

Area Agency on Aging of Somerset County



Senior News

April 2010



Fighting BAC!



Everyone Can Fight BAC!®

The Invisible Enemy: Bacteria

Despite the fact that America's food supply is among the safest in the world, the unappetizing fact is that sometimes, the food we eat can make us sick. Why? Because under the right conditions, an invisible enemy called "BAC" (bacteria) may be present on foods when purchased or get into food during preparation, cooking, serving or storage. In fact, even though we may not see BAC - or smell him or feel him - this creature and millions more like him may already be on a sponge, a cutting board, or the food itself. Although BAC is everywhere, he can be stopped with a little know-how and such everyday weapons as soap and hot water, a refrigerator and a food thermometer.

BAC: The Facts

Scientists have been studying bacteria and other tiny organisms (like viruses) that cause food-related illness for a long time. They have learned these important facts:

- Bacteria are a part of all living things and are found on all raw agricultural products;
 - Harmful bacteria can be transferred from food to people, people onto food, or from one food to another;
 - Bacteria can grow rapidly at room temperature;
 - Growth of harmful bacteria in food can be slowed or stopped by refrigerating or freezing;
- Food-related illness can produce symptoms from mild to very serious. Illness can occur from 30 minutes to two weeks after eating food containing harmful bacteria;

People who are most likely to become sick from food-related illness are infants and young children, senior citizens and people with weakened immune systems.

Fighting BAC!®: Four Simple Steps

To Fight BAC!® food safety experts recommend that everyone think about food safety at each step in the food handling process - from shopping to storing leftovers. What this really means is always following these four simple steps:

CLEAN - Wash hands, utensils and surfaces in hot soapy water before and after food preparation, and especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood to protect adequately against bacteria. Using a disinfectant cleaner or a mixture of bleach and water on surfaces and antibacterial soap on hands can provide some added protection.

SEPARATE - Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods; never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood.

COOK - Cook food to the proper internal temperature (this varies for different cuts and types of meat and poultry) and check for doneness with a food thermometer. Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm.

CHILL - Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours and make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40°F and that the freezer unit is set at 0°F.

So, don't risk problems when these simple steps will help you reduce food-related illness.

Adapted from http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/IsItDoneYet_Magnet.pdf, http://www.fightbac.org/component?option=com_docman&Itemid,2/

Legal



Issues

A partnership between
the Area Agency on Aging
and the
Somerset County Bar Association

The topic for this month's feature is "Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program".

In Pennsylvania, home owners or renters age 65 or older, widow/ers age 50 or older, or individuals permanently disabled during all or part of the claim year and 18 years of age or older during the claim year and unable to work because of a medically-determined or mental disability, with a total household income of \$35,000 or less for homeowners, and \$15,000 or less for renters, may file a claim with the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue for a real estate property tax or rent rebate and inflation dividend. Applications are due for filing between January 1 and June 30th of the year following the year in which the individual paid the tax or rent. Beginning in claim year 1999, claimants may exclude 50% of their Social Security/Railroad Retirement income in determining their eligibility requirements. So, if you make \$40,000 or more, you may still qualify for a rebate.

In addition, the owners must have paid taxes prior to filing and renters must make certain their landlords were required to pay property taxes or made payments in lieu of property taxes on the rental property. Claimants who qualify may be reimbursed up to \$650 a year for the amount they paid in property taxes or rent. Rebate checks are mailed beginning July 1st of each year. Proof of income is required, such as state or federal income tax returns for the claim year in which you are filing. If you are claiming a rental rebate, you must include proof of the rent you paid, such as an affidavit signed by the landlord or the landlord's agent. If the landlord's signature cannot be obtained, the claimant must complete and submit a notarized rental occupancy permit. The property owner can only claim a refund if this is their primary residence.

For further information you may call the Property Tax/Rent Rebate office at 1-888-728-2937. This is an automated system but they offer answers to the most common questions.

Disclaimer: The information presented in the Legal Issues feature has been prepared for informational purposes only. It is not offered for and does not represent legal advice or a legal opinion on any specific fact or issue.

2010 Donors to "Senior News"

Walter S. Kososki
Fred & Ruth Lape
Lois A. Shuck

** Please remember, it's never too late to make your donation. Please mail it to the Area Agency on Aging, 1338 South Edgewood Avenue, Somerset, PA. 15501.

**~ THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS FOR
THE SENIOR NEWS ~**

2010 CENSUS

Conducted every 10 years, the census is more than just a population count. It is an opportunity to ensure that our community is accurately represented when it comes to funding for essential programs and services. Census data are used to reapportion congressional seats to states, and directly affect how more than \$400 billion per year in federal funding is distributed to state, local and tribal governments.

Accurate representation and funding is especially important to older people and retirees because these individuals may rely on government, community, and social service programs. Census data help guide local planning decisions, including where to provide additional social services, establish senior centers, build new roads, hospitals and schools, or determine locations for job training centers.

The census is a count of everyone in the United States; citizens and noncitizens. The individual in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned should complete and mail back the form on behalf of every person living in the in the residence; relatives and nonrelatives as soon as it arrives. If you need assistance with the questionnaire assistance centers have been established at each of the Area Agency on Aging Senior Centers.

Census workers will visit households that do not return the form to take the count in person.

The 2010 Census is easy, important and safe. By law, your personal information cannot be shared with anyone.

For more information, visit 2010census.gov.

Medicare, APPRISE & You

The following information is provided by the Area Agency on Aging State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) known as the APPRISE Program in PA. This information is taken from the **2010 Medicare & You Handbook**.

Where to Get Your Medicare Questions Answered:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1-800-MEDICARE To get general Medicare information and other important telephone numbers.</p> | <p>1-800-633-4227 TTY 1-877-486-2048</p> |
| <p>State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) To get free Medicare counseling and personalized help making coverage decisions; information on programs for people with limited income and resources; and help with claims, billing and appeals.</p> | <p>Somerset County (814) 443-2681</p> <p>Other PA 1-800-783-7067</p> <p>Call 1-800-MEDICARE to get the numbers of SHIP's in other states.</p> |
| <p>Social Security To replace a Medicare card; change your address or name; get information about Part A and/or Part B eligibility, entitlement and enrollment; apply for Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug costs; ask questions about premiums; and report a death.</p> | <p>1-800-772-1213 TTY 1-800-325-0778</p> <p>Somerset Office 1-866-217-7002 This is a new number for all calls-there is no longer a local number</p> |
| <p>Coordination of Benefits Contractor To get information on whether Medicare or your other insurance pays first and to report changes in your insurance information.</p> | <p>1-800-999-1118 TTY 1-800-318-8782</p> |
| <p>Department of Defense To get information about TRICARE for Life</p> | <p>1-866-773-0404 TTY 1-866-773-0405</p> |

Caregiver Assistance

Windber Caregiver Support Group

April 08, 2010 at 10:00 AM

Somerset Caregiver Support Group

April 29, 2010 at 10:00 AM

Please contact the Area Agency on Aging at (814) 443-2681 or 1-800-452-0825 for further information.

Recipe



Corner

Sunshine Yams

Ingredients:

2 pounds yams, peeled and cut into 1 inch slices
 1/3 cup honey
 1/4 cup orange juice
 1 Tbsp grated lemon peel
 1 Tbsp grated orange peel
 1/2 tsp nutmeg
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/8 tsp white pepper

Directions:

Place yams in a large saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium, cover and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain yams and cool. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Transfer yams to a large bowl. Using a potato masher or a fork, mash yams until smooth. In a small saucepan, combine honey, orange juice, orange peel, lemon peel, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Bring mixture to a boil over medium heat; stir to melt honey. Remove from heat. Stir honey mixture into yams. Spoon mixture into a 1 quart casserole dish and smooth top. Bake until heated through, about 15-20 minutes.

Volunteer Opportunities Through RSVP

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Somerset County provides placement services and support benefits to people age 55 and over who wish to serve their community by volunteering for one of 70 organizations county-wide. For information about these and other volunteer opportunities, please call RSVP at (814) 443-2681 or 1-800-452-0825.

APPRISE-The Area Agency on Aging's APPRISE peer counseling service for people needing help with Medicare insurance issues has openings for new counselors to work in Boswell, Hollsopple and Central City. Training opportunity is being planned in Somerset soon.

Somerset County 4-H-Share your love of sewing, knitting or crocheting with youth through the 4-H program of Somerset County. Volunteers are needed to assist with sewing projects as instructors, assistants or possible leaders. Contact the Penn State Extension Office at (814) 445-8911 ext 7 for more information.

AARP Tax Program-This tax program is looking for one or more people to fill the position of District Coordinator for Somerset County. The DC is responsible for the publicity of the program and making sure all materials are ordered and that all sites are operated according to the rules. They recruit and manage volunteers to fill the needs of the different sites. They do not need to do taxes. They would work with a Technical Coordinator, Tax Laws Instructor and Local Coordinator for each site. They should be a people person. There is compensation of mileage and reimbursement of any supplies used.

Critical Need-Escort Drivers are needed throughout Somerset County. Escort drivers use their own vehicles to transport consumers to needed treatment such as dialysis, chemotherapy or doctor's visits. Trips are scheduled through a coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging in Somerset. Reimbursement applies.

This Agency is a branch of Somerset County Government under the Commissioners of Somerset County

Pamela A. Tokar-Ickes

John P. Vatauvuk

James C. Marker

Arthur N. DiLoreto,
Administrator

Nancy Miller, Chairperson of
the Advisory Council.

This project is funded, in part,
under contract with the PA
Department of Aging.

**If you would like to obtain
further information about
any newsletter topics or
Agency services please call
the Somerset office at**

**443-2681 or
1-800-452-0825**

Find us online at:
www.somersetaaa.org



Return Service Requested

Website: www.somersetaaa.org

Email: webmaster@somersetaaa.org

Fax: (814) 445-4398

Phone: (814) 443-2681

Somerset, PA 15501

1338 South Edgewood Avenue

Area Agency on Aging of Somerset County

PRRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
JOHNSTOWN, PA
PERMIT #93