes can be prevented, including more fiber in our diets is certainly beneficial to our health not only in diabetes prevention, but for weight control, heart health, bowel regularity and prevention of certain types of cancers.

While many plant based foods are a source of fiber and carbohydrates, they can have powerful impact in diabetes prevention. Recent studies looking at the consumption of legumes on development of diabetes showed risk reduction as high as 35% (lentils showed the highest risk reduction). Consumption of whole grain products suggest they may reduce insulin resistance and the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 20-30%.

### Carbohydrates and Diabetes

Sadly, when individuals at risk for diabetes learn that their blood sugar is high, they start slashing all carbohydrates from their diets, including the nutritious ones. While it makes sense to reduce the intake of highly processed, high sugar foods and beverages (like cake, cookies, candy and sweetened drinks that raise blood sugar and lead to weight gain), eliminating all carbohydrates from the diet may be counterproductive. High fiber carbohydrates such as shredded wheat, bran cereal, whole grain pasta, and brown rice can (and should) be included in your diet in moderation to provide adequate fiber as well as vitamins and minerals. As mentioned above, legumes such as lentils should also be consumed. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025 recommends that adults eat 22 to 34 grams of fiber each day, the specific amount will depend on your age and gender.

If you already have diabetes or prediabetes, fiber is your friend because it helps with blood sugar control and weight management. Because the body is unable to absorb and break down fiber, it doesn't cause a spike in blood sugar the way other carbohydrates can. This can help you keep your blood sugar in target range. Since fiber can't be digested, it moves slowly through the stomach, making you feel full for a longer period of time which can help you achieve your weight management goals. Many high fiber foods tend to be low in calories which can also help with weight loss and to lower insulin resistance.

There are two types of fiber and each has important health benefits and plays a different role in the body:

**Soluble Fiber** - This type dissolves in water and forms a gel-like substance in your stomach, slowing down digestion. It helps control your blood sugar and cholesterol, which can help prevent or manage diabetes complications. Soluble fiber is found in apples, bananas, oats, peas, black beans, lima beans, brussel sprouts, and avocados.

**Insoluble Fiber** - This type does not dissolve in water and typically remains whole as it passes through your stomach. It supports insulin sensitivity and helps keep your bowels healthy to keep you regular. Insoluble fiber is found in whole wheat flour, bran, nuts, seeds, and the skins of many fruits and vegetables.

### Tips to increase your fiber intake:

- **Have a fiber-friendly breakfast-** Try avocado toast topped with chickpeas, or make a bowl of oatmeal with nuts and berries.
- **Choose whole grains** - Look for bread that lists whole grain flour as the first ingredient. Swap out white rice for brown rice or quinoa. Try whole wheat pasta instead of regular pasta.
- **Focus on non-starchy vegetables** - Start dinners with a salad. Or, add spinach, broccoli, or a bag of frozen mixed vegetables to your meals for a fiber boost.
- **Add beans or other legumes** - Try adding legumes such as lentils and peas or different kinds of beans to salads, soups, stews, or casseroles.
- **Snack on fruit, vegetables, nuts, and seeds** - Choose fruits and vegetables to snack on. Keep almonds, sunflower seeds, and pistachios handy for a quick fiber-friendly snack.

Just remember to take it slow by adding a bit more fiber every few days. A sudden increase in fiber can lead to uncomfortable digestive problems such as bloating, gas, diarrhea, or cramps. Drink plenty of water to help food move easily through your system

## Crispy Peanut Butter Balls

### Ingredients

1/2 cup Natural peanut butter, almond butter or sunflower seed butter  
3/4 cup crispy rice cereal  
1 teaspoon pure maple syrup  
1/2 cup dark chocolate chips, melted

### Directions

Line a baking sheet with parchment or wax paper. Combine peanut butter, cereal and maple syrup in a medium bowl. Roll the mixture into 12 balls, using about 2 teaspoons for each. Place on the prepared baking sheet. Freeze the balls until firm, about 15 minutes.

Roll the balls in melted chocolate. Return to the freezer until the chocolate is set, about 15 minutes.

Refrigerate in an air tight container for up to 3 weeks.

*Tip:* To melt chocolate, microwave on medium for 1 minute. Stir, then continue microwaving on medium, stirring every 20 seconds, until melted. Or place chocolate in the top of a double boiler over hot, but not boiling water. Stir until melted.

Recipe from:

<https://www.eatingwell.com/gallery/8005520/easy-diabetes-friendly-dessert-recipes/>



## November is Diabetes Awareness Month

Diabetes is a serious disease, and it affects many older adults. People get diabetes when their blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. The good news is that you can take steps to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes, which is the most common form of the disease to develop in older adults. If you already have diabetes, there are steps you can take to manage the condition and prevent diabetes-related health problems.

### What is Diabetes?

Our bodies turn a lot of the food we eat into sugar, called glucose, which gives us energy. To use glucose as energy, our body needs insulin, a hormone that helps glucose get into our cells. If you have diabetes, your body may not make enough insulin, may not use insulin in the right way, or both. That can cause too much glucose to stay in the blood, which can cause health problems over time. Your family doctor may refer you to a doctor who specializes in taking care of people with diabetes, called an endocrinologist. Often, your family doctor will work directly with you to manage your diabetes.

### Types of Diabetes

There are two types of diabetes.

- In **Type 1 Diabetes**, the body does not make much insulin. Although older adults can develop this type of diabetes, it begins most often in children and young adults, who then have diabetes for life.
- In **Type 2 Diabetes**, the body does not make or use insulin well. It is the most common kind of diabetes. It occurs most often in middle-aged and older adults, but it can also affect children. Your chance of getting type 2 diabetes is higher if you are overweight, inactive, or have a family history of diabetes. Women with a history of gestational diabetes (a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy) also have a greater chance of developing type 2 later in life.

Diabetes can affect many parts of your body. It's important to manage diabetes because, over time, it can cause serious health problems like heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, eye problems and nerve damage that may lead to amputation. Also, people with type 2 diabetes may be at greater risk for cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

**Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes** - Symptoms of type 2 diabetes may include feeling tired, increased hunger or thirst, losing weight without trying, urinating often, or having trouble with blurred vision. You may also get skin infections or heal slowly from cuts and bruises. Some people with type 2 diabetes may not realize they have it because symptoms often develop slowly and go unnoticed. Sometimes older adults dismiss these symptoms as "getting old," but they can be signs of a serious problem. Talk with your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

**Managing type 2 diabetes** - Many people with type 2 diabetes can manage their blood glucose levels with diet and exercise alone. Others may need diabetes pills or insulin injections, along with medicines to manage other conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Over time a person with diabetes may need both lifestyle changes and medication. Once you have been told you have diabetes, a health care team will work with you to create a diabetes management plan. Your plan will be based on your lifestyle, preferences, health goals, and other health conditions you have.

For more information about diabetes:

American Diabetes Association 800-342-2383 [askada@diabetes.org](mailto:askada@diabetes.org) [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 800-232-4636 [cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov) [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

If you think you have Diabetes or need more information on how to manage your Diabetes, always contact your Doctor first.

Article from: NIH - National Institute on Aging You can read the entire article at [nia.nih.gov/health/diabetes-older-people](https://nia.nih.gov/health/diabetes-older-people)



## Beating the Holiday Blues

Many people tend to feel the loss of friends and family intensely during the holidays. We do see an increase in depression during this time for various reasons, says Geriatrician Dr. Manisha Perera. "Added to the stresses of daily life, the holidays create pressure on our time, finances and expectations of what the holidays should be."

Try taking a proactive approach to avoid the holiday blues and improving your physical and mental health, Dr. Perera suggests. Here are some strategies to consider:

- Resolve to make the best of the holidays but adjust your expectations and adopt realistic goals.
- Plan to visit relatives and friends, while taking precautions to protect your health.
- Can't get out, reach out to family and friends, through video calls, letters, holiday cards, emails and phone calls.
- Eat the right diet for your medical condition.
- Take a walk or just get outside for some fresh air, in addition to regular physical activity.
- Consider exploring a new activity or hobby, or teach someone else a craft you're skilled at.
- Consider volunteering to help others who need help.
- Limit screen time - A constant diet of bad news can create a high-level of anxiety that people may not even realize they're experiencing.

"These are examples of small changes and connections you can make that, over time, will make a difference in your outlook and overall health," says Dr. Perera. Your holidays may look different, they can still be meaningful. "Even if the holidays aren't what you'd like them to be, you are not alone," she adds. "Hold your memories close but try to embrace new ways to celebrate and most importantly, be kind to yourself."



Information taken from: <https://www.ucihealth.org/blog/2021/12/beating-the-holiday-blues>

## Tai Chi can help with Arthritis and Fall Prevention

Tai Chi is a low impact, slow-motion exercise, you go without pausing through a series of motions and as you move you breathe deeply and naturally. Tai Chi differs from other types of exercise in several respects. The movements are usually circular and never forced, the muscles are relaxed rather than tensed, the joints are not fully extended or bent, and connective tissues are not stretched. Tai Chi is very safe, and doesn't need any fancy equipment. Just dress comfortably in loose fitting clothes that don't restrict your range of motion. You can go barefoot or in light weight comfortable shoes with soles thin enough to allow you to feel the ground. Tai Chi can be easily adapted for anyone, from the most fit, to people confined to wheelchairs or recovering from surgery.

Although Tai Chi is slow and gentle and doesn't leave you breathless, it addresses the key components of fitness-muscle strength, flexibility, balance, and to a lesser degree, aerobic conditioning.

Check with your doctor. If you have a limiting musculoskeletal problem or medical condition - or if you take medications that can make you dizzy or lightheaded. Check with your doctor before starting Tai Chi. Given it's excellent safety record, chances are that you'll be encouraged to try it.

Classes can also be found at the YMCA and Senior Centers

There are also free online courses. Look at YouTube for Tai Chi for Seniors - Dr. Paul Lim



*Taken from an Article from Harvard Health Publishing - Harvard Medical School <https://health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi>*

## Does Medicare cover the RSV vaccine?

Earlier this year, the food and drug administration (FDA) approved the RSV vaccine. According to the centers for disease control and prevention, the RSV vaccine can help prevent lower respiratory tract disease caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV season varies from year to year, but usually starts in the fall and peaks in the winter. RSV can affect people of all ages but may be especially serious for infants and older adults.

Medicare Part D covers the RSV vaccine if it's recommended for you by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a government agency that gives advice about who should get certain vaccines. At this time, the RSV vaccine is recommended for adults over the age of 60.

There should be no cost to you to get this vaccine. This means your pharmacy shouldn't charge you a copay or deductible to get the RSV vaccine. If you have Medicare Part D, it should be free to you. If you have Medicare Part D and your doctor or pharmacy tries to charge you for the RSV vaccine, you should call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for help.

If you have non-Medicare drug coverage (like drug coverage from an employer or union), you should check to see its coverage rules for the RSV vaccine. Because it is a newer vaccine, it may not be listed on an insurance plan's list of covered drugs yet, so you should check with your plan before making an appointment. Remember that while the RSV vaccine is covered by Part D, your flu and covid-19 vaccines will still be covered by Part B.

*Article from Dear Marci September 2023 <dearmarci@medicarerights.org>*

## What's Happening in Youth Services...

Do you have children visiting your home for the holidays ?

Here are some fun activities to keep them busy at the holiday dinner table.

- Print out some placemats for kids with activities, games and pictures to color.
- Storytelling, at some point during the meal, allow the children to tell the story of the holiday in their own words. See how much they know about the Pilgrims, the Christmas Story or Santa's origins. Alternatively, allow children to read a special holiday tale from a favorite book to everyone gathered.
- Kids are usually finished eating first so have some card games at the ready to keep them entertained while everyone else finishes their meal.



When the meal is over there is always plenty to clean up, have the kids help out by clearing their plates from the table.

<https://www.thefoodieskitchen.com/2010/12/02/keeping-kids-entertained-at-holiday-meals/>