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Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

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Herkimer County OFA & NY Connects
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Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS"

Better Nutrition – Using the SNAP Program

Uncovering nutrition problems at the earliest stage can help prevent serious complications later. In addition to weight loss, malnutrition can cause poor wound healing, easy bruising and dental difficulties.

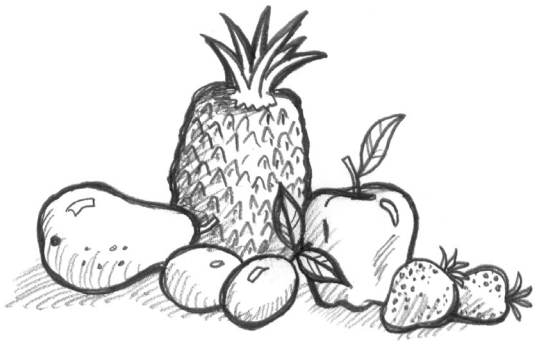
Eating right for proper nutrition is basic to good health. Most older people need fewer calories to maintain normal body weight. Their bodies absorb fewer nutrients, so they must eat high-nutrient food to maintain good health. *They must get more nutrients from less food.* If a person does not get enough calories, he becomes weaker and is more likely to get infections.

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

SNAP used to be called Food Stamps. In some states it has a different name. No matter which name you know, the program is helping nearly 5 million older Americans afford food at their local markets. SNAP's goal is to help people with limited income maintain a healthy and nutritious diet.

The average SNAP benefit for a one-person senior household is about $110 a month. A two-person household can receive up to $357 a month.

Unfortunately, 5 million older adults are eligible for SNAP, but are not enrolled in the program.



How to apply for SNAP

To receive SNAP, you must apply to the agency that administers the program in your state.

We know that you are often warned against sharing personal information, but don't worry. The information you share on the SNAP application is kept completely confidential throughout the process. Depending on where you live, the SNAP application is going to ask you about two – possibly three – main things: the size of your household, your annual income, and in some states, information about your assets. Eligibility and benefit amounts are based on these factors. Other factors can also help you qualify for SNAP or increase your benefit amount. To get SNAP benefits, households must meet certain tests, but a household with an elderly person or a person who is receiving certain types of disability payments only has to meet the net income test. To learn more visit, https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply.

Source: USDA

Article continues on page 2

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Getting the Most Out of Meals

Be aware of any medical condition that would require restrictions such as salt (congestive heart failure) or potassium (kidney failure). Encourage the person in your care to focus on the good things she can eat rather than what she must give up.

- Offer the most nutritious foods at the beginning of the meal when the person is most hungry – save breads and desserts for the end.
- Cut foods into small pieces before serving or put food in a food processor.
- Encourage the person to eat food with the fingers if it increases intake.
- Eating alone can be lonely. Encourage visitors at mealtimes. Add to the enjoyment of the meal by putting flowers on the table, and playing soft music. Give the person something to look at while eating if she doesn't have company, such as the television or a nice view.
- Many drugs affect appetite, digestion and nutrient absorption. Check with a doctor or pharmacist to know what effect prescription medicines might have on individual nutritional needs. Consider asking for a referral to a registered dietitian.
- **Serve fresh fruits and vegetables** at every meal (they are full of vitamins and fiber to prevent constipation).
- **Use salt substitutes** whenever possible (ask at your grocery store). **Choose low sodium foods.**
- **Boost nutrient intake,** if the person is not eating enough, by adding non-fat powdered milk to liquids, and wheat germ to vegetables. Spread peanut or other nut butters on toast and crackers, fresh fruits, and raw vegetables. Add extra egg whites to scrambled eggs and omelets and encourage use of whole milk. Sprinkle finely chopped nuts or wheat germ on yogurt, fruit and cereal. (Be aware of diet restrictions.)
- **Avoid processed food,** such as fast food, white bread, frozen pre-packaged meals, and canned fruits and vegetables.

Measuring Food Portions

Being careful with a diabetic person's diet can prevent serious problems. When you prepare meals, be sure each serving is the right amount.

Some tips on serving sizes:

- 1-cup serving carbs is about the size of your fist.
- 3-ounce serving protein is a deck of playing cards.
- 1-ounce serving cheese is the size of your thumb.

Source: American Diabetes Association

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Taking Care of Yourself—Medical Test Anxiety

You may be experiencing high anxiety before visits to the doctor. Some anxiety is normal. It's hard to eliminate all anxiety during medical tests, but you can reduce the fear.

- ✔ Take a long walk before the medical test.
- ✔ Ask the doctor if you can take a few minutes to collect yourself before the test begins.
- ✔ Remember to breathe deeply from your abdomen, rather than shallow breaths.
- ✔ Close your eyes and picture yourself in a favorite place (a warm beach etc.).
- ✔ If you are still anxious, ask your doctor if you can take a sedative before the test to relax you.

Dehydration

As a person ages, he feels less thirsty, so a special effort should be made to provide enough fluids. Beverages with caffeine (soda, coffees, and tea) actually cause dehydration.Dehydration—especially in the elderly—can increase confusion and muscle weakness.

Live Life Laughing!

Bad news, our health plan only covers the first 3 litters.

Inspiration

The body becomes what the foods we eat are, just as the spirit becomes what are thoughts we think are.

Don't Fall – Be Safe

Calcium is a mineral that is essential for the formation of strong bones. Dairy foods are the richest sources of calcium. Not only is calcium important in *preventing* fractures, it is also beneficial in helping fractures *heal faster* if they do occur.

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Your donations are important part of offsetting the cost of the Caregiver Newsletter. If you would like to donate send donations to :

Herkimer County Office For the Aging
Caregiver Newsletter
109 Mary St, Suite 1101, Herkimer, NY 13350

Alzheimer's Support Group:

1)At Folts Home (HomeLife at Folts Claxton) meets the first Monday of each month at 5pm in the Claxton Conference Room, 104 N Washington St, Herkimer. For additional information, call the Social Services Department at (315) 866-6964 ext 260.

2)Little Falls Community Center, 524 Main St. Meet the 2nd Thursday of the month at 5:30pm.

3) Weller Library, 41 W Main St, Mohawk. Meet the 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10:30am. Call Patricia at 315-269-5266 or 315-235-7143 to sign up.

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

Ordering Info

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SAFETY TIPS—Less Fuss and Muss at Mealtimes

If spills are a concern, keep cleanup simpler…

- ★ Place a plastic sheet or newspaper on the floor or under the bed-tray during mealtimes.
- ★ Use a no-spill cup with a flexible straw.
- ★ Keep a bib or cloth napkin around the person's neck or keep an oversized "meal-time" shirt.
- ★ Keep a moist towel handy during meal times.
- ★ Don't overfill cups and plates.
- ★ Make sure the person is at a comfortable distance and height from his plate to reach it easily.

Remember that helping someone eat can be a little messy, so don't be too hard on yourself or him. Enjoy the time together!

NEXT ISSUE… SURVIVE A HEAT WAVE / STORM SAFETY

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QUICK QUIZ

Households can use SNAP benefits to buy foods for the household to eat, such as breads and cereals; fruits and vegetables; meats, fish and poultry; and dairy products. Households CANNOT use SNAP benefits to buy alcohol, cigarettes or tobacco. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Seniors' bodies absorb fewer nutrients, so they must eat high-nutrient food to maintain good health.
T F

2. If a person does not get enough calories, he becomes weaker and is more likely to get infections.
T F

3. Not only is calcium important in *preventing* fractures, it is also beneficial in helping fractures *heal faster* if they do occur.
T F

4. Beverages with caffeine (soda, coffees, and tea) cannot cause dehydration.
T F

5. SNAP's goal is to help people with limited income maintain a healthy and nutritious diet.
T F

6. For a diabetic person's diet, be sure each serving is the right amount.
T F

7. To get SNAP benefits, a household with an elderly person, or a person who is receiving certain types of disability payments, doesn't need to meet the net income test.
T F

8. Uncovering nutrition problems at the earliest stage can help prevent serious complications later.
T F

9. Be aware of any medical condition that would require restrictions such as salt (congestive heart failure) or potassium (kidney failure).
T F

10. Dehydration does not increase confusion and muscle weakness.
T F

Name_____

Signature_____Date_____

KEY: 1. T; 2. T; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. T; 7. F; 8. T; 9. T; 10. F

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