



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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CENTER LOCATION

MARCH 2024

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Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

Sponsorship

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Sandoval County Commission and
Non Metro New Mexico
Economic Development District
Area Agency on Aging

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**All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area
information, activities calendars and games.**

Health & Wellness

Celebrate Women's History Month by Prioritizing Your Mental Health

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we want to take time to celebrate the diverse, brilliant women across this nation who keep everything going at home and work, within community organizations and faith institutions, and in every aspect of life. We celebrate the women from our history who have helped to shape us as individuals and as a nation. We hope this note speaks in a positive way to every woman who reads or is served by this message.

During this month, celebrate the women in your life and ask them to prioritize their own mental health. Acknowledge and support women at whatever age or stage they are in life. Check on the women in your life to make sure they are doing okay. Let them know that it is okay to not always be okay. Make sure they know that they have a safe place to go if they are struggling with their mental health and offer your help in connecting them to a behavioral health professional. If you are a woman, consider taking the time to celebrate your own accomplishments and do a mental health self-care check-up this month. If you find that you need additional help, reach out to your physician or a behavioral health provider.

Women are often the caregivers to their families and friends, yet often overlook giving themselves the care they need. Mental health is essential to well-being and women must prioritize their own mental health to ensure that they remain healthy. Being mentally healthy has an impact on the legacies and history of women. Ensure the women in your life have the tools to be mentally and physically healthy starting with these tips below.

- Take time for yourself to do something you want or nothing at all
- Get a good night's rest every night, 7-9 hours per night is recommended for adults
- Participate in regular exercise, 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity is recommended for adults
- Get outside and get some sunshine whenever possible
- Try relaxation techniques like meditation, mindfulness, or prayer
- Tell a trusted family member or friend if you are struggling with your mental health
- Consider talking to a mental health professional

If you or someone you know is in a crisis please use the resource provided for help
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
Disaster Distress Helpline - 1-800-985-5990

For free and confidential treatment referral and information about mental health and/or substance use disorders in English and Spanish, 24/7
SAMHSA's National Helpline - 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Nutrition

5 Tips for Creating Healthy Meal Plans

Following a balanced diet meal plan at home can help nourish your mind, body, and spirit—and keep your bank account looking healthier, too. With a little planning and a spark of inspiration, you can be on your way to enjoying delicious meals that are good for you, too.

Here are 5 tips to help you create meal plans filled with healthy foods that you and your family are sure to enjoy.

1. Review healthy eating guidelines

A good place to start is always with your healthcare professional, who can help you set diet and nutrition goals and benchmarks. A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can work with you to create an eating plan that's tailored to your needs. When it comes to meeting nutrition requirements, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. And while there are dietary imperatives that apply for most age groups—like enjoying nutrient-dense foods and limiting added sugar—there are special considerations for older adults, too.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, recommends that older adults pay special attention to protein intake, since about half of women and a third of men 71 and older don't eat enough of it. And some older adults may need to eat more foods fortified with Vitamin B12, or take a supplement, since aging can reduce absorption of this vital nutrient.

2. Gather inspiration

As you create your healthy meal plan, you may want to rekindle your culinary creativity. Search your favorite websites and cookbooks for recipes that will add variety and excitement to your menus. You'll find recipes for every taste, cultural tradition, and cooking style. You might also consider meal delivery services, many of which offer healthy ingredients and creative recipes.

Breakfast on your healthy meal plan could be a bowl of bran flakes cereal, topped with Vitamin C-rich blueberries and low-fat milk. But it could also be eggs over kale and sweet potato grits. Or, for those days when you're in a hurry to get to the pickleball court, overnight no-cook banana oatmeal.

3. Choose foods that do double-duty

Join the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in embracing food as “preventative medicine to encourage health and well-being.” Healthy eating at home should be nutritious and delicious.

Nutrition continued

Pack your meals with anti-inflammatory foods like legumes and apricots, which experts say can offer protection against type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other conditions. Add flavonoid-rich berries to help boost memory. Fill your salad bowl with leafy greens, a nutritional powerhouse, and sprinkle them with slivered almonds, which are filled with phytonutrients that support gut health.

4. Always be prepared

Don't let a missing ingredient sabotage your healthy meal plan or trigger a dinner delivery impulse buy. A well-stocked pantry, refrigerator, and freezer can help you stay the course and keep your meals budget friendly. The American Heart Association suggests having these items on hand:

- “Dinner builder” items: canned or dried beans, such as kidney, pinto, black, butter and navy; canned or pouched tuna, salmon and chicken; spaghetti sauce
- Canned vegetables: for easy side dishes and adding to soups and sauce
- Whole grains: brown rice, oats, couscous, bulgur and quinoa; whole-grain pastas, breads and tortillas (store extra bread and tortillas in the freezer); whole-grain flour or cornmeal for baking
- Cooking oils: non-tropical vegetable oils, such as olive, canola and corn
- Nuts, seeds and nut butters: for stir-fries and garnishes (and satisfying snacks)
- Broths: fat-free, low-sodium chicken, vegetable and beef—for making soups
- Dried herbs and spices: keep a variety on hand and buy or create salt-free seasoning blends
- Proteins: Unbreaded fish fillets, skinless chicken breasts, extra-lean or lean meats; tofu
- Dairy products: low-fat and fat-free milk, yogurt and cheese
- Soft margarine: made with nonhydrogenated vegetable oil and containing no trans-fat
- Frozen vegetables and fruits: choose a wide variety (lots of colors) without salty sauces and sugary syrups

Tailor the list to meet your tastes, healthy eating guidelines, and budget. And remember, you can shop for these staples using your Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Many grocery delivery services now accept SNAP (but SNAP will not cover the delivery fee). If you're wondering whether you're eligible for SNAP, visit www.hsd.state.nm.us to find out and get help applying for the food assistance benefit.

5. Consult other healthy eating meal plans

When you're ready to create your own food plan, get a head start by reviewing templates from trusted sources. This can help save you time and speed you toward your goal of healthy eating at home.

Nutrition continued

The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) meal plan, developed by researchers for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is flexible and heart-healthy. You can download or order a printed copy of a healthy meal plan for a week. These menus are based on 2,000 calories a day but can be tailored to other daily calorie levels and nutritional needs.

A typical DASH day may start with whole grain cereal, fruit, and fat-free yogurt. For lunch, you may choose from a range of sandwich choices, including tuna salad, barbecue beef, and chicken breast. A healthy dinner meal plan might include zucchini lasagna, or roast beef with a lightened-up version of a stuffed baked potato, with fat-free sour cream, reduced-fat cheddar cheese, and chopped scallions as toppings. Daily snacks include items like almonds, dried apricots, graham crackers, and peanut butter.

The USDA's MyPlate offers a 2-week sample healthy meal plan and a customized grocery list. The National Institute on Aging (NIA) offers meal planning tips and sample menus.

Old ways, a food and nutrition nonprofit, puts its focus on healthful diets based on diverse cuisines. You can build your own plan for healthy eating at home by choosing recipes from Mediterranean, African Heritage, Latin American, Asian Heritage, and Vegetarian & Vegan diets.

Following a balanced diet meal plan can help you reap the benefits of healthy eating and give you more time to enjoy your leisure activities.

Frail & Elderly

Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls

At least one in every three older adults will experience a fall each year. Many times, a fall can result in a severe injury that requires medical attention.

Here are some risk factors for falls:

- Balance and gait issues
- Weakness in the lower body
- Vision issues
- Certain medications for sleep, anxiety and depression

Most falls are preventable. Here are some tips to assist in fall prevention:

- Remove loose rugs from your home
- Keep walking paths in your house and yard clear of tripping hazards
- Ensure that there is good lighting in areas where you will be walking
- Talk to your doctor about your medications
- Discuss balance and strength therapy with your doctor if needed
- Get your eyes and feet checked on a regular basis
- Use assistance when walking on uneven surfaces

Volunteer



AmeriCorps Is Not a Moment, It's a Movement

As part of our continued celebration of AmeriCorps 30th Anniversary, we focus on recruitment of AmeriCorps Senior Volunteers in March.

For the past three decades, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers have become the next innovators, and changemakers throughout the United States and especially here in Sandoval County, providing over **25,000** hours of service last year alone. During AmeriCorps Week, **March 10-16** we recognize the millions of Americans who have chosen to serve their country through AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors and encourage you to invite your friends and neighbors to follow in your footsteps of service.

Choose Your Future.

- **Create positive change.**
 - ◇ Unleash your determination, compassion, and creativity to create practical solutions for your community.
 - ◇ With the power of service, you can make a positive impact on the lives of your neighbors and even strangers.
 - ◇ It doesn't matter if you have work experience, or are enjoying retirement - everyone can serve with AmeriCorps Seniors
- **Be a force for good.**
 - ◇ Our programs offer you the flexibility to volunteer or serve where and how you want. With a variety of organizational partners and opportunities throughout the county, AmeriCorps can fit your goals and lifestyle, whether it is for a day, a year or more.
- **Choose to make a difference.**
 - ◇ Service allows you to turn your determination, compassion, and creativity into practical solutions for neighbors and strangers alike.
- **Make Giving Back Your Second Act.**
 - ◇ AmeriCorps Seniors offers three distinct volunteer programs for Americans aged 55 and older. Volunteers can choose to serve anywhere from five to 40 hours a week in each of these programs.

Volunteer continued

- **AmeriCorps Seniors: Foster Grandparent Program**
 - ◇ Mentor and guide students to higher academic achievement and grow life skills. This intergenerational program focuses on mentoring and tutoring children and youth, which helps them develop academic and life skills.
- **AmeriCorps Seniors: Senior Companion Program**
 - ◇ Serve as a friend and companion by assisting seniors who have difficulty with daily living tasks. The program aims to keep seniors independent longer and provide respite to family caregivers.
- **AmeriCorps Seniors: RSVP Program**
 - ◇ Use your skills and talents learned over the years to serve your community in a way that means the most to you. AmeriCorps RSVP offers program options in all of the AmeriCorps priority areas including economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families.



Dottie Hu
Martin G. Bartoli
Rosario Fiallos
Donna Huxtable
Ida S. Martinez
Loyd Munnerlyn
Marianne Pepin
Maggie Rice
Cathy Sissung



Staying Active

Can Gardening Count As Exercise?

The benefits of gardening go far beyond connecting to nature and creating a beautiful yard. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), gardening qualifies as exercise. In fact, getting out in the yard for just 30-45 minutes can burn up to 300 calories.

Routine gardening activities, such as raking, weeding and trimming, engage multiple muscle groups at once, improving your overall fitness level. Want more specifics? Here are seven strategies to transform gardening duties into a bona fide workout:

1. Create a routine. Treat gardening like any workout: Stretch for 10 minutes, then alternate light activities with heavier ones. You might rake for a little while, then dig a few holes, then prune. Cool down for 10 to 15 minutes--perhaps by snipping flowers or picking vegetables--and you're done! Just keep in mind that gardening requires endurance, strength and flexibility, so it's important to build up gradually
2. Dig deep. Digging is one of the highest-intensity gardening activities. Pushing down with one foot, turning over the soil, then down with the other foot and bringing the soil to the top engages multiple muscle groups and forces you to get your hands dirty. Bottom line: Take every opportunity to dig.
3. Mix it up. Lifting and carrying 40-pound bags of mulch, stretching to reach low-hanging fruit and pushing a lawn mower around a large plot can be physically draining. Your best bet: alternate between activities like raking, mowing, weeding, pruning and digging. And if you're spreading mulch, be sure to switch hands periodically.
4. Watch your form. Bending and twisting can cause injury if you're not careful. In fact, bending at the waist instead of the knees is responsible for many gardening injuries. If you're lifting heavy items, bend at the knees. Use long-handed tools to rake and hoe to avoid back pain. And if something hurts, stop what you're doing and take a break.
5. Go old school. Use manual clippers, shears and mowers instead of tools that plug into an outlet. Using a traditional push mower, for example, requires you to use your legs, upper body strength and core. That's not the case with power mowers, or the type that you sit on and steer.

Staying Active continued

6. Build in strength training. Puttering around the garden may not qualify as high-intensity exercise, but you can incorporate strength-training exercises into your gardening tasks to increase the intensity. Do mini-squats and engage your core while you're pulling weeds. Take break from digging and do some lunges. You can even pause while you're mowing the lawn to do triceps.

No matter how you slice it, our bodies need consistent motion to function optimally. Gardening is just one way to promote activity when you otherwise might be sitting. After all, if the weeds are infiltrating your yard, you have built-in motivation to get in the dirt and work. Time passes quickly, and before you know it, you've racked up 60 minutes of exercise.

Just keep in mind that gardening tools, methods, conditions and plot size all impact the intensity of your workout. If you've been inactive for months, start slowly. Apply sunscreen, wear a broad-brimmed hat, and be sure to take frequent water breaks. And don't forget to wear insect repellant. You don't want to become an insect's lunch when you're growing your own food.



Sunday March 10, 2024