



NUTRITION NEWS

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Happy New Year!

The tree has been taken down, the decorations back in storage, but the freezer is packed! All of the holiday leftovers can be utilized in healthy, appetizing ways. Keep in mind that as we age, our dietary needs change. Making small adjustments to your diet can help you maximize the nutritional benefits of your current intake. The following recommendations were listed on the My Plate for Older Adults website.



- ◆ Add flavor to food with spices and herbs instead of salt and look for low sodium packaged foods. (Our sense of taste can diminish as we age, so don't scrimp on flavor just because you can't use the salt shaker!)
- ◆ Add sliced fruits or vegetables to your meals and snacks. Look for pre-sliced foods if slicing and chopping is challenging.
- ◆ Ask your doctor to recommend other options if the medications you take affect your appetite (including your sense of thirst.)
- ◆ Drink 3 cups of fat free or low fat milk throughout the day. If you cannot tolerate milk, try small amounts of yogurt, butter

milk, hard cheese or lactose free foods. Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

- ◆ Consume foods fortified with Vitamin B12, such as fortified cereals. (Our ability to absorb this vitamin greatly decreases with age.)

Keep in mind that as we age, we may need fewer calories to maintain a normal body weight. It is also true that as we age, our absorption of certain key nutrients becomes less efficient.

Another pronounced change seen in the elderly is a lessened sense of thirst. While our fluid requirements generally stay about the same, an additional effort may need to be made to meet that need. It can be especially difficult for caregivers to assess a loved one's nutritional status. The next page contains some basic questions you can ask that may provide an indication of needing to seek outside help.

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Monthly Exercise

Side leg raise/sideways walking:

Improves stability when you have to take weight on one leg & helps you step sideways to avoid tripping

1. With fingertips on something solid to help balance, stand on one leg & raise the other sideways, holding it for 5 seconds.
2. Repeat 8 times.
3. Repeat with other leg.
4. Extend to walking sideways, with slow steps alongside a bench or table.

- * Has there been an unintentional weight loss or gain?
- * Has the appetite changed significantly?
- * Is there difficulty chewing or swallowing?
- * Does the person eat fewer than 2 meals per day?
- * Is the person drinking enough fluids?
- * Have bowel habits changed?



Answering yes to three or more of these questions could be a red flag regarding nutrition. Consider seeking help from a registered dietitian. This is a complementary service offered by Office for Aging.

New Year's Resolutions

Of course, January is also the time of year for resolutions. Many times, resolutions involve giving something up. This January, why not try adding something? Did you know that January is National Blood Donor Month? Consider making a donation through the American Red Cross. They periodically hold blood drives locally and are often in short supply of different types of blood. This could become a different kind of annual tradition!



Adding physical activity is also something we tend to talk about in January. It doesn't have to be strenuous exercise. According to the World Health Organization, physical activity for individuals aged 65 years and older can include leisurely activities (such as walking, dancing, gardening, hiking, and swimming.) It can also include everyday household chores such as vacuuming or

washing windows. Here are some specific recommendations from the WHO.

1. Older adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
2. Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration.
3. For additional health benefits, older adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
4. Older adults with poor mobility should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week.
5. Muscle strengthening activities, involving major muscle groups, should be done on 2 or more days a week.
6. When older adults cannot do the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, they should be physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.



The benefits are considerable, including a lowered rate of mortality, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and enhanced bone health.

The start of a new year is also a good time to meet with your physician or pharmacist and talk about your medications. Since most people now see multiple doctors, it is a good idea to coordinate your care and make sure that you are not taking duplicate medications.

Most people over the age of 55 take at least one prescription daily. And many take more than one every day. Living alone, taking 3 or more medications including non-prescription drugs or vitamins, memory problems, getting prescriptions from more than one doctor, filling prescriptions at more than one pharmacy, or using both online and community pharmacies can all increase the odds of making a mistake when taking your medicine. Here are some helpful tips and reminders to prevent an error.

- Use a medication organizer: choose one that works for you. Some have daily slots while others have slots for morning and evening as well.
- Make a list: present a complete medication list including amounts and dosage to each doctor you see.
- Ask questions: asking doctors or pharmacists about side effects, food interactions, and other drug interactions can be helpful in promoting your overall health.
- Keep a medicine diary: detailing your side effects, especially to new medications, may help physicians recognize if the symptoms are a sign of the disease or are a true side effect of the medication.



Medications can also have potentially dangerous interactions. Not only can they interact with foods, they may also interact with other medications. Drug interactions may make

your medication less effective. It may also make your medication “too effective” that is, consuming certain foods at the same time as your medication may speed up your body’s metabolism of the drug, thereby intensifying the results.

One class of medications that are commonly prescribed AND interactive with certain foods are antihypertensive medications. These are drugs that treat high blood pressure. Some examples include Lisinopril, Lasix, Captopril, Norvasc, and Atenolol. Diuretics (such as Lasix, Torsemide, and Furosemide) may cause a dangerously low potassium level. Because potassium is excreted in the urine and these drugs cause increased urination, monitoring your potassium levels is very important if you take one of these medicines. Your doctor may even prescribe you a potassium tablet to take in conjunction with the diuretic to ensure that your levels remain within normal limits.



Another common interaction is between cholesterol lowering drugs and grapefruit or grapefruit juice. Chemicals in the fruit can interfere with the enzymes in your digestive tract that break down the drug. Being aware of these interactions and the accompanying recommendations can prevent serious health consequences.



January is also National Soup Month! It's cold outside— time to warm up from the inside out with this month's recipe!

Creamy Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

4 cups chicken broth 2 cups water
 2 cooked, boneless chicken breast halves, shredded
 1 (14.5 ounce) package quick cooking long grain and wild rice with seasoning packet
 1/2 tsp salt
 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
 3/4 cup all purpose flour
 1/2 cup butter 2 cups heavy cream

In a large pot over medium heat, combine broth, water, and chicken. Bring just to boiling, then stir in rice, reserving seasoning packet. Cover and remove from heat.

In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, and flour. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in contents of seasoning packet until mixture is bubbly. Reduce heat to low, then stir in flour mixture by tablespoons, to form a roux. Whisk in cream, a little at a time, until fully incorporated and smooth. Cook until thickened, 5 minutes

Stir cream mixture into broth and rice. Cook over medium heat until heated through, 10 to 15 minutes.

HEAP

If you received HEAP last year but have not yet received an application for this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

If you did not receive HEAP last year but want to apply this year, please call our Office at 867-1195.

Homemade soups are lower in sodium and generally higher in vegetable and protein content than most canned soups. They are also a great way to use up leftovers after a week's cooking! Serve with a warm roll or freshly baked slice of bread and enjoy!



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