

# WESTMORELAND COUNTY

## AREA AGENCY ON AGING

# INSIDE LINE

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

### JOB TRAINING

If you are 55 years of age or older, a resident of Westmoreland County, and your income falls within the 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.

### FOODS THAT FIGHT CANCER

There's no denying that cancer is scary. It strikes without prejudice, affecting men and women of all ages, races and body shapes. And even if you're doing your best to lead a healthy life (you don't smoke and you exercise regularly), it's hard to know if you're really doing enough.

Some risk factors, such as your family history or ethnicity, can't be changed. But preliminary research is finding that

eating certain foods may help reduce your risk of certain cancers. While many experts are quick to point out that the evidence linking foods and cancer prevention is incomplete, others are eager to tell you what they know and let you be the judge.

- Whole grains help fight all cancers. The term "whole grain" means that all three parts of the grain kernel (the germ, bran and endosperm) are being used. Refined grains usually remove the bran and germ, leaving only the not-as-good-for-you endosperm. The USDA recommends that you eat three or more ounce equivalents (a slice of bread or a bowl of breakfast cereal equals about one ounce) of whole-grain products a day.
- Green tea helps fight leukemia, esophageal, stomach and other

cancers. Green tea contains powerful antioxidants called catechins, which have been used in research to shrink cancer cells. The jury is still out, but drinking green tea is not going to hurt you, especially if it replaces soda or other less nutritious drinks in your diet. Buy green tea leaves or bags and brew it yourself rather than the bottled tea, which contains excessive amounts of sugar. Decaf green tea is just as beneficial as caffeinated.

- Dairy foods help fight colon cancer. Eating foods that contain calcium has always been an essential part of a healthy diet. The calcium may bind to irritants (such as stomach bile acids or some fats) and prevent them from irritating the colon or rectum, or it might have an effect directly

on the lining of the bowel. Of course, there is no substitute for regular colon cancer screenings.

Add three servings of calcium-rich foods (a cup of milk, an 8-oz container of yogurt and a few cubes of cheese) to your daily diet. And ask your doctor if you might benefit from taking a calcium supplement.

- Soy helps fight breast cancer. A study found a possible link between soy consumption and reduced breast cancer risk in both premenopausal and postmenopausal women. Soy contains phytoestrogens, which have biologic activity and can interact with human estrogen. Japanese women have one of the highest rates of consumption of soy and one of the lowest rates of breast cancer. Soy can replace red meat as a source of protein in your diet. Use soy milk in your coffee and cereal.
- Broccoli helps fight ovarian cancer. Broccoli's reputation as a nutritional powerhouse only seems to grow the more it's studied. Like other cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, watercress and

cauliflower) broccoli contains isothiocyanates, a plant chemical that fights carcinogens. Plan on adding one cup of raw or steamed broccoli to your diet every day.

- Tomatoes help fight prostate cancer. The lycopene found in tomatoes is one of the most potent antioxidants found in food. Researchers believe it may not be the lycopene alone that fights the cancer, but the interaction between it and the other components in tomatoes. Men should try to eat at least two tomato-based sauces and stews each week.
- Red chiles help fight pancreatic cancer. The part of the chile that makes it hot, called capsaicin may help fight pancreatic cancer. Capsaicin inhibits the growth of pancreatic cancer cells while not affecting normal cells. Red chile peppers also have antioxidant properties and contain vitamin C. Include one half to one whole red chile pepper as part of your daily vegetable requirement. Use them in cooking as a healthy way to add flavor.

- Fish, egg yolks and dairy foods help fight lung cancer. When scientists noticed that patients who had their lung cancer surgery in the summer months were more than twice as likely to be alive five years later than those who had their surgery in the winter, they connected the improved survival rate to vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. Vitamin D inhibits the growth of tumor vessels and prevents the spread of tumor cells. Of course, if you smoke, the best way to prevent lung cancer is to quit – eight out of ten cases of lung cancer are due to smoking. A good way to get vitamin D is through 20 minutes of daily sun exposure, but your ability to produce the vitamin this way decreases as you age. Try to eat foods rich in vitamin D, such as salt-water fish, egg yolks and vitamin D-fortified dairy foods.
- Black raspberries help fight oral cancer. As a rule of thumb, the deeper and darker its color, the more nutritional the food. These berries contain high levels of cancer-inhibiting compounds such as vitamins A, C and E, folic acid,

calcium and zinc. They also contain ellagic acid and anthocyanin, which have been shown to slow tumor growth and reduce the size of tumors in laboratory rats. This is one food that is beneficial in any amount. Have a handful of black raspberries with low-fat yogurt instead of ice cream for dessert. Or add a half cup to your morning cereal.

Foods to avoid include processed and red meats, refined carbohydrates, alcohol and fried foods, which all may increase your risk for cancer. Choose chicken, fish or soy, fresh fruits and vegetables instead. And don't forget the exercise: Adults should be moderately active for 30 minutes, five days a week. That means being able to walk one mile in about 15 to 20 minutes.

### **BLACK TEA BOOSTS IMMUNITY**

People who consumed five cups of black tea a day for one week had five times more germ fighting proteins in their blood than they did before they started to drink tea.

The theory is that the immune-boosting capacity of black tea is derived from L-theanine, an amino acid that is found in black tea as well as other nonherbal teas.

Regularly drinking just two cups a day may confer many of the same benefits. Because tea can reduce absorption of iron, people with iron-deficiency anemia should be sure to limit their intake of tea

### **NATIONAL SENIOR CENTER MONTH**

The National Council on Aging reminds us that September is National Senior Center Month. The senior center as we know it today was first introduced in New York City in 1943 to provide social activities, nutritious meals and case management to adults aged 60 and older, particularly those with low income. Sixty-six years later, senior centers are recognized as one of the most widely utilized services supported by the Older Americans Act of 1965. An estimated 15,000 centers are helping millions of older adults from all walks of life continue to thrive in their communities.

Today's senior centers are evolving to reflect a new view of aging that empowers the people they serve. They're connecting older adults with meaningful work and volunteer opportunities, and increasing their access to valuable benefits and resources. Through evidenced-based programs, they're helping them manage their health and finances so they can continue to live in their homes as long as possible. Senior centers work!

Drop in soon at one of our senior centers in Westmoreland County to check out the benefits of social and educational activity, exercise and health promotion instruction, assistance with benefits, a hot meal or a table game, cards, pool, and special speakers. If you're looking for any or all of these opportunities, join us soon!

Looking for a volunteer opportunity? Your local senior center can always use an extra hand in the kitchen, answering the phone, instructing a class, making crafts, organizing a party! This is just to name a few of the many gratifying volunteer opportunities available. Call your local center for details!

### **AUTUMN HUES**

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that tickets are available for the Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra's "Autumn Hues" concert on Saturday, October 24, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg.

This performance features trumpeter, Brandon Ridenour. Musical selections include Glinka's "Overture to Russian and Ludmilla," Hummel's "Trumpet Concerto" and Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 5."

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 September 25, 2009. You must be a Westmoreland County resident age 60 or older to receive these tickets.

### **MINI PUMPKIN TARTS**

Try the signature autumn flavor of pumpkin in a fun new way with these bite-size tarts. They're easy to make, even easier to eat, and make a great treat for any fall party. No baking required!

- 3 packages (15 tarts each) prebaked frozen mini pastry shells (Athens Mini Fillo Shells)
- 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin
- 2 cups (plus extra for garnish) frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 teaspoon (plus extra for garnish) pumpkin pie spice
- 1 (3.4-ounce) package cheesecake-flavor

instant pudding and pie filling

- Mint leaves (for garnish)

Remove the shells from the freezer and let them thaw at room temperature for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the pumpkin, whipped topping, and pumpkin pie spice in a medium bowl, whisking until smooth. Add the pudding mix and whisk until smooth and thick. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of the filling into each of the shells (you can also pipe the filling with a pastry bag or a plastic sandwich bag with one corner snipped off), then top the tarts with whipped topping, a sprinkling of the pumpkin pie spice, and a mint leaf, if you like. Recipe makes 45 tarts.

### **2009 HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO OCTOBER 28, 2009**

The Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging, Westmoreland Casemanagement & Supports, Inc., Westmoreland Community Action, and the Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners are proud to sponsor the 2009 HEALTH AND EDUCATION EXPO. Caregivers, seniors, persons with disabilities and the general public are welcome to attend.

There will be many activities, free health

screenings and information, light refreshments, free parking and a live radio broadcast by 1480 WCNS. A variety of vendors are participating, providing their assistance and information to address every health and care issue imaginable. Those attending will have access to a stroke screen, bone density screen, blood pressure, breathing screen, body fat analysis, oxygen levels, vision, hearing and glaucoma screens, spinal screen, massages, reiki and nutrition information – ALL FOR FREE. Flu shots will be available at no charge with certain health plans, although some people may be charged depending on their Medicare and supplemental health plan coverage. Please be prepared with cash or check if yours' is not one of the accepted insurance plans.

Mark your calendar for:  
Wednesday, October 28  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Four Points Sheraton  
Greensburg

Come anytime, stay as long as you like and bring a friend. No pre-registration is required.

Need a ride???  
Seniors age 60 and older can use senior transportation with a one-day advance reservation through their local taxi company.

The Westmoreland County Transit Authority (WCTA) offers reduced-fare bus trips as follows:

- Free pass for riders over age 65
- ½ fare for people with disabilities.
- ½ fare for people with a Medicare card but not yet 65.

For WCTA information, call 724-834-9282 or 1-800-221-9282. You don't want to miss this once-a-year OPPORTUNITY to obtain all this valuable information in one place. For more details, contact the Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4444 or 1-800-442-8000.

## **NURSING HOME TRANSITION**

Nursing Home Transition is a program in Pennsylvania which assists people to move from a nursing facility to a community setting with the assistance of home and community-based services. Support is available for those individuals who wish to return to their own homes or live independently in an apartment or other community setting.

Long Term Living Counseling is available to all interested consumers. Counselors will visit nursing facility residents and provide information and guidance to consumers and families.

Although 24-hour care is not available, a Personal Response System can be provided and used for assistance in serious emergencies. If eligible, services may include:

- Adult Day Care
- Environmental Modifications
- Home-Delivered Meals
- Housing Assistance & Relocation
- Personal Care
- Medical Services & Equipment
- Nursing & Therapeutic Services
- Respite Care for Caregivers

Consumers age 60 and over can obtain more information about the program or make a referral by calling the Westmoreland County Area Agency on Aging at 724-830-4444 or 1-800-442-8000. Consumers age 18 to 59 should contact the Three Rivers Center for Independent Living at 412-371-7700 or 1-800-633-4566.

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