



Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

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CENTER LOCATION

Sandoval County Senior Program
1500 Idalia Rd., Bldg. D
P O Box 40
Bernalillo NM 87004

Phone: 867-7535
Fax: 867-7606

Hours of Operation:
Monday—Friday 8-5pm

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Sponsorship

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Economic Development District
Area Agency on Aging

ADMINISTRATION STAFF

Senior Program Administrator
Desi Aragon

Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Stivers

Food Service Manager
Donald Ravizza

Accounting Specialist
Sharon Hicks

Transportation Drivers
Matthew Montoya (**Scheduler-Driver**)
Greg Shea (**Driver**)
Vacant (**Driver**)

SAMS Data Coordinator
Alicia Arriola

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

Health & Wellness

Strategies to Improve Brain Health

Maintaining and improving brain health is essential to preserve cognitive function and overall well-being. Here are some key strategies to consider:

1. Engage in mental exercises

Puzzles and Games: Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, jigsaw puzzles, chess, card games like bridge, and memory games can stimulate the brain, improve memory recall, attention span, and problem-solving skills.

Learning New Skills: Learning a new language, playing a musical instrument, painting, knitting, or taking up a new hobby challenges different parts of the brain and strengthens neural pathways, according to Spectrum Community Services.

Reading and Writing: Regularly reading books, articles, or even writing in a journal or creating short stories enhances language skills, vocabulary, and memory.

Digital Brain Training: Utilize brain-training apps and online games that are designed to challenge cognitive abilities in a fun and engaging way.

2. Prioritize physical activity

Regular Exercise: Engage in regular, moderate-intensity physical activity like brisk walking, swimming, dancing, yoga, or tai chi. Physical activity improves blood flow to the brain, which in turn enhances cognitive function and reduces the risk of cognitive decline.

Balance Training: Incorporate activities that improve balance to reduce the risk of falls, as falls can lead to serious head injuries.

3. Embrace a healthy diet

Nutrient-Rich Foods: Focus on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables (especially leafy greens), whole grains, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish. These foods provide antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins that are crucial for brain health.

Hydration: Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep the brain functioning optimally.

MIND Diet: Consider following a Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diet, which emphasizes natural plant-based foods and limits animal products and saturated fats, potentially reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Health & Wellness continued

4. Maintain social connections

Social Activities: Engage in activities with friends, family, and community members. This can include joining clubs, volunteering, attending social gatherings, or using technology to connect with loved ones.

Reduce Isolation: Loneliness and social isolation are linked to increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Staying socially engaged provides mental stimulation and reduces feelings of loneliness and depression.

5. Manage stress

Mindfulness and Meditation: Practice deep breathing, meditation, and other mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and improve focus.

Relaxation Techniques: Incorporate activities like reading, listening to music, gardening, or taking a warm bath to relax and unwind.

Seek Support: Talk to trusted friends, family members, or consider seeing a therapist or joining a support group if stress becomes unmanageable.

6. Prioritize sleep

Consistent Sleep Schedule: Establish a regular sleep schedule and create a sleep-friendly environment to ensure sufficient restful sleep.

Consult a Doctor: If you experience extreme tiredness or difficulty sleeping consistently, consult your doctor.

7. Address health concerns

Manage Chronic Conditions: Control and treat high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, and high cholesterol, as these conditions are linked to increased risk of cognitive decline.

Regular Checkups: Schedule regular health screenings and talk to your doctor about medications and potential side effects on memory or brain function.

Quit Smoking and Limit Alcohol: Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are detrimental to brain health.

Treat Sensory Conditions: Address hearing and vision loss, as these can affect cognition and make social interaction difficult.

Prevent Head Injury: Take steps to prevent falls and head injuries, such as fall-proofing your home and using appropriate safety gear.

By adopting these strategies and making healthy lifestyle choices, you can significantly improve your brain health, potentially reduce the risk of cognitive decline, and enjoy a higher quality of life.

Nutrition

Healthy diet for seniors: a guide to nourishing the golden years

As we age, our bodies undergo changes that affect our nutritional needs. While the fundamental principles of healthy eating remain similar to younger adults, seniors often require specific adjustments to their diet to maintain optimal health and well-being.

Here's a breakdown of healthy eating for older adults:

Focus on nutrient-dense foods

Protein: Important for preventing muscle loss, which can occur with age. Lean sources include poultry, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, and tofu.

Fruits and Vegetables: Choose a variety of colorful options for vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Fresh or frozen are good choices, and steaming can make them easier to chew and digest while preserving nutrients.

Whole Grains: Such as oatmeal, brown rice, and whole-wheat bread, provide sustained energy and fiber for digestion and fullness.

Dairy or Dairy Alternatives: Provide calcium and vitamin D, crucial for bone health and reducing the risk of osteoporosis. Include low-fat dairy or fortified plant-based options.

Prioritize key nutrients

Vitamin B12: Absorption may decrease with age. Consume protein-rich foods and fortified foods like some cereals. Consult a healthcare provider about potential supplementation.

Vitamin D: Essential for calcium absorption and bone health. Found in fatty fish, fish oils, egg yolks, liver, and fortified foods, and produced with sunlight exposure.

Calcium: Supports bone health, muscle and nerve function, blood clotting, and hormone secretion. Good sources include dairy products, dark leafy greens, broccoli, sardines, salmon, and calcium-fortified foods. Women ages 51+ and men age 71+ are recommended 1,200 mg daily.

Potassium: Helps with fluid balance and the function of the heart, muscles, and nervous system. Found in foods like apricots, bananas, prunes, cantaloupes, squash, potatoes, and lentils.

Hydration is crucial

Drink water regularly: Aim for at least 8 cups daily, as the sense of thirst can diminish with age.

Nutrition continued

Hydrating Foods: Incorporate water-rich foods like cucumbers, watermelon, oranges, and soups.

Limit Dehydrating Beverages: Reduce consumption of soda, sugary drinks, and excessive alcohol.

Other important considerations

Manage Portion Sizes: Due to slower metabolism, seniors may need fewer calories, according to the National Council on Aging. Focus on smaller, well-balanced meals and snacks.

Limit Added Sugars, Saturated Fats, and Sodium: These can contribute to weight gain and worsen health conditions. Check Nutrition Facts labels.

Involve Family and Friends: Shared meals can enhance enjoyment and combat social isolation, which can affect appetite. Consider communal meals or potlucks.

Adapt to Challenges: For difficulty chewing or swallowing, opt for soft, moist foods like soups, stews, casseroles, and mashed vegetables. For reduced appetite, smaller, more frequent, and visually appealing meals may help. If problems persist, consult a healthcare provider or registered dietitian nutritionist.

Staying Active

Improving balance is essential for seniors to prevent falls and maintain independence.

Here are some effective exercises you can consider:

Standing exercises (with support as needed)

Single Limb Stance (or Single-Leg Balance): Stand behind a sturdy chair or counter for support. Lift one foot off the floor and hold the position, aiming for 10-15 seconds. Gradually increase the time as your balance improves, aiming for 30-60 seconds on each leg.

Rock the Boat: Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Shift your weight to one foot and slowly lift the other leg a few inches off the ground. Hold this position for up to 30 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Heel-to-Toe Walk: Walk in a straight line, placing the heel of your front foot directly in front of the toes of your back foot. Focus on maintaining your balance and taking slow, controlled steps. Start with a few steps and gradually increase as you feel more confident.

Staying Active continued

Side Leg Raises: Stand behind a chair with feet slightly apart. Slowly lift one leg to the side, keeping your back straight and toes pointing forward. Hold briefly, then lower and repeat on the other side.

Standing Marches: Quartet Senior Living suggests that seniors stand tall with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a chair or counter for support if needed. Gently raise one knee as high as possible, then slowly lower it back to the starting position. Alternate legs, aiming for 20 repetitions (10 per leg).

Head Rotations: Stand with your feet hip-width apart and gently rotate your head from left to right and up and down for approximately 30 seconds. Stop if you feel dizzy.

Toe Taps: Stand in front of a low step or sturdy object. Slowly lift one foot to tap the top of the step, then return it to the floor. Repeat 15-20 times and switch legs.

Seated exercises

Balancing Wand: Sit in a chair and hold a lightweight stick (like a cane or broomstick) in the palm of your hand, trying to balance it upright for as long as possible. Switch hands and repeat.

Seated Knee Lifts: While seated, lift one knee at a time as if you are marching. This can be done at a moderate pace to improve strength and coordination.

Shoulder Rolls: Gently rotate your shoulders in circular motions, both forwards and backwards, to improve upper body flexibility.

Important considerations

Safety First: Always prioritize safety. Perform exercises near a wall, counter, or chair for support, especially when starting out.

Consult your Doctor: Before beginning any new exercise program, consult your doctor or physical therapist to ensure the exercises are safe and appropriate for you. Gradual Progression: Start slowly and gradually increase the duration, repetitions, or difficulty of exercises as your balance improves.

Listen to Your Body: If you feel pain or dizziness, stop the exercise and rest. Consult with a healthcare professional if discomfort persists.

Incorporate into Daily Life: Look for opportunities to practice balance exercises in everyday activities, such as standing on one foot while brushing your teeth.

Combine with Other Activities: Supplement balance exercises with other forms of exercise like walking, strength training, and stretching, to achieve optimal results.

Consider Tai Chi or Yoga: These practices are known to be beneficial for improving balance and overall well-being.

Volunteer



Thank You, Volunteers!

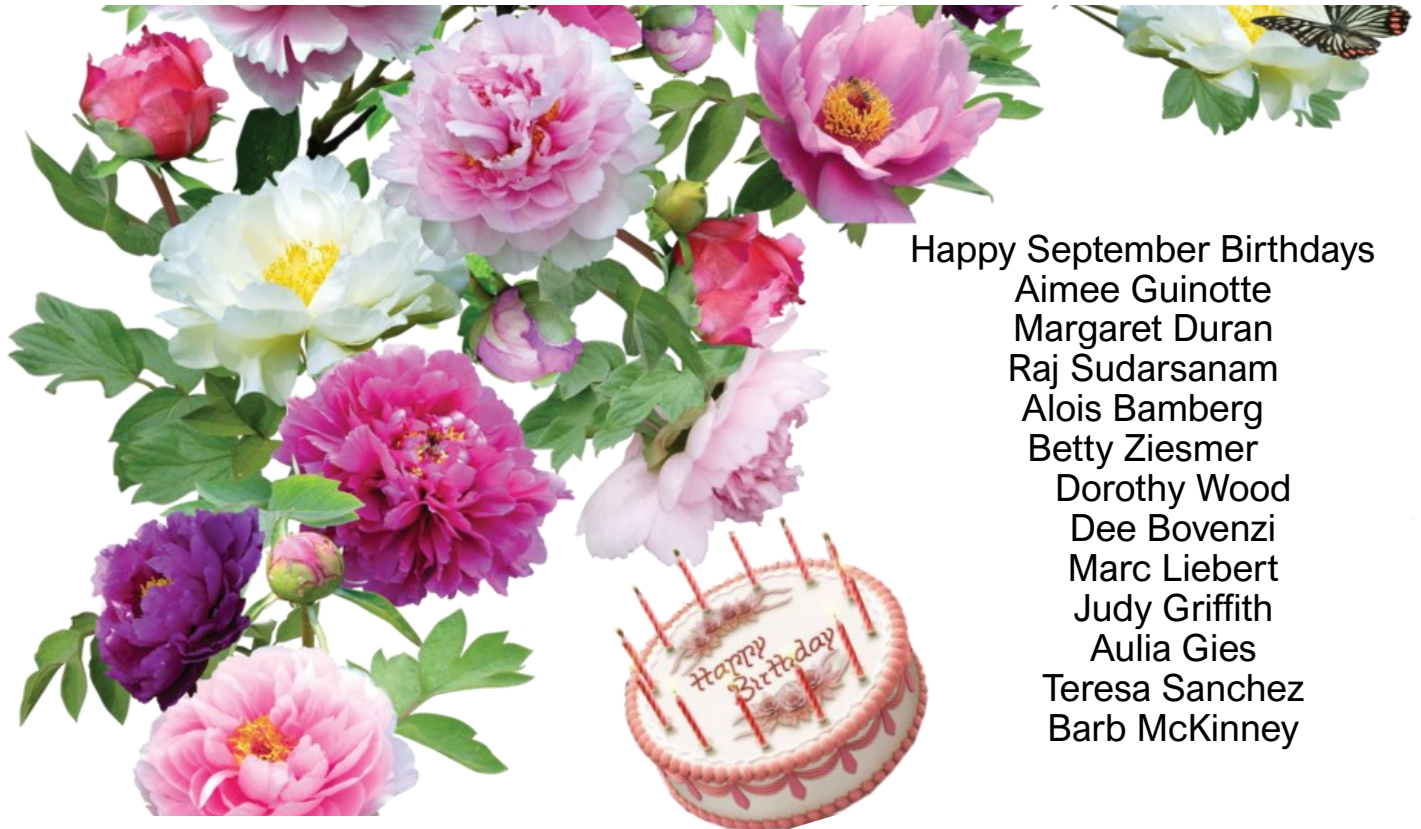
To each of you who gives your time, talents, and compassion—know that you are the heart of everything we do.

Your hands **lift boxes of food, sort shelves, pack pantry bags, label donations, restock fresh produce, assist clients in choosing groceries, and greet every person with kindness.**

You craft blankets, stock books, prepare meals, and, most importantly, lift spirits. You turn ordinary moments into extraordinary acts of service.

Because of you, neighbors find hope, strangers feel welcome, and our community grows stronger. Your generosity stitches us together, one act of service at a time. We see you. We appreciate you. And we are endlessly grateful for the difference you make every day.

With admiration and gratitude to: Bernalillo Food Pantry • Bernalillo Senior Center • Broadmoor Senior Center • Clare's Closet • Corrales Senior Center • Cuba Senior Center • Friends of Libraries • Meadowlark Senior Center • Needlecrafters of Rio Rancho • Pena Blanca Community • Placitas Senior Center • Presbyterian Rust Hospital • Project Linus • Read West • Sandoval County Historical Society • St. Anthony Food Kitchen • Storehouse West



Happy September Birthdays

Aimee Guinotte
Margaret Duran
Raj Sudarsanam
Alois Bamberg
Betty Ziesmer
Dorothy Wood
Dee Bovenzi
Marc Liebert
Judy Griffith
Aulia Gies
Teresa Sanchez
Barb McKinney

Volunteering
 Thanksgiving
 Relationship
 Appreciation
 compassion
 acknowledge
 Thoughtful
 Friendship
 compliment
 Happiness
 Encourage
 Excited
 Grateful
 Engaged
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 Thankful
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 Honesty
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