

# Aging Healthfully Newsletter

May/June 2021



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## May is Older Americans Month (OAM)

Led by the [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\)](#) each May, Older Americans Month shines light on our nation's seniors!



**The theme for 2021 is “*Communities of Strength.*”**

Over the past year, our older Illinoisans have truly shown their strength and resilience to overcome such a difficult time with the pandemic. Over the course of their lives, successes, failures, triumphs, and struggles have taught them to persist and to have hope.

OAM provides [resources](#) that promote good health, independence, and support to help our older American communities stay strong.

This month, we encourage you to share your stories and contributions to your community, which can help to inspire and support other older adults that are longing for connection, socialization, and engagement.

Check out these [Pen Pal Writing Prompts](#) to get the conversation started!

Connecting with others plays such a vital role in our health and well-being. Finding joy in the little things and sharing our stories not only helps us to feel connected, but also gives a feeling that we are not alone.

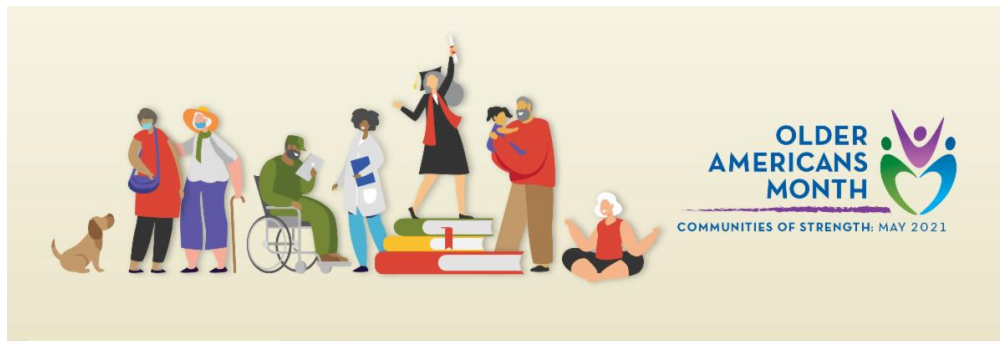
See here for [Event Planning Tips](#) for virtual or in-person gathering [ideas](#) to stay connected.

Looking at the big picture and finding strength together instead of individually leads to a stronger community!

**Check out these posters to celebrate your *Community of Strength* for Older Americans Month.**  
([English](#) and [Spanish](#))

**Looking to get your community involved?**  
Here is a [sample article](#) to use!

**Share your stories and plans for OAM**



## June is National Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Month

Seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables can be found just about anywhere this time of year!

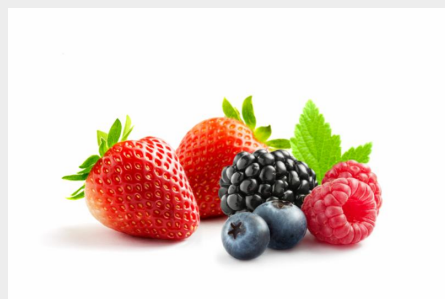


From locally sourced fruits and vegetables at the grocery store to a variety of offerings at [farmers markets](#) near you, it is easy to find a tasty and healthy option.

One thing is certain, the more fruits and veggies in your diet, the greater the chance you are meeting your dietary needs for vitamins and minerals.

**Older adults need more of certain vitamins and minerals to promote good health and combat health issues associated with aging** such as age-related eye conditions, constipation, and high blood pressure.

Fruits and vegetables provide essential [nutrients](#) such as vitamins A, C, E, and folic acid, minerals such as magnesium, zinc, potassium and phosphorus, fiber, and antioxidants, which are known to help fight harmful free radicals in the body.



**What is a serving of Fruits?**



**What is a serving of Vegetables?**

**A half cup-equivalent of fruit is considered a serving.**

Here are some examples of a ½ cup-equivalent:

- A medium-sized apple
- ½ cup 100% fruit juice
- ¼ of a cup dried fruit (e.g. raisins, cranberries)
- ½ cup fresh or canned peaches (preferably in 100% juice)

**Older adults should aim for at least 2 cup-equivalents (or 4-1/2 cup servings) of fruits each day!**

**A half cup-equivalent of vegetables is considered a serving.**

Here are some examples of a ½ cup-equivalent:

- 1 cup raw leafy greens
- ½ cup cooked broccoli
- 1 cup 100% vegetable juice

**Older adults should aim for at least 2 ½ cup-equivalents (or 5-1/2 cup servings) of vegetables each day!**

**Need a few more reasons to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables?**  
Click [here](#) to learn more about how adding color to your plate can improve your health!

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## 10 Ways to Eat More Fresh Fruits & Vegetables



1. **Make a smoothie** with fresh blueberries, strawberries, banana slices, milk or a calcium fortified milk alternative, vanilla or plain Greek yogurt, and some ice.
2. Whip up a **fresh salsa** by combining tomatoes, onions, bell pepper or jalapeno, olive oil, lime juice, black pepper, and a pinch of salt (optional) in your blender or food processor. Pulse several times until it resembles a chunky salsa.
3. **Frozen watermelon chunks** can be used in the place of ice to chill your beverages and you can eat the fruit after it has thawed.
4. Try a “**Meatless Monday**” dish such as veggie loaded burritos or a Southwest style salad with mixed salad greens topped with fresh diced avocado, corn, and black beans, served with a salsa ranch salad dressing.

5. Top your morning bowl of **oatmeal** with a fresh farmers market peach or blackberries.
6. Enjoy **gazpacho** (chilled tomato/veggie soup) on a hot day – To make it yourself combine the following ingredients in a blender and blend until it resembles a smooth salsa: 1 pound diced tomatoes, ½ diced onion, ½ diced cucumber, ¼ diced bell pepper, ½ tablespoon minced garlic, drizzle of olive oil, 1 ½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar, ½ cup low sodium V8 juice, dash of cumin, dash of hot pepper sauce (optional), and black pepper.
7. Make **yogurt parfait** in a bowl for breakfast - Combine berries, cherries, or peaches with low-fat Greek yogurt and a sprinkle of granola (Tip: look for granola that has less than 8 grams of sugar per serving).
8. Try **veggie-loaded scrambled eggs!** Add fresh chopped spinach, diced mushrooms, green onions, cherry tomatoes and shredded cheese.
9. Make a **fruit punch** with sparkling water or sangria using cherries, fresh pineapple chunks, grapes, strawberries, and melon.
10. Saute' sliced zucchini, mushrooms, and tomatoes in a skillet with garlic, pepper, and olive oil for **tasty side dish**.

**Check out these tasty recipes to help you meet your daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables!**

([Fruit Recipe](#); [Vegetable Recipe](#))

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**For previous editions of the Aging Healthfully Newsletter or to find the newsletter offered in a different language [click here](#).**

**Note:** Translated versions of the newsletter may not be posted on the site right away.  
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