

Discover your Optimum Life® today

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EA East Activity
FL Front Lobby
MDR Main Dining Room
PDR Private Dining Room
RL Resident Led
* Sign up
WA West Activity
LIB Library
TR Theater Room
BI Bistro

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Independent Living

All activities are subject to change.

Optimum Life® Inspiration

Are You Getting Enough Plant Diversity in Your Diet?

Eating a variety of plants is essential for your health, from meeting nutrient needs to helping brain health. Here's how to determine if you're getting enough plant diversity and discover easy ways to add more variety to your diet.

What Is Plant Diversity and Why Does It Matter?

Plant diversity in your diet is exactly what it sounds like—it's the number of different types of fruits and vegetables you eat. But how many plants should you be eating in a week? Research shows that those who consume 30 or more types of plants a week have a significantly more diverse gut microbiome. Our microbiome consists of a wide range of bacteria and other microorganisms in our gut, and it plays a crucial role in many aspects of our overall health, like immune function, digestion and nutrient absorption, reduced inflammation and enhanced brain health.



How to Achieve Plant Diversity in Your Diet

So, you're committed to eating 30 or more plants a week, but how do you achieve this biodiverse diet? Here are a few tips for helping you pack more plants into your meals:

1. Create a Colorful Plate

A good way to start diversifying your diet is by making sure each meal has a variety of colors. For example, if the base for your meal is a piece of grilled chicken and a baked sweet potato, add a pop of red by eating a few pickled beets on the side. Make a quick side salad with a mixed base including greens like spinach, kale or arugula; add your favorite colorful toppings like cherry tomatoes, sliced bell pepper, cucumber, avocado and whatever else you have sitting in your produce drawer.

2. Make a Plant-Packed Bowl or Smoothie

If you want to get in as many plants as possible in one meal, a bowl or a smoothie could be a great vehicle for those fruits and veggies. To make a plant-forward bowl, start with your favorite base, like brown rice or quinoa. Next, add your favorite leafy green, then start throwing in your favorite plants like sweet potato, artichokes, hummus, pickled red onions and anything else that you fancy. If you're looking to make your plants more portable, consider adding a blended smoothie to your weekly meal rotation.

3. Disguise Your Plants

Whether you're not the biggest fan of fruits and vegetables or you just want to incorporate more plants into some of your go-to recipes, try disguising your plants. If you love spaghetti, blend up some cooked chickpeas into your favorite pasta sauce. Not only will your sauce come out extra creamy, but you'll also get a boost of fiber and protein.

Keep in mind that you don't have to be perfect when it comes to aiming for a more biodiverse diet. Start slow if you need to. Before you know it, you'll be sneaking plants in wherever you can as a healthy path to your Optimum Life! *Source: Could Eating 30 Plants a Week Be the Answer to Better Health? (Emory University)*

Did You Know?

Brookdale's Make It Mine web series

Watch season six of Make It Mine to meet Brookdale residents who receive professional help personalizing their space to make it their home. Learn about each resident and how they like to spend time in their community, all while interior designers have just one day to make this happen.

Want even more room makeover inspiration? Binge watch past seasons of Make It Mine by visiting - brookdale.com/en/plp/social/make-it-mine.html



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

September 2026

Brookdale News

A Healthy Season Starts with Protection

As we head into the season when respiratory illnesses become more common, it's a good time to think about protecting your health. Staying current on recommended vaccinations is one of the simplest ways to support your well-being and continue enjoying the activities and connections that make our community so special.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults ages 65 and older receive recommended vaccines to help reduce the risk of serious illness and related complications. Because older adults are at greater risk for severe illness, vaccination is an important part of staying healthy and maintaining independence.

As part of our commitment to resident wellness, Brookdale offers convenient onsite vaccine clinics. Upcoming clinics may offer a variety of vaccines, including COVID-19, influenza (flu), RSV, pneumonia, shingles, and, when appropriate, measles. Most recommended vaccines are covered by Medicare Parts B, and D, as well as many Medicare Advantage plans, Medicaid and private insurance. Coverage may vary depending on your plan and the vaccine received.

If you have questions about which vaccines may be right for you, talk with your Health & Wellness Director or healthcare provider. They can answer your questions and help you make informed decisions based on your individual health needs.

By taking this simple step, you're helping protect your own health while contributing to a healthier, stronger community for everyone throughout the season.



An Engaged Life



Jean moved to Brookdale West Hartford in August 2022 after retiring from her career as a legal secretary. When she arrived her goal was simple- to continue enjoying the activities and relationships that had always made her life meaningful and without major changes. Jean is a lifelong member of the League of Women Voters and remains passionate about encouraging civic participation.

At Brookdale West Hartford, Jean found exactly what she was seeking and more. She values the friendships she has built with residents from many different places and backgrounds. She especially enjoys helping with Brookdale's Flex Your Brain Signature Program and serving as an ambassador, where she shares her experiences with prospective and new residents. Known for living a purpose-driven life, Jean encourages others to get involved, stay active, and have fun. She says this sense of purpose would not be possible without the support of the caring and compassionate staff. Jean also shared, "I feel blessed to be part of the Brookdale community at this time in my life."