

**Family Living  
Focus**  
by  
**Katherine  
Wenzel**  
Mercer County



Older Americans are living longer and feeling better as the National Institute on Aging (NIA) reports that "an overwhelming majority rate their health as good or excellent.

But large numbers of older people find their health threatened by memory impairments, depression, chronic conditions, and disability, especially at very advanced ages, which can substantially diminish quality of life."

Mental decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease do not have to be a normal part of aging. With the continual growth in the population of older adults much research is now being conducted regarding possible connections between nutrient intake and age-related mental decline. Evidence

now suggests that paying careful attention to your diet and lifestyle will help keep your mind sharp, and may even protect you from the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported this week that "a diet rich in foods containing vitamin E may help protect some people against Alzheimer's disease." However, the study also found that vitamin E in the form of supplements was not associated with a reduction in the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Head of the Dementias of Aging Branch at the NIA, Neil Buckholtz, Ph.D. states, "It is not recommended, based on current evidence, that people take high-dose vitamin E supplements or other antioxidant pills in an effort to prevent mental de-

cline."

Studies are underway to determine why food sources seem to be a more beneficial form of vitamin E. Other studies indicate that high dietary sources of vitamin C may also help to protect against Alzheimer's disease in certain people.

A study reported in the New England Journal of Medicine earlier this year found people with elevated blood levels of the amino acid homocysteine are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia as those with normal levels. Adequate intakes of folic acid, B6, and B12 have been shown to keep homocysteine levels down, and to possibly help stave off mental decline.

The NIA plans to continue to fund research on the potential dietary components of antioxidants, B vitamins, and antioxidant-rich foods to prevent age-related mental decline or perhaps to even prevent Alzheimer's disease.

So what can you do now to help reduce your risk of Alzheimer's disease? Follow these suggestions from the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Food & Fitness Advisor, (July 2002):

Eat more foods rich in antioxidants and B vitamins. B6 vitamin sources include; chicken, fish, pork, bananas, eggs, oats, whole-wheat products, peanuts, and walnuts. B12 sources; red meat,

**Master Gardeners Offer Tour**

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — The Penn State Master Gardeners of Lancaster County will conduct an open house and garden tour on Saturday, Aug. 24, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everyone interested in home gardening is invited free of charge.

There are many horticulture educational aspects to the day which include:

- The Gardener Selects Trial Garden, including annuals, perennials, and ornamental shrubs, is part of a PSU state-wide project designed to assist home gardeners. This new effort was created to educate, evaluate, and display plants that are available at local nurseries. PSU, working with growers and seed companies, wants to demonstrate that regardless of skill level, one can purchase and grow these plants with confidence. Gardener Selects, chosen for outstanding performance throughout Pennsylvania, are pretty, durable, long lasting, and easy to care for. Blackthumbs to enthusiasts to professionals alike can rely on Gardener Selects plants to enhance the beauty of most any garden.

Each plant is evaluated during the growing season by specially trained Penn State Master Gardeners for quality characteristics and garden performance. At the end of the season these evaluations will be tabulated and the "Gardener Selects Plants of the Year" will be chosen. Gardeners will find these plants or seeds with the assurance that they have been tested across the commonwealth proving their superior performance. Review 2001 evaluations and vote for your favorite plant for 2002.

- Container gardens, located in the courtyard, display a variety of colorful foliage, flowering plants, trailing and upright, annuals and perennials in attractive combinations.

- The Idea Garden, an extensive area, holds herbs, vines, small ornamental trees and shrubs, butterfly garden and a number of garden ornaments.

- All plants are labeled with botanic and common names. Master Gardeners will be standing by to answer your questions pertaining to any and all plantings. Handouts will be available, listing names and planting information.

- Displays with accompanying handouts covering: backyard composting, drought tolerant plants, and how to grow plants in spite of present drought conditions.

fish, shellfish, poultry, fortified cereals, eggs, and dairy products. Vitamin C; citrus fruits, green leafy vegetables, potatoes. Vitamin E; vegetable oils, wheat germ, nuts, green leafy vegetables. Get at least 400 mcg of folic acid everyday. Good sources of folate include; green leafy vegetables, broccoli, orange juice, dry beans, bananas, lima beans, and whole-wheat bread products.

Stay physically active. Keep mentally active—read, do crossword puzzles, play cards.

Stay socially active invite friends over, dine together.

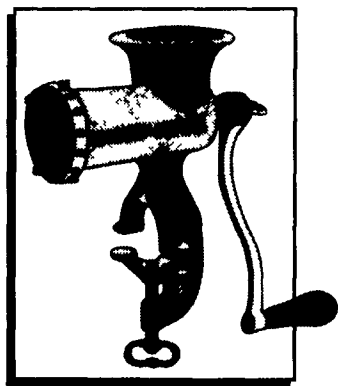
For more information on Alzheimer's disease contact the Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral (ADEAR) Center at 1-800-438-4380 or at [www.alzheimers.org](http://www.alzheimers.org).

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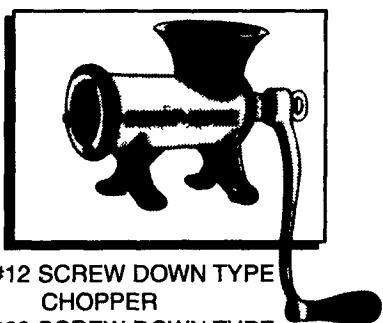
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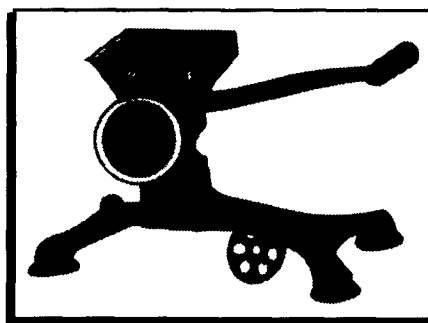
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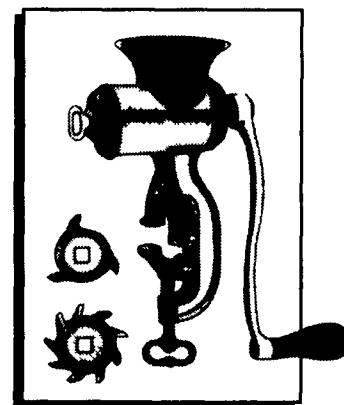
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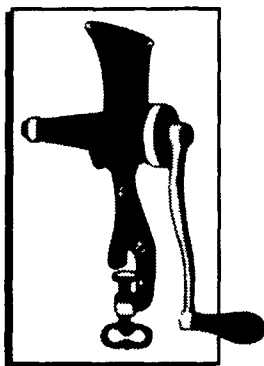
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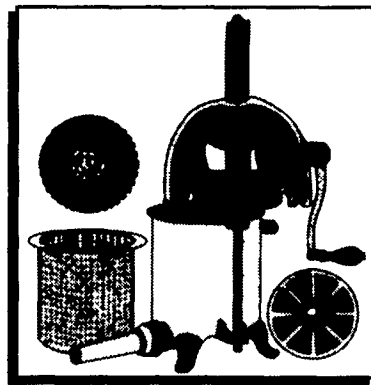
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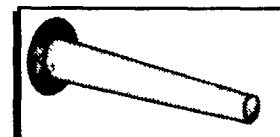
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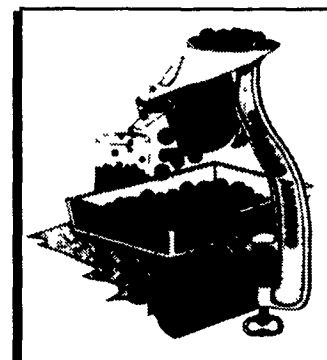
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