

Area Bloggers



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Age Spots - Senior Nutrition

APRIL 11TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Age Spots - Senior Nutrition

Senior Nutrition-Getting the Most Out of That Bite

“Mom...what’s for dinner?” How many times have we as children asked this simple question? The results in our house would vary from a good old Sunday dinner of fried chicken and all the fixins to an “I’m busy, just grab a sandwich.” But now that simple question could mean the difference between a healthy life and hunger.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA) 1 in 6 older adults, are at risk for hunger in the United States. Seniors in your neighborhood are at risk! If seniors are struggling to afford healthy food choices, there are many ways to help.

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) also known as Food Stamps, helps seniors with low-income buy the food they need for good health.
- SEMO Food Bank serves over 180 local hunger relief organizations in the Southeast Missouri area.
- Senior Centers offer hot nutritious lunches to those 60+ or those married to someone 60+, in the center or delivered to the home of those who cannot get to a center. There are 32 senior centers in our 18 county area, the centers also offer social interaction, fun activities and learning programs.
- Distance Dining Program, is a service of Aging Matters that will deliver frozen meals to those who qualify and live outside the delivery area for a senior center.

Financial concerns are not the only reasons seniors are at risk for malnutrition. Many seniors take medication that can change the way food smells and tastes. Medicines could have side effects that make them nauseous or cause them not to be able to absorb the nutrients in their food. Other physical conditions might make it hard to chew certain foods or even shop for and prepare a nutritious meal. These limitations make it more important to choose healthy nutritious foods.

Tracey Tripp, RDN, LD at Aging Matters states “The issue of hunger and food insecurity, especially among the older adults in Southeast Missouri, is not always obvious and many people are not aware of how many of our seniors are affected. Another facet of this issue is that many seniors may have *enough* food, but it’s not the healthy, nutritious food they need to help reduce their risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer, and anemia. If they already have one or more of these

chronic diseases, eating well and being physically active may help them better manage these diseases. Healthy eating may also help them reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and manage diabetes. Eating well gives them the nutrients needed to keep their muscles, bones, organs, and other parts of their body healthy throughout their life. Or to put it simply, health requires healthy food.”

Healthy eating begins with you! Giving your body the right nutrients and maintaining a healthy weight can help you stay active and independent. You’ll also spend less time and money at the doctor. This is especially true if you have a chronic condition, such as diabetes or heart disease.

The definition of healthy eating does change a little as you age. For example, as you grow older, your metabolism slows down, so you need fewer calories than before. Your body also needs more of certain nutrients. That means it’s more important than ever to choose foods that give you the best nutritional value.

So remember no matter how old we get asking “Mom, what’s for dinner?” will always be an important question.

For questions or more information please call Aging Matters, 1-800-392-8771.

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