

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

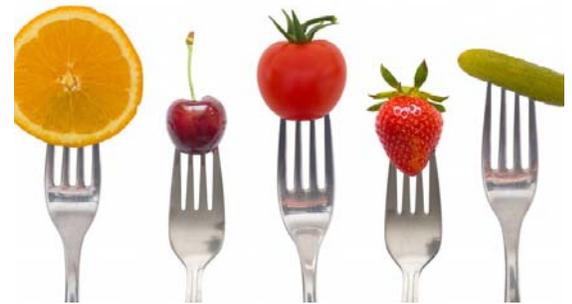
www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**



JUNE 2017

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, they become weaker and are 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 five 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. In Ohio, you can contact your local Job and Family Services agency for more information.

Often there are warnings against sharing personal information, but you don't have to worry when applying for SNAP. The information that is shared 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

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 they can eat rather than what they 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 they do not 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 foods, 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

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.



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

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, they feel less thirsty, so a special effort should be made to provide enough fluids. Beverages with caffeine (soda, coffees and teas) actually cause dehydration. Dehydration - especially in older adults - can increase confusion and muscle weakness.



Community Wellness Classes

**Chronic Disease Self-Management • Diabetes Self-Management
A Matter of Balance Falls Prevention • Diabetes Empowerment**

Contact us to learn more about these FREE classes!

**1-800-582-7277 or
info@aaa7.org**

Chronic Disease Self-Management

Brown County - July 7th - August 11th in
Georgetown

Scioto County - September 11th -
October 16th in Portsmouth

Diabetes Self-Management

Brown County - August 25th -
September 29th in
Georgetown

Lawrence County - July 20th -
August 24th in Ironton



Diabetes Empowerment Education Program

Jackson County - August 31st - October 12th

Matter of Balance Falls Management

Jackson County - August 2nd - September 20th
in Jackson

Check out our website at www.aaa7.org to keep up-to-date on calendar changes and additions!



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Safety Tips - *Less Fuss and Muss at Mealtimes*

If spills are a concern, keep clean-up 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 their plate to reach it easily.

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

