NUTRITION Notes

Senior Services OF WICHITA

May 2026

Published monthly for the clients of Meals on Wheels.

HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Meals on Wheels will be closed and not delivering meals on:

Memorial Day - Monday, May 25th

A nonperishable meal will be sent prior to the holiday; these need to be saved and used on the day you will not be receiving a meal delivery.

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

(https://aafa.org/get-involved/asthma-and-allergy-awareness-month/)

Since 1984, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) has designated May to be National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. It's a time to focus on respiratory and immune health. The awareness month aims to educate the public about asthma and allergic diseases, risk factors, symptoms, and treatment.

Facts & Stats

More than 106 million people in the United States have asthma and/or allergies. Some people may have more than 1 of these conditions.

- 28 million people in the U.S. (8 out of 10) have asthma (more than 23 million adults and about 5 million children).
- About 22 million people in the U.S. (6 out of 10) have food allergies (18 million adults and 4 million children).
- About 82 million people in the U.S. (1 in 4) have rhinitis due to nasal allergies, also called "hay fever" (67 million adults and 14 million children).
- Around 21 million adults and more than 9 million children in the U.S. have eczema. This equals about 8 out of 100 adults and 13 out of 100 children.
- There is no cure for asthma or allergies.

Why Do Certain Groups of People Have Higher Rates of Asthma, Asthma Attacks, or Asthma Deaths?

Asthma is one of the most common and costly diseases in the United States. The groups most affected by asthma are people with lower incomes, older adults, and people who are Black or Indigenous. These groups have the highest asthma rates, hospital visits/stays, and death.

Continued on Pg 2

Produce Spotlight: Spinach

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

Nutrition Notes

Spinach is a leafy green vegetable that is both nutritious and easy to incorporate into a variety of meals. It can be eaten raw in salads, blended into smoothies, or cooked in dishes like pasta, omelets, and soups. Along with its mild, slightly earthy flavor, spinach provides several important nutrients that support overall health.

Spinach has antioxidants that may decrease risk of cancer, chronic diseases, and infection. It also has compounds that may support eye health. Spinach provides vitamin C, which supports skin and immune health, and calcium which supports bone health. This leafy green is also high in soluble fiber, which can help prevent constipation.

Recipe: Strawberry Spinach Salad

Ingredients:

- 5 ounces fresh spinach
- 1 cup sliced strawberries
- 1/3 cup sliced red onion
- ½ cup toasted pecans
- 2 ounces crumbled feta cheese
- Balsamic dressing to taste

Directions:

Add all ingredients in a bowl and toss. Serve with a source of protein (chicken, salmon, steak, beans, eggs, etc.) and a whole grain (quinoa, brown rice, whole grain toast, etc.) for a complete and filling meal.

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month - CONTINUED

Structural inequities (e.g. systemic racism, income and wealth inequities) and social drivers largely drive disparities in asthma. Factors such as genetics and individual behaviors contribute less to asthma disparities.

- **Structural Inequities (determinants)** such as systemic racism, segregation, sexism, inequitable wealth distribution, labor markets, education systems, housing policies and availability, discriminatory policies, and climate change.
- **Social drivers (determinants)** such as socioeconomic status, education quality, neighborhood and living environment, employment, social support networks, and access to health care.
- **Biological drivers (determinants)** such as genes and ancestry.
- **Behavioral drivers (determinants)** such as tobacco use and adherence to medicines.

Healthier Home

Having good indoor air quality is an important part of having a healthy living space. People spend more than 90% of their time indoors, and your indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air.

You can improve your indoor air quality by cutting down the sources of allergens and asthma irritants throughout the home:

- Improve air flow – leave interior doors open, run exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Avoid harmful products like bleach and other harsh cleaners as much as possible.
- Use Asthma & Allergy Friendly products (bedding, flooring, vacuums, etc).
- Establish a regular cleaning routine to remove dust, pollen, mold and pet dander.

Continued on Pg 3

Carbohydrates: Your Body's Main Source of Energy

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

Your body depends on carbohydrates for energy throughout the day.

When you eat carbohydrates, your body breaks them down into glucose (sugar), which fuels your brain and muscles. Without enough carbohydrates, you may feel tired or have trouble concentrating.

Carbohydrates are found in many foods, including grains, fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. There are three main types of carbohydrates: sugars, starches, and fiber.

Sugars are carbohydrates that your body breaks down quickly. There are two types of sugars. Naturally occurring sugars are found in foods like fruit and milk, which also provide important nutrients. Added sugars are found in foods and drinks like soda, candy, baked goods, and sweetened beverages. These foods often provide energy without many nutrients.

Starches are a type of carbohydrate that your body breaks down more slowly. Many starchy foods also provide important vitamins and minerals. Starches are found in foods like whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal, whole wheat bread), beans and lentils, and vegetables such as corn, peas, and potatoes.

Fiber is found in plant foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds. Your body cannot fully break down fiber, but it plays an important role in health. Fiber helps support digestion, keeps you feeling full, helps regulate blood sugar, and can lower cholesterol levels. Most adults should aim for about 25–30 grams of fiber per day, but many people do not get enough.

Here are some tips for including carbohydrates as part of a balanced diet:

- Choose high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and seeds.
- Limit foods and drinks with added sugars, such as soda, candy, and desserts.
- Pair carbohydrates with protein or fat to help keep you full longer.
- Try to eat regular meals to maintain steady energy throughout the day.

Carbohydrates are an essential part of a balanced diet. Certain conditions like diabetes alter carbohydrate needs. These are general recommendations. Speak with a healthcare provider about your individual nutrition needs.

National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month - CONTINUED

- Keep your home's humidity level below 50%.
- Remove items with strong scents like candles.
- Replace carpet with solid surfaces if possible.
- Maintain your furnace and air-conditioning systems. Replace air filters as recommended.

Asthma can be harder to diagnose in older adults because they often have other health issues. Because of this, asthma is underdiagnosed and undertreated in this age group. Changing in aging lungs can also make asthma worse.

Be sure to see your doctor if you see changes to your lung health, breathing patterns, or you have a history of asthma. Having a plan can help decrease episodes and make your days better.

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

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

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Milk is Served with Every Meal				1 Sweet-n-Sour Chicken over Steamed Rice Fajita Blend Vegetables Apple Cobbler
4 Turkey Cacciatore w/ Rigatoni Pasta Casserole Baby Carrots w/ Oregano Whole Grain Roll Mixed Fruit	5 Parmesan Crusted Tilapia Potato Wedges Yellow Squash Biscuit Cinnamon Applesauce	6 Goulash Green Beans Almondine Garlic Knot Pineapple Chunks	7 BBQ Pork on Wheat Bun Steamed Broccoli w/ Lemon Peaches	8 Breaded Chicken Cutlet w/ Cream Sauce Brown Rice Green Beans Whole Grain Roll Mandarin Oranges
11 Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Mix Vegetables Whole Wheat Roll Tropical Fruit	12 Sliced Ham Macaroni & Cheese Corn on the Cob Garlic Knot Yogurt w/ Fruit	13 Honey Mustard Chicken Wild Brown Rice Collard Greens Wheat Roll Hawaiian Fruit Cup	14 Turkey and Brown Gravy Cornbread Dressing Parsley Buttered Carrots Peach Cobbler	15 Tuna Noodle Casserole Stewed Tomatoes Whole Grain Roll Tartar Sauce Apricots
18 Beef Tips Sweet Cornbread Peas Apple Cinnamon Slices	19 Hawaiian Beef Meatballs Sweet Potatoes Roasted Cauliflower Garlic Bread Mixed Fruit	20 Chicken Chili w/ Shredded Cheese Corn Whole Wheat Roll Tortilla Chips Mango Papaya Cup	21 Lemon Garlic Cod Mediterranean Brown Rice Green Beans Whole Grain Roll Fruit Cup	22 Chicken Cordon Bleu Scalloped Potatoes Roasted Broccoli Wheat Roll Peaches
25 **Closed For Memorial Day** Use the Shelf Stable Meal Provided	26 Chicken Aloha Potato Wedges Vegetable Blend Whole Wheat Roll Crushed Pineapple	27 Beef Country Fried Steak Mashed Potatoes Country Gravy Glazed Carrots Whole Grain Roll Mandarin Oranges	28 ***(Cold Meal)*** Chicken Salad Croissant Vegetable Pasta Spiced Apricots	29 Spaghetti and Meat Sauce Coleslaw Garlic Knot Blackberry Cobbler

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

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