



# Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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JULY 2024

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### Sponsorship

Funding for this newsletter is provided by  
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

### July is UV Safety Awareness Month

July is UV Safety Awareness Month, and with summer in full swing, it's the perfect time to think about protecting yourself and your loved ones from the sun's harmful UV rays. In this blog, we'll explore why UV safety is so important and give you some tips on how to enjoy the outdoors safely.

First of all, what is UV? Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is a type of energy that comes from the sun and can penetrate your skin, causing damage over time. There are three types of UV radiation: UVA, UVB, and UVC. UVC is absorbed by the Earth's atmosphere, so we don't need to worry about it. UVA and UVB, however, can cause damage to our skin and eyes.

Why is UV safety important? Exposure to UV radiation can cause a range of health problems, including skin cancer, cataracts, and eye damage. According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States, with more than 5 million cases diagnosed each year.

**So, how can you protect yourself from UV radiation? Here are some tips:**

1. Wear protective clothing. This includes hats with wide brims, sunglasses with UV protection, and long-sleeved shirts and pants made from breathable fabrics that provide UPF (Ultraviolet Protection Factor).
2. Use sunscreen. Apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 to all exposed skin, including your face, ears, and the back of your neck. Be sure to reapply every two hours or after swimming or sweating.
3. Seek shade. Try to stay in the shade during peak UV hours, which are typically from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
4. Avoid tanning beds. Tanning beds expose your skin to UV radiation, which increases your risk of skin cancer and premature aging.
5. Get regular skin exams. Check your skin regularly for any new or unusual growths and see your medical provider if you notice anything that concerns you.

UV safety is especially important for those with darker skin tones, who may think they don't need to worry about sun protection. However, while darker skin tones do have more natural protection against UV radiation, they are still at risk for skin cancer and other UV-related health problems.

It's also important to think about UV safety for children. Childhood sunburns can greatly increase the risk of skin cancer later in life, so it's crucial to protect children from the sun's harmful rays. Infants under 6 months should always be kept out of direct sunlight, and older children should wear hats and protective clothing, and use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30.

Health & Wellness continued

In addition to protecting yourself and your family from UV radiation, you can also take steps to promote UV safety in your community. MHEDS, the Multi-Cultural Health Education Delivery System, offers resources and education about UV safety and skin cancer prevention. They also provide free skin cancer screenings for those who may be at risk.

It's never too late to start practicing UV safety. By taking steps to protect yourself and your loved ones from the sun's harmful rays, you can greatly reduce your risk of skin cancer and other UV-related health problems. So don't forget to wear protective clothing, use sunscreen, seek shade, avoid tanning beds, and get regular skin exams.

## Nutrition

### 6 Tips for Healthy Summer Eating

Barbecues, vacations and cocktails don't have to tank your diet. Here are some simple ideas to help you enjoy the season while keeping your nutritional needs on track.

From backyard cookouts to poolside cocktails, eating and drinking takes on a whole new dimension in the summertime. Though you might indulge in more treats than usual, you can still balance out your diet with the bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables available in the warmer months. These tips to help you keep your nutritional needs on track.

#### 1. Be mindful of your fruit intake.

Yes, fruit is good for you. It broadens the range of nutrients in your diet, and it's much better than a sweet, processed snack.

But keep an eye on the size of that portion, it is recommended one small or medium piece of whole fruit or ½ cup of fresh or frozen fruit with each meal. The amount of sugar in a fruit like watermelon adds up fast, especially because it feels so light as you're eating it. That doesn't mean you can't have any fruit at all, but just be aware of how much you're consuming.

#### 2. Eat locally.

With the abundance of fresh summer produce comes the opportunity to purchase more of it at the source. In the summertime, we have the ability to get to know local farmers, to seek out farm stands and learn what produce they have.

## Nutrition Continued

Keep in mind that what's available at the farm down the road may look different than what you'll find in the store, smaller or slightly different in color, but that's not a bad thing. Small mom-and-pop farms may not have the same capabilities as large farmers, so their produce might look a little different, but it doesn't have the additives that produce from large-scale farms can have. It's also a greener option, since it doesn't need to be brought in from far away.

### **3. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.**

There are some simple rules to follow when it comes to summer hydration. If you're outside for longer than 30 minutes, have a big glass of water as soon as you come back inside, even if you aren't thirsty. If you're starting to feel thirsty, you're probably already dehydrated.

Water, sparkling water or club soda are the best options. A general guide is to have eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day. Try squeezing in some lemon or lime to add a little zing without additional calories or sugar. And limit fruit juice, which might taste refreshing but is often loaded with sugar.

### **4. Set some general cookout rules.**

Barbecues don't have to be diet bombs. It's all about living a healthy lifestyle, rather than sticking to a set diet. You don't have to feel guilty if you keep everything in balance. That means having some grilled or raw veggies alongside your burger instead of potato salad or making your coleslaw with Greek yogurt or using a vinegar-based sauce instead of mayo. Provide or bring your own healthier options, like turkey burgers or plant-based meats, or grill some mushrooms for a meaty, earthy meal. Fruit kabobs are great for adults and kids alike because of the built-in portion control; plus, they're fun to eat.

One important note that's often overlooked is to be sure to keep foods at appropriate temperatures when you're outdoors: Don't leave meats out too long before cooking them and put leftovers in the fridge quickly. Potato salad, coleslaw and other dairy-based foods should also be kept cold and not left in the hot sun.

### **5. Try not to make food the focus.**

Everyone loves a good backyard barbecue. But the actual meal itself doesn't need to be the star of the show. Oftentimes what we come together for is the eating, but the food doesn't have to be the focus. Play outdoor games or do outdoor activities instead, or try to make the day about the walk you'll take after the meal. If the food is not the focal point, you'll be less inclined to sit around eating a lot of it.

Nutrition Continued

## **6. Before you travel, check out the local scene.**

Having special meals or treats, especially at restaurants, is one of the reasons we look forward to vacations. But a little bit of research beforehand can go a long way in helping you avoid the diet pitfalls that so often crop up when traveling—as well as the guilt that hits when you return home. Most people are able to make a healthy choice if they look at a menu beforehand, ask to share a main dish, or order a healthier appetizer, a side salad or a cold soup to start. Try having a healthy snack like a handful of baby carrots or cherry tomatoes before you go out so you don't overeat."

## **Staying Active**

### **How Seniors Can Stay Active in the Heat**

Today's older adults are more active than ever. Popular hobbies such as golfing, biking, and gardening provide daily opportunities to exercise and socialize, and there's no better time to enjoy these outdoor activities than during the summer months – but for seniors who want to stay active in the heat, there are some considerations to keep in mind.

As temperatures rise, the effects of heat on the human body can be severe. When you were young, you probably didn't give the heat much thought – but, as an older adult, you should consider its possible impact on you and practice summer heat safety.

As we age, our bodies become less efficient at regulating temperature. People over 65 do not sweat as much as younger people. Also, seniors produce significantly less blood flow to the skin's surface area to cool themselves.

### **So, how do you beat the heat?**

#### **Heat Beaters**

You should wear a broad-brimmed hat while out during the day, and stay out of the sun when it is at its strongest — between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Take your walk or ride your bike at alternative times, and search out a shaded route to follow.

Keep at your indoor physical activities or add new ones — yoga, balance, and resistance training, for example. Consider indoor cardio exercise routines like this one from SilverSneakers.

Older adults working outdoors should practice heat safety by taking frequent breaks and cooling off in the shade, or finding some air conditioning. Gardening is a great physical activity if seniors don't work for too long in the heat.

Staying Active continued

Whatever seniors do during the day, they should use sunscreen. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends a water-resistant sunscreen with a broad spectrum (protects against UVA and UVB rays) of SPF 30 or higher. The sunscreen should be applied every couple of hours, and more often if you are swimming or sweating.

Also, older adults should dress in lighter colors — dark clothes absorb heat. Loose clothing and lighter fabrics will let cooling air circulate over the skin.

Even when seniors are not physically active during the summer, they should be drinking water regularly. Drink fluids at every meal, and sip fluids throughout the day. Avoid alcohol, as it dehydrates the body.

### **Be Aware**

You should be aware that many of the medications used to treat chronic conditions further reduce the body's ability to adjust to heat, making heat safety an even larger concern. For example, chronic kidney disease, heart failure, and high blood pressure are often treated with diuretics (also called water pills). Diuretics increase the amount of water and salt expelled from the body, which can lead to dehydration — a major problem for those who want to stay active in the heat.

Seniors should talk with their physician about how their medications may affect their ability to regulate their body temperature.

### **Know the Signs of Heat Illness**

Heat exhaustion, the milder form of heat-related illness, can produce any of the following symptoms:

- ⇒ Heavy sweating
- ⇒ Muscle cramps
- ⇒ Fatigue
- ⇒ Weakness
- ⇒ Dizziness
- ⇒ Headache
- ⇒ Fainting
- ⇒ Nausea or vomiting
- ⇒ Dark urine
- ⇒ Cool, moist skin

If you're experiencing heat exhaustion, seek rest in the shade. Drink cool fluids like water or sports drinks (no alcohol). Take a cool shower, soak in a cool bath, or place towels soaked in cool water on your skin. Loosen clothing.

Staying Active continued

Severe cases may lead to heat stroke, which has more serious symptoms:

- ⇒ Dry, hot skin (no sweating)
- ⇒ Rapid, weak pulse
- ⇒ Rapid breathing
- ⇒ Confusion
- ⇒ Slurred speech
- ⇒ Nausea and vomiting
- ⇒ Flushed skin
- ⇒ Headache
- ⇒ Body temperature above 103 degrees F
- ⇒ Seizures
- ⇒ Unconsciousness (fainting may be the first sign in older adults)

Call 911 immediately if a person is exhibiting these symptoms, then cool the victim as best you can. Move them to a shady spot or into an air-conditioned space. Wet the skin. Fan them while misting them with cool water. Place ice packs or cool wet towels on the person's neck, armpits and groin. Cover with cool damp sheets. Let the person drink cool water if they are able — but not too cold, as this may cause stomach cramps.

The outdoors have plenty of health benefits to offer when seniors take the proper precautions.

There's no need to hide under the air-conditioners this summer. Seniors can stay active in the heat and enjoy summer activities safely by being aware of its effects, and employing strategies to mitigate its serious health consequences.



## Volunteer



### **Reframing Aging: A New Perspective on the Value of Seniors Impacting Our Community**

We all aspire to have fulfilling lives well into old age, staying socially connected and contributing to our communities. Yet aging in America comes with its own set of realities, bringing opportunities for growth, connection, community, and, at times, challenges. At Sandoval County Senior Volunteer program, we believe that aging well with security, dignity, and purpose is powered by connection.

Connection is at the heart of aging well. Social connections provide emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and contribute to overall health and well-being. Research shows that strong social ties can improve physical health, enhance mental health, and even extend the length of our lives. Maintaining connections as we age is crucial.

One reality that can prevent us from deepening our connections is ageism. It is one of the last “isms” we have yet to address as a society. The World Health Organization asked Becca Levy, a professor at the School of Public Health and the psychology department at Yale University, to lead an analysis of the effects of ageism. She found it led to worse health because older adults are denied care, fewer work opportunities because they are not considered or hired, a negative self-perception, and overall devalued lives. She even estimated that internalized ageism, or negative beliefs about growing older, shaves 7.5 years off a person’s life expectancy. AmeriCorps Seniors demonstrate how straightforward it is to break down negative stereotypes and myths about older adults. These volunteers show the world that growing older does not mean we no longer have value.

The Reframing Aging movement, is about changing the way we think and talk about aging. Instead of seeing aging as a period of decline, we focus on the strengths, contributions, and resilience of older adults. This new perspective helps society value older adults for their wisdom, experience, and diverse viewpoints, clearing the path for us to connect with each other without the limitation of preconceived notions.



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Volunteer continued

This year, more than 11,000 Americans are turning 65 every single day – a population higher than ever before. It is paramount that we work collectively across sectors to build our capacity and keep us all connected as we age.

We know aging well in America is about more than physical health—it's about emotional well-being, financial security, and social engagement. By embracing the principles of Reframing Aging and focusing on investing in connection, we can create a society where we are all valued, supported, and empowered to live our best lives as we age. Help us continue to improve Sandoval County residents' lives by volunteering and asking your friends and neighbors to volunteer too! Let's work together to build a stronger, more connected Sandoval community for all older adults.



The goals of the Volunteer Program are to enable persons over age 55 to remain physically and mentally active and to enhance their self-esteem through participation in community service.

## Happy Birthday to Our JULY Volunteers

Merrie Blue  
Cissy Casaus  
Shelly Herbst  
Younis Lave  
Mary Marruio  
Ann Murphy  
Edward O'Gara Doherty



Melinda Radaelli  
Jana Reynolds  
Mary Roskom  
Gail Sacharczuk  
Linda Sanchez  
Debbie Tallman  
Elizabeth Templeton  
Carol Watson