

ShowMe Health

Subject: Living Today for a Better Tomorrow (or Adult Wellness)

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May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults and create community-wide opportunities to help older Americans improve their quality of life. This year's theme is "Living Today For a Better Tomorrow," and we, as a community, must work together to give older adults the tools they need to make healthy decisions.

By 2030, one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. Although the risk of disease increases with advancing age, poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Many illnesses, disabilities and even death associated with chronic disease are preventable.

Nearly 40% of deaths in America can be attributed to poor health habits such as lack of physical exercise, poor eating habits and smoking. Older Americans can prevent or control chronic disease by adopting healthy habits such as exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet, ceasing tobacco use and getting recommended preventive screenings.

The benefits of regular physical activity include weight control; healthy bones, muscles and joints; arthritis relief; reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression; and more. Exercise does not have to be strenuous and is safe for people of all age groups. In fact, it's healthier to exercise than eliminate it altogether.

In addition to a regular exercise routine, good nutrition is vital in maintaining good health. Improving older Americans' diets can reduce the occurrence of chronic diseases, but most older adults over age 65 do not maintain a healthy diet. Reducing saturated fats and eating a

balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, and grains can help out older Americans on the right track to staying healthy.

The health center offers several services for older clients, including cholesterol testing, blood pressure testing, diabetes support and flu shots. Speaking of shots, more than ever before, vaccines aren't just for kids. Zostavax, or shingles vaccine is now being recommended for those over 60, and covered under Medicare for those over 65.

Shingles (herpes zoster or zoster) is a painful skin rash caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. Anyone who has had chickenpox can come down with shingles. Risk increases with age. Half of all cases of shingles are in people over sixty. In the United States, there are an estimated one million new cases of shingles each year. Talk to your doctor about his or her recommendations for you.

In addition to Zostavax, whooping cough booster shots were recently recommended for adults up to age 64. Whooping cough boosters, or tdaps, are provided at no out of pocket cost through our office, while health center nurses will administer shingles vaccine on a doctor's recommendation. The vaccine must be purchased by the client through a local pharmacy. For more information on obtaining shingles vaccine, call the health center at 646-5506.

Two preventive screening opportunities for adults of all ages are coming up at the health center. On Tuesday, May 19th, Stroke Detection Plus will be using our building to perform screenings including stroke, abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral arterial disease and osteoporosis. Each test costs \$40, any three screenings are available for \$100, or clients can have a full wellness profile for \$120. If you're interested, make an appointment by calling toll free at 1-877-732-8258.

On Thursday, July 30th from 7am to 10 am, the health center will host its second Adult Wellness Clinic of 2009. Our first clinic in January was a big success, with 80 participants. You can receive several screenings recommended for adults at this clinic. Those attending can receive a CBC/Chem Profile for \$30, a PSA prostate marker for men for \$15 and a hemoglobin A1C* for \$12. No appointments are necessary, blood is drawn on a first come, first served basis. All tests require fasting the night before. *Hemoglobin A1C is a test for patients living with diabetes.

Unless you are diabetic, or pre-diabetic and the test is recommended by your doctor, there's no need to add it on to your profile.

By working together, we can improve the health and well being of our county's older adults and pave the way for better health as we age.

Livingston County Health Center is an equal opportunity provider.