



**APRIL 2026**

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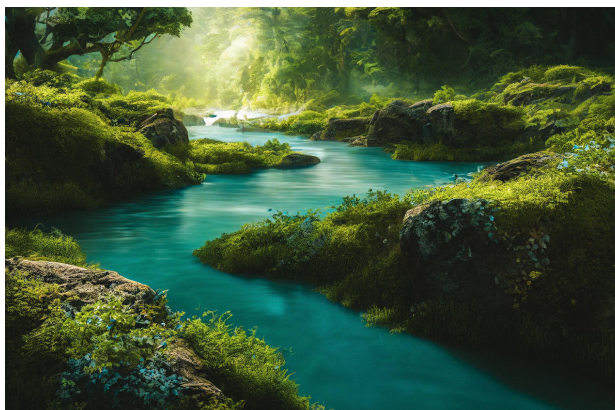
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**How to Spot AI** *By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team*

It seems like nowadays, artificial intelligence, or AI-generated content, is everywhere you look online. It can be frustratingly hard to decipher whether or not an image or video is real or was generated using AI. Below are some tips to try to help you spot AI:

- **Bad hands, facial, or other body features** – One sign of AI is if hands have the wrong number of fingers or proportions. Other body proportions may also look “off.” Also, the human face is naturally asymmetrical, but AI often produces symmetrical faces. That is another red flag.
- **Repeating patterns and textures** - Another common characteristic that you’ll find in AI-generated content is repeated patterns where you would normally expect randomness or chaos. You’ll often see this in hair and fur, foliage, wood, and other similar textures that should have a chaotic quality up close but have the appearance of repetition at a distance.
- **Misshapen text, unrecognizable logos, or inconsistencies in fine details** – AI image generators are notoriously bad at imitating text or logos. If you see a car with a brand logo you don’t recognize, that is a red flag. Another example would be a clock without hands or numbers.



• **Light rays, reflections, refraction, and shadows** – AI can be good at mimicking reality, but it’s not necessarily good at simulating reality. That is, it can make details such as reflections and shadows look plausible, but it can’t simulate what they would actually look like if the light was obeying the basic laws of physics. So, look for shadows where there should not be any or vice versa, or light where there is no light source.

To spot AI-generated videos, you would use the same concepts above. Additionally, AI videos might have unnatural or impossible content. For example, a video of a small dog carrying a giant tree through a front door, is most definitely AI.

AI-generated text or writing may have a repetitive structure or predictable phrasing that is overused. It might also be overly vague or specific and contain factual errors. AI may also use uncommon or incorrect punctuation such as overuse of semi colons or dashes.

If you are still concerned that text or images may be AI, there are websites and apps you can use to help detect AI-generated content. An example of one tool for images is <https://wasitai.com/>. Another website is <https://www.aiornot.com/> where you can check for AI in images or text. For text only, you can use <https://gptzero.me/> or a similar website to detect AI-generated content.

**Check out our website at [seniorreviewnewspapers.com](https://seniorreviewnewspapers.com)**

## Staff Spotlight: Kayla Colbenson

I have been with the Aging and Disability Resources Center of Chippewa County for 2 years. I was born and raised in Chippewa County and enjoy raising my two sons here now. When I am not working, I enjoy being outdoors or at sporting events with my boys.



As the Nutrition and Transportation Programs Supervisor for Meals on Wheels I oversee the coordination and daily operations of nutrition services and transportation programs that support older adults and individuals in need. This role supervises staff and volunteers, manages meal distribution and delivery logistics, and ensures compliance with nutrition, safety, and program regulations. The position helps ensure timely meal delivery and reliable transportation services that promote independence, health, and community well-being. I strive to stay up-to-date on the ever-evolving changes, challenges and funding issues in Nutrition and Transportation to better serve the members of our community.

## Bed Maker

In a perfect world, we'd all wake up with our sheets clean and our beds made. Until then, we've got a neat little device called the Bed Maker. This wedge-shaped tool does the heavy lifting—literally. By simultaneously lifting the mattress and tucking in the sheets, the toughest part of making your bed is done for you. Its simple, lightweight design relies on physics and gravity to do the work, instead of you. No more straining your back and jamming your fingers; just grab the easy-to-grasp handle, drape the sheets over the mattress, and wedge them in. When not in use, you can tuck it under your bed and out of sight. This device is perfect for those with arthritis, wheelchair users, and anyone with limited dexterity.



Similar items retail between \$20-40 on retailers such as Amazon or Walmart.

Compass IL offers the opportunity for individuals to borrow or try out items mentioned in our articles before making a purchase.

To learn more about this assistive device or other devices that can improve your independence, please contact Compass IL at 715-233-1070 or 800-228-3287. Our services are provided free of charge. However, we do not directly fund the purchase of assistive technology. Through the WisTech Assistive Technology Program, Compass IL provides a variety of services, including information on alternative financing options like WisLoan, Telework, and TEPP, upon request.

## The ADRC is Online!

Subscribe for FREE to get this eNewsletter emailed to you each month at [www.chippewacountywi.gov/adrc](http://www.chippewacountywi.gov/adrc) or scan the QR code below. You can always pick up this free newspaper at most local grocery stores, or pay \$16/year for a mailed subscription. **Call the ADRC at 715-726-7777.**

Website



Resource Guide



Facebook



Events



Leave Us a Review



eNewsletter



## Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Staff ... *Your Bridge to Support!*

- ADRC Manager – Sarah Zielke
- Administrative Assistants – Renee Price, Carmen Olson, Karen Herbison
- Benefit Specialist Assistant – Breanna Schemenauer
- Disability Benefit Specialist – Stephanie Rasmussen
- Elder Benefit Specialist – Cory Miller
- Nutrition & Transportation Programs Supervisor – Kayla Colbenson
- Nutrition Program Assistants – Jason Kolano, Jen Buckley
- Nutrition Site Aides – Sue Barnum, Linda Felmlee, Cindy Sarazen, Ann Mueller, Cindy Irish, Vicky Steinmetz
- Options Counselors – Sarah Hedlund, Erika Stevens, Jessica Gibson, Libby Leinenkugel, Brittany Lofquist

*Aging and Disability Resource Centers are the first place to go with your aging and disability questions. We are an "information station" where you can get accurate, unbiased information related to aging or living with a disability. Our job is to help you remain as independent as possible! Give us a call at 715-726-7777 or stop in at 711 N. Bridge Street (Courthouse), Room 118, Chippewa Falls.*

# Avoid a Medicare Part D Late Enrollment Penalty

By the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

If you do not enroll in a Medicare Part D plan when you become eligible you could receive a late enrollment penalty or LEP. If after your initial enrollment period, you fail to enroll in a Medicare Part D plan or do not enroll in creditable coverage for a continuous 63 days or more you will receive a LEP. This penalty increases every month that you go without Part D coverage after the 63 days. This penalty will attach to your Part D premium and will remain attached to your premium as long as you have a Part D plan. Below is an example of how the LEP is calculated.



### Example:

If you did not enroll in a Medicare Part D plan until 15 months after you became eligible for Medicare and you did not have creditable coverage, you would pay a 15% LEP in addition to your monthly Part D premium. This LEP is calculated using the national base beneficiary premium. For 2026 the national base beneficiary premium is \$38.99.

\$38.99 (2026 national base beneficiary premium)  
 X 0.15 (15% penalty)  
 \$5.85 (round to the nearest \$0.10)  
 \$5.90 is the LEP attached to your monthly Part D premium

The good news is that you have a few options to eliminate the LEP or avoid one altogether. You can enroll in creditable coverage instead of a Part D plan. Creditable coverage is coverage that pays for or covers, at a minimum, the same as a standard Medicare Part D plan. This coverage can come from some employer plans, military-related coverage, or you can sign up for SeniorCare. SeniorCare is creditable coverage that offers prescription drugs at reduced prices. This program will give you the creditable coverage you need to avoid a LEP.

Another option is to enroll in Extra Help. This program helps with Part D costs for low-income individuals. This program pays for premiums, deductibles, and copays for Medicare Part D plans. It also offers prescriptions at a lower cost. The program will eliminate a LEP.

One last option is to appeal the LEP. If you disagree with a LEP decision, you can request a reconsideration based on the reason indicated on the LEP notice from your Part D plan. You will need to fill out the Part D Late Enrollment Penalty Reconsideration Request form to request the appeal. The Medicare contractor will review the appeal and send notice of their decision, usually within 90 days.

Remember if you want to avoid a Part D LEP, you can enroll in a plan during your initial enrollment period. If you cannot afford this option, you can enroll in Extra Help, SeniorCare, or look at other creditable coverage options. If you receive a LEP and disagree, you have the option to appeal. Always review documents pertaining to healthcare coverage to ensure you avoid a lapse of coverage or unexpected costs.

## Stay Safe & Get Smart About AI FREE WORKSHOP

**Friday  
April 17  
1:00-2:30 pm**

UNITED WAY  
Greater Chippewa Valley

Join us for a seminar that blends internet safety with an introduction to artificial intelligence (AI). Learn how to protect yourself from online scams and identity theft, create strong passwords, and discover how tools that ChatGPT are showing up in everyday life. We'll discuss the benefits, risks, and give you a chance to try it out yourself - all in a supportive, easy-to-follow setting. No tech experience needed!

Presented by  
Dr. Stacy Martin, Community Impact Director -  
Digital Access & Engagement,  
United Way Greater Chippewa Valley

**Register at  
bit.ly/registerBPL**

For more information visit us at 1519 17th Ave.,  
online at [bloomerpubliclibrary.org](http://bloomerpubliclibrary.org) or call 715-568-2384.

Join us and begin

## Planning AHEAD

for the end of this life

**What is Planning AHEAD?**  
 Planning AHEAD is a 3-session course that guides participants through the topics on the right. This course features a workbook to help people with the tasks and decisions associated with end-of-life.

**Who is the program for?**  
 This program is for people who:

- Are interested in planning for the end of life to make things easier for family members
- Have lost a loved one
- Are in the process of losing a loved one and are dealing with the transition

**When is the program?**  
 April 16, May 21, and June 18 from 4:00pm-6:00pm  
 G.E. Bleskacek Family Memorial Library  
 1519 17th Ave, Bloomer, WI

**How do I sign up?**  
 No Fee Required  
 Contact the Chippewa County Extension Office at 715-726-7950 or by emailing [amber.gilles@wisc.edu](mailto:amber.gilles@wisc.edu).

**Planning AHEAD program topics**

- Getting Started**
- Handling Financial Changes**
- Advance Medical and Legal Directives**
- Estate Planning**
- Choices in End-of-Life Care**
- Final Wishes**
- Understanding Grief**

This class is taught by Jeanne Walsh, Chippewa County Human Development & Relationships Educator.

Scan or visit [go.wisc.edu/planning-ahead-participants](http://go.wisc.edu/planning-ahead-participants) to download a fillable copy of the Planning AHEAD workbook and get more information.

A hard copy of the workbook will be provided during the first session of the course.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.

**GENETIC TESTING SCAMS**

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is seeing genetic testing fraud and scams. Beneficiaries report that they are receiving calls from their medical providers with offers of genetic testing that is covered by Medicare. These callers are not their medical providers. Scammers are spoofing phone numbers and using phony information in order to scam Medicare beneficiaries. These scammers are stealing people's medical identity and falsely billing Medicare, draining the system of needed funds. Tests ordered under these circumstances are medically unnecessary and could lead to confusion about someone's health condition.

**SMP recommends that beneficiaries should:**

- Refuse to give out their personal information or accept screening services, including a cheek swab, from someone at a community event, a local fair, a farmer's market, a parking lot, and/or any other large event.
- Go to their own doctor to assess their condition, not a doctor on the phone they've never met from a company they don't know.
- Always read their Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB). The words "gene analysis" or "molecular pathology" as service codes may indicate questionable genetic testing.
- Refuse the delivery of any genetic testing kit that was not ordered by their physician.
- Be suspicious of anyone who offers free genetic testing and then requests their Medicare number. If their personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.



Report any suspected fraud or suspicious activity to the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol. Call 888-818-2611 to report fraudulent activity.

For more information, visit [www.smpwi.org](http://www.smpwi.org).



This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MPPG0102, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201

# April is National Volunteer Month!

*Thank you!*  
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

What a perfect opportunity to highlight the wonderful volunteers at the Aging and Disability Resource Center. Our volunteers make a difference in the lives of others by assisting with our Senior Dining and Meals on Wheels programs. Without the help of our volunteers to package, serve and deliver meals, these programs would not be possible. We greatly appreciate you!

Rewarding volunteer opportunities are available in all areas of Chippewa county and the number of hours is chosen by each volunteer. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with the ADRC, please contact us at 715-726-7777.

## National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is April 25, 2026

Resourced by [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](http://Wisconsin.Department.of.Health.Services).

Too often, unused and expired medications find their way into the wrong hands. That's dangerous and often tragic. Bringing unused and expired medications to a *Prescription Take Back Day* collection site protects you, your family, and your community.

**How to Participate**

It's easy to participate. Just stop by a collection event and drop your items into a bin. That's it. No questions are asked. You can be in and out of a collection event in minutes.

**To find drop-off locations in your area, check back here, after March 15.**

**The Following Items Are Not Accepted**

- Aerosol cans
- Sharps/syringes
- Anything containing blood or a bodily fluid
- Iodine containing medications
- Vape pens/e-cigarette devices with a built-in battery that cannot be removed
- Mercury thermometers
- Illegal drugs
- Household hazardous waste (paint, pesticides, oil, gas)
- Personal care products (shampoo, soaps, lotions, sunscreens, etc.)



**What to Bring**

Prescription and over-the-counter medications may be disposed of at Drug Take Back Day collection events, including:

- Capsules
- Creams
- Inhalers
- Non-aerosol sprays
- Ointments
- Patches
- Pills
- Vials

Liquids must be in their original container.

Pet medications are accepted.

Vape pens are accepted with the batteries removed. Other e-cigarette devices are accepted with the batteries removed. These batteries are highly flammable. That's why it is important that the batteries are removed before the pen or device is placed in a collection bin.



## Cremation Society of Wisconsin



- Professional
  - On-Site Crematory
  - Dignified
  - Economical
- [cremationsociety-wi.com](http://cremationsociety-wi.com)

**PLEASE SEND YOUR FREE-NO OBLIGATION BROCHURE ABOUT CREMATION TO:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**CREMATION SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN- 715.834.6411**  
**STOKES, PROCK & MUNDT FUNERAL CHAPEL - 715-832-3428**  
535 S. Hillcrest Parkway, Altoona WI 54720

## MEADOWBROOK Senior Living of Bloomer

CALL NOW TO SCHEDULE A TOUR!  
**(715) 383-5597**

**Fully Furnished & Move-in Ready One-Bedroom Apartments!**

- 2 LED TVs
- Couch & Recliner
- Keurig Coffee Maker
- Echo Show
- Memory Foam Bed & Comforter
- Spacious Living Apartment
- And so much more!



1840 Priddy Street | Bloomer, WI 54724

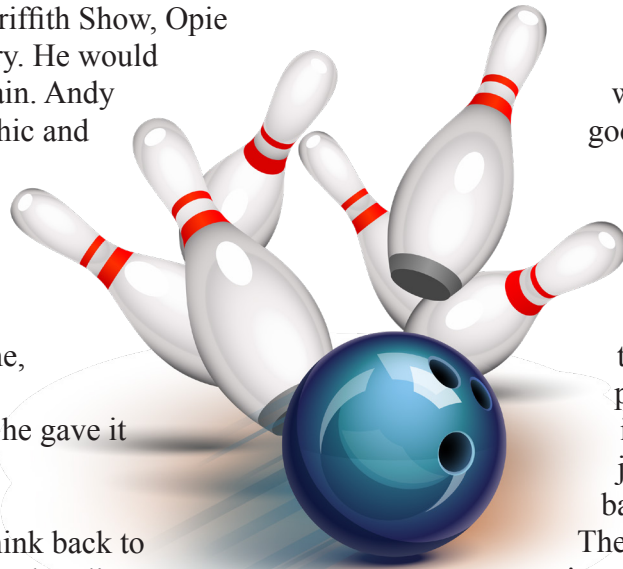
# Recalling My First Job By Ken Anderson, themayberryguru@gmail.com

In one of the later episodes of The Andy Griffith Show, Opie got his first job at the drugstore in Mayberry. He would be responsible for handling the soda fountain. Andy was very proud of his young son's work ethic and initiative.

Andy and Howard Sprague recalled their first jobs. Andy worked at the movie theater, running the popcorn machine. However, because he overfilled the machine, most of the popcorn had to be given away. Howard's first job was driving a truck, but he gave it up because it just wasn't for him.

Whenever I watch this episode, I always think back to my very first real job. I was a pinsetter at the bowling lanes at Dorchester Memorial Hall in Dorchester. I started setting pins in my freshman year of high school and continued for four more years until I graduated. Despite the hard work, it was a job that I enjoyed very much.

I did not get rich setting pins. I was paid ten cents a line. A line means setting the pins for one person for the entire game. So, if five people came in, they all bowled one game, I would make fifty cents. I set pins for league bowling, which meant I set the pins for



the entire team bowling three games. So, for one shift, I would make \$2.40. Some nights I would do two shifts. I thought making \$4.80 was good pay for about four hours of work. Quite often, I would work three nights a week.

It was hard work. I had to set two alleys at one time. I had to sit behind the pits, and when the pins were knocked down, I had to jump into the pit, lift the ball up to the return line, and then put the pins in the machine. By that time, the pins in the other lane were knocked down, so I had to jump into that pit and do the same thing. This was back-breaking work for my skinny 140-pound body. The one good thing was that there was always another pinsetter to work the other two lanes. So, there was always someone to talk to while working. However, I had to be very careful, so I did not get hit by either the ball or the flying pins.

I did get one fringe benefit for my hard work. On Monday nights, pinsetters could bowl for 10 cents a game. Most Monday nights, I would be found improving my bowling skills. I improved so much that I won trophies in my later years of league bowling. To this day, every time I hear bowling pins being knocked down, I get this nostalgic feeling of being a pin setter at Dorchester Memorial Hall.

**SERVICE with PASSION**

**DISCOVER THE DIFFERENCE**

Providing assisted living and memory care services in a thoughtfully designed community setting.

Experience the difference of a non-corporate, unconventional care provider like Comforts of Home.

### Need Extra Cash?

Tax credits lower the amount of taxes you owe. When a refundable tax credit is more than the taxes you owe, you receive money back. This page has information on tax credits working families can receive.

**NOTE:** Tax credits are not always counted as income for public assistance programs. Each program can help you understand if a tax credit you get will be counted as income, please ask your program worker if you have questions.

#### Wisconsin and Federal Earned Income Tax Credits

If you worked in 2025 you may be able to get the Wisconsin **and** federal earned income tax credits. Your tax credit amount is based on how many children you have and your family income.

The table below shows the maximum tax credit amount you could get from both earned income tax credits combined:

Number of Children	Maximum Household Income (2025)	Maximum Tax Credit Amount
0	\$19,104 (single) \$26,214 (married)	\$649
1	\$50,434 (single) \$57,554 (married)	\$4,501
2	\$57,310 (single) \$64,430 (married)	\$7,939
3 or more	\$61,555 (single) \$68,675 (married)	\$10,782

More information can be found at:  
[www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit](http://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit)  
 and  
[www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/eic.aspx](http://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/eic.aspx).

#### Federal Child Tax Credit

You may be able to get up to **\$2,200** for each dependent child younger than 17 if you worked in 2025. Up to \$1,700 can be refundable. More information can be found at:  
[www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/child-tax-credit](http://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/child-tax-credit).

#### Federal Child and Dependent Care Credit

You may claim the Child and Dependent Care Credit if you pay someone to care for a dependent(s) or an incapacitated spouse so you can earn income.

The maximum credit is **\$3,000** for one dependent and **\$6,000** for two or more dependents. The credit depends on family income and your qualified care expenses. More information can be found at:  
[www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc602.html](http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc602.html).

#### Wisconsin Homestead Credit

You may be able to get up to **\$1,168** if in 2025 you were a Wisconsin resident, and your household income was less than \$24,680. People who got a W-2 payment in **all 12 months** of 2025 are not eligible for this tax credit. More information can be found at:  
[www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/homestead.aspx](http://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/Individuals/homestead.aspx).

**NOT SURE IF YOU CAN GET THESE TAX CREDITS?  
GET FREE TAX HELP!**

Get free tax help at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. VITA sites are often at community centers, libraries, schools, shopping centers. **To find a local VITA site, call 800-906-9887 or visit [irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/](http://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/).** VITA sites are free and have electronic tax filing, which can result in a speedier tax return.

**NOTICE!** Some tax preparation companies offer money up front to do your tax return but charge you high interest rates and fees. Please read and understand all documents before signing an agreement.

Please post in public areas and provide to clients until APRIL 15, 2026.



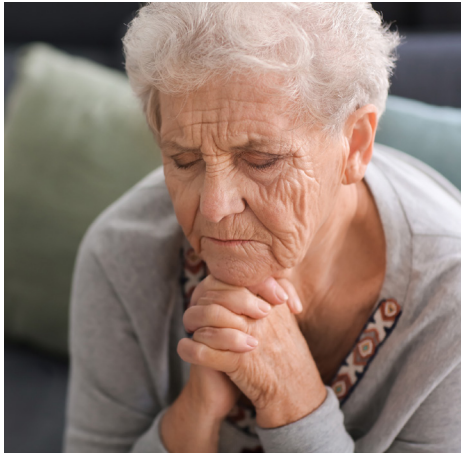
## GREAT LOCATIONS

Menomonie Chippewa Falls  
Hudson River Falls  
Baldwin St. Croix Falls

[www.COHSeniorLiving.com](http://www.COHSeniorLiving.com)

# What is Sundowning?

Sundowning is a common symptom of dementia. It usually occurs late afternoon or early evening. It is estimated that 30-60% of people living with dementia will have sundowning symptoms. The symptoms can include: agitation, emotional outbursts, restlessness, paranoia, wandering and rummaging. Although we do not truly understand why this happens, there are some theories:



3. It can also be part of unused energy if the person with dementia takes a lot of naps during the day and does not have meaningful activities as part of their daily routine.
4. They may be in pain or hungry and may not be able to find the words to express it to you.
5. Their medications may wear off in the late afternoon.

The additional challenge of sundowning is that the caregiver is often tired at this time of day too. So, their ability to help their person living with dementia may be limited too.

So, now that you know more about Sundowning. Here are some strategies to try to reduce the symptoms of sundowning:

1. As the day wears on, they wear out. They are exhausted from making sense of a confusing world all day
2. Late afternoon may have been a typical shift in activities in earlier years, such as driving home from work and starting supper.

1. Limit sugar and caffeine as they are already revved up!
2. Look for triggers, is there something disturbing on TV? Are they over-stimulated?
3. Close the blinds, reflections on the windows can be confusing.
4. Limit daytime naps to 30 minutes, once a day.
5. Encourage good sleep. By limiting daytime naps and including meaningful activities and exercise into their day, also consider creating a consistent sleep routine and restful environment.

**Chippewa Valley Dementia Coalition**  
Presents the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual:



Thursday  
**JUNE 11, 2026**  
8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Chippewa Valley Technical College  
771 Scheidler Road, Chippewa Falls

**FOR PROFESSIONALS AND FAMILY CAREGIVERS**



**Dr. Barbara Bendlin**  
School of Medicine and  
Public Health  
UW-Madison

**Join us for the 2nd Annual Chippewa Valley Dementia Conference! A day designed to offer practical tools, shared learning, and a supportive space with others who understand the realities of dementia care.**

**All attendees will enjoy:**

- Take-home materials from keynotes and breakout sessions
- Direct access to speakers and exhibitors for Q&A
- Meaningful connection with other caregivers
- Insight into valuable Chippewa Valley resources
- Continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon refreshments
- Certificates of attendance if needed
- Cost to attend: \$25
- Scholarships available, contact your local ADRC

If you need respite care to attend the event, consider using supportive home care or adult day programs. Contact your local ADRC for more information.

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

<https://bit.ly/dementiaconf26>  
by Friday, June 5, 2026.










## VIRTUAL DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUPS



All support groups listed are provided by Dementia Care Specialist at the Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) throughout Wisconsin. Join us for support, encouragement and resources. The groups listed are for those living in or caring for someone living in Wisconsin. For more information on local dementia resources near you, contact your local ADRC.

**MONDAY COFFEE CONNECT** **EVERY MONDAY 10:00- 11:00 AM**

This support group is for caregivers of loved ones living at home, it offers a safe, welcoming space to connect with other caregivers weekly. Ask questions, gain support, and brainstorm solutions—participate by video or phone via Microsoft Teams. For more information contact Kelsey at [kflock@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:kflock@lacrossecounty.org)

**MONDAY D.I.S.H.** **1<sup>ST</sup> MONDAY OF THE MONTH 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

This group was created to support adult working children, friends and spouses of someone living with dementia. Join us as we support each other working through challenges and sharing strategies. To join, contact Carla at [cberscheit@dunncountywi.gov](mailto:cberscheit@dunncountywi.gov)

**CIRCLE OF SUPPORT** **3<sup>RD</sup> TUESDAY OF THE MONTH 2:00-3:00 PM**

Is a support group for people caring for someone living with brain changes. Join to share encouragement, resources and struggles with each other. Contact Teresa at [teresa.gander@vernoncountywi.gov](mailto:teresa.gander@vernoncountywi.gov)

**EVENING CONVERSATIONS** **2<sup>ND</sup> THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 7:00 - 8:00 PM**

This support group is for people caring for someone with brain changes. Join us as we share education, strategies, challenges, encouragement and resources. Contact Teresa at [teresa.gander@vernoncountywi.gov](mailto:teresa.gander@vernoncountywi.gov)

**MINDS & VOICES** **2<sup>ND</sup> WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH 10:30 - 11:30 AM**

A virtual advocacy group for people living with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or living with any form of dementia. We meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday from 10:30-11:30am. Building a better tomorrow starts with the making changes today. Your voice, opinions, and feedback matter. Contact Tonya at 920-675-4035 or [tonyar@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:tonyar@jeffersoncountywi.gov)

to find an ADRC near you [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc)



D.R. MOON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

# COMFORT CORNER

**A MEMORY CAFE PROGRAM FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA AND THEIR CAREGIVERS**

**APRIL 29**

🕒 1PM-2:30PM

📍 STANLEY FIRE STATION

- ACTIVITIES
- REFRESHMENTS
- GAMES
- SOCIALIZATION

📍 239 E 1ST AVE. STANLEY WI 📞 715-644-2004

*MADE POSSIBLE WITH FUNDING FROM THE CHIPPEVA VALLEY DEMENTIA COALITION*



# Dementia Support Group

*This group is for people living with dementia and their caregivers, friends and neighbors. Join us for support, strategies and resources*

**2nd Thursday of the month**  
**1 pm - 2:30 pm**

Central Lutheran Church  
28 East Columbia Street Chippewa Falls



For more information, contact the ADRC at 715-726-7777

## DEMENTIA P.A.C.T.

**Positive & Assertive Caregiver Training**



JOIN US FOR FREE QUARTERLY TRAININGS TO INCREASE YOUR SKILLS AS A CAREGIVER. ALL TRAININGS WILL BE HELD AT **ASPIRUS STANLEY HOSPITAL FROM 10AM - 11:30AM**

**COPING SKILLS FOR CAREGIVERS**  
**FEBRUARY 10**

Caregiving can take a toll. Learn practical strategies to care for yourself while caring for others

**DICE APPROACH TO DEMENTIA**  
**AUGUST 11**

Sometimes people with dementia can have behaviors related to their brain changes. Learn practical strategies to manage them.

**DEMENTIA LIVE**  
**MAY 12**

Have you ever wondered what it might feel like to have dementia? Come and check out our dementia simulation!

**DEMENTIA & HOME SAFETY**  
**NOVEMBER 10**

Learn low tech and high tech devices that can help keep your loved one safe at home.

Join Hannah Quicker, Dementia Care Specialist to gain knowledge, understanding and resources.



Attend some or all of the trainings

Registration is required



📞 715-644-6153

✉ Diane.Finn@aspirus.org

# Lake Hallie Memory Care

A happier life for everyone...

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*Celebrating 12 Years of Exceptional Care*



📞 **715-738-0011**

📱 @MemoryCarePartners

Virtual tour available at: [LakeHallieMemoryCare.com](http://LakeHallieMemoryCare.com)

## Healthy Living Programs Available to YOU

The ADRC of Chippewa County has made arrangements with the ADRC of Eau Claire County to allow Chippewa County residents the ability to enroll in any of their healthy living programs. If you would like more information about any of these programs or would like to register, please call the ADRC of Eau Claire County at 715-839-4735 or go to [www.adrcevents.org](http://www.adrcevents.org)

### Stepping On fall prevention program

Are you feeling unsteady on your feet? Stepping On can help you avoid a dangerous and costly fall so you can keep doing the things you love to do. In just 7 weeks, you will learn strategies for avoiding falls including balance and strength exercises, home safety modifications, medication review and more. Guest experts include a physical therapist, pharmacist and others who visit over the course of the seven sessions. The workshop is designed specifically for people who are aged 60 or older and have fallen or have a fear of falling. Participants can expect to finish the program with more strength, better balance and a feeling of confidence and independence.

Tuesdays, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm/ **April 7 - May 19, 2026**  
Lake Street Methodist Church, 337 Lake Street, Eau Claire

### Mind Over Matter: Healthy Bowels, Healthy Bladder

If you have issues with bladder or bowel control, you are not alone. More than half of women aged 50 or older experience urine or bowel leakage sometimes! The Mind Over Matter; Healthy Bowels, Healthy Bladder workshop is designed to give women the tools they need to take control of their symptoms. Scientific studies show that attending this workshop reduces or even cures symptoms for many women. Even if you don't have symptoms now, it's never too early or too late to think about your bladder and bowel health.



Three-session workshop for older women includes information, group activities, and simple exercises to do at home.

Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:30 am/ April 9, 23 & May 7, 2026  
Lake Street Methodist Church, 337 Lake Street, Eau Claire

**REGISTER** at least one week prior: Call the ADRC at 715-839-4735 or go to [www.adrcevents.org](http://www.adrcevents.org).



### Join us for the StrongBodies Program!

StrongBodies has been shown to increase strength, muscle mass, and bone density. Classes are held twice weekly and include progressive resistance training, balance training, and flexibility exercises.

For more information, contact the ADRC of Chippewa County at 715-726-7777

### Virtual StrongBodies - Spring Series

Dates: April 7 - June 25, 2026

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 - 10:15 am

Deadline to register: Friday, May 1st

Offered virtually via Zoom

How to Sign Up: Call 715-726-7777



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

## NO NEW MEDICARE CARD



Have you been told you need a new Medicare card?

**STOP!  
It's a scam**

### Here's the truth

- Medicare is NOT issuing plastic cards
- You do NOT need to 'update' your Medicare Card
- Medicare will NEVER call or text you asking for your Medicare number

### Protect Yourself

- Never give out your Medicare number to unexpected callers
- Hang up on anyone asking for personal information
- Report suspicious calls to SMP



**Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol**

**888-818-2611**

[www.smpwi.org](http://www.smpwi.org)

Preventing Medicare Fraud

SMPs are grant-funded projects of the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL).

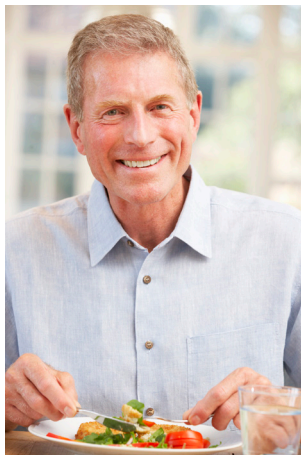
Visit our website at [seniorreviewnewspapers.com](http://seniorreviewnewspapers.com) for a FREE email subscription!

# Supporting Healthy Aging from the Inside Out: Why Gut Health Matters

By Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

Protecting our health often means focusing on heart health, mobility, memory, and independence. But one powerful and often overlooked factor connects them all: gut health.

The gut microbiome — the trillions of bacteria living in our digestive tract — plays a critical role in digestion, immune function, inflammation regulation, metabolism, and even brain health. A diverse and balanced gut microbiome helps regulate blood sugar, supports cardiovascular and immune health, and keeps your digestive system working well.



This is very important as we age. Chronic inflammation and metabolic imbalances are key drivers of many chronic conditions. A healthy gut can help reduce inflammation, strengthen the immune system, and support metabolic health — all essential for maintaining resilience and independence.

## How Whole, Minimally Processed Foods Help

One of the simplest and most effective ways to support gut health is to eat whole, minimally processed foods. Highly processed foods are often low in fiber and high in added sugars and refined ingredients. Research has linked high consumption of ultra-processed foods with increased risk of cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions.

Whole foods provide the fiber and nutrients that feed beneficial gut bacteria and help your microbiome thrive.

## Key Takeaways for Healthy Aging

- **Eat a variety of whole foods:** Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean proteins (like fish, chicken or turkey breasts, eggs, tofu, and/or legumes), and healthy fats (such as olive oil, avocado, nuts, and some dairy) support a diverse and healthy gut microbiome.
- **Choose balanced dietary patterns:** Overall eating patterns support gut health better than focusing on single “superfoods” or supplements.
- **Minimize ultra-processed foods:** Packaged and highly processed foods can reduce microbial diversity and promote inflammation.
- **Each person has unique food preferences and potential sensitivities:** It is helpful to explore what is best for your individual health by working with a dietician in order to determine your unique situation and dietary requirements.

Dietary patterns rich in whole, minimally processed foods are consistently associated with lower risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions — all central to healthy aging.

## Bottom Line

Healthy aging isn’t just about adding years to life — it’s about adding life to years. While each person has unique nutritional needs, nourishing your gut with whole, minimally processed foods is a simple, practical, evidence-based step toward staying active, engaged, and independent.

# The Power of Staying Connected

By Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)

At WIHA, we know that healthy aging includes caring for our relationships as much as our bodies. Social connection means talking with friends, spending time with family, and feeling like we belong. Strong social ties are linked to better health and longer life. A recent research brief notes that strong social support has been shown to slow biological aging and help people stay healthier longer.



## Why Social Connection Helps Us Thrive

As we age, staying connected becomes even more important. Loneliness and social isolation are linked to increased risk of heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline. Regular face-to-face contact may help reduce feelings of loneliness more effectively than phone or online contact. When we share time with others, we feel supported, valued, and happier, and that positive mood helps to stay engaged in life.

## Everyday Ways to Build Connection

Connection can happen in many simple ways. You might call a friend, have lunch with a neighbor, join a class, or help out at a local event. Even small acts like saying hello or sharing a story can lift someone’s spirits. Making time for meaningful conversations and group activities helps keep minds active and hearts full.

## A Wisconsin Effort to Help Everyone Connect

The Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection works to make social connection a priority for older adults and people with disabilities. The coalition brings together community groups, service providers, and individuals to share ideas and programs that help people build relationships and feel a sense of belonging. Learn more about the benefits of staying connected on our partner website: <https://connectwi.org>

## A Simple Step Today

Healthy aging is not just about diet or exercise. It also includes nurturing friendships and community ties. Reach out to someone today, join a local event, or invite a neighbor for coffee. Every connection we make can help us feel happier, healthier, and more energized. Together, we can build communities where everyone has a chance to age well and stay connected.

## All About Cabbage

### A Vegetable with Ancient Roots

Cabbage has been cultivated for over 4,000 years and was highly valued in ancient civilizations like Ancient Rome for its medicinal properties. Today, it's grown worldwide and remains a staple in many global cuisines.

From hearty European dishes to spicy Asian specialties, cabbage is incredibly versatile. It thrives in cooler climates and belongs to the cruciferous vegetable family—alongside broccoli, kale, and Brussels sprouts.



### Popular Types of Cabbage:

- Green Cabbage – The most common type, with tightly packed pale green leaves. Perfect for coleslaw and stir-fries.
- Red (Purple) Cabbage – Slightly peppery with a vibrant color that brightens salads and tacos.
- Savoy Cabbage – Wrinkled, tender leaves and a milder flavor.
- Napa Cabbage – Elongated and softer, often used in Asian cuisine.

One of the most famous cabbage-based dishes is Sauerkraut, a fermented German specialty rich in probiotics.

### Nutritional Powerhouse

Cabbage is low in calories but high in nutrients. One cup of raw green cabbage provides:

- High in Vitamin C (immune support)
- Rich in Vitamin K (bone health)
- Good source of fiber (digestive health)
- Contains antioxidants
- Supports heart health

It also contains compounds called glucosinolates, which may help reduce inflammation and support the body's natural detox systems.

### Health Benefits at a Glance

1. Boosts Immunity - Thanks to its high vitamin C content.
2. Supports Gut Health - Especially when fermented, like in Kimchi, a traditional Korean staple.
3. Promotes Heart Health - Red cabbage contains anthocyanins, which may reduce cardiovascular risk.
4. May Help Reduce Cancer Risk - Cruciferous vegetables are being studied for their protective effects.

### Cooking with Cabbage

#### Cooking Tips

- Don't overcook—it can become mushy and release a strong sulfur smell.
- Slice thin for salads and slaws.
- Roast wedges for a caramelized, slightly sweet flavor.
- Use large leaves as wraps instead of tortillas.

### Fun Cabbage Facts

- Cabbage is about 92% water.
- It was once used by sailors to prevent scurvy due to its vitamin C content.
- The heaviest cabbage ever recorded weighed over 138 pounds!

### Final Thoughts

Cabbage might not always steal the spotlight, but it's one of the most nutritious, affordable, and versatile vegetables you can add to your plate. Whether raw, roasted, or fermented, this humble veggie truly deserves a place in your kitchen.

## APRIL RECIPE:

### Garlic Butter Roasted Cabbage Steaks

#### Ingredients

- 1 large green cabbage
- 3 tablespoons olive oil or melted butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional: paprika or grated Parmesan cheese

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Remove outer leaves and slice cabbage into 1-inch thick "steaks."
3. Mix olive oil (or butter) with minced garlic.
4. Brush both sides of cabbage slices.
5. Season with salt, pepper, and optional spices.
6. Roast for 25–30 minutes, flipping halfway through.
7. Serve warm and enjoy!

*Pair it with grilled chicken, fish, or enjoy as a plant-based main dish!*

**Do you want to have your favorite recipe featured in our newsletter?**

Write down your favorite recipe and mail it to us for your chance to see your recipe featured in one of our monthly newsletters. Include your name and where you are from.

Send us your favorite recipe to:  
Aging and Disability  
Resource Center  
711 N. Bridge Street Rm 118  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

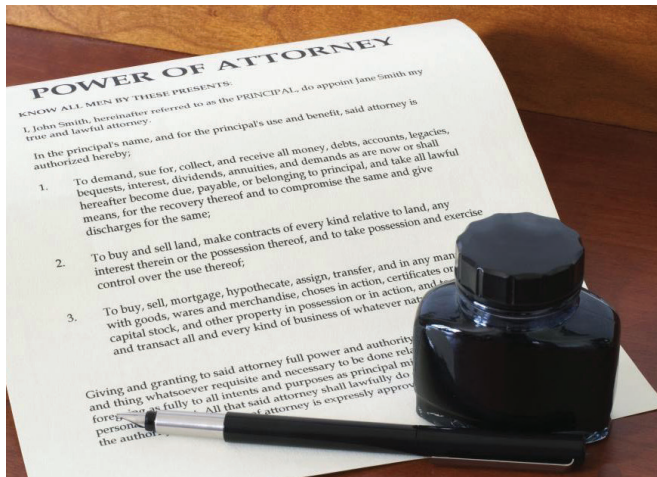


**Thank you to the family of Shirley Rosenow for their donation to the Chippewa County Meals on Wheels Program in her memory**

# Advance Directives: What They Are and Why You Need Them

By Polly Shoemaker, Managing Attorney, Wisconsin Guardianship Support Center

April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day! This movement became nationally recognized in 2008 to help raise awareness of the importance of advance care planning, to empower people to draft advance planning documents, and to encourage discussions with family members and medical professionals about healthcare wishes. In general, Wisconsin doesn't automatically allow family members to make decisions, so having advanced directives in place is the best way to ensure that the person has a say in who their decision-maker is and what types of decisions they can make.



A POA for Health Care document can also grant an agent authority to make these decisions. A Living Will can serve as a helpful backup, though, in case agents are ever unable or unwilling to make these decisions. A Living Will also typically stays in place if a guardian is ever needed and can provide guidance to the guardian.

Like a POA for Health Care, the Living Will must be witnessed by two witnesses.

## Authorization for Final Disposition

The Authorization for Final Disposition allows a person to indicate their funeral and

burial/cremation preferences in writing and to appoint a representative to carry out those wishes upon the person's death. If no representative is appointed, Wisconsin law indicates that a surviving spouse, adult child, parent, adult sibling, or guardian (in that order) can make funeral and burial decisions on behalf of a decedent.

The Authorization for Final Disposition can be witnessed by two witnesses or signed in front of a notary. The representative does not need to sign it at the same time as the individual, but they do need to sign it before they can act.

The Guardianship Support Center's website (<https://gwaar.org/guardianship-resources>) includes links to forms, more information on advance directives, and Do-It-Yourself Guides. The Department of Health Services also has the statutory forms for all of these documents available on its website (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/advdirectives/adformspoa.htm>); most are available in multiple languages.

## Myth-busting false beliefs about POAs:

### 1. I do not need a POA because my spouse or family can make decisions on my behalf.

a. Wisconsin is not a "next of kin" state, meaning that family members do not have inherent authority to make decisions solely based on their relationship with you. Authority must be specifically given to a person through a POA or a court order for guardianship.

### 2. I do not need a POA until I am older or sick.

a. Too often, people wait until it is too late to do advance planning. If a person no longer has the capacity to execute a POA document, then a court may need to appoint a guardian. All adults over the age of 18 should consider creating advance directives.

### 3. Once I create a POA, I'm set for life.

a. The POA documents are not locked in stone. They can be revoked or re-executed at any time. The Wisconsin Medical Society recommends that advance planning documents be reviewed if any of the 4 "d's" occur:

- **Death** (if any of the agents named in your POA pass away)
- **Decade** (if it has been more than 10 years since you drafted or reviewed your documents)
- **Divorce** (if you subsequently get a divorce after drafting your POA—in Wisconsin, if you named your spouse as agent, your POAs may be automatically revoked or the agent's authority may terminate)
- **Disease** (if you become sick or are diagnosed with an illness).

The law on advance care planning documents and authority varies by state. In Wisconsin, practitioners typically recommend the following documents:

- Power of attorney for finances
- Power of attorney for healthcare
- Living Will (optional)
- Authorization for Final Disposition (burial & funeral arrangements)

Advanced directives can be executed with or without an attorney. While the basic forms are available online for free, an attorney can provide legal advice and counseling based on the person's specific circumstances to make sure their wishes can be carried out as desired.

## Powers of Attorney

Powers of attorney (POAs) provide authority for someone to make financial and/or healthcare decisions for another person. Powers of attorney documents are valid once they are signed, but the agent does not have authority to act on behalf of the principal until the document is activated. Healthcare POA are usually activated if the individual becomes incapacitated. Financial POAs can be activated immediately or upon a future event. A POA agent's authority ends if the document is deactivated or revoked. The agent's authority also ends at the person's death.

A Power of Attorney for Health Care does not need to be notarized, but it must be witnessed by two disinterested witnesses. Disinterested means the witnesses are not:

- The agent
- Related to the person
- Financially responsible for the person's care
- An heir

A healthcare provider/facility or employee who is currently providing care to the person, unless they are a social worker or chaplain – these two types of health care employees may serve as witnesses.

A Power of Attorney for Finances & Property typically does need to be notarized before banks and other financial institutions will accept it.

## Living Will/Declaration to Health Care Professionals

A living will is similar to a Power of Attorney for Health Care, but it has some important differences. A living will allows the person to specify their wishes for end-of-life care, such as whether feeding tubes and other life-sustaining treatment should be used. It directs the person's healthcare providers to carry out those wishes if the person is incapacitated and cannot decide for themselves. It does not grant authority to an agent and it does not allow any other decisions.

# The Simplest Ways to Support the Caregivers in Your Life

By The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources Legal Services Team

We set up meal trains when someone has a baby. What can we do for people who are taking care of adults?

I have a group chat with my four closest childhood friends. We are part of the sandwich generation, a category of adults with older parents who are still raising kids. So our video messages, shared on a social media app, include everything from teenage drama and college applications to dementia and power of attorney.

“Wouldn’t it be great if all of our parents could just get the same disease,” I joked to the group a few months ago. “We’d all know what’s coming and could establish best practices!”

An hour later, I opened a message from my friend Hallie, who was laughing as she said, “Elizabeth, have you forgotten that three of our dads had Parkinson’s?”

I had indeed. Clearly, no best practices emerged.

But we provide emotional support — and practical help, too. When my mother had surgery last winter, and my hometown was expecting an ice storm, a friend’s husband offered to pick her up from the hospital and drive her home in his massive, four-wheel-drive truck.

Mostly, though, we say, “I’m sorry” and “You’re a good daughter.”

“The biggest gift is just a simple text,” said Catherine Newman, who writes about caregiving in her novels “Sandwich” and “Wreck” and takes care of her parents in real life. The vibe from her friends, she added, is “always we’re here. We love you. You are never alone.”

If you are wondering how to support a friend in the midst of caregiving, these practical tips from experts and others who have gone through it will give you a place to start.

## Begin by listening and validating.

It can be hard to know what wisdom or help to offer, so resist the urge. “Caregivers don’t want to be fixed; they want to be heard,” said Susanne White, author of “Self-Care for Caregivers.”

You can break the ice with: “What’s annoying you right now? Want to talk about it?” Be a safe space for venting, she said.

If you’ve been there with your own parents and can relate, even better, said Catherine Riffin, an associate professor of psychology in geriatric medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine who studies family caregiving. “It’s called experiential similarity,” she said. “Talking to people who are going through the same life experience reduces stress.”

Dr. Riffin said that the emotional demands of caregiving — feeling overwhelmed or guilty or rehashing old arguments — cause the most strain. “Exposing your own vulnerabilities can alleviate the loneliness your friend may feel,” she said.

## Get specific about how you can help.

Offers like “let me know if you need anything” are often met with crickets. Pay attention to what your friend is angry about and propose targeted support.

Experts agreed that setting a specific time frame — saying you are free from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and will bring coffee or take a walk — may get a quicker yes. White had offers to walk her dog. Friends of mine who knew the constant burden of feeding kids ordered dinner or sent grocery deliveries (both of which can be done from afar).



Your friend might refuse your help or ignore you altogether. Don’t take it personally. “Caregivers need time to adapt,” White explained. When she began caring for her parents, she found that her most helpful friends were “patient and consistent,” she said. “They kept offering — ‘I have some extra time. I can pick up the groceries. I’m good with paperwork.’ — until I felt comfortable asking for help.”

## Don’t be afraid to sub in.

Respite is critical for avoiding burnout, Dr. Riffin said. If you know your friend’s parents, you might even offer to take a shift. You could read to them

while your friend takes a nap or goes to yoga.

Lynn Bufka, a clinical psychologist and head of practice at the American Psychological Association, lives 600 miles from her parents but has childhood friends who offer to step in when needed. “Remember that older people still have things to contribute,” she said. “Let your friend’s parents teach you a new card game or crochet skill.”

A colleague recently told me that when she was caring for her father, having friends stop by (often with her dad’s favorite treats) broke up the monotony of long days. “One childhood friend wrote me a note after he died about how much it meant to her to be with him,” she said. “I knew my dad loved it but never thought about the other way around.”

The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Chippewa County Presents

## Medicare & You Classes



## Free Unbiased Medicare Information!

New to Medicare or want to know more about those Medicare commercials you keep seeing? Wondering where you can go for objective Medicare information?

We will cover multiple topics including enrolling in Medicare, the parts of Medicare, the difference between Advantage Plans, Supplements & drug coverage options.

This is open to anyone new to Medicare, currently on Medicare, caregivers, families and community partners.

### Registration Required (3 ways)

1. [www.chippewacountywi.gov/adrc/events](http://www.chippewacountywi.gov/adrc/events)



2. Or use your phone’s camera to scan this code & register online.

3. Or call us to register: 715-726-7777

In person and Virtual attendance are offered. See our website for the full schedule.

**Upcoming** Wednesday, April 8th | 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM | Chippewa Courthouse



This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,061,673 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

**Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild**

presents

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THE MUSICAL

Directed by Frank Bartella

Two old neighbors face-off as romantic rivals in this hilarious stage version of the hit comedy film.

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**ONLINE: CVTG.ORG    715-832-7529**  
ADULTS \$40    STUDENTS \$20    PLUS FEES

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## Safe, Simple Medication Disposal - Right from Home

This April, the Chippewa County Department of Public Health in collaboration with the ADRC is helping Meals on Wheels participants safely clean out their medicine cabinets by providing Mail-Back Medication Disposal Bags, which offer a convenient and easy way to get rid of unused or expired medications.

Using the bags is simple: place your unwanted medications (no need to remove them from original packaging), seal the bag, and drop it in the mail using the prepaid shipping. The medications are then safely destroyed, helping prevent misuse, accidental poisoning, and environmental harm.

These mail-away bags are especially helpful for individuals who may have difficulty traveling to a drop-off site, bringing a safe disposal option right to your doorstep.

Please note: For safety reasons, these bags cannot be used for sharps (such as needles or lancets), batteries, or illicit substances. Only medications should be placed inside.

Taking a few minutes to dispose of unused medications safely can make a big difference in keeping our homes and community safe. If you receive a bag this April, we encourage you to take advantage of this free and easy service!

Want to learn more about safe medication and sharps disposal options? Contact the Chippewa County Department of Public Health by calling 715-726-7900 or visiting our website, <https://www.chippewacountywi.gov/422/Harm-Reduction>



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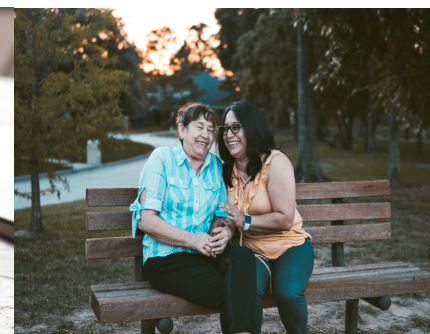


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University of Wisconsin  
**Eau Claire** Continuing Education

The Aging and Disability Resource Center Presents

## FREE: Power of Attorney Clinic



*Why everyone 18 and older should have a POA*

Did you know that **Wisconsin doesn't recognize relatives** as automatic decision makers when someone is incapacitated?

Completing a POA is a gift to your family and friends because they won't be left wondering what you would like.

You can save money by avoiding the need for court-appointed guardianship.

Attend a FREE event where knowledgeable staff from Chippewa County DHS will provide unbiased information on the POA for Health Care and POA for Finance.

Please plan to attend the entire presentation. No registration required.

**Save the 2026 dates!**

- Wednesday, April 8  
○ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday, June 2  
○ 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Wednesday, August 12  
○ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm
- Tuesday, October 6  
○ 10:00 – 11:30 am
- Wednesday, December 9  
○ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Chippewa County Courthouse  
Third Floor Conference Room – 302

For questions, contact the ADRC.  
715- 726-7777 or find more info online:  
[www.chippewacountywi.gov/ADRC/events](http://www.chippewacountywi.gov/ADRC/events)



# Free Medication and Sharps Disposal on Saturday, April 25

By Sarah Dillivan-Pospisil, MPH, public health specialist with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

Spring is a great time to clean out your home including your medicine cabinet. It is also a helpful reminder to safely dispose of unused medications and sharps.

Drug Take-Back Day is happening on Saturday, April 25 in Altoona, Eau Claire, and Fairchild.

For many of us, it is a familiar sight: an expired prescription tucked in the cupboard, or an old inhaler sitting in a bedside drawer. While it may seem harmless to keep them around, unused medications can pose serious risks.

Kids or pets can find unused or expired medication and accidentally swallow them, or medications left in the home can sometimes fall into the hands of people who shouldn't be using them. This can lead to accidental poisoning or overdose.

Don't flush old medications or pour them down the drain. When we flush or pour medications down the drain, they can end up in our groundwater. Improperly disposed of sharps put emergency responders, community members, and pets at risk for an injury and the spread of infections.

Stop by a Drug Take-Back Day event on Saturday, April 25, starting at 10am.

Here's what you can bring: medications, pills, ointments, patches, non-aerosol sprays, inhalers, creams, vials, and pet medications. Liquid medication is also accepted in the original container. You can also bring sharps, including needles, syringes, lancets, or auto injectors.

Curbside drop-off will be available at each location, making it quick and easy to safely dispose of these items.

- **Altoona Police Department**  
1904 Spooner Ave.  
10am - 2pm
- **Eau Claire County Government Center**  
721 Oxford Ave., Eau Claire  
10am - 2 pm
- **Fairchild Village Hall**  
331 Oak Street  
10am - noon



All you need to do is remove or cover up any personal information on the prescription label, then drop your medications off. You don't even need to get out of your car. Just pull up next to the Take-Back Day signs and roll down your car window and our volunteers will take it from there.

The Health Department and local law enforcement agencies hold take-back day events every spring and fall, when anyone can drop off old medications at local sites for free disposal. Learn more by visiting: [www.ECHealthAlliance.org/news](http://www.ECHealthAlliance.org/news)

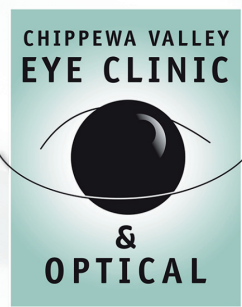
Safely disposing of medication keeps everyone in our community safer.

Can't make it to Take-Back Day? Stop by a permanent medication or sharps drop box in your neighborhood. There are 13 medication drop boxes and 11 sharps drop boxes available throughout Eau Claire County. Find a drop box near you by visiting [bit.ly/MedDropBoxes](http://bit.ly/MedDropBoxes) and [qrco.de/sharps](http://qrco.de/sharps)

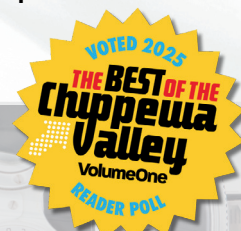
Last year, you've helped us dispose of over 3,600 pounds of medication through Take-Back Day events and permanent medication drop boxes. Thank you for making our community a safer place for all of us.

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## Smartphone Photos

Learn how to take, view, save, share, organize, and edit photos on your smartphone.

**Wednesday, April 15**  
10am-noon

Chippewa Falls Public Library  
Wissota Room

No Registration Required

*Chippewa Falls*  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

# Why Spring is the Perfect Time to Volunteer...

## Even If You'd Rather Stay on the Couch!

By Carl A. Trapani, MA, MS, LPC, Chippewa Manor Campus Chaplain

Have you noticed? Every year, spring arrives like a motivational speaker giving a pep-talk for our planet. Birds start chirping, flowers start blooming, and people suddenly feel the urge to do something productive. While for some folks that feeling lasts about seven minutes—giving them enough time to admire some birds or flowers before returning to the couch for a little nap. Spring is more than just the season of blooming plants and budding trees. It's also one of the best times to get out of the house and do something for others.

There's a strange psychological phenomenon that happens in spring. It's the "Spring Energy Effect." After months of wintry social hibernation, people suddenly feel like becoming better humans. It's the season when people say things like:

- "I should probably help clean up the park."
- "Maybe I'll volunteer at the animal shelter, or hospital."
- "This year I'm definitely planting a community garden."

Of course, some of these same people said they were going to work out every day and diet religiously in January, so their enthusiasm must be handled carefully. But be aware of this important fact: volunteering channels that springtime burst of motivation into something useful.

One of the biggest myths about volunteering is that you need special skills or endless free time. Volunteering doesn't require lots of time or superpowers. Many volunteer opportunities are simple and surprisingly fun. For example:

**1. Community Clean-Ups:** Spring reveals what winter tried to hide: lost gloves, mysterious soda cans, and enough plastic to "...cover the entire Earth." (Specifically, there's over 4.9 billion metric tons of plastic debris in landfills and the environment, enough to cover the entire planet in a layer of plastic.) Joining with other cleanup volunteers can be a lot of fun. Equipment is minimal: gloves, and garbage bags. There's a special bond between like-minded souls working together restoring parks, roadsides, empty lots and entire neighborhoods. Plus, there's a strange satisfaction in holding up a bag of trash and thinking, "Yes, the world is slightly better because of me."

**2. Animal Shelters:** If you've ever wanted to spend time with those who believe you are the most important person in the universe, volunteering at a shelter is perfect. Prepare to be the center of attention – and probably licked, sniffed and purred to more than you can possibly imagine! Your responsibilities may include walking dogs, playing with cats, and resisting the urge to adopt twelve animals and starting a hobby farm.

**3. Community Gardens:** Spring is planting season, and community gardens always need extra hands. Even if you know nothing about plants, experienced gardeners will happily explain the difference between a tomato seedling and a weed. You might even donate a part of your harvest to help feed the hungry.

**4. Helping at Local Events:** Spring festivals, charity runs, school events, nursing homes and hospitals all need volunteers. Tasks range from handing out water bottles to pushing wheelchairs and directing people who are already lost. And yes, someone will always ask you a question you absolutely cannot answer.

There are unexpected benefits to volunteering. People often volunteer because they want to help others, but they usually gain just as much in return. Volunteering can:

- Introduce you to new friends
- Build useful skills
- Boost your mood

- Make your community cleaner, stronger, and more pleasant.

It also gives you great stories. For example, you might start the day planting flowers and end it chasing a runaway goat from a petting zoo. Not every job offers that kind of excitement.

The most important thing to remember about volunteering is that small actions add up. You don't have to change the world in a single afternoon. Sometimes helping for a few hours is enough to make someone's day easier. Spring reminds us that growth often starts small. A tiny seed becomes a plant, a kind gesture becomes a habit, and a few volunteers can transform an entire neighborhood.

Spring is nature's reminder that everything can start fresh—including us. So when you feel that sudden burst of springtime motivation, consider using it for something meaningful. Help clean a park, walk a shelter dog, plant a garden, visit a shut-in or assist at a community event. The worst that can happen is you spend a few hours doing something good. The best that can happen is discovering that helping others is far more rewarding than hugging your couch and taking a nap. Besides, the couch will still be waiting for you next winter – so get busy now!

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