

COUNTY EXECUTIVE **BRUCE A. BLAKEMAN** PRESENTS



NASSAU NEWS

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE FOR THE AGING

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February 2026

February is Cancer Prevention Month

February is National Cancer Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness that many cancers are preventable through, lifestyle choices, early detection, and healthy habits like balanced diets and exercise, avoiding tobacco, and staying up-to-date on vaccinations and screenings

While some factors like genetics are beyond our control, the latest data by the American Cancer Society shows that nearly 40% of cancer cases and 44% of cancer-related deaths are linked to preventable lifestyle choices. By making informed decisions, we can significantly lower our risk:

Healthy Lifestyle: Eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins such as chicken and turkey, staying active, and maintaining a healthy weight. In addition, limiting consumption of red meat to three portions a week.

Avoiding Harmful Substances: Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of cancer. Quitting at any age significantly reduces cancer risk. Staying away from alcohol or limiting it to no more than one drink per day for women and two for men is recommended.



Early Detection & Prevention: Be sure to get regular screenings (mammograms, colonoscopies, skin checks) and stay on top of vaccinations (HPV, Hepatitis B).

Protect your Skin: Protect your skin from Ultra Violet (UV) radiation. Even though cancer caused by UV radiation is more common in people with lighter skin tones, everyone is susceptible. The FDA recommends using a broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Avoid tanning beds, seek shade during peak sunlight hours and don't forget to wear sunglasses. 😎

Know your Risk: Understand your family history and manage your chronic conditions.

Cancer prevention begins with the choices we make everyday. While not all risks are within our control, many are.

If transportation to healthcare provides is an issue, the Nassau County Office for the Aging together with the NY State Office for the Aging can help. Through GoGo Grandparent, one round trip ride for an annual screening is available, with additional rides if cancer treatment is required. Please contact NY Connects at 516-227-8900 for more information.



Unsaturated fat and why it's good for your health.

Learn eating healthy fat can help prevent heart disease in the long run.

As we age, choosing the right types of fats becomes especially important for maintaining heart, brain, and overall health. While fats were once viewed negatively, research now shows that healthy fats are essential, especially unsaturated fats, which offer strong benefits for seniors. Unsaturated fats—found in olive oil, canola oil, nuts, seeds, avocados, and fatty fish like salmon—can help lower “bad” LDL cholesterol, raise “good” HDL cholesterol, reduce inflammation, and support brain function. Including these fats in daily meals can improve cardiovascular health and provide long-lasting energy.

In contrast, saturated fats, found in red meat, butter, cheese, and full-fat dairy products, should be eaten in moderation because they can raise LDL cholesterol. The most harmful fats are trans fats, once used in many packaged and fried foods. Trans fats increase heart disease and stroke risk and should be avoided, though they are now mostly removed from foods.

For seniors, the goal isn't to eliminate fat, but to replace unhealthy fats with unsaturated ones. Choosing meals that feature plant oils, nuts, seeds, and fish can support healthy aging, protect the heart, and contribute to a higher quality of life.

Quick Nutrition Tips:

Here is a list of foods that are high in unsaturated fats:

- Avocados
- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pecans
- Flax Seeds
- Chia Seeds
- Sunflower Seeds
- Pumpkin Seeds
- Salmon
- Mackerel
- Sardines
- Olives
- Olive Oil
- Canola Oil
- Sunflower Oil

Stay Healthy this Winter

Every year, an estimated one billion people catch a cold in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 3 to 11% of the U.S. population catches the flu annually. The winter months keep us indoors, making exposure more likely. Here are some tips to avoid getting sick this winter:



- ◆ Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- ◆ Wipe down shared surfaces such as countertops, keyboards, remote controls, and phones
- ◆ Avoid touching your mouth, nose and ears
- ◆ Eat healthy foods to strengthen your immune system
- ◆ Get enough rest and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- ◆ Avoid sick people and stay home if you are sick

By incorporating these tips into your routine, you will strengthen your immune system and nurture your well-being. Have a healthy and safe winter!

2026 Senior of the Year!

Nassau County Office for the Aging is now accepting nominations for the 2026 Senior of the Year!

QUALIFICATIONS:

- All candidates must be 60 years of age or older and presently living in Nassau County.
- Candidates must be in an unpaid volunteer position.
- Persons who have already received the honor of this Award are not eligible.
- Persons who were candidates before, but who were not selected for the Award, are eligible to be re-nominated.
- Candidates should be individuals who have demonstrated outstanding concern and action for human services and community involvement for any age group.
- Winner(s) names will be submitted to NYSOFA for publication in the Older NYers Day Commemorative Booklet.

If you are interested in nominating an older adult, call (516) 227-8900 or visit for the Application:

nassaucountyny.gov/Aging The deadline for the nomination is February 27, 2026.

Celebrating Black History Month

Black History Month celebrates the achievements of African Americans and recognizes their central role in U.S. history. The 2026 theme, designated by American Life and History (ASALH) is "A Century of Black History Commemorations" marking the 100th anniversary of the first Black History week in 1926.

Celebrate Black History Month with these programs at our Nassau County senior centers:

- **February 2 at 2:30 p.m.** Freeport Senior Center at the Salvation Army. Black History Month Celebration with sing-along, poetry reading and display. Call 516-623-2008 for more information.
- **February 24 at 1:15 p.m.** North Merrick Senior Center. Black History Month Trivia. Reservations required, please call to RSVP at 516-571-8675.



Throughout the year, be sure to visit the Joysetta & Julius Pearse African American Museum of Nassau County located in Hempstead. The museum showcases the work of local and national Black artists and preserves Black history through rotating exhibits, screenings, lectures, and workshops. They are located at 110 N. Franklin Avenue, Hempstead. Call 516-572-0730 for more information.



February Word Search



E K A L F W O N S Y H E A T
 G R O U N D H O G V T M L B
 T D R A Z Z I L B A M P T L
 V R D A G F K D L K T V R R
 A T A U M L E O I N I O B Y
 L Y H E L E C B E P M S F D
 E R S D H O T D R A U R S Q
 N O N E H T I H N U O C C Y
 T T R C L S E C Y S A H R V
 I S Q O E C E E T S I R Q Y
 N I M R S V I Z W L T K Y Z
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|-----------|------------|
| Amethyst | Roses |
| History | Kiss |
| President | Snowflake |
| February | Heat |
| Frost | Cupid |
| Icicles | Hug |
| Love | Chill |
| Romance | Groundhog |
| Blizzard | Chocolate |
| Valentine | Sweetheart |

To join Office for the Aging's email distribution list please email us at:
seniors@hhsnassaucountyny.us

Medicare Preventative Services: Cardiovascular Screening

February is recognized as Heart Month. A time dedicated to raising awareness about cardiovascular health and the importance of taking proactive steps to protect your heart.

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of illness among older adults—but early detection can make a powerful difference. That's why Medicare offers cardiovascular screenings, such as blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests, and heart rhythm evaluations, as a covered preventive service to help identify risk factors before serious problems develop.



Eligibility

Medicare Part B covers blood tests for heart disease once every five years, when ordered by your provider. You do not need to show signs of heart disease or have any particular risk factors to qualify for these tests.

Costs

If you qualify, Original Medicare covers screening blood tests for heart disease at 100% of the Medicare-approved amount when you receive the service from a participating provider. This means you pay nothing (no deductible or coinsurance). Medicare Advantage Plans are required to cover heart disease screenings without applying deductibles, copayments, or coinsurance when you see an in-network provider and meet Medicare's eligibility requirements for the service.

During your heart disease screening, your provider may discover and need to investigate or treat a new or existing problem. This additional care is considered diagnostic, meaning your provider is treating you because of certain symptoms or risk factors. Medicare may bill you for any diagnostic care you receive during a preventive visit.

You can learn more about Medicare's preventive services by visiting Medicare.gov or by calling the Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance (HIICAP) at 516-485-3754.

Veterans' Spotlight



The Nassau County Office for the Aging hosts a monthly Veterans' Luncheon to honor our senior Veterans for their service. Pictured above are our Veterans at the luncheon in Bethpage.

The next Senior Veterans' Luncheon is Friday, February 13, doors open at 11:30. To RSVP:

- Lynbrook St. Mary's Knights of Columbus call 516-227-8900
- Bethpage Senior Center call 516-571-9910

County Executive Signs New Law



Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman took his oath of office on January 12, along with running mates Nassau County Clerk Maureen O'Connell and Nassau County Comptroller Elaine Phillips, to begin his second term in office. Wasting no time in getting to work, County Executive Blakeman took the opportunity at the conclusion of the ceremonies to sign a new law that protects houses of worship and their attendees from being targeted by protestors.

"I sign this on behalf of every religious institution here in the County of Nassau. You know how I feel about religious freedom and the ability for people to be able to worship in their mosque, their church, their synagogue, and their temple. And therefore, we will protect those institutions, and we will protect people's rights to worship freely here in Nassau County," he stated.

National Soup Day is February 4th

National Soup Day is Feb. 4th, a time when many places are in the depths of winter. It is the perfect opportunity to create a cozy homemade soup.

Soup has many health benefits. It is nutrient-rich, packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Soups are also an excellent way to stay hydrated, and are soothing to the digestive system, providing relief from sickness like the flu.

This simple recipe that can be enjoyed for days!

Pasta E Fagioli

Yields: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- salt to taste
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can chicken broth
- 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- ½ cup ditalini or other small pasta
- 1 (15 ounce) can cannellini beans, with liquid



Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add onion, celery, garlic, parsley, Italian seasoning, pepper flakes, and salt.
3. Cook and stir until onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in chicken broth, tomato sauce, and tomatoes.
5. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.
6. Add pasta and cook until tender, about 10 minutes.
7. Stir in undrained beans and cook until heated through, 3 to 4 minutes.
8. Serve and enjoy!

Discover Live



The Nassau County Office for the Aging started the New Year right with a virtual trip to Cardiff, Wales! Participants at the Bethpage Senior Center enjoyed lunch with their tour guide while visiting local landmarks, learning about the language, the climate and more.



Then on January 14th, the Freeport Senior Center at the Salvation Army enjoyed a visit to Lisbon, Portugal along with tea and Pastel De Nata desserts.

If you would like to visit far-away places, the next Discover Live will be held at the Hicksville Library on February 6 at 12:p.m. where they will visit Mexico City, Mexico! Call 516-931-1417 and press 3 for Reference Dept. to RSVP.

Chinese New Year



Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring Festival falls on Tuesday, February 17th. It marks the beginning of the Year of the Fire Horse, known for intensity and bold action. The festive period lasts about 16 days, culminating in the Lantern Festival on March 3rd.

Senior Center Happenings...

New Year's Eve Brunch

Both the Bethpage Senior Center and West Hempstead Senior Center hosted a New Years Eve Brunch with sparkling cider and a countdown to noon.



Friends toasting the New Year at the Bethpage Senior Center!

Friends at the West Hempstead Senior Center enjoying the festivities!



Great Neck Senior Center



Participants at the Great Neck Senior Center enjoyed Chinese Dance with Mrs. Li. This class is enjoyed every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.

Hispanic Brotherhood



Participants from the Rockville Centre location created valentines for war Veterans.

Freeport Senior Center



Participants at the Freeport Senior Center at the Salvation Army enjoyed the Otago Exercise Program led by Mount Sinai South Nassau.

Life-Saving Techniques Workshop

It was a great turnout for the life-saving workshop presented by Mount Sinai South Nassau. At the January 13th St. Pius Seniors meeting at the Bethpage Senior Center, guests learned about hands-only CPR, how to operate an AED, abdominal thrusts for choking, and more. Now they have the tools to help their family and friends if they are experiencing a medical crisis.



L to R: Mount Sinai South Nassau: RNs Abigail Fromm, Val Griffiths, Catherine Colwell, and Dr. David Neubert
American Heart Association: Jeremy Leiss
St. Pius Seniors: Vice President Janet Riley and President Lou Fabiano,



Janet Riley practices infant CPR

Case Management Services



Did you know that the Nassau County Office for the Aging offers Case Management services?

If an older adult is having difficulty functioning independently at home, Case Managers will help individuals access community programs such as personal care aides, home delivered meals, counseling, and more.

For more information call NY Connects at 516-227-8900.

Senior Center Open House



Mark your calendar for our next Senior Center Open House on Tuesday, February 24th. Enjoy activities, lunch and more! Meet the people who make our senior centers a vibrant place of living, learning, and friendship!

All Nassau County residents, age 60 and above are welcome to participate. Call NY Connects at 516-227-8900 for your local Senior Center information.



Milestone Birthday Celebrations!

Happy 100th Birthday, Gloria!



Deputy Commissioner Debbie Pugliese stopped by to wish Gloria a Happy 100th Birthday, and present her with a citation.

Wantagh Senior Center Birthdays!



Happy 90th Birthday, Janet!

Happy 85th Birthday, Rose!



Happy 85th Birthday, Patricia!



Interested in a presentation from Nassau County Office for the Aging?

Call (516) 227-8900 to schedule



Scan here to visit our website

