

**The National
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CAREGIVER NUTRITION EDUCATION TOOLKIT

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Executive Summary

Providing care and support for a loved one brings on diverse and overwhelming responsibilities for a caregiver. In a given week, a caregiver may be helping someone with bathing, dressing or grocery shopping, which can complement the circle of long-term services that keeps individuals at home within the community. At the same time, caregivers may need to be interacting with the individual's medical and health care team, or carrying out complex medical and nursing tasks in the home (such as tube feeding, wound care and injections)—often with little or no instruction. Typically, caregivers feel highly strained and overwhelmed and are themselves at increased risk for chronic loneliness, even though they find meaning in taking care of a loved one.

An important part of caregiving is ensuring the care recipient gets the right kind of nutrition. Nutrition education, counseling and other services improve a caregiver's ability to provide nutritionally adequate and appropriate diets. Planning meals that meet nutritional needs is crucial for the health and well-being of both the care recipient and the caregiver. Nutrition education guides healthy and cost-effective food choices and supports this goal.

The trustworthy nutrition education resources in this report can help caregivers, especially when proper nutrition directly relates to the treatment of medical diagnosis that a caregiver may be dealing with. Such diagnoses include malnutrition, chronic disease management, obesity, dementia/Alzheimer's, oral health, food and drug interaction, and nutrition support therapy. Consulting with medical professionals and registered dietitian nutritionists (RDN) can provide relevant food and nutrition information.

Nutrition education also benefits a caregiver by helping maintain her own health and well-being. In 2017, there were about 41 million family or unpaid caregivers in the United States providing 34 billion hours of daily personal care and/or medical care. Caregivers can be family/unpaid (a spouse, partner, family member, friend or neighbor) or formal paid care providers. Most family caregivers (60 percent) are in the work force, yet still providing caregiving. This can create a financial and emotional burden on caregivers who are trying to balance life's responsibilities.

The federal online resources collected here are in a consumer-friendly format. Other sources include state or local government sources, such as health departments or clinics; colleges, universities or USDA Cooperative Extension Services; health care systems or local hospitals; and national organizations specific to chronic disease conditions and nutrition, such as the American Diabetes Association or Alzheimer's Association.

The paper also helps professionals know how to provide nutrition education to caregivers. Tips include understanding how adults learn; knowing the audience, both the caregiver and the care recipient (literacy level, health status, income range, race/ethnicity or marital status, etc.); conducting a needs assessment; developing learning goals; selecting a learning environment; providing nutrition education materials in a format best suited for the caregiver; facilitating rather than teaching; including action-oriented learning activities; developing written materials that are easy to read; and evaluating results.

Profile of Today's Caregivers

- Family caregivers represent every age, racial and socioeconomic group, and include both men and women. Nearly one in four (24 percent) is a millennial, 40 percent are men, and about 40 percent are from multicultural communities.
- Most family caregivers (60 percent) are in the work force and still providing caregiving. This can create both a financial and emotional burden to caregivers who are trying to balance life's responsibilities.
- Without workplace benefits to support family caregivers, those who are employed can experience heightened financial and emotional strain.
- Family caregivers who disrupt their careers or leave the labor force to meet caregiving demands can face substantial economic risk and short- and long-term financial difficulties.
- Most family caregivers incur out-of-pocket costs related to caregiving, spending \$7,000 on average in 2016.
- Rising demand and shrinking families will increasingly strain family caregivers and the individuals for whom they provide care. In 2010, there were 7.1 potential family caregivers for every person age 80+. By 2030, there may be only 4.1 potential caregivers for every person 80+.¹
- More than 16 million caregivers provide more than 18.5 billion hours of unpaid care for someone who has Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.¹
- The majority of caregivers (82%) care for one other adult, while 15% care for 2 adults, and 3% for 3 or more adults.¹
- During 2015-2017, almost 20% of caregivers were in fair or poor health.¹

Caregiver Support 101

In 2017, there were about 41 million family or unpaid caregivers in the United States, providing 34 billion hours of daily personal care and/or medical care.¹ This family care is essential to completing the circle of long-term services and supports that keeps individuals at home within the community.

Caregiver tasks go beyond activities of daily living (such as bathing or dressing) and independent activities of daily living such as housework, meal preparation and transportation. Caregivers may provide complex medical care tasks such as pain management, tube feedings and administering medications.

In recognition of the need to support family caregivers, there are available individual counseling, support groups, training and respite care. Providing nutrition education, counseling and other nutrition/ food assistance services improves the ability of caregivers to provide nutritionally adequate and appropriate diets. These services benefit caregivers by helping to maintain their own health and well-being.

Caregiver burden or stress may be coupled with positive feelings of satisfaction and meaning. Nevertheless, caregivers typically feel strained and overwhelmed and are themselves at increased risk for chronic loneliness.²

Everyday Challenges for Caregivers

The responsibilities for providing care and support for a loved one are diverse and overwhelming and often extend beyond traditional direct care. These may include advocating for the care recipient and interacting with the individual's medical and health care providers, understanding and navigating the health care payer system, and providing transportation to medical appointments.

Caregiving tasks related to meal and meal preparation include grocery or other shopping assistance (76%) and meal preparation (61%).³ Although these tasks seem



routine, there are nutritional needs, feeding strategies and appetite that may change with the care recipient's condition and functional status.

In addition, the caregiver may be tasked with administering tube feeding, performing wound care, giving injections, and handling medical equipment in the home. This level of skill is expected while most caregivers receive little or no instruction.

Nutrition and Aging

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs), updated by the federal government every five years, provide recommendations to achieve a balanced, nutrient-dense diet for all Americans.⁸ The 2015-2020 DGAs contain five guidelines:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.
2. Focus on variety, nutrient density and amount.
3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.
4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.
5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.

In addition, the Health and Medicine Division (HMD) of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM/HMD) develops Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs), which offer the current science on nutrition with specific recommendations that healthy populations need. Federally-funded nutrition programs follow these DRIs.⁹ Certain nutrients are essential to maintaining good health in older adults. These include protein, fiber, vitamin B-12, vitamin B-6, calcium and vitamin D.

General Nutrition Tips for Older Adults

1. Water is important.

- Water is the single most important nutrient to the body. Every day water is lost through breath, perspiration, and urine and bowel movements. For a body to function properly, its water supply must be replenished by consuming beverages and foods

that contain water. As a person ages, the internal control that sends the message of “thirsty” diminishes. Lack of water can lead to dehydration—meaning not enough water to carry out normal functions. Symptoms may include less frequent urination, dizziness, fatigue or confusion.

- **Tip:** Drink several glasses of water daily. In the warmer months, increase water consumption to replace body water lost through sweating.

2. Maintain ideal body weight.

- There should be a balance of calories consumed and energy used. Unintentional weight gain or loss is an important indicator of potentially inappropriate food intake.
- Muscle loss can lead to functional decline and loss of independence. This can be remedied by an adequate intake of protein and appropriate, moderate weight-bearing exercise.
- **Tip:** Include different colors and types of vegetables and fruits and good sources of whole grains. Eat only small amounts of solid fats, oil and foods high in added sugars. Limit the intake of saturated fat (mostly foods of animal origin).

3. Include plenty of fiber in the diet.

- Eating fiber-rich foods helps to keep the body’s digestive system healthy. Fiber can also reduce the risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Include at least 25 grams of fiber daily. If not accustomed to eating a high fiber diet, start slowly introducing good fiber sources into the daily diet and drink plenty of fluids.
- **Tip:** Include fruits and vegetables with the skins, whole grains, legumes and nuts.

4. Watch the fats in the diet.

- Reduce saturated fats and trans fats to help reduce the risk of heart disease. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are the good fats, but only in moderation.
- **Tips:** Choose trimmed cuts of meat, fish or poultry (with the skin removed) with less fat. Use low-fat dairy products and salad dressings. Use non-stick pots and pans and cook without added fat. Choose a polyunsaturated or monosaturated vegetable oil (check the label) or a nonfat cooking spray. Instead of frying, try to broil, roast, bake, stir-fry, steam, microwave or boil foods.

5. Watch the salt and increase potassium-rich foods.

- The body needs some sodium but in moderation. Reducing sodium along with increasing potassium will help to lower the risk of high blood pressure. Potassium-rich foods include fruits, vegetables and beans.
- **Tips:** If you need salt, add it lightly during cooking rather than at the table. Try seasoning with herbs and spices. Avoid salty snacks and processed foods. Look for the word sodium, not salt, on the nutrition label of foods.

6. Keep those bones healthy!

- Choose foods rich in calcium and Vitamin D to keep the bones strong and help prevent falls. Vitamin D helps to absorb calcium into the bones.
- **Tip:** Every day, include at least three sources of calcium-rich foods such as fortified milk, dairy products, fortified cereals and fruit juices. Many foods are now fortified with calcium.

7. Remember the forgotten Vitamin B12.

- With aging, some individuals are unable to absorb Vitamin B12 that is naturally present in food. Many older adults do not get enough Vitamin B12. Check with a doctor or registered dietitian nutritionist to see if a Vitamin B12 supplement is needed.
- **Tip:** Vitamin B12 is naturally found in animal products, including fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk and milk products.

8. Vitamin B6 may help to prevent memory decline.

- The ability of the body to absorb and use Vitamin B6 declines with age. A diet rich in Vitamin B6 should be included daily, however, check with a doctor or dietitian nutritionist to see if a Vitamin B6 supplement is needed.
- **Tip:** Beans, chicken, bananas, baked potato, pork, fish, nuts and fortified breakfast cereals are good sources of vitamin B6.

9. Exercise, exercise, exercise.

- Research has shown that it is never too late to rebuild muscle. Weight-bearing exercise will help build and strengthen muscles. Include some activity each day, even chair exercises, leg lifts or arm stretches to start.



The Role of Nutrition Support

Providing meals and nutrition support is critical to the care recipient's health and well-being. Proper nutrition also directly relates to the decline and treatment of certain medical diagnoses that a caregiver may be dealing with. For specific nutritional needs of the care recipient, consult with the medical provider familiar with the health diagnosis.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is the clinical term used when the body does not have the right balance of calories or nutrients to stay healthy. Malnutrition can be caused by an inadequate diet or the body's inability to digest or use nutrients effectively. The causes of malnutrition also may include physical, social and psychological issues—from the loss of appetite due to depression or medications to the inability to get to the store for groceries.

Malnutrition is a serious health issue among older adults and may go undetected. Up to 50% of older adults are at risk of malnutrition, depending on the care setting (hospital, nursing home or community),¹⁰ with chronic health conditions contributing to heightened risks. Malnutrition leads to more medical complications, falls and an increased number of 30-day hospital readmissions.¹¹

From a caregiver's perspective, malnutrition may not be immediately apparent. It may develop over time. Watch for weight loss; swelling in the abdomen, legs, ankles or feet; or a decrease in appetite, amount of food eaten, bowel habits, or activity level. An individual is at a higher risk of malnutrition if she is 85 years or older, suffered an injury or trauma, takes multiple medications, or has cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney or liver disease, gastrointestinal issues, depression or dementia.

Consult with a healthcare professional if malnutrition is suspected.¹² A health professional can assess malnutrition through the presence of two or more of these characteristics:

- Insufficient food/calorie/nutrient intake
- Weight loss
- Loss of muscle mass
- Loss of subcutaneous fat
- Localized or generalized fluid retention (edema)
- Diminished functional status (hand grip strength, mobility)

Chronic Disease Management

Chronic diseases are defined broadly as conditions that last one year or more and require ongoing medical attention or limit activities of daily living or both. A healthy diet can directly affect the treatment of chronic diseases such as heart disease, hypertension, stroke, some types of cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis. A first step is limiting calories from added sugars and

saturated fats and reducing sodium intake. To prevent and treat certain chronic diseases, follow a healthy eating pattern that focuses on variety, nutrient-dense foods and amount.

Obesity

Obesity is a complex health issue that is associated with the leading causes of death in the U.S. including diabetes, heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer. Obesity is also associated with poorer mental health, reduced quality of life, and reduced mobility and activity. Obesity results from a combination of causes, including individual factors such as eating patterns, physical inactivity, and medication. To prevent and treat obesity, follow a healthy eating pattern that focuses on variety, nutrient-dense foods and amount.

Dementia/Alzheimer's

Providing meals for someone with dementia can prove challenging. An appetite for food and liquids may be non-existent. When it is apparent there is no interest in eating, then nagging and coaxing can prove frustrating for not only for the care recipient, but also the caregiver. A positive mealtime experience may change from day to day. Here are a few tips to help increase the intake of nutrient-rich foods.¹³

Food Preparation

- Eliminate empty calorie foods such as sugary desserts and drinks.
- Increase the nutrition quality of food items by adding powdered protein and pureed vegetables.
- Limit salt.
- Cut foods that may be difficult to chew into smaller pieces.

Meal Setting

- Dine in a quiet room without distractions of television, noise and a lot of conversation.
- Select table settings that are simple and plain in colors.
- Provide utensils that are designed for dementia patients.
- Keep the dining experience comfortable and casual.

Meal Service

- Start with nutritious foods and small portions.
- Understand that tastes, smells, textures and temperature can affect a care recipient's acceptance of food.
- Allow time to eat.
- Keep track of foods that are acceptable.

Oral Health (Mouth Pain, Difficulty Chewing or Swallowing)

Missing, loose, or rotten teeth or dentures that don't fit well may make it difficult to chew and eat. Dental issues can cause an individual to eat less food or certain kinds of food like fruits and vegetables.

The texture of the food can be modified to soft, chopped, ground or pureed to accommodate mouth pain or difficulty in chewing or swallowing. Liquids can be thickened to support ease of swallowing for some individuals.

Some individuals who have difficulty swallowing, and even experience pain or choking while swallowing, may have what is called dysphagia. They may be completely unable to swallow or may have trouble safely swallowing liquids, foods or saliva. This becomes challenging for the caregiver to make sure there is an adequate food, nutrient or fluid intake. Often, dysphagia makes it difficult to take in enough calories and fluids to nourish the body and can lead to additional serious medical problems.¹⁴ Work with your medical professional, physician, registered dietitian nutritionist or nurse to identify foods and liquids that will be acceptable and still provide the needed calories, nutrients and fluids.

Food and Drug Interaction

Many older adults must take multiple medicines daily, especially if they have one or more chronic health conditions. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, for individuals age 65 and over, 67% take three or more prescription medications and 40% take five or more prescription medications.¹⁵

Aging also may change the way the body responds to drugs. The more medicines taken, the greater the chance for side effects such as increased or decreased appetite, changes in taste, constipation, weakness, drowsiness, diarrhea, nausea and other symptoms. Some foods may even interfere with the metabolism of certain medications. Vitamins or mineral supplements, when taken in large doses, can cause harm. Alert the medical professional of all drugs, both prescribed and over the counter, that are taken and plan meals accordingly.

Nutrition Support Therapy

If the individuals you are caring for cannot get enough or proper nutrition through eating due to an illness or surgery, then nutrition may be provided through a feeding tube (enteral nutrition) or, when the digestive tract cannot be used, through an intravenous tube that is inserted directly into the veins (parenteral nutrition). A medical professional tailors the amount, type and route of nutrition for each patient with the goal of improving nutritional outcomes, minimizing infections and allowing individuals to live their lives as normally as possible.

Nutrition support professionals (registered dietitian nutritionists, pharmacists, nurses and physicians) can assist in managing and monitoring these types of specialized feeding.¹⁶

Importance of Nutrition Education

Eating too little or too much may lead to poor health. Repeat consumption of the same foods without variety or eliminating fruit, vegetables and milk products in the diet also can lead to poor nutritional health. About three-fourths of the population has an eating pattern that is low in vegetables, fruits and dairy. These eating habits may be due to physical decline (loss of appetite, inability to chew), functional decline (inability to shop or cook), or not having enough money to purchase healthy foods. Most Americans exceed the recommendations for added sugars, saturated fat and sodium.¹⁷

Planning meals that meet nutritional needs is important for the health and well-being of both the care recipient and the caregiver. Nutrition education guides healthy and cost-effective food choices.

Sources for Reliable Nutrition Education

With much information available, both online and through the media, where can a caregiver get reliable information regarding nutrition and health? The following key resources provide an overview:

- A medical professional who is knowledgeable about the overall health status of the care recipient can address specific nutritional needs, especially food and medication interactions.
- A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can provide food and nutrition information based on knowing how a healthy diet improves health and fights disease. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics provides online resources for consumers through its website Eatright.org.
- Federal online resources provide up to date information in a consumer-friendly format. Information is updated regularly. A government sponsored website will end with .gov (see Appendix A).
- State or local government sources, such as health departments or clinics.
- Colleges, universities or USDA Cooperative Extension Services.
- Health care systems or local hospitals.
- National organizations that are specific to chronic disease conditions and nutrition, including organizations such as the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, American Diabetes Association, American Cancer Society and Alzheimer's Association.

Recognized Diet Plans

Two specific diet plans have consistently demonstrated health benefits in randomized control studies over the past decades. The **Mediterranean Diet** has been shown to reduce heart attack and stroke as well as lowering LDL, or bad, cholesterol. The **DASH Diet** has been recognized to lower blood pressure and prevent heart disease. Both diet plans can help with weight loss and both can benefit cognition and brain health.

The **Mediterranean Diet** is based on traditional eating habits in southern Italy and Greece. It provides for plenty of fish and other seafood with limited amounts of lean meat and chicken. Higher fiber foods such as whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and legumes are included. Olive oil is the main fat for preparing food. For more information on the Mediterranean Diet on a budget, see <https://extension.psu.edu/mediterranean-eating-on-a-budget>.

The **DASH Diet** emphasizes foods that are low in sodium and high in potassium, calcium, magnesium, protein and fiber—such as leafy greens, fruits, whole grains, nuts, fat-free or low-fat dairy, and lean meats. The diet plan recommends limiting foods high in saturated fat, such as red meat and whole-milk dairy, as well as sugary foods and sweetened beverages. For more information on the DASH Diet, see <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan>.

Adaptive Dining Aids

For caregivers, feeding can become difficult as a disease progresses and a care recipient may lose the ability to feed himself. Hand and eye coordination may diminish. It is important to keep the individual independent and engaged in the dining experience. Caregivers can encourage the use of adaptive dining aids to allow independent self-feeding for as long as possible.

Adaptive dining aids include adult bibs, plates with divisions and suction to table, scoop plates, food bumpers, weighted utensils, adaptive weighted silverware, and cups with lids. Adaptive dining aids help make the dining experience easier and more enjoyable.

For Professionals: Providing Nutrition Education to Caregivers

Although there are many caregiver education resources, few provide nutrition education support to the caregiver. The caregiver can be key to recognizing and addressing any possible unmet nutritional needs or the risk for malnutrition of the care recipient. Yet the stress of caregiving may place the caregiver herself at risk of poor nutritional status or malnutrition. The goal of nutrition education should be to improve or maintain dietary behaviors of both the care recipient and the caregiver.

Nutrition education programming must meet the caregiver's needs, providing information about foods and nutrients, diets, medical and physical needs, community nutrition resources and services to people to improve or maintain their nutritional health (see Appendix B).

Tips for Successful Caregiver Nutrition Education Programming

These guidelines will help to maximize the learning potential of caregivers.

1. **Understand how adults learn.** Adult learners are self-directed. Each person brings his own base of experiences to attach new ideas and skills. Adults are ready to learn when they experience in their life situation a need to know. As a caregiver, he or she already brings some experiences, negative or positive, to the learning experience.
2. **Know the audience, both the caregiver and the care recipient.** Determine who the learner is. Is the program for caregivers or consumers? What is their literacy level, health

status, income range, race/ethnicity and marital status? What is their role with respect to food purchasing, preparation and/or service? What are the nutritional needs and chronic health conditions of the care recipient?

3. **Conduct a needs assessment if possible.** The first step in planning nutrition education programs is to determine what the caregiver wants to learn. Involve the learners through focus groups, surveys or personal interviews. Topics best accepted are those that are relevant to the learner and information that can be implemented easily and quickly.
4. **Develop learning goals.** This is a process of transforming the learners' needs into positive steps for implementation.
5. **Select a learning environment.** An accessible, comfortable and quiet environment is conducive to learning. Settings for caregiver nutrition education may include the home (if the caregiver is not distracted and can focus attention), senior or community center, or health care provider's or physician's office. Some workplace assistance programs may include caregiver support education since a large percentage of caregivers are still in the work force.
6. **Provide nutrition education materials in a format that is best suited for the caregiver.** Identify the educational format that will best deliver nutrition education materials. Is it one-on-one counseling or discussion groups? Are online resources more appropriate and meet the caregiver's needs? Can social media create online group support and increase information?
7. **Facilitate rather than teach.** The educator becomes an active part of the learning process to guide the learner.
8. **Include action-oriented learning activities.** A variety of learning activities, such as cooking demonstrations and recipe exchanges, appeals to older adults. Games, game shows, problem-solving skits and role-playing exercises also can encourage learner participation. Create a stress-free atmosphere. Learning is one of the most satisfying activities that a person can do.
9. **Develop written materials that are easy to read.** For older adults, printed material should have type that is 14 point with plain large lettering rather than italic or fancy type. Simple illustrations, charts and graphics greatly increase audience retention and understanding. They also break the monotony of written words. White spaces make the printed page more inviting and easier to read. Ethnic or culturally appropriate printed materials should be available if indicated.
10. **Evaluate the results.** Did the learner achieve the learning goals? Knowing this will assist in planning follow-up presentations to achieve meaningful nutrition education programming for caregivers.

Caregiver Health Education Training Programs

Caregivers can help maintain their health and nutrition through a selection of online and in-person training programs.

- The Savvy Caregiver: <https://www.caregiver.org/savvy-caregiver-program>
- Aging Mastery program: <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/aging-mastery-program/aging-mastery-program-faqs/>

Appendix A

Online Education Resources for Caregivers

General Nutrition Information

Nutrition.gov

Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/audience/older-individuals>

Overview: Nutrition.gov serves as a gateway to reliable resources on food, healthy eating, physical activity and food safety. It provides links to information from federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and universities with expertise in food and human nutrition. Information is arranged by audience and topic. The website also includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). The site is updated regularly by a staff of Registered Dietitians at the Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC) at the National Agricultural Library (NAL).

Resources:

- Online links to browse by subjects that include audience (older adults), basic nutrition, diet and health conditions, dietary supplement, food assistance programs, health weight, shopping, cooking and food safety.
- Educational materials, videos, toolkits
- Spanish materials included

Food and Nutrition Information Center—National Agriculture Library

Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/older-individuals>

Overview: Resources for older adults include healthy eating, nutritional challenges related to aging, food safety issues, Meals on Wheels and other assistance programs.

Resources:

- Comprehensive list of federal and state online resources
- A variety of nutrition and health-related topics
- Educational materials, videos, toolkits
- Spanish materials included

Food Labeling and Nutrition

Agency: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Website: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition>

Overview: The website provides information on the labeling requirements for foods under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and its amendments. Food labeling is required for most prepared foods, such as breads, cereals, canned and frozen foods, snacks, desserts, drinks, etc. Nutrition labeling for raw produce (fruits and vegetables) and fish is voluntary.

Resources:

- Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) Education Resource Library
- New and improved nutrition facts label
- Calories on the Menu: Menu labeling information for consumers
- Gluten-free labeling
- Spanish materials included

Healthy Eating

Choose MyPlate.gov

Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Overview: MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet. Other topics include food waste, food safety and physical activity. The information is excellent for older adults.

Resources:

- Tip sheets
- Toolkits
- Recipes/menus/cookbooks
- Print materials/videos
- Seasonal resources
- Quizzes
- Infographics
- MyPlate graphics
- Spanish materials included

MyPlate for Older Adults

Organization: The Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA), Tufts University

Website: <https://hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate/>

Overview: MyPlate for Older Adults provides examples of foods that support a healthy diet. MyPlate for Older Adults corresponds with the federal government's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Resources:

- My Plate Video
- MyPlate of Older Adults—PDF
- Tips for shopping, recipes, physical activity and salt alternatives

Smart Food Choices

Agency: National Institute on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Website: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating>

Overview: Articles and resources that include smart food choices, shopping for healthy food on a budget, and vitamins and minerals needs for older people. Limited downloadable materials.

Resources:

- Prepared shopping list
- Infographics

EatRight.Org

Organization: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Website: <https://www.eatright.org/food>

Overview: Nutrition and health information for older adults in a text format and information regarding food safety.

Resources:

- Information regarding nutrition-influenced diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and osteoporosis
- Preventing illness by healthy eating
- Food safety during power outages or emergencies

Healthy Eating Tips for Seniors

Organization: National Council on Aging

Website: <https://www.ncoa.org/economic-security/benefits/food-and-nutrition/senior-nutrition/>

Overview: Website provide videos and tips for improving healthy eating.

Resources:

- 6 Ways to Eat Well as You Get Older—Infographic
- Tips for Picking Healthy Food as You Get Older
- Healthy Eating Videos

Food Access/Low Cost Meals

SNAP-Ed Connection

Agency: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/snap-ed-works/nutrition-education>

Overview: SNAP-Ed teaches people to shop for and cook healthy meals. SNAP-Ed can help people learn how to make their SNAP dollars stretch. SNAP-Ed Connection provides many hands-on educational lessons and materials.

Resources:

- Nutrition education curricula
- Nutrition education material
- Spanish material included
- Heathy and thrifty holiday menus
- Seasonal produce guide
- Success stories
- SNAP-Ed Library
- Recipes
- Farmers Markets materials
- Cooking demonstrations
- Cooking Matters Toolkit

Eat Smart Live Strong

Agency: Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/fns-curricula/eat-smart-live-strong>

Overview: Eat Smart, Live Strong is an intervention to improve fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity among 60-74 year olds participating in or eligible for FNS nutrition assistance programs.

Resources:

- Four-session activity kit
- Promotional materials

Food Safety

Foodsafety.gov

Agency: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Website: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/>

Overview: Federal food safety information including the latest news, alerts and tips on safely handling and storing food to prevent food poisoning.

Resources:

- FoodKeeper app: Tool for Smart Food Storage
- Kitchen safety tips
- Holiday food safety
- Food recalls information

Food Safety for Older Adults

Organization: U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USDA)

Website: <https://www.fda.gov/food/people-risk-foodborne-illness/food-safety-older-adults>

Overview: A guide for keeping food safe and free from certain disease-causing bacteria or pathogens that can contaminate food, causing foodborne illness or food poisoning. Although everyone is susceptible, older adults and those with weakened immune systems are at greater risk for developing foodborne illness.

Guide includes:

- Major Pathogens That Cause Foodborne Illness
- Eating at Home: Making Wise Food Choices
- Common Foods: Select the Lower Risk Options
- Taking Care: Handling and Preparing Food Safely
- Cold Storage Chart
- In the Know: Becoming a Better Shopper
- Food Product Dating
- Transporting Your Groceries
- Tips for Transporting Food
- Foodborne Illness: Know the Symptoms
- Foodborne Illness Action Plan

Malnutrition

Community Malnutrition Resource Hub¹⁹

Organization: National Council on Aging

Website: <https://www.ncoa.org/center-for-healthy-aging/resourcehub/>

Overview: This resource hub helps community-based organizations, health professionals, older adults and caregivers prevent and treat malnutrition. It includes practical resources, tools and ideas to help develop and implement a malnutrition plan. Reports, books, fact sheets, websites, webinars and infographics are provided.

Resources:

- Understanding malnutrition
- Preventing and caring for malnutrition

Malnutrition in Older Adults

Organization: Alliance for Aging Research

Website: <https://www.agingresearch.org/campaign/malnutrition/>

Overview: Website has a short video that explains malnutrition among older adults, its risks, plus tips for identifying, preventing and treating. The video is also available in Spanish.

Malnutrition Solution Center

Organization: American Society of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

Website: <https://www.nutritioncare.org/malnutrition/>

Overview: Resources to help consumers and caregivers identify and understand malnutrition, as well as tips on talking to their healthcare providers about malnutrition.

Resources:

- Infographics
- Nutrition tips and posters on spotting malnutrition.
- Resources and links to find nutrition support such as local Meals on Wheels

Chronic Disease Management

Diabetes-Nutrition Support

Organization: American Diabetes Association

Website: <https://www.diabetes.org/nutrition>

Overview: Resources to better understand and control blood sugar through healthy food choices, fitness and medication management.

Resources:

- Cookbooks
- Online community support
- Recipes/meal planning
- Tips on healthy food choices, fitness and mental health
- Diabetes Forecast Magazine
- Research

Controlling Hypertension - DASH Diet

Organization: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

Website: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan>

Overview: The DASH diet plan helps support a heart-healthy eating style, especially for those with hypertension. It requires no special foods and emphasizes a balanced healthy eating plan.

Resources:

- Description of the DASH Diet
- Health benefits of the DASH Diet
- Meal plans for various caloric levels
- Tips for reducing salt in the diet
- Tips for success following the DASH Diet

Heart Healthy-Caregiver Support

Organization: American Heart Association

Website: <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/caregiver-support>

Overview: Website for caregivers provides information on specific heart issues and diagnosis. Includes caregiver tips to eating right and staying healthy.

Resources:

- Tips for Staying Healthy and Active
- What is a Serving?
- Ten Cooking Tips
- Heart Healthy Recipes
- Complete Caregiver Resources
- Communications Tips

Nutrition Tips for Seniors with Chronic Conditions

Organization: National Council on Aging

Website: <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/chronic-disease/nutrition-chronic-conditions/nutrition-tips-chronic-diseases/nutrition-tips-for-people-with-chronic-conditions/>

Overview: Details on how nutritional intake directly influences many chronic conditions.

Resources:

- Steps to identifying and treating a poor nutritional intake
- Links to resources to improve nutrition in older adults
- Causes of malnutrition in hospitalized patients
- Preventing malnutrition after coming home from the hospital

Obesity

Healthy Tips for Older Adults

Agency: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Website: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/health-tips-older-adults>

Overview: Information is part of the Healthy Eating & Physical Activity Across Your Lifespan Series from the Weight-control Information Network (WIN).

Resources:

- Young at Heart Tips for Older Adults
- Young at Heart Checklist PDF

Dementia/Alzheimer's

Food and Eating

Organization: Alzheimer's Association

Website: <https://alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/food-eating>

Overview: Mealtime may become a challenge for people with dementia, and for those caring for them. As a person's cognitive function declines, he or she may become overwhelmed with too many food choices, forget to eat or have difficulty with eating utensils. The website provides practical solutions for caregivers.

Resources:

- Nutrition tips
- Making mealtimes easier
- Encouraging independence
- Minimizing eating and nutrition problems

Oral Health (Mouth Pain/Difficulty Chewing or Swallowing)

Oral Health Care

Organization: National Institutes of Health

Website: <https://catalog.nidcr.nih.gov/OrderPublications/#101>

Overview: Website provides information for caregivers on oral health care in older adults.

Resources:

- Oral healthcare basics
- Brushing tips
- Flossing guidance

- Dry mouth and older adults
- Low-cost dental care

Food and Drug Interaction

Medications: Tips for Seniors

Organization: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Website: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-information-consumers/tips-seniors>

Overview: Website provides information on the use of medications, both prescribed and over the counter.

Resources:

- Medicines and You: A Guide for Older Adults
- As You Age...A Guide to Aging, Medicines, and Alcohol
- As You Age: You and Your Medicines
- Stop -- Learn -- Go: Tips for Talking with Your Pharmacist to Learn How to Use Medicines Safely
- Educational Resources: Ensuring Safe Use of Medicine

Nutrition Support Therapy

Patient and Caregiver Education

Organization: American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition

Website:

[https://www.nutritioncare.org/Guidelines and Clinical Resources/Toolkits/Enteral Nutrition Toolkit/Patient and Caregiver Education/](https://www.nutritioncare.org/Guidelines%20and%20Clinical%20Resources/Toolkits/Enteral%20Nutrition%20Toolkit/Patient%20and%20Caregiver%20Education/)

Overview: Provides information and resources for caregivers who are dealing with care recipients requiring nutrition support therapy of parenteral or enteral nutrition to prevent malnutrition. Parenteral nutrition is given directly into the blood and contains nutrients necessary for the body. Enteral nutrition is a liquid nutritional supplement provided through a tube into the stomach or small intestine. Both are part of medical treatment and a part of the individual's health care plan.



Appendix B

Community-Based Assistance for Caregivers

Older Americans Act (OAA) Community-Based Services

Eldercare Locator <https://eldercare.acl.gov>

The Eldercare Locator is a public information website supported by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Administration on Aging (AoA) to assist older individuals and their caregivers in locating community-based resources throughout the United States. The Eldercare Locator links to state, local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and community-based organizations that provide services for older adults and their caregivers. These services include nutrition, homemaker and home-health aide services, transportation, physical activity and chronic disease self-management programs, home repair and modification, and falls-prevention programs. AAAs and ADRCs provide information and assistance to locate the needed community services.

Through the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program, ACL's AoA services include the Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home-Delivered Nutrition Program (Meals on Wheels), which provide healthy meals in group settings. Such settings include senior centers and community settings, as well as the homes of older adults who are homebound. Other nutrition services, such as nutrition screening, assessment, education and counseling, may also be available for individuals age 60 and over who meet the eligibility requirements. The spouse of an individual age 60 and over, regardless of their own age, may also be eligible for services.

National Family Caregiver Support Program (Title III E)

The National Family Caregiver Support Program provides federal funds through the OAA to states and territories for a range of services to assist family and unpaid caregivers in caring for their loved ones at home. These services include information about services within the community, assistance in accessing the services, individual counseling, support groups, caregiver training and respite care for the caregiver. Other supplemental services may be available in certain communities.

These services work in conjunction with other state and community-based services to provide a coordinated set of supports. Studies have shown that these services can reduce caregiver depression, anxiety and stress as well as enable caregivers to provide care over a longer time, avoiding or delaying the need for costly institutional care. To locate services within your community, contact your local AAA or ADRC through the Eldercare Locator <https://eldercare.acl.gov>.

ACL Resource Centers

The Administration for Community Living (ACL)-funded National Resource Centers provide information primarily for professionals; however, several of the following Resource Centers offer consumer information and support for caregivers.¹⁹

National Resource Center: National Alzheimer's Call Center

Grantee: Alzheimer's Association

Contact: www.alz.org, 800-272-3900

Website: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/helpline>

Audience: People with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, their family members, friends and caregivers; professionals and other members of the public can also benefit from available information.

Overview: The National Call Center is available to people in 56 states and territories, 24/7, to provide expert advice, care consultation, information and referrals at the national and local levels. Trained professional customer service staff and social workers are available. The Call Center can help with questions about memory problems, how to deal with challenging behaviors, and tips for taking care of someone with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia.

National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment

Grantee: National Council on Aging, Inc.

Website: <https://www.ncoa.org/centerforbenefits/beecs/>

Audience: Consumers seeking information

Overview: This resource center helps organizations enroll seniors and younger adults with limited means who have disabilities into the benefits programs for which they are eligible, so that they can remain healthy and improve the quality of their lives. This includes enrollment in the food assistance program SNAP.

National Center on Elder Abuse

Grantee: University of Southern California

Contact: Phone (855) 500-3537 (ELDR), fax (626) 457-4090

Website: <https://acl.gov/programs/elder-justice/national-center-elder-abuse>

Audience: General public, social service and health care practitioners, the justice system, researchers, advocates and policymakers

Overview: The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) serves as a national resource center dedicated to the prevention of elder mistreatment. The NCEA makes news and resources available online; collaborates on research; provides training; identifies and provides information about promising practices and interventions; operates a list-serv forum for professionals; and provides subject matter expertise on program and policy development.

National Center on Elder Abuse: National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative

Grantee: University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Contact: Phone (855) 834-1572, Fax (701) 777-6779

Website: www.nieji.org

Audience: Tribes, care providers, stakeholders, law enforcement

Overview: The National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative (NIEJI) was created to address the lack of culturally appropriate information and community education materials on elder abuse, neglect and exploitation in Indian Country.

National Falls Prevention Resource Center

Grantee: National Council on Aging

Website: www.ncoa.org/professionals/health/center-for-healthy-aging/national-falls-prevention-resource-center/

Audience: Aging network, public health network, ACL falls-prevention grantees, health care professionals, older adults, adults with disabilities, caregivers

Overview: The National Falls Prevention Resource Center supports the implementation and dissemination of evidence-based falls-prevention programs and strategies. The Center's purpose is to increase public awareness and educate consumers and professionals about the risks of falls and how to prevent falls; support the implementation, dissemination and sustainability of evidence-based falls-prevention programs and strategies to reduce the incidence of falls among older adults and adults with disabilities; and serve as the national clearinghouse of tools, best practices and other information on falls and falls-prevention.

National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging

Grantee: Meals on Wheels Association of America

Website: <https://nutritionandaging.org>

Audience: Aging network, including national associations and regional, state and local aging services networks

Overview: The National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging (NRCNA) supports the aging network's nutrition services programs by helping to enhance skills, business acumen and sustainability.

Food Assistance Programs

Several community-based programs address the food insecurity and nutrition needs of older adults. These may include both local organizations and federally funded programs such as the Older Americans Act (OAA) supported Congregate Nutrition and Home-Delivered Nutrition Programs (Meals on Wheels) and provided in-community settings and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Programs (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).¹⁸ Many of the programs have income eligibility requirements. Several have other eligibility requirements for services. Checking with the local program will inform what food assistance programs may meet the care recipient's needs.

Food Assistance Program	Website/Contact	Low-Income or Means- Tested Eligibility	Other Eligibility
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services			
Older Americans Act Nutrition Program- Home-Delivered Meals	Contact your local Area Agency on Aging https://eldercare.acl.gov		X
Older Americans Act Nutrition Program- Congregate Meals	Contact your local Area Agency on Aging https://eldercare.acl.gov		X
Medicare	Contact your Medicare Advantage service provider		X
Medicaid Waiver	Contact your state Medicaid Office	X	X
U.S. Department of Agriculture			
SNAP-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program	X	
FDPIR-Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations	https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdpir/food-distribution-program-indian-reservations	X	X
CSFP-Commodity Supplemental Food Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program	X	X
CACFP-Child and Adult Care Food Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program	X	X
TEFAP-The Emergency Food Assistance Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program	X	
SFMNP-Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program	X	X
National Organization			
Feeding America-Local Food Banks and Pantries	https://www.feedingamerica.org	X	X

Community-Based Caregiver Programs

Dementia Care Programs

Hosts: **Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging** and **Family Caregiver Alliance**

Website: www.BPC.Caregiver.org

Overview: A searchable national database of evidenced based dementia programs for family caregivers. The

database for healthcare and community-based organizations, as well as funders and policy makers gives detailed information on program implementation, development, and research findings.

RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center

Host: National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)

Website: <https://nashp.org/policy/aging-and-disabilities/family-caregiving/>

Overview: A resource center that supports the Recognize, Assist, Include, Support and Engage (RAISE) Family Caregivers Act – ground-breaking legislation passed in 2018 that requires the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop, maintain and update an integrated national strategy to support family caregivers. Through this legislation, the Family Caregiving Advisory Council was established. The RAISE Family Caregiver Resource and Dissemination Center supports the work for this Council by identifying state resources for family caregivers and supporting states as they develop policies that address family caregiver issues.



Additional Resources for Caregiver Support 19

AARP

Website: <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/>

AARP Caregiver Resource Center helps family members navigate their role of caregiver. Resources include Prepare to Care Guide, Support Line, Connect with Caregivers on Facebook, and other tips and resources. Many resources are available in Spanish.

Family Caregiver Alliance—National Center on Caregiving

Website: <https://www.caregiver.org/national-center-caregiving>

A program of the Family Caregiver Alliance, the National Center on Caregiving (NCC) works to advance high-quality, cost-effective policies and programs for caregivers in every state. Uniting research, public policy and services, the NCC serves as a central source of information on caregiving and long-term care issues for policymakers, service providers, media, funders and family caregivers. Services include: Family Care Navigator, Caregiving Across the States, Caregiver Alerts/State & National Policy Initiatives, Caregiver Alerts/State & National Policy Initiatives, Research & Publications, and Educational Training Programs.

National Alliance for Caregiving

Website: <https://www.caregiving.org/>

The National Alliance for Caregiving is a nonprofit coalition of national organizations focusing on issues of family caregiving. Alliance members include grassroots organizations, professional associations, service organizations, disease-specific organizations, a government agency and corporations. The Alliance conducts research, analyzes policy, develops national programs, increases public awareness of family caregiving issues, strengthens state and local caregiving coalitions, and represents the U.S. caregiving community internationally.

Caregiver Action Network

Website: <http://www.caregiveraction.org/>

The Caregiver Action Network provides resources to improve the quality of life for those who care for individuals with chronic conditions, disabilities, disease or the frailties of older age. CAN is a nonprofit organization providing education, peer support and resources to family caregivers nationwide, free of charge.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Women’s Health Topics

Website: <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/womens-health-topics/caring-others-resources-help-you>

The Caring for Others: Resources to Help You website provides caregiver information on medicine and medical devices, food safety, understanding chronic health conditions, and caring for oneself.

Next Step in Care

Website: <http://www.nextstepincare.org>

Next Step in Care provides easy-to-use guides to help family caregivers and health care providers work closely together to plan and implement safe and smooth transitions for chronically or seriously ill patients.

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