

Senior Nutrition – Eat Safely & Wisely

Calories and Nutrients

As we age, our calorie requirements decrease, but our need for nutrients never decreases. Make sure the foods you eat are full of nutrients, not empty calories.

Nutrients are vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, found in a variety of foods. Nutrients keep us looking and feeling our best. And don't forget water; it's our most important "nutrient."

A **calorie** is a way to measure the energy, or fuel, a person gets from food. The amount of calories you need depends on age, activity levels, and gender. Below is a chart that will help you determine your caloric needs:

Women over 50:

- 1,600 calories if you do low physical activity
- 1,800 if you are moderately active
- 2,000–2,200 if you are very active

Men over 50:

- 2,000 calories for a man with low physical activity
- 2,200–2,400 for moderately active
- 2,400–2,800 for an active lifestyle

Source: NIH Senior Health For information about exercise and physical activity for older adults, visit

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/toc.html>

Making Mealtime Enjoyable

The senses of taste and smell change with age, and food might seem to have less flavor. Some drugs can also change the sense of taste or reduce appetite. Talk with a doctor about low appetite, or if food tastes bad or has no flavor. Also, another way to enhance the flavor of food is to use herbs and spices.

If it hurts to chew, badly fitting dentures may be to blame. Softer foods are easier to chew, so try replacing raw vegetables and fruits with cooked vegetables, juices, applesauce, and canned fruits. Try ground or shredded meat or replace meat with soft foods like beans, eggs, tofu, tuna fish, etc.

One main way to improve mealtime enjoyment is to eat with others. Share meals with neighbors at home or dine out with friends or family members. When possible, share shopping and food preparation efforts too. Cooking together is also a great way to make dinnertime more enjoyable!



Eat Safely – Eating Out, Eating In

Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, is fairly common—every year about 48 million people in the U.S. become ill from eating contaminated foods. Of those, about 3,000 die. Elderly people are at special risk because they can't efficiently fight off the bacteria, virus, and parasites that make people sick.

People often think their illness was caused by their last meal, but the time between eating bad food and the onset of illness can vary widely. Usually, you'll feel sick 1–3 days after eating. But you could become sick anytime from 30 minutes to 3 weeks after eating. Whether or not you get sick depends on a lot of factors, including the type of bacteria in the food.

The symptoms of foodborne illness are usually upset stomach, abdominal pain, vomiting, and/or diarrhea. It is also possible to experience flu-like symptoms with a fever, headache and body aches. It's easy to confuse foodborne illness with other types of illness, so stay aware and be careful.

At restaurants, be sure to: Always order food well done. Don't hesitate to ask the server or chef to make sure foods are not served raw or undercooked. To-go bags should be refrigerated within 2 hours; within 1 hour if air temperature is 90° F or above.

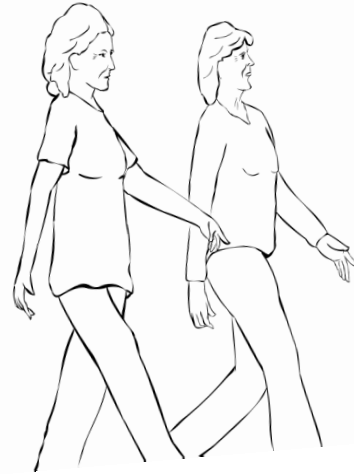
At home, be sure to:

- ✓ Wash hands with soap before preparing, serving or eating food
- ✓ Disinfect sink and kitchen counters with a solution of 1 tsp. chlorine bleach per gallon/liter of water
- ✓ Air dry dishes—it is more sanitary than using a dish towel
- ✓ Check expiration dates carefully and discard expired food
- ✓ Cook all meat, poultry, and fish thoroughly, to an oven temperature of at least 325° F.
 - Cook hamburgers or chopped meat to an internal temperature of 160° F. (Much less chance of being infected by a solid piece of meat like a steak; bacteria only collects on the outside)
- ✓ Allow standing time for reheated foods. Use a clean food thermometer to ensure temp is 165° F
- ✓ Keep hot foods hot at 140° F or more and cold foods at 40° F or colder.
- ✓ Keep the refrigerator below 41° F.
- ✓ Cook eggs until the yolks are no longer runny; never serve raw eggs.
- ✓ Don't serve raw oysters, clams or shellfish
- ✓ Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- ✓ Avoid unpasteurized milk and cider
- ✓ Throw out refrigerated leftovers after 3–4 days.
- ✓ Thaw foods properly
- ✓ Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate

Taking Care of Yourself

Motivation is the #1 factor determining whether people change their lifestyles or fail to follow their exercise and diet prescriptions. While motivation is an inside job, the caregiver has a part to play.

No single day of exercise or eating right makes much of a difference in your or your care receiver's health, but 30 days do. Sixty days makes even more of an impact; a year's worth of a new lifestyle will provide remarkable shifts in mood and self-esteem. People who take up the challenge presented by diet and exercise prescriptions make huge strides in their physical and emotional recovery; imagine what it does to their independence.



If You Suspect Foodborne Illness

1. Contact a doctor
2. Wrap questionable food securely, label it "Danger," and then freeze it. Your doctor may want to see and test it.
3. Save packaging, such as cans or cartons. Write down the food, date and time consumed.
4. Call your local health department if you think a local eating establishment might be at fault.
5. Report contaminated food to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

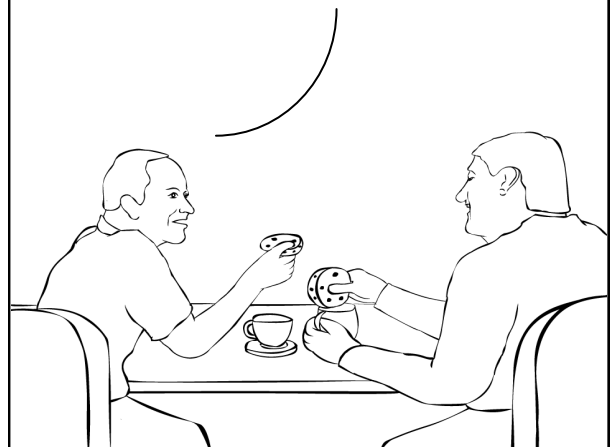
For a live chat on food safety, visit www.askkaren.gov from 10 AM to 4 PM EST or visit www.fsis.usda.gov

Don't Fall – Be Safe

Never use a chair as a step-stool to reach high shelves.

Live Life Laughing!

If I dip enough cookies in my milk, I'll get my daily calcium.



Quick Quiz

If an older person does not get enough calories from food, his or her body will use stored nutrients for energy. The individual then becomes weaker and is more likely to get infections. Read the issue and answer True or False to test your knowledge!

1. As individuals age, their *calorie* requirements decrease, but their need for *nutrients* does not.
True or False
2. **Nutrients** are vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats, found in a variety of foods.
True or False
3. A **calorie** is a way to measure the energy (the “fuel”) a person gets from food.
True or False
4. The senses of taste and smell do not change with age.
True or False
5. If it hurts to chew, badly fitting dentures may be to blame.
True or False
6. Elderly people are at special risk for foodborne illness because they can't efficiently fight off the bacteria, virus, and parasites that make people sick.
True or False
7. It is important to check food expiration dates carefully and discard food that's expired.
True or False
8. Eating with others increases the enjoyment of mealtime so the low-cost or free meals provided at churches and community centers is a good way for seniors to get good nutrition.
True or False
9. Some drugs change the sense of taste or reduce appetite.
True or False
10. Undercooked food cannot make an elderly person sick.
True or False

KEY: 1. T; 2. T; 3. T; 4. F; 5. T; 6. T; 7. T; 8. T; 9. T; 10. F

Family Ties

LifeSpan Resources
P.O. Box 995
New Albany, IN 47151



Family Matters

Phone: 812-948-8330
Toll Free: 1-888-948-8330

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LifeSpan Resources' Family Caregiver Support Group

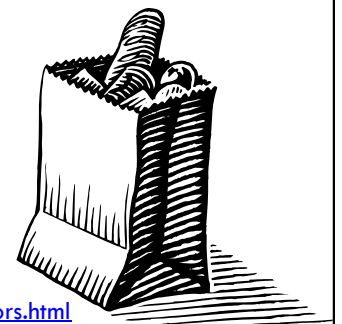
Below is the meeting time for our family caregiver support group. This is a great place to go to find relief from stress, meet other caregivers and draw from their experiences.

1st Thursday of ea. month
St. Luke's United Church of Christ
329 Walnut Street
Jeffersonville, IN 47130
6:30pm to 8:00pm

Get Help Buying Food

- **Food stamps** - these help people with low-income get enough food; food stamps also encourage good nutrition and health
- **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** - this program gives coupons to low-income older adults; the coupons can be used at farmers' markets, roadside stands and other places to buy fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs
- **Churches and community and senior centers** - many often provide free or low-cost meals, which offer good food and fellowship
- **Home-delivered meals** - *Meals on Wheels* may be available for people who can't get out of their homes

Your local Area Agency on Aging can tell you more about these options. To contact your Area Agency on Aging, call the Eldercare Locator toll-free at 1-800-677-1116.



Source: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/nutritionforseniors.html>