

# Senior Series

The Ohio  
Department of  
Aging



Senior Series - Ohio State University Extension and Ohio Aging Networks  
Working Together to Address Older Adult Issues

## Senior Hotline Volume 8, Issue 2

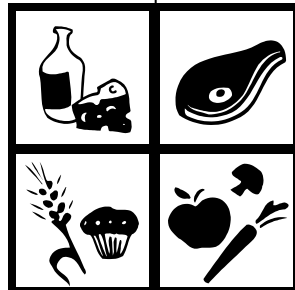
... a newsletter for older adults or those who care for an older adult

### Start Today for a Healthy Tomorrow March 2002, National Nutrition Month <sup>®</sup>

You might have heard that March is National Nutrition Month <sup>®</sup>(NNM) but do you know what it means? NNM is an annual nutrition education and information campaign sponsored by the American Dietetic Association (ADA). The campaign helps focus attention on the importance of developing sound eating and physical activity habits and on helping Americans make informed food choices.

The theme for NNM this year is **“Start Today for a Healthy Tomorrow.”** It emphasizes the following concepts:

- Americans of all ages benefit from making healthful eating, physical activity, and lifestyle choices.
- Trying new foods and new physical activities can help you put energy into you plans for health.
- Personalizing the Food Guide Pyramid as your plan towards eating a variety of foods, eating foods in moderate portion sizes, and balancing your food choices over time.



Taking the first step toward making healthful choices can be easy if you ask for help from family and friends.

The growing senior population has caused an increased interest in the nutritional needs of older Americans. In general, older people need at least the same amounts of vitamins and minerals as they did when they were younger. Getting the proper amounts of nutrients becomes a challenge - and often at a time when interest in nutrition and cooking is decreasing.

As we age, some major changes affect nearly everyone. These include:

- A decrease in the amount of calories needed from food by 25 percent.
- An increased risk of dehydration due to a reduced sense of thirst and bodily changes.
- An increased use of medications can affect both appetite and vitamin and mineral needs.

The ADA emphasizes that

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because of these three factors, older Americans need to get “more bang for their buck” in nutritional terms. This means meeting nutrient needs by eating frequent smaller meals with a glass of water. In addition, the quantity of food eaten should change, not the quality.

Older adults should continue to select foods with high nutrient density such as whole grains, legumes, low-fat dairy foods, fruits and vegetables that are dark green, deep orange, red or yellow.

Some nutrient Dietary Reference Intakes for older adults differ substantially from younger adults. Most older adults do not get enough protein, calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin B6.

Food sources of protein include

meat, poultry, fish, legumes, eggs, peanut butter, and dairy products.

Calcium and vitamin D are found in dairy products, fortified orange juice, salmon with bones, spinach and broccoli. Sources of vitamin B6 include bananas, whole-wheat bread, chicken, eggs, oatmeal, peanut butter, pork, potatoes, brown rice, tuna, shellfish, and walnuts.

As we look to the future, the availability of more fortified foods such as calcium-fortified milk and juices and cereal fortified with folic acid will provide older adults with new and varied ways to eat well and stay well.

Submitted by: Jennifer Even, FCS Agent, Hamilton County, OSU Extension.

Source: American Dietetic Assn.; International Food Information Council, Food Insight, Jan/Feb 2000 – “A Status Report on Senior Nutritional Needs”.

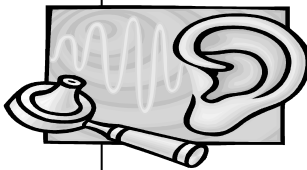
## An Opportunity to Participate in a Study on Hearing at OSU!

Healthy men and women, age 40-49 and over 60, are needed to participate in a clinical hearing evaluation study.

You must have good hearing in both ears and have no history of ear disease. You will receive a free hearing test and \$20 for your participation in the study.

The study will take place at the Department of Speech and

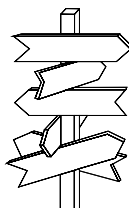
Hearing Science in Pressey Hall on the Ohio State University Campus in Columbus. Please call 614-292-7789 for more details and to schedule an appointment.



Patrick Feeney, Ph.D.  
The Ohio State University  
Department of Speech and  
Hearing Science  
1070 Carmack Road,  
Columbus, OH 43210

## One Size DOES NOT Fit All... Supporting Real Choice in Long-Term Care

Aging organizations are working together to promote choices for those in need of long-term care support. One size **DOES NOT** fit all. Individuals have varying needs and desires when they require long-



term care assistance. Together, we can educate the general public and policymakers so that more choices are available for older Ohioans.

Support **real choice** in long-term care in your community.



## Do-It-Yourself Adaptive Equipment



Dad really liked those elastic shoe strings — but \$2.99 a pair? Wow! I stood in our local drug store and pondered the situation.

We had never known the price of the pair he was currently using because they had been part of a package of adaptive equipment he had been given at the rehabilitation center where he stayed while recovering from his recent stroke.

They were very helpful, allowing him to use the long-handled shoe horn they'd also given him (I wondered how much that had cost!) to slip his shoes onto his feet each morning without needing to wrestle with the laces.

Six months of daily use had stretched them until they no longer served their purpose, and replacing them every six months would become quite costly. As I stood there trying to think of ways to cut costs, I recalled using some very thin elastic in a recent project that cost about 44 ¢ a yard. At that price, we could make 13 pairs of homemade shoe laces for the price of one store-bought pair! All I had to do was buy the elastic from a fabric store, cut shoe-string lengths, and tied knots in the ends once we threaded them through Dad's shoes.

I was hooked! What other adaptive equipment could we make at home that would work as well as the commercially-produced items while costing much less?

As I looked through adaptive equipment catalogs, I was able to dream-up functional aids that worked very well, as long as looks didn't matter much. You can do the same!

Some require carpentry skills, so if you're not the 'handy-person type' just ask a neighbor, your child, or grandchild to help you make them. This is not only a good chance to visit together, but your helper might have an idea or two that will improve the piece of equipment you're working on! My brother was willing to help me and got quite excited about being able to help Dad in a way he'd not considered before.

Here are a few of my ideas you might want to try:

- ★ Wrap rubber bands around the handles of utensils or tools to make the "grip" larger, softer, and easier to grasp.
- ★ Save bubble wrap from packages and use it to wrap around the handles of utensils, etc. Fasten it on with rubber bands and remember to remove the bubble wrap to wash the utensils well.
- ★ Rubber bands or masking tape wrapped around pencils and pens makes them easier to grip.
- ★ Non-slip shelf liner makes great place mats and can also be used on end tables and bedside tables to keep plates, lamps, coasters, etc. from sliding.
- ★ An aluminum or stainless steel nail can be driven through a cutting board and used to hold fruits and vegetables for peeling and slicing. Be sure to blunt the tip of the nail slightly to avoid puncture accidents.



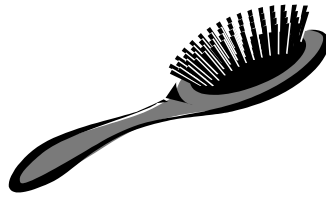
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- ★ A potato masher with a “W” shaped head can help you turn knobs on the range or washing machine.
- ★ Attach the ring section of a key ring to a coat or sweater zipper to make an extra-large zipper pull. Or, use a large paper clip to slip

into the hole on zipper pulls.

- ★ Use a clean hair-brush or scrub brush to hold your hand while playing cards. Two small brushes can be angled to hold and



hide your “hand” while keeping your opponents honest!

I encourage you to think creatively to invent your own adaptive equipment and save all that extra money for the things you really want!

Submitted by : Joyce. J. Brown, FCS Agent, Athens County, OSU Extension.

## April Is Parkinson Awareness Month

It is estimated that 1.5 million people in the U.S. have Parkinson’s disease (PD), more than 20,000 of them right here in Ohio. The number of people affected by the disease is much higher when you include care-givers, family members and friends.

Although 15% of PD patients are diagnosed before age 50, it is generally considered a disease which affects adults age 60 and over.

Although there are many theories as to the cause of PD, none are conclusive. It is a chronic, neurological condition involving the loss of dopamine in the brain. Symptoms of PD can include: slowness of movement, rigidity of limbs, poor balance, difficulty walking, stooped posture, “masked” facial expressions, and tremors; however, 30% of people with PD do not have tremors.

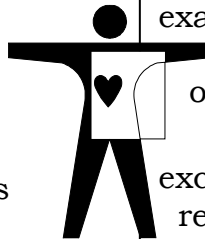
The symptoms and accompanying loss of coordination characteristic of PD can result in robbing its victims of their

ability to complete simple tasks like writing, buttoning and swallowing. In conjunction with a medication regime, there are therapies that can help to minimize symptoms, for example, Tai Chi exercises, speech therapy, as well as physical and occupational therapies.

There has never been a more exciting time in Parkinson’s disease research. It is said that PD is the most curable of all the neurological diseases. The current research has the ability to impact cures for other neurological diseases like Alzheimer’s disease, Multiple Sclerosis and ALS to name a few.

For more information about PD and to find an area support group, call the Central Ohio Parkinson’s Society (COPS) at (614)486-1901. Additional information can be found at the National Parkinson Foundation website at [www.parkinson.org](http://www.parkinson.org)

Submitted by : Lynn Dobb, Education Manager, COAAA.



## Try a Family Reunion... with Cleaning Supplies!

Family reunions frequently have the same basic elements— food, fun and conversation. This year, have a family reunion with a new twist. . .

. . .add cleaning supplies.

That's right, cleaning supplies! Hold the family reunion at Grandma's house and have everyone bring a sponge, bucket, and other cleaning items. The family can do Grandma's spring-cleaning while getting caught up on all the news.

Every spring, a big worry many seniors have is spring cleaning. They need help moving the bed to get at all the dust bunnies, moving furniture to paint, washing windows, and getting the flower beds ready to plant.

This year, don't let Grandma worry about how to get these chores done; get the entire family involved!

Be sure to talk this idea over with your loved one well in advance. Some may be very open to the idea and see it as a great relief and wonderful help, while others may be very threatened by the prospects of having their living space "invaded." Take the time to listen to their concerns and make a list of the rooms and tasks that are to be done as well as any areas that might stay "off-limits."

With the list in hand, make the family reunion a day of fun-filled spring cleaning. It only takes one member of the family to get everyone organized and assign the tasks. This can be a fun and easy way to get spring cleaning done!

The following suggestions can help get you started:

- ☞ Talk with your older family member and get a list of the things he or she would like to have done.
- ☞ Once you have a wish list, call all the family members who live nearby and invite them to participate! Tell them the date and time, and what's on the list.
- ☞ Let each person decide what they would like to do, provide any special instructions, and ask them to bring along any tools they will need.
- ☞ Be sure everyone also knows to bring a covered dish! All hard work should be rewarded with a fantastic meal!



☞ Don't forget the camera—there will be a lot of moments you'll want to capture and put in the family photo album!

So often families don't take the time to get together. But

by scheduling a fun "cleaning reunion" a family can get together and at the same time help an aging loved one. Adding lunch is a great treat!

In addition to spending time together, everyone gets to enjoy Aunt Betty's famous scalloped potatoes and Grandma's mouth-watering apple pie! It doesn't get any better than that! Give this year's family reunion a twist . . . add cleaning supplies.

Submitted by: Teresa Cook, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging

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Issue Editors: *Christine A. Price,*  
*OSU Extension State Specialist, Gerontology,*  
*Kirk Blair, OSU Extension Associate,*  
*Human Development & Family Science, and*  
*Judy Hardy, Ohio Department of Aging.*

Prepared by: *Kirk Blair & Judy Hardy*

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**Sincerely,**

**Extension Agent,  
Family and Consumer Sciences**

*For more information, contact the OSU Extension office at:*



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