

SENIOR

NEWSLETTER



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NATIONAL SENIOR NUTRITION MONTH Supporting the Health of Older Montanans

Good nutrition plays an essential role in healthy aging by improving energy, supporting mobility, and helping prevent or manage chronic conditions. But winter can make it harder for many Eastern Montana seniors to get the nutritious meals they need. Limited transportation, higher grocery costs, and harsh weather all create challenges.

That's why March is an important reminder of the vital nutrition supports that are available in our region. This month, we are highlighting the services that help our older adults stay strong, connected, and independent.

Congregate Meals: Food, Friendship & Community

Area I Agency on Aging supports the Senior Centers in our region to help provide hot, well-balanced meals in a friendly group setting. These meals offer more than nutrition - they offer connection. Regular socialization has been proven to reduce loneliness, improve mental health, and encourage seniors to eat more consistently. If you haven't joined one for lunch recently, March is the perfect month to stop in, visit with friends, and enjoy a home-cooked meal.

SENIOR NUTRITION MONTH (continued)

Home Delivered Meals: Nutrition You Can Count On

For older adults who have difficulty leaving home and reside in a delivery area*, nutritious meals can be delivered right to their door. Each delivery ensures:

- A hot nutritious entree
- A safety check and friendly visit
- Reliable access to food

*For those who live in more rural settings, check with your local Council on Aging to see if frozen meal

deliveries are an option. Many provide made-to-order meals that provide the same nutrition and can be easily heated in a microwave.



NOTE: No senior will ever be denied a nutrition program if they are unable to financially contribute.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides monthly food packages to income-eligible adults who are 60+. These boxes are meant to help reduce your monthly grocery bill by providing pantry staples. Items include shelf-stable items such as cereal, rice, protein, milk, fruits, and vegetables. Many seniors pair CSFP with congregate or home-delivered meals to stretch their budget and maintain healthy eating habits.

Depending on your local distribution site, you will either receive one box per month or two boxes every other month. You can contact your local Council on Aging for an application.

Nutrition Really Matters!

Paying attention to what you put in your body is one of the best ways you can take care of it.

Eating well supports:

- **Stronger immune systems**
- **Better balance and mobility**
- **Improved energy and alertness**
- **Chronic disease management**
- **Healthy aging and independence**

Even small changes like adding one extra serving of fruits or vegetables, choosing whole grains, or eating a balanced lunch at your senior center can make a true difference!



EASY 10-MINUTE TUNA PASTA SALAD

- 1 can tuna, drained
- 1 cup cooked pasta
- ¼ cup diced celery
- ¼ cup peas
- 2-3 Tbsp mayo or Greek yogurt
- Salt & pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Season and chill. Makes 2 light, protein-rich servings. Great for lunch!

FINDING YOUR SPRING ROUTINE

Caring For Your Mind and Body

Winter can leave any of us feeling stiff, isolated, or a little out of sync with the world. In our region, March is still unpredictable; some days feel like spring while others remind us that winter hasn't finished with us yet. This in-between season is a great time to build small, steady habits that can help you ease back into a routine that supports your health, mood, and energy.

Start with gentle movement

You don't need a workout plan, just a bit of regular motion. Try walking the hallway, doing light stretches while your coffee brews, or take a short stroll when the weather permits (as long as it isn't icy!). Even five minutes will help loosen joints, improve balance, and lift your spirits. **The key is consistency, not intensity.**

Refresh your daily rhythm

After months of early sunsets, it's normal for sleep, meals, and activity to drift off schedule. Begin nudging your routine back into place: eat at regular times, open the blinds in the morning to let in natural light, and try going to bed and waking up at similar times each day. Stable routines support better sleep, sharper thinking, and steadier energy throughout the day.

Stay connected

Spring is a great time to reconnect with neighbors, check in with friends, or stop by a Senior Center for a program, meal, or activity. Social time is one of the strongest predictors of healthy aging. If getting out is difficult, try phone calls, video chats, and even letter writing to provide mood-boosting connections.

Add one habit at a time

A spring routine doesn't need to be a major overhaul. Choose one thing that feels doable and not overwhelming. Drink an extra glass of water, step outside for five minutes of fresh air. Small habits stack up quickly and help you build momentum for the new season!



CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

The Importance of Taking Time for Yourself

Many caregivers pour so much energy into supporting a loved one that their own health slips into the background. Over time, skipped meals, poor sleep, and constant stress can lead to burnout, depression, and serious health concerns.

Taking breaks, asking for help, and staying connected socially aren't luxuries – **they are essential parts of good caregiving.** Respite services, support groups, and caregiver workshops can lighten the load and provide tools to cope with the emotional challenges of dementia and long term care.

“CARING FOR YOURSELF ISN'T SELFISH – IT'S HOW YOU STAY STRONG ENOUGH TO CARE FOR SOMEONE ELSE.”

WHEN CAREGIVERS FEEL SUPPORTED, THE PEOPLE THEY CARE FOR BENEFIT EVEN MORE!

Better Caregiving for All

**March 25, 2026
Time: 1-2 PM PST**

Caring for Yourself While Caring for Someone with Dementia

Panelists will include:

- Moderator - Linda Ercoli, PhD
- Content Expert - Monica Moore, MSG
- Caregiver(s) - to share their knowledge and experience

Q&A with the Panel



Register via QR code or link:



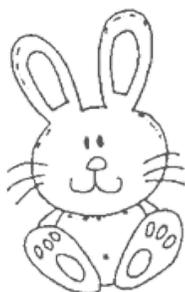
<https://bit.ly/BCA-Caring-for-Yourself>

YOUR MARCH BRAIN GAME

Keep your mind sharp! Brain games help improve memory, focus, and problem-solving skills—plus they're fun. A little daily mental exercise goes a long way in staying mentally healthy as you age.

SPRING word SCRAMBLE

nbori	-----
liagcnen	-----
lripa	-----
lmba	-----
chamr	-----
ssnheuni	-----
onbr	-----
snoesa	-----
ejnu	-----
nnbyu	-----



This Spring themed Word Scramble features **10** Spring themed words which have been scrambled. See if you can unscramble them to see what they are.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Our Director

Brittany Christensen serves as the Director of Area I Agency on Aging and has been part of Action for Eastern Montana for three years. She can't imagine doing anything else – even on the toughest days, a good caffeinated pick-me-up and witnessing the real, positive impact our programs have on Older Adults are all it takes to remind her why she loves her work.

Outside the office, Brittany's world revolves around her husband, her children, and a slightly overplump cat named Callie, who graciously tolerates the rest of the household but reserves her actual affection for Brittany. Whether relaxing at home or exploring new places on family trips, time with her family remains her greatest joy.

Brittany strives to live by the quote “Always abide by your integrity”. Anyone who knows her – personally or professionally – will tell you that this principle is woven into everything she does for Area I.

February Puzzle Solution

Key West

BAHEC = BEACH
GNIBIK = BIKING
MIEBONAH = BOHEMIAN
CRIGA = CIGAR
NCOCH = CONCH
VGINID = DIVING
FGIHISN = FISHING
TFOR = FORT
NIDASL = ISLAND
OLHSEUIGTH = LIGHTHOUSE

More puzzles are available monthly at:
<https://www.aemt.org/programs/aging>



**BRITTANY CHRISTENSEN; DIRECTOR
AREA I AGENCY ON AGING**