



May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults and create community-wide opportunities to help older Americans improve their quality of life. This year's theme is "Living Today for a Better Tomorrow."

By 2030, one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. Although the risk of disease increases with advancing age, poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Many illnesses, disabilities and even death associated with chronic disease are preventable.

Older Americans can prevent or control chronic disease by adopting healthy habits such as exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet and ceasing tobacco usage. Exercise does not have to be strenuous and is safe for people of all age groups. Good nutrition is vital in maintaining good health. Reducing saturated fats and eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables and grains can help out older Americans on the right track to staying healthy. Older adults who stop smoking will gain immediate and long-term health benefits.

While it's important for older Americans to have good physical health, it's equally important that they maintain good mental health. Did you know that nearly 20 percent of Americans age 55 and older experience depression and anxiety disorders? Studies have shown that engaging in social activities within the community can greatly improve mental health. In fact, research has demonstrated a strong relationship between volunteering and mental health, and that volunteering provides older adults with greater benefits than younger volunteers.

Americans of all ages and backgrounds can celebrate Older Americans Month. If you'd like to volunteer or learn about local organizations working toward communities for all ages, call us! We can offer you contact information and the names of local organizations looking for help. By working together, we can improve the health and well being of our Nation's older adults and pave the way for better health as we age.

Branch-St. Joseph Area Agency on Aging (IIIC)  
570 Marshall Road  
Coldwater, MI 49036  
Phone: 517-278-2538  
Toll Free: 888-615-8009  
[www.bhsj.org/AAA](http://www.bhsj.org/AAA)