

Seasoning Adults

Having access to healthy foods and proper nutrition is an essential component of aging well. Often as we age, there are several factors that can contribute to struggles with eating healthy.

When we get older, the ability to go grocery shopping takes more effort. Many older adults may not be able to drive themselves anymore and must rely on public transportation or family to get them to a nearby store. Additionally, the act of physically shopping may be difficult for older adults due to trouble walking or standing for a long period of time.

What can you do?

- Many grocery stores now offer delivery services. Check with your local grocery store to see if they will deliver groceries to your home.
- Check with your local senior center to see if they offer transportation services. They may also have volunteers willing to help.
- Use motorized carts if available at the store. If this isn't an option, don't be afraid to ask an available employee if they can reach things or push your cart.
- Keep an emergency supply of nonperishable foods that you can choose from if weather is permitting you from getting to the grocery store.

Another adjustment that may affect food decisions for older adults is finances. Having a limited budget may make it difficult to buy enough food or could keep them from eating well.

Here are some ways that may help keep the cost of food down:

- Buy only the foods you need and as much food as you will use.
- Divide leftovers into small servings, label and date, and freeze to use within a few months.

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- Talk to your local Department of Family Services office to see if you qualify for a food program that can help you purchase groceries.

The act of cooking may also be difficult for older adults for several reasons, including those listed above. There are several community programs that offer in-home services and allow older adults to remain living in their homes.

Here is a list of some services that may be available in your community:

- Meals on Wheels delivers meals to older adults who are homebound or geographically isolated.
- Senior centers and community centers offer hot meals during the week. Many provide transportation to and from an individual's home.
- Many local churches have events where they host individuals and provide meals.
- Look for Home Health services in your local community. Often times they provide grocery shopping services or can help prepare meals at a low cost.

Communities offer many services for older adults. If you struggle with anything listed above, you may be eligible for these services. Don't be afraid to seek out more information from your local organizations!

Source: "For Mature Adults—Age Fifty Plus!" *American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, by Roberta Larson. Duyff, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012, pp.525-530.