

Nutrition Resources for Staying Healthy

Accessing affordable and healthy food is a challenge for many older Americans and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the new coronavirus (COVID-19) places additional barriers in the way. For older adults, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and people with compromised immune systems, COVID-19 can be more overwhelming because of the greater risk for contracting the virus. Health care experts are recommending older adults and people with compromised immune systems stay home and keep a distance from people to limit their exposure. If you're having difficulty getting or preparing food because of finances, mobility or social distancing, there are resources available to help.

Where can I find food?

This is a stressful time and it is important to know you are not alone. Federal, state and local organizations are adapting their programs and services to meet the changing needs of the community.

- **2-1-1 Texas** is a free, anonymous information and referral services hotline available 24 hours a day every day connecting Texans with state and local health and human services programs such as home-delivered meals and soup kitchens. [2-1-1Texas.org](https://www.2-1-1Texas.org)
- **Home Delivered Meal** programs provide older adults and people with disabilities with access to healthy fresh and frozen meals that are planned by a registered dietician and delivered to their door. The Area Agency on Aging can help you apply. hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm
- **YourTexasBenefits.com** is a resource to get food at no-cost. People of all ages can apply to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by calling **2-1-1** or by visiting [YourTexasBenefits.com](https://www.YourTexasBenefits.com). A new program will roll out in May 2020 allowing SNAP benefits to be used when ordering groceries online.
- **FoodPantries.org** can help locate a local food pantry near you. Food pantries are run by a variety of organizations and are in communities across Texas. [FoodPantries.org](https://www.FoodPantries.org)
- **Feeding America** can help you find your regional food bank and get more information. Many food banks in Texas are organizing extra food distributions during this challenging time. [Feedingamerica.org](https://www.Feedingamerica.org)

Other ways to find help

Community volunteers and local resources might be available to provide relief during this pandemic. Find out what help is offered in your area with the resources below:

- **Area Agencies on Aging** are located across Texas to help adults 60 and older and their caregivers. AAAs connect older Texans to in-home care, home delivered meals, benefits counseling and more. hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm
- **Aging and Disability Resource Centers** are part of the No Wrong Door system to streamline access to long-term services and support for the whole family. Connect to your local ADRC for one-to-one counseling, and to learn more about the full range of available long-term and supports in Texas, call 855-YES-ADRC (937-2372). hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/aging-disability-resource-center/find-adrc
- **Local intellectual and developmental disabilities authorities** can assist with eligibility determination, benefits screening, service coordination and more. hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/find-us/where-can-i-find-services
- **The Eldercare Locator** can connect you with a variety of services, including transportation and benefits. Call 800-677-1116 (weekdays, 8 a.m.–7 p.m. Central time) [Eldercare.acl.gov](https://eldercare.acl.gov)
- **BenefitsCheckUp.org** has a full confidential screening that can help you find benefits that cover a variety of needs. Receiving support for other basic needs can free up room in a budget for food. BenefitsCheckUp.org

More nutrition resources

For more information on how to start and maintain a healthy diet, visit the following nutrition resources:

- **Texercise – Healthy Eating** provides comprehensive nutrition information for healthy aging. Consider following the Texercise *Fit for the Health of It!* videos on the Get Texercise page of the website to stay active. Texercise.com
- **National Institute on Aging – Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging** highlights ways to shift to healthy eating patterns for healthy aging. nia.nih.gov/health/smart-food-choices-healthy-aging
- **National Council on Aging – Senior Nutrition** offers informative videos on nutrition topics (for example, healthy eating on a budget). ncoa.org/economic-security/benefits/food-and-nutrition/senior-nutrition

- **National Institute on Aging – 10 Tips for Eating Healthy on a Budget.** nia.nih.gov/health/10-tips-eating-healthy-budget
- **National Center for Health, Physical Activity and Disability** provides nutrition information and resources for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. nchpad.org/287/1802/Nutrition~for~Persons~with~Intellectual~Developmental~Disabilities
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Dinner Tonight** provides recipes and tips for healthy cooking as well as low-cost, healthy cooking videos. dinnertonight.tamu.edu
- **Foodsafety.gov** has information about keeping food safe and preventing food poisoning, a good reminder as we all are cooking at home more. foodsafety.gov
- **Choosemyplate.gov** offers helpful information about food planning during COVID-19. [Choosemyplate.gov/coronavirus](https://choosemyplate.gov/coronavirus)