



## Eating Healthy is Vital to Seniors' Well-Being



The phrase “you are what you eat” may be a cliché, but nothing is truer nutritionally for adults who have reached their 65th birthday.

Pamela Redwine, a Mississippi State University Extension Service agent in Yalobusha County, said a good diet provides the energy seniors need to be at their most productive.

“Good nutritional management in later years provides stamina and a positive outlook to handle the mental challenges and emotional ups and downs of everyday life. It also reduces risk for life-changing diseases including diabetes, heart disease and cancer,” Redwine said.

“A healthy diet helps seniors look and feel their best and gives them a chance for a higher quality of life, and perhaps a longer one.”

Extension Health Specialist David Buys said fats provide energy, but it is necessary to monitor which kinds of fat are eaten. Foods with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier and can reduce the risk of heart disease as long as they are not overconsumed.

“Monounsaturated fats include canola oil, olive oil, peanut oil and safflower oil, and they are found in avocados and peanut butter,” Buys said, “Polyunsaturated fats include corn oil, soybean oil and flaxseed oil, and they are also found in fatty fish and walnuts.”

Oils, shortening, butter and margarine are types of fats. Mayonnaise, salad dressings and sour cream are typically high in fat. While some fats are beneficial, certain types of fats are to be limited, namely saturated and trans fats.

“Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, unlike trans fats and saturated fats, which are usually solid at room temperature,” Buys said.

Saturated fats are found in red meat, milk products, such as butter, and palm and coconut oils. Grain-based and dairy desserts, regular cheese and pizza are common sources of saturated fat.

“Trans fats are typically processed and are found in stick margarine and vegetable shortening,” Buys said. “They are used in store-bought baked goods and fried foods at some fast-food restaurants.”

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Along with fat intake, seniors should monitor their weight regularly. Significant weight gain comes with risks, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and other life-limiting conditions. Older adults who are already overweight should consider controlled weight loss programs under the supervision of a health care provider. Report any unintentional weight loss to a health care provider, as this may indicate a greater problem.

“Weight matters,” Buys said. “We often hear that the U.S. is experiencing an obesity epidemic, and we all need to lose weight. That’s not always the case, especially for older adults. Seniors need to talk with their health care provider about any major changes in weight loss or gain.”

A well-managed diet can also mitigate two common mobility problems that come with aging: arthritis and osteoporosis. Calcium plays a primary role in keeping bones healthy and preventing bones from becoming brittle.

“Older adults have higher calcium needs. To help maintain bone mass, calcium recommendations increase by 20 percent,” Redwine said. “For both men and women over age 50, the adequate intake level is 1,200 milligrams of calcium daily. If possible, you should also do weight-bearing exercise, which helps keep the bones stronger. Get enough vitamin D, which helps the body use calcium. Following a healthful eating plan and maintaining a healthy weight reduce strain on arthritic joints.”

Eating a healthy diet does not have to mean cutting out all foods a person enjoys. Substitution is a good approach for seniors to practice when they still want to enjoy their favorite meals, Redwine said.

“Choose lean meat, such as lean beef, veal, pork and skinless poultry,” she said. “Loin and round cuts of meat have less fat. Trim visible fat from meat and poultry. Lean meat isn’t fat-free; it just has less fat.”

Source: MSU Extension Service, Mr. Robert Nathan Gregory, Author

### Simply Summer Fruit Salad



- 1 cup watermelon, scrubbed with clean vegetable brush under running water
- 1 cup blueberries, gently rubbed under cold running water
- 1 cup diced kiwi, gently rubbed under cold running water
- 1 cup canned mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 cup pineapple chunks, fresh, frozen or canned

#### Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Stir fruit together in a medium sized bowl.
3. Serve immediately or cover and store in the refrigerator.

**Nutrition Information:** Serving Size (1 cup): Calories 77, Total Fat 0.4g, Sodium 4mg, Total Carbohydrates 19.4g, Fiber 2.7g

Recipe Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension



## Older Adults Can Plan for Disasters with Easy Steps

As hurricane season begins, older adults should be sure their disaster plan is up to date and reflects their current situation.

David Buys, Health Specialist with the Mississippi State University Extension Service, said everyone needs to review their disaster plan periodically, but older adults will want to make sure their plan reflects any new specific needs or special circumstances they may have.

He recommends following the guidelines in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's "Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults" when reviewing or creating a plan.

"Some things to consider when thinking about your disaster plan are whether you have any special medical needs, dietary needs, mobility challenges or a disability that need to be taken into account," Buys said. "Do those needs or circumstances require medications, devices or assistance that would be affected in a disaster?"

"If you have a pet or a service animal, you'll need to have a plan for them as well. Make sure you have a plan for communicating with family, friends or neighbors, especially if you live a long distance from family or friends."

This assessment is the first step of a three-step process to build an adequate disaster plan. During step one, Buys suggests people think about their day-to-day routines and how a disaster could affect that routine.

The second step involves creating a plan and building an emergency kit. Make sure family, friends and neighbors know the emergency plan, know about medications and understand how to use necessary medical equipment. Have a backup plan for any routine medical treatments through home health services or medical facilities. Check with shelters or the local emergency management personnel about arrangements for pets or service animals if it is necessary to evacuate.

In addition to basic emergency kit supplies, include items specific to individual needs, including a list of the support network and their contact information, extra hearing aids and other assistive devices and supplies for service animals.

"For individuals with limited resources, look for free or discounted items to include in your emergency kit, and check with your emergency management agency to find out what services are available during a disaster," Buys said. "It is also critical to keep insurance and financial records in a waterproof container that can be picked up and taken with you if you need to evacuate."

Rural residents should stock up on essential items that may be hard to get in a disaster and have a reliable way to communicate with their support network. A backup power source is also important, Buys said.

The last step is to involve the members of the support network by making them aware of the plan and having them practice the plan.

Anne Hilbun-Benoit, instructor with the MSU Extension Center for Government and Community Development, said in addition to the local emergency management office, community centers, senior centers or assisted living facilities may be able to offer information and support.

“Local television and radio stations are a great source of information before, during and after a disaster,” said Hilbun-Benoit. “Just make sure you have a backup power source in case the power goes out. Available support resources will vary depending on where a person lives. If you are unsure what resources are available, start by contacting your local government officials -- your city alderperson, county supervisor or county emergency manager.”

She also suggests people be on alert for scams, especially after a disaster.

Source: MSU Extension Service, Ms. Susan M. Collins-Smith, Author

## No Bake Energy Bites

¾ cup quick oats  
¼ cup wheat bran  
⅓ cup honey  
¼ cup nut butter (peanut, soy, almond, etc.)  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 Tablespoons dried fruit (raisins, dried cranberries, etc.)  
1 Tablespoon slivered almonds (optional)  
2 Tablespoons mini chocolate chips (optional)

### Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. In a small bowl, mix together oats and wheat bran.
3. In a medium bowl, combine honey, nut butter, and vanilla extract. Stir until mixed well.
4. Add oat mixture to honey mixture.
5. Stir in dried fruit, almonds and chocolate chips, if desired.
6. Spray cooking spray on one hand. Rub hands together.
7. Using a spoon to portion out a small amount, roll mixture into 15 balls and serve.
8. Store leftovers in a sealed container in the refrigerator or freezer.



Serving Size (1 bite):

Calories 70, Total Fat 2.5g, Saturated Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 20mg, Total Carbohydrates 11g, Fiber 1g, Total Sugars 7g, includes 6g Added Sugars, Protein 2g, Vitamin D 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%, Potassium 0%

**Yield:** 15 servings

Recipe Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension