

&gt;&gt;&gt; Passages &lt;&lt;&lt;

# Mindful Connections



## MENTAL HEALTH IN OLDER ADULTS



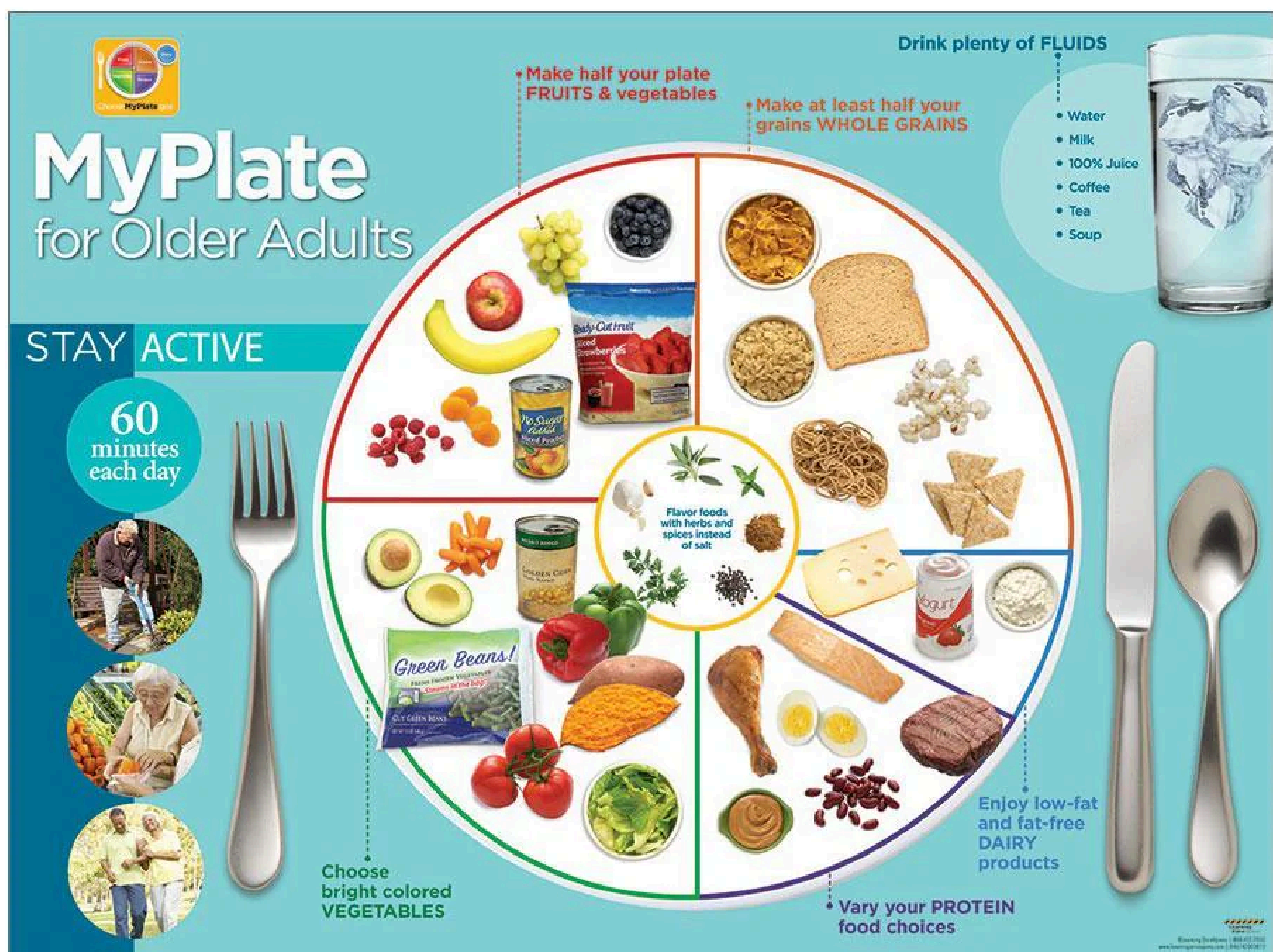
Our newsletter is dedicated to raising awareness of the various mental health issues affecting adults aged 60 and older. By exploring a variety of topics related to mental health and connecting individuals with resources, we aim to provide support to those struggling with these issues.

20.3% of adults aged 65 and older experience malnutrition, making it a pressing issue in the well-being of older adults. Good nutrition is one of the best ways to maintain mental health as we age, promoting greater physical strength, increased immune function, prolonged cognitive function in memory and problem-solving ability, and sustained energy.

# >>> TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR BODY <<<

There are many misconceptions when it comes to nutrition, especially in older adults. Even though many older adults may have decreased activity levels compared to younger people, this does not mean they require fewer nutrients. Having a balanced diet does not have to mean cutting out all of the foods you like or taking supplements to replace healthy eating, it simply means finding foods that incorporate essential nutrients like B, D, & E vitamins, fiber, protein, and fatty acids.

While it is normal to experience changes in appetite, slower metabolism, decreased nutrient intake, and other factors that may make it more difficult to control our weight as we age, it is important to talk to your doctor about what specific steps you can take to cater to your personal nutritional needs. A nutritious diet does not have to be bland; try adding herbs and spices that enhance the flavor of nutritious food without adding unnecessary salt.







# BENEFITS OF NUTRITION



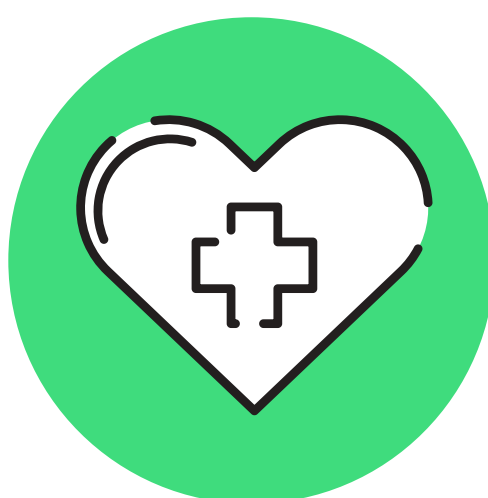
**Increased  
Muscle Mass**



**Boosted  
Energy**



**Cognitive  
Function**



**Surgery & Illness  
Recovery**



**Increased Bone  
Density**

## FACTORS IMPACTING NUTRITION



**Lack of Income**



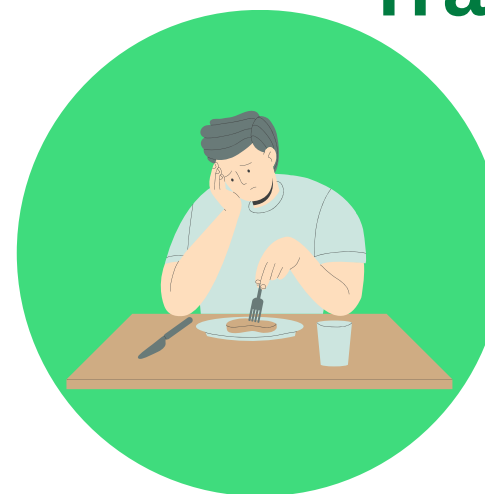
**Decreased  
Mobility**



**No  
Transportation**



**Medications**



**Decreased  
Appetite**



## >>> NUTRITION AND MENTAL HEALTH <<<

Nutrition and mental health are closely connected. Adults over the age of 65 are already at an increased risk for anxiety and depression, a poor diet can further elevate the likelihood of developing a mental health disorder and heighten symptoms of existing disorders. Consuming a nutrient-rich diet is one of the most effective ways to support brain health, as it provides the essential building blocks for brain cell function and the production of neurotransmitters, helping to prevent cognitive decline.

Chronic inflammation is a major risk factor for age-related cognitive decline and is strongly influenced by nutrition. Eating foods rich in antioxidants—such as fruits and vegetables—can help reduce inflammation and support the maintenance of cognitive function. Additionally, incorporating anti-inflammatory foods like fatty fish, nuts, whole grains, and olive oil into your diet can further protect brain health, potentially reducing the risk of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.



>>> YOU ARE NOT ALONE <<<

Both under-nutrition and over-nutrition are crucial problems for older adults, with 10 percent of older people living in their own homes not eating enough, and one-third overeating. Our population of people over the age of 65 is increasing significantly, projected to double, passing the population of young adults and adolescents by 2050. With such a great portion of our population being older adults, addressing nutritional imbalances becomes a critical public health priority.



Source: Dietary Guidellines for Americans

At Passages, we are dedicated to providing nutritional intervention, community support programs, and education to promote healthy eating habits. Ensuring access to affordable, nutrient-dense food and offering awareness about the dietary needs of older adults is essential to supporting healthy aging and improving mental health in older adults.



## >>> **WHAT YOU CAN DO** <<<

### **Home Delivered Meals Program**

530-898-5923

Chico, Biggs, Gridley, Palermo, Oroville

Offers home-delivered meals to older adults over the age of 60 who are homebound.

### **Congregate Meals Program**

530-898-4224

**Chico:** 850 Palmetto Avenue, 95926

Monday-Thursday 11:30am-12:30pm

**Oroville:** 1335 Myers Street, 95965

Monday-Thursday 11:15-12:15

\*Requires reservation

For adults above the age of 60, this program offers free nutritious hot meals and a chance to socialize with older adults in Chico.

### **PASSAGES Volunteer Transportation Program**

530-898-4027

\*Requires 7 day notice to schedule volunteer

Volunteer-based program that offers free rides, providing assistance in appointments, grocery shopping, and other errands.

## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR



Depending on your medical history and current physical health, talk to your doctor to come up with a plan that benefits your own nutritional needs- you are a unique individual with unique preferences, and you deserve a meal plan that will reflect your personal preferences and health goals.

# >>> **ADJUST TO YOUR NEEDS** <<<

## PERSONALIZE YOUR DIET

You are a unique individual with unique restrictions and preferences for the food you eat, dependent on allergies, health history, food preference, and other factors.

**Set manageable goals- after talking to your doctor, determine what parts of your diet need adjusting based on your health goals.**

- Are you trying to gain or lose weight?
- Do you want to increase energy levels?
- Do you have a specific medical condition that requires a specialized nutritional plan?
- Are there any important nutrients that you are lacking?

**Determine what steps you can take to make this process as easy as possible**

- Do you need soft foods that are easier to chew?
- Do you need foods that are premade and easier to prepare due to mobility issues?
- Would having a set time and routine for meals make meal time less stressful?
- Maybe eating smaller , more frequent meals would help increase appetite.