

AGING MATTERS: Nutrition and Exercise



McConnell

Several months ago, my staff participated in a health and wellness event in Columbia. Hundreds of active seniors gathered to attend classes and watch cooking and exercise demonstrations to learn more about the importance of proper nutrition and remaining fit.

In the United States, heart disease remains the leading cause of death, but through preventative measures such as eating healthy and staying active, proper nutrition choices along with exercise can help lower your risk for many chronic diseases associated with aging. Additionally, numerous studies have shown how exercise and a healthy diet are directly correlated with improved mobility and a reduced cost of care as you age.

A focus on senior wellness and nutrition is vital to a senior's independent lifestyle. In fact, many medical experts agree that just 30 minutes of exercise each day for five days a week has been proven to significantly reduce your risk for diabetes, lower your cholesterol level, and decrease your chances of developing cardiovascular disease.

Below is a list of simple activities that can have a big impact on your quality of life. Remember to consult your health care advisor before participating in more strenuous methods of exercise.

- **Join a local walking group.** Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, and walk in a safe place with adequate lighting.
- **Work outside.** As long as summer temperatures are not overwhelming, gardening or tinkering in your workshop can be a great way to maintain mobility.
- **Find ways to volunteer.** Involvement in your community benefits others, and it also a good way for you to stay active and keep your skills sharp.
- **Maintain your mental prowess.** Reading regularly keeps your mind active and helps improve your memory. Also, games such as crossword puzzles and Sudoku (which are often found in newspapers) are designed to encourage mental stimulation.
- **Implement healthy eating habits.** Eating healthy is a very important aspect of your overall wellbeing. The websites www.eatsmartmovemoreesc.org and www.choosemyplate.gov provide great resources for planning healthy meals.

Question of the Week:

Q:) How can I learn more about classes and activities offered in my community?

A:) It's simple. The Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging hosts www.scaccesshelp.org, a website that lists programs and services available in your area. Click on "Search for Services", select your county, enter a keyword (such as "exercise" or "nutrition"), and then click the "Search" button. A list of available services will then be displayed. You may also contact your local Area Agency on Aging for additional resources or to sign up for an evidence-based program offered in your area.

For more information, contact the South Carolina Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging (803-734-9900 or 800-868-9095) or visit our website: www.aging.sc.gov.