

SENIOR NUTRITION NEWSLETTER

Nutrition Information, Recipes, and Resources for Seniors



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

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**Take a peek
outside for
signs of Spring
all around!**

What's your favorite
part about this time of
year?



The Essential Nutrients

We may talk a lot about the importance of “good nutrition” and eating foods with “nutrients” in them, but what does that really mean? In this quarter’s newsletter, we’re going to break down the essential nutrients, why our bodies need them, and where you can get them in the foods that you eat. But first thing’s first: what does “nutrient” even mean? A nutrient is a substance that promotes growth, provides energy, and maintains life¹. Nutrients can be separated into two main categories: macronutrients and micronutrients. **Macronutrients** are the main components of a healthy diet that provide your body with the energy it needs to function. These types of nutrients are needed in large amounts. They include proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. **Micronutrients** are needed by our bodies in small amounts to maintain a wide variety of functionality, such as strengthening our immune systems, supporting cellular health, and balancing our metabolism. Micronutrients include vitamins and minerals.

It’s important to note that every person’s nutritional needs vary depending on their activity level, age, biological sex, and other health conditions. You should consult with a nutritionist or other healthcare professional about your individual nutrition needs. Because of this, we have not provided any recommended amounts for daily consumption, only types of foods that contain each nutrient.

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Days to Celebrate

MARCH

- 20** First Day of Spring
- 26** National Spinach Day
- 31** National Farm Worker Day

APRIL

- 4** Vitamin C Day
- 22** Earth Day

MAY

- 11** Mother's Day
- 20** National Pick Strawberries Day

JUNE

- 4** National Cheese Day
- 18** International Picnic Day
- 21** Summer Solstice

What's What:

Proteins

Proteins are often referred to as the “building blocks” of the body. They support the health and maintenance of our cells, bones, skin, hair, and muscles. Proteins are made up of chains of amino acids. Our bodies can create some amino acids, but many can only come from food. ***Foods that are high in protein include: Fish, eggs, beans, legumes, meat, dairy products, and nuts.***



Sources of Protein

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates (Carbs) are a key energy source for fueling the body and maintaining healthy blood sugar levels. Carbs can get a bad reputation as being unhealthy, but that is not the full story! There are two types of carbs: complex and simple. **Complex** carbs take longer for the body to digest and don't cause a big spike in blood pressure. They are an important part of a nutritious diet and will help give you the energy you need to go about your day. ***These types of carbs include: Fruits, beans, potatoes, corn and whole grains such as oats, rice, and whole wheat pasta.*** **Simple** carbs, on the other hand, are digested quickly and cause the blood sugar to spike rapidly. They should be enjoyed in smaller quantities and for special occasions. ***Examples of simple carbs include: candy, pastries, cookies, potato chips, soda drinks, and other sweets with added sugars.***



Sources of Complex Carbohydrates

Fats

Fats are another essential nutrient that are often not thought of as nutritious! In reality, fats are very important in helping the body absorb vitamins and minerals, provide energy, and support brain health. Similar to carbs, however, there are different types of fats: unsaturated and saturated. **Unsaturated fats** are highly important to a nutritious diet. They provide us with fatty acids (these are good!) that our bodies can't make on their own. ***Unsaturated fats are mostly found in nuts and seeds, vegetable oils, fish, avocados, and eggs.*** **Saturated fats**, however, can raise your blood cholesterol and cause a decrease in heart health. They should be consumed in smaller quantities and are mostly found in red meat (beef, pork), butter, cheese, and ice cream.



Sources of Unsaturated Fats

Vitamins

Vitamins are micronutrients that support a wide range of basic bodily functions. There are **fat-soluble** vitamins and **water-soluble** vitamins, which refers to how the vitamins are absorbed in the body. They are found in all kinds of foods that make up a healthy diet. ***This includes fish, dark leafy greens like spinach and kale, mushrooms, red bell peppers, nuts, yogurt, and squash.*** Vitamins can also be taken as supplements, but it is important to consult with your healthcare professional before taking any new supplements.



Sources of Vitamins

Minerals

Minerals are natural elements that are found in the earth and make their way into the foods we eat. Like vitamins, they are a micronutrient, and they are essential for many body functions, including heart and



Sources of Minerals



Food Sources of Water

Drinking a full glass of water when you wake up in the morning is a great way to start your day. *Eating foods such as cucumbers, watermelon, tomatoes, lettuce, and celery can also help contribute to your daily water intake, as they are all comprised of at least 90% water!* 🌱

brain health. Some examples of minerals our bodies need are calcium, potassium, phosphorous, and magnesium. ***Foods that are notably high in minerals are nuts, seeds, cruciferous veggies like broccoli and cauliflower, eggs, beans, and berries.***

Water

Did you know that on average, our bodies are made of 60% water? Although you may not initially associate water as being “nutritious”, water consumption is universally one of the most important things we can do for our health. Water is crucial for every system in the body, particularly for protecting nerves and joints, delivering oxygen, and flushing out waste.

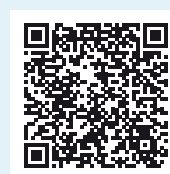
The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Begins on June 1st

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is a great opportunity for older adults to receive seasonal foods at farmers markets. It provides an \$80 benefit card for Washington seniors to shop at their local farmers market! Below are some key details on the SFMNP including program eligibility, dates, how to apply, how it works, and more.

- **To qualify for the SFMNP, you must be:**
 - » 60 years or older (55+ if you are Native American/Alaska Native)
 - » A resident of Washington State
 - » Your income must be below 185% of the federal poverty line.
That means:
 - \$28,953 annual or \$2,413 monthly for 1 person
 - \$39,128 annual or \$3,261 monthly for 2 people
- **You must apply to the program through your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA).** A contact list of all AAAs across the state can be found by scanning the QR code to the right. Call the number or visit the website associated with your county on this contact list. Applications usually open in April or May!
- **The program runs from June 1st through October 31st each year.**
- **You will receive your benefits loaded onto a SFMNP benefits card or digitally on the SFMNP mobile app.**
- **You can use your SFMNP benefits to buy fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, honey, and herbs.** Look for a sign at each farmer’s booth that looks like the image to the right. If you do not see a sign, you can always go to the market’s “Information Booth” to ask for assistance.
- **For more information, scan the QR code to the right or visit <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program>.** 🌱



Open the Area Agency on Aging Contact List



View the SFMNP page on the DSHS website for more info

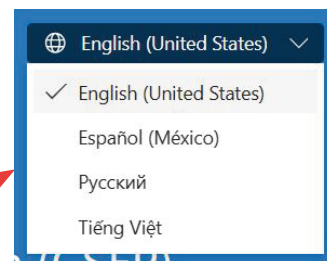
The Annual CSFP Survey is Available Now

Each spring, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) administers a survey to CSFP participants to help improve program services. The survey is available now and should take 3-5 minutes to complete. It may be administered to you in any of the following ways. **Please note you only need to complete it once.**

- Your CSFP agency may print off copies of the survey to fill out upon picking up your monthly box. You can return the completed survey to them — they will mail it to us once they have gathered all the responses!
- You can print your own survey at home or at the library and mail it to us yourself. The survey is located at <https://agr.wa.gov/services/food-access/hunger-relief-agency-hub/csfp/csfp-forms>. Scroll down to “Participant Forms and Publications” and look for AGR-2248 “CSFP Participant Survey”. You will be able to download and print the form in English, Spanish, Russian, or Vietnamese. Our mailing address is printed at the top of the form.
- Take the digital survey now by scanning the QR code found at the right or by going to: <https://forms.office.com/g/RjeeiDQ2Sh>. In the upper right-hand corner of the webpage, you can choose between the following languages: English, Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese. 🌱



Scan the QR code to access the CSFP Annual Survey



Recipe of the Season

With only 6 ingredients, these are a great option for a snack on the go and a cost-effective alternative to buying granola bars from the store. They also include both macro and micro nutrients!

Homemade Granola Bars

Ingredients:

- 1 cup honey
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 3 1/2 cups rolled oats

24 Servings

- 1/2 cup raisins (optional) can substitute a different dried fruit or chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup carrot (grated)
- 1/2 cup coconut

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
3. Peel and grate the carrots.
4. Put the honey and peanut butter in a large saucepan. Cook on low heat until they melt.
5. Remove the pan from the heat. Turn off the burner.
6. Add oatmeal, raisins, carrots, and coconut to the saucepan. Stir well and let it cool until you can safely touch it with your hands.
7. Put the mix into a 9x13 inch baking pan.
8. Press the mix firmly into the bottom of the pan.
9. Bake for 25 minutes.
10. Let cool and then cut into 24 bars.

Nutrition Facts

Servings per recipe: 6

Amount Per Serving **Calories 168**

Total Fat 7 g

Dietary Fiber 2 g

Cholesterol 0 mg

Sodium 44 mg

Carbohydrates 24 g

Dietary Fiber 2 g

Total Sugars 15 g

Added Sugars Included 12 g

Protein 4 g

Vitamin D 0 mcg

Calcium 14 mg

Iron 1 mg

Potassium 171 mg

Granola Bars | MyPlate: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/granola-bars>
Looking for more great recipes to try? USDA's MyPlate Kitchen has hundreds of healthy, budget-friendly recipes at myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen



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