



Lake County Council on Aging
Hunger in America
Second Quarter Training, 2017

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"A hungry man is not a free man."

Adlai E. Stevenson

Senior Hunger in America

In 2011, a study was conducted by Professor James P. Ziliak, University of Kentucky, and Professor Craig Gunderson, University of Illinois on the state of senior hunger in America. The national Foundation to End Senior Hunger provided the funding for the research and report. The report classified anyone over the age of 60 as a senior.

Here is a synopsis of what the research found:

- The Great Recession has caused an increase in food insecurities for many Americans
- 15.2% of seniors, or 8.8 million, face the threat of hunger
- This is a 1.1% increase over the findings in 2009
- The following are those most likely to be threatened by hunger:
 - Those living in the Southern and South-Westerly states
 - Those who are racial or ethnic minorities
 - Those with lower incomes
 - Those who are younger (age 60-69)
 - Out of those seniors who faced the threat of hunger, the majority had incomes above the poverty line and were white
 - Those who live with grandchildren
- From 2001-2011, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger has increased 88%
- From 2007-2011, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger has increased 42%
- From 2010-2011 the number of seniors threatened by hunger increased from 14.9% to 15.2%
- The threat of hunger is 3 times higher among those who are disables than retired
- The threat of hunger is 2.5 times higher among homes where grandchildren are present
- Hispanic seniors are 2-3 times higher than non-Hispanic seniors at facing the threat of hunger
- In 2007, 1 in 8 seniors faced the threat of hunger
- In 2009, 1 in 6 seniors faces the threat of hunger
- It is predicted that those seniors faced with the threat of hunger will double to almost 79.7 million Americans
- Research has shown that some food insecure seniors have the funds to purchase food but currently lack the resources to access or prepare food

The ten states with the highest threat of senior hunger are:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------|
| 1. Arkansas | 24.23% |
| 2. Mississippi | 20.49% |
| 3. Alabama | 20.34% |
| 4. Nevada | 18.80% |
| 5. Tennessee | 18.79% |
| 6. Louisiana | 18.76% |
| 7. Texas | 18.35% |
| 8. New Mexico | 18.05% |
| 9. Georgia | 17.52% |
| 10. South Carolina | 17.38% |

Ohio ranks 24th with a 13.83% threat of Senior Hunger.

“Our lives are to be used and thus to be lived as fully as possible, and truly it seems that we are never so alive as when we concern ourselves with other people.”

Harry Chapin

Meals on Wheels

- The first home delivered meal was in Great Britain in 1943 during World War 2
- These volunteers prepared and then delivered the meals
- Philadelphia, PA was the first city to offer a home delivered meals program in 1954
 - This program was started by Margaret Toy
 - The program delivered meals to homebound seniors and “shut ins”
- Columbus, OH was the second city in the United States to deliver Meals on Wheels
 - The meals were prepared by local restaurants and delivered by taxi cabs
- In 1965, The Older Americans Act (OAA) allowed prepared meals to be delivered to qualified individuals assessed to be homebound or otherwise isolated
- In 1972, the OAA was amended to include nutrition
- In 1978, the OAA was again amended establishing a congregate meal program for those individuals assessed to be unable to receive home delivered meals
- 30% of the cost for home delivered meals is met through OAA funding
- Today, there are active Meals on Wheels programs in Australia, Canada, The United Kingdom, and the United States
- All programs are meant to both deliver a meal and provide both a safety check as well as much needed companionship

Nationally

- An estimated 135 million meals are delivered annually through the Meals on Wheels programs
- 83% of clients say Meals on Wheels helps them eat healthier
- 87% say Meals on Wheels helps improve their health
- 90% say Meals on Wheels helps them feel more secure
- 92% say Meals on Wheels means they can continue to live in their own home
- 88% rate Meals on Wheels service as good to excellent

Lake County Council on Aging

- We served 1,550 clients with Meals on Wheels in 2016
- We delivered 148,261 meals in 2016
- We served 543 clients at our congregate meal sites in 2016
- We served 34,123 meals at our congregate sites 2016
- Volunteers donated 25,582 in 2016 hours to our nutrition program
- Volunteers donated 129 hours to our Holiday Meals on Wheels program in 2016
- Volunteers donated 3,552 hours to our grocery shopping program
- 35% of the Lake County Council on Aging's expenses went to our meals program in 2016

*“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life.
It turns what we have into enough, and more.
It turns denial into acceptance,
chaos to order, confusion to clarity.
It can turn a meal into a feast,
a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.
Gratitude makes sense of our past,
brings peace for today,
and creates a vision for tomorrow.”*

Melody Beattie

What is “Normal” Aging

- Experts have determined that we reach our peak physical functioning and ability in our 20’s and 30’s
- Experts suggest that people who age normally reflect the following:
 - They are physically active
 - They are socially engaged
 - They are free from chronic illness
 - They feel good about themselves
- People age 65 and older identified the following as reflective of aging normally:
 - Being able to...
 - Take care of themselves until close to the time of death
 - Making choices about things that affect the way they age
 - Coping with the challenges of later years
 - Acting according to their own inner standards and values
 - Meeting all of their needs and some of their wants
 - Also,
 - Successfully managing their chronic diseases
 - Having friends and family who are there for them
 - Feeling good about themselves
 - Feeling satisfied with their lives the majority of the time
 - Staying involved with the world around them
 - Staying involved with their friends
 - Adjusting to the changes related to aging
 - Not being alone or isolated
- It has been estimated that approximately 80% of older adults are living with one or more chronic illnesses (e.g. arthritis, diabetes, or heart disease)
- In 2007, the average life expectancy in the United States was 77.9 years

“If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon our heart. The spirit should not grow old.”

James A. Garfield

Age Related Changes

Bones

- At age 30, bone marrow gradually disappears from our arms and legs
- Gradually, there is a reduction in the calcium that leads to decreased bone mass
 - This leads to brittle bones
 - Some of the best ways to combat this is through the following:
 - Dietary changes
 - Exercise
 - Vitamins and supplements
 - Modifying the home to reduce the risk of falls
 - Remove throw rugs
 - Remove extension cords
 - Place grab bars in the bathroom and at stairs
 - Beginning in our 40's, we lose 1-2 inches of height
 - This is mainly due to disks in the spine vertebrae shrinking

Muscles

- We tend to experience a steady reduction in physical strength due to loss of muscle tissue
- The most rapid decline occurs after age 50
 - This can lead to a lack of coordination, strength, balance, and body control
 - Some of the best ways to combat this is through the following:
 - Performing weight bearing exercises
 - Walking
 - Dancing

Skin

- Skin becomes less resistant to cuts and bruises
 - Moisturizing skin in the winter months can help prevent cuts

Teeth

- Our teeth become more sensitive to hot and cold as we age
- Tooth decay becomes more prevalent as well as we age
- Gum disease becomes more prevalent as we age
- Chewing and tasting food can become more difficult

Weight

- Most tend to gradually increase weight in our 30's and 40's
- Most tend to gradually lose weight starting in their 50's
- In our 50's, we begin losing fat which can change the appearance of arms, legs, and face
 - Some of the best ways to combat this are the following:
 - Stay active
 - Engage in low-impact exercises for at least 30 minutes, 3 times a week
 - Swimming
 - Walking
 - Bicycling

Sense of Hearing

- Starting at around age 30, we begin to experience hearing loss
- by age 40-50, it becomes more difficult to distinguish close and far sounds
- Higher tones become for difficult to hear (e.g. women's and children's voices)
 - People tend to experience more difficulties with phone conversations
 - People tend to experience more difficulties hearing the television
 - People can become less social due to hearing impairments
- The ear is also responsible for our sense of balance
 - As we age, the structures within the ear responsible for balance begin to decline
 - People begin to experience issues with sitting, standing, and walking

Sense of Smell and Taste

- As we age, we experience a decline in our ability to detect and identify odors
- Smoking and medications can also impact this
 - As we age, we become less aware of body odor
 - We lose our natural ability to detect spoiled food
 - We lose our natural ability to detect smoke
- As we age, the intensity of taste diminishes
- As we age, the ability to identify different tastes also diminishes
- As we age, we have more difficulty detecting sour, salty, and bitter tastes
- As we age, we tend to maintain our ability to detect sweets
 - Dentures, smoking, and medications can also impact this
 - People may begin choosing foods with distinct or strong flavors
- We begin our lives with 9,000 taste buds that begin decreasing in our 40's
 - Taste sensitivity doesn't decrease until around age 60
 - This is due to decrease in saliva production
- We tend to lose our sense to taste salty

Touch and Sensitivity

- Due to skin changes and reduced circulation, our sense of touch declines
- We also become less sensitive to temperatures
- We also have more challenges with our small motor skills
 - E.g. handling silverware, opening jars
- As we age, we can increase our chances of injuring ourselves due to the lack of sensation
 - Diabetes, vascular disease, and arthritis may face additional limitations
- The lack of certain nutrients may decrease our sense of touch
- After age 50, people tend to have a reduced sensitivity to pain

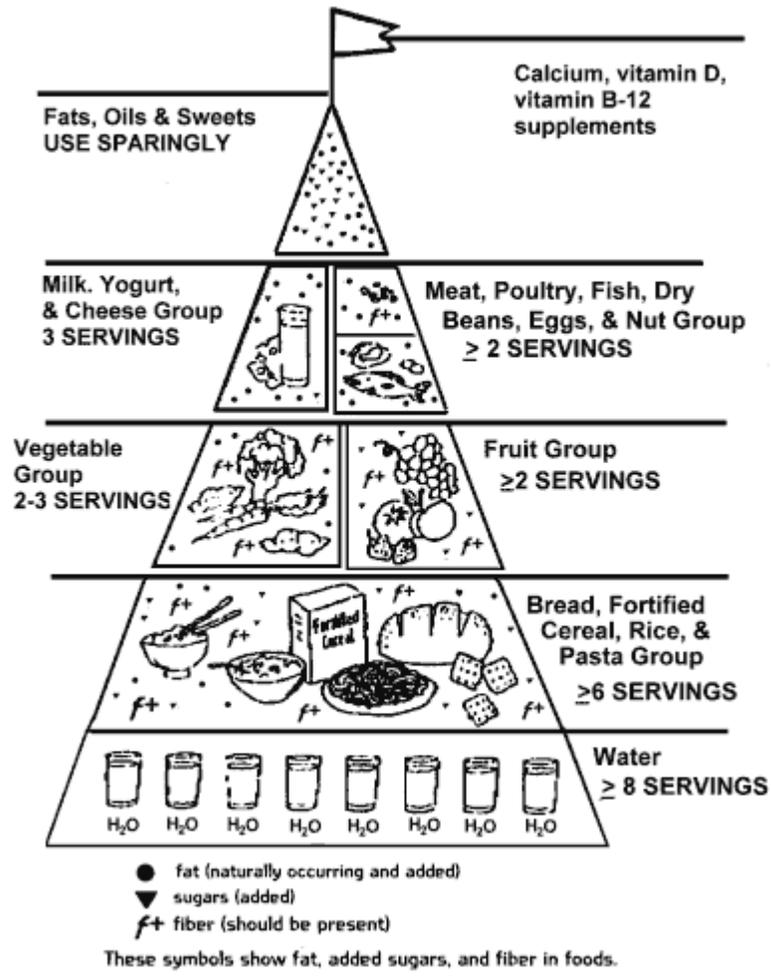
“Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.”

Mark Twain

Overall Implications of Aging on Nutrition

- Reduced sense of smell and taste often results in appetite depression
 - Malnutrition becomes common place
 - Due to the inability to taste food
 - Their “favorite” foods don’t taste like they used to
 - The best way to combat this with flavor. Use new spices and herbs to enhance the taste of the food items
 - Weight loss becomes more prominent
 - An exacerbation of other health problems also becomes apparent
 - Due to deteriorating sense of smell, other health problems begin to arise
 - Hypertension
 - Due to reduced sense of taste and smell, it is more likely for our aging to eat spoiled or rotten food
 - Food poisoning
 - Nausea
 - Diarrhea
 - Infectious diarrhea
- Reduction of sense of sight
 - Due to visual impairments, food itself does not look appetizing
 - The best way to combat this is by:
 - Increasing the colors on the plate
 - Separating the foods by color to make the food more defined
- Problems with chewing
 - Teeth issues tend to arise as we age
 - Visit a dentist to see if there are specific tooth or gum issues
 - Determine if dentures need to be adjusted
 - Serve softer foods
 - Replace raw fruits and vegetables with cooked vegetables or juices
 - Serve ground or shredded meats

Remodeled Food Guide Pyramid for Seniors



For more information regarding health nutrition, please visit: ChooseMyPlate.gov



Conclusion

As we age, healthy nutrition becomes both a more important part of our lives but a more difficult part of our lives. Our bodies continue to require the same vitamins, nutrients, and minerals, we have always needed. Our bodies also need food in order to properly process and metabolize the medications we take. However, due to a lack of balance from both a reduced sense of touch as well as from changes with our hearing, an inability to distinguish temperatures of items to a decreased sense of taste and smell, preparing healthy meals becomes a daunting task for many.

We, as a country, are now faced with an aging population who is having more difficulty with not just a lack of ability to purchase groceries due to transportation issues but also unable to purchase groceries due to a financial issues. As our population continues to age, we are faced with an ever-growing need on behalf of our seniors to ensure that they do not face the threat of hunger.

Meals on Wheels have been in existence for over half a century in the United States and have been able to reach out to millions of Americans in need. Last year, it was estimated that 135 million meals were delivered to homebound and vulnerable Americans. This does not include the millions of Americans who received congregate meals throughout the country.

Aging is a part of all our lives. Some choices we make now will impact our functionality in years to come. Without the help of millions of volunteers, those seniors who are at risk for malnutrition or are threatened by hunger have an option. Each of us can and has played a role in combating hunger in America.

“Aging can be difficult at times, we all go through it. It is important to remember that even though our physical appearance changes, our spirit does not. Some people in their 70’s and 80’s are much younger than some people in their 20’s and 30’s. It all comes down to one thing and that is our outlook on life. Everybody is looking for the fountain of youth, but what they are often unaware of is that the fountain of youth can be found by simply looking within oneself.

Always remember, we are never too old to realize a new goal or dream. Also, we must realize, just because someone is older, does not mean that they have nothing left to offer to society and are incapable of accomplishing great things in their remaining years.”

Original article written by Quille

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Fitness and Freebies