NUTRITION Notes

Senior Services OF WICHITA

March 2026

Published monthly for the clients of Meals on Wheels.

Daylight Savings Time

Sunday, March 8th we will "Spring Forward" an hour in recognition of Daylight Savings Time. In 1966, after years of debate, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed a law to make the start and end dates of Daylight Savings Time uniform across the country.

March for Meals 2026

March for Meals is a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness and support for senior nutrition programs, particularly through Meals on Wheels and events scheduled during the month.

March for Meals is an annual celebration that began in 2002, commemorating the signing of the Older Americans Act, which established a national nutrition program for seniors. The campaign aims to combat food insecurity and social isolation among older adults by mobilizing communities to support local Meals on Wheels programs through volunteering, donations and advocacy.

Participating in March for Meals not only helps raise awareness but also directly supports the efforts to provide nutritious meals to seniors in need. The campaign encourages individuals and organizations to come together to ensure that no senior faces hunger or isolation.

During the month of March, we will be celebrating our kitchen and social services staff in the Meals on Wheels program. There will be two separate events to celebrate and honor our Volunteers. Also be on the look out for special volunteer visitors that will be out to help with delivery of meals. These could be local personalities, County Commissioners and other VIPs.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program - LIEAP

LIEAP can help pay your home heating bills. The following summary describes the basic LIEAP eligibility provisions. Additional information may be obtained by calling 1-888-369-4777.

DCF has been notified that federal funding was approved for the 2026 LIEAP season. This significant development allows us to continue planning the LIEAP season in Kansas.

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefits.

Persons Eligible

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.

2. The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level according to the guidelines listed.

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	$1,956
2	$2,644
3	$3,331
4	$4,019
5	$4,706
6	$5,394
7	$6,081
8	$6,769
$688 for each additional person	

If you are interested in receiving an application, please contact the office at (316) 267-0122.

Healthy Lifestyles for Healthy Older Adults

(www.eatright.org)

Americans are living longer, enjoying energetic and active lifestyles well into their 80s and 90s. Study after study confirm eating well and being active can make a dramatic difference in the quality of life for older adults.

You are never too old to enjoy the benefits of improved nutrition and fitness. With nutrient-rich foods and activities with friends, you can feel an immediate difference in your energy levels and enjoyment of life. In fact, as we get older, our food and activity choices are as important as ever to health.

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Produce Spotlight: Navel Oranges

By Isabelle Meyer, M.S., R.D

Nutrition Notes

Kale is a leafy green vegetable that is full of important nutrients. It is high in vitamin K, which helps your blood clot and keeps bones strong. Kale contains vitamin A which supports eye and immune health and vitamin C, which helps your body heal and fight cell damage. It also provides fiber, which helps with digestion and keeps you feeling full after meals. Kale has minerals like calcium and potassium, which help with strong bones, muscles, and a healthy heart.

Kale is easy to add to meals. You can eat it raw in salads, blend it into smoothies, or cook it in soups and stir-fries.

Recipe: Kale Salad

Ingredients:

For the Salad:

- 4 cups finely chopped kale
- 2 tablespoons chopped toasted almonds
- 1 diced apple
- 1-ounce diced cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan

For the Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Whisk together the dressing ingredients. Add the dressing to the kale and massage the kale for a few minutes. This makes the kale more tender and less bitter! Add the almonds, apple, and cheddar. Sprinkle parmesan over the top and serve.

Healthy Lifestyles for Healthy Older Adults - CONTINUED

Focus on Nutrient Density

As adults age, they need fewer total calories, but higher amounts of certain nutrients, especially calcium and vitamin D. In terms of nutrition, you need to focus on quality, not quantity. For both optimal physical and mental health, older adults truly need to make every calorie count. For a healthy eating plan, choose a variety of foods from all the food groups regularly.

Retired people on limited incomes may have trouble buying enough nutrient-rich foods to meet all their nutritional needs. If this is a problem for you or someone you love, explore the options for senior meal sites, Meals on Wheels, or supplemental nutrition assistance programs in your community.

The golden years are not the time for fad diets or drastic weight loss. Your goal should be to eat better while staying within your calorie needs. Fad diets frequently eliminate entire food groups, which can lead to serious nutrient gaps. Rapid weight loss often leads to a loss of lean body mass, exactly the opposite of what older people need for good health.

Aim for a stable weight as you get older. If you want to lose a few pounds, talk to your health care provider or a registered dietitian nutritionist about the best plan for you. The right balance of foods and activities can help you maintain strong muscles and bones.

Enjoy the Power of Protein

People of all ages need protein for strong, healthy bodies. Some older adults do not get the protein they need to maintain muscle mass, fight infection and recover from an accident or surgery. Chewing protein foods such as meat can be a problem for some older adults. Here are a few tasty tips to pump up your protein intake, without upsetting your food budget or energy balance.

- Enjoy more beans – Add canned beans to salads, soups, rice dishes and casseroles.
- Make your crackers count – Spread peanut butter on whole-grain crackers and eat them as snacks or alongside soup, chili or salad.
- Amp up your eggs – Mix grated, low-fat cheese or extra egg whites into scrambled eggs.
- Cook with milk – Use fat-free or low-fat milk or fortified soy milk, rather than water, to make creamy soups or oatmeal.
- Use dry milk powder – Mix a spoonful of dry milk into fluid milk, cream soups and mashed potatoes.

Is Breakfast Really the Most Important Meal of the Day?

By Isabelle Meyer, M.S., R.D

We've all heard the phrase: "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day." Yet nearly one in four Americans skips breakfast on a regular basis. So, is breakfast essential for health or is this just a common phrase?

For many people, breakfast can be a strong foundation for daily nutrition. Research suggests breakfast plays an important role in supporting health, energy, and balanced eating patterns.

BENEFITS OF EATING BREAKFAST

Metabolic Health

People who eat breakfast have lower risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and hypertension. Studies suggest that breakfast consumption improves glucose and insulin responses throughout the day.

Cognitive Function

Eating breakfast is linked to better memory and learning at all ages. Children who eat breakfast often do better in school. Older adults who skip breakfast may have more trouble with memory. This correlation could be due to breakfast refueling the brain after several hours without food.

Energy and Physical Performance

Food provides energy for daily activities, focusing at work or school, and physical movement. Eating breakfast can be especially helpful for people who are active in the morning.

Appetite Regulation and Balanced Eating

Skipping breakfast can lead to excessive hunger later in the day. When people get overly hungry, they are more likely to choose foods that are quick, high in calories, and low in fiber or protein. This can make it harder to have a balanced dietary pattern.

Nutrient Adequacy

Children and adults who eat breakfast usually have more balanced diets overall. Breakfast eaters are more likely to get enough important nutrients like calcium, iron, fiber, and folate.

BUILDING A BALANCED BREAKFAST

Breakfast is a great opportunity for eating nourishing foods, which may be why it is associated with so many health benefits.

For a balanced breakfast, try including:

- **Whole grains** (old-fashioned oatmeal or grits, whole grain toast, some cereals): Provide fiber that supports digestion, blood sugar stability, and fullness.
- **Protein** (eggs, yogurt, milk, soy foods, nuts/nut butters, beans): Helps with satiety, muscle maintenance, and steady energy.
- **Fruits and/or vegetables:** Provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and additional fiber.
- **Dairy or fortified alternatives:** Contribute calcium, vitamin D, and protein.

Highly refined, low-fiber breakfasts can still provide energy, but they may not offer the same benefits for fullness, blood sugar regulation, or nutrient intake.

TAKE-AWAY

Breakfast can support metabolic health, cognition, energy, and overall dietary balance. For many people, it helps set up the day for balanced eating. However, the foods we eat are more important than the timing. If you want individualized guidance, a registered dietitian can help you find an eating pattern that works best for you.

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK! PLEASE MARK YOUR MENU AT THE END OF THE MONTH AND SEND IT BACK TO US:

Cross through items you don't like.
Circle items you do like.
Put a star in front of items you want to see more often.

Suggested Donation
$10 Monthly

March 2026 - NOON MEALS ARE NOT LATE UNTIL 1:00 P.M.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 Beef Stuffed Pepper Italian Vegetable Blend Garlic Knot Fruit Cocktail	3 Marinated Chicken Potato Wedges Green Beans Whole Grain Roll Mandarin Oranges	4 Baked Cod Cheesy Grits Carrot Coins Wheat Roll Diced Peaches	5 Baked Turkey Cutlet w/ Gravy Rice Pilaf Sauteed Garlic Spinach Whole Wheat Roll Pineapple Chunks	6 Country Pork Chop w/ Gravy Mashed Potatoes Steamed Zucchini Cornbread Peach Applesauce
9 Meatloaf Buttered Rotini Pasta Poached Peaches Whole Wheat Roll Spring Salad Mix w/ Dressing	10 Turkey Croquette Mushroom Orzo Broccoli Florets Honey Wheat Roll Diced Pears	11 Braised Pork Tips Roasted Baby Potatoes Vegetable Blend Whole Wheat Roll Mixed Fruit	12 Chicken Quesadilla w/ Whole Wheat Tortilla Spanish Rice Peppers & Onions Diced Mango	13 Butter Crumb Tilapia Vegetable Couscous Collard Greens Whole Wheat Roll Apricots
16 Italian Pork Chop Lemon Orzo Green Peas Wheat Roll Mixed Fruit Cup	17 Turkey Burger on Wheat Bun Cubed Sweet Potatoes Caesar Salad Rosy Pears	18 Lemon Pepper Chicken Jefferson Noodles Fried Green Tomatoes Honey Wheat Roll Apple/Pear Bar	19 Fish Sticks Parslied Mashed Potatoes Brown Sugar Carrots Wheat Roll Tropical Fruit	20 Chicken Enchiladas Brown Rice Pilaf Black Beans Cherry Cobbler
23 Maple Glazed Pork Roast Confetti Couscous Broccoli Florets Whole Wheat Roll Spiced Apricots	24 Tuna Noodle Casserole Capri Vegetables Whole Wheat Roll Peach Fluff	25 Beef Tips w/ Mushroom Gravy Grits Glazed Carrots Garlic Knot Mandarin Oranges	26 Grilled Chicken Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bun Oven Fried Potatoes Vegetable Blend Fruit Cocktail	27 Chicken Parmesan Parsley Noodles Whole Wheat Roll Tossed Salad Blueberry Cobbler
30 Turkey Cacciatore Elbow Pasta Baby Carrots Whole Wheat Roll Peach Yogurt	31 Parmesan Crusted Tilapia Potato Wedges Yellow Squash Biscuit Cinnamon Applesauce			Milk is Served with Every Meal

IF YOU DO NOT EAT YOUR MEAL WHEN IT ARRIVES - REFRIGERATE IMMEDIATELY!

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