

Nutrition and Wellness Newsletter

January/February 2023



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Happy New Year!



February is Heart Health Month!



Now that Christmas is over and 2022 is coming to an end, we look ahead to the new year 2023. New Year's resolutions are often made with good intentions. The key is not to make too many and to make them realistic. Some health-related resolutions may include the following. Since February is Heart Health month, including heart healthy resolutions is a good idea to start the new year off right!

1) Eat healthier

Setting one or two goals rather than making a lot of changes at once regarding your food choices seems to be more successful in the long run. For example, if eating more fresh fruit is our goal, we can start by making a list of fruits we like to eat. Shopping for some of these fruits each week and having them on hand in order to eat them for a snack or with a meal is the next step. Recording what we eat for a day or a week once per month allows us to check our progress and make adjustments.

For some information on trying to eat healthier go to:

[My Plate for Older Adults](#)

2) Exercise more often

Some of us who start an exercise program have trouble losing weight, and then we get discouraged and stop exercising. But it's important to remember that regular exercise protects our hearts and is beneficial even if we don't lose weight.

The benefits of exercise are numerous and include:

- 1) Exercise makes our hearts less prone to arrhythmias, and it affects our sympathetic nervous system, which brings down our heart rate and allows our heart to work more efficiently.
- 2) Exercise also lowers blood pressure and improves our lipid profile and glucose processing.
- 3) Exercise can be a real energy booster for many people, including those with various medical conditions including diabetes and cancer. Over time, this aerobic training results in less demand on our lungs, and it requires less energy to perform the same activities.
- 4) Exercise also helps decrease feelings of fatigue and helps us improve our strength to complete our daily tasks. As we move more, our hearts pump more blood, delivering more oxygen to our working muscles. With regular exercise, our hearts become more efficient and adept at moving oxygen into our blood, making our muscles more efficient.

For ideas on exercise for older adults go to:

3) Obtain or keep a healthy weight

Weight loss benefits many systems. Even if we lose weight mainly from dieting and not from exercise, weight loss is good for our blood pressure, for our blood fat profile, and for processing glucose and insulin, and it reduces inflammation. When regular exercise is combined with weight loss, the benefits are even greater. To determine your Body Mass Index go to:

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

4) Keep our strength and ability to complete daily tasks

For those of us in our 60's and beyond, we need to be aware of the power of protein.

As older adults, we need to eat enough protein to keep our muscles strong and active. Protein, along with regular strength building activities, is essential for maintaining muscle, which we tend to lose as we age. Consuming enough protein also may be linked with bone health.

Women and men in their sixties and beyond need 5 to 5 1/2 ounce-equivalents, respectively, of protein foods daily and preferably spread throughout the day. Good sources include lean cuts of beef, chicken, fish, pork and lamb. Not a meat eater? Protein is also found in eggs, beans, tofu and nuts, as well as low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese.

Vitamin B12 is essential and another vital nutrient. Vitamin B12 helps our bodies make red blood cells and keeps our brain and nervous system healthy. However, as we get older we can develop a reduced ability to absorb vitamin B12. We can get B12 through any food that comes from an animal: meat, fish, dairy products and eggs, as well as fortified foods. We should talk to our doctor to see if we need a supplement, especially if our eating plan is mostly plant-based.

5) Drink more water and stay hydrated.

Staying hydrated is important for the functioning of the body overall.

For more information go to:

<https://www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/water/how->

Try these relaxing coloring pages to engage your mind and reduce stress:

[Happy New Year Coloring Page](#)

[January Coloring Page](#)

[February Coloring Page](#)

Recipe Box

Enjoy these recipes this winter season:

[Lemon Salmon with Basil](#)

[Sweet Potato Kwanzaa Bread](#)

[Tandoori Chicken](#)

[Bean Burrito Bowl](#)



Nutrition Program Spotlight

At our October Nutrition Advisory Council Meeting, Kara Corsiglia from Ageguide Northeastern Illinois, shared with the group a Restaurant Program for older adults. The development of the program was a joint collaboration between Illinois Department on Aging, Age Guide Northeastern Illinois and Lori's Restaurant in Kankakee county. The senior dine program is a program that utilizes an electronic debit card system to serve seniors nutritious meals in a restaurant at an affordable cost. The participants may sign up for the program and receive a debit card which is loaded with a specific number of meals per month. The meals are tracked through a software program as the debit card is used for meal purchase transactions. The menu offered to the participants is reviewed and approved by a Registered Dietitian and meets one third of the daily nutrition requirements. The program offers flexibility to dine any time the restaurant is open. It also offers meal choices which increases participants' overall satisfaction. For more information on the program, go to [link](#) and click on Senior Nutrition Programs.

HEALTH



Information/Events

For additional information on assistance programs
for older adults go to:

[Assistance Programs For Older Adults](#)

Next Nutrition Advisory Council Meeting

January 19, 2023

9:30-11:30 am

Illinois Department on Aging in Springfield or via Webex

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in a different *language [click here](#).**

*Translated versions of the newsletter may not be posted on the site right away.
Please check back often!

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