

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

MAKE 2007 YOUR HEALTHIEST YEAR

Did you know that you are more likely to change a behavior if you make a resolution? Let's start the New Year right and make a commitment for a long-term change. Five ways to make the New Year a healthier one are:

Exercise regularly to lower your risk of diseases, reduce depression and boost self-esteem. Just 30 minutes a day will do the trick. The following list is just a few places to get moving: YMCA of Greensburg 724-834-0150, Ligonier Valley YMCA 724-238-7580, Valley Points Family YMCA 724-335-9191, Mon Valley YMCA 724-483-8077, The Aerobic Center 724-834-2153, and Redstone Highlands 724-864-5811.

Quit smoking. It's the number one cause of preventable cancers and other health problems. For ways on kicking the habit, talk to your physician or visit the American Lung

Association's website at www.lungusa.org.

Get a physical annually and ask your doctor what you can do now to help prevent disease later on.

Protect your skin. The sun's rays even reflect off winter ice and snow, so slather on SPF year-round.

Eat right. Instead of relying on takeout or fast food, fill your plate with colorful fruits and veggies for a healthy meal. For food and nutrition information or for a referral to a dietetics professional in your area, call 1-800-366-1655 or visit www.eatright.org.

VISION SENSE

People use vision more than any other sense to live actively and independently. Everyone experiences subtle changes in vision as he or she ages. Most of these changes, if managed properly, result in few or no adjustments in people's lifestyles.

Many older people can't focus on objects that

are close by. This problem (called presbyopia) is usually corrected with bifocal glasses or contact lenses. Many also can't see well at night. They must keep their eyeglass prescriptions up-to-date and use caution at night, especially when driving.

Other more dramatic changes in vision can result in major loss of independence if not treated properly. Cataracts and glaucoma are two major eye diseases for which older people are at special risk. Cataracts, the leading cause of vision loss among older people, can usually be treated through surgery. Cataracts cause a gradual, painless loss of vision. People who have glaucoma lose their side or peripheral vision first, then gradually their total vision. In most cases, once glaucoma is detected, it can be controlled or its progression slowed with special eye drops. There are some older adults at even higher risk of getting glaucoma than others, including people on cortisone medication and people with

diabetes, eye injuries or family members with the disease.

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging operates a vision center for seniors located at Westmoreland Manor in Greensburg. Seniors age 60 and older, who reside in Westmoreland County, can schedule Wednesday or Thursday examinations done by a licensed optometrist and include cataract and glaucoma screenings. Eyeglasses are available yearly for patients whose prescription changes; otherwise, eyeglasses are available every two years. The fee for services is based on income of the individual or couple. For additional information, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4444 or toll-free at 1-800-442-8000.

WINTER SKIN

Sun exposure or cold, dry air can cause skin to become dehydrated. Dry skin is more common in the winter because the air contains less humidity. Your skin may be rough, itchy, red, and flaky or feel tighter. In severe cases, skin may crack and bleed, especially on the hands and fingertips. Here are a few things you can do to relieve dry skin:

- Over-the-counter lotions can relieve dryness and flaking. The best time to apply lotion is immediately after a shower or

bath, when skin is still damp. Or try a body cream that contains oil to help seal in moisture.

- Avoid antibacterial and deodorant soaps, which can be harsh and drying. Instead, use a gentle cleanser or a mild shower gel with added moisturizers.
- Don't take extremely hot baths, or shower or soak in the tub for more than ten minutes. Doing so breaks down your skin's natural protective oils, which keep it soft and smooth.
- Use a humidifier during the winter. Central heating and space heaters can dry out the air in your home.
- Choose natural, breathable fabrics, such as cotton and silk, for your bedding and innermost layer of clothing.
- Drink plenty of water and other liquids to keep skin hydrated from the inside out. Omega-3 (essential fatty acid found in foods such as salmon, walnuts, flaxseed, soybeans and broccoli) can also help keep skin supple.
- Apply SPF 15 or higher every day to your face, neck and ears, since dry skin is

extra sensitive to the sun's rays, especially if it is snowing. Snow can reflect as much as 80 percent of the sun's rays.

- See a dermatologist if you have any of the following skin conditions: Open sores, large areas of scaling or peeling skin, or infection from scratching. You could have a more serious condition such as eczema, psoriasis or another skin disorder.

For more information, contact the American Academy of Dermatology at 866-503-7546 or log on to www.aad.org.

SYMPHONY TICKETS AVAILABLE

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra's "American Traditions!" on Saturday, March 10, 2007. The concert is at the Palace Theatre in downtown Greensburg at 8:00 p.m.

Copeland's ballet, *Billy the Kid*, chronicles the life of one of the most famous outlaws in the history of the Wild West, while Schuller masterfully combines jazz and symphonic orchestra, featuring Trio Bravo. Both composers are Pulitzer Prize winners! And finally, Dvorak's *Symphony No. 6* will be sure to send you

home in high spirits,
humming Bohemian tunes!

Tickets will be distributed by a random drawing. Please send your request with the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Number of tickets requested (1 or 2) and
- A self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
Jean Healey
Area Agency on Aging200
S. Main Street
Greensburg, PA 15601

Your request must be postmarked no later than February 7, 2007. You must be a Westmoreland County resident age 60 or older to receive these tickets. Transportation is not provided.

HEART FACTS

by The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute

The heart works 24 hours a day, pumping oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to the body. Blood is supplied to the heart through its coronary arteries. In coronary heart disease (CHD), plaques or fatty substances build up inside the walls of the arteries. The plaques also attract blood components, which stick to the artery wall lining, called atherosclerosis. The process develops gradually, over many years. It often

begins early in life, even in childhood.

The fatty buildup or plaque can break open and lead to the formation of a blood clot that seals the break. The clot reduces blood flow. The cycle of fatty buildup, plaque rupture, and blood clot formation causes the coronary arteries to narrow, reducing blood flow.

When too little blood reaches the heart, the condition is called ischemia. Chest pain, or angina, may occur. The pain can vary in occurrence and be mild and intermittent, or more pronounced and steady. It can be severe enough to make normal everyday activities difficult. The same inadequate blood supply also may cause no symptoms, a condition called silent ischemia.

If a blood clot suddenly cuts off most or all blood supply to the heart, a heart attack results. Cells in the heart muscle that do not receive enough oxygen-carrying blood begin to die. The more time that passes without treatment to restore blood flow, the greater the damage to the heart.

A heart attack is a frightening event, and you probably don't want to think about it. But, if you learn the signs of a heart attack and what steps to take, you can save a life – maybe your own.

Many heart attacks start slowly, as a mild pain or discomfort. If you feel such

a symptom, you may not be sure what's wrong. Your symptoms may even come and go. Even those who have had a heart attack may not recognize their symptoms because the next attack can have entirely different ones. Warning signs of a heart attack are:

- **Chest discomfort** in the center of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body**, which can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** comes along with chest discomfort. But it also can occur before chest discomfort.
- **Other symptoms** may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.

You can reduce your risk of having a heart attack even if you already have coronary heart disease (CHD) or have had a previous heart attack. The key is to take steps to prevent or control your heart disease risk factors. The six key steps to reduce your risk of having a heart attack are:

- **Stop smoking**
- **Lower high blood pressure**
- **Reduce high blood cholesterol**
- **Aim for a healthy weight**
- **Be physically active each day**
- **Manage diabetes**

For more information regarding heart disease, contact the local Westmoreland American Heart Association at 724-837-5468 or online at www.americanheart.org

SEARCHING FOR A JOB?

If you are 55 years of age or older, a resident of Westmoreland County, and your income falls within our guidelines, you may be eligible for our training program.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at Westmoreland County Community College enrolls low-income older adults to update old skills or get training in new skills, allowing you to earn while you learn in preparation for re-entering the job market. All positions earn \$5.15 per hour, 20 hours per week.

For more information, please call Mimi Owens 724-925-4098 or Rebecca Dunn 724-925-4231 or toll-free at 1-800-262-2103 and ask for the Lifelong Learning Center.

Available Training Positions

Clerical Trainee – Office work, familiarity with office machines helpful but not required. Primary duties may include receptionist activities, copying and collating materials for mass mailings, assisting with fundraising activities, and maintaining information areas. Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

Dietary Aide – Must be knowledgeable in minimal food preparation techniques and have the ability to work with senior citizens.

Docent – Training provided in archiving, researching and preserving local history.

Library Aides – Positions available throughout Westmoreland County. Individuals should possess an inquisitive, helpful attitude.

Maintenance/Groundskeeper – Positions available throughout Westmoreland County.

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