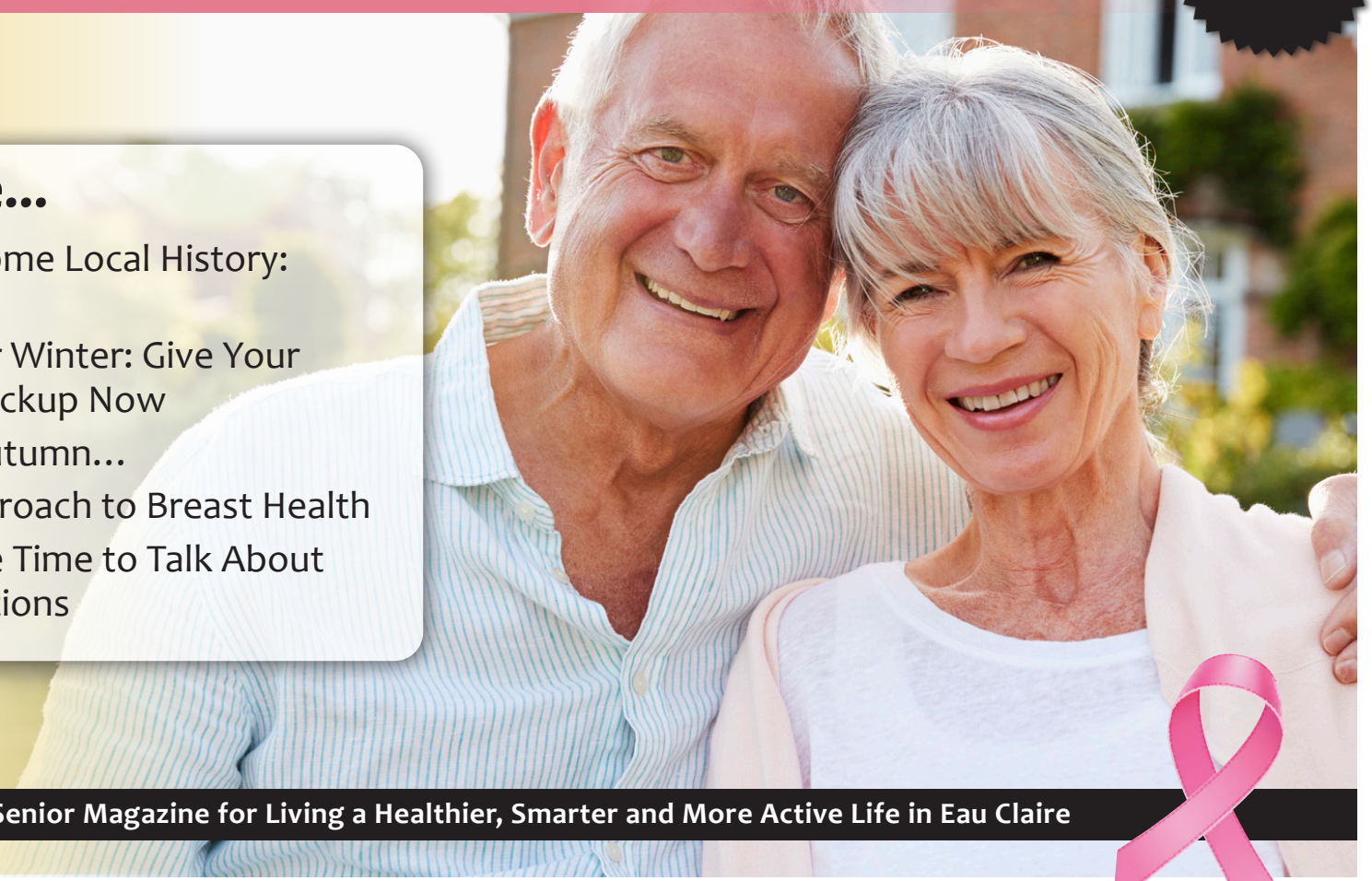
senior review

FREE

October 2026

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- Don’t Wait for Winter: Give Your Furnace a Checkup Now
- Why I Love Autumn…
- A Holistic Approach to Breast Health
- October Is the Time to Talk About Your Prescriptions



A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Eau Claire

You Don’t Have to Live With Knee Pain

By Dr. Lucas Emmerich, Central Health

Knee pain is something many of us experience as we get older. It can make simple activities—walking, going up and down stairs, gardening, exercising, or playing with the grandkids—more difficult than they used to be. While knee pain is common, **it do**esn’t mean you have to simply live with it.



At Central Health, we help people with knee pain using a non-invasive approach that does not involve surgery or injections. Our goal is to help reduce pain, improve movement, and help you get back to the activities you enjoy.

A Different Approach to Knee Pain

Every person’s knee pain is different. Some people experience pain from arthritis or wear and tear over time, while others may be dealing with an old injury, stiffness, or irritation in the tissues around the knee. We use a combination of treatments based on your individual needs, including **hands-on care, Knee-On-Trac therapy, and shockwave therapy.**

Knee-On-Trac gently applies traction to the knee, which can help reduce pressure on the joint and improve mobility.

Shockwave therapy uses focused sound waves to stimulate the treated area and support the body's natural healing response. It can be helpful for certain chronic knee pain conditions and problems involving the tissues around the knee.

We also use **hands-on treatment** to improve the movement of the knee and surrounding areas and address muscles and soft tissues that may be contributing to your discomfort.

Rather than using the same treatment for everyone, we look at your individual condition and determine which combination of treatments may be appropriate for you.

Keep Doing the Things You Love

Our goal isn't simply to make your knee feel better for a short time. We want to help you **move better and stay active.**

If knee pain has been keeping you from taking walks, exercising, traveling, working in the yard, or enjoying time with family, it may be worth exploring your options. You don't have to assume that surgery or injections are your only choices.

If you or someone you know is struggling with knee pain, we invite you to schedule a complimentary consultation at Central Health. We can evaluate your knee, discuss your symptoms, and explain whether our non-invasive approach may be a good option for you.

balanced living

Tips and ideas for a healthy and balanced life

October is breast cancer awareness month



TIPS FOR BREAST CANCER PREVENTION:

Avoid becoming overweight. Avoid gaining weight over time, and try to maintain a body-mass index under 25.

Eat healthy to avoid tipping the scale. Embrace a diet high in vegetables & fruit and low in sugared drinks, refined carbohydrates & fatty foods.

Keep physically active. Increased physical activity, even when begun later in life, reduces overall breast-cancer risk.

Drink little or no alcohol. Women should limit intake to no more than one drink per day, regardless of the type of alcohol.

Avoid hormone replacement therapy. Menopausal hormone therapy increases risk for breast cancer.

Don't smoke. Long-term smoking is associated with increased risk of breast cancer in some women.

Breast-feed your babies for as long as possible. Women who breast-feed their babies for at least a year in total have a reduced risk of developing breast cancer later.

Get annual mammograms. Regular mammograms are recommended for women aged 40 and older to detect breast cancer early.

Canned Food Drive

OCTOBER 1ST – 15TH

Help us support individuals and families in need within our local community by donating nonperishable, unexpired food items. All donations will benefit a local food pantry!



Donations can be dropped off at Heritage at Oakwood Hills
3706 Damon Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701

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Protect What Matters Most: Estate Planning in Retirement

By Logan Woller, Private Wealth Advisor and Retirement Plan Consultant at Buska Wealth Management

As you approach or enjoy retirement, your financial priorities often begin to shift. After decades of saving and building wealth, the focus may move from accumulating assets to creating sustainable income, managing taxes, and making sure the wealth you've worked hard to build can benefit the people and causes that matter most to you.

That is where estate planning becomes an important part of your overall retirement strategy

.



Estate planning isn't just about what happens after you die. It can help you prepare for situations during your lifetime, communicate your wishes, and make it easier for your family to navigate important decisions.

Your Estate Plan Is Part of Your Retirement Plan
Retirement planning and estate planning are closely connected. Decisions about when to withdraw money from retirement accounts, how assets are titled, and which accounts are passed to heirs can all affect the way your wealth is ultimately transferred.

For example, retirement accounts typically have beneficiary designations that determine who receives the account after your death. Life insurance policies and certain financial accounts may also transfer directly to named beneficiaries. These designations should be considered alongside your will or trust to help ensure your overall plan works as intended.

Consider More Than Who Gets What
Estate planning involves more than dividing assets among heirs. It also involves determining who can make important decisions if you become unable to make them yourself.

A financial power of attorney can designate someone to handle financial matters on your behalf. A healthcare directive can communicate your wishes regarding medical care and designate someone to make healthcare decisions when appropriate. For retirees, these documents can be particularly important because they provide a framework for handling financial and healthcare decisions during periods of incapacity.

Think About Your Family's Future
As you build an estate plan, consider the people you want to protect and the goals you want your assets to accomplish. You may want to provide for a spouse, children, grandchildren, or other loved ones. You may have charitable intentions or want to help future generations with education, homeownership, or other milestones.

You may also have family circumstances that require additional consideration. A thoughtful estate plan can help address these situations and provide greater clarity about your intentions.

Don't Overlook Taxes
Taxes can also play a role in wealth transfer. Retirement accounts, investment accounts, real estate, and other assets may be treated differently when transferred to heirs.

Understanding the potential tax consequences can help you make more informed decisions about which assets to use during retirement and which may be better positioned for future generations. Tax laws can also change, making it important to consider estate planning as part of an ongoing financial strategy.

Organization Is Part of the Plan
Having the right documents is important, but your family also needs to know where to find important information.

Consider keeping an organized record of financial accounts, retirement plans, insurance policies, real estate, important contacts, estate planning documents, and other information your family may need. Clear organization can help reduce confusion and make it easier for loved ones to carry out your wishes.

Give Yourself—and Your Family—Clarity
Estate planning can feel uncomfortable because it requires thinking about circumstances we'd rather not consider. But planning ahead gives you the opportunity to make important decisions while you can and communicate what matters most to you.

For those entering or enjoying retirement, protecting your legacy is about more than passing on money. It's about protecting the people you love, preserving your wishes, and making the transition of your wealth as clear and intentional as possible.

A well-considered estate plan can help turn a lifetime of hard work into a lasting legacy.



Dusting off Some Local History: "Hallowe'en"

By Greg Kocken, Archivist, UW-Eau Claire, Kockeng@uwec.edu

At the end of this month, children dressed in costumes will parade through neighborhoods announcing their presence with the all-too-familiar phrase "trick or treat." During the 19th and 20th centuries, Halloween evolved into the holiday we now recognize, but its history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was more trick than treat!



This image, published in the Eau Claire Leader on October 26, 1924, suggested it was easy to make your own Halloween costume. Halloween parties were common beginning in the late 1800s.

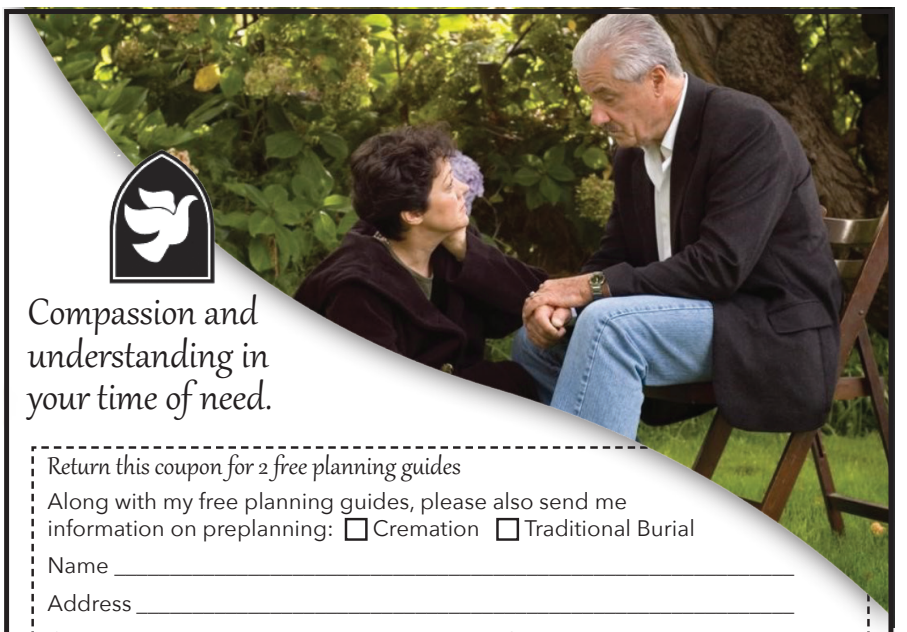
Halloween has Celtic roots dating back nearly 2,000 years. As a holiday, it marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of the winter season. It also marked a time when the boundary separating the living and the dead blurred. In the 7th century, the Catholic Church began observing All Saints' Day on November 1st. All Saints' Day was known as All Hallow's Day. The word "Hallow" has old English roots meaning "holy" or "saint." The day before thus became known as "All Hallow's Even," where "even" presented a shortened version of "evening." Over time, as the holiday became popularized in America, it became further modified and shortened to simply "Hallowe'en," and later, "Halloween."

The blurred boundary between the living and the dead, still a fixture of the evolving holiday in the late 1800s and early 1900s, often led to mischief among local teens and children. The Eau Claire Leader of November 2, 1895, reported that, "bad little boys were out on the streets," and "doorbells, and school bells were rung and considerable mischief indulged in every ward." In the early 1900s, newspapers encouraged parents and adults to transform the holiday into something focused on community, children, and charity. Americans embraced the holiday's European origins by wearing costumes and participating in door-to-door trick-or-treating. Costumes were originally designed to deceive the ghostly spirits haunting the living world, allowing people to move about on All Hallow's Eve. Trick-or-treating evolved from the act of "souling" where the poor would receive small pastries from wealthy patrons in exchange for praying for that patron's dead relatives.

During World War II, trick-or-treating and many Halloween celebrations were paused due to sugar rationing. After the war, as suburban neighborhoods rapidly expanded across the country, the holiday exploded in popularity. Movies and cartoons in the 1950s further transformed the holiday into a major American tradition. Retailers soon embraced the holiday selling costumes, make-up, decorations, and bite-size candy and other treats.

This year, my own children plan to dress as a dragon and a skeleton for Halloween. I will not, however, make these costumes for my children. I doubt that would be as easy as the 1924 Eau Claire Leader article referenced in the image suggests. Instead, much like the candy I hand out, I will embrace the commercialized version of Halloween sold by retailers and purchase these costumes.

Is there a local history mystery or topic you want to know more about? Do you have a suggestion for an upcoming column of "Dusting Off?" Please contact Greg at the UW-Eau Claire archives. He would love to hear from you.



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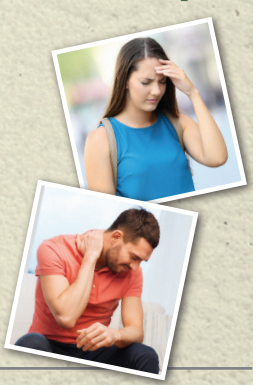
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Don't Wait for Winter: Give Your Furnace a Checkup Now

Wisconsin winters have a way of reminding us just how important a dependable furnace can be. Before the snow flies and temperatures begin to drop, fall is a good time for older adults to have their heating system checked.

A furnace inspection may not be at the top of your fall to-do list, but a little preventive maintenance now can save you from an unexpected breakdown on the coldest day of the year—and help keep your home safe.

For seniors, staying warm during the winter is particularly important. Cold indoor temperatures can be uncomfortable and may put additional stress on the body. Having the furnace inspected before winter arrives gives you time to address problems while heating companies are less likely to be dealing with emergency calls.

What can go wrong?
Furnaces work hard during a Wisconsin winter, and small problems can turn into expensive repairs if they are ignored. A dirty filter, worn-out part, electrical problem or blocked vent can cause a furnace to work harder, heat unevenly or stop working altogether.
For furnaces that burn natural gas, propane or oil, there is another important concern: carbon monoxide.

Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an invisible, odorless gas that can be produced when fuel-burning appliances do not operate or vent properly. Carbon monoxide poisoning can cause headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, confusion and, in severe cases, death.

That is why furnace maintenance and working carbon monoxide detectors are so important.

Make the most of the service call
When the technician comes to inspect your furnace, don't simply ask, "Is everything OK?" Take the opportunity to ask a few questions:

- Is my furnace operating safely?
- Is it heating efficiently?
- Are any parts worn or likely to need replacement soon?
- Is the heat exchanger in good condition?
- Are the vents and flue clear and working properly?
- Is there any evidence of carbon monoxide or combustion problems?
- How often should I change the filter?
- Are there repairs that need to be made now?
- How many more years can I reasonably expect from this furnace?

If a major repair is recommended, ask the technician to explain the problem and give you a written estimate. It is also reasonable to ask whether the repair makes sense for the age and condition of the furnace or whether replacement should be considered.

Know the warning signs
Even a furnace that passes its annual inspection can develop problems later. Pay attention if you notice unusual noises, strange odors, rooms that aren't getting warm, frequent cycling on and off, cold air coming from the vents or an unexplained increase in your heating bill.

Never ignore a carbon monoxide detector. If it sounds, leave the house immediately and get into fresh air. Call 911 or seek medical attention if anyone is experiencing symptoms. Do not go back inside until emergency personnel or a qualified professional says it is safe.

It is also important to have working carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Test them regularly and replace batteries as recommended.

And throughout the winter, keep outdoor furnace vents clear of snow and ice.

A little prevention goes a long way
For older adults, a furnace inspection is about more than keeping the house comfortable. It is about being prepared.

Schedule the checkup before winter arrives, ask questions and take care of small problems before they become emergencies. When the first Wisconsin cold snap arrives, you'll have one less thing to worry about—and you can settle in knowing your furnace is ready for winter.

5 Things to Do Before Turning On Your Furnace

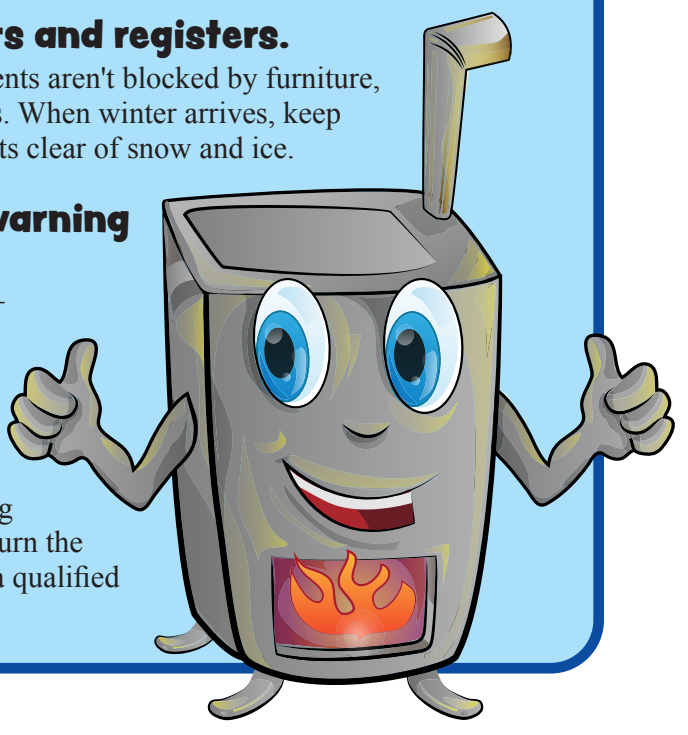
1. Schedule a furnace inspection.
Have a qualified technician inspect and service your furnace before you need it every day. Ask about worn parts, efficiency and potential safety concerns.

2. Replace the filter.
A dirty filter makes your furnace work harder and can reduce airflow. Check your owner's manual for the correct filter and how often it should be replaced.

3. Test your carbon monoxide detectors.
Make sure CO detectors are working and have fresh batteries. Detectors should be located near sleeping areas and on each level of the home.

4. Check vents and registers.
Make sure indoor vents aren't blocked by furniture, rugs or other objects. When winter arrives, keep outdoor furnace vents clear of snow and ice.

5. Know the warning signs.
Before—and after—turning on your furnace, watch for unusual noises, strange odors, poor airflow or uneven heating. If something doesn't seem right, turn the system off and call a qualified technician.



Why I Love Autumn...

And reasons to appreciate every season of our lives

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



Life is a lot like the weather. We are always waiting for it to change. When we're young, we can't wait for the next season. When we're middle-aged, we're usually too busy mowing the lawn, going to work, raising children, paying bills, and wondering why the furnace is making that noise to notice the seasons. Then we get older and discover something remarkable: The seasons were changing all along—but we were too busy to enjoy them. Spring, summer, autumn, winter. Beginning, growing, changing, reflecting.

Psychologist Erik Erikson described human development as a series of stages, each presenting different challenges and opportunities. Spring is the season of youth. Everything is new. And in our childish imaginations – Everything is possible. The world is enormous. We have dreams, plans, energy, and knees that don't make strange noises when we stand up. When we're young, we ask: "What do I want to become?" We imagine careers, adventures, marriages, families, houses, travel, and all the wonderful things waiting for us. We also make decisions with remarkable confidence despite knowing absolutely nothing. That is one of the privileges of being young.

Then comes summer. This is the season when life gets busy. Very busy. We work. We marry. We raise children. We mow lawns. We fix things. We replace things. We pay for things we don't remember buying. There are school concerts, birthday parties, family gatherings, vacations, soccer games, meetings, deadlines, and that mysterious pile of laundry that seems to reproduce overnight. We spend years saying: "Someday, when things slow down..." Then we discover Things don't slow down. We do.

And perhaps that is one of the great lessons of the middle years. We are often so busy building a life that we forget to enjoy the life we're building. Psychology has a name for one of our favorite human habits: the hedonic treadmill. We achieve something wonderful, enjoy it for a while, and then start looking for the next thing. A new job. A bigger house. A nicer car. A better vacation. A newer phone. And just when we finally learn how to use the phone we have, they release another model.

Our ancestors had a simpler solution. "Count your blessings and be content with what you have." Perhaps most importantly: "You can't take it with you." History has provided plenty of examples for this. Kings and conquerors accumulated fortunes, built palaces, acquired territories, and eventually discovered that their final trip didn't require a U-Haul truck. So, enjoy your possessions. Just don't let your possessions own you.

Then one day, without asking permission, autumn arrives. The children grow up. The career winds down. The house gets quieter. The years begin to move faster. We look in the mirror and think: "Who is that?" "When did I get all those wrinkles?" Apparently, while we were busy doing everything else.

Autumn is wonderful. Just look at the trees. They don't spend October complaining that they're not still green. They turn gold, red, orange, and crimson. They become spectacular. They are more beautiful than they ever were. Perhaps we should take the hint. Getting older doesn't mean we are losing our beauty and becoming less. It means we are becoming beautifully different. By Autumn we have survived things we once thought would destroy us. We have endured heartbreak, disappointment, embarrassment, bad decisions, difficult bosses, and lots of questionable hairstyles. And we're still here.

By this point in life, we've learned a few things. We've learned that most of the things we worried about weren't worth worrying about. We've also learned that people matter more than things. The old family photographs become more valuable. The stories become more important. And memories that once seemed ordinary suddenly become treasures. Autumn also teaches us about letting go. That's not always easy. Over the years, we've had to let go of jobs, houses, possessions, routines, and people we loved. Some changes were welcome. Others were painful. But the trees releasing their leaves remind us that letting go isn't necessarily losing. Sometimes it's simply making room for the next season.

Eventually, winter comes. Winter represents a better perspective and reflection. It's the season when we look back and remember. We remember people who mattered. Some have been gone for many years, yet one song can bring them back instantly. That's the power of memory, which is one of the greatest gifts of growing older. We remember how things were before smartphones, before the internet, before everybody carried a camera in their pocket. We remember a simpler world. Not a perfect world. But one where people often knew their neighbors, kids played outside, and families gathered simply to talk.

Autumn reminds me that every stage of life has its own beauty. Spring is about beginnings. Summer is about doing. Autumn is about understanding. Winter is about remembering. I think Autumn is especially beautiful because it gives us permission to appreciate what we've become. We may not have the energy we had at twenty-five. We may have a few more wrinkles. Our hair may have changed color—or disappeared entirely. Our backs may complain when we bend over. But we've gained something too. We've gained experience. Perspective. Stories. Friendships. Memories. And hopefully, wisdom.

So, when somebody says, "You're getting old," don't argue. Just smile and say:"Of course I am. I've been working on it for years."

Carl Trapani, MA, MS, LPC serves as campus Chaplain at Chippewa Manor. He has more than 50 years of pastoral service and professional counseling experience. For more information please call (715) 723-4437 or email him at carl.trapani@chippewamanor.com.



Why Talking About Your Prescriptions Matters

Taking a prescription medication can become such a routine part of daily life that it is easy to stop thinking about what is in the bottle, why you are taking it or whether it is still the right medication for you. That is why **October is recognized as Talk About Your Medicines Month**—a reminder that an open conversation with your doctor and pharmacist can be an important part of staying safe and healthy.

The observance dates back more than 35 years and was established to encourage better communication between patients and health care professionals about medications. The goal is simple: understand what you are taking, why you are taking it and how to take it safely. (NeedyMeds Blog)

Don't Be Afraid to Ask Questions
A prescription is not simply a bottle of pills. It comes with instructions, possible side effects, potential interactions and important considerations about how it fits with your other medications.

- When your doctor prescribes something new, ask:
- What is this medication for, and how will it help me?
- How much should I take, and what time of day should I take it?
- Should I take it with food or on an empty stomach?
- How long will I need to take it?
- What side effects should I watch for, and which ones require a call to my doctor?
- What should I do if I miss a dose?
- Will it interact with my other prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins or supplements?
- Are there foods, beverages or activities I should avoid?
- How will we know whether the medication is working?
- Is there a less expensive alternative or another treatment option?



The FDA recommends keeping an updated list of every medication you take—including prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements—and sharing that list with your health care providers. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

A Simple Question Can Prevent a Big Problem
Consider this composite example: A woman in her 70s was prescribed a new medication after a doctor's appointment. She understood that she needed to take it once a day but didn't ask whether it should be taken in the morning or at bedtime. She also didn't mention that she occasionally took an over-the-counter sleep aid.

Within several days, she began feeling unusually tired and unsteady. Her family initially thought she was simply having a few "off days." When her doctor reviewed all of her medications, it became clear that the combination could contribute to increased drowsiness and dizziness.

The important lesson isn't that she did something wrong. **She didn't know what she didn't know.** A few additional questions—and a complete medication list—could have brought the potential problem to light sooner.

Medication side effects can sometimes look like other health problems. The FDA notes that some medications can contribute to symptoms such as dizziness, sleepiness and memory difficulties. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

Make Medication Conversations Routine
Medication reviews shouldn't happen only when something goes wrong. Ask your doctor periodically whether you still need each prescription, whether the dose remains appropriate and whether anything has changed that could affect how the medication works.

And remember, your pharmacist is an important resource, too. Pharmacists can answer questions about dosing, interactions, side effects and how to take medications correctly. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

This October, take a few minutes to **talk about your prescriptions.** Bring your medication list to your next appointment, ask questions and speak up about anything that doesn't seem right. When it comes to medications, there really is no such thing as a question that isn't worth asking.

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A Holistic Approach to Breast Health

By Thermography of Wisconsin

Taking care of your breast health is about caring for your whole self. Managing stress, staying active, eating well, getting restorative sleep, maintaining a positive outlook, and having regular screenings all contribute to your overall wellness.



Thermography of Wisconsin supports this holistic approach and encourages you to use a variety of tools along with building a trusted healthcare team to monitor your health. Thermography is one of those screening tools.

Thermography is a no-touch, non-invasive, pain-free, and radiation-free screening tool which uses a specialized infrared camera to measure temperature patterns on the surface of your skin. These patterns visualize physiology, including inflammation, circulation, lymphatic activity, and hormonal influences. The resulting image, called a thermogram, is interpreted by a medical doctor specially trained in thermology, who provides a written report with findings and recommendations.

Breast thermal patterns are as unique as your fingerprints; therefore, two screenings spaced three months apart are needed to establish a personal baseline. If no changes are identified and your results remain stable, your baseline is established and annual screenings are generally recommended.

Thermography is not a replacement for any structural screening such as mammography, ultrasound or MRI, and no screening is diagnostic on its own. Instead, they provide different but complementary information. Structural screening evaluates the structure of breast tissue and may identify findings such as tumors, calcifications, cysts and dense tissue. Thermography screening evaluates function by measuring physiological changes that may indicate inflammation, vascular changes, lymphatic activity, or hormonal influences. Early detection of physiological changes can result in earlier treatment and better outcomes. When combined with structural screenings, monthly self-breast exams, clinical breast exams, and healthy lifestyle choices, thermography can be an important part of your overall breast health plan.

Thermography of Wisconsin serves clients in Eau Claire, River Falls, Spooner, Stratford, and Phillips, Wis., as well as four locations in Minnesota. Shawn Seuferer is a Certified Clinical Thermographer and a proud member of the American College of Clinical Thermology (ACCT).

Bring this article with you to receive $25 off your regular-priced thermography screening. Expires 10/31/2026.

City of Eau Claire Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program

The City of Eau Claire Housing Division is taking applications for its Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. The Rehabilitation Loan Program is Federally funded and offers loans up to $20,000. This program is for homes in need of repair, not for extensions or cosmetic renovations.

Types of Eligible Work:

- Roof & window replacement
- Plumbing repairs or upgrading
- Accessibility Modifications
- Electrical repairs or upgrading
- Carpentry repairs
- Heating system replacement
- Energy saving repairs
- Siding repairs or replacement

Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

- City of Eau Claire resident
- The assessed value of the property may not exceed $165,750
- Property must be a minimum of 25 years old
- Owner occupied (at least one year)
- Good credit history
- HUD income guidelines apply: not to exceed 80% of area median income

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Under Your Breast Skin *by Joyce Sobotta*





The simple fact is that your breasts and their surrounding areas are made up of tissue covered by the same skin that covers your arms, legs, back etc. But, it's what's underneath that skin covering that is important here. Your breasts are complicated. They are medically known as "organs". They have lymphatic highways running through them.

This lymphatic system is the way your body gets rid of toxins that build up in your body. Unlike your circulatory system, the lymphatic system has no "pump" like your heart to move the toxic lymph though the system and eventually out of your body. The lymphatic system relies on pressurized movement to encourage the flow throughout the system. The more movement, the better the flow of lymph and the healthier your breasts will be.

Breast massage According to the Texas Institute of Functional Medicines, breast massage is the act of slowly kneading and stroking the breasts, using varying amounts of mild to moderate pressure in gentle lifting and compressive movements.

Breast massage is a reliable means of flushing out toxins from the body's lymphatic system. Because toxins impede healthy circulation in the breasts, toxic buildup could account for an increased chance of developing cancer. Breast massage stimulates drainage of the breasts' lymphatic system, which eliminates harmful waste products and allows nutrient-rich blood to travel to the breast tissue.

Scientific research shows that massaging your breasts may help you look younger because it stimulates the endocrine system to secrete a powerful cocktail of youthful hormones. Prolactin, oxytocin, and estrogen are three powerhouse anti-aging hormones known to be produced during breast massage. It lifts the breasts by tightening and toning the tendons and muscles.

"It encourages cells to expel cancer-causing chemicals from breast ducts" "says Professor Tim Murrell, of the Department of Community Medicine, at the University of Adelaide. Regular breast massage can also alert you of changes in your breast tissue so you can take quick measures to heal.

Breast massage is also a good healing technique for aching breasts. Because it employs a soft, gentle touch, breast massage can be quite therapeutic. According to the Ayurvedic Cure website, "Simply rubbing an area can have a demonstrable analgesic effect." Massage eases soreness in the tissues, reduces pain and swelling in the breasts and relaxes tightness or tension in the ligaments.

Post mastectomy breast massage has tremendous benefits for women that have gone through this procedure. Massage is particularly useful in soothing the pain associated with this procedure as well as helping to reduce and soften breast scarring.

As nice as it is to have a healthy, attractive bust line, there are more serious issues to consider than how your breasts look and feel. It is important that you familiarize yourself with the shape and feel of your breast to detect any abnormalities. Be consistent with breast self-massage because early detection could be the key to preventing cancer.





When Was the Last Time Your Medicine Cabinet Had a Checkup?

By Jen Miller, RN, Owner of Rellim Senior Day Care

Be honest. Is there a bottle in your medicine cabinet expired when people still printed MapQuest directions? A mystery pill in a drawer? Or one you call, "That little blue one I take for my heart"?



If so, October is your month! It is Talk About Your Prescriptions Month, and your medicine cabinet needs a checkup.

Let us begin with the little blue pill. Knowing a medication by its color is risky because pills can change color, shape, or markings between manufacturers. You should know its name, strength, purpose, and when you take it. If that list makes your eyes glaze over, start with one medication at a time, learn it, know it, own it.

Next, pull everything out. Check expiration dates and remove medications that were discontinued, replaced, or prescribed for an illness that ended three years ago. Old medications should not be saved "just in case," shared, or flushed. A medication take-back box is usually safest. Ask your pharmacist if you are unsure.

Now make one complete medication list—and "complete" means more than prescriptions. Include vitamins, supplements, pain relievers, sleep aids, creams, patches, inhalers, drops, and as-needed medications. Keep one copy in your wallet or purse. Put another in an envelope labeled MEDICATION LIST and attach it to your refrigerator. No fancy system required—although magnetic emergency-medication holders are available online for those of us who enjoy being officially organized. Date your list and update both copies whenever something changes.

When you begin a medication or change a dose, become your own detective. During the first couple weeks, notice what is different. Are you more tired, dizzy, confused, constipated, or unsteady? Has your appetite changed? Did a new symptom begin after the medication changed?

Write it down, including when it happened and when you took the medication. Side effects can also appear later, especially following dehydration, illness, weight loss, changes in kidney function, or the addition of another medication or supplement. Do not automatically assume, "I must be getting sick," or "I am just getting older."

Sometimes a medication causes a new symptom, the symptom is mistaken for another condition, and a second medication is prescribed. This is called a prescribing cascade. Before adding another pill, ask, "Could this be caused by something I already take?"

Research cited by the FDA suggests that not taking medications as directed may contribute to nearly 125,000 deaths and 25% of hospital admissions each year. Knowing your medications is more than just a good habit.

Bring your medication list to appointments. Ask what each medication does, whether it is still needed, what it may interact with, and which side effects deserve a phone call. Never stop a prescription abruptly without guidance.

Finally, remember that some of the best medicine never comes in a bottle. Movement is medicine. Nutritious food is medicine. Laughter, friendship, and purpose are medicine too. That is our favorite kind of prescription!



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October Is the Time to Talk About Your Prescriptions



For many older adults, taking medications is simply part of the daily routine. There may be a pill for blood pressure in the morning, another medication with lunch, something for cholesterol at bedtime and perhaps several over-the-counter medicines or supplements in between.

With so many medications involved, it is easy to forget an important part of medication safety: **talking about what you take, why you take it and whether you still need it.**

October is **Talk About Your Medicines Month,** an observance that began in 1986 as Talk About Prescriptions Month. The National Council on Patient Information and Education, now known as the BeMedWise Program at NeedyMeds, created the observance to encourage better communication between patients and their health care providers. Over the years, the focus has expanded to include medication safety, adherence, interactions, proper storage and safe disposal.

Start with a conversation
October is a good time to bring your medication list to your doctor or pharmacist and ask some basic questions.

Do I still need every medication I am taking? Are any of them duplicates? Could any of my prescriptions interact with another medicine, an over-the-counter product or a supplement? Are there side effects I should be watching for? Could any medication affect my balance, alertness or risk of falling?

It is also important to tell your health care provider about **everything** you take—not just prescriptions. Vitamins, herbal supplements, pain relievers and other over-the-counter medicines can interact with prescription medications.

If you have difficulty remembering when to take your medications, ask whether your prescriptions can be synchronized or whether a pill organizer, medication chart or other reminder system might help.

Clean out the medicine cabinet
Talking about medications should also include what you no longer take.

Unused and expired medications can be dangerous if accidentally taken by someone in the household or obtained by someone for whom they were not prescribed. Wisconsin DHS recommends safely disposing of medications rather than keeping them around the house "just in case." Unused and expired medications should not be flushed down the toilet or poured down the drain because they can contaminate the water supply.

Wisconsin holds Drug Take Back Days twice a year, in April and October. The next statewide Drug Take Back Day is **Saturday, October 24, 2026**. Prescription and over-the-counter medications—including pills, capsules, liquids, creams, ointments, patches and inhalers—can be taken to participating collection sites. Pet medications are also accepted.

If April or October doesn't work for you, you don't have to wait. Contact your local county health department for locations where residents can safely and anonymously dispose of medications throughout the year.

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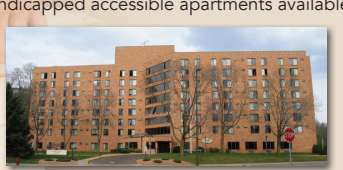


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AEP Season Is Here: Why This Year's Changes Make Your Medicare Review More Important Than Ever

Authored by Casey C Sauter, Agent- Mediqwest Insurance Eau Claire

Every fall, Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) gives you the chance to review your coverage and make changes for the upcoming year. AEP runs October 15 through December 7, and any updates you make take effect on January 1 of the new plan year. This window comes around every year, but this year's changes are more significant than usual, making it especially important to take a careful look at your plan materials and stay informed.

Why You Should Pay Extra Attention This Year
Medicare Advantage and Part D plans can change their premiums, copays, provider networks, drug formularies, and added benefits every year. But for the upcoming plan year, many plans are making broader adjustments, some reducing benefits, some shifting networks, and others changing drug coverage tiers. These changes may affect how much you pay and which doctors or pharmacies you can use.

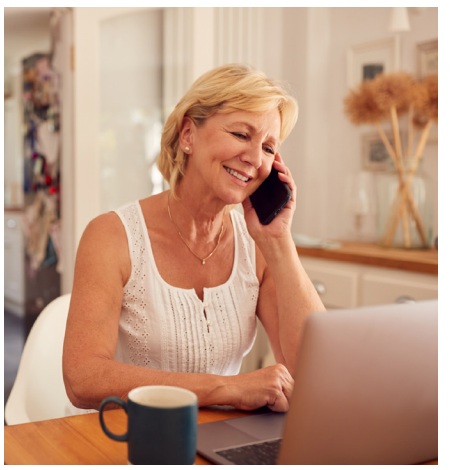
That's why reviewing your Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) is essential. This document outlines exactly what will be different next year, and it arrives each fall from your current plan. CMS specifically advises beneficiaries to read the ANOC carefully, so you're not surprised by new costs or coverage gaps in January.

Attend Local Informational Meetings
Your licensed agent or your health plan may offer group informational meetings during AEP. These sessions are designed to help you understand changes, compare options, and ask questions in a safe, trusted environment. Attending a meeting can help you feel confident about whether your current plan still fits your needs—or whether switching might save you money or improve your coverage.

Be Cautious With Calls, Emails, and Mailings
AEP also brings a surge of marketing activity. You may receive phone calls, emails, or mail from companies you've never heard of. Some may be legitimate marketing organizations, but others may be scam attempts trying to collect your personal information.

Remember these key rules:

- Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone who contacts you unexpectedly.
- Do not respond to messages from entities you don't recognize.
- Do not click links in unsolicited emails or social media ads.
- Do not share personal details unless you initiated the contact and know exactly who you're speaking with.
- Scammers often use high-pressure tactics, promising "free benefits," "cash cards," or "upgraded Medicare cards." If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Talk to Your Agent Before Accepting Anything



If you're offered free equipment, extra benefits, or monetary gifts, talk to your agent first. Many of these offers are tied to plans that may not fit your needs—or worse, may be fraudulent attempts to obtain your Medicare number. Your agent can verify whether an offer is legitimate and whether it's actually beneficial for you.

Your Best Defense Is Staying Informed
AEP is your annual opportunity to make sure your Medicare coverage still works for you. By reviewing your ANOC, attending trusted informational meetings, contacting a licensed Agent, and staying alert to unfamiliar outreach, you can protect your benefits and make confident decisions for the year ahead.

Working with an Insurance Agent is never at a cost to you, and now more important than ever. Speak with a licensed agent today by calling 715-513-9967 or by email csauter@mediqwest.com

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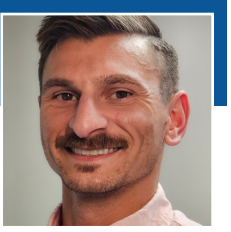


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