

## Ask the Expert:

### What nutrition assistance programs are available for older adults?



May is Older Americans Month—celebrate this month by focusing on the seniors in your communities! It is important to be aware of, and promote, the nutrition resources available to seniors.

Barriers to seniors seeking assistance may include misunderstandings about qualifications and benefits, confusion with paperwork, lack of transportation and technology, and perceived stigma and embarrassment associated with assistance. Emergency food providers can serve this population by making all facilities handicap accessible, providing client choice to accommodate senior needs (ie. cooking abilities and limitations), assisting with food selection, carrying items and advertising other local resources, like congregate meals.

The assistance programs available may include:

- **The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFM-NP):** Qualifying seniors receive coupons for farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs

(CSA) to obtain unprepared, local fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey. For more information, visit <http://www.in.gov/isdh/20085.htm>.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Economic assistance is provided to qualifying families and individuals. For more information, contact your local county Division of Family Resources (<http://www.in.gov/fssa/dfr/2999.htm>).
- **The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):** CSFP supplements the diets of women, infants, children and the elderly. For more information, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/csfp/>.
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP):** TEFAP supplements the diets of low-income Americans with commodity foods. For more information, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/>.
- **The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** Meals and snacks are provided to qualifying adults in day care programs. For more information, visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/>

care/.

- **Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA):** Meal delivery is provided to seniors through this program. To find a location near you, visit <http://www.mowaa.org/> and [eldercare.gov](http://eldercare.gov).
- **Congregate meals:** Seniors are offered low-cost meals at community locations, often by donation only. Visit <http://www.in.gov/fssa/da/3478.htm> and [eldercare.gov](http://eldercare.gov), to find congregate meals locations.

**Sources:** <http://frac.org/initiatives/addressing-senior-hunger/seniors-and-snapfood-stamps/>; <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/eatingwellasyougetolder/eatwellonyourbudget/01.html>; **Photo:** [http://snap.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/photo\\_gallery.php?mode=shopping](http://snap.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/photo_gallery.php?mode=shopping)

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# Food Safety: Keep the Kitchen Safe

Safety in the kitchen is a concern for many seniors and presents many potentially dangerous situations if precautions are overlooked. Use the checklist and tips below to prevent accidents.



- Bright lighting, including night lights
- Clear pathways
- Clutter-free counters
- No telephone or electrical cords on the floor
- Easy to grip handles, knobs, and utensils
- Fire extinguisher should be within easy access
- Working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Emergency contacts should be easily visible
- Non-skid rugs
- Easy to clean flooring and countertops
- Appliances at waist height
- No sharp corners
- Water heater temperature no higher than 120-125°F
- Loud, easy to read buzzers and timers

## ALWAYS REMEMBER TO...

- Turn burners and oven off after use
- Clean up spills immediately
- Unplug unused appliances
- Avoid loose-fitting clothing near the stove
- Never leave the stove unattended
- Move items to reachable locations
- Store flammable items away from stove
- Place pot holders near oven for easy access



Due to a natural decline in immune system function, seniors are more susceptible to foodborne illness, making food safety an important component of a safe kitchen. **FightBAC!**® emphasizes four food safety components:

**1. CLEAN:** wash hands and surfaces often

**2. SEPARATE:** don't cross contaminate

**3. COOK:** cook to safe temperatures

**4. CHILL:** refrigerate promptly

Visit [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org) for more information about **FightBAC!**®, including handouts for clients.

**Sources:** <http://www.caring.com/articles/senior-kitchen-safety>; <http://www.agingcare.com/Articles/seniors-kitchen-fires-safe-cooking-149302.htm>; <http://www.silverplanet.com/blog/elder-care-made-easier/kitchen-safety-seniors/57059>; **Photos:** <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/images/results.aspx?qu=kitchen&ex=2>

Seniors need adequate nutrients to promote proper health. While this is not a complete list, and every individual is different, a few nutrients of concern for seniors are outlined below. \*ingredients containing a high proportion of the nutrient featured are underlined in the recipes below.

## FIBER

Fiber-rich foods aid digestion and intestinal function. Soluble fibers may help lower cholesterol. Beans, whole-grains, and fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber.

### **Apple Cinnamon Oatmeal**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 cup milk and chopped  
 1/2 cup quick oats 2 Tablespoon raisins  
 1 medium apple, cored 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a small saucepan, heat milk to boiling.
2. Add oats, apple, raisins, and cinnamon. Reduce heat to low-medium and cook, stirring until creamy, about 1-2 minutes.



## CALCIUM & VITAMIN D

Calcium has many functions, but is perhaps most recognized for bone health. Vitamin D helps with calcium absorption. Examples of calcium sources include dairy foods, sardines with bones, and fortified products. Vitamin D can be obtained from certain types of fatty fish, fortified dairy and cereals, eggs, and sunlight.

### **Orange Banana Frosty**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 banana, frozen 1/2 cup orange juice,  
 1/2 cup low-fat yogurt, calcium-fortified pre-  
 plain ferred

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Blend all ingredients until smooth.

## VITAMIN B12

Ability to absorb vitamin B12 declines with age. Vitamin B12 is found in animal foods like meat and dairy, and in some fortified foods like cereal.

### **Tuna Melt Burger**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

1 can tuna (6 ounces) minced  
 2 stalks celery, chopped 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 6 slices of cheese 1/8 teaspoon pepper  
 1/4 cup light mayon- 1/2 whole wheat bread  
 naise slices  
 1 Tablespoon onion,

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Drain tuna and break the meat apart with a fork.
3. Mix tuna, celery, mayonnaise, onion, salt, and pepper in a bowl.
4. Spread tuna mixture on six pieces of bread and place a single slice of cheese and bread on top of each.
5. Put each sandwich on a square of aluminum foil, wrap foil around sandwiches, and bake for 20 minutes or until hot in the middle. Let cool slightly before eating.

## FLUID

The feeling of thirst may decline with age. However, certain medications, illnesses, or diets (ie. high fiber) may increase fluid needs, making it important to drink plenty of fluids. Water is a great way to meet your fluid needs; otherwise, choose sugar-free beverages. Many fruits and vegetables also contribute to fluid intake.

A balanced diet is important for obtaining sufficient nutrients. Aim for a variety of fruits and vegetables, daily servings of calcium-rich foods and beverages, lean protein choices, and whole grains. Decrease sodium, solid fats, and added sugars, especially for those with high blood pressure, cholesterol, or diabetes. Be sure to follow any special diets advised by your doctor or dietitian.

Recipes adapted from: <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>; Sources: <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6839>; <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fiber/NU00033>; <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/b12/detection.html>; <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/water/NU00283/>; Photo: <http://www.foodandhealth.com/clipart.php?cat=3>; \*Underlining denotes a TEFAP commodity food ingredient.



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This newsletter is created by faculty and Cooperative Extension Service staff in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University, with funding provided in support of the USDA TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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IN THE NEWS

## May is Older Americans Month

Every year since 1963, the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging (now a part of the Administration for Community Living) has declared May as the month to appreciate and celebrate the vitality and aspirations of older adults and their contributions and achievements. It is a proud tradition that shows our nation's commitment to honor the value that elders continue to contribute to our communities.

This year's Older Americans Month theme--"**Unleash the Power of Age!**"--emphasizes the important role of older adults. This May, communities across the nation will recognize older Americans as productive, active, and influential members of society, inviting them to share their talents, wisdom, activities, and experiences with their families, friends, and communities.

Visit <http://www.olderamericansmonth.acl.gov/> to read more about Older Americans Month and what you can do to "Unleash the Power of Age." Encourage opportunities for elders to become involved in your community, such as volunteering at the pantry, teaching skills to others, and becoming involved in community decision making.



OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2013