

healthy aging UPDATE

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Lifelong Smiles Coalition aims to improve the oral health of older Iowans

As Americans age, oral health care tends to take a back seat to other health issues. According to the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, up to 33 percent of adults over the age of 65 have untreated tooth decay.

This statistic is not particularly shocking, given that only one in four older Americans carries dental insurance. But with more than 450,000 adults over the age of 65 living in Iowa and growing evidence that oral health is directly linked to other health problems – including heart attacks and dementia – dental care among older Iowans is an issue that can no longer be ignored.

As a result, the Iowa Department on Aging and a dozen other public and private organizations across the state have teamed up to launch the Lifelong Smiles Coalition. Designed to increase access to oral health care for older Iowans, the group hopes to help every homebound older adult and nursing home resident in Iowa have access to oral health care.

The coalition consists of state agencies, advocacy organizations, trade associations, health professionals and academic institutions and funders, including the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation.



The new 13-member Lifelong Smiles Coalition is made up of public and private entities with a common goal of ensuring every homebound older adult and nursing home resident in Iowa has access to oral health care.

To date, Delta Dental has provided more than \$600,000 in grants to fund coalition projects that enhance access to oral health care. These include:

- ▶ Developing a community-based system of care to improve the oral health of homebound and nursing home residents in Lee and Scott Counties;
- ▶ Providing oral health care education to direct care workers to help them better address the oral health care needs of homebound and nursing home residents; and
- ▶ Developing continuing dental education programs for dentists and hygienists that are specifically focused on geriatric oral health care.

For more information about the Lifelong Smiles Coalition, contact Carlene Russell at carlene.russell@iowa.gov.

Poor oral health leads to nutritional health risks in older adults

Studies have found an association between poor oral health and increased nutritional health risks in older adults, largely due to the fact that decaying, missing or poorly aligned teeth can pose significant barriers to healthy eating.

As an individual's ability to chew declines, the likelihood of malnutrition increases, whether because the person eats less nutrient-rich food that is difficult to chew or eats less food altogether. As a result, older adults without teeth are twice as likely to be overweight or obese (from eating high-calorie, nutrient-poor food) and three times more likely to be underweight (from not eating an adequate amount of food) than those with healthy teeth.

Because significant fluctuations in weight can contribute to an inability to perform activities of daily living, older adults with poor oral health also may be less able to care for themselves and can suffer from limited social interaction. Because poor oral health will not resolve itself if left untreated, regular checkups and preventive measures such as daily brushing play an important role when it comes to older adults' ability to maintain quality of life.

Older adults may benefit from handouts with tips on healthy eating and oral health awareness. For example, the brochure [“Are You Having Trouble Swallowing?”](#) that is distributed by Aging Resources of Central Iowa provides tips for healthy eating, food-modification and a dental checklist.

30% of older adults lose their teeth, which contributes to nutritional deficiencies.

23% of older adults have severe gum disease, which has been linked to systemic diseases.

50% of older adults have untreated cavities, resulting in pain that diminishes quality of life.

70% of older adults do not have dental insurance and almost one in four has not seen a dentist in 5 years.

Sources:

[The Spectrum \(Fall 2014\). Healthy Aging Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.](#)
<http://www.toothwisdom.org>

Food safety for seniors begins at home

One in six Americans suffers from food-borne illness annually, resulting in medical costs of nearly \$80 billion. To examine how this affects older adults, Rutgers University and the Meals on Wheels Association partnered to study food-borne illness among older receiving home-delivered meals.

Researchers looked at the kitchens of 700 home-delivered meal participants across five states, including Iowa (through the Heritage Area Agency on Aging). The findings were alarming:

- ▶ 20% of refrigerators were set at temperatures above 40 degrees.
- ▶ 36% of participants reported they find it difficult to discard food.
- ▶ 29% of participants had at least one home-delivered meal in the refrigerator; 5% had more than five meals in the refrigerator.

- ▶ 6% had outdated home-delivered milk in the refrigerator (7 days past expiration date on carton).
- ▶ 25% had unclean refrigerators.

Poor vision may be one of the main reasons older adults have an increased risk of contracting food-borne illness. Problems seeing make it difficult to read labels and dates on packages, clean food preparation surfaces and appliances adequately or ensure refrigerators and freezers are set to safe temperatures.

To help home-delivered meal recipients stay safe from food-borne illness, experts recommend the following:

- ▶ Meal containers should be clearly labeled with the contents, any major food allergens and date.
- ▶ Instructions for storing food not



consumed upon delivery should accompany the meal.

- ▶ If the food is to be stored in the refrigerator, instructions should include directions for reheating and a date by which the food should be consumed.
- ▶ If the food is to be stored in the freezer, instructions should also include directions for thawing.

For more information about the study, visit <http://nutritionandaging.org/momentum-webinars> to view a webinar.

Congregate meal sites bring friends together across Iowa

According to participants, one of the best things about the MLK Congregate Meal Site in Des Moines is that it provides a supportive environment for older Iowans who are looking for social interaction in addition to a delicious lunch.

Thanks to the congregate meals, Lovella Neighbors and Lorene James have developed a longstanding friendship that they say feels more like family. "The meal helps me eat better – at least I get one good meal a day," Lovella said. "I know it provides the right things to eat."

While she likes participating in activities like bingo and crafts, Lovella especially enjoys having someone to eat with, like her friend Lorene.

"Most of the meals are alright or even great," Lorene commented. "Overall, they are well-balanced and I don't eat this good at home."

Many such friendships are featured with pictures of guests displayed



Lorene James (left) and Lovella Neighbors (right) enjoy spending time together at the MLK Congregate Meal Site.

on a large bulletin board that greets visitors as they enter the MLK Meal Site. Clearly, the site's staff and volunteers understand they are bringing people together for more than a great meal.

Congregate meals are available to people who are over the age of 60; the spouses of eligible individuals, regardless of age; volunteers who provide needed services during meal hours; and individuals with a disability who meet specific criteria. For a list of meal sites, contact your local [Area Agency on Aging](#).

2014 Iowa Nutrition Program Facts

81%

of high nutrition-risk congregate meal participants maintained or improved their nutrition risk score.

72%

of high nutrition-risk home-delivered meal participants maintained or improved their nutrition risk score.

2.6 million

congregate and home-delivered meals were served/distributed.

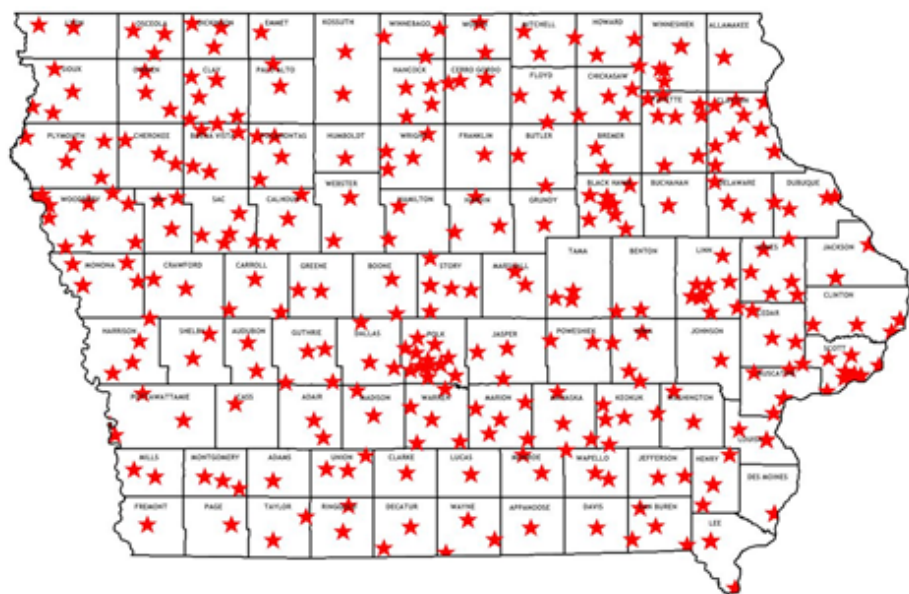
45%

of congregate and home-delivered meal participants lived below poverty.

Most

high nutrition-risk congregate and home-delivered meal participants did not receive any additional services.

Iowa Congregate Meal Sites (Nov. 2014)



Source:

Iowa Department on Aging
Nutrition Services Fact Sheet (SFY 2014)

Use ice melt correctly to help prevent winter slips and falls



Winter brings snow and ice – and with it, a greater risk of falls. A simple way to help reduce the chance of falling outdoors is to use ice melt, which is available at most hardware and home improvement stores, grocery stores and other retail outlets.

For best results, it is important to use ice melt correctly. Every product is a bit different, so be sure to read the application directions before using ice melt and remember:

- ▶ Less is more. Excessive Ice melt tracked inside a building can damage floors and may actually lead to slips and falls inside. As a general rule, use half a cup per square yard
- ▶ Timing is everything. In order for ice melt to be effective, it must be applied on the ground in advance of a storm. Shovel slush from walkways after the ice melt has done its job.

Of course, ice melt is just one component of a comprehensive winter falls prevention program. For more information and a variety of resources on numerous winter safety issues, visit the [“Slips and Falls” topic page](#) under the Loss Control section of the EMC Insurance website (www.emcins.com).

Falls prevention training courses offered in 2015

According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, unintentional falls are the leading cause of injury-related death among adults 65 and older and are responsible for sending more older Iowans to the emergency room than any other cause of injury, including motor vehicle accidents. In fact, older Iowans are hospitalized for fall-related injuries five times more often than they are for any other cause.

As Iowa’s population continues to age, the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA), as a member of the Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition, is helping organizations across the state implement evidence-based falls prevention programs to help older adults reduce their risk of falling.

TAI CHI FOR ARTHRITIS (TCA)

This graceful form of exercise has been shown to reduce participants’ fear of falling while improving balance, strength, mobility and psychological health. For these reasons, TCA is recommended as a falls prevention program for older adults.

Together, the IDA, Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition and the YMCA of Greater Des Moines are working to increase the number of TCA classes available statewide. A Master Training course for new instructors is being held from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Feb. 21-22 at the YMCA Healthy Living Center in Clive. The cost is \$60 and includes a Tai Chi for Arthritis DVD and book. Those who are interested can call (515) 226-9622 to register or contact Trina Radske-Suchan at trina.radskesuchan@dmymca.org.



A MATTER OF BALANCE

A Matter of Balance is specifically designed to reduce fear of falling and improve activity levels among community-dwelling older adults. The program includes eight classes conducted over a 4-week period, during which participants practice exercises to improve strength, coordination and balance and discover how to conduct a home safety evaluation.

A Matter of Balance Master Leaders are trained to facilitate participant classes and are capable of training additional coaches to lead classes. A grant awarded to the IDA will fund a Master Leader Training Course on March 11-12 at the Staybridge Suites Hotel in West Des Moines. To apply, contact Mark Hanson at mhanson@i4a.org or (515) 210-7008.

STEPPING ON

Stepping On is a community-based, small-group program for older adults who have fallen or who have a fear of falling. The 7-week program covers a range of topics, including strength and balance, home hazards, safe footwear and clothing, vision as it relates to falls, community mobility, coping after a fall and understanding medication risks.

A Stepping On Leader Training Course will be offered Feb. 24-26 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Johnston. To apply, contact Mark Hanson at mhanson@i4a.org or (515) 210-7008.

Evidence-based falls prevention programs work together to reduce risks

On Nov. 19, the Oregon Senior Falls Prevention Program hosted a webinar in which it discussed how the three evidence-based falls prevention programs supported by the grant awarded to the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) can work together to address a continuum of fall risks.

The image below illustrates how offering Tai Chi for Arthritis, A Matter of Balance and Stepping On can benefit older Iowans by allowing them to move from one falls prevention program to another as their risk for falling evolves over time.

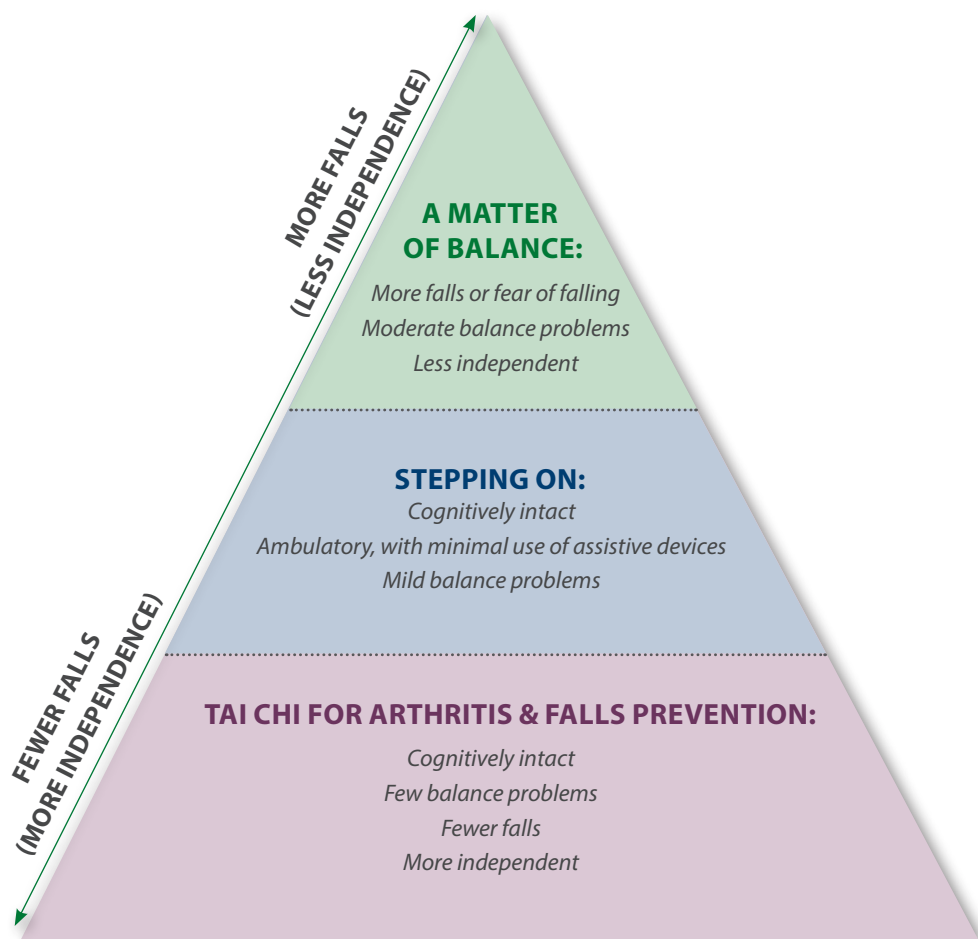
To maximize the benefits of these programs, the Iowa Department on

Aging (IDA) plans to work closely with the six Area Agencies on Aging to ensure access is available statewide.

Beginning in 2015, low-cost training opportunities will be offered to ensure program instructors are available to provide falls prevention classes throughout the state for older adults and adults with disabilities (see page 2).

Additionally, the grant will fund falls prevention education for health care professionals and caregivers in an effort to promote awareness of fall risks and prevention. Together, these initiatives will significantly reduce the incidence of fall-related injury and death among older Iowans.

Falls Prevention Programs: Participant Profiles



Vitamin D may help older adults lower risk of falling



New research suggests low vitamin D levels in older adults is associated with muscle loss, which can contribute to poor balance and increase the risk of falling.

A study conducted over six years measured the vitamin D blood levels and muscle mass of 568 older adults in China. Researchers found participants who had lower levels of plasma 25-hydroxyvitamin D in their blood had significantly more muscle loss in their arms and legs, even with adequate dietary protein intake.

This study supports the growing body of evidence that links adequate vitamin D intake to maintaining muscle mass as we age. Current recommendations state individuals who are 70 or older need at least 800 IU (20 mcg) of vitamin D each day.

Although vitamin D is often associated with dairy products, it can also be obtained from food sources like salmon, tuna, mackerel, egg yolks, some mushrooms, fortified orange juice and fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereals.

Sources:

JAND Oct. 2014 (Vol. 114, Issue 10)
<http://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/VitaminD-HealthProfessional/>

Iowa Administrative Code: Eligibility for Meals at Congregate Nutrition Sites

The following information pertains to eligibility for congregate nutrition services, according to Iowa Administrative Code 17–7.20 (231):

7.20(1)

A person aged 60 or older and the spouse of the person, regardless of age, are eligible to participate in congregate nutrition services.

7.20(2)

Individuals providing volunteer services during meal hours are eligible to participate in congregate nutrition services.

7.20(3)

Individuals with disabilities who reside at home or reside with and accompany eligible older individuals are eligible to participate in congregate nutrition services.

7.20(4)

Individuals with disabilities who are not 60 years of age or older and who reside in housing facilities occupied primarily by older individuals at which congregate nutrition services are provided are eligible to participate in congregate nutrition services.

7.20(5)

Ineligible individuals may eat at a site and pay the programmatic cost of the meal, if the ineligible individual's receipt of the meal does not deprive an eligible participant of a meal.

Note: Employees who do not meet these criteria do not qualify for meals paid with Older Americans Act funds.

Unintentional drug overdoses threaten grandchildren

Each year, poison control centers across the country receive more than 500,000 calls about medicine poisoning from parents and caregivers of children. Some of these calls are due to the fact that a child has accidentally been given the wrong dose of medicine, but recently reports of children getting into medication belonging to someone else have been increasing.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), unintentional medication overdoses are responsible for most emergency room visits in children under the age of five. More than 60,000 young children end up in emergency departments each year because they got into medicines while their parent or caregiver was not looking.

Easily accessible, brightly colored prescription medications may be to blame, especially in 38 percent of cases where children took medicine belonging to their grandparent. But as more American children are raised in households headed by a grandparent, medication safety has become a priority when it comes to making a home safe for children.

As a result, a public awareness campaign has been launched by PROTECT, in partnership with the CDC, the Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation and a number of other organizations.

At www.upandaway.org, consumers can find a number of resources in a variety of languages about medicine safety, including the fact



sheet included on page 7 of this newsletter. These include tip sheets, posters, brochures, coloring books and information about what to do in case of an emergency.

The site also includes a pledge for parents and caregivers to encourage them to keep medicines up and out of sight at home, reminding them about the following safety tips:

- ▶ Medicine and vitamins should be stored in a place high up and out of sight that children cannot reach.
- ▶ Medicine and vitamins should be put away after every use, even those used every day.
- ▶ Safety caps on medicine bottles should be locked after every use.
- ▶ Children should be taught about medicine safety.
- ▶ Friends and family members should be educated about medicine safety and encouraged to keep medicine stored safely in their homes.

There is no question that grandparents across Iowa love their grandchildren, but with nearly one out of every four admitting that they store prescription medicines in easily accessible places, it is important to realize the dangers that can pose for children and take precautionary steps to keep them safe.

4 BUSLOADS
OF CHILDREN
PER DAY
VISIT THE
EMERGENCY ROOM



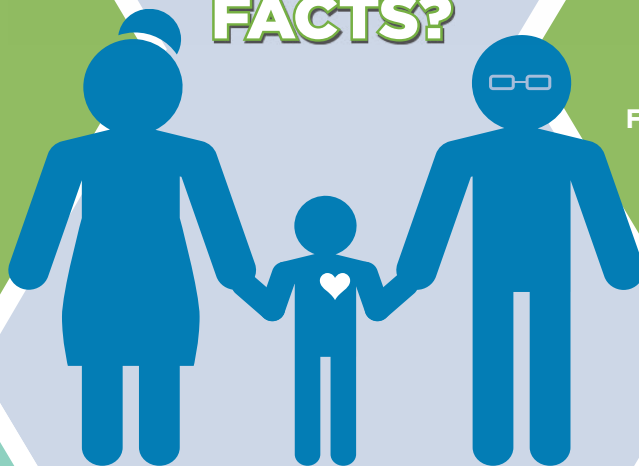
FOR MEDICINE
POISONING

=1 EVERY
8 MINUTES



YOU WOULD DO ANYTHING TO KEEP
YOUR GRANDCHILDREN SAFE.

BUT DID YOU KNOW THESE STARTLING FACTS?



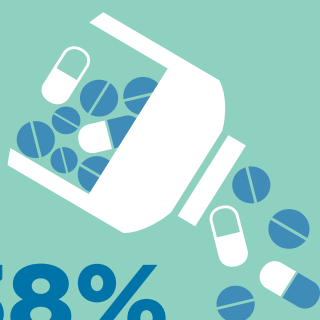
Put your medicines
up AND away
and out of sight

IN **86%**
OF ER VISITS,
THE CHILD
HAD EASY ACCESS
TO THE MEDICATION

CHILDREN
MOST COMMONLY
FIND MEDICATIONS
ON COUNTERS,
NIGHT STANDS
& DRESSERS; IN
PURSES & BAGS;
OR ON
THE GROUND



HOW ARE
CHILDREN GETTING
THE MEDICINE?



IN
38%
OF CASES,
THE MEDICINE
BELONGED TO
THE GRANDPARENT

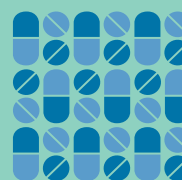
ELECTRICAL
OUTLETS
ARE THE

#1

SAFETY
CONCERN OF
GRANDPARENTS



BUT IT'S
36x
MORE
LIKELY



THAT A CHILD WILL
GO TO THE ER FOR
MEDICINE POISONING



EVERY MINUTE A POISON CONTROL
CENTER ANSWERS A CALL ABOUT A
YOUNG CHILD GETTING INTO MEDICINE

500,000 CALLS
PER YEAR

TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS ON SAFE MEDICINE STORAGE

- Store all medicines and vitamins **Up and Away** and out of sight.
- Keep purses, bags, and coats that contain medicines or vitamins out of reach and sight.
- Always lock caps tightly and put away medicines after every use. Remember that weekly pill reminder kits often don't have child resistant closures.
- Never leave medicines or vitamins out on a table, countertop, or sink.
- Set a daily reminder to take your medicines and vitamins since they will be out of sight.
- Program the national Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222 into your phone.

Infographic data source: Safe Kids Worldwide. 2014. *Keeping Families Safe Around Medicine*

FOR MORE TOOLS AND INFORMATION, VISIT
UPANDAWAY.ORG



CHPA EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION



In partnership with the
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Tools and Resources

TO SCREEN OR NOT TO SCREEN

Screening volunteers is sometimes viewed by service organizations as costly, time-consuming and inconvenient. For these reasons, some volunteer managers employed with nonprofit organizations choose not to screen their volunteers.

But one volunteer can do more damage than you think. No nonprofit or volunteer program is exempt from the risks posed by untrustworthy volunteers; organizations of all shapes and sizes have been affected. That's why more and more of them are screening their volunteers. This [white paper](#) by Verified Volunteers takes a quick look at the numbers.

FRESH CONVERSATIONS

In this [webinar](#) hosted by the Food Access and Health Working Group (FAHWG), the AARP Foundation identifies action steps to address hunger in aging Iowans and the Iowa Department of Public Health introduces Fresh Conversations, a new, emotion-based nutrition education model for older Iowans at congregate meal sites.

VACCINES TO KEEP OLDER ADULTS HEALTHY

On this [tip page](#), the National Council on Aging discusses three vaccines commonly recommended for older adults and covered by Medicare – the flu shot, shingles vaccine and pneumococcal vaccine.

QUICKLY THAW FROZEN BEEF

Although ground beef is quite versatile and convenient, thawing can be a bit time-consuming and improper thawing can lead to food-borne illness.



This [infographic](#), produced by the Cattlemen's Beef Board and National Cattlemen's Beef Association, includes a great tip for thawing frozen ground beef in the microwave in less than 10 minutes.

NATIONAL HEALTH STATISTICS

In its "[National Health Report: Leading Causes of Morbidity and Mortality and Associated Behavioral Risk and Protective Factors](#)," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviews population health in the United States and assesses progress being made toward meeting high-priority health objectives.

SPANISH STROKE EDUCATION TOOLKIT

The [Know Stroke Toolkit](#) from the National Institutes of Health is designed for lay health educators (promotores de salud), community leaders and health care professionals to educate Hispanics about the signs of stroke and the importance of calling 911 promptly.

The toolkit includes a 13-minute Spanish-language video; brochures; a bilingual flip chart illustrating the different types of stroke, risk factors and symptoms; and a poster highlighting

the benefits of getting treatment within one hour. The toolkit also is available in English.

Additionally, a community facilitator's guide is available that offers tips and instructions on how to host a stroke awareness event in your community.

CANCER AWARENESS MESSAGES

The Iowa Cancer Consortium, Iowa Department of Public Health, American Cancer Society and American Lung Association have partnered to create a free [toolkit](#) organizations can use to promote cancer awareness.

The messages, statistics and images about lung cancer are available for public use and may be edited and shared freely.

STAY ON TRACK WITH NUTRITION

The USDA offers its free [SuperTracker](#) site to help individuals plan, analyze and track their diet and physical activity. Users will find out what and how much they should eat; learn how to track food, physical activities and weight; and enjoy personalized goal setting, virtual coaching and journaling. The site also has a tool to look up nutrition information for more than 8,000 foods.