

# NUTRITION NEWS

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## Vaccinations and the Elderly



Covid put the spotlight on vaccinations and who should get them. But there are more vaccinations than the Covid vaccine to consider. Flu season is right around the corner, and if you are over the age of 65, your physician may recommend even more vaccinations.

These can be confusing, especially as many of them come with side effects. Common vaccinations now include shingles, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, and pneumococcal disease (pneumonia).

The decision to get vaccinated against these various diseases can also be complicated by whether or not these shots are covered by your insurance company. Some of the vaccinations can be pricy and coverage can be affected not only by individuals' preexisting health conditions and medical necessities but by the



comprehensive coverage that your plan provides.

There are side effects associated with most vaccines. The most common side effects experienced include mild and temporary pain at the injection site, headache, muscle aches, fever, and general malaise. Side effects can vary from person to person and can also vary from year to year. The side effects can be influenced by your current state of health as well as by the current condition of your immune system.

Not all vaccinations are available to all people either. Certain treatments, such as chemotherapy, may contraindicate your need for vaccinations. This may also impact your caregivers, specifically those living in the same household. If you are receiving chemotherapy, even people that you live with may not be able to receive certain vaccines, as it may put the immunocompromised individual at risk.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SHINGLES VACCINE	2
PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS	3
BETTER BREAKFAST MONTH	4

#### Monthly Exercise:

##### Neck Stretch

Stand with feet kept at a width of shoulders. Your hands should be kept relaxed at the sides.

Turn the head to the right slowly without tipping it backward or forward. Stop when a little stretch is felt. Hold in this position for 15-30 seconds.

Now turn your head to left. Hold in this position for 15-30 seconds.

One of the vaccines that is getting a lot of attention in the news lately is the shingles vaccine. Shingles is a viral infection that causes a painful rash. Shingles can occur anywhere on your body. However, it most often presents as a single stripe of blisters that wraps around either the left or right side of your torso.

Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox. If you have had chicken pox in your lifetime, the virus lies inactive in nerve tissue surrounding your spinal cord and brain. Many years later, the virus may reactivate as shingles.

Shingles is not a life threatening condition but it can be extremely painful. Vaccines reduce the risk of shingles. If you do develop shingles, early treatment can help shorten the time of infection and lessen the chance of complications.

Recognizing the symptoms of a shingles infection will help promote early treatment. These signs and symptoms usually only affect one small section of your body. The symptoms include:

- ◆ Pain, burning, numbness, or tingling
- ◆ Sensitivity to touch
- ◆ A red rash that begins a few days after the pain
- ◆ Fluid-filled blisters that break open and crust over
- ◆ Itching
- ◆ Fever, headache, sensitivity to light, and fatigue may also be experienced



If you suspect shingles, you should see a doctor. Contacting a doctor is especially important if the following occur:

- ◆ The pain and rash occur near an eye. If left untreated, this infection can lead to permanent eye damage.
- ◆ You're 70 or older, because your age significantly increases your risk of complications.
- ◆ You or someone in your family has a weakened immune system (due to cancer, medications, or chronic illness.)
- ◆ The rash is widespread and painful.

Shingles can be contagious to anyone who isn't immune to chicken pox (either by exposure or vaccination). The infected person will develop chicken pox, not shingles. The following factors may increase your risk of getting shingles: being over the age of 50, having certain diseases (such as HIV/AIDS or cancer), undergoing cancer treatments, and taking certain medications.

Long term complications of shingles can include postherpetic neuralgia (pain long after the shingles rash has disappeared), vision loss, neurological problems, and skin infections. Proper treatment can help lessen the likelihood of developing these complications.

The shingles vaccine has been approved for people over the age of 50. While it doesn't guarantee that you won't develop shingles, it can reduce the likelihood as well as the severity if you do develop it.

September is also Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. About 1 in every 7 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. Other than skin cancer, it is the most common cancer in American men. It mainly develops in older men and is rare in men under the age of 40. The average age at diagnosis is 66.

Most men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not succumb to it. If it is caught early, it is very treatable. Usually, prostate cancer grows slowly and stays confined to the prostate gland. Prostate cancer may cause no signs or symptoms in early stages. More advanced prostate cancer may present as the following symptoms:

- ◆ Trouble urinating
- ◆ Decreased force in the stream of the urine
- ◆ Blood in semen
- ◆ Discomfort in the pelvic area
- ◆ Bone pain
- ◆ Erectile dysfunction

There are a number of factors which can increase your risk of developing prostate cancer. These include:

- \* Age– your risk of prostate cancer increases as you age
- \* Race– for reasons that are not determined, black men carry a greater risk of developing prostate cancer than men of other races do. Also, in black men, prostate cancer is more likely to be aggressive or advanced.
- \* Family history– if men in your family have had prostate cancer, your risk may also be increased. Also, if you have a family history of genes that increase your risk of breast cancer or a very strong family history of breast cancer, your risk of prostate cancer may be higher.

- \* Obesity– obese men diagnosed with prostate cancer may be more likely to have advanced disease that is harder to treat.

There is some controversy regarding screening for prostate cancer. Prostate screening may include a physical exam or a simple blood test. Men over the age of 50 (or men of any age who may be having symptoms) should discuss the possibility of being screened for prostate cancer.

Some men diagnosed with low risk prostate cancer may not require treatment right away. The doctors may choose to monitor the growth of the cancer through blood tests. This is known as active surveillance. Active surveillance may be an option for cancer that isn't causing any symptoms and is expected to grow slowly and stay confined to a small area of the prostate. It may also be considered for someone who has another serious health condition or in someone of advanced age, where the treatment may be very difficult.

Other treatments may include surgery, radiation therapy, or even hormone therapy that may stop the body from producing testosterone. As always, discussing your symptoms and health conditions regularly with your physician can help you dictate the path of screening and treatment that is right for you.



September is also better breakfast month! Here are a few recipes to give you some ideas.

### **Breakfast Crisp**

- 1 1/1 cups quick cooking oats**
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour**
- 1 tsp baking powder**
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon**
- 1/2 tsp salt**
- 1/2 cup brown sugar**
- 1/4 cup butter, softened**
- 1 egg**

### **HEAP**

If you received HEAP last year but have not yet received an application for this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

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## **HERKIMER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

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Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease 9x9 inch baking pan. In a large bowl, stir together oats, flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. In a separate bowl, cream together brown sugar and butter. Beat in egg. Stir mixtures together just until blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into center of pan comes out clean.

### **Carnation Breakfast Truffles**

- 1 packet Carnation Breakfast Essentials Rich Milk Chocolate Powdered Drink Mix**
- 1/4 cup roasted honey nut peanut butter**
- 1 tbs Neufchatel cheese**
- 2 tsp agave nectar**
- 2 tbs finely chopped pecans**

Place chocolate drink mix, peanut butter, and Neufchatel cheese in a mini food processor. Pulse until well combined. Roll mixture into eight 1-inch balls. Dip each ball in agave, then in chopped pecans. Serve immediately or refrigerate in an airtight container.