



This Month's Focus: Nutrition Issues with Older Adults

As men and women grow older, they face changes in the nutrients needed by their bodies as well as changes in the physical activity that they are able to do. Meeting nutritional needs can be a challenge for some seniors as their ability to cook and feed themselves may be declining. Eating may become less appealing if their ability to taste and smell diminishes due to age or side effects of medication, or if they have poor oral health, or are lonely or depressed. Not having enough money to spend on nutrient-rich foods or limited access to healthy foods because of transportation issues can pose additional difficulties. This issue of *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* focuses on programs and materials that can help older adults enjoy both the nutritional and social values of eating healthful meals.

More Washington Seniors Using Food Banks – In the past two years, the number of seniors relying on food banks has risen substantially. Susan Eichrodt of the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) reports an increase of 22% by seniors using food banks: 110,117 for the period of July-December 2010 compared to 90,333 for the same time period in 2008. (Contact: Susan Eichrodt, Program Manager, EFAP, susan.eichrodt@commerce.wa.gov (360) 725-2853.)

Fruits and Veggies for Seniors –

Between June and October, low income seniors may use special checks to purchase \$40 worth of produce at farmers markets or roadside produce stands. Fruits and vegetables help build healthful diets, and the experience of visiting farmers markets gives older adults enjoyable social opportunities. For information and eligibility requirements about the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in our state, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/markets/sfmnp.html>. For a list of roadside stands authorized to accept SFMNP checks, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/markets/roadsidestands.html>. (Contact: Rosemary Biggins, SFMNP Manager, Aging and Disability Services Administration, 360-725-2466 or 800-422-3263, biggire@dshs.wa.gov.)



Image courtesy of Farmers Market Nutrition Program, WSU

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Tell Us What's New...

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail martha_marino@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

Subscription Information

Energize can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge.

To order or unsubscribe contact: Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541. Fax 253-445-4569, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

Energize is a publication of the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*. Content of newsletter is up to the discretion of *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* staff.

For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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Meals on Wheels in Island County – Three times a week, volunteers with the *Meals on Wheels* program at Senior Services of Island County (SSIC) drive up and down Whidbey and Camano Islands to deliver hot and frozen meals to 145 homebound seniors. It's not just for low income older adults: anyone over age 60 and homebound can participate, such as someone who has come home from the hospital or has low vision ability restricting their ability to drive. The program asks for donations of \$3.50 per meal, which covers about half of the cost of the locally produced meals. Leslie Saelens of SSIC says that through the personal visits by volunteers, people feel connected to the outside world. Saelens visits them shortly after they start receiving meals, and annually thereafter to track their nutritional status and evaluate their other needs. SSIC also operates congregate meal sites for seniors which Saelens says are enriching both nutritionally and socially. *Meals on Wheels* nationally delivers more than a million meals to seniors each day. To learn more about Meals on Wheels, go to www.mowaa.org, to find *Meals on Wheels* Programs in your area go to www.mealcall.org/meals-on-wheels/wa and to read about SSIC's programs for seniors, go to www.islandseniorservices.org. (Contact: Leslie Saelens, Assistant Nutrition Director / Home Delivered Meals Assessor, Senior Services of Island County, 360-321-1600 ext 25, saelens@islandseniorservices.org.)



Image courtesy of Senior Services of Island County

Position Paper on Food and Nutrition Programs for Older Adults – Three prominent nutrition organizations recently published a joint position paper saying that “all older adults should have access to food and nutrition programs that ensure the availability of safe, adequate food to promote optimal nutritional status.” They go on to urge adequate funding for food assistance, nutrition education, and other means to provide for healthful aging. Seniors with health disparities and poor nutritional status are particularly in need of food and nutrition programs. The position of the American Dietetic Association, American Society for Nutrition, and Society for Nutrition Education was published simultaneously March 2010 in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association (JADA)* and the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior (JNEB)*. (Source: “Position of the American Dietetic Association, American Society for Nutrition, and Society for Nutrition Education: Food and nutrition programs for community-residing older adults,” *JADA* 110(3):463-472, March 2010 and *JNEB* 42(2):72-82, March 2010).



Image courtesy of University of Florida IFAS Extension

MyPyramid for Older Adults – University of Florida Extension has produced a full-color mini-poster that adapts MyPyramid for use with seniors. It includes images of foods that older people tend to consume because they are easier to prepare and are economical. It also depicts silhouettes of seniors being physically active. The handout is available for free download at University of Florida's Elder Nutrition and Food Safety (ENAFS) site at <http://enafs.ifas.ufl.edu>. ENAFS is an educational program targeted to active retirees and persons 60 years and older who have limited resources and are at risk for poor nutritional status and chronic disease. To purchase packs of 50 for \$15, go to www.ifasbooks.ufl.edu and click on “Health, Nutrition, Family and Community” or call 800-226-1762. The ENAFS educational modules (great for use at senior centers) are also available at this website, including a recently updated module

on hypertension. (Contact for information about the ENAFS program: Linda Bobroff, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida, 352-273-3521, bobroff@ufl.edu)

Quick Tips for Seniors – A colorful two-page handout from the Dairy Council of California lists tips for healthy eating and physical activity. The handout begins by asking readers to check the health issues that are important to them today, and then they can read on for advice. Available in English and Spanish large type for easier reading. Go to www.dairycouncilofca.org/tools/downloads.aspx and click on “Healthy Eating for Adults.”

Unintended Weight Loss – For a host of reasons such as loss of appetite, depression, difficulty feeding themselves, poor oral health, and reduced physical activity, many adults over age 65 lose weight without meaning to do so. Eating less food can cause poor health because limited food intake doesn't supply the nutrients that seniors need. The American Dietetic Association has conducted an extensive review of the literature to analyze evidence identifying their caloric needs, causes of unintended weight loss, and interventions that work. ADA members can access the Evidence Analysis Library for free; guests can sign in to view some content. Go to http://www.adaevidencelibrary.com/a_z_index.cfm and click on “Unintended Weight Loss in Older Adults.”

OUR MISSION: The *Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that the *Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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Nutrition Education Resources Targeted to Seniors – If you're working with older adults and could use websites, pamphlets and other print materials, simply go to this site designed for consumers:

http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=3&tax_subject=358&topic_id=1612&level3_id=5954&level4_id=0&level5_id=0&placement_default=0. Particularly interesting is the adaptation of the MyPyramid graphic for older adults, developed by Tufts University. For a comprehensive list of resources by federal agencies that was recently updated in February, go to <http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/USDA-DHHS-ComprehensiveListing-FederalNutritionEducationResources2005-to-Feb2010.pdf> and scroll down to "Seniors". This list includes materials that meet the nutrition recommendations of the current Dietary Guidelines. Included in the list of resources targeting seniors, you'll find booklets with tips for healthier eating, guidance for Native American elders, nutrition advice for lowering blood pressure (DASH Diet), and fact sheets about iron, chromium and carnitine.

IN THE MEDIA

Let's Move Has a Plan of Action – The First Lady's Let's Move campaign released last week an action plan that sets measurable goals and objectives to tackle childhood obesity. The report to President Obama was produced by an Interagency Childhood Obesity Task Force, *Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity within a Generation*. It outlines steps that can be taken in early childhood, among parents and caregivers, in schools, by providing access to healthy food, and by increasing physical activity. Nutrition educators will be pleased to see that education is woven throughout the report. For the full report, go to www.letsmove.gov/taskforce_childhoodobesityrpt.html.

LOCAL EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Washington WIC Wins Breastfeeding Award – Breastfeeding rates among new moms in the Washington's WIC Nutrition Program are some of the highest in the nation. Washington WIC was one of five states to receive a WIC Breastfeeding Performance Award from the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services. More than 85% of new moms on the WIC program in Washington breastfeed their babies. Breastfeeding saves money and is a cost-effective way to fight childhood obesity. The award was more than a pat on the back: Washington WIC was awarded more than \$415,000 to support breastfeeding. (Contact: Jean O'Leary, Breastfeeding Coordinator, Washington State WIC Nutrition Program, Department of Health, 360-236-3662, jean.oleary@doh.wa.gov.)

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – Locally grown rhubarb and asparagus are welcome signs of spring in the Pacific Northwest. Other vegetables that are fresh this month include baby beets, baby turnips, lettuce and other salad greens, sugar snap peas, and shelling peas. Also available are over-wintered vegetables such as cauliflower and leeks which were planted last fall but harvested in the spring. Strawberries and sweet cherries are right around the corner, with harvest expected to begin in early June.

Finding Farmers' Markets – Many local farmers' markets opened for the season this month. To locate a produce stand or farmers' market in our state, the Washington State Farmers Market Association provides a useful map: www.wafarmersmarkets.com/washingtonfarmersmarketdirectory.php.

DID YOU KNOW?

SNAP (Basic Food/Food Stamps) provided food assistance to a greater percentage of the US population than ever before: one in eight people. Participation rose to a record-breaking 39,693,919 people in February 2010, an increase of more than 7 million people compared with February 2009. (Source: Food Research and Action Center's *Weekly News Digest*, May 12, 2010)

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