

SENIOR NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

Nutrition Information, Recipes, and Resources for Seniors



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

WINTER 2019

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

Winter has arrived!

This issue includes tips on how you can maintain a healthy lifestyle despite the cold winter weather.



Stay Active

During the winter months, colder temperatures and less daylight can make it hard for us to be active. This inactivity tends to increase as we age. Inactivity can lead to a higher risk of heart disease, type two diabetes, anxiety, depression, and cancer.¹

You are never too old to exercise! Exercise can help keep your body strong and limber², which is especially important as you age. Seniors who take part in balance and strength exercises can reduce their risk of falling by 33 percent.³

Below are some resources to help you stay active:

- **Silver Sneakers** is a fitness program for seniors. The program is available to seniors with Medicare advantage and Medicare supplement plans. Silver Sneakers gives you access to gyms and fitness classes designed for seniors, both in person and online. Learn more at: silversneakers.com
- The National Institute on Aging's **Go4Life** campaign wants to help you fit exercise and physical activity into your daily life. The site provides exercises designed for

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Days to Celebrate!

December

- 1-7 National Handwashing Awareness Week
- 4 National Day of Giving
- 21 Crossword Puzzle Day

January

- 9 National Apricot Day
- 10 National Cut Your Energy Costs Day
- 11 National Milk Day
- 19-25 Healthy Weight Week
- 24 National Peanut Butter Day

February

- 4 Nat'l Homemade Soup Day
- 14 No One Eats Alone Day
- 17 National Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 21 National Caregivers Day

Stay Active, continued from page 1

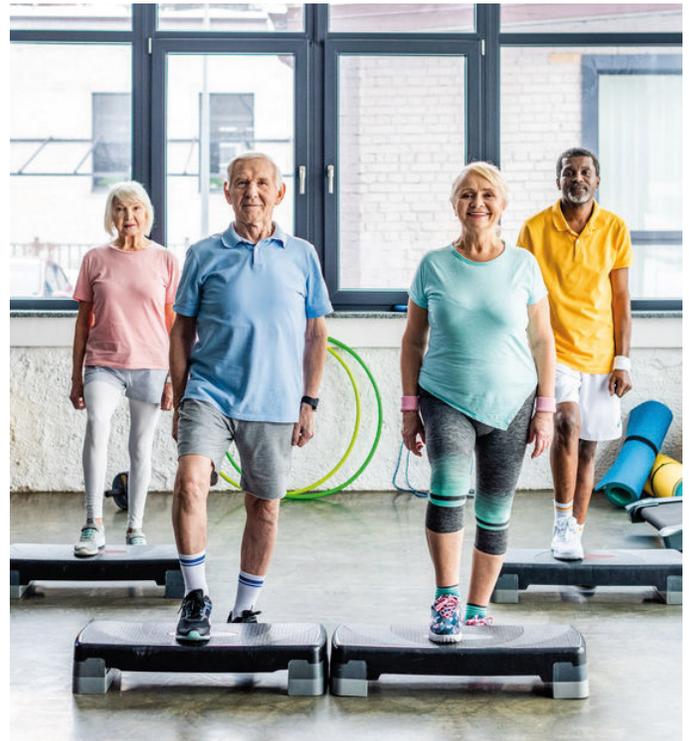
older adults, motivational tips, and much more. Learn more at: go4life.nia.nih.gov

- **Move Your Way** wants to make it easier to get active. Their activity tracker can help you set your own weekly activity plan with the goal of 150 minutes of aerobic activity and two days of muscle strengthening a week. Learn more at: health.gov/moveyourway

¹ Johns Hopkins Medicine. Risks of Physical Inactivity. Retrieved from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/risks-of-physical-inactivity>

² eHealth. (6/6/19) Seven Medicare Advantage Benefits To Consider. Retrieved from <https://medicare.com/medicare-advantage/seven-medicare-advantage-benefits-to-consider/>

³ Clemson Lindy, Fiatarone Singh Maria A, Bundy Anita, Cumming Robert G, Manollaras Kate, O'Loughlin Patricia et al. Integration of balance and strength training into daily life activity to reduce rate of falls in older people (the LiFE study): randomised parallel trial BMJ 2012;



Eat Healthy

Maintaining a healthy diet can be hard in the winter when fruits and vegetables are not as plentiful. However, good nutrition is even more important in the winter. A balanced diet helps to maintain your immune system during peak cold and flu season.

Below are tips to help you eat healthy this winter:

- **Buy Canned or Frozen Produce.** Canned and frozen produce, processed right after harvest, can be as nutritious as fresh produce that may have been stored for an extended time.
- **Take Advantage of Root Vegetables.** Root vegetables are one of the most nutrient-rich vegetables you can eat and can be stored for long periods. Carrots, beets, parsnips, turnips, radishes, and yams are a few root vegetables available from fall to spring. Root vegetables are high in vitamins A, B, and C, as well iron.
- **Add Dark, Leafy Vegetables.** Dark greens such as spinach, broccoli, kale, and chard are rich in vitamins and antioxidants.
- **Savor Citrus.** Oranges, grapefruit, pineapple and other citrus fruits are at their peak of freshness in the winter. High in vitamin C, citrus can help you keep cold and flu at bay. While not a citrus, kiwis are another great source of vitamin C. Grapefruit juice may interact with some medications. If you are on any medications, please check with your healthcare provider before consuming grapefruit juice.
- **More Vitamin D Rich Foods.** Winter's shorter days bring less sunlight. Our main source of vitamin D is sunlight, so in the winter we need to get our vitamin D from other sources. Vitamin D keeps your immune system strong so you're able to fight off viruses and bacteria that cause illness. Foods rich in vitamin D include egg yolks, seafood, healthy grains, mushrooms, and fortified milk.
- **Stay Hydrated.** Drinking plenty of fluids is important no matter what the season, but it is especially vital during the winter months. Staying hydrated helps people speed recovery from colds and flus. Warm fluids like tea can also help keep your body warm.



Keep Warm!

As you get older, it gets harder to sense a change in temperature. Your ability to shiver diminishes, making it harder to maintain your body temperature. Unfortunately, this can make seniors more susceptible to hypothermia.⁴ Hypothermia occurs when your body loses heat faster than it can produce it. It is important to recognize the warning signs of hypothermia. They include confusion, shivering, difficulty speaking, sleepiness, and muscle stiffness.



Hypothermia doesn't only happen outdoors.

Being in a place colder than your body for a long time can lead to hypothermia if you aren't dressed for the weather. To keep your body warm, wear layers like sweaters, hats, long underwear, or other items of clothing. Set your thermostat to at least 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit so your home is warm enough to keep you healthy.

Many seniors are on a limited income, which can make paying the heating bill difficult. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) may be able to help lower-income households pay their heating bill in the winter.

The Washington State Low-Income Weatherization program can help you make improvements to your home, helping to keep cold out and warmth in. If your home doesn't have enough insulation, they can help weatherize your home. These improvements can help save energy and keep heating bills down.

To learn more about LIHEAP or the Weatherization Program, call the Washington State Department of Commerce at 360-725-2857, visit their website at: commerce.wa.gov or contact your local community action agency.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)⁵

Our Pacific Northwest winters are not only colder, they're also cloudy and overcast, with rain and sometimes snow. While this type of weather can naturally reduce our energy levels, some people suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a form of depression that typically affects people during the winter months when the days become shorter.

With fewer hours of sunlight, the body naturally increases the production of melatonin affecting our circadian rhythms. These changes also decrease our body's serotonin levels, a neurotransmitter that regulates our moods. SAD can affect seniors, especially those who are homebound, have limited mobility, or a medical condition irritated by cold weather.

It is important to talk to your doctor if you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed in the box to the right. Medication is usually not necessary for SAD. Creating daily routines can make a big difference. Try one or more of the following to improve your mood:

- Get 30 – 40 minutes of light therapy a day with a lightbulb that simulates natural sunlight.
- Take walks outside (weather permitting).
- Open your curtains or blinds to let in the light.
- Exercise regularly.
- Meet up with friends.
- Decorate your house to distract from the weather.
- Fill your house with live plants.

The primary symptoms of SAD include:

- Feeling depressed or sad
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Having low energy
- Having problems with sleep
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Having trouble concentrating
- Irritability and being easily agitated
- Loss of interest

⁴ National Institute on Aging (1/1/2018) Cold Weather Safety for Older Adults. Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/cold-weather-safety-older-adults>

⁵ National Institute of Mental Health. (March 2013) Seasonal Affective Disorder. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/seasonal-affective-disorder/index.shtml>

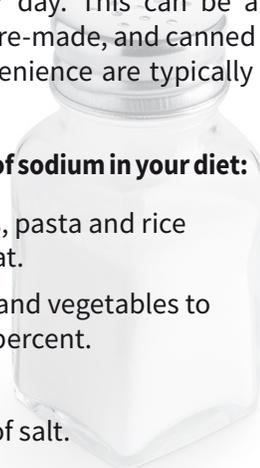
Sodium in your diet⁶

We need sodium to maintain a proper balance of fluid in our body and to control our nerves and muscles. But too much sodium can cause harm. Our kidney function decreases as we get older, making it harder to remove excess sodium from the body. Because of this, seniors must be careful of how much sodium they consume.

The Centers for Disease Control recommend that people over 50 consume no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium (2/3 teaspoon of salt) per day. This can be a difficult because most processed, pre-made, and canned foods that seniors rely on for convenience are typically high in sodium.

Below are tips to reduce the amount of sodium in your diet:

- Limit the amount of deli meats, pasta and rice mixes, and frozen meals you eat.
- Drain and rinse canned beans and vegetables to lower the sodium levels by 41 percent.
- Choose low-sodium soups.
- Use herbs and spices in place of salt.



Recipe of the Season

Beef and Vegetable Soup

Number of Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup whole grain macaroni, uncooked*
- 1 small onion (diced)
- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 - 24 oz. can ground beef*, drained (may substitute with 1 1/2 lbs. of ground beef)
- 4 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1 - 15 oz. can low-sodium green beans*, drained
- 1 - 15 oz. can low-sodium carrots*, drained
- 1 - 15 oz. can low-sodium sliced potatoes*, drained
- 2 - 15 oz. cans low-sodium diced tomatoes*

Directions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain and set aside.
2. In a large pan over medium heat, cook onion in vegetable oil, stirring often, until onion is soft.
3. Add ground beef and cook until brown. Drain any remaining fat.
4. In a large pot add beef broth, beef and onions, green beans, carrots, potatoes, and tomatoes.
5. Cook for 25 minutes over medium heat, stirring every 10 minutes.
6. Add macaroni, garlic powder, onion powder, and basil and cook for an additional 10 minutes.

Source: Adapted from a What's Cooking USDA Mixing Bowl and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) cookbook.

*Items are typically included in a CSFP box.

Nutritional Info

Servings Per Recipe: 8
Amount Per Serving
Calories: 319.0
Total Fat: 15.8 g
Cholesterol: 75.6 mg
Sodium: 788.1 mg
Total Carbs: 19.2 g
Dietary Fiber: 3.5g
Protein: 24.3 g

Spice up your life⁷

Herbs and spices can help keep your food full of flavor while cutting back on sodium, dietary fat, and sugar. Most herbs are easy-to-grow perennial plants that come back every year.

Looking to reduce sodium? Below are some tips on how to use herbs and spices in place of salt:

- Instead of salt, substitute herbs and spices with savory flavors like: black pepper, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, dill seeds, basil, ginger, coriander and onion.
- Skip the salt and flavor your pasta sauces or soups with basil, oregano, parsley and pepper, or use an Italian seasoning blend.
- Use powdered garlic and onion instead of onion and garlic salt. You'll find you will only need to use half as much.

Looking to reduce or eliminate sugar? Try using these sweet spices:

- Allspice
- Cardamom
- Cloves
- Mace
- Anise
- Cinnamon
- Ginger
- Nutmeg



⁶ Sheehan, K. (12/27/19) How Much Sodium Do Seniors Need in Their Diets? Retrieved from <https://healthyeating.sfgate.com/much-sodium-seniors-need-diets-7100.html>

⁷ Henneman, A. Add a Little Spice (& Herbs) to Your Life! Retrieved from <https://food.unl.edu/documents/Spice%26HerbsHandout08.pdf>



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