

Reducing Malnutrition through Senior Meal Programs

How ACL’s Senior Nutrition Program helps address malnutrition among older adults

Older adults are at high risk of malnutrition.¹ Malnutrition occurs when a person is not eating enough food or meeting their nutritional needs. As we age, changes occur in how our brain and body work. These changes can affect body weight, increase risk of health conditions and disease, and lead to use of medications that impact the way we absorb nutrients – all of which put us at higher risk of malnutrition.²

ACL’s Senior Nutrition Program works to address malnutrition among older adults by providing access to nutritious food through local home-delivered and congregate meal programs.

These programs make an impact! A systematic review of 20 studies by the Community Preventative Services Task Force recommended home-delivered and congregate meal services to reduce malnutrition among older adults living independently.³

Evidence also showed that senior nutrition meal services like the Senior Nutrition Program are likely to:

- Reduce food insecurity among participants.
- Increased the percentage of participants who met the recommended daily allowances for energy intake.
- Improve intake of protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- Improve Health Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) and well-being.



Home-delivered meal participants were **15.5%** less likely to be malnourished.

Congregate meal participants were **9%** less likely to be malnourished.

To learn more about the Senior Nutrition Program and its impact on older adults, visit acl.gov/snp.

References:

1. Norman K, Haß U, Pirlich, M. Malnutrition in older adults—recent advances and remaining challenges. *Nutrients* 2021;13:2764.
2. Krondl M, Coleman P, Lau D. Helping older adults meet nutritional challenges. *Journal of Nutrition for the Elderly* 2008; 27(3/4), 205-220.
3. CPSTF considers older adults living independently as those who are not residents of senior living or retirement community centers.

The Community Preventative Services Task Force (CPSTF) is an independent, nonfederal panel of public health and prevention experts who provide evidence-based recommendations and finding on programs to protect and improve the population health.