



DECEMBER 2024

# As We Age

Strengthening the Journey

Harvey County Department on Aging Newsletter



Harvey County  
Department on Aging

## HOLIDAY CHALLENGE: SHARE THE GIFT OF COMPANIONSHIP!

The Harvey County Department on Aging challenges our readers to reach out in person or by phone to someone they have not seen or visited within six months. Have you noticed older adults who tend to stay indoors more frequently? Perhaps you've seen their absence from the neighborhood, grocery store, church, or senior center. Loneliness is feeling alone, disconnected, or distanced from others. In contrast, social isolation refers to a lack of social interactions and having few people to connect with regularly. It's crucial to understand that an individual can live alone without feeling lonely or socially isolated, while they can still experience loneliness even when in the company of others.

Loneliness and social isolation can have serious negative effects on the aging process. Research from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates that experiencing these feelings is akin to smoking 15 cigarettes a day, which adversely affects both life span and health span. These factors elevate the risk of various health issues, including cardiovascular disease, stroke, cognitive decline, and dementia, as well as mental health challenges like depression and anxiety, leading to a more than 60% increase in premature mortality. Older adults facing chronic illnesses, transportation issues, physical limitations, financial constraints, and the loss of family and friends are particularly vulnerable to the detrimental effects of social isolation and loneliness. Human beings thrive on social connections and a sense of community for their well-being.

The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, said, "Our relationships are a source of healing and well-being hiding in plain sight – one that can help us live healthier, more fulfilled, and more productive lives." "In the May 2024 news release, the Surgeon General highlighted the alarming effects of loneliness and isolation in the United States. Dr. Murthy urged the nation to "prioritize building social connections the same way we have prioritized other critical public health issues ... we can create a country that is healthier, more resilient, less lonely, and more connected."

Reach out to your doctor or health professional and urge others to do the same if you or they are experiencing isolation or loneliness. By sharing insights about physical, emotional, and mental states, along with discussing any major changes or stresses, you enable your doctor to pinpoint issues and offer valuable advice.

To shield yourself from the adverse effects of loneliness and social isolation, incorporate movement into your daily routine, maintain a healthy diet, ensure sufficient sleep (seven to nine hours), and engage in activities that bring joy. Individuals who participate in meaningful and fulfilling activities alongside others often experience a sense of purpose, leading to a longer and healthier life.

### 2025 New Year's Resolution

**Commit to building connections within the community, enriching the lives of others as well as your own.**

# Malnutrition in older adults



## What is Malnutrition?

Malnutrition occurs when our bodies do not receive enough nutrient-rich food. Various factors can lead to malnutrition, including loss of appetite, restrictive diets, difficulties with chewing and swallowing, and chronic health conditions. Additionally, individuals who struggle to access or prepare healthy meals are at increased risk. Social isolation can also play a significant role in this issue.

Nutrient density measures the nutrients provided per calorie of food. To improve your diet, focus on nutrient-dense whole foods over processed options, prioritize fresh items, and prepare meals at home. When enjoying sweets, choose those made with whole food ingredients instead of processed sugars.

## Effects of Malnutrition on Older Adults

- Weakness and fatigue
- Difficulty healing wounds
- Decreased muscle mass and strength
- Increased risk of falls and fractures
- Higher susceptibility to infections
- Rising medical expenses
- Inability to remain in their homes
- Greater risk of mortality
- Increased likelihood of hospitalization

## Malnutrition Screening Practices for Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs

Individuals aged 60 and above can access malnutrition screenings at the Central Plains Area Agencies on Aging. CPAAA also offers referrals to additional community and medical support services. For further details, contact CPAAA at 1-855-200-2372 or visit their website at <https://www.cpaaa.org/>

## Factors Contributing to Malnutrition:

As people age, changes in smell, taste, and appetite can adversely affect their eating habits. Health issues, dental challenges, cognitive decline, medications, dietary restrictions, and limited financial resources can also contribute to malnutrition in older adults. This problem often arises from inadequate food consumption or a diet deficient in vital nutrients. However, it is commonly influenced by a mix of physical, social, and psychological factors.

Adults over 50 require fewer daily calories due to decreased activity, muscle loss, and slower metabolism. The 2020 Dietary Guidelines suggest 1,800 calories for moderately active women aged 61 and older and 2,400 calories for moderately active men. Sedentary women should consume 1,600 calories, while sedentary men should aim for 2,000 calories. Individual caloric needs may vary, so consult a healthcare provider for personalized guidance.

## Explore Community Resources

**The Older Americans Act (OAA)** provides a range of services such as information, legal assistance, caregiver support, in-home aid, transportation, and nutrition programs for older individuals. These services are accessible at no cost with optional contributions based on the service and income guidelines. Individuals must be 60 or older to qualify, with potential variations for the Family Caregiver Support Program. For more information on these programs in Harvey County, contact the Department on Aging at 316-284-6880.

**Area Senior Centers in Harvey County:** The senior centers host OAA and other meal programs that include congregate and home delivered meal services. Senior nutrition programs promote better nutrition with an opportunity to socialize, reduce feelings of isolation, and improve health and overall quality of life in their later years.

- Halstead Senior Citizens Center, Phone: 316-835-2283, Address: 523 Poplar St, Halstead, KS 67056
- Hesston Area Senior Center, Phone: 620-327-5099, Address: 108 E Randall St, Hesston, KS 67062
- Newton Area Senior Center, Phone: 316-283-2222, Address: 122 E 6th St, Newton, KS 67114
- Sedgwick Senior Center, Phone: 316-772-0393, Address: 107 W 5th St, Sedgwick, KS 67135

**Newton Meals on Wheels (MOW) 316-283-3500:** Must be 60 years or older, homebound due to a disability or lack of mobility, unable to prepare meals, and live within the delivery area of a Meals on Wheels program. MOW is supported by OAA funding.

**Store to Door, 316-284-6881:** Harvey County RSVP Store to Door (grocery shopping for homebound persons)

**Mom's Meals Delivery for Seniors, 1-877-508-6667:** The service offers tailored meals for medical needs like diabetes, gluten-free, vegetarian, and heart-friendly options. Some customers may qualify for reduced or no-cost meal deliveries through OAA in remote areas of Butler, Harvey, and Sedgwick Counties, Medicare Part C, or certain Medicaid programs. For those not eligible, meals can be purchased for under \$10.

**Magic Kitchen Meal Delivery for Seniors, 1-800-766-1765:** Magic Kitchen offers meal delivery services for seniors with meal plan programs, individual meals, and a la carte options. They provide nutritious meals without contracts or subscriptions, catering to special diets. Meals range from \$11 to \$15, with a la carte options under \$10.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program, 316-267-0511:** This is a Monthly food program through the United States Department of Agriculture for low-income older adults aged 60 and above and 130% of the federal poverty level.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** provides food benefits to low-income families by supplementing their grocery budget so they can afford nutritious food. Contact DCF Office 316-283-3015.

### Food and other assistance programs in Harvey County:

- Agape Resource Center 316-283-1600
- Burrton Food Pantry, United Methodist Church 620-463-4155
- City of Sedgwick, City Hall 316-772-5151
- Harvey County United Way 316-283-7101
- Hesston Resource Center 620-327-2729
- New Jerusalem Mission 316-282-2101
- Newton Christian Church 316-283-5998
- Our Lady Of Guadalupe, The Lord's Pantry 316-283-3499
- The Salvation Army Harvey County 316-283-3190



**New Hope Shelter** 316-283-7711 serves homeless men, women, and children from Harvey, Butler, Marion, and McPherson Counties located at 308 S. Meridian Rd, Newton, KS 67114

# UNKNOWN TEXT



A text message from an unknown number that simply states, "Hi, how are you?" or "Are you home?" may seem like an innocent mistake. Your immediate reaction might be to respond, hoping it's someone you recognize, or perhaps to inform them of the wrong number. However, it's wiser to disregard these types of messages entirely. Scammers often use this tactic as a way to initiate conversation, so it's best not to reply. If you do respond, here's what could unfold next.

The individual on the other end (a scammer) will likely apologize and attempt to keep the conversation alive to gain your trust. Once they feel they have your confidence, they may start offering advice on investing in cryptocurrency or claim they can reveal secrets to making substantial profits in the crypto market—naturally, for a fee. But remember, this is all a scam designed to take your money.

Even if you merely reply without engaging further, you confirm that your number is active, which could result in receiving even more calls and texts from scammers.

What steps can you take to steer clear of scams when receiving messages from unfamiliar numbers?

- Avoid replying to texts from unknown sources, as this could lead to a scam. Instead, delete and report them using the "report junk" option on your phone or by forwarding unwanted texts to 7726 (SPAM) and unwanted emails to your email provider.
- Refrain from clicking on links in unexpected messages. Some links may compromise your personal information or install malware that gives scammers access to your device.
- Be cautious of anyone promising quick and easy money. Every investment carries risks, and only scammers will guarantee substantial returns in a short period with no risk involved.

Have you fallen victim to a scam like this? Report your experience to the Federal Trade Commission at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud).

## Health Fair 2025



223 E. 7th Newton, KS 67114  
Saturday, January 11, 2025,  
9 AM to 12:30 PM

**The Department on Aging will  
present two informative sessions.**

**Aging in Place at 9:30 AM**

**Medicare Overview 11:30 AM**

### What Actions Can You Take to Protect Yourself After a Data Breach?

Data breaches can significantly threaten your identity and financial security. Start by freezing your credit report with all three major credit reporting agencies, either online or by phone:

- Experian: 1-888-397-3742
- Equifax: 1-800-685-1111
- TransUnion: 1-888-909-8872

Next, update your passwords with unique combinations for each account. Ensure they are strong by mixing uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols, with a minimum of 12 characters. Enable two-factor authentication for extra security. Remain vigilant against unusual calls, emails, texts, or letters. Scammers may exploit information available on the Dark Web, such as your Social Security or Medicare number, to deceive you into believing their communications are genuine. Take your time to spot the signs of a phishing scam.



# Caregiving Corner

## Dementia and Holidays, Realistic, Positive Approach

Planning holidays with loved ones who have dementia involves balancing enjoyment with addressing care changes.

Tips for a Meaningful Holiday:

- One of the most effective ways to reduce stress during the holidays is to plan ahead. Start by creating a detailed schedule that includes activities, meals, and rest periods. Stick to routines as much as possible to provide a sense of structure.
- If you're celebrating the holidays at home, try to make the environment familiar. Decorate the house gradually, so your loved one can adjust to the changes. Play their favorite music and enjoy favorite activities.
- Diet can play a significant role in managing stress for individuals with dementia. Prepare easy-to-eat and familiar foods that are suitable for their condition. Avoid excessive sugar and caffeine, which can contribute to mood swings and increased confusion.

Remember to take care of yourself. Caregiving can be emotionally and physically draining, especially during the holidays. Make time for relaxation and don't hesitate to seek support from other family members or professionals when needed.



A MATTER OF  
BALANCE

## Enroll in 2025 classes

A Matter of Balance class helps reduce the fear of falling and increases activity levels among older adults. Call the Harvey County Department on Aging for more information at 316-284-6880.

## After the Holidays Do Your Parents Need Help?

After the holidays, reflecting on time spent with family may reveal changes in a loved one that signal a need for extra assistance. If you do feel a loved one needs additional help, the first step is to talk with them about it.

Initiating the conversation can be challenging, but expressing concern and listening can also create a safe space for a loved one to share their own feelings and challenges.

Express concern and observations. Begin in a place of love and concern. Use specific examples of what you have noticed, framing them as changes you've seen rather than problems. The goal is to avoid making a loved one feel defensive and provide space for an honest discussion about their needs.

Reassure them that asking for help is okay and not a weakness or failure. Offer assistance in finding suitable solutions, whether it's hiring in-home help, coordinating support from other family members, or exploring assisted living options. Discuss future plans together. Remember, this conversation is about collaboration. Call the Department on Aging at 316-284-6880 for information and referral to local services.



## TWO NEW PROGRAMS

### The Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers of Persons with Dementia or Persons with Chronic Conditions

The nine-week program comprises 90-minute weekly sessions, accommodating up to eight participants. The course is proven to reduce caregivers' stress, anger, hostility, anxiety and improving quality of life.

**Please call the Harvey County Department on Aging for information on our next class at 316-284-6880.**



**Mark your calendars for January 14, 2025!**

Volunteers from Harvey County RSVP are needed to prepare and serve a meal for the community. If you're interested in helping out for the MLK Day of Service, please reach out to Mary Wilson, RSVP Coordinator, at (316) 284-6881.

**Make a Difference in Your Community - Volunteer with Us!**

Are you 55 or older and looking for a meaningful way to give back? Join us in bringing meals, groceries, and much-needed support to socially isolated older adults in our community. By volunteering, you can make a real difference in the lives of others while enjoying connection and purpose.

**Why Volunteer?**

Our variety of programs not only provide essentials but also bring hope, companionship, and a friendly face to those who may be facing isolation. Your help can brighten someone's day and make them feel cared for.

**How You Can Help**

Whether you're delivering meals, picking up groceries, or checking in with a quick hello, your kindness will go a long way. We'll provide all the guidance and support you need, and you'll join a network of amazing volunteers who share your passion for service.

Let's make our community stronger together! If you're ready to volunteer, reach out today to Mary Wilson, RSVP Coordinator, at (316) 284-6881, by email at mwilson@harveycounty.com, or stop by the Harvey County Courthouse. We'd love to welcome you to our team!

**Harvey County RSVP 9/11 Remembrance Food Drive Success**

We're thrilled to announce the success of our recent food drive, organized as part of our 9/11 Remembrance Community Service Project. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we collected an incredible 1,208 pounds of food to benefit The Harvey County Salvation Army!

This achievement was made possible by our supportive community and the collaboration with Dillons grocery stores in Newton. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this effort. Your kindness and support make a difference for those in need in Harvey County!

*As 2024 comes to a close, I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the time and dedication you've shown in helping charities across Harvey County. Your efforts have made a true difference in the lives of so many, and I am constantly inspired by your commitment and generosity. Thank you for all that you do.*

*Wishing each of you a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and a joyous holiday season.*

*Warmest regards,*  
Mary Wilson, RSVP Coordinator



*Call to Action*

- Et Cetera Shop**
- Book Reviews**
- NMC Health**
- The Salvation Army**
- Harvest of Love**
- Department on Aging**
- Halstead Senior Center**
- Harvey County FACS**
- Harvey County Health Department**
- Harvey County RSVP Store-to-Door**
- Hesston Area Seniors Center**
- Newton Meals on Wheels**

*Happy Holidays, RSVP Volunteers!*

Let's welcome our new recruits:

- Charlene Berg
- Laurie Hall
- Lyle Jensen
- Cindy Simmons
- Dennis Veges

*Meet  
the  
Staff*



**Lona Kelly, Director**

**Christy Estrada,  
Program Specialist**



**Karen Kaufman,  
Transportation  
Coordinator**

**Mary Wilson,  
AmeriCorps RSVP  
Coordinator**



**Paula Whillock,  
AmeriCorps RSVP  
Customer Service**

**Interurban Drivers**



**Frenchy**



**Ed**



**Jerry**



**Wayne**



**Bob**



**Lenny**

**Harvey Interurban  
316-284-6802**

**Office Hours Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
(excluding county-approved holidays)**



Harvey Interurban provides transportation for Harvey County residents to cities in the surrounding counties, such as Wichita, McPherson, and Hutchinson, for medical and personal appointments. We also provide transportation to and from the Wichita airport.

- \$20 fare for out of county
- \$12 fare in the county
- \$8 within Newton for non-ambulatory persons  
(For ambulatory persons needing transportation within Newton, call OT Cab Company at 316-283-2960.)
- Transportation to and from Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport costs \$25 for an individual or \$35 for two people.

Interurban also offers an AVI shopping trip on Tuesday afternoons to ensure our rural communities can access affordable transportation to come into Newton for shopping. The AVI fare is \$6 for a round trip.

Reservations for appointments and non-emergency medical transportation are on a first-call, first-served basis with a minimum of 24-hour advance notice. A resident making reservations for Mondays must make them on the prior Friday and all reservations may be made up to a year in advance. All Harvey Interurban vehicles are ADA-accessible.

For Harvey Interurban monthly recreational trips, visit:  
<https://www.harveycounty.com/departments/transportation/trip-calendar.html>

**This project funded in part by the Kansas Department of Transportation KDOT,  
Public Transportation Program.**





**HarveyCounty**

**Department on Aging**

800 N Main, PO Box 687  
Newton, KS 67114

**Return Address Requested**

*As We Age*  
Strengthening the Journey

## **HUGS CAN HAVE MANY BENEFITS**

**HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED THAT HUGS CAN EFFECTIVELY COMBAT THE “STRESS HORMONE” CORTISOL AFTER A CHALLENGING EXPERIENCE? EMBRACING SOMEONE BEFORE A STRESSFUL SITUATION CAN ASSIST IN CALMING DOWN AND MAINTAINING COMPOSURE.**

**HUGS ARE LIKE A SUPERHERO FOR YOUR HEALTH, POWERING UP YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM, KEEPING YOUR HEART HAPPY, AND MELTING AWAY TENSION IN THOSE MUSCLES.**

**HUGS ARE LIKE A MAGICAL POTION, SPRINKLING ENDORPHINS TO TACKLE PAIN AND BOOST CIRCULATION.**

**HUGS SPEAK VOLUMES OF EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS THAT WORDS MIGHT MISS, BUILDING A DEEPER BOND THAN JUST CHATTING AWAY**

