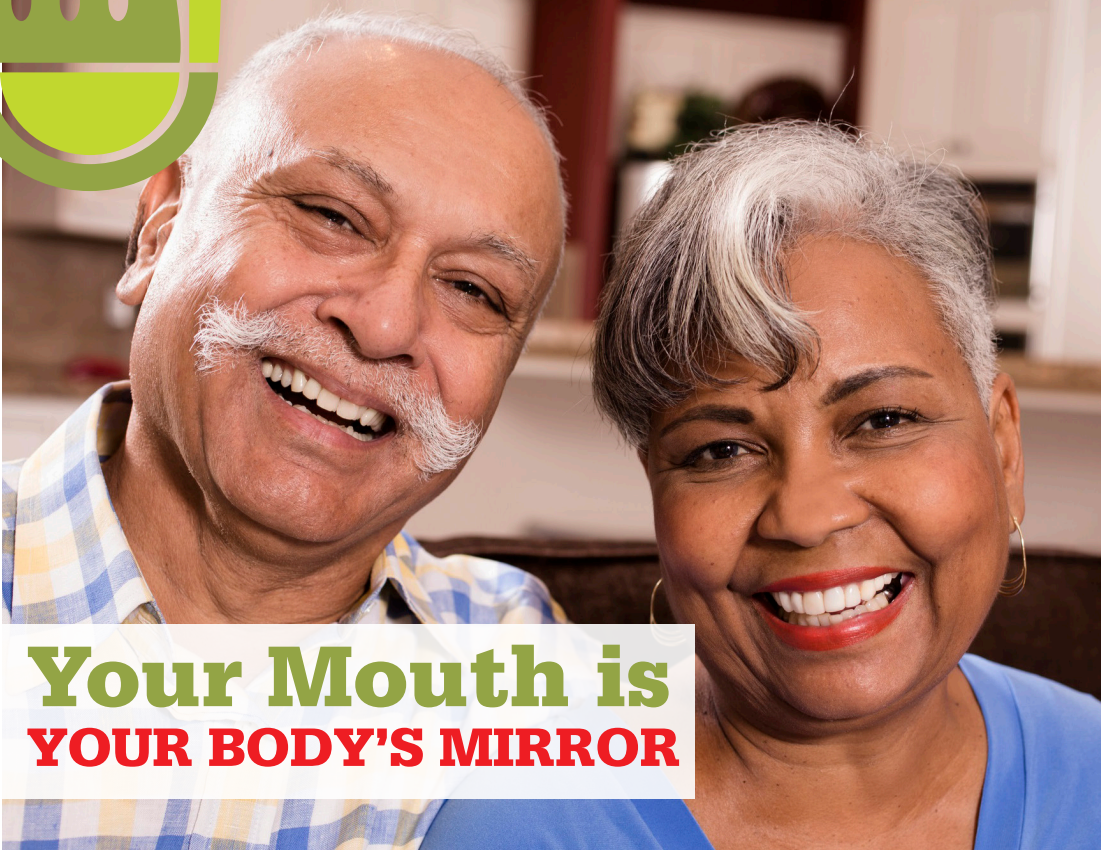


FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

Volume 8, Issue 2



Your Mouth is YOUR BODY'S MIRROR

EXPERTS RECOMMEND a dental cleaning and oral health assessment two times every year.

“The mouth is the entry way for food and fluid intake.”

Malnutrition and oral health - how do the two relate? It is estimated that almost one out of every two older adults are at risk for malnutrition - that's almost 50%! But let's talk about what that word really means first.

Malnutrition is defined as a lack of proper nutrients that leads to a change in body composition and health decline. Malnutrition is a growing and urgent problem among older Americans and it is often underrecognized. It has been found to be linked to higher death rates, longer stays in the hospital, and more medical complications. It also increases the risk of infections, anemia, skin problems, and electrolyte imbalances in your blood.

Now what does that have to do with oral health? It is known that oral health and malnutrition are closely related. If your teeth are not properly

taken care of, you likely are not getting enough nutrients. This is largely due to the fact that missing teeth, sore gums, and ill-fitting dentures may make it harder to eat, especially protein and nutrient-rich foods such as meat and vegetable products. With increased tooth decay, eating may also become more painful. Eating is supposed to bring you joy and nutrients, not pain!

As you age, your risk of developing oral health problems increases. One study found that patients with poor or moderate oral health were 54% more likely to be malnourished than those with good oral health. Of those malnourished patients, 41% had not seen a dentist in the past two years.

So where do you start? First, it is important to identify the causes and signs of malnutrition. Additionally, as you age, it is very important to take care of your oral health. The prevention of malnutrition can start with you!

Source: <https://www.westhealth.org/the-link-between-malnutrition-and-poor-oral-health-in-older-adults/>



Page 2
Are you malnourished?



Page 3
Enjoy a split peas favorite



DID YOU KNOW that depression and loneliness can lead to malnutrition?

Am I Malnourished?

Use this screening tool if you feel like you might be at risk for malnutrition.

1 Have you recently lost weight without trying?

No	0
Unsure	2

If yes, how much weight have you lost?

2-13 lb	1
14-23 lb	2
24-33 lb	3
34 lb or more	4
Unsure	2

Weight loss score:

Score to determine risk:

0-1
Not at risk

2 or more
At risk

2 Have you been eating poorly because of a decreased appetite?

No	0
Yes	1

Appetite score:

Add weight loss and appetite scores

MST SCORE:

Signs or symptoms to look out for:

- Sudden, unintended weight loss
- Lack of appetite
- Poor concentration/confusion
- Trouble staying warm
- Fluid buildup
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Decreased urination
- Constipation

CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN if you believe you are suffering from malnutrition.

The Myth of Malnutrition

You may have an image in your mind of someone who is malnourished. It may include someone who is underweight, weak, and frail. But malnutrition can occur in all shapes and sizes. Malnutrition refers both to “under-nutrition” and “over-nutrition.”

Under-nutrition occurs when there is a deficiency of calories or essential nutrients in a person’s diet. It is often caused by not having enough to eat or having a diet that lacks proper nutrition such as calories, protein or essential nutrients. This may lead to weight loss and significant health problems. This is most likely to occur in older adults with serious diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, heart failure, cancer, or organ failure.

Over-nutrition may happen when you become less physically active with age, but continue to eat as you did when you were younger. This can put you at risk for becoming overweight and increases your risks for serious diseases, particularly cardiovascular disease, arthritis, and diabetes. In the case of overnutrition, you may be missing adequate levels of important nutrients resulting in a form of malnutrition as well.

Tips on preventing malnutrition:

- Monitor your weight.
- Take care of your oral health.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Plan healthy meals.
- Make meals social events.
- Drink enough water.
- Take advantage of services available.

Source: <https://www.healthinaging.org/a-z-topic/nutrition/basic-facts>

Feelings of Joy

Being physically active outdoors no matter the time of year can be incredibly pleasant. Connecting to nature may help keep seasonal affective disorder (SAD), depression and anxiety at bay because sunshine naturally increases the mood-boosting hormone serotonin. When we are active, our bodies release a chemical called endorphins. These reduce your perception of pain in your brain, and endorphins also make us feel good! This leaves us with a pleasant or even euphoric feeling. In addition to short-term feelings of joy and less stress, it can also help to alleviate anxiety and depression.



The Basics of Oral Health

Oral health is important to overall health for all ages but according to experts, focusing on oral health is critical for older adults. Proper oral health plays a key role in preventing malnutrition. Let's explore some of the statistics showcasing the importance of oral health for older adults.

- The prevalence of cavities is more than twice as high in older adults (aged 65 and older) than in younger adults, aged 20-64.
- As many as 64% of older adults have periodontitis, a serious gum infection that damages the soft tissue and destroys the bone that supports your teeth.
- Many older adults have lost teeth throughout their lives. This may affect your chewing, specifically meats and potentially lead to malnutrition.

What can I do for my own oral health?

- Brush and floss your teeth every day. Use fluoridated toothpaste.
- Watch for changes in your mouth, the risk for oral cancer increases as you get older.
- If you have difficulty chewing, try to prepare foods so that they can be chewed easily. Many foods can be chopped, stewed, or grated so that they are still appealing but easier to eat with dental problems.
- Practice healthy habits such as cutting back on sugary foods and drinks, quitting smoking, and drinking alcohol in moderation.

Sources:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/09/190926114004.htm>

<https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/topics/doctor-visits/regular-checkups/oral-health-older-adults-quick-tips>

SPLIT PEA SOUP



Easy-peasy! Try a healthy and delicious split pea soup.

Serving Size: 1½ cups, serves 8 people

**THIS
RECIPE
IS ONLY
\$.77 PER
SERVING.**

Ingredients

- 4 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 6 cups water
- ½ cup brown rice
- 1 pound split peas, rinsed
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 cup carrots, sliced
- 1 cup onion, diced
- 1 cup ham, cubed

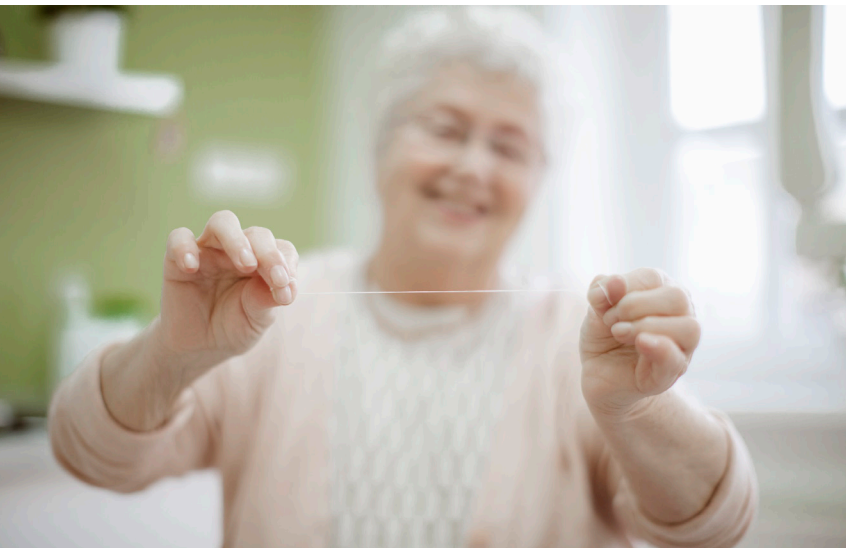
Instructions

1. Stir chicken broth, water, split peas, rice, and ground black pepper together in a large pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer, covered, for 30 minutes.
2. Add celery, carrots, and onion to soup. Simmer, covered, for 30 minutes or until peas and vegetables are tender.
3. Stir in ham. Heat for 5 minutes.

Tips

- **Food Safety Tip:** Rinse your fresh vegetables under running water just before cutting. Even vegetables that will be peeled or skinned must be washed first!
- **Freezing Tip:** Prepare soup as the recipe indicates. Freeze leftovers for up to 3 months.

This recipe is provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. For more resources like this, visit the Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website at <http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>. Spend Smart. Eat Smart. is a registered trademark of Iowa State University.



Be Active. Take Action!

This month, I will stay active by...





RANJIT AND MEENA SHAH attend Fresh Conversations at Westside Community in West Des Moines.



Testimonial of the Month

Great role models

Ranjit and Meena Shah bring a wealth of healthy lifestyle practices to their *Fresh Conversations* meetings. They have been attending the meetings for 3-4 years.

Ranjit and Meena moved to the United States in 2002 and said they use the information provided from *Fresh Conversations* to incorporate into their way of cooking. Ranjit stated he likes listening to other participants and learning how they cook or use the food products. They incorporate lean meats, beans, pulses, and nuts into their everyday meal planning.

Their grandchildren live close by, so they are keeping their traditions alive by cooking the same way for the kids. Both are very active with gardening, walking, and playing with their grandkids. Thank you for being great role models!

- Cracking the Malnutrition Puzzle Answers
1. Weight loss
 2. Appetite
 3. Floss your teeth
 4. Oral health
 5. Malnutrition
 6. Endorphins

Cracking the Malnutrition Puzzle

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
5	12	20	9	13	18	11	24	3	16	22	25	7

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
21	4	15	10	19	1	6	12	23	17	2	14	8

1. $\frac{17}{13} \frac{3}{11} \frac{24}{6} \frac{25}{4} \frac{1}{1}$
2. $\frac{5}{15} \frac{15}{13} \frac{6}{3} \frac{6}{13}$
3. $\frac{13}{25} \frac{4}{1} \frac{1}{14} \frac{4}{12} \frac{19}{6} \frac{13}{13} \frac{6}{24}$
4. $\frac{4}{19} \frac{5}{25} \frac{24}{13} \frac{5}{25} \frac{6}{24}$
5. $\frac{7}{5} \frac{25}{21} \frac{12}{6} \frac{19}{3} \frac{6}{3} \frac{4}{21}$
6. $\frac{13}{21} \frac{9}{4} \frac{19}{15} \frac{24}{3} \frac{21}{1}$
7. $\frac{15}{13} \frac{19}{3} \frac{4}{9} \frac{4}{21} \frac{6}{3} \frac{6}{3} \frac{1}{1}$