

# Seniors Taking Charge



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## Nutritious Bites

### Healthy Holiday Eating

By Mary Grider, Nutrition Educator

As we approach the holidays, let's change our minds about those extra five pounds we always assume we will gain. We aren't suggesting you deprive yourself of your favorite foods. Just consider making some adjustments and good choices that will keep you fit and healthy no matter the season.

Here are a few tips and suggestions:

1. Bring your own healthy version of a family favorite to a potluck.
2. Have a healthy snack before you go to a party to keep you from being so hungry.
3. Check out the buffet before you get your plate. Choose only those foods you really want to eat rather than having a bite of everything.
4. Wait a good 10 minutes before heading back for seconds. It can take that long for your head to register that your stomach

is full.

5. Watch what you drink. Sugary punch, eggnog or alcoholic drinks add hidden calories.
6. Get some light exercise after a meal. A short walk before dessert can help you feel better.
7. Family, friends, and fun should take priority over food.
8. No foods are off limits (unless by your doctor's orders). Moderation in everything!
9. If you go overboard one day, do not let that be your excuse to eat poorly from Thanksgiving through New Year. Just get right back on your healthy eating plan.

Following these tips should ensure that you will not be carrying an extra five pounds into the New Year.

*Happy Holiday Season!*

## Recipe of the Month

### Light Sweet Potato Casserole (Serves 8)

This lightened-up version of a sweet potato casserole is delicious and easy to make. You'll never know the difference! Recipe Courtesy of *Taste of Home*.

#### Ingredients

- 3 lbs. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1/3 cup fat-free milk
- ¼ cup egg substitute
- 2 tbsp. brown sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon



#### Directions

1. Place sweet potatoes in a large saucepan or Dutch oven; cover with water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover, and cook for 25-30 minutes or until tender. Drain.
2. In a large bowl, beat the sweet potatoes, milk, egg substitute, brown sugar, salt, and vanilla until smooth. Transfer to a 1 ½ qt. baking dish coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until heated through.

## Keep on Moving #OptOutside

While most of us think about spending “Black Friday” at the mall or perhaps shopping online, there is a movement to #OptOutside on the day after Thanksgiving. Being in nature can reduce stress, anxiety, and mild depression, as well as increase creativity. Plus, it’s a fun way to be active! The following suggestions can help you #OptOutside for Black Friday.

- Visit a local state park. Many offer handicap-accessible trails and facilities. Check out the following website for more information: <https://gastateparks.org/>
- Plan outdoor games with grandchildren. Flag football, tag, hide-and-go-seek, or throwing a frisbee are all good ways to be active as a family.
- Engage in a walking tour of your local city. Pretend that you’re a tourist in your hometown, and view points of interest from a new perspective while walking instead of driving around town.

## Monthly Chair Exercise Hamstring Stretch

**This exercise is important for increasing flexibility in the back of the upper legs, which helps with fall prevention.**

Seated in a chair with good posture, bring one knee up toward your chest and hold on to the back of the leg just above the knee to support the weight of your leg. Slowly rotate the ankle clockwise for about 10 seconds, then reverse and rotate counterclockwise. Lower the leg back down and do the same with the opposite leg. Do another set. Stretching the hamstrings helps to prevent them from tugging on the lower back, which can help to prevent lower back pain.

### Hamstring Stretch



For more exercises, visit the following link:  
[https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/livewellagewell-archive/Exercise+Resources/13-ChairExercisesBallsBands+\(1\).pdf](https://s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/livewellagewell-archive/Exercise+Resources/13-ChairExercisesBallsBands+(1).pdf)

## Living Better

# Dealing with Seasonal Depression

The winter months and shorter days can often bring on symptoms of depression for many people. These symptoms can include feeling sad, gaining weight, wanting to sleep more, an increased appetite, as well as cravings for carbohydrates like bread, cookies, pasta, and cake.

Seasonal depression, or seasonal affective disorder (SAD), is a very common condition for many people. You may find that following these suggestions can help to combat the seasonal depression symptoms:

1. Get more light. You can add more lights to the rooms you are in most frequently. Also, sitting close to a window with natural light or going for a walk when it's sunny outside can help.
2. Get fit! Exercise can increase mood-boosting brain chemicals called endorphins.
3. Try to stay warm. Wear clothing layers or sip hot beverages.
4. Be mindful of not eating too many of those comfort food carbohydrates (sweets, breads,

pastas) that can add pounds and make you feel lethargic. Substitute more proteins for those kinds of carbohydrates.

5. Keep a journal. This can help you track possible triggers for your depression, as well as give you an outlet for some of the negative feelings you may be having.
6. Stick with a regular sleep schedule - go to bed and wake up at the same times (even on the weekends). This can help you keep a healthy sleep rhythm.
7. Check with your doctor to be sure you have enough vitamin D in your system. You may need a supplement.

If after trying these tips you find that your symptoms are interfering with your everyday life, if you notice major sleeping or eating changes, or if you have a weight gain of 15 - 20 pounds, contact your physician. They can often help with other suggestions or prescriptions to help you start feeling like yourself again.

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## Medication Manager

# About Hospice and Palliative Care

November is National Home Care and Hospice month and a perfect time to discuss the different ways that the sick and possibly dying can receive care. The two most common alternatives for care are Hospice Care and Palliative Care. Below is a brief description of each. Please consult your doctor or care administration to discuss these or any other services that would be best for you and your loved ones.

### HOSPICE

- You are enrolled through a referral from your primary care physician.
- It often relies on family caregivers as well as visiting hospice nurses.
- You must be considered terminal or within 6 months of death.

- Insurance coverages can vary, but many are covered under Medicare.
- There is a concentration on the patient's comfort. They usually forgo extensive life-prolonging treatment.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

- Teams are made up of doctors, nurses and medical caregivers. This is usually at a facility where they receive the treatment.
- There are no time restrictions. You can receive palliative care at any time or in any stage of illness (terminal or not).
- It may be covered by your regular insurance, but always check with your insurance company to be sure.
- Life-prolonging treatments are given and not avoided.

## To Your Health

# Nutrition for Swallowing Difficulty

Dysphagia, or swallowing difficulty, can result from many health conditions, such as stroke; cancer of the head, neck, or stomach and/or radiation treatment; Parkinson's Disease; Multiple Sclerosis; ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease; and many others. You may experience difficulty swallowing as a feeling that food is stuck in your throat or chest, drooling, coughing or gagging, frequent heartburn, or unexpected weight loss.

Swallowing difficulties increase risk for malnutrition. Many people who have trouble swallowing foods and beverages may get too tired to finish a meal or may become afraid of eating many foods because of the risk of choking. Swallowing problems can lead to choking or aspiration pneumonia. If you have difficulty swallowing, it's important to talk with your doctor and a speech and language pathologist (SLP) who can determine why you have trouble swallowing, and which textures of foods and beverages are best for you. The following textures may be recommended for you based on why you have trouble swallowing:

**Puréed:** These foods are one texture for easiest swallowing. Most foods are the consistency of pudding and require little chewing.

**Mechanically altered:** These foods are moist, semi-solid foods that require some chewing. Moistened cooked ground meats and canned or cooked fruits without seeds or skin are foods allowed in this texture.

**Mechanical soft:** These foods are soft but require chewing, such as well-moistened breads, biscuits, or pancakes; soft fresh fruits; cooked tender vegetables

and shredded lettuce; and well-moistened tender cooked meats or fish.

**Thickened beverages:** You may not be able to swallow regular thin liquids. Your healthcare provider or SLP may recommend a thickening agent for beverages.

If you have been advised to follow a particular Dysphagia Diet, you may want to ask for a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist who can help you plan meals and snacks that are safe for you to eat.

## Upcoming Events

### A Matter of Balance Workshops

More workshops coming Spring 2019!

We are seeking folks interested in preventing falls to train as MOB coaches. Please e-mail [web1975@uga.edu](mailto:web1975@uga.edu) if you want to learn more!

### Living Well Workshops

More workshops coming Spring 2019!

If you'd like to host a workshop, please contact Whitney Bignell ([web1975@uga.edu](mailto:web1975@uga.edu))

Support for this newsletter is also provided by:

#### The University of Georgia

- College of Family and Consumer Sciences
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- College of Public Health
  - Dept. of Health Policy and Management
  - Institute of Gerontology

### Questions or Comments? Contact us!

Whitney Bignell, PhD, RDN, LD  
Wellness Coordinator  
NE Georgia Area Agency on Aging  
Limited-term Clinical Assistant Professor  
The University of Georgia  
(706) 542-4067 | [web1975@uga.edu](mailto:web1975@uga.edu)  
Visit our web site! [www.negahealthmatters.org](http://www.negahealthmatters.org)