



National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is celebrated in the United States every March. Sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, National Nutrition Month focuses on helping people to make correct food choices as well as developing good eating and exercising habits.

As spring approaches, we often find ourselves ready to try new things. This is the perfect time to think about our present nutrition plan and consider ways to improve it. Small changes in our eating habits can often bring big benefits.

Nutrition can have an impact on energy, blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels which are often associated with heart disease. What we eat also plays a role in the body's immune function, the system that responds to foreign invaders such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites.

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As we age, our body, activity level and lifestyle also changes. The need for healthy eating becomes even more important. However, meeting those needs may be challenging due to several factors. The good news is there are ways to overcome those challenges.



Medications as well as age-related changes in taste or smell may affect the appetite, cause dry mouth or alter taste. Taking a drink between bites may help. Talk to your physician to make sure there is not an alternative medication.

Cooking and getting around the kitchen may become more difficult. Check to see if a meal delivery plan would work for you. Aging Best offers nutrition assistance throughout our 19-county service area.

Budget constraints may make it more difficult to buy fresh, healthy foods. Check to see if you are eligible for a food assistance program such as SNAP. Aging Best has Specialists available to assist with the application process.

Physical changes can make chewing or swallowing difficult. Make sure dentures are properly fitting and well secured. Take small bites and be sure you drink plenty during your meal. If chewing or swallowing remains a problem, it should be discussed with your physician.

Digestive changes may also occur as we age causing problems such as occasional constipation. Staying active and drinking plenty of fluids can help. Fresh fruits and vegetables are good options for fiber.

Observing the color of our food can reveal a lot. The more colorful our plate is the more likely it is to contain important vitamins and nutrients. Foods rich in calcium and protein such as dairy products, fatty fish, soaked beans and dark leafy greens are very important as the risk for bone density and osteoporosis increases with age.



It is never too late to begin consuming a healthier diet. If you would like more information on nutrition resources or to check your eligibility for programs such as SNAP, please contact Aging Best at 800-369-5211 or help4u@agingbest.org.

Ombudsman Advocacy Day

Every year the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program hosts an Advocacy Day at the Missouri State Capitol. Regional Ombudsman Coordinators from across the state have the opportunity to speak with their respective legislators on current legislation that affects the quality of life for residents of long-term care.

This year's event was held Wednesday, March 23rd at the Missouri State Capitol. Ronda Giger, Regional Ombudsman Program Director, and Rebecca Baker, Regional Ombudsman Coordinator, were among the many participants.



Members of the Ombudsman team from Aging Best have attended the event several times. Unfortunately, last year they were unable to meet with their Senators and Representatives in person due to the pandemic. Virtual and phone meetings were held instead. "At the time, many of the nursing home residents and their families were struggling with the pandemic-related lockdowns. I feel like

we were still able to provide the Senators and State Representatives with important resources," said Giger.



This year many, including Representative Tim Taylor, pictured above, remembered the Ombudsman team from Aging Best and seemed grateful for the information.

For more information on volunteering opportunities call 800-369-5211 or email rgiger@agingbest.org.

Are You Eligible?

Aging Best can provide an eligibility screening for assistance with your Medicare costs. The application can be completed by phone from the comfort of your home. If you prefer to meet in person, you will be connected with a Specialist in your area and can set up and appointment. Eligibility for other savings programs will also be checked at the time of your screening.

For more information on savings programs contact 800-369-5211 or email help4u@agingbest.org.



Activities



Osage Beach Senior Center



Camdenon Senior Center



Owensville Senior Center



California Nutrition Center



Mexico Senior Center



Salem Senior Center