

# **About the Senior Meals Menus**

## **The Basic Menu:**

**3/8/18**

A **nutritional analysis** of each menu is provided by a registered dietitian to meet the current state standards for fat, calories and sodium. In addition, we track approximately 9 nutrients in this analysis process.

**Hot Meal menu offers two entrees** (different proteins) each day. Participants can select the entrée that appeals most to them.

**Frozen Meals** are available to those who need Meals on Wheels for days we do send out fresh meals. Those receiving frozen meals must be able to safely store and reheat these meals. Menu- Choice of 12 entrees, subtle changes to the menu occur every 4 months. Frozen meals do not include dessert; all frozen meals would be suitable for a diabetic; meatless items are available.

### **With both Fresh and Frozen Menus:**

- Menus are low sodium. Averaged over the week, the menus will not exceed 1,050 mg of sodium.
- Diabetic Friendly Meals (including dessert or dessert substitute) will offer Carbohydrate Counts range between 4 and 8. Averaged over a week, the calories range between 600 and 850 for complete Diabetic Friendly Meals.
- Recipes are modified to reduce fat and sodium
- Nonfat milk in all recipes (including puddings)
- Most gravies are very low in fat.
- Averaged over the week, no more than 30% of calories from fat.
- No trans fats, tropical oils or lard used
- Variety in fruits and vegetables
- Freshly baked breads, rolls, desserts.
- One cup of 1% milk with each meal
- At least 1/3 DRI (Dietary Reference Intake for nutrients) daily

### **Diabetic Friendly Meals:**

Participants with Diabetes should work with their health care professional to determine if this menu will meet their own personal needs. A nutritional analysis is available to participants and their health care team.

The menu's nutritional analysis is calculated with no concentrated sweets.

Averaged over a week, calories range between 600 and 850 for complete Diabetic Friendly Meals (this includes dessert or dessert substitute)

- Carbohydrate Counts range between 4 and 8 for complete Diabetic Friendly Menus (including dessert and milk)
- Desserts may be fresh fruits or canned fruits in juice, diet gelatins, puddings, custards, and occasionally sherbet or ice cream if they fit into the menu's calorie and carbohydrate range

## **Sodium:**

Meals are suitable for those on a low sodium diet depending on their physician's recommendation. Averaged over the week, the menus will not exceed 1,050 mg of sodium.

### **More about Sodium.**

Café 60 and Meals on Wheels menus provide, at most, 7 of the 21 meals a participant eats each week. Controlling sodium requires making lower sodium choices in all the foods they select, whether it is from this menu or items they are using for their other meals and snacks.

Each healthcare organization uses its own "sodium language." If a participant has been told they are on a low sodium diet, they need to ask the specific mg of sodium their physician recommends. Low sodium will mean different sodium levels to different health care providers.

Sodium is added to many foods to enhance flavor. It also occurs naturally in many food items. For instance, a cup of milk contains 130 mg of sodium.

The majority of sodium in our diets comes from packaged and restaurant food and is a direct result of food processing. Even foods that may not taste salty can be a major source of sodium.

More than 40% of the sodium you eat comes from just 10 types of food:

- |                 |                            |                    |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| *Breads & Rolls | *Cold cuts and cured meats | *Snacks            |
| *Pizza          | *Poultry                   | *Mixed Meat Dishes |
| *Soups          | *Sandwiches                |                    |
| *Cheese         | *Pasta Dishes              |                    |

You can **reduce the amount of sodium** in your diet by:

- Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables or frozen fruits and vegetables without sauces
- Limit processed foods “convenience foods” such as canned foods, pies, pastries, deli meats, ham, bacon or other processed foods.
- Limit “instant” products like oatmeal, flavored rice and ready-made pasta dishes
- Read and compare food labels and choose lowest sodium options
- Choose reduced sodium or no salt added versions of canned products like soup and vegetables
- Limit high sodium condiments like soy sauce, salad dressing, sauces, dips, catsup, mustard and relish
- Use herbs, spices and flavorings to season foods
- Use salt substitutes only with your doctor’s approval.

## **Other Special Needs:**

**Vegetarian Meals** -Meatless entrees are available sparingly on the menu. The Frozen meal menu offers 4 meatless entrees of the 12 menu choices.

**MSG** – The program cannot guarantee that no MSG will be in the menu. MSG occurs naturally in many foods (like tomatoes and cheese) and it is added to others to enhance flavoring. Not all food processors disclose MSG in their canned products, dressings, condiments etc... that would be included in a recipe.

**Food Sensitivities and Food Intolerances such as:** lactose, gluten, allergens to nuts, or other sensitivities. In general, the program cannot accommodate individual food intolerances. Some milk or powdered milk is used in some recipes. Gluten free foods must be produced in a kitchen that is completely free from gluten products. Gluten Free Frozen meals could be available in the future. A food processor that produces a product without nuts, could have a cross contamination issue with airborne nut dust if another product containing nuts is processed in the same facility. The same applies to cooking in a kitchen.

**Meals on Wheels cannot leave a meal on a porch, even in a cooler with ice.** These coolers are meant to keep cold foods cold for short periods. They will not sufficiently cool the hot meal quickly enough to a safe temperature to maintain food safety and risks “food poisoning.”