

WESTMORELAND COUNTY

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

INSIDE LINE

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION

Digital television is coming February 17, 2009: Are you ready? Do you have a television at home that works with the help of "rabbit ears" or a rooftop antenna? Television broadcasting is moving from an old standard – "analog" – to a new standard – "digital". All analog televisions getting programming through an antenna will need to be plugged into a special television converter to receive digital broadcasts.

The converter option is not for everyone. Most people have television sets connected to cable, satellite, or other pay television service. And, if you purchased a television within the last five years, chances are that you have a television with a digital tuner. Converters will not be needed for these sets. Therefore, only an older set not connected to a television service is a good candidate for a converter.

Starting January 1, 2008, each household in America can request up to two coupons from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to use toward the purchase of certain converters. Each coupon is worth \$40 and the coupon expires 90 days after they are issued.

Requests will only be taken beginning January 2008 by calling 1-888-388-2009 or visiting www.dtv.gov. Although February 2009 might sound like a long way off, it's not too early to start preparing.

HEALTHFUL LIVING

by American Dietetic Association

There is no time like a New Year to invest in your health. For 2008, follow these goal-setting steps to start eating smarter and moving more.

- **Watch your food choices and lifestyle.** Keep track of what you eat or drink, along with how

much, when and why. Do you snack when you feel stressed or bored? Start a food diary to determine the eating behaviors you want to change.

- **Set realistic personal goals.** Do you want a healthier weight or lower cholesterol? Remember smaller portions, different ways of cooking or being more physically active give you ways to occasionally enjoy foods with more calories.
- **Design a plan for change.** Divide big goals into smaller ones. Instead of "I will eat better", try "I will eat more fruit each day". Write down practical steps you can take to achieve your goals.
- **Re-evaluate your plan every month or two.** Monitor how the changes you're making fit with your goals, and make

additional changes as needed.

- **Be patient.** Changes that last take time, commitment and encouragement. Most health goals take a lifelong commitment. Stick with your plan and remember that small steps toward reaching your goal add up over time. If you get off track, pick up where you left off and start again. Seek help from a qualified health professional. A registered dietitian is your best source of reliable and up-to-date food and nutrition information, with the skills to translate science into practical advice you can use.

To obtain more information, go to the American Dietetic Association Website at www.eatright.org.

NATIONAL THYROID AWARENESS MONTH

One in ten Americans suffer from thyroid disease and half remain undiagnosed. In order to educate the public about the prevalence of thyroid disease, the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists has set aside the month of January for its annual thyroid awareness campaign.

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland located in the front base of

the neck that makes hormones to regulate physiological functions in the body. Its main purpose is to manufacture the thyroid hormone, which regulates the rate at which your body carries on its necessary functions; breathing, metabolism, heart rate, digestion, muscle and bone strength and cholesterol levels. The most common thyroid diseases are hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism that affect millions of Americans. There are no preventive measures; however, they are typically easily treated.

Hypothyroidism is a deficient activity of the thyroid gland, resulting in a lowered metabolic rate and general loss of vigor. Symptoms include: weakness; fatigue and drowsiness; intolerance to cold; constipation; unintentional weight gain; depression; joint stiffness and pain or muscle pain and spasms; thin, brittle fingernails and hair; and paleness. Late symptoms of the disease include slow speech; dry flaky skin; thickening of the skin; puffy face, hands and feet; decreased taste and smell; thinning of eyebrows; hoarseness and abnormal menstrual periods. Hypothyroidism is not curable but can be treated with lifelong medication.

Hyperthyroidism is excessive functional activity of the thyroid gland, resulting in increased

metabolic rate, enlargement of the thyroid gland, rapid heart rate and high blood pressure. Symptoms include: weight loss; increased appetite; nervousness and restlessness; intolerance to heat; increased sweating; fatigue; frequent bowel movements or diarrhea; menstrual irregularities; goiter (visibly enlarged thyroid); difficulty sleeping; rapid pulse; nausea and vomiting; high blood pressure; and protruding eyes.

Hyperthyroidism is treated depending on the severity of the symptoms. Sometimes medication and/or radioactive iodine are sufficient; other times, surgery is necessary to remove the thyroid.

TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR "NORDIC KNIGHTS"

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra's "Nordic Nights" concert on **Saturday, March 8, 2008** at 8:00 p.m. at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg.

This performance features David Allen Wehr on piano. Musical selections include Arrington's "Gilead", Greig's "Piano Concerto in A Minor", and "Symphony No. 2" by Sibelius.

Tickets will be distributed by a random

drawing. Please send your request with the following information:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Number of tickets (1 or 2)
- Self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
Jean Healey

Westmoreland County
Area Agency on Aging
200 S. Main Street

Greensburg, PA 15601-3110

Your request **must** be postmarked no later than February 6, 2008. You must be a Westmoreland County resident age 60 or older to receive these tickets.

WHAT IS AN OMBUDSMAN?

Ombudsman is a Swedish word meaning Citizen Representative. The Westmoreland County Long-Term Care Ombudsman answers questions, investigates complaints about quality of care or treatment of a long-term care provider, and offers assistance in resolving problems. If you or someone you know has a question, problem or complaint regarding long-term care, please feel free to contact your local Ombudsman by calling the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4444, 724-684-3141, 1-800-442-8000 or 1-800-339-9454.

AEROBIC CENTER NEWS

- **January 30, 2008** – The Aerobic Center Health Fair “Getting Older and Getting Better”. Informative booths, demonstrations, giveaways, door prizes, and light refreshments. 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- **February 13, 2008** – Senior/Silver Sneakers® Covered Dish Luncheon. Speaker to be announced. Begins at noon.

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 the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) at Westmoreland County Community College. For more information, please call Mimi Owens or Rebecca Dunn at 724-925-4066 or toll-free at 1-800-262-2103.

Available Training Positions

Clerical Trainee – Primary duties may include receptionist activities, copying and collating materials for mass mailings, assisting with fundraising activities, performing data entry, and maintaining information areas.

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

Library Aide – Individuals should possess an inquisitive, helpful attitude.

Maintenance/Groundskeeper – Custodial, painting, and outdoor work.

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