



Rockland County  
AGING

# MOVING FORWARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING  
ED DAY, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

CHERYL DEAN WARD, DIRECTOR

MARCH / APRIL 2026

## OFFICE FOR THE AGING UPCOMING EVENTS



**March 11 - 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.**

**Nutrition Presentation** (registration required)

March is National Nutrition Month and Office for the Aging's dietician will give a presentation on the month's theme, "Discover the Power of Nutrition." The theme emphasizes how making informed food choices and building sustainable healthy habits can fuel daily life while empowering communities to thrive both now and in the future.

## SAVE THE DATES!

**NY Connects Presentations** - Rockland County Office for the Aging offers brief presentations of their programs and services. There will be an informational table and NY Connects representative to answer questions afterward.

**April 16 - 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.**  
Finkelstein Memorial Library  
845-352-5700 x228

**April 29 - 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.**  
Suffern Free Library  
845-357-1237

### April-May - Technology Classes for Older Adults

The Office for the Aging partners with BOCES to provide informative sessions for Rockland County adults, 60 and over, to learn more about their hand-held devices. *Dates and times to be determined.*

**Call the OFA for information (845) 364-2100**



### A Fresh Start for Spring

This season of renewal is a perfect opportunity to refocus on our well-being and enjoy the vibrant community connections available to us all. I wish you a healthy, active, and inspired season as we welcome the warmer days ahead.

All the best,

*Ed*

*Ed Day,*

*Rockland County Executive*



**Meet the Rockland County Office for the Aging's Volunteer Consultant, Mellanie Nguyen.** Mellanie supports the Rockland Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), a vital initiative that connects older adults with meaningful volunteer opportunities throughout the community. In her role, she helps strengthen the program through outreach, recruitment, and onboarding of new volunteers. RSVP continues to make a meaningful impact countywide by engaging seniors in service activities that support nonprofits, enrich local programs, and enhance the well being of older adults.

## Stay Informed! Join our email list

**SCAN** the QR code below,  
give us a call at **845-364-2110**,  
or email us at  
**ofa@co.rockland.ny.us**



The Rockland County Office for the Aging is a County agency funded under the U.S. Older Americans Act, the N.Y. State Office for the Aging, and the County of Rockland. The County of Rockland does not discriminate on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, prior non-job related record of conviction, race, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, military status or other legally protected status.

Visit us online at: [www.rocklandcountyny.gov/departments/office-for-the-aging](http://www.rocklandcountyny.gov/departments/office-for-the-aging)

# News From the OFA!



Director Cheryl Ward

As winter gives way to spring, we look forward to longer days, warmer weather, and the joy of upcoming holidays that bring families and communities together. This season is a wonderful reminder of renewal and connection, values we hold dear at the Office for the Aging.

Our social support programs continue to provide vital resources for older adults, from transportation and meal services to wellness activities that foster independence and engagement. Be sure to explore social engagement activities at one of our five senior centers, operated by Meals on Wheels, funded through OFA. We encourage everyone to take

advantage of the programs offered to Rockland's older adults.

March is National Nutrition Month, and we're excited to host a special nutrition presentation on March 11. This event will offer practical tips for healthy eating and maintaining wellness as we age; don't miss it!

April brings National Volunteer Month, a time to celebrate those who give so generously of their time and talents. We are pleased to share that Congressman Lawler has introduced an effort to designate 2026 as the Year of the Volunteer, underscoring the importance of service in our communities. Locally, we will honor our volunteers at the Volunteer Recognition Breakfast in April, where we will also recognize our Senior of the Year and Outstanding Senior, individuals who exemplify dedication and leadership.

Looking ahead, our senior award winners will be attending a recognition ceremony at our state capital, Albany, on Older New Yorkers' Day, May 26.

Spring is a season of growth and gratitude. Let's embrace it together by staying active, engaged and connected.

We look forward to seeing you this spring! For more information or to register for upcoming events, please call (845) 364-2100 or email [OFA@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:OFA@co.rockland.ny.us).

*Cheryl Dean Ward*

*Director, Rockland County Office for the Aging*



**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

NY Connects is a service that provides information and assistance about long-term services and supports in Rockland County. This includes a child or an adult with a disability, an older adult, a family member or caregiver, a friend or neighbor, and helping professionals.

**A NY CONNECTS SPECIALIST CAN BE REACHED BY PHONE AT 845-364-3444**



County Executive Ed Day and OFA Director Cheryl Ward at our Foster Grandparent presentation.



OFA's Foster Grandparent presentation.



OFA staff attended the Professional Aging Networking monthly meeting in Orangeburg.



DIY Energy Savings Session with Cornell Cooperative Extension and Orange & Rockland Utilities.

# HIICAP Medicare Assistance Programs

## Medicare Savings Program

The Medicare Savings Program (MSP) helps individuals with limited income pay for Medicare expenses. At a minimum, the program covers your Medicare Part B premium and automatically enrolls you in Extra Help (see below). Depending on your eligibility level, MSP may also assist with deductibles and copayments. Enrolling in an MSP can save you more than \$8,400 per year in healthcare costs. If your monthly income is below \$2,446 (individual) or \$3,299 (couple), contact us to see if you qualify. *Please note: these income guidelines are expected to be updated in the coming months.*

## Extra Help

Extra Help is a federal program administered by the Social Security Administration that supports older adults with limited income and resources. Current income limits are \$2,015 (individual) and \$2,725 (couple), with asset limits of \$18,090 (individual) and \$36,100 (couple). This benefit can eliminate your Prescription Drug Plan premium and significantly reduce prescription copayments. You can apply online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

## Medicare Preventive Services

Medicare covers a broad range of preventive services at 100%, meaning no out-of-pocket cost to you. These preventive benefits are designed to identify health concerns early and support ongoing wellness.

Examples of covered services include:

- Annual wellness visits
- Select cancer screenings
- Depression screenings

- Diabetes prevention and management programs
- HIV screenings
- Smoking cessation counseling

For a full list of preventive services covered by Medicare, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

## EPIC

EPIC (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage) is New York State's Pharmaceutical Assistance Program. It helps eligible residents reduce Prescription Drug Plan premiums and prescription copayments. Income eligibility extends to individuals earning up to \$75,000 per year and couples earning up to \$100,000 per year. For more information about how EPIC may work for you, please contact HIICAP.

We are happy to provide free eligibility screenings for these programs. If you are having trouble with Medicare-related expenses, contact HIICAP at (845) 364-2118 or email [ofa@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:ofa@co.rockland.ny.us).


## Reminder: Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment ends March 31

If you are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan and feel your coverage is not meeting your needs, you may make a change through March 31.

During this enrollment period, you can:

- Switch from one Medicare Advantage Plan to another
- Return to Original Medicare and enroll in a Prescription Drug Plan
- Add a Supplemental (Medigap) plan


If you would like help reviewing your coverage options, our counselors are here to assist you.



**NAMI Rockland**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

## Mental Health

**Online Support Group Meeting for Adults 55+**



**A Safe, Understanding Space for Connection and Hope**


*Are you an adult aged 55 or older seeking a supportive community that understands the unique challenges of mental health?*

NAMI Rockland invites you to join our confidential, virtual Support Group—a dedicated space to share, listen, and gain valuable resources alongside peers.

Register at: <https://bit.ly/55seniors>

**Third Monday of the Month**


**4PM - 5:30PM**



**NAMI Rockland**  
National Alliance on Mental Illness

## Mental Health

**Online Support Group Seniors with Adult Children**



**A Safe, Understanding Space for Connection and Hope**

*Are you a 60+ parent of an adult child who has mental health concerns?*

NAMI Rockland invites you to join our confidential, virtual Support Group.

Register at: [bit.ly/parentsofadultchildren](https://bit.ly/parentsofadultchildren)

**Connecting with this group offers powerful benefits:**

- **Understanding and Empathy:** Meet others who truly "get it" because they are navigating similar life experiences
- **Reduced Isolation:** Combat loneliness and feel a strong sense of belonging in a welcoming and non-judgmental environment.
- **Practical Coping Skills:** Learn new ways to manage stress, improve emotional well-being, and navigate life transitions.
- **Renewed Hope:** Share stories of resilience and discover resources and strategies that promote recovery and a better quality of life.

**Fourth Monday of the Month**

**4PM - 5:30PM**

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**NUTRITION**


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# 10 Tips for Powering Up Your Nutrition

## 1. Eat Breakfast

Start your day with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit and whole grain cereal.

## 2. Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and veggies add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen and canned.

## 3. Watch Portion Sizes

Use half your plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. Complete the meal with a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt. Measuring cups may also help you compare your portions to the recommended serving size.

## 4. Be Active

Regular physical activity has many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults at least two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym – take a walk after dinner or put on music and dance at home.

## 5. Get to Know Food Labels

Reading the Nutrition Facts panel can help you choose food and drinks to meet your nutrient needs.

## 6. Fix Healthy Snacks

Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more of the food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese or hummus, or a tablespoon of nut or seed butter with an apple or banana.



**eat right.** Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

## 7. Consult an RDN

Whether you want to lose weight, lower your health risks or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.

## 8. Follow Food Safety Guidelines

Reduce your chances of getting sick with proper food safety. This includes regular hand washing, separating raw foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate internal temperature, and refrigerating food promptly. Learn more about home food safety at [eatright.org](https://www.eatright.org).

## 9. Drink More Water

Quench your thirst with water instead of drinks with added sugar. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water, especially if you are active, an older adult or live or work in hot conditions.

## 10. Get Cooking

Preparing food at home can be healthy, rewarding and cost-effective. Master some kitchen basics, like dicing onions or cooking dried beans.

## NUTRICIÓN

# 10 Consejos para Potenciar tu Nutrición

## 1. Desayuna

Comienza tu día con un desayuno saludable que incluya proteínas magras, granos enteros, frutas y verduras. Prueba preparar un burrito de desayuno con huevos revueltos, queso bajo en grasa, salsa y una tortilla de trigo integral, o un parfait con yogur natural bajo en grasa, fruta y cereal integral.

## 2. Haz que la mitad de tu plato sean frutas y verduras

Las frutas y verduras añaden color, sabor y textura, además de vitaminas, minerales y fibra dietética. Fija como meta diaria 2 tazas de fruta y 2 ½ tazas de verduras. Experimenta con diferentes tipos: frescas, congeladas y enlatadas.

## 3. Controla el tamaño de las porciones

Usa la mitad del plato para frutas y verduras y la otra mitad para granos y proteínas magras. Completa la comida con una porción de leche o yogur descremado o bajo en grasa. Las tazas medidoras también pueden ayudarte a comparar tus porciones con el tamaño recomendado.

## 4. Mantente activo

La actividad física regular tiene muchos beneficios para la salud. Comienza haciendo el ejercicio que puedas. Los niños y adolescentes deben realizar 60 minutos o más de actividad física al día, y los adultos al menos dos horas y 30 minutos por semana. No es necesario ir al gimnasio: camina después de la cena o pon música y baila en casa.

## 5. Conoce las etiquetas de los alimentos

Leer la tabla de Información Nutricional puede ayudarte a elegir alimentos y bebidas que satisfagan tus necesidades de nutrientes.

## 6. Prepara bocadillos saludables

Los snacks saludables pueden ayudarte a mantener la energía entre comidas, especialmente cuando combinan varios tipos de alimentos. Elige dos o más de los grupos alimentarios: granos, frutas, verduras, lácteos y proteínas. Prueba verduras crudas con queso cottage bajo en grasa o humus, o una cucharada de mantequilla de nuez o semillas con una manzana o un plátano. eed butter with an apple or banana.



**eat right.** Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

## 7. Consulta a un RDN

Si deseas bajar de peso, reducir riesgos de salud o manejar una enfermedad crónica, ¡consulta a los expertos! Los dietistas nutricionistas registrados pueden ayudarte brindando consejos de nutrición personalizados, sólidos y fáciles de seguir.

## 8. Sigue las pautas de seguridad alimentaria

Reduce las probabilidades de enfermarte siguiendo prácticas adecuadas de seguridad alimentaria. Esto incluye lavarse las manos con regularidad, separar alimentos crudos de los listos para comer, cocinar los alimentos a la temperatura interna adecuada y refrigerarlos de inmediato. Obtén más información sobre seguridad alimentaria en el hogar en [eatright.org](https://www.eatright.org).

## 9. Bebe más agua

Calma tu sed con agua en lugar de bebidas con azúcar añadida. Mantente hidratado y bebe suficiente agua, especialmente si eres una persona activa, un adulto mayor o si vives o trabajas en condiciones de calor.

## 10. Cocina más en casa

Preparar alimentos en casa puede ser saludable, gratificante y rentable. Domina algunas técnicas básicas de cocina, como picar cebollas o cocinar frijoles secos.



# Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) Lottery

March 16, 2026 through March 27, 2026

**New City, NY** – County Executive Ed Day and Commissioner of Social Services Joan Silvestri announce that the Rockland County Department of Social Services (RCDSS) will be having an online Housing Choice Voucher Program lottery for specialized programs. The lottery will take place from 8:00 AM, March 16, 2026, through 5:00 PM, March 27, 2026. To apply for the wait lists listed below, use this link: <https://section8.hcr.ny.gov>



**Mainstream Wait List:** Applicants must find their own housing in Rockland County (300 applicants randomly chosen to form a Wait List). Verification of disability and homelessness is required.

**To be eligible for this application, a person must be:**

- under 62 years of age
- disabled, and
- homeless, at risk of homelessness or transitioning out of segregated care

**Walnut Hills Senior Housing Wait List:** There are 94 units within this complex involved with the Project Based Voucher contract located on Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY (400 applicants will be randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

**Depew Manor Senior Housing:** There are 45 units on our Project Based Voucher Contract located on Depew Avenue, Nyack NY. (300 applicants will be randomly chosen to form a list.)

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- 62 years of age or older

**Waldron Terrace:** There are 30 units on our Project Based Voucher Contract located on Highview Court, Nyack, NY (250 applicants randomly chosen to form a list). (Number of applicants varies depending on unit size and will be randomly chosen to form a list.)

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- There is no age requirement as some units are for 62+ and some units are 1-5 bedrooms. Each specific sized unit needs an appropriate number of applicants before this lottery closes.

**Spring Valley Preservation:** There are 58 units on our Project Based Voucher contract located at Lakeview Village and Highview Apartments, Spring Valley, NY (Number of applicants varies depending on unit size and will be randomly chosen to form a list).

**To be eligible for a voucher or for this Wait List, a person must be:**

- There is no age requirement as some units are for 62+ and some units are 1-5 bedrooms. Each specific sized unit needs an appropriate number of applicants before this lottery closes.

This lottery is for the above programs **only**. There are **five separate lotteries which will be conducted simultaneously and will result in separate lists. Applications will NOT be provided or accepted at any RCDSS office. Only one application per household will be accepted. If multiple applications are received for same household, both will be void.**

Applicants who are elderly or require assistance completing an application because of a disability, may call 845-364-3331 or email [rocklandhcv@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:rocklandhcv@dfa.state.ny.us) between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday - Friday during the open application period. Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities using TDD or TTY technology may call New York Relay Services by dialing 7-1-1 for assistance.

“We are encouraging anyone who believes they are eligible to apply to this program,” said County Executive Ed Day. “Remember that there is no cost to apply, and no one will ask an applicant for any payment. We also ask that applicants please keep in mind that there are a limited number of vouchers available.”

For more information about income limits and other program requirements visit:

[Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher \(HCV\) | Rockland County, NY \(rocklandcountyny.gov\)](https://rocklandcountyny.gov)

- ROCKLAND COUNTY OFFICE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION -

# Rockland County Weights and Measures: The History of Fairness You Can Measure

by Helena Smith, Consumer Protection Program Manager

## A History Rooted in Fairness

The concept of fair weights and measures goes back thousands of years and has always been essential to trade and daily life. Long before modern laws existed, civilizations recognized that accurate measurement was key to building trust between buyers and sellers. Across cultures and religions, fairness in trade has been seen as both a practical and moral responsibility.

In Judaism, the Talmud asks, “Were your stones good?” (Shabbat 31a), emphasizing honesty in commerce. Christianity also stresses fairness in trade, as Proverbs 16:11 says, “Honest scales and balances belong to the Lord.” Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism similarly highlight ethical trade, while ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian laws punished false measurements. Across time and tradition, accurate weights and measures have long been linked to justice, trust, and even divine order.

## From Biblical Principles to American Law

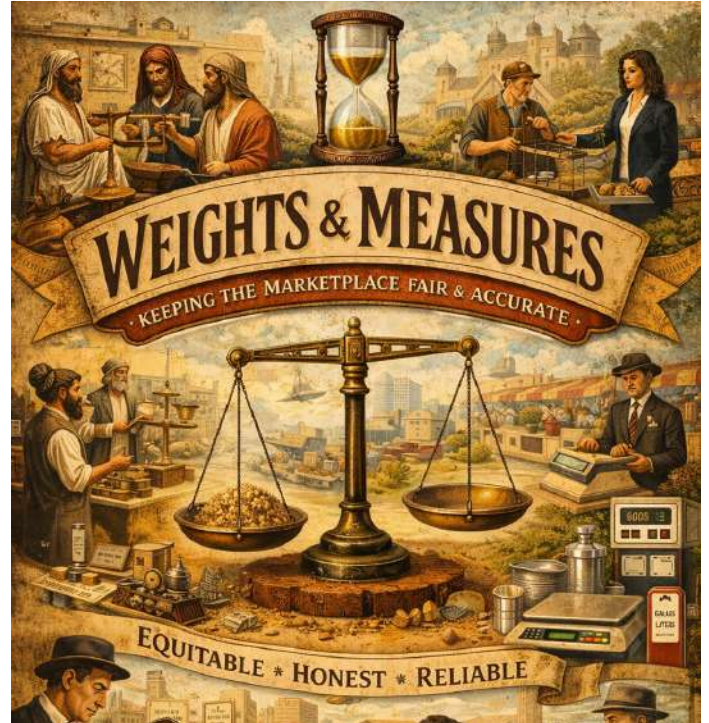
The United States recognized the importance of uniform measurements from the very beginning. In fact, Weights and Measures Week, celebrated each year from March 1-7, reminds us of the value of fair and accurate measurement in everyday life. It commemorates President John Adams signing the first U.S. weights and measures law on March 2, 1799, putting the principle of fairness into action. As John Quincy Adams later noted, accurate measurements are “among the necessities of life.” Today, by checking scales, gas pumps, and other devices, weights and measures programs continue to protect shoppers, support businesses, and keep commerce fair for everyone.

## From Ancient Principles to Modern Practice

Measurement tools have evolved, but the need for accuracy remains unchanged. New York State law requires all weighing and measuring devices used in commerce to be inspected annually by certified Weights and Measures inspectors. This ensures consistency and fairness in transactions. Devices subject to inspection include gas pumps, grocery and deli scales, pharmacy and jewelry scales, fuel oil delivery trucks, and large-capacity scales used at transfer stations, scrap metal facilities, and recycling centers.

## The Role of Rockland County Weights and Measures

In Rockland County, inspectors work behind the scenes to protect both consumers and businesses. Using specialized testing equipment and standardized procedures,



they verify that devices are accurate and properly sealed to prevent tampering. When a device does not meet standards, corrective action is taken to protect the public and ensure compliance.

## Why It Matters

Even small inaccuracies can add up. A gas pump that delivers slightly less fuel or a scale that weighs a little heavy can cost consumers money. Regular inspections ensure that residents get exactly what they pay for while honest businesses are protected from unfair competition.

## Protecting Consumers Every Day

From buying groceries to heating your home, Weights and Measures affects nearly every part of daily life. Rooted in ancient values and upheld through modern law, this essential service continues to promote fairness, accuracy, and trust for all Rockland County residents.

## When in Doubt, Reach Out

Think you were overcharged due to an incorrect weight or measurement? Contact Rockland County Office of Consumer Protection at:

**Phone:** (845) 364-3901

**Email:** [CPLCAL@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:CPLCAL@co.rockland.ny.us)

**Follow us on Facebook and Instagram:**  
@RocklandCountyConsumerProtection

## April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress can affect your health at any age. Older adults should take simple steps to care for both their minds and their bodies.

The National Council on Aging says stress can harm your health, worsen existing conditions, and even make aging happen faster. The good news is that following these simple steps can help reduce stress and protect your health:

**Be active:** Take a short walk in your neighborhood or local park, take slow and deep breaths, stretch your arms, shoulders, and legs, move to music, or read.

**Enjoy spring in Rockland County:** Visit county and state parks, walk on nearby trails, sit outside for fresh air, or try light gardening or yard work.

**Stay connected:** Call or visit family and friends, join activities at local senior centers, or take part in programs offered by the Rockland County Office for the Aging.



**Mind and emotional health:** Focus on positive moments each day, try meditation or mindfulness exercises.

**Get enough sleep:** Sleep is essential for both physical and mental health. It allows the body to repair itself and helps support mood and memory, especially during deep (REM) sleep.

## Spring Into Movement

Spring is here, and it's time to get moving and enjoy the fresh air! Wear comfortable shoes, stay hydrated, move at your own pace, and check with your healthcare provider before starting any new activity.

**Stay active** - it helps prevent falls, improve strength, balance, and coordination.

- **Focus on balance & strength:** Activities like walking, tai chi, and chair yoga can help reduce the risk of falls.
- **Start slowly & build up:** Gradually increase time and intensity to help prevent injuries.
- **Use support when needed:** Hold onto a chair, wall, or railing.
- **Wear the right footwear:** Choose sturdy, non-slip shoes.
- **Warm-up & cool-down:** Stretch before and after activity to help prevent stiffness and falls.
- **Stay hydrated & rest:** Fatigue and dehydration can increase fall risk.
- **Talk to your healthcare provider:** Especially before starting a new activity.



MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

## Interested in Becoming a Volunteer Coach for the A Matter of Balance Fall Prevention Program?

A Matter of Balance is an 8-week program designed to help people manage concerns about falls and increase activity. The program meets once a week for two hours and is led by trained volunteers. Coaches help participants become more confident in managing falls, identify ways to reduce falls, and lead simple exercises to increase strength and balance.

### What does it take to be a coach?

- Strong communication and people skills
- Ability to lead a group of 10-15 older adults
- Comfortable leading low-to-moderate exercises
- Attend and teach all scheduled classes
- Ability to lift or carry up to 20 pounds

### Perks of being a volunteer coach

- Gain experience leading exercises
- Mileage reimbursement for driving to and from classes
- Interact with your community

For more information about becoming a volunteer coach, contact Master Coach Michelle Kleinman at the Rockland County Department of Health at 845-364-3612.

**STAY UP-TO-DATE ON IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT!**

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rockhealth](https://www.facebook.com/rockhealth) • Instagram: [www.instagram.com/rocklandhealth](https://www.instagram.com/rocklandhealth) • x.com/rockhealth • Website: <https://rckind.us/RCDOH>

# Spring Clean Your Medicine Cabinet



**Safely dispose of unused or expired medications:** Check expiration dates and remove medications that are no longer needed. Do not flush medications down the toilet or throw them in the garbage unless the label says it's safe to do so.

**Do not share medications:** Medications are prescribed for specific individuals and conditions. Sharing medications can cause harmful side effects or dangerous drug interactions.

**Use local takeback locations:** Check with your local pharmacy, visit the Rockland County [household hazardous waste](#) facility, or call 845-753-2200 for more information. Additionally, the Rockland County Sheriff's Office, located at 55 New Hempstead Road, New City, has a 24-hour collection box for controlled and non-controlled medications.

## It's Time to Be Your Best Slept Self®

Sleep Awareness Week (March 8 -14, 2026) emphasizes the important connection between sleep, health, and well-being.

Established by NSF in 1998, Sleep Awareness Week is the premier awareness and education campaign for sleep health. Each year, NSF releases the results of its hallmark Sleep in America® Poll during the campaign week. The Sleep in America Poll helps the public understand key attitudes, behaviors, and experiences with sleep health and explores a broad range of topics from aging, to exercise, to pain, to incorporating healthy sleep behaviors into daily living. Most recently, the [2025 Sleep in America Poll](#) showcased the powerful link between sleep health and an individual's ability to flourish in life.

For information about sleep and older adults, visit the [National Institute on Aging](#).



**Be your Best Slept Self®**

**Daytime Tips**

- 1. Light**  
Spend time in bright light during the day, natural light or equivalent brightness.
- 2. Exercise**  
Exercise regularly for sleep. Aim for 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- 3. Mealtimes**  
Eat your meals at consistent times day after day.

**Evening Tips**

- 4. Avoid...**  
Avoid heavy meals, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.
- 5. Wind-down**  
Use a consistent routine with a relaxing wind-down to help get the sleep you need each night (7-9 hours for most adults, with same sleep and wake times.)
- 6. Environment**  
Put your devices away an hour before bed and sleep in a quiet, cool, and dark environment.

NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION | theNSF.org

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# Jeevan Jyoti: Our Community's Heartbeat

by *Raghunath M. Mehta, M.D.*

A support group is more than just a gathering; it is a living organism fueled by purpose and connection. As the visionary brainchild of Mamta Arya, ably administered by Suresh Arya, Jeevan Jyoti has become a sanctuary where seniors don't just pass the time—they find a renewed lease on life.

The group's strength lies in the synergy between Mamta's initial spark and Suresh's tireless dedication. Together, they have built a space where every member is seen, heard, and valued, a mission they sustain through immense personal sacrifice. This heartbeat is protected by a Board committed to transparency, ensuring that every major decision is guided by collective wisdom.

## A Tapestry of Purposeful Activities

Central to our success is a diverse curriculum of activities designed specifically for the evolving needs of seniors. Our programming includes:

- **Emotional Resilience:** Our “Share and Care” sessions provide a safe harbor for emotional understanding, allowing members to navigate the complexities of emotions with empathy and mutual support.
- **Intellectual Vitality:** The Book Club serves as a vibrant forum for discussion, keeping minds sharp and perspectives broad through the power of selected books and movies. The popular game of Bridge stimulates the brain and enhances cognitive functions.
- **Financial Literacy:** A cornerstone of our support, financial management—at both basic and advanced levels—is guided by experienced members. This ensures our members navigate everything from daily budgeting to complex estate planning and investing with adequate knowledge and information.
- **Wellness & Movement:** Gentle yoga, meditation, and guided exercise help to maintain physical mobility. Sessions in physical health and creative expression provide vital outlets for energy.
- **Health Advocacy:** Expert-led seminars on nutrition, preventative care, and advances in medicine ensure our members are equipped with the knowledge to thrive.
- **Computer Skills:** Understanding how to use technology safely and effectively has assumed an important place in our lives. There is expert guidance on five essential skills, including navigation, file management, email management, software use, and security awareness.
- **Creative Expression:** Creating art is a relaxing outlet and offers a safe way to communicate inner beauty, inner thoughts, and complex feelings. It fosters positive emotions and a sense of accomplishment.

Each of these sessions is conducted by leaders with expertise in their fields, ensuring high-quality engagement. Furthermore, we are proud to be supported by a grant from the Office for the Aging, a partnership that underscores the credibility and vital importance of our mission.

## Shared Ownership: The Secret to Longevity

What truly sets this group apart is the unique cultural fabric of shared ownership. While our expert leaders provide the framework, the energy and enthusiasm are a collective effort. Every member is encouraged to contribute their voice, ensuring that the group evolves with them, not just for them.

This shared responsibility creates a powerful psychological bond. When members feel they own a piece of the group's success, their commitment deepens. This is the true secret of our longevity and ever-increasing strength: the transition from being a “participant” to being a “stakeholder.”

## Celebrating Our Successes

Our community thrives on joy and celebration. We host several hallmark events throughout the year, including our festive picnics and vibrant music programs. These occasions, along with our Annual Dinner, are carefully choreographed and hugely successful, providing moments of connection that linger in our memories long after the lights go down.

The Annual Dinner serves as our grand finale, where all leaders are acknowledged and applauded for their tireless service. This public celebration reinforces the value of every individual's contribution. As we look toward the future, we do so with the confidence that as long as we share the ownership and the spirit of this group, our strength will only continue to grow.



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# How the Aging Brain Affects Thinking

from the National Intsitute on Aging

The brain controls many aspects of thinking — remembering, planning and organizing, making decisions, and much more. These cognitive abilities affect how well we do everyday tasks and whether we can live independently.

Some changes in thinking are common as people get older. For example, older adults may:

- Be slower to find words and recall names
- Have problems with multitasking
- Experience mild decreases in the ability to pay attention

Aging may also bring positive cognitive changes. For example, many studies have shown that older adults have larger vocabularies and greater knowledge of the depth of meaning of words than younger adults. Older adults may also have learned from their many years of accumulated knowledge and experiences. Whether and how older adults apply this knowledge, and how the brain changes as a result, is an area that researchers are actively exploring.

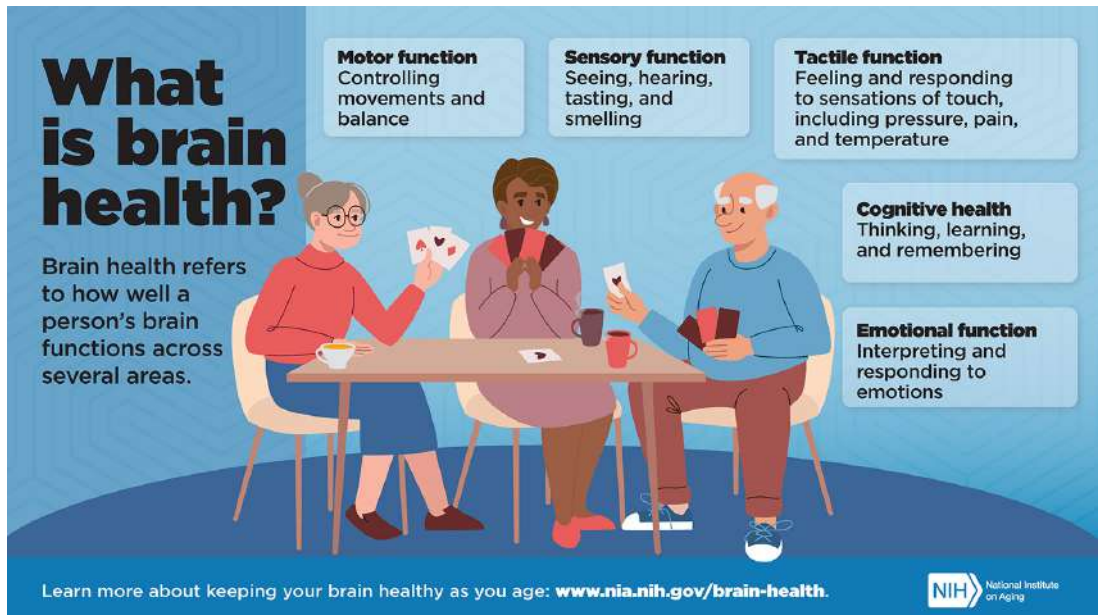
Despite the changes in cognition that may come with age, older adults can still do many of the things they have enjoyed their whole lives. Research shows that older adults can still:

- Learn new skills
- Form new memories
- Improve vocabulary and language skills

## How the brain changes as people age

As a person gets older, changes occur in all parts of the body, including the brain.

- Certain parts of the brain shrink, including those important to learning and other complex mental activities.



- In certain brain regions, communication between neurons may be less effective.
- Blood flow in the brain may decrease.
- Inflammation, which occurs when the body responds to an injury or disease, may increase.

These changes in the brain can affect mental function, even in healthy older people. For example, some older adults may find that they don't do as well as younger individuals on complex memory or learning tests. However, if given enough time to learn a new task, they usually perform just as well. Needing that extra time is normal as people age. There is growing evidence that the brain maintains the ability to change and adapt so that people can manage new challenges and tasks as they age.

Talk with your doctor if you're concerned about changes in your thinking and memory. They can help you determine whether those changes are normal or whether it could be something else.

## The brain-body connection

There is growing scientific evidence of the brain-body connection. Not only can changes in our brain affect our thinking, but also changes in our physical health may affect our brains.

For example, an NIA-funded study of almost 3,000 older adults showed that healthy lifestyle factors — physical activity, not smoking, not drinking heavily, following the Mediterranean-style diet, and engaging in mentally stimulating activities — can have important benefits. People who engaged in four or five of these behaviors had a 60% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's compared to those who only followed one or none. People who followed two or three of the activities had a 37% lower risk.

In another study, older adults with higher levels of physical activity showed slower rates of cognitive decline than peers who were less active. Another example of how physical health can affect brain health has to do with the heart. Observational studies have found that high blood pressure in middle age, along with other cerebrovascular risk factors, such as diabetes and smoking, increase the risk of developing dementia.

Results from observational studies such as these can't prove cause and effect, but they point to how a combination of modifiable behaviors may affect the brain as people age and identify promising avenues to be tested further.



## NO WRONG DOOR

**NY Connects** functions as “hub” to the **No Wrong Door** system, a comprehensive resource for all long-term services and supports.

The program serves all ages, regardless of income or background. We provide one-stop information, assistance, and referral services needed to make informed decisions. Our goal is to assist clients in safely maintaining their independence and remaining in their homes as they choose. Individuals, families, and caregivers often have multiple needs across systems.

**NY Connects** works to create seamless linkages to other agencies and assists with any public assistance applications. Person-centered counseling services are provided at no cost to our clients.

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### CONTACT:

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**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term  
Services and Supports