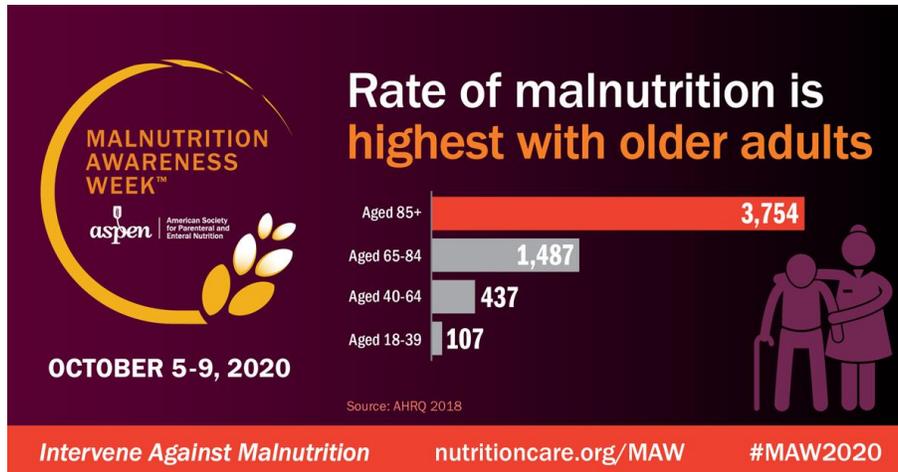


# Malnutrition Awareness Week is October 5-9!

*Did you know that up to 1 out of 2 of older adults is either at risk for becoming malnourished or is malnourished?*



Why senior malnutrition happens can be due to a combination of factors such as:

- **Normal age-related changes:** As we age, taste, smell and appetite tend to decline. Our decreased senses make eating less enjoyable and therefore, we consume less food.
- **Illness:** Physiological changes in our bodies such as inflammation from illness, causes our appetites to decrease and makes it more difficult to absorb nutrients.
- **Difficulty Chewing/Swallowing:** Poor dental health and loose fitting dentures can cause great difficulty with consuming enough nutrients.
- **Dementia:** Individuals may forget to eat, think they have already eaten, or even forget to buy groceries.
- **Medications:** Some medications can cause decreased appetites or make it more difficult to absorb nutrients.
- **Restricted Diets:** Medically tailored diets, like low sodium or sugar restricted, may contribute to less food intake because of less appeal.
- **Limited Income:** Older adults may have difficulty purchasing groceries due to financial insecurity.
- **Reduced Social Contact:** Older adults who eat alone may not enjoy meals as they did before and lose interest in cooking and eating.
- **Depression:** Factors such as grief, loneliness and decreased mobility can contribute to depression which in turn decreased appetite.
- **Alcoholism:** Drinking lots of alcohol can interfere with the digestion and absorption of nutrients. Increased alcohol intake also can cause people to consume less nutritional calories.

# Signs and Symptoms of Malnutrition



## Improving Nutrition:

First and foremost, make sure you **speak with your physician** if you have any nutritional concerns.

Make sure to eat **nutrient-rich foods** including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish, and lean meats.

Flavor foods with **herbs and spices** to add flavors and to make meals more interesting and appetizing.

Incorporate **healthy snacks between meals** to help with eating more calories throughout the day. Try yogurt, peanut butter with crackers, or vegetables with ranch or hummus.

Your physician may recommend and prescribe **nutritional shakes** between meals to help increase your daily overall calorie intake.

**Use local services** such as congregate meals, home meal delivery, food pantries or food banks to get the foods you need.

Resources:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/caregivers/in-depth/senior-health/art-20044699>

[American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition](https://www.aspen.org/)