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AGING PERSPECTIVES: Finding Strength in Difficult Times

Whenever you find yourself doubting how far you can go, just remember how far you have come. Remember everything you have faced, all the battles you have won, and all the fears you have overcome. -unknown-

Our world has changed pretty drastically over the past several months and we find ourselves in somewhat uncharted waters. The “new normal” we keep hearing about includes stay-at-home orders, masks, frequent handwashing and social distancing, not to mention no shaking hands or hugging. Such extreme changes have caused many of us to experience more anxiety and stress than usual and that is normal. ***But really, how much anxiety is “normal?”***

According to the Mayo Clinic; “For many people, anxiety is high as a result of the pandemic. This is not all bad. Anxiety and fear are natural protectors of people's lives. These responses trigger the fight-or-flight response that motivates people to act in the primitive sense — usually to run or fight. This response has kept humans alive for generations despite many dangers in this world.”

“However, an unknown or not easily understood danger can increase people's anxiety. These reasons lead many people to seek understanding and develop a plan of safety and action. Examples can be found in multiple disciplines or groups, including scientists, hospitals, schools, government, transportation, retail stores, families, older adults and others.”

While the pandemic may lead to anxiety in many people, there are some populations who have a higher risk of being affected:

- **Those with a history of anxiety** — People who struggled with anxiety prior to this situation may feel especially overwhelmed during the pandemic.
- **Older or immunocompromised people** — Older adults, or those who have underlying medical issues or weakened immune systems, are aware of their personal increased risk should they contract COVID-19. This may cause them heightened anxiety or feelings of helplessness. Also, their loved ones may fear for them and feel helpless to protect them and feel heightened anxiety.
- **Children** — Children may watch the news and hear the concern in a parent's or other adult's voice and begin to feel the world is scary and out of control. They may not be able to explain their fears or anxious thoughts.
- **Health care workers** — Health care workers or other people who have a lot of contact with people who are ill may experience high concern and anxiety about their risk due to potential exposure. They also know that they could expose their families to the virus when they return home.

Anxiety affects a person's thoughts and actions and presents physical symptoms. When in physical danger, anxiety is designed to help people focus on the threat, so they know where the danger is coming from and how to fight or escape it.

Anxiety quickly builds up energy so we can fight or run from danger, but it may cause uncomfortable physical symptoms, such as a racing heart, inability to concentrate, shakiness, sweating and difficulty swallowing. These symptoms may feel horrible, but they are not dangerous in the short term.

In the current situation, anxiety can cause rumination, a sense of impending doom, helplessness and over focusing on the news, which can provoke more anxiety. Some people may wish to hide, avoid learning about any dangers or act like ostriches and put their heads in the sand. Feeling tense, irritable and impatient can be a part of anxiety. Other actions related to anxiety include pacing, spacing out and feeling like a spinning wheel without getting tasks done.

Build up resiliency



9 tips to build up your personal resilience during this time:

1 Gather information Knowledge of the enemy, fear and issue can reduce anxiety. Gather accurate, factual information from trusted sources to better understand the situation and help with problem-solving and a greater sense of control. Avoid sensationalized, dramatic information about the pandemic.

2 Establish a new routine Many daily routines have changed due to COVID-19. Routine and structure can be helpful and calming. Create a new normal with some practical and enjoyable tasks to become more resilient to chaos and change. Mindfully create a daily and weekly flow of events, such as starting your morning with a relaxing cup of tea or coffee, or breakfast. Other ideas include making a list of projects that you have wanted to accomplish, reading inspirational writings and journaling to record your thoughts, hopes, emotions and concerns.

3 Stay connected virtually Reaching out to loved ones is important and can be done through phone calls, texting, emailing and video calls. Consider hosting virtual meetings with your loved ones. Human connection can lower stress and anxiety levels and build camaraderie.

4 Practice self-care habits Take a few moments to care for yourself each day; soak in a long soothing bath, listen to calming or upbeat music, get plenty of sleep, and eat healthy food. These habits can help whether you are working inside or outside the home.

5 Look for the good Acknowledge and accept that the good and bad are often adjacent in the same moment in life. A person can be sad about one thing but be aware that there's goodness and happiness in the same moment about another thing. Intentionally look for those good things. Whatever thoughts we feed grow so it can help to purposefully think hopeful, realistic and problem-solving thoughts. Look at the beauty amid the difficulties in life.

6 Exercise Regular exercise and movement helps release built-up fight-or-flight energy. Using bigger muscle movements can help release this energy so you feel calmer. Also, exercise releases endorphins, which are feel-good chemicals in the brain. Try jumping jacks, pushups, walking, running, chopping wood, swimming or lifting weights. Even cleaning the house or moving heavy boxes are good big-muscle exercises. Stretching and yoga also are helpful in reducing stress.

7 Meditate Meditation, mindfulness and breathing exercises are good ways to release stress. Now is a good time to learn these approaches and incorporate them into daily habits.

8 Reflect COVID-19 enables people to reflect on what is truly important and express gratitude. When life returns to normal, do you want to go back to how things were before, or will you reprioritize some things in your life?

9 Reach out Everyone is in this together and that is a comfort. You are not alone. If you feel alone, don't be silent. Instead, reach out to a friend or health care professional. Many people are feeling the same way. If you communicate your hopes and fears, and listen to others, it divides the burden and increases the connection. This decreases the sense of isolation and anxiety.

<https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/9-ways-to-tame-anxiety-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>



Senior Farmer's Market Coupon Program (SFMNP) is now available in participating communities (see website)

SFMNP is a supplemental food program for eligible seniors (60+ and 185 FPL) that allows Seniors to exchange coupons for fresh produce/honey at the Summer Farmer's Market. The program encourages seniors to supplement their diet with healthy nutrition food, gets them out in the fresh air and visit among friends and neighbors. Each coupon is worth \$2. Seniors can receive up to \$50 worth of coupons at participating Vendors. This programs benefits seniors by enabling them to purchase fresh produce.

How do I benefit?

- ✓ **SFMNP supports local vendors. Coupons are only redeemable for produce and raw honey sold at the local Farmer's Market. (coupons not eligible for grocery store purchases or non- produce items)**
- ✓ **Seniors benefit by the ability to access fresh and nutritious produce sold at the market in exchange for their coupons**

How Do I sign up? It's Easy!

1. **You must be 60 or older and meet the income guidelines 185% FPL (\$1968 or less per month)**
2. **Contact the local participating agencies in your county (see list on website) for the short SFMNP application and upon approval, collect your coupon booklets.**
3. **Spend away at that Market. Look for Participating Vendors signs**
4. **Proxys can be used for seniors with mobility or health issues. Ask SFMNP**

Contact Information: Jackie Stoeckel 444-6061 or jstoeckel@mt.gov

THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER

Calling All Fresh Produce/Honey Vendors

Senior Farmer's Market Coupon Program (SFMNP) is recruiting Fresh Produce/Honey Vendors for participating markets

What is SFMNP?

SFMNP is a supplemental food program for eligible seniors (60+ and 185 FPL2020) that allows Seniors to exchange coupons for fresh produce at the Summer Farmer's Market. The program encourages seniors to supplement their diet with healthy nutrition food, gets them out in the fresh air and visit among friends and neighbors. Each coupon is worth \$2. Seniors spend up to \$50 worth of coupons at participating Vendors. This programs benefits seniors by enabling them to purchase fresh produce.

How do I benefit?

- ✓ SFMNP supports local vendors. Coupons are only redeemable for produce sold at the local Farmer's Market. (coupons not eligible for grocery store purchases)
- ✓ Coupons are redeemable at the **local sponsoring agency listed on website**
- ✓ You benefit the seniors by the availability of your produce in exchange for their coupons
- ✓ You benefit by contributing to our seniors' healthy and nutritional eating choices

How Do I sign up? It's Easy!

1. Review and sign a short contract that specifies the do's and don'ts.
2. Participate in a short phone or in person training at a time that is convenient for you.

(short orientation on the do's and don'ts).

3. Display the SFMNP sign (provided) so that the seniors know you are eligible to accept the coupons.

Contact Information:

Jackie Stoeckel, Aging Services at 1 800-332-2272 or 444-6061 or email jstoeckel@mt.gov

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NUTRITION CORNER



Roasted Summer Vegetables

Roasted Summer Vegetables are a super easy side dish and can be served as a simple side or added to enhance several other dishes.

Prep Time: 10 mins/Cook Time: 40 mins/Total Cost: \$4.85 recipe /Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 zucchini (about 1.25 lbs.) **(\$1.22)**
- 1 yellow squash (about 0.5 lbs.) **(\$0.48)**
- 1 small red onion (about 0.5 lbs.) **(\$0.70)**
- 1 red bell pepper **(\$1.79)**
- 2 Tbsp olive oil **(\$0.26)**
- 1 tsp dried basil **(\$0.10)**
- salt and pepper to taste **(\$0.05)**
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley (optional) **(\$0.25)**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wash and chop the vegetables into 1-inch pieces.
2. Spread the vegetables out over a large baking sheet (or two, if needed) so they're in a single layer and not piled on top of one another. Drizzle the olive oil over top, then add the basil and a pinch of salt and pepper. Toss the vegetables until they're evenly coated in oil and spices.
3. Roast the vegetables for 30-40 minutes, stirring (every 15-20 minutes or so), until the vegetables are soft and browned on the edges. Taste the vegetables and add another pinch of salt if desired. Sprinkle fresh chopped parsley over top and serve!

You can use any mix of vegetables you like in any quantity add other herbs/spices!

<https://www.budgetbytes.com/roasted-summer-vegetables/>

Gazpacho



This traditional Spanish soup is **served cold** and is a refreshing way to use fresh summer vegetables.

Ingredients

3 large tomatoes, diced
1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 cucumber, diced
1 ripe avocado, peeled, seeded and diced
½ medium-size red onion, diced
¼ cup diced Kalamata olives, about 4 to 6 olives
3 tablespoons fresh cilantro, diced
2 tablespoons fresh basil, diced (or 2 teaspoons dried)
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon fresh dill, diced (or 1 teaspoon dried)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon hot sauce
1 46-ounce can reduced-sodium tomato juice
¼ to ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Croutons or breadsticks

Directions *Before you begin: Wash your hands.*

1. Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl, stirring well. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Serve with croutons.
2. Substitute an equal volume of vegetable juice (regular or spicy) for the tomato juice.

Nutrition Information Serving size: 1 cup/Serves 8

Calories: 190; Total fat: 13g; Saturated fat: 2.5g; Cholesterol: 0mg;
Sodium: 440mg; Total carbohydrates: 17g; Dietary fiber: 5g; Protein:
5g *By Golda Ewalt, MS, RD, LD, Eatright.org*





UPDATE: Medicare, telehealth & related services

Medicare has temporarily expanded its coverage of [telehealth services](#) to respond to the current Public Health Emergency. These services expand the current telehealth covered services, to help you have access from more places (including your home), with a wider range of communication tools (including smartphones), to interact with a range of providers (like doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists). During this time, you will be able to receive a specific set of services through telehealth including evaluation and management visits (common office visits), mental health counseling and preventive health screenings without a copayment if you have Original Medicare. This will help ensure you are able to visit with your doctor from your home, without having to go to a doctor's office or hospital, which puts you and others at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

- You may be able to communicate with your doctors or certain other practitioners without necessarily going to the doctor's office in person for a full visit. Medicare pays for "[virtual check-ins](#)"—brief, virtual services with your physician or certain practitioners where the communication isn't related to a medical visit within the previous 7 days and doesn't lead to a medical visit within the next 24 hours (or soonest appointment available).
- You need to consent verbally to using virtual check-ins and your doctor must document that consent in your medical record before you use this service. You pay your usual Medicare coinsurance and deductible for these services.
- Medicare also pays for you to communicate with your doctors using [online patient portals](#) without going to the doctor's office. Like the virtual check-ins, you must initiate these individual communications.
- Since some people don't have access to interactive audio-video technology needed for Medicare telehealth services or choose not to use it even if offered by their practitioner, Medicare is allowing people to use an audio-only phone.
- You may use communication technology to have full visits with your doctors. Also, you can get these visits at rural health clinics and federally

qualified health clinics. Medicare pays for many medical visits through this telehealth benefit.

Other ways Medicare is helping

Every day, Medicare is responsible for developing and enforcing the essential health and safety requirements that health care providers must meet. When you go to a healthcare provider, you expect a certain standard of care, and we work to make sure you get it. That includes taking additional steps in response to coronavirus:

- Providing a [special enrollment opportunity](#) for people who missed their chance to enroll in a Medicare health or drug plan due to COVID-19.
- Providing [COVID-19 enrollment flexibilities](#) for Medicare Parts A & B.
- Medicare Advantage Plans and Prescription Drug Plans may waive or relax [prior authorization](#) requirements.
- Taking aggressive actions and exercising regulatory flexibilities to help healthcare providers and Medicare health plans.
- As part of an effort to address the urgent need to increase capacity to care for patients, hospitals can now provide hospital services in other healthcare facilities and sites that aren't currently considered part of a healthcare facility. This includes off-site screenings. Medicare covers medically necessary care in these facilities and sites.
- Waiving certain requirements for [skilled nursing facility care](#).
- Establishing new codes to allow providers to correctly bill for services related to diagnosis and treatment of the illness.
- Instructing our national network of [State Survey Agencies](#) and Accrediting Organizations to focus all their efforts on infection prevention and other cases of abuse and neglect in nursing homes and hospitals.
- Instructing nursing homes and hospitals to review their infection control procedures, which they're required to maintain at all times.
- Issuing important guidance answering questions that nursing homes may have with respect to addressing cases of COVID-19. <https://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus#500>





Aging Horizons TV Show
**"If you are asking about it, we are talking
about it"**

Sundays at 9:00AM on KWYB – ABC Butte/Bozeman
KFBB – ABC Great Falls KHBB – ABC Helena KTMF – ABC Missoula/Kalispell

SWX and NBC in Billings– Saturday at 9:00AM on SWX
&
Sunday at 9:30AM on NBC (KULR8)

Did you know you can watch AGING HORIZONS on YOUTUBE?

Click on www.youtube.com/user/MontanaDPHHS



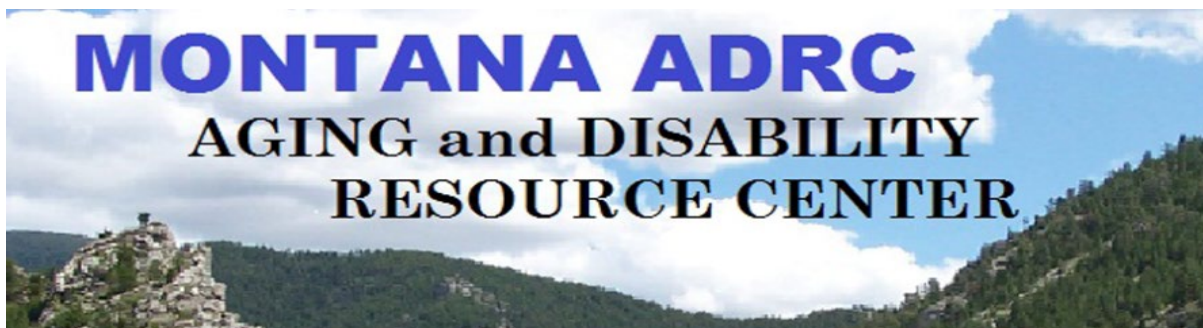


**For a Hand Up – Contact your local SHIP Counselor
at 1-800-551-3191**

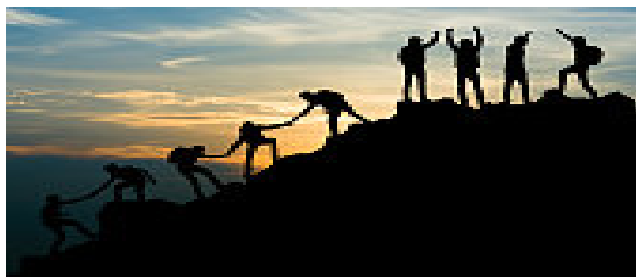


LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Looking for Resources?



**Try the Montana Aging and Disability Resource Center
Directory www.Montana-ADRC.com**



The 2020 Conference and Centenarian Celebration has been canceled and rescheduled for 2021 due to COVID-19 concerns.

See you in Butte for 2021

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Plan to attend the

52nd Annual Governor's Conference on Aging September 2021

**Copper King Hotel and Convention
Center, 4655 Harrison Ave, Butte**



Current Topics Tentatively Scheduled:

Congressional Solutions for Lowering Prescription Drug Costs, Nutrition, Home based services, Veteran topics, Panels on Caregiving, Senior Center innovations, Age Friendly Community projects etc.

STAY TUNED for more details

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/aging/GovernorsConferenceonAging>