



DEPARTMENT OF **PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

September 2025 Nutrition Article **National Healthy Aging Month**

September is National Healthy Aging Month—a timely opportunity for older Americans (and all of us) to reassess how we approach aging. First launched 30 years ago by the [Healthy Aging](#) media platform, the observance was created to highlight the positive aspects of growing older and to encourage individuals to take greater responsibility for their health.

In 2021, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution officially recognizing September as National Healthy Aging Month, further elevating its mission to spotlight aging-related issues. Originally aimed at those turning 50 and beginning to experience age-related changes, the initiative has since expanded to inspire people of all ages to embrace aging with a positive mindset. It promotes healthy lifestyles and encourages activities that support physical, mental, and emotional well-being throughout the aging journey.

The intent is for communities, organizations, and individuals to come together to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining good health, encouraging positive aging practices, and highlighting resources that support older Americans in leading fulfilling lives. Below are some areas you can assess to help support your health.

Eat Enough to Support Body Functions

A balanced diet is crucial for older adults as it supports energy, vitality, and overall wellness. It helps maintain muscle mass, supports immune system function, and enhances cognitive abilities. In short, older Americans benefit greatly from a balanced diet because food serves as medicine, increasing our physical and psychological well-being by supplying the body and brain with the necessary nutrients to promote and maintain health.

That said, older Americans often do not eat enough because they do not experience the same hunger signals as younger people. Over time, this can become a concern if the body isn't receiving enough nourishment to sustain good health. Celebrating quality foods you like is one way to support healthy aging. However, many older adults face challenges that can reduce appetite, including health conditions, financial limitations, mobility and transportation barriers, and social isolation. Establishing a routine of specific times to eat can help stimulate and automate hunger. In addition, choosing quality, wholesome foods can provide the body with the necessary nourishment without requiring excessive consumption. Focusing on quality sources of protein (lean meats, eggs, nuts, seeds, beans, and nut butters) helps minimize the effect of naturally losing muscle mass due to aging. Just a palm-sized piece of lean meat is enough for a meal.

Keep in Touch with Your Healthcare Team

To age well, regular health check-ups are essential for older Americans. Most important, they allow for early detection of health issues that, if left unmanaged, can accelerate the aging process. Common and often preventable health conditions — such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer — can be addressed more effectively through routine visits that support both timely treatment and proactive prevention.

As the body changes with age, you may need to reassess long-standing medication regimes. Establishing positive and routine visits with health care professionals can ensure any chronic conditions are managed effectively and that preventative care remains a priority. These visits also offer tailored advice on self-care strategies and referrals for diet, exercise, and other wellness resources that enhance overall well-being.

Another valuable benefit of routine check-ups is the opportunity to build trusted relationships with your care team — people you can rely on when the aging process feels overwhelming or difficult.

Continue Learning

Lifelong learning helps older Americans stay mentally sharp and socially connected, and purposeful. It's not just about acquiring new skills or knowledge — it's about strengthening connections, boosting cognitive health, and enhancing life as we age.

So many options are available that enhance lifelong learning, such as local or online academic courses, workshops, or seminars. Additionally, pursuing new hobbies or trying something new, such as painting, can be mentally stimulating. Lastly, volunteering lets you give back to your community, meet new people, learn about local causes, and get involved with something you're passionate about.

Stay Active

Staying active as you age is crucial for maintaining physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being. Regular physical activity — regardless of duration or intensity — helps you manage and reduce the risk of chronic disease. It also improves mood and enhances mobility and strength. Therapeutic and enjoyable activities that support overall wellness are more easily enjoyed with good physical health. Choosing a variety of activities suited to your ability makes physical activity more enjoyable and helps reduce the risk of injury.

Cultivate Positivity

Cultivating positivity is essential for older Americans, as it supports emotional well-being, encourages physical activity, and contributes to a more fulfilling life. Practicing more positive outlooks (ie, gratitude) can boost physical health by increasing physical activity. Positive thinking can also help older Americans cope with cognitive challenges and maintain better memory and attention, not to mention reduce the risk of depression and anxiety. A positive attitude also provides you with the tools to bounce back from setbacks and manage life's challenges with confidence. Aging is a natural process that we all experience, so creating and investigating ways to celebrate it is something we can control, while the ticking clock is clearly beyond our control.

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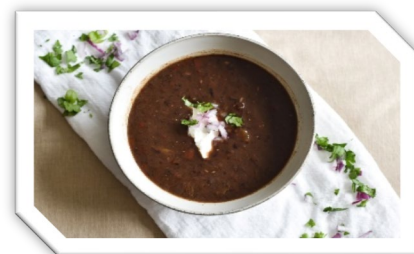
Recipe of the Month

Homemade Black Bean Soup

As the weather starts to turn colder, there's nothing like quality soup to make one feel cozy.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cans of black beans (rinsed and drained)
- 2 cups of chicken broth
- 1 cup mild salsa
- 1 tsp cumin
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- Sour cream, green onions, and shredded cheese for toppings (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Blend black beans and chicken broth in a blender or food processor.
2. Mix in salsa, cumin, and garlic powder.
3. Blend until smooth.
4. Heat in a saucepan until desired warmth or serve cold.
5. Top with desired toppings.