Why Being Able to Talk with Your Doctor Matters

In the past, the doctor typically took the lead and the patient followed. Today, a good patient-doctor relationship is more of a partnership. You and your doctor can work as a team, along with nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, and other healthcare providers, to manage your medical problems and keep you healthy.

How well you and your doctor talk to each other is one of the most important parts of getting good health care. But, talking to your doctor isn't always easy. It takes time and effort on your part as well as your doctor’s.

This means asking questions if the doctor’s explanations or instructions are unclear, bringing up problems even if the doctor doesn’t ask, and letting the doctor know if you have concerns about a particular treatment or change in your daily life. Taking an active role in your health care puts the responsibility for good communication on both you and your doctor.

All of this is true at any age. But, when you’re older, it becomes even more important to talk often and comfortably with your doctor. That’s partly because you may have more health conditions and treatments to discuss. It’s also because your health has a big impact on other parts of your life, and that needs to be talked about, too.

HOW TO CHOOSE A DOCTOR YOU CAN TALK TO

Finding a main doctor (often called your primary doctor or primary care doctor) who you feel comfortable talking to is the first step in good communication. It is also a way to ensure your good health. This doctor gets to know you and what your health is normally like. He or she can help you make medical decisions that suit your values and daily habits and can keep in touch with the other medical specialists and healthcare providers you may need.

If you don’t have a primary doctor or are not at ease with the one you currently see, now may be the time to find a new doctor. Whether you just moved to a new city, changed insurance providers, or had a bad experience with your doctor or medical staff, it is worthwhile to spend time finding a doctor you can trust.

People sometimes hesitate to change doctors because they worry about hurting their doctor’s feelings. But doctors understand that different people have different needs. They know it is important for everyone to have a doctor with whom they are comfortable.

Primary care physicians frequently are family practitioners, internists, or geriatricians. A geriatrician is a doctor who specializes in older people, but family practitioners and internists may also have a lot of experience with older patients. Here are some suggestions that can help you find a doctor who meets your needs.

DECIDE WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR IN A DOCTOR

A good first step is to make a list of qualities that matter to you. Do you care if your doctor is a man or a woman? Is it important that your doctor has evening office hours, is associated with a specific hospital or medical center, or speaks your language? Do you prefer a doctor who has an individual practice or one who is part of a group so you can see one of your doctor’s partners if your doctor is not available? After you have made your list, go back over it and decide which qualities are most important and which are nice, but not essential.

Identify Several Possible Doctors

Once you have a general sense of what you are looking for, ask friends and relatives, medical specialists, and other health professionals for the names of doctors with whom they have had good experiences. Rather than just getting a name, ask about the person’s experiences. For example, say: “What do you like about Dr. Smith?” and “Does this doctor take time to answer questions?” A doctor whose name comes up often may be a strong possibility.

If you belong to a managed care plan—a health maintenance organization (HMO) or preferred provider organization (PPO)—you may be required to choose a doctor in the plan or else you may have to pay extra to see a doctor outside the network. Most managed care plans will provide information on their doctors’ backgrounds and credentials. Some plans have websites with lists of participating doctors from which you can choose.

It may be helpful to develop a list of a few names you can choose from. As you find out more about the doctors on this list, you may rule out some of them. In some cases, a doctor may not be taking new patients and you may have to make another choice.

Consult Reference Sources

The American Medical Association’s Doctor Finder website and the American Board of Medical Specialties’ Certification Matters database can help you find doctors in your area. These websites don’t recommend individual doctors, but they do provide a list of doctors you may want to consider. MedlinePlus, a website from the
LTC Ombudsman Conference held

On September 10th and 11th, Ombudsman Volunteers from across the state of Missouri gathered at the 2018 Long-Term Care Ombudsman Conference in St. Charles, MO to learn new information and celebrate their service as volunteers. 21 volunteers from the Southeast region attended, the most out of all of the regions in the state!

The theme for the conference this year was “We’re All in This Together.” This reminds the volunteers that it takes all of us working together to advocate for the residents living in long term care homes. The volunteers were able to socialize with other fellow volunteers from different areas of the state and learn valuable information in different training sessions. These sessions included “The New Survey Process,” “Disability Awareness Training,” and “Healthy Lifestyle Training.” The volunteers were recognized for their years of service during a dinner reception at the 15th Annual Show-Me Summit on Aging & Health that evening.

Delegates to the Silver Haired Legislature Choose their Priorities for 2019

The 45th Annual Conference of the Silver Haired Legislature took place at the State Capitol in Jefferson City on October 16, 17, and 18. The 103 delegates in attendance chose their Top Five Priorities and formulated plans to advocate for senior issues during the coming legislative session. After spirited debates in the Legislative chambers, the delegates chose these issues as their Top Five Priorities for the 2019 legislative session:

1. Establish the Senior Service Growth & Development Program
2. Revision of MoRx
3. Increase funding for Home-Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals
4. Make Missouri’s income tax brackets more progressive
5. Approval of over the counter sale/use of industrial hemp oil as a supplement

Anyone interested in learning further details about the priorities of the Silver Haired Legislature is encouraged to call or e-mail Jackie Dover, Aging Matters at 800-392-8771 or jdover@agingmatters2u.com.

Missouri’s Silver Haired Legislature was founded in 1973, the first in the nation after the Older Americans Act was amended to include advocacy groups. The SHL is composed of fifteen volunteers from each of the ten statewide Area Agencies on Aging. These 150 senior advocates, elected by their peers, identify and advocate for issues critical to older Missourians.

Medicare Quickies

Many people are asking where their new Medicare cards are and what they have to do to get them. New Medicare cards are on the way, they should be here by the end of the year and you only have to make sure the address Social Security has for you is up to date. Medicare will not call you and ask for your information to send you a card. Medicare will not charge you for your new card either. Several people in our area have received calls that they must send $5-25 to get their card, THAT IS A SCAM. Please do not give your Medicare or Social Security number out to someone who calls you on the phone.

Another recent question is what to do with letters and information that promotes a website Medicare.com to access Medicare information. That site is not in any way affiliated with Medicare. If you need Medicare information, you can go to Medicare.gov. The .gov is important and lets you know you are on the real Medicare governmental site. If the internet is not a way you like to communicate, you can call 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227). You can also call the information and assistance program at Aging Matters for help with your Medicare questions. That number is 800-392-8771 and select one of these extensions – 113, 114, 104, or 127.

Medicare also has changes to the cost; the standard Medicare Part B premium will be $135.50. Some will pay less because the Social Security COLA raise of 2.8% will not cover an increase. Those with higher incomes (over $85,000 for a person filing single or $107,000 for a couple filing jointly) could pay more. If you have limited income and assets you might qualify for help with your Medicare costs; call Aging Matters to see. The Medicare Part A deductible will increase to $1364 per benefit period and the Part B deductible will increase $2 to $185.

Many Part D plans are changing and we have already begun to help beneficiaries sort through the plans available. Open Enrollment for Medicare Part B continues until December 7. Please check your plan to make sure you are in the best plan for you. If you have any questions about Medicare, please call Aging Matters, 800-392-8771 or 573-335-3331, and select one of these extensions - 113, 114, 104, or 127.
Gifts for Caregivers by Kathy Bullis

If you’ve ever caught yourself saying to a family caregiver, “Let me know if there’s anything I can do to help...” then you probably know that it can be difficult to discern how and when you can support a caregiver. A caregiver may not even know how to tell you how to help, or may be hesitant to really accept your assistance. Caregiving can also be an isolating endeavor, with people finding it hard to break out and let others know when they really could use assistance.

That said, there are ways you can help a caregiver with small gestures and gifts, whether for a special occasion or “just because.” With November being Family Caregivers Month, it’s a perfect time for gift-giving. Below are 10 unique gift ideas for caregivers:

1. **Encouragement and Support** This gift is free and unlimited! Make yourself available for visits and chats, letting them vent as needed, and supporting as best you can. Perhaps they can even find time to join you for a weekly walk around the neighborhood. Having an appointment like that to look forward to can be a lifeline in the most stressful times. As an added bonus, you could bring a little treat to your visit, from a frozen yogurt to a nice cold soda. Remember that it’s the gesture that counts, and having someone show they care can make a big impact for the caregiver.

2. **Small Chores** If a person is constantly busy helping another human being survive and conduct daily tasks, there are countless small chores that can fall through the cracks. Look around and see what chores are easy and simple enough for you to do yourself. For example, you can wash their car or clean out their gutters. Or, consider even smaller actions that are still thoughtful, like taking their empty trash can in from the curb, putting their newspaper on their front porch, or doing any other small thing that needs attention. Every little action the caregiver does not have to do themselves can make a difference.

3. **Grocery Shopping** If you have time and go to the grocery store on a regular basis, why not offer to pick up items for the caregiver as well? You could go a more formal route – telling them ahead of time so they can give you a shopping list and money – or perhaps less formal, sending them a text while you’re at the store, “Need anything from the grocery store?” You may be surprised at how just picking up a loaf of bread or a bottle of laundry detergent might save the caregiver a huge amount of time and energy not trying to arrange their own visit to the store. Drop off the items on your way home with a smile and you’ve made a huge difference!

4. **Donation in their Loved One’s Name** If the caregiver is caring for a family member or spouse, you might consider making a donation in the loved one’s name through an appropriate organization, such as the Alzheimer’s Association. Perhaps you have a shared interest with the loved one, such as your alma mater or a community service organization, like an animal shelter. Almost all organizations have a way you can give in honor of another person, whether it is a brick on a sidewalk, a name on a bulletin board, or a card sent from the organization. These types of gifts are great for people who “have everything,” but can still be a touching tribute to the caregiver’s loved one.

5. **Meals** If you have a favorite dish that’s easy to warm up, make an extra batch, put it in a foil pan, and drop it off at the caregiver’s house. Make sure to give them a heads up ahead of time so they don’t plan for supper, then drop off the meal at an agreed upon time. Don’t stay for dinner unless you’ve already planned this with the caregiver, as an unexpected guest can add additional stress to the evening routine. Casseroles are a great option since you can prepare them and drop them off to be baked by the caregiver when they are ready. They can also be divided and frozen in portions to be eaten later. If you are delivering closer to mealtime, you can also simply pick up a hot meal from a favorite drive-through or local restaurant. Just be sure to keep in mind any dietary restrictions and ease of preparation.

6. **Entertainment On-Demand.** When a caregiver spends 24-hours a day caring for another human being, they often end up working around their schedule. As a result, they don’t see much “prime time” TV and must often wait for reruns to catch any of their favorite episodes. It’s a small thing, but finding time to watch their favorite show can be just what a caregiver needs to relax. If you have the funds, why not set up the caregiver with a system for recording and watching their favorite shows on-demand. Options like TiVo and a DVR work with TVs, while a subscription to Netflix allows them to stream shows through their computer or other devices.

7. **Gift certificate for a Massage, Manicure or Pedicure** Caregiving can be hard on a person’s body, as days are often spent lifting and moving someone who is no longer very mobile. A one-hour massage can do wonders in helping the caregiver feel restored and ready to take on a new day. In the same way, caregivers often have to prioritize their loved one over themselves, meaning pampering activities – like a manicure or pedicure – can fall by the wayside. Make it easier for them to care for themselves with a simple gift card.

8. **Gift Certificate for Lawn Care, House Cleaning, or Other Chores.** Again, chores that were once simple and perhaps even enjoyable can become next to impossible when caring for someone else full-time. You can find affordable and reliable services for everything ranging from house cleaning to lawn care to dog walking. Why not take one thing off the caregiver’s to-do list with one (or more) service visits from a provider? It might be something they would never do for themselves but would greatly appreciate as a gift.

9. **The Gift of Time** The easiest and most affordable gift you can give a caregiver is just a bit of free time to do whatever they need to do... or the time to do nothing at all! You may have to insist, but tell the caregiver you want to come over for even just an hour and sit with the loved one (or perhaps, be in the house while he or she naps) so that the caregiver can take a shower, get out of the house, run an errand alone, or even take a nap. Ensure that the caregiver does not feel he or she has to entertain you when you come (avoid meal times, etc. so they don’t feel like they have to feed you) and reassure them that you will call them if anything happens beyond your control. Then politely kick them out for some free time. They may not know what to do with themselves, but even going to a book store to peruse the aisles for 45 minutes can make a huge impact on a person’s outlook.

10. **Pay for a Session of Respite Care** If you have the funds and are looking for a more substantial gift, many professional elder care organizations offer “respite care” designed specifically to support caregivers by giving them a regular, scheduled amount of time on their own, providing professionals to care for the dementia patient while they are out. This, of course, would be a much-appreciated gift for any caregiver.
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CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

National Library of Medicine at NIH, has a comprehensive list of directories, which may also be helpful. For a list of doctors who participate in Medicare, visit www.medicare.gov/physiciancompare.

Don’t forget to call your local or State medical society to check if complaints have been filed against any of the doctors you are considering.

LEARN ABOUT DOCTORS YOU ARE CONSIDERING

Once you have narrowed your list to two or three doctors, call their offices. The office staff is a good source of information about the doctor’s education and qualifications, office policies, and payment procedures. Pay attention to the office staff—you will have to communicate with them often!

You may want to set up an appointment to meet and talk with a doctor you are considering. He or she is likely to charge you for such a visit. After the appointment, ask yourself if this doctor is a person with whom you could work well. If you are not satisfied, schedule a visit with one of your other candidates. When learning about a doctor, consider asking questions like:

- Do you have many older patients?
- How do you feel about involving my family in care decisions?
- Can I call or email you or your staff when I have questions? Do you charge for telephone or email time?
- What are your thoughts about complementary or alternative treatments?

MAKE A CHOICE

When making a decision about which doctor to choose, you might want to ask yourself questions like:

- Did the doctor give me a chance to ask questions?
- Was the doctor really listening to me?
- Could I understand what the doctor was saying? Was I comfortable asking him or her to say it again?
- Once you’ve chosen a doctor, make your first actual care appointment. This visit may include a medical history and a physical exam. Be sure to bring your medical records, or have them sent from your former doctor. Bring a list of your current medicines or put the medicines in a bag and take them with you. If you haven’t already met the doctor, ask for extra time during this visit to ask any questions you have about the doctor or the practice.

17 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR NEW DOCTOR

Basics

- Is the doctor taking new patients?
- Is the doctor covered by my insurance plan?
- Does the doctor accept Medicare?

Qualifications and Characteristics

- Is the doctor board certified? In what field?
- Is the age, sex, race, or religion of the doctor important to me?
- Will language be an obstacle to communication? Is there someone in the office who speaks my language?

- Do I prefer a group practice or an individual doctor?
- Does it matter which hospital the doctor admits patients to?

Logistics

- Is the location of the doctor’s office important? How far am I willing to travel to see the doctor?
- Is there parking? What does it cost? Is the office on a bus or subway line?
- Does the building have an elevator? What about ramps for a wheelchair or walker?

Office Policies

- What days/hours does the doctor see patients?
- Are there times set aside for the doctor to take phone calls? Does the doctor accept emailed questions? Is there a charge for this service?
- Does the doctor ever make house calls?
- How far in advance do I have to make appointments?
- What’s the process for urgent care? How do I reach the doctor in an emergency?
- Who takes care of patients after hours or when the doctor is away

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A DOCTOR’S APPOINTMENT

A basic plan can help you make the most of your appointment whether you are starting with a new doctor or continuing with the doctor you’ve seen for years. The following tips will make it easier for you and your doctor to cover everything you need to talk about.

Make a list of what you want to discuss. For example, do you have a new symptom you want to ask the doctor about? Do you want to get a flu shot? Are you concerned about how a treatment is affecting your daily life? If you have more than a few items to discuss, put them in order and ask about the most important ones first. Don’t put off the things that are really on your mind until the end of your appointment—bring them up right away!

Take Information with You

Some doctors suggest you put all your prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal remedies or supplements in a bag and bring them with you. Others recommend you bring a list of everything you take and the dose. You should also take your insurance cards, names and phone numbers of other doctors you see, and your medical records if the doctor doesn’t already have them.

Consider Bringing a Family Member or Friend

Sometimes it is helpful to bring a family member or close friend with you. Let your family member or friend know in advance what you want from your visit. Your companion can remind you what you planned to discuss with the doctor if you forget. She or he can take notes for you and can help you remember what the doctor said.

Plan to Update the Doctor

Let your doctor know what has happened in your life since your last visit. If you have been treated in the emergency room or by a specialist, tell the doctor right away. Mention any changes you have noticed in your appetite, weight, sleep, or energy level. Also tell the doctor about any recent changes in any medications you take or the effects they have had on you.

Request an Interpreter if you know you’ll need one

If the doctor you selected or were referred to doesn’t speak your language, ask the doctor’s office to provide an interpreter. Even though some English-speaking doctors know basic medical terms in Spanish or other languages, you may feel more comfortable speaking in your own language, especially when it comes to sensitive subjects, such as sexuality or depression. Call the doctor’s office ahead of time, as they may need to plan for an interpreter to be available.

5 WAYS TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR TIME AT THE DOCTOR’S OFFICE

1. Be Honest It is tempting to say what you think the doctor wants to hear, for example, that you smoke less or eat a more balanced diet than you really do. While this is natural, it’s not in your best interest. Your doctor can suggest the best treatment only if you say what is really going on. For instance, you might say: “I have been trying to quit smoking, as you recommended, but I am not making much headway.”

2. Decide What Questions Are Most Important Pick three or four questions or concerns that you must want to talk about with the doctor. You can tell him or her what they are at the beginning of the appointment, and then discuss each in turn. If you have time, you can then go on to other questions.

3. Stick to the Point Although your doctor might like
to talk with you at length, each patient is given a limited amount of time. To make the best use of your time, stick to the point. For instance, give the doctor a brief description of the symptom, when it started, how often it happens, and if it is getting worse or better.

4. **Share Your Point of View about the Visit**
Tell the doctor if you feel rushed, worried, or uncomfortable. If necessary, you can offer to return for a second visit to discuss your concerns. Try to voice your feelings in a positive way. For example, you could say something like: “I know you have many patients to see, but I’m really worried about this. I’d feel much better if we could talk about it a little more.”

5. **Remember, the Doctor May Not Be Able to Answer All Your Questions**
Even the best doctor may be unable to answer some questions. Most doctors will tell you when they don't have answers. They also may help you find the information you need or refer you to a specialist. If a doctor regularly brushes off your questions or symptoms as simply a part of aging, think about looking for another doctor.

**WHAT DO I NEED TO TELL THE DOCTOR?**

Talking about your health means sharing information about how you feel physically, emotionally, and mentally. Knowing how to describe your symptoms and bring up other concerns will help you become a partner in your health care.

**Share Any Symptoms**
A symptom is evidence of a disease or disorder in the body. Examples of symptoms include pain, fever, a lump or bump, unexplained weight loss or gain, or having a hard time sleeping.

Be clear and concise when describing your symptoms. Your description helps the doctor identify the problem. A physical exam and medical tests provide valuable information, but your symptoms point the doctor in the right direction.

Your doctor will ask when your symptoms started, what time of day they happen, how long they last (seconds? Days?), how often they occur, if they seem to be getting worse or better, and if they keep you from going out or doing your usual activities.

Take the time to make some notes about your symptoms before you call or visit the doctor. Worrying about your symptoms is not a sign of weakness. Being honest about what you are experiencing doesn't mean that you are complaining. The doctor needs to know how you feel.

**Questions to ask yourself about your symptoms:**
- What exactly are my symptoms?
- Are the symptoms constant? If not, when do I experience them?
- Does anything I do make the symptoms better? Or worse?
- Do the symptoms affect my daily activities? Which ones? How?

**Give Information about Your Medications**
It is possible for medicines to interact, causing unpleasant and sometimes dangerous side effects. Your doctor needs to know about ALL of the medicines you take, including over-the-counter (nonprescription) drugs and herbal remedies or supplements. Make a list or bring everything with you to your visit—don’t forget about eye drops, vitamins, and laxatives. Tell the doctor how often you take each. Describe any drug allergies or reactions you have had. Say which medications work best for you. Be sure your doctor has the phone number of the pharmacy you use.

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**Tell the Doctor about Your Habits**
To provide the best care, your doctor must understand you as a person and know what your life is like. The doctor may ask about where you live, what you eat, how you sleep, what you do each day, what activities you enjoy, what your sex life is like, and if you smoke or drink. Be open and honest with your doctor. It will help him or her to understand your medical conditions fully and recommend the best treatment choices for you.

**Voice Other Concerns**
Your doctor may ask you how your life is going. This isn't being impolite or nosy. Information about what's happening in your life may be useful medically. Let the doctor know about any major changes or stresses in your life, such as a divorce or the death of a loved one. You don't have to go into detail; you may want to say something like: "It might be helpful for you to know that my sister passed away since my last visit with you," or "I recently had to sell my home and move in with my daughter."

**What Should I Ask My Doctor During a Checkup?**
Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. If you don't ask questions, he or she may assume you already know the answer or that you don't want more information. Don't wait for the doctor to raise a specific question or subject; he or she may not know it's important to you. Be proactive. Ask questions when you don't know the meaning of a word (like aneurysm, hypertension, or infarct) or when instructions aren't clear (for example, does taking medicine with food mean before, during, or after a meal?).

**Learn About Medical Tests**
Sometimes, doctors need to do blood tests, x-rays, or other procedures to find out what is wrong or to learn more about your medical condition. Some tests, such as Pap tests, mammograms, glaucoma tests, and screenings for prostate and colorectal cancer, are done regularly to check for hidden medical problems.

Before having a medical test, ask your doctor to explain why it is important, what it will show, and what it will cost. Ask what kind of things you need to do to prepare for the test. For example, you may need to have an empty stomach, or you may have to provide a urine sample. Ask how you will be notified of the test results and how long they will take to come in.

**Questions to Ask About Medical Tests**
- Why is the test being done?
- What steps does the test involve? How should I get ready?
- Are there any dangers or side effects?
- How will I find out the results? How long will it take to get the results?
- What will I know after the test?

When the results are ready, make sure the doctor tells you what they are and explains what they mean. You may want to ask your doctor for a written copy of the test results. If the test is done by a specialist, ask to have the results sent to your primary doctor.

**Discuss Your Diagnosis and What to Expect**
A diagnosis identifies your disease or physical problem. The doctor makes a diagnosis based on the symptoms you are experiencing and the results of the physical exam, laboratory work, and other tests.

If you understand your medical condition, you can help make better decisions about treatment. If you know what to expect, it may be easier for you to deal with the condition.

Ask the doctor to tell you the name of the condition and why he or she thinks you have it. Ask how it may affect you and how long it might last. Some medical problems never go away completely. They can't be cured, but they can be treated or managed.

**Questions to Ask About Your Diagnosis**
- What may have caused this condition? Will it be permanent?
- How is this condition treated or managed? What will be the long-term effects on my life?
- How can I learn more about my condition?

**Talk About Your Medications**
Your doctor may prescribe a drug for your condition. Make sure you know the name of the drug and understand why it has been prescribed for you. Ask the doctor to write down how often and for how long you should take it.

Make notes about any other special instructions. If you are taking other medications, make sure your doctor knows what they are, so he or she can prevent harmful drug interactions. Check with your doctor's office before taking any over-the-counter medications.

Let the doctor know if your medicine doesn't seem to be working or if it is causing problems. If you want to stop taking your medicine, check with your doctor first.

You may find it helpful to keep a chart of all the medicines you take and when you take them.

Get answers to commonly asked questions about medicines and learn more about how you can save money on costly prescriptions.

Source: nia.nih.gov - This article will conclude in the January-February 2019 newsletter–
**Holiday Fun Food Facts**

As the end of the year approaches, our anticipation for the fall and winter holidays begins to build. In addition to the festive decorations and twinkling lights, we enjoy holiday parties, spending time with friends and family, and a variety of other holiday activities. And the one thing that all of these events have in common is a variety of traditional and delicious holiday foods.

While we enjoy some of the same foods every holiday season, have you ever wondered why we associate some foods with a special time like the holidays? Here are the origins behind a few of our favorite holiday foods and some fun festive food facts.

**Gingerbread** is a spicy sweet treat, often enjoyed at holiday time. While she didn’t actually bake the cookies herself, Queen Elizabeth I was credited with the idea of decorating the cookies. Eventually, gingerbread was consumed year-round and the shapes and decorating became a symbol of elegance. This may be why we most often associate them with a special time like the holidays.

**Cranberries** are a fruit native to North America. They become ripe and are harvested mid-September to mid-October, making them perfect to consume during holiday time. Because of small air pockets inside the fruit, they can float and bounce like a ball when ripe. They were first canned in 1912 as a way to extend the short selling season and in the process a jellied treat was created that can act as a sauce when warmed.

**Fruitcake** is a traditional holiday treat and is often used as a gift. These cakes contain an abundance of candied or dried fruits, nuts, spices, and sugars – all very expensive in the Middle Ages when this treat is thought to have first been created. Because of this expense, as well as the time and effort that goes into making the cake, it’s assumed it was served mainly during the holidays as a special dessert.

**Eggnog** seems to have originated in Great Britain, where the aristocracy would use it to toast to prosperity and good health. It’s based on a medieval drink called posset, which contained the same basic ingredients as our modern version of eggnog – milk, sugar, eggs and sometimes alcohol. Since all of the ingredients were expensive at the time, it became a drink of the wealthy. The people in the American colonies were eventually able to harvest the ingredients from their own farms and the drink caught on in the New World. What we drink today is uniquely American thanks to the custom of adding rum, which never really caught on with the British upper classes.

**Pumpkin Pie** is such a holiday tradition that it’s hard to imagine an American Thanksgiving table without one or two of these desserts. It’s likely that the Pilgrims carried pumpkins on the Mayflower in 1620 but pumpkins were already growing in North America. It’s likely that pumpkins were on the table in some form at the first Thanksgiving celebration. By the early 18th century, pumpkin pie had earned a place at the table, as Thanksgiving became an important New England regional holiday. Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863 and after the civil war, pumpkin pie started to become popular nationally. Libby’s meat-canning company of Chicago introduced a line of canned pumpkin that soon became a Thanksgiving fixture in its own right.

Christmas cookies come in all shapes, sizes, flavors and textures. According to culinary historians, cookies as we know them today were first made not to eat, but to test the temperature of an oven. Cooks would take a small dollop of cake batter and bake it as a means of gauging whether the oven was ready or not. It wasn’t common to leave cookies and milk out for Santa Claus until the 1930’s. Parents encouraged children to do it in order to teach them how to share and be charitable during a time of economic depression. The tradition stuck and today, Santa visits over 500 million homes where he encounters about a billion cookies!

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**Recipes**

**Libby’s Pumpkin Pie Recipe**

**Ingredients**

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 can (15 oz.) LIBBYS® 100% Pure Pumpkin
- 1 can (12 fl. oz.) Evaporated Milk, (Or substitute with equal amount Lactose-Free or Almond Cooking Milk)
- 1 unbaked 9-inch (4-cup volume) deep-dish pie shell
- Whipped cream (optional)

**Instructions**

Mix sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves in small bowl. Beat eggs in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture. Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell. Bake in preheated 425° F oven for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° F; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerate. Top with whipped cream before serving.
Campbell’s Green Bean Casserole  
(a newer holiday tradition)

Ingredients
- 1 can (10 1/2 ounces) Campbell’s® Condensed Cream of Mushroom Soup or Campbell’s® Condensed 98% Fat Free Cream of Mushroom Soup
- ½ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 2/3 cups cooked cut green beans
- 1 1/3 cups French’s® French Fried Onions

Instructions
Stir the soup, milk, soy sauce, black pepper, beans and 2/3 cup onions in a 1 1/2-quart casserole. Bake at 350° F, for 25 minutes or until the bean mixture is hot and bubbling. Stir the bean mixture. Sprinkle with the remaining onions. Bake for 5 minutes or until the onions are golden brown. Recipe Tips: for the cooked green beans: Use 1 bag (16 to 20 ounces) frozen green beans, thawed, 2 packages (9 ounces each) frozen green beans, thawed, 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) green beans, drained or about 1 1/2 pounds fresh green beans for this recipe.

Cranberry Sauce
(Recipe found at Simply Recipes)

Ingredients
- 1 cup (200 g) sugar
- 1 cup (250 mL) water
- 4 cups (1 12-oz package) fresh or frozen cranberries
- Optional Pecans, orange zest, raisins, currants, blueberries, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice.

Instructions
Rinse cranberries: Place the cranberries in a colander and rinse them. Pick out and discard any damaged or bruised cranberries. Boil water with sugar: Put the water and sugar in a medium saucepan on high heat and bring to a boil. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Add cranberries, cook until they burst: Add the cranberries to the pot and return to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes or until most of the cranberries have burst. Stir in mix-ins if using: Once the cranberries have burst you can leave the cranberry sauce as is, or dress it up with other ingredients. We like to mix in a half a cup of chopped pecans a pinch or two of orange zest. Some people like adding raisins or currants, or even blueberries for added sweetness. You can also add holiday spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, or allspice. If adding spices, start with a pinch of each and add more to your taste. Let cool: Remove the pot from heat. Let cool completely at room temperature, then transfer to a bowl to chill in the refrigerator. Note that the cranberry sauce will continue to thicken as it cools.

Theme: Lyrics of the song "the greatest gift of all"
Roger Huff receives Senior Service Award

Each Monday, Roger volunteers at the Marble Hill Nutrition Center delivering meals to the area home bound citizens. He also serves as backup on other days when a driver is needed and volunteers to work at the desk for the center.

On August 3, 2018 Roger Huff was honored and presented the Lieutenant Governor’s Senior Service Award by District 145 Representative, Rick Francis, at the Nutrition Center in Marble Hill. Roger’s volunteer activities with the Nutrition Center, Aging Matters, and New Salem Baptist Church, was also recognized with a Resolution from the Missouri Senate.

Roger and his wife, Sharon, moved back to Marble Hill in 2010 after he retired in 2008 from Meridian Medical Technologies as a quality control/inventory control employee. He and his wife are members of New Salem Baptist Church where Roger volunteers in various positions and activities. At Aging Matters, Roger is currently serving as the chairman of the Board of Directors and the representative for Bollinger County.

Aging Matters welcomes new employee

Cindy Silman joined the staff of Aging Matters in September 2018, as the Family Caregiver Case Manager. Cindy is no stranger to Aging Matters or social work; prior to this position, Cindy worked as an assessor contracted by Aging Matters completing home visits authorizing state-funded services. She also worked with the Children’s Division and the Division of Health and Senior Services. Cindy has a bachelor’s degree in social work from Southeast Missouri State University.

Cindy and her husband, Mark, live in Benton. They have two married sons and two grandchildren. They also have a seven year old great dane named Maggie.

At Aging Matters, it takes the whole team to achieve our goals and provide the services needed by our clients. Each employee plays an important role and for this we want to acknowledge each employee on their work anniversary month. For the months of November and December, the following people are recognized for their hard work and dedication:

**NOVEMBER**
Mary Ann Burgess, Central Office, 8 years
Paula Fann, Central Office, 6 years
Christy McClain, RSVP/VIC, 5 years

**DECEMBER**
Anita Campbell, Central Office, 2 years
Patsy Estraca, Carouthersville Senior Center, 23 years
Emily Smith, Central Office, 5 years
Regina VonHasseln, Central Office, 18 years

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FUNDS

Funds for this project were made available through the Division of Aging of the Missouri Department of Social Services under provisions of the Older Americans Act. The total project is in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to the Regulation of the Department of Health and Human Resources issued pursuant to the Title to the end that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from the benefits of the project.

PUBLISHED BY:
AGING MATTERS
EDITOR:
BARBARA HAHS
WEBSITE/RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
1-800-392-8771