

# HomeTimes

Your Independent Senior Living Resource for Aging in Place

From America's Choice in Homecare.

## Help Your Senior Loved One Stick to a Healthy Diet

A proper diet for older adults is important for their overall health and wellness. Many seniors are instructed by their physicians to follow specialized diets to meet changing nutritional needs or treat certain medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, congestive heart failure, and coronary artery disease. With your help, your senior loved one can succeed on a diet focused on good nutrition.

### *Why Are Senior Diet Plans Hard to Follow?*

Seniors can oppose or have difficulties with specialized diets for the following reasons:

**Physical Changes:** It's no secret aging changes the way the body works. Seniors tend to have slower metabolisms, and they exercise less than younger people. This means senior diet plans should include fewer calories and more nutrient-rich foods. Taste buds, a sense of thirst, and the digestive system also change with age, which can lead seniors to eat more salt, become dehydrated, and experience more difficulty absorbing nutrients. Additionally, the elderly can have difficulty chewing or swallowing food and may take certain medications that decrease appetite.

**Memory Problems:** Seniors with memory issues may be uniquely challenged by a diet. For example, some elderly people may not remember if they've eaten and could overeat or not eat enough as a result. Seniors with more advanced memory impairments may even forget they have a diet to follow. This can be dangerous, particularly if your loved one has a condition such as diabetes or congestive heart failure that can exacerbate by eating the wrong foods.

**Emotional Health:** If your loved one has been given a new dietary plan that eliminates or limits certain foods, they may be unmotivated to follow instructions. Changes to home routines, such as suddenly living alone, can also cause anxiety or depression and throw a wrench into your loved one's dietary plan. It may be difficult for seniors to motivate themselves to cook and eat meals alone or shop for the right dietary foods.

### *How Can In-Home Care Help*

Changing lifetime habits can feel overwhelming, especially for older adults. While you should encourage your senior loved one to follow a doctor's advice on a proper diet, it can be a challenge. At the end of the day, your loved one is ultimately the one who will decide if he or she will follow a diet. Ask your loved one's physician how you can help and do your best to provide support and encouragement. Try to avoid making your loved one feel like you're taking away their choices and independence.



If your loved one needs additional support to stick to their diet plan, Visiting Angels® can help. Our home care professionals understand seniors have different nutritional needs and unique challenges. Essential home care can help your elderly loved one meet nutritional needs by providing:

### *Companionship*

Home care professionals are a trusted presence in many seniors' lives. They can encourage seniors to try new foods and can help your loved one adjust to a new diet more quickly. And because eating is often a social activity, having someone to sit down with and enjoy a meal can help older adults look forward to eating.

### *Encouragement*

For seniors with memory difficulty, in-home caregivers can often provide the reminders your loved one needs to stick to a diet plan. Whether it's suggesting your loved one have a drink of water, reminding them it's time to eat, asking if they've taken their dietary supplements, or helping them stick to the specific guidelines of their diet, an in-home caregiver is someone you can lean upon to care for your loved one.

### *Help Around the Home*

In-home caregivers are available to help your senior loved one purchase the right foods and assist with meal preparation and cooking. For seniors who have mobility impairments or other conditions that affect their ability to cook or grocery shop, this type of home care can be especially important.

***Following a healthy diet plan can be hard, but with the right support, your loved one will benefit from proper senior nutrition.***



## Foot Problems in the Elderly

When you think about your elderly loved one's physical condition, you may not focus on the health of their feet. It can be easy to overlook that their feet are a main support system — literally.

Unfortunately, foot pain and other foot problems in the elderly are very common and associated with:

- Weakness
- Frailty
- Exhaustion
- Gait Alteration
- Balance Difficulties
- Increased Swaying While Walking
- Decreased Walking
- Walking Speed

### Five Strategies for More Effective Communication

Unfortunately, foot pain and other foot problems in the elderly are very common and associated with:

#### Corns and Calluses

Corns and calluses are thick, hardened layers of skin around sensitive areas of the feet where a lot of pressure is placed upon. They're most commonly caused by ill-fitting footwear but can also be caused by an improper walking motion.

#### Toenail Disorders

Toenail problems can take on a variety of forms and be very painful. Some of the most common toenail disorders in the elderly are fungal infections or ingrown toenails.

#### Bunions, Hammertoe, and Claw Toe

These painful deformities occur when a toe becomes bent out of shape or grows excess bone. Some types of foot deformities are associated with specific footwear, such as high heels.

#### Loss of Fat Pads

Everyone is born with fat pads that cushion the bottoms of the feet. If you experience a decrease in fat pads, it may not seem like a big deal, but it can cause extreme discomfort. As you age,

you can lose these fat pads, which result in painful force being applied to parts of the feet that have no protection.

#### Connective Tissue Disorders

Connective tissues consist of cartilage, bone, tendons, muscles and ligaments. When connective tissues in the feet become irritated or inflamed, it can lead to painful conditions such as foot tendonitis or plantar fasciitis.

#### Poor Circulation in Feet

Poor circulation can happen when inadequate blood flow arises from certain factors, including sedentary lifestyle, age, obesity, smoking, diabetes and blood clots. If left untreated, the effects could be very serious. It is important to report symptoms of poor circulation in feet to a doctor.

Additional causes of foot issues include systemic disorders like diabetes, osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and even congestive heart failure. These conditions can lead to nerve pain, weak and painful joints, and swollen feet. Some people can have acute foot problems, such as plantar fasciitis, and a systemic problem like osteoarthritis at the same time.

### Caring for Older Adults' Feet

There are three major factors to consider for proper foot care in the elderly:

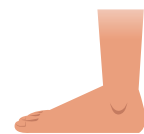


**Regular Care:** Make sure someone is checking your elderly loved one's feet regularly for any changes. Look for open cracks or sores, misshapen toes, discolored or altered toenails, and other changes to the skin such as thickening.

Make sure their feet are washed regularly to avoid infection, and their toenails are trimmed as needed. Visit a podiatrist if you notice anything strange about your loved one's feet.



**Proper Footwear:** Studies show most seniors wear shoes that are too small for reasons such as fashion, altered foot shape, and not realizing their feet keep growing in old age. Make sure your loved one is using the right size footwear by having their feet measured. Also, encourage them to use footwear with more support and avoid wearing high heels.



**Foot Orthoses:** Foot orthoses (specialized inserts placed inside the shoe) can be anything from over-the-counter adhesive pads to custom-made devices prescribed by a podiatrist. They help reduce foot pain and fall risk by changing the way force affects the feet while walking or standing. Visit a podiatrist to determine if your loved one would benefit from orthoses.

*If an elderly loved one has difficulty taking care of their feet, consider using essential home care services from a professional agency such as Visiting Angels®. Contact your nearest home care office today by calling 800-365-4189.*



## Low Carb Turkey-Stuffed Peppers

1 nonfat cooking spray	2 teaspoons chili paste
1 tablespoon olive oil	1/2 teaspoon salt
1 pound ground turkey	1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 cup diced onion	2 large bell peppers, any color, cut in half lengthwise, cored, and seeded
3 tablespoons diced fresh jalapeno pepper	4 (1 inch) cubes colby-jack cheese
2 cloves garlic, chopped	1/3 cup shredded colby-jack cheese
2 cups frozen cauliflower rice	4 teaspoons reduced fat sour cream
1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes	
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce	
1/2 cup water	

### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Spray a baking dish with cooking spray.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in ground turkey, onion, jalapeno, and garlic. Cook and stir until turkey browns and vegetables are tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain grease from the skillet. Add frozen riced cauliflower, tomatoes, tomato sauce, water, chili paste, salt, and pepper; stir until well incorporated. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes.

Drain marinade from the turkey and vegetables, and discard. Place bell pepper halves in the prepared baking dish. Place 1 Colby-Jack cheese cube in each pepper half, and fill with turkey mixture. Spoon remaining turkey mixture into the dish around the peppers.

Cover dish with aluminum foil, and bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes. Remove foil and sprinkle each pepper with shredded Colby-Jack cheese. Bake, uncovered, until peppers are soft and cheese has melted, about 10 minutes more.

(Optional) Add a teaspoon of sour cream to each pepper half.

### Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 4 servings • Calories: 462  
[www.allrecipes.com/recipe/276832](http://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/276832)



## Pumpkin Ginger Cupcakes

2 cups all-purpose flour	1 cup butter, room temp
1 (3.4 ounce) package instant butterscotch pudding mix	1 cup white sugar
2 teaspoons baking soda	1 cup brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt	4 eggs
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger	1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice	cream cheese frosting (optional)
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves	
1/3 cup finely chopped crystallized ginger	

### Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease 24 muffin cups, or line with paper muffin liners. Whisk together the flour, pudding mix, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ground ginger, allspice, cloves, and crystallized ginger in a bowl; set aside.

Beat the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until light and fluffy. The mixture should be noticeably lighter in color. Add the eggs one at a time, allowing each egg to blend into the butter mixture before adding the next. Beat in the vanilla and pumpkin puree with the last egg. Stir in the flour mixture, mixing until just incorporated. Pour the batter into the prepared muffin cups.

Bake in the oven until golden and the tops spring back when lightly pressed, about 20 minutes. Cool in the pans for 10 minutes before removing to cool completely on a wire rack.

When cupcakes have cooled, top with frosting and crystallized ginger pieces.

(Optional) Add cream cheese frosting.

### Nutritional Information

Serving Size: 24 servings • Calories: 210  
[www.allrecipes.com/recipe/152120](http://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/152120)



## America's Choice In Homecare®

Since 1998, Visiting Angels has been providing adults and seniors with the needed assistance to continue living at home. At our nationally known, locally owned agency, it is our mission to maintain the independence and familiar surroundings for those in need.

We offer help with personal care, light housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, shopping, companionship, respite care for families, live-in care and assistance with daily living activities. Call us today for a free, no obligation consultation! We care every day, in every way!

