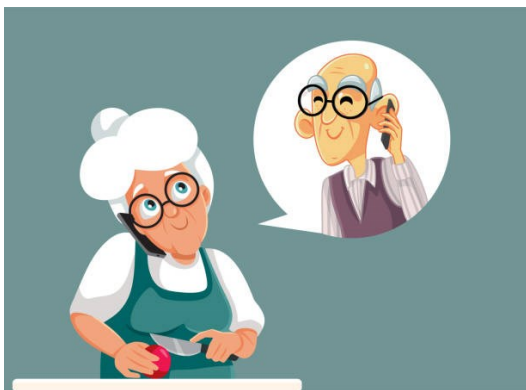


Older Americans Month 2024: Powered By Connection

Older Americans Month was established in 1963 to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of older adults. The theme this year for is *Powered By Connection*. Humans are social creatures, meaning we rely on connections with others to feel fulfilled and part of a community. There are both physical and mental health benefits to staying connected. It can be hard to maintain those connections as we age, but there are ways to make it easier.



Health Benefits of Maintaining Connections:

- ⇒ Less stress
- ⇒ Better sleep
- ⇒ Better mood/mental health (less depression and anxiety)
- ⇒ A sense of belonging
- ⇒ Stronger immune system
- ⇒ Better heart health
- ⇒ Lower risk of developing dementia
- ⇒ Better quality of life
- ⇒ A wider support network

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

3 Ways to Improve Social Connection

Adapted from CDC page on Emotional Well-Being:
<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/ways-to-improve.htm>

Establish & maintain social connections:

- ⇒ Spend time with the people you care about
- ⇒ Diversify your social network. Having different types of people in our lives can provide more resources, information & opportunities to help with life's many changes
- ⇒ Joining a group that focuses on one of your interests can be rewarding & foster a sense of belonging
- ⇒ Be responsive, supportive, and grateful to others
- ⇒ Address conflict or negative feelings when they arise
- ⇒ Embrace technology: devices like the Amazon Echo Show, and apps like Facetime can help you to stay in touch with friends and family that are far away



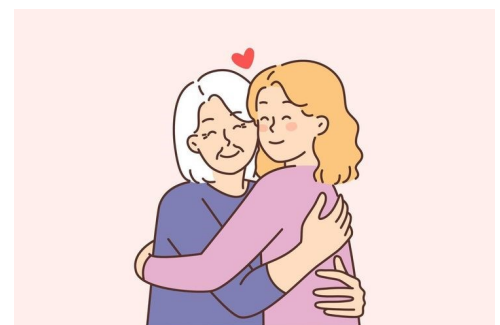
Consider the support you give, receive and have available to you:

- ⇒ Reach out to your support system to help you through the tough times, like members of your family or community, or health care providers
- ⇒ Provide support to others—it can give them much needed help, and make you feel good, too!
- ⇒ Don't forget to take care of yourself even if you are caring for others—remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup



Talk with a health care provider about concerns like stress, loneliness and social isolation:

- ⇒ Talk to your doctor or a health professional if you are feeling isolated or lonely, or if there are major changes or stresses in your life. This can help them identify potential concerns and ways to help.
- ⇒ Life changes can lead to disconnection. Being honest with your health care provider can help them better understand how to help you.



Amazing Amish Friendship Cinnamon Bread

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 55 mins

Ingredients:

⇒ for bread:

1/2 cup unsalted butter

1 large egg

1 cup buttermilk

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

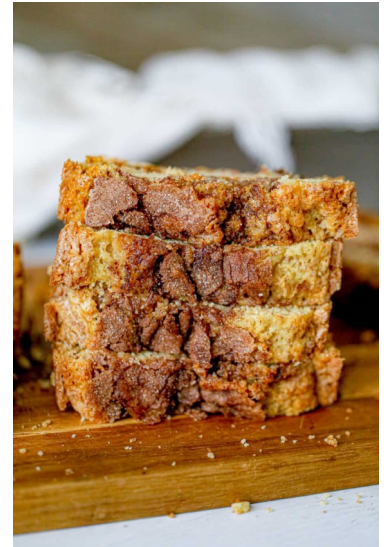
2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

⇒ for topping:

1/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Mix together the cinnamon and 1/3 cup sugar for the topping; set aside.
3. Cream together butter and 1 cup sugar until light and fluffy.
4. Add the egg and vanilla; mix until combined.
5. Add the buttermilk, flour, baking soda and salt; mix until just combined.
6. Spread half the batter into a greased 9X5-inch loaf pan.
7. Sprinkle 3/4 of the cinnamon sugar mixture over the batter. Gently spread remaining batter over the top, then sprinkle with the remaining cinnamon sugar.
8. Bake for 48-52 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
9. Allow to cool in the loaf pan for 15-20 minutes, then run a knife around the edge of the pan and invert onto a wire rack to finish cooling.

Notes:

1. Store in zip top bag or sealed container at room temperature for 2-3 days.
2. For longer storage, tightly wrap loaf with plastic wrap then again with foil. Label and store in the freezer for 1-2 months. Thaw before cutting.
3. You can make your own buttermilk by combining 1 cup milk with 1 tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice, then letting it sit for 5 minutes until curdled.

Ideas to Help Nurture Relationships

Check out community programs:

- ⇒ The library offers lots of programs, including crafts, writing, local history, gardening, computer literacy and so much more!
- ⇒ Faith communities usually have Bible study groups, men's or women's groups and other activities
- ⇒ There are many heritage or service-based organizations in the area, such as the Sons and Daughters of Italy in Rotterdam, the Polish American Center and Italian American Center in Albany, The VFW, Elks Lodge, etc.
- ⇒ Senior centers in the area often have many programs, classes and bus trips

Create Your Own Group:

- ⇒ Supper club
- ⇒ Book club
- ⇒ Walking group
- ⇒ Card or game club



Resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/ways-to-improve.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/features/power-of-connection.htm>

<https://blog.massgeneralbrighamhealthplan.org/the-researched-benefits-of-social-connections-on-senior-health>

<https://www.thebakingchocolatess.com/amish-friendship-cinnamon-bread-without-starter/>

Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.

For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304



Do you have questions or concerns about what to eat?

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

OFA May 2024