



Me Time Monday™ Tip Sheet for Caregivers in support of



Senior Nutrition Tips for Family Caregivers

While it is important for all of us to check on how well we are balancing our diet, it is even more important to know that more than six million Americans over age 60 suffer from malnutrition and hunger according to the [Meals on Wheels Association of America \(MOWAA\)](#). In fact, there has been a 79 percent increase in hunger among people age 50 plus over the last 10 years according to an [AARP Foundation report](#).

How do you know if your older loved one is getting the correct daily nutrition? According to [NIH National Institute on Aging](#), here are some common complaints as to why your older loved one may not be eating and how caregivers can solve the issue:

"I have trouble chewing." This could mean dentures do not fit well or your loved one's gums are sore. Ensure they get to the dentist for a check-up and in the meantime, choose softer foods for them to eat.

"Food just doesn't taste the same anymore." Or "I'm just not that hungry." Taste buds and a sense of smell changes as we age. Medications can also change the taste of foods or make you feel less hungry. Have a conversation with your loved one's doctor about the side effects of medication on taste and try adding mild spices, herbs or lemon juice to flavor your loved one's food.

"I can't get out to go shopping." Or "It's too much trouble to cook for one person." Mobility issues such as arthritic hands or concern over driving can all lead your older loved one to ignore making meals or getting to the grocery store. As a caregiver, there are numerous options for getting nutritious meals delivered.

As we age we encounter changes in our dietary needs. If you have a chronic illness such as diabetes, heart disease or even arthritis, all call for changes in diet. In addition, foods that we were able to tolerate – such as milk – may now have to be substituted if you find your loved one is lactose intolerant.

Helping your loved one maintain a healthy, nutritious diet will help them maintain a good immune system, ward off chronic illness and will give you better peace of mind. And, for your own nutritional, healthy diet needs, check out the other [Me Time Monday Tips from the Caregiving Club](#) and our [Me Time Monday videos](#).

You can also find more information about the [Caregivers' Monday campaign](#), part of the non-profit Healthy Mondays organization.