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FOLIC ACID

Researchers find that folic acid may boost brain power in the elderly and also lessen the decline of age-related hearing loss. Research conducted at the Nestle Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland, found folic acid supplements do improve performance on tests that measured information processing speed and memory (domains that decline with age). Folic acid is a synthetic compound of folate, a B vitamin found in green, leafy vegetables, yeast, liver and beans.

Researchers also found that people who took a folic acid supplement had less decline in hearing low frequency sounds compared with those who did not take the supplement. It is thought that folic acid supplementation helps to slow the decline in ability to hear speech frequencies associated with aging. These studies help highlight the significance of adequate nutrition in adults!

END OF LIFE DECISIONS – PLANNING AHEAD

Planning one's advanced healthcare directives can be daunting. Very few people like to think about end of life issues. However, every adult — young and old — should have advanced directives in place. Advanced directives include living wills and durable power of attorney for healthcare.

A living will might include instructions about life sustaining treatments, pain management and whether one wants to be cared for at home or in a long term care facility or hospital. A durable power of attorney for healthcare names a person as your healthcare agent. He or she can make decisions for you if become unable to do so. These documents speak to what YOU want or do not want in certain medical situations.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a self-care handbook designed to introduce you to advanced healthcare directives as well as help you make decisions in line with your own values and beliefs about treatment options such as common life-sustaining measures. It is important to make sure YOUR voice is heard!

Questions or
comments call
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IMPORTANT MEDICARE CHANGES

The Federal government has extended a policy allowing low-income Medicare participants to enroll in the drug benefit program throughout 2007 without late enrollment penalties. About 9.1 million people get extra help in paying for their medicine through a low income subsidy. Medicare officials have identified about 500,000 more people they believe are eligible for the extra help. Officials want to help people work through the application process and get signed up in a plan without fear of a penalty fee for missing the enrollment cutoff. Those who qualify for extra help must have yearly incomes below \$14,700 for a single person and \$19,800 for married couples living together. For additional information visit the official Medicare website at www.medicare.gov.

Additionally, the U.S. House of Representatives voted in favor of H.R. 4, a bill that would require the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs covered under Medicare Part D for the elderly and disabled. Recent financial filings showed that large drug companies spend more on advertising, marketing and administration than on research. For additional information on H.R. 4, visit www.aarp.org.

AN APPLE A DAY ... MAY JUST KEEP THE DOCTOR AWAY

Antioxidants are well established as an important part of how healthful eating can lower our risk of heart disease, cancer and possibly other conditions that develop as we age. Apples contain only modest amounts of Vitamin C, however, they contain lots of flavonoids. Scientists have now calculated that the antioxidant power of an apple is equal to more than 1500 milligrams of Vitamin C. The vast majority of its antioxidants come from flavonoids. Along with antioxidant protection, apples contain pectin, a soluble fiber that helps lower blood cholesterol. So try snacking on apples throughout the day or try them in green and fruit salads and cooked with vegetables such as carrots, winter squash or sweet potatoes.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Man invented language to satisfy his deep need to complain.”

— Lily Tomlin

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