

NUTRITION FOR SENIORS IN THE SENIOR MEAL PROGRAMS

MINKIE MEDORA, MS RD

Nutrition Consultant

Montana State Aging Services

Role of Nutrition in the Lives of Your Clients

- The Senior Meal Programs are an excellent source of good nutrition, as well as socialization for seniors in your communities
- Seniors deal with many concerns in their lives – and some challenges.
- No matter what else your clients deal with – everyone has to eat – so you play a very major role in their lives.
- While many seniors are in good health, several seniors deal with chronic health issues like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, weight loss, limited mobility, lack of money to buy food and other issues.
- Food and diet can make an impact in dealing with these conditions.

Seniors and their lifestyles

- As the folks who provide a major meal of the day for your clients – do you feel you have got to know them a little bit?
- Are there some seniors who live with their children and grandchildren?
- Are there some that live alone, or very far from the site?
- Are there some seniors for whom the lunch is the major meal of the day?
- Your services and food you prepare for them makes a significant difference in their health and well being



The New Dietary Guidelines: 2015 - 2020

- The revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) were released in January 2016.
- For all Americans – including seniors, major changes are in the quality of food we eat
- Healthy eating is especially important for seniors – in order to prevent chronic diseases or manage their health problems better.
- More emphasis on good quality protein, plenty of vegetables and fruits, whole grains and better quality of fat in the diet.

DGAs – Major Recommendations for Seniors

- Choose lean meat and other protein items. Less red meat, more poultry, fish, eggs, beans and other non-meat proteins.
- Limited use of processed meats like sausage, bacon, lunchmeats.
- Increased use of whole grains – like whole grain bread, pasta, rolls, brown rice, quinoa, bulger, oatmeal, baking with whole wheat flour
- Increased use of vegetables and fruits, especially darker colored items – orange, purple, red, green – excellent source of anti-oxidants that help seniors to prevent types of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and improve vision and cognitive function.

DGAs – Major Recommendations for Seniors

- Using fats and oils in cooking:
 - Greater emphasis on using vegetable oils, olive oil in cooking and baking
 - Avoid foods with Trans fats, saturated fats, animal fats
 - Less use of whole milk, high fat meats
 - Avoid coconut and palm oil
- Sugars and sweeteners
 - Use foods with natural sugars – like fruit and cooked starches
 - Watch for added sugar in the foods you choose.
 - Items like ready made salad dressing, ketchup, soups – high in added sugar
- Salt – or sodium. Limit amount of added salt in cooking

POLLING QUESTIONS

SENIOR HEALTH – ARE ALL SENIORS THE SAME?

- Baby boomers, younger seniors
 - Seniors with chronic health problems
 - Seniors with social, economic concerns
 - Seniors above age 80
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- The senior population in Montana is growing fast and this state will continue to be one of the top states in the country for the number of seniors that live here.

SOME PROBLEMS SENIORS MAY HAVE

- Feeling easily tired and weak
- Health Problems, heart disease, diabetes
- Immunity low – getting frequently ill
- Skin breakdown
- Anemia
- Too much weight loss or gain
- Trouble digesting certain foods
- Increased risk of falling, fractures



SOME PROBLEMS SENIORS MAY HAVE

- Physical limitations – shopping, cooking
- Dental problems
- Reduced sense of taste and smell
- Reduced sense of thirst
- Effect of certain Rx – dry mouth, ↓ appetite
- Recent hospital stay – and still recovering



BENEFITS OF THE SENIOR MEAL PROGRAM

- Senior meal programs are designed to meet the nutritional needs that seniors have in order to stay well and prevent health problems.
- The meal design is done in such a way that if you plan menus that meet the recommended types of food from each food group – and provide it in the recommended amounts, you will provide the seniors with very important nutrition – especially the particular nutrients that seniors need at this stage in their lives.
- The food groups and the menu planning are two of the most critical tasks you have at your meal sites.
- Food is medicine.



Simple, lean Chicken Stew with sweet potatoes

Ingredients

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves, cut into cubes
- 2 sweet potatoes, or butternut squash peeled and chopped
- 1 cup fresh spinach, or ½ cup frozen chopped
- 1 pinch crushed red pepper, or more to taste
- 1 pinch paprika, or more to taste
- sea salt to taste
- 1/2 cup chicken broth, or more to taste

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Saute onion and garlic in hot oil until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir chicken, sweet potatoes or squash, spinach, crushed red pepper, paprika, and sea salt with the onion and garlic in the saucepan. Pour as much chicken broth into the saucepan to make the mixture as soup-like or stew-like as you'd like it.
3. Bring the broth to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until the chicken is no longer pink in the middle and the sweet potatoes are tender, about 30 minutes.

MENU PLANNING

THE FOOD GROUPS

Meal Pattern Guide for Seniors

550 – 700 Calories/Meal. Revised July 2015

Food Group	Number of Servings in One Meal	Serving Sizes (see for more details)
Grains and breads	2 servings per meal One whole grain serving minimum 3 times/week Legumes, beans at least once a week	1 serving equivalent equals: 1 slice bread, ½ C cooked rice, pasta 1 muffin, 1 tortilla
Fruits and vegetables	3 servings per meal – combined as needed Use dark colored: red, orange, yellow 3 times a week Dark green at least once a week	1 serving equals: ½ cup of cooked, drained vegetables ½ cup raw 1 cup raw leafy
Milk or dairy equivalents	1 – 8z servings each meal, or equivalent	1 C low fat or fat-free milk 1 C yogurt, 1 ½ oz low-fat cheese 1 C fortified soy milk
Protein foods, meat, etc.	3 servings per meal Ground meat – limit of twice a week	1 serving equals: 1 oz meat, fish, poultry 1 egg ½ C cooked beans, lentils 1 oz cheese, ½ C cottage cheese
Oils and Fats	7 – 9 grams per meal per meal	
Other optional calories	40 – 80 calories	

THE FOOD GROUPS: Bread & Grains

- -One serving of bread or other grain items is generally 1 slice.
- - At least 50% of the bread serving should be whole grain.
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- 1 small 2 ounce muffin
- 2" cube cornbread
- 1 biscuit, 2.5" diameter
- 1 waffle, 7" diameter
- 1 slice French toast
- 1/2 English muffin
- 1 tortilla, 6" diameter
- 2 pancakes, 4" diameter
- 1/2 bagel
- 1 small sandwich bun
 - 1/2 cup cooked cereal
- 4-6 crackers
- 1/2 large sandwich bun
- 3/4 cup ready to eat cereal
- 2 graham cracker squares
- 1/2 cup bread dressing/stuffing
- 1/2 cup pasta, noodles, rice



THE FOOD GROUPS - Vegetables



- A serving of vegetable – (including dried beans, peas and lentils) is generally
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked vegetables;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c raw vegetables like carrots, celery, radishes or tomatoes,
- 2 cups raw leafy vegetable
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup 100% vegetable juice
- For pre-packed 100% vegetable juices, a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice pack may be counted as a serving if a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pre-packed serving is not available).
- Fresh or frozen vegetables are preferred over canned vegetables.
- Vegetables as a primary ingredient in soups, stews, casseroles or other combination dishes should total $\frac{1}{2}$ cup per serving.

THE FOOD GROUPS: Fruit

- A serving of fruit is generally
- one medium apple, banana, orange, or pear;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped, cooked, or canned fruit;
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup 100% fruit juice.
- For prepacked 100% fruit juices, a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice pack may be counted as a serving if a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pre-packed serving is not available.
- Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit will preferably be packed in juice, light syrup or without sugar.



THE FOOD GROUPS: Milk & Dairy foods

- One cup (8 oz) low fat, skim, buttermilk, low-fat chocolate milk, or lactose-free milk fortified with Vitamins A and D should be used. Whole milk can be used, but low-fat or skim milk is recommended.
- Powdered dry milk (1/3 cup) or evaporated milk (1/2 cup) may be served as part of a home-delivered meal.
- Milk alternates for the equivalent of one cup of milk include:
 - 6 oz yogurt
 - 1/2 cup cottage cheese
 - 8 ounces tofu (processed with calcium salt)
 - 1 1/2 ounces natural or 2 ounces processed cheese
 - 1 1/2 cups ice milk/ice cream



THE FOOD GROUPS: Protein & Meats

- A serving of the protein is 3 oz of meat or 3 servings of the alternates listed..
- Other protein choices include:
 - 1 egg (count as one ounce of protein)
 - 1 ounce cheese (nutritionally equivalent measure of pasteurized process cheese food, cheese spread, or other cheese product. However most of the processed cheeses are high in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.)
 - ½ cup cooked dried beans, peas or lentils – at least once a week.
 - 2 tablespoon peanut butter or 1/3 cup nuts
 - ¼ cup cottage cheese
 - ½ cup tofu



THE FOOD GROUPS: Fats & Oils

- A serving of fat is about 1 Tablespoon for one meal.
- As much as possible use the liquid vegetables oils.
- Avoid fats that are hydrogenated fat, trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
- Some fat choices include:
 - 1 ½ teaspoon soft margarine
 - 1 ½ teaspoon mayonnaise
 - 1 tablespoon salad dressing
 - 1 ½ teaspoon light spread
 - 1 tablespoon light cream cheese
 - 1 strip bacon



THE FOOD GROUPS Extras: Desserts

- Desserts can be made with the items from the grain group, fruit, and dairy group, as well as meat or protein group.
- Healthier desserts generally include fruit, whole grains, low fat products, and/or limited sugar. Desserts such as fruit, whole grains, low fat or low sugar products are better.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C fruit in a dessert would be one fruit serving
- 1 serving of starch – like in bread pudding would be one serving
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C milk can be counted as half a milk serving
- Use fruit or fruit juice to sweeten desserts in place of sugar

THE FOOD GROUPS Extras: Beverages

Beverages

- Fluid intake should be encouraged as dehydration is a common problem in older adults.
- It is a good practice to have drinking water available.
- Other beverages such as 100% juices, coffee, tea, decaffeinated beverages may be served.
- Nonnutritive beverages do not help meet nutrition requirements but can help with hydration.
- Alcoholic beverages should not be provided with OAA funds

POLLING QUESTIONS

Menu Planning

What is your process for planning menus?

- Who does the planning – for a menu and each meal?
- Food cost – major factor in menu planning
- Assuring best nutrition, taste, client satisfaction and cost

Who does the Menu Planning

- Is it done by one person or a group?
- Is the person planning the menu also do the ordering and cooking?
- What are the main items that you consider in the items to prepare?
 - Color of food on the plate or tray – examples
 - Garnish on plate – can use things already in the kitchen
 - Made from scratch vs ready made or mixes – both can be fine
 - Cutting salt, fat and sugar from recipes – examples
 - Adding fresh vegetables and fruits as much as possible

“Food for Fifty” by Mary K. Milt – 13th edition - \$130, 11th edition for \$24 at American Book Warehouse.

Food Cost – Major issue in Menu Planning

- Planning menus that are healthy, have simple recipes, look and taste good and have better costs – are tricky to do.
- Before placing the order:
 - Check what you already have in inventory – freezer, refrigerator, storeroom
 - Food in your kitchen are \$\$ on the shelf
 - Find ways to use what you have so things are not held too long
 - Know how to use substitutions to use up inventory - examples
 - Ask prices and negotiate with your vendor for best prices
 - Buy as much as possible from one vendor – example
 - Find best prices and repeat the item on menu – but in different ways

Food Cost – Ordering, Delivery, Storage

- Order and use Seasonal items whenever possible: Best prices, great flavor, good variety in menu
- Check deliveries – person must know the order and check each item
- Make sure all food is stored correctly and quickly
- Homestyle cooking sounds good, but not consistent
- Use Standardized recipes – more work at first, but well worth it
- Provides consistency to cost, preparation time, portions and taste

Food Cost – Portions and serving style

- What is your current system?
- Benefits of plated meal
- Concerns with self-serve buffet style
- Food Safety issues

Menu Review Questions

- Do you use herbs and seasonings to improve flavor?
- Do you reduce amount of salt and butter that a recipe calls for?
- Do menus have at least one moist item or served with gravy?
- Are your gravies low in fat?
- Are your recipes simple yet tasty?

Next webinar topics

- Webinar II: Promoting nutrition and health for Home-bound Seniors
 - Webinar III: Nutrition Risk Assessment for all seniors in the area Meal Programs
 - Webinar IV: The status of hunger among seniors in Montana – what you can do
 - Dates to be announced.
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- For further information contact Minkie Medora at
 - Minkie.medora5@gmail.com