



# As We Age

Strengthening the Journey  
Harvey County Department on Aging Newsletter

## December is Seasonal Depression Awareness month (SAD).



Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, is more than just those winter blues or a seasonal “funk.” SAD is a genuine depression most commonly associated with the fall and winter.

**Symptoms of SAD** can include Low energy, depressed mood, hopelessness, irritability or anxiety, poor concentration, social withdrawal, changes in sleep and appetite, and loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed.

### What can you do about it?

- **Structure.** Go to bed at a regular time, and get enough rest. Give focus to eating healthy meals on a regular schedule.
- **Make your environment brighter** when you can. Open blinds, and sit closer to bright windows.
- **Get outside.** Go for a walk, take your lunch out, take short breaks throughout the day, and enjoy the sunshine.
- **Exercise.** A regular exercise routine can help with stress relief, and being more fit can help to increase self-esteem. Plus, exercise boosts levels in your brain of the same chemicals used in anti-depressant medications!
- **Socialize.** Visit one of the senior centers and connect with the people. You might make new friends.
- **Take a trip.** Make an effort to plan for vacations during the winter months when possible.

We all have tough days and times when life presents us with an increase in overall stress. It's ok to have a bad day. However, SAD is a type of depression, and if your symptoms do not improve or even worsen, it may be time to seek professional support. Treatment options can include psychotherapy, medications, and even light box therapy.



# Caregiving Corner



Stress comes in two primary forms, physical and emotional, and both can be incredibly taxing as we age. The challenges many of us face as we age are failing health, dwindling finances, and retaining our independence.

Dr. Andrew Weil developed a simple but powerful breathing method that promotes calmness and relaxation called the 4-7-8 see below.

## What is compassion fatigue?

Care and empathy have no limits. We can accomplish amazing things when love is our motivation. It is easy and quite common for family caregivers to fall into chronic stress and experience unpleasant feelings concerning the care they're giving. It is called compassion fatigue, and it stems from overexerting your mental, physical, and emotional capacity for others without recentering and recharging yourself in between.

### Here are the steps:

1. **First, place the tip of your tongue behind your upper front teeth.**
2. **Exhale completely through your mouth and make a "whoosh" sound.**
3. **Close your mouth, and inhale through your nose while mentally counting to 4.**
4. **Hold your breath, and mentally count to 7.**
5. **Open your mouth and exhale completely, making a "whoosh" sound and mentally counting to 8.**
6. **Repeat this cycle at least three more times.**



Caregivers, it's ok to accept help. Even with a support system in place, there are times when caregivers take on too much responsibility to avoid placing a burden on those around them. Many caregivers aren't aware of the community resources available to them. There are many community resources such as respite care, home care services, delivered meals, transportation, and caregiver support groups. The Harvey County Department on Aging can help guide you to services. Please call us at 316-264-6880.

When you accept help and give yourself a break from your caregiving duties, you refresh your mind and body, making you a better caregiver.



Family Caregiver programs are made possible through grants from the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging, with federal funds from the Older Americans Act.





# AWARENESS SAVES LIVES!

February is **AMERICAN HEART MONTH**

## Catch the signs early

Don't wait to get help if you experience these warning signs of a heart attack. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Pay attention to your body and call 911 if you experience the following:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes – or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** can occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs.** Other possible symptoms include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

Symptoms vary between men and women. As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain (angina) or discomfort. But women are more likely than men to experience other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.



GetSetUp provides hundreds of live online classes to keep you mentally, physically, and socially active. Classes are interactive, easy to join, offered day and night, and free for our community. Visit <https://www.getsetup.io/partner/CPAAA>



Attend a SilverSneakers class at your participating gym or other community location

- North Newton Wellness Center
- Newton Recreation Wellness Center
- Newton YMCA

Not sure if the health plan includes SilverSneakers? Visit <https://www.silversneakers.com>



## Stop Smoking

Set your "Quit Day" and take a No Smoking or Vaping pledge.



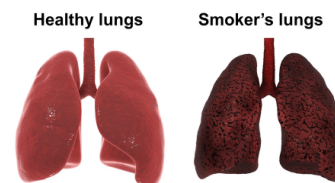
The use of tobacco is very harmful to the heart and body as a whole.

Just 20-30 minutes after someone quits smoking, the body starts to repair itself.

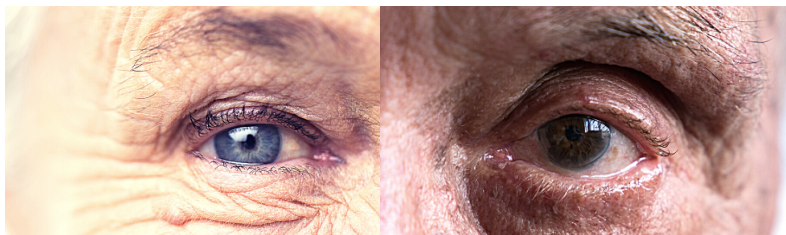
After 48 hours, the sense of taste and smell improves.

Lung function, stamina, and circulation improve between two weeks to three months after quitting.

In just one year, the risk of heart disease drops to half that of a smoker.



*Be the change*  
you wish to see  
in the world.  
*Mahatma Gandhi*



## JANUARY IS NATIONAL EYE CARE MONTH

Eyesight is one of the most important senses: 80% of what we receive comes through the sense of sight. Protecting your eyes will reduce the odds of blindness and vision loss while staying on top of developing eye diseases such as cataracts and glaucoma.

It's only fitting that January is also **Glaucoma Awareness Month**. There's no cure for glaucoma, but early treatment can often stop the damage and protect your vision.

What is the leading cause of glaucoma? Glaucoma is typically caused by high pressure inside your eyes. However, diabetes can also be a risk factor for glaucoma.

There are actions that you can take to slow the progression of glaucoma. Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and reducing alcohol and caffeine intake can help. It is essential to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

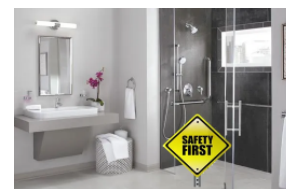
A routine eye exam is essential to living a healthy life. After any eye checkup, remember to ask for a copy of your prescription for no extra charge. Your prescription lets you shop for the best deal wherever you buy your glasses or contact lenses.

The Federal Trade Commission FTC enforces the Eyeglass Rule and Contact Lens Rule, which give you those rights.

### To learn what eye care services your health insurance plan covers:

- Call the number on the back of your insurance card and ask about eye care coverage.
- Health insurance plans may also help cover the cost of eye care for eye diseases like cataracts, diabetic eye disease, and glaucoma.
- Some Medicare Advantage plans may also offer vision coverage, so check your schedule for more details.
- Original Medicare doesn't cover routine eye exams or eyeglasses for most people. Still, it will help protect some eye care if you have diabetes, age-related macular degeneration, A high risk of glaucoma, or Cataracts.
- Veterans Affairs (VA) may qualify for health benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); the VA will cover routine eye exams and preventive vision testing (like testing for glaucoma).
- You may also get the necessary eyeglasses and other vision care covered.

## January is Bathroom Safety Month



### How safe is your bathroom?

**Are the sink, bathtub, and shower faucets easy to use? No?** Install lever handles on the sink, bathtub, and shower faucets.

**Are the floor surfaces slippery? Yes?** Use non-skid mats or non-slip strips on the bathtub and shower floors.

**Are there grab bars in the bathtub/shower and toilet areas? No?**

Install grab bars in the bathtub, shower, and toilet areas.

**Is a low toilet seat making it hard to stand up? Yes?** Install a toilet seat extender, or consider purchasing a toilet with a higher chair.

**Are there exposed hot water pipes beneath the sink? Yes?** Insulate the hot water pipes beneath the sink.

**Do you have a handheld or adjustable-height showerhead? No?** Install a handheld or adjustable showerhead.

**Does the bathtub or shower have a bath seat? No?** Install a bath seat or bench in the tub or shower.

**Is the water heater set at 120°? No?** Set the water heater to 120° to avoid scalding.

**Is there good lighting? No?** Install the highest wattage bulb that's allowed for the fixture. Install a night light and replace the light switch with an illuminated button that can be seen in the dark.

**Are small electrical appliances (including hairdryers, curling irons, and shavers) plugged in when not used? Yes?** Unplug all electrical appliances when not in use.



# RSVP



**MLK DAY  
OF SERVICE**

## Dillons Stores Saturday, January 21st Noon to 4:00 PM



North and South  
Newton Kansas  
Food Drive Benefiting  
Harvey County  
Salvation Army

Everyone is invited  
to participate  
and build a  
stronger community.

Please call to volunteer  
to hand out flyers at the  
store locations by calling  
Mary Adams at 316.284.6881

## 2023 Medicare



While the costs of many goods and services have risen lately, there is still some good news to share. The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B enrollees will be \$164.90 for 2023, a decrease of \$5.20 from \$170.10 in 2022. The annual deductible for all Medicare Part B beneficiaries is \$226 in 2023, a decrease of \$7 from the annual deductible of \$233 in 2022. Visit the <https://www.cms.gov> website for the full article.

### Health Savings Account (HSA) and Medicare.

If you enroll in Medicare Part A and B, you can no longer contribute pre-tax dollars to your HSA. This is because to contribute pre-tax dollars to an HSA, you cannot have health insurance other than a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). The month your Medicare coverage begins, your account overseer should stop your financial contribution to your HSA. However, you may continue to withdraw money from your HSA after you enroll in Medicare to help pay for medical expenses, such as deductibles, premiums, copayments, and coinsurances. If you use the account for qualified medical expenses, its funds will continue to be tax-free. For more information, visit <https://www.medicare.gov>.

### Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids and Medicare

On October 17, 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) finalized its ruling on over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids being legally offered for sale without a medical exam, prescription, or professional fitting.

Currently, Medicare offers no hearing aid coverage. While some Medicare Advantage plans might it is limited.



National Council on Aging Adviser's hearing aid review provides everything you need to know to find the right device for your needs and budget, including a quick look at the best hearing aids of 2022.

<https://www.ncoa.org/adviser/hearing-aids/best-hearing-aids>





It is that time of year to start thinking about how thankful and blessed each of us is this year. Think about how one derives happiness and what drives one to help others. Harvey County charitable organizations seek help in meeting the needs of the underserved population. RSVP is grateful for the organizations that work to fulfill these community needs.

RSVP deeply appreciates the volunteers helping these organizations meet the community's needs and expresses gratitude toward the selfless and hard-working volunteers for their gift of time. These volunteers may help to do a small thing in the client's life, but it significantly improves their well-being.

Volunteerism is a gift, making a difference and strengthening the Harvey County community. By becoming an RSVP volunteer, you can serve as much or as little as you wish. Know that every hour given enhances the safety nets and ability of service non-profit organizations in Harvey County. Harvey County RSVP focuses on partnering with non-profit organizations offering Healthy Futures services. Activities include meal delivery, grocery shopping, companionship, and local community transportation.

RSVP is open to suggestions and comments on helping older adults with unmet needs, increased well-being, and contentment in later years. How can you help make a difference?

Let us hear from you,  
316-284-6881

**\*\* Volunteers time sheets are due by the 7th of each month \*\***

## Volunteer Opportunities

### Book Reviews

Saturday  
Clerks Two Shifts

### New Jerusalem

Front Desk Two shifts  
Lunch/Salads  
Landscaping

### Et Cetera Shop

Sorting Pricing  
2-4 Hour Shifts  
Maintenance Clerk  
2-4 Hour Shifts

### Meals on Wheels

Subs

### Join us

as an Advisory Council Member or know someone who would be interested, Please call Mary Adams  
316-284-6881

## Welcome New Volunteers

Robert Carlton  
Gary Denny  
Jane Eberle  
Sandy Wilson



## Meet the staff



**Lona Kelly, Director**

**Christy Estrada,  
Program Specialist**



**Karen Kaufman,  
Transportation  
Coordinator**

**Mary Adams,  
AmeriCorps RSVP  
Coordinator**



**Paula Whillock,  
RSVP Customer  
Service**

## Interurban Drivers



**Frenchy**



**Ed**



**Jerry**



Please join us in wishing Wayne Valentine a  
**\*\* Happy Retirement \*\***

Thank you for the thousands of miles you have traveled over the last four years. Each **MILE** adding another **SMILE** to a Harvey County Resident.



## Harvey Interurban

We believe that all community members should have the freedom of mobility and pride ourselves on providing service to every community member regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability.

### Our Services:

- ADA-compliant vehicles
  - Trained drivers secure mobility devices
- Medical Transportation
  - Local and surrounding counties
- Personal Appointments
- Recreational trips
- Rural AVI Shopping Trips
  - Tuesday afternoons
  - Rural outlying communities
- Advanced and recurring bookings
- Airport Transportation
- Discount Ridership Card
  - Income-based



## Non-Emergency Transportation



**HarveyCounty**

**Department on Aging**

800 N Main, PO Box 687  
Newton, KS 67114

Sign up for our

*As We Age*

Strengthening the Journey

Newsletter

**Harvey County**

**Department on Aging**

**316-284-6880**

**800 N Main, PO Box 687**

**Newton, KS 67114**

Email



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