

How much protein are  
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# Getting enough protein becomes trickier with age

By **LESLIE SHALLCROSS**

For Senior Voice

My college freshman roommate insisted that she needed to eat meat twice a day or she would get sick. At one point, she missed her lunchtime bologna sandwich and declared that her sniffles later that day were evidence of this need for protein – I wasn't so sure about that. This was the era of the popular book, "Diet for a Small Planet," and the beginning of a widespread movement of vegetarianism, promoted both for the health of the planet and human health. I investigated the environmental and nutrition science and chose to follow a healthy, mostly vegetarian diet (with no increased frequency of colds). But, since attaining the official rank of "senior," I've confronted a few more facts about protein that have me reconsidering my roommate's assertion.

## Building your health

Protein provides the building blocks for blood, connective tissue, skin, hair, nails and muscle. Sufficient protein is necessary to produce disease-fight-

ing immune cells and create strong bone. Research evidence in seniors support the idea that higher protein intakes may also be necessary for ideal health due to protein's role in maintaining and building muscle mass.

Muscle loss is natural and begins around age 30, with most individuals losing between 3 percent and 5 percent of muscle mass each decade of life. Even if your weight has stayed the same over time, you may have noticed a change in your figure (this is my excuse for a change in how my clothes fit) and decreased muscle strength and stamina. After age 70 years, this may increase to as much as a 15 percent loss per decade. The result of this continued muscle loss may lead to a condition called "sarcopenia".

Many of us know the word "osteopenia", a condition in which the bones become weaker and easily fracture (as it progresses, it becomes osteoporosis). A less familiar term, sarcopenia, is a condition of muscle loss which leads to decreased strength and mobility, sometimes to the



David Washburn/Senior Voice

*There is a universe of options for supplemental protein – flavored or neutral powders in bulk buckets or individual packets; premixed shakes or beverages; snack bars, and more. The protein is milk or whey-based, or made from various plants, from soy to hemp and peas.*

point that we are no longer able to care for ourselves. Sarcopenia can lead to debilitating falls and fractures. In the United States, sarcopenia affects as many as 45 percent of elderly, with about 30 percent of those 60 years and older experiencing significant muscle loss. Just how severe and compromising this loss becomes may depend upon other health issues, physical activity and protein intake.

A recent news report suggests that 1 in 3 adults over 50 years of age are not meeting the Recommended

Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein; in older adults it is close to 40 percent. This is especially troubling because it takes more protein than the current RDA to stimulate muscle growth in seniors. In addition, physical inactivity, whether by choice or due to illness or disability, makes muscles very resistant to growth regardless of protein intake.

Reasons seniors may come up on short on protein intake:

- reduced appetite
- reduced sense of taste/smell
- inability to cook meals

- lack of financial resources
- skipping meals
- chewing or swallowing difficulties
- poor vision
- dementia
- depression
- dieting (for weight loss)

In young healthy adults, a meal including protein stimulates muscle growth. In older adults, this normal metabolic response that builds muscle doesn't work as well – even when we have the same amount of physical activity and a relatively healthy diet, there will be muscle loss. However, seniors may prevent, reverse or stabilize muscle loss by increasing physical activity with regular resistance exercise and by eating extra, high-quality protein.

## Getting enough

So, how much protein do we need? The current RDA for protein is 0.8 of grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day. Experts studying sarcopenia believe that this should be increased to between 1.0

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# Struggling to stay active? Visit the pool

By **MACKENZIE STEWART**

Senior Voice

Whether it's to tackle a New Year's resolution or find a new activity that encourages you to venture outside the house during the winter months, swimming, a low impact activity that works your entire body while also managing to take the pressure off hips, joints and knees, is an excellent way to stay active during the coldest, darkest time of year.

Classes around the state range anywhere from intensive master swim to soothing Ai Chi (*that's not a typo; Google it – Editor*), providing guided experience and another way to connect with community members and cultivate friendships. Various high schools, gyms and community centers statewide

**Swimming, a low impact activity that works your entire body while also managing to take the pressure off hips, joints and knees, is an excellent way to stay active during the coldest, darkest time of year.**

offer lap swim hours for those interested in independent practice or open swim hours for those looking to spend extra time with children and grandchildren.

Check out the list below to find a pool near you.

## Anchorage

- South Side YMCA at Dimond, Dimond Center Mall, 344-7788. Lap swim, open swim, arthritis water exercise.
- Anchorage Community YMCA, 5353 Lake Otis Parkway, 563-3211. Lap swim, open swim, arthritis water exercise.
- University of Alaska

Anchorage Public Pool, 3211 Providence Dr., 786-1231. Lap swim, open swim.

- H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark, 1520 O'Malley Rd., 522-4420. Riverwalk, water exercise.

- Moseley Sports Center at Alaska Pacific University, 4400 University Dr., 564-8314. Lap swim, water exercise, adult training classes.

- Alaska Club East (membership required), 5201 E. Tudor Rd., 337-9550. Lap swim, water exercise, private swim lessons.

- Alaska Club South (membership required), 10931 O'Malley Rd., 344-6567. Lap swim, water

exercise, private swim lessons

- Buckner Physical Fitness Center, Bldg. 690, D St., Fort Richardson, 384-1308. Open swim, swim lessons, water exercise.

- Elmendorf Fitness Center, Bldg. 9510, Rick-enbacker Ave., Elmendorf AFB, 552-3624. Lap swim.

- High school pools: Visit [muni.org/departments/parks/pages/directory.aspx](http://muni.org/departments/parks/pages/directory.aspx) or contact city Department of Recreation (907-343-4402) for pool locations, schedules and activities in Anchorage.

## Fairbanks

- Alaska Club Fairbanks South (membership required), 747 Old Richardson Hwy., 452-6801. Lap swim, water exercise.

- Mary Siah Recreation Center, 1025 14th Ave.,

459-1082. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.

- Hamme Swimming Pool, 931 Airport Way, 459-1086. Lap swim, open swim.

- Patty Pool in Patty Center at University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1890 Tanana Loop E, 474-7744. Lap swim, open swim

## Juneau

- Augustus Brown Pool, 1619 Glacier Ave., 586-5325. Lap swim, water exercise, aqua aerobics.

- Dimond Park Aqua Center, 3045 Dimond Park Loop, 586-2782. Lap swim, water exercise, swim lessons, sauna.

## Around the state

- Utqiagvik Barrow High School Pool, 1684 Okpik St.,

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# Chore programs catching on in Alaska

By JOHN SCHIESZER  
For Senior Voice

You probably have never heard of chore programs, but you should. They are a whole new way of helping people live safely and independently, especially those who have problems with activities of daily living (ADLs). Chore programs help individuals remain independent and living at home through assistance that they otherwise might not qualify for under restrictive or state-run supportive services.

“I think it is recognized that chore service can help folks stay safely in their home,” said Joan Heikens, who is with the Valdez Senior Center. “Family used to take care of their seniors. Now, families do not. They may not live in same area or they are too busy.”

Chore programs not only are growing in Alaska but all over the United States. The Valdez Senior Center Inc. has offered chore services through Medicaid for more than 10 years. Heikens said their programs allows individuals to stay where they are often most happy. She is not surprised that they are growing in popularity.

“I believe that these services are needed to help a person maintain in their home safely. Many times, seniors are unable to do chore work themselves and it is important to keep their environment clean,” Heikens told Senior Voice.

Chore programs usually include housekeeping, grocery shopping, help with laundry, yardwork and transportation to health care appointments. Some even offer minor household repairs, mail reading and bill paying assistance. Chore programs are meant to serve as safety nets. It is hoped that underserved individuals, such as those who are isolated and do not have family and friends as resources, can be helped.

“Chore work includes housekeeping, but it also covers snow removal, cutting wood, and shopping. In 2016, I started a non-profit

**Chore programs usually include housekeeping, grocery shopping, help with laundry, yardwork and transportation to health care appointments. Some even offer minor household repairs, mail reading and bill paying assistance.**

called Connections to Care Inc. Our main focus is hospice services, which are not available in Valdez,” said Heikens. “We recognized that many folks went without help because they do not qualify for Medicaid and were not able to afford to pay. Connections to Care Inc. provides services free of charge. We have volunteers that go into homes to help. We also have an equipment closet (shed) full of wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, raised toilet seats, etc.”

She said in her community the volunteers help with chore work weekly or just provide companionship.

At Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI), they are on a mission to help older adults remain as independent for as long as possible. “There are any number of reasons why a person might find themselves unable to stay in the home and community they choose, and that could result in placement in a higher-cost setting that they really don’t want and can’t afford,” said Chuck Foster, WASI Chief Executive Officer.

He said chore programs are making a big difference in many communities across Alaska. WASI looks for ways to provide the little bits of support seniors need so they can stay independent. “One of those services is housekeeping,” Foster said. “Age takes a toll on our ability to do some of the more demanding tasks in keeping up a home. Through our In-Home Services, WASI offers

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# Everyone deserves to communicate

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Alaska Relay provides free distance communications equipment to Alaskans who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties. Equipment options include phones with amplification or captioning, tablets and accessories for accessing mobile devices.

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For individuals who have a hard time hearing over the phone, but may still catch a large portion of the conversation, an amplified phone may be the right fit. Choose between a corded or cordless amplified phone. If the challenge is not about hearing others, but rather others hearing you, there is the option of outgoing amplification.

For those who have a difficult time hearing over the phone and miss many words, a captioned telephone (CapTel) may be the right fit. CapTel provides real-time captioning of the conversation, similar to captions on your television. These phones require internet to access the captions. While the captioning comes at no cost to the user, telephone service does still need to be obtained from your local telephone company.

Tablets are available for individuals who cannot access a standard phone line or need it for relay

services. Tablets come preloaded with the applications (apps) necessary to make a call. If the user has a speech disability, it is required that they can use text-based communication. If the user needs relay services, apps like Video Relay Service (VRS) and Sprint IP Relay will be considered. Another option is the iBox. It connects the tablet with a communication app to a standard landline so the user can “have a voice” over the phone.

In addition to these options, teletypewriters (TTY) and hearing carry-over (HCO) phones are available. If you do not know when your phone is ringing, a flasher can be included to give a visual alert for calls.

Apply today at [www.alaskarelay.com](http://www.alaskarelay.com) or by contacting Assistive Technology of Alaska at (907) 563-2599 or [akrelay@atlaak.org](mailto:akrelay@atlaak.org)

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# Sexual intimacy doesn't end with dementia

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

When confronted with sexual activity in our parents or clients with dementia we usually make a judgement: Is this right or wrong? It is here that our personal experience and feelings may get in the way of ensuring seniors a satisfying late-stage quality of life.

For relatives, sexual activity may be embarrassing; for professional caregivers, inconvenient or uncomfortable.

One of the least-discussed issues with dementia patients is intimacy and sexual activity, said Gay Wellman, RN and education specialist with the Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

At a webinar in Anchorage in late August, Wellman discussed how our preconceived notions about intimacy in people with dementia is colored by our own experience and values.

"I'm looking at it from a family point of view," she said by phone. "I'm really excited to get this topic out."

Amber Smith, education specialist with Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, added that family members often say, "My parents certainly didn't have sex at that age", or "That's not my Dad, he never did that." But how does that reflect on the person?"

## Leave your preconceived notions behind

Wellman said when confronted with displays of intimacy and sexuality in older adults, caretakers need to ask themselves how they define intimacy and sexuality and do those beliefs impact the family member or client negatively.

She finds videos by Teepa Snow helpful and informative. Snow says her mission is to change the culture of dementia support and care. She believes people living with brain changes, caused by various dementias, are all too frequently being deprived of their human rights. See

**One of the least-discussed issues with dementia patients is intimacy and sexual activity.**

<https://bit.ly/2Eh9VvC>.

"Before you look at this activity ask yourself what do think is intimacy, what do you think is sexuality," Wellman said. "What's the need that's not being met? Try to respond rather than react."

## Thought process and dementia

In particular, Wellman said, patients with frontal temporal dementia face challenges in decision-making and control of behaviors, while Lewy Body dementia sufferers present with emotional flatness, lack of interest or the total opposite.

A person's response to dementia is as unique as their personality, and a lack of understanding of dementia and its effect on a loved one or client can result in inappropriate treatment.

We all want what is best for our parents and clients but it is their best not ours.

"People with dementia are not aware of how they affect other people," Wellman said.

## Intimacy comes in many ways

From feelings of being in a close relationship to physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual relations with others — intimacy has many faces.

And all are valid said Smith.

"Sexuality is so varied because each person is unique and I need to know that in order to provide care.

"How do I put aside my wishes, my religion and look at you as a unique individual," Wellman said. "Assume that every woman and every man are sexually active as they get older. The popular opinion about sexuality is if you're not doing it there's something wrong with you."

With professional caretakers there's the added



© Can Stock Photo / Bialasiewicz

prohibition on touching or being touched by patients and it's a minefield that has to be crossed carefully.

But touch is what makes us human and gives us pleasure and contentment.

"There forms of touching today that are not permitted between staff and patients," Smith said. "I can't hold their hand making people feel 'other.' But I can ask 'hey can I give you a hug.' Look at if your touch is desired by the other person and ask permission."

Misunderstandings can come in when staff or caregivers provide personal hygiene care and a client

misinterprets it.

"Sex trauma in a person's life can cause them to react a certain way because of our personal care," Wellman said.

The best approach is to be aware of the patient's state of dementia and realize be able to move past any misinterpreted situation.

## Out of the closet

In the 21st century it has become clear that people have a wide range of sexual identities.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people have a particularly difficult time as they age.

If it is disturbing for

caretakers to find straight adults engaging in sexual activity, for many caretakers responding to LGBT activity is difficult.

"What happens when partners who have loved openly gay all their lives and it can be really scary when one of the couple goes into a nursing home or hospital and staff sees them holding hands," said Wellman. "They worry whether they'll be discharged or kicked out. Places should have policies in place."

Other states have provided protection such a New York which has a law that provides LGBT older adults with protections while in the care of a nursing home in New York State, including the right to be free from discrimination, neglect and emotional and physical abuse.

Seniors of any persuasion have lived their lives as bets they possibly could under whatever circumstances life may have presented to them, they all deserve love, comfort and care at its end.

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# AARP Alaska focuses on education, healthy lifestyles

By **TERESA HOLT**

AARP Alaska

I have been the new AARP State Director for Alaska for a couple of months. Some of you may know me from my previous position as the State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

When a friend suggested I apply to work at AARP, I was not sure how my work experience would be relevant. All I knew about AARP was that they send you a discount card when you turn 50 and sell insurance. After reading the book “Disrupt Aging,” written by AARP CEO JoAnn Jenkins, I knew this was the place I wanted to work. I learned that the mission of the Alaska AARP office is to empower people to choose how they age. At first I thought I could help my mother and other people in their 80s have more options as they age. Once I started working at AARP I have realized that what AARP has to offer is also

relevant to people in their 50s, like my friends and me. We need to work now to change the system so the options for aging are what we want.

In the past, AARP has focused on making systemic changes at the national level. In recent years, AARP has focused on working with locals to make change not just at the state level but also at the community level. The main advocacy focus for AARP Alaska will be around the state budget and making sure that services affecting elders are funded. We will also be involved in voter education, including providing candidate forums. We are working with Alaska Counts and other groups to support the 2020 Census. In the new year, AARP Alaska state priorities will be to provide events and information about caregiving,



AARP Alaska State Director Teresa Holt.

healthy living, fraud and financial security.

Health is one of the factors that allow us to have options in how and where we live as we get older. AARP Alaska wants to help people make the behavior changes needed to live a healthier life. In 2020, AARP Alaska will focus on providing tangi-

ble solutions to improving health in the daily lives of those over 50. We offer educational opportunities about healthy eating and physical fitness such as:

- Get out and play every day – information on cardio workouts and weight training
- Healthy eating – information on nutrition, disease prevention and weight loss
- Brain health – information on the effects of exercise and nutrition, dementia information
- Outdoor education – opportunities for avalanche awareness classes, Nordic skiing lessons, hiking and walking opportunities, and fun community events
- Technology resources – information on step counters, nutrition logs, and other resources

National AARP also offers online information about staying fit, wellness and longevity, healthy eating, and a BMI calculator. The website offers articles such as “How to

Snack Smarter” and “Can Wearable Technology Help Improve Your Health?”. Get more information at [www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/](http://www.aarp.org/health/healthy-living/).

If you are interested in receiving information about any AARP Alaska events you can check out AARP Alaska’s website at <https://states.aarp.org/alaska/> or our Facebook page for upcoming events [www.facebook.com/pg/AARPAK](https://www.facebook.com/pg/AARPAK).

AARP Alaska is looking for volunteers to help us expand our ability to provide education and make changes at the community level. One of the community events that AARP Alaska will be participating is the Fur Rondy Outhouse Race. We are looking for Outhouse decorators and racers! If you are interested in being a volunteer or help plan events in your community, please contact Daryl Royce at [droyce@aarp.org](mailto:droyce@aarp.org).



## DISCOVER REAL POSSIBILITIES IN ALASKA.

AARP is in Alaska creating real, meaningful change. We’re proud to help communities become the best they can be. AARP provides tips for family caregivers, healthy living, fraud prevention and financial security. Join us at fun events across the state.

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**AARP** Real Possibilities  
 Alaska



# Protein: Getting enough as you get older

continued from page H2

to 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight to prevent muscle loss. A “dose” of approximately 30 grams of protein is required to stimulate muscle growth. When a meal with less high-quality protein is eaten, the body doesn’t get the message to produce more muscle.

Following the 1.0 to 1.5 grams per kilogram of body weight recommendation, most seniors should consume between 80 and 100 grams of protein divided among three meals per day or approximately 3 ½ to 4 ½ ounce equivalents of meat, egg, poultry, fish or cheese at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Peanut butter, beans and lentils or protein powders can also be used to supplement smaller portions of animal protein or even in place of animal protein.

If you have been working toward the commonly recommended “Mediterranean Diet,” continue to do so, while looking for ways to sneak in a bit more protein. Don’t forget that exercise is also a part of the equation. And, preventing muscle loss with increased protein and consistent muscle building physical activity is easier than trying to rebuild muscle in your 70s and 80s. Time to “Facebook” my roommate and let her know that she was ahead of her time.

**How much do you need?**

Old recommendation: 0.8 grams of protein for each kilogram of body weight.

New recommendation: 1.0 to 1.5 grams of protein for each kilogram of body weight.

Divide your weight by 2.2 to find your weight in kilograms.

Multiply that number by 1.0 or 1.5 for the recommended amount of daily protein.

Protein Sources	Amount of Protein
Milk – 8 ounces	8 grams
Greek Yogurt – 8 ounces	22 grams
Firm Tofu – 3 ounces	7 grams
Egg – 1	6 grams
Cottage Cheese - ½ cup	14 grams
Beef – 3 ounces (raw)	18 grams
Nuts – ¼ cup or 1 ounce	7 grams
Moose Meat – 3 ounces (raw)	19 grams
Red Salmon – 3 ounces (raw)	18 grams
Boneless Chicken Breast- 3 ounces (raw)	18 grams

- Eat your protein in three doses – breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Quick ways to get extra protein**
- Shredded or cubed cheese can be added to nearly any dish
  - Use beans or lentils in salads, sauces, pasta dishes, soups, casseroles
  - Use peanut butter in smoothies, on fruit slices, on toast or other baked goods
  - Start using Greek-style yogurt
  - Keep a supply of hard-boiled eggs on-hand for use on salads
  - Use mashed tofu in place of or with mayonnaise in tuna salad or on sandwiches
  - Use high quality protein drink supplements
  - Add protein powders, whey powder or powdered milk to cooked cereal, smoothies, a glass of milk
  - Add nuts and seeds to

salads, soups, cereal, casseroles, pancakes

A final precaution: Individuals with kidney disease should speak with their medical providers before increasing protein.

*Leslie Shallcross is a registered dietitian and professor of Home, Health and Family Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Natural Resources and Extension.*

## Food assistance programs can help people in need

By JIM MILLER  
Savvy Senior

**Dear Savvy Senior:** I would like to find out if my 73-year-old aunt is eligible for food stamps or any other type of food assistance program. It seems that she has a difficult time affording enough food each month, and I would like to help if I can. What can you tell me? – Searching Niece

**Dear Searching:** Sadly, millions of older Americans, like your aunt, struggle with food costs. According to a recent study by Feeding America, 5.5 million U.S. seniors age 60 and older are food insecure. Fortunately, there are several programs that may be able to help. Here’s what you should know.

### SNAP benefits

While there are millions of seniors who are eligible for food stamps, less than 40 percent actually take advantage of this benefit. Food stamps are now referred to as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. However, your state may use a different name. (It is SNAP in Alaska – Editor.)

For seniors to get SNAP, their net income must be under the 100 percent federal poverty guidelines. So, households that have at least one-person age 60 and older, or disabled, their net monthly income must be less than \$1,300 per month for an individual or \$1,761 for a family of two. Households receiving TANF or SSI are also eligible.

Net income is figured by taking gross income minus allowable deductions including a standard monthly deduction, medical expenses that exceed \$35 per month out-of-pocket, and shelter expenses (rent or mortgage payments, taxes and utility costs) that exceeds half of the household’s income.

In addition to the net income requirement, a few states also require that a senior’s assets be below

\$3,500, not counting their home, retirement or pension plans, income from SSI or TANF, and vehicle (this varies by state). Most states, however, have much higher asset limits or they don’t count assets at all when determining eligibility.

To apply, seniors or an authorized representative will need to fill out a state application form, which can be done at the local SNAP office or, it can be mailed or faxed in. In many states it can be completed online.

If eligible, benefits will be provided on a plastic card that’s used like a debit card and accepted at most grocery stores. The average SNAP benefit for 60-and-older households is around \$125 per month.

To learn more or apply, contact your local SNAP office – call 800-221-5689 for contact information or visit [fns.usda.gov/snap](http://fns.usda.gov/snap). Alaska’s SNAP web page is at [fns.usda.gov/snap](http://fns.usda.gov/snap).

### Other Programs

In addition to SNAP, there are other federal programs that can help low-income seniors, age 60 and older, like the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

The CSFP (see [fns.usda.gov/csfp](http://fns.usda.gov/csfp)) is a program that provides supplemental food packages to seniors with income limits at or below the 130 percent poverty line. Alaska’s CSFP web page: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/csfp>.

And the SFMNP ([fns.usda.gov/sfmnp](http://fns.usda.gov/sfmnp)) provides seniors coupons that can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs in select locations throughout the U.S. To be eligible, your aunt’s income must be below the 185 percent poverty level. Alaska’s Senior SFMNP web page: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/nutri/fmnp/fmnpseior.aspx>.

There are also many Feeding America network food banks that host “Senior Grocery Programs” that provide free groceries to older adults, no strings attached. Contact your local food bank (see [feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank)) to find out if a program is available nearby.

In addition to the food assistance programs, there are also various financial assistance programs that may help your aunt pay for medications, health care, utilities and more. To locate these programs, and learn how to apply for them, go to [BenefitsCheckUp.org](http://BenefitsCheckUp.org).

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of “The Savvy Senior” book.





# Beat the winter doldrums at the Anchorage Museum

## Anchorage Museum

It's cold. It's dark. It's winter in Anchorage. But that doesn't mean you have to hibernate until spring. Staying active is one of the best ways to thrive both physically and emotionally during winter months. Here are some tips from the Anchorage Museum on how a museum visit can keep you vital and creative through winter and beyond.

### 1. Learn something new: Take a class

From cooking and canning food to learning about Alaska history and making art, the museum offers classes year-round, including adult continuing education courses. Museum members receive discounts on classes. Find schedules online at [anchagemuseum.org/classes](http://anchagemuseum.org/classes).

### 2. Savor your social circle: Meet friends for lunch

Follow a stroll through

galleries with lunch at Muse Restaurant, which serves healthy food made from scratch in right-size portions. Hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday with dinner hours until 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for Sunday brunch.

### 3. Experience art and artifacts in new ways: Take a special tour

The museum regularly gives close-up viewing tours of selected objects from the collection and can create custom tours for groups and organizations supporting individuals with limited vision or hearing or with other special needs. Two weeks advance notice and a minimum group size of five individuals is requested. To learn more, email [accessibility@anchagemuseum.org](mailto:accessibility@anchagemuseum.org).



### 4. Create lasting memories with grandkids: Visit the Discovery Center

Between daily planetarium shows, weekly animal demonstrations and monthly guided creative activities, there's more than enough to see and do for kids of all ages. Plus, this learn/play time with you creates memories your grandkids will cherish.

### 5. Share your skills and get some great perks: Volunteer

Help in the museum store, give a tour, greet visitors or assist with children's activities. The museum provides training for

a variety of volunteer roles. Perks include free museum admission, a 20% discount in the museum store, free museum guest passes and free educational class with 40+ hours of service per year.

### 6. Treat yourself to a low-cost evening out: Visit after-hours and during free days

The museum offers more than 15 free admission days per year, in addition to the first weekends of each month for Bank of America cardholders. Admission is free 6 to 9 p.m. on the first Friday of each month and on other special days throughout the year. See [anchagemuseum.org/calendar](http://anchagemuseum.org/calendar) for details. Join the museum's e-mail list from the museum's website homepage and get the latest schedule and program information sent to you every other week.

Become a museum member and enjoy free admission all year. An individual membership pays for itself after six visits per year and a family membership (two adults with children) is an even better deal, see [anchagemuseum.org/join](http://anchagemuseum.org/join) for details.

### 7. Don't let the weather keep you home-bound: Park in the museum's secure, heated garage

The museum has on-site parking during both day and evening hours for people with special disability parking permit vehicle tags and weekend parking for everyone. You may pay for parking at the paybox. An elevator takes you from the garage to the museum's main floor. If you need wheelchair assistance or can't safely walk outside to the main entrance, ask Security staff for escorted entry through the staff entrance to the main lobby admissions desk.



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# Improved hand-eye coordination is a side benefit

For those of you who were under the impression that your badminton interest was meant to stay dust-encased along with your equipment in your garage, think again. At about 100-strong, the members of the Anchorage Badminton Club offer a lively three-net open session several times a week at the Fairview and Spenard Recreation Centers. Several seniors are involved in the club, and they are open to more members of the wiser set. Tournament play is frequently on the schedule. Right, James Marsen keeps his eye on the birdie as he plays badminton at the Spenard Recreation Center.



Search Facebook for @AnchorageBadmintonclub to find the group's page. The club administrator is Jia Fim, who may be reached by text at 907-350-5501.

Left, Melinda Nicholson enjoys the camaraderie at the Spenard Recreation Center.

Photos for Senior Voice by Michael Dinneen.

## Chores: More services being offered in Alaska

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affordable housekeeping to seniors who want it."

In the past, many Alaskans left the state when they retired, Foster said. "Our population was decidedly young, but that's changed, especially in the Mat-Su Borough. People are looking for ways they can stay in the community and state they love, and even beyond that, we see an increase in the number of families that bring their aged parents from the Lower 48 to live near their Alaska family. The senior

**More and more older adults are discovering it's a wise choice to accept a service designed to help them stay safe, healthy and happy and out of more expensive care.**

population is growing at a healthy clip."

Foster said this is a great trend for Alaska because it is good to have generations near each other. Mary Lackey is the Program Manager at WASI and said their chore services include light to heavy housekeeping and some outside work, such as sweeping the walk or porch. "We clean and put away and carry out the

trash. We can do just about anything a senior can't do because of limited mobility or other limitations," Lackey said.

She said WASI also offers short-term respite care. "If an unpaid caregiver needs time to run errands, or simply enjoy a little 'me time', we can stay with the person they care for. It's a great service that helps support family members

who care for their elderly family members."

The workers don't do repairs or install appliances. However, they can refer someone who can do those kinds of things. In Wasilla, these chore services have been offered since 2015. "The only surprise I've experienced is that we aren't overwhelmed with seniors wanting these services," Lackey said. "Yet, I've come to realize I shouldn't be surprised at all. Seniors are like everyone else, they like to take care of their own home and it seems like 'cheating' to ask someone

to come into your home and lend a hand."

But with the growing popularity of chore programs, more and more older adults are discovering it's a wise choice to accept a service designed to help them stay safe, healthy and happy and out of more expensive care. Lackey said she receives notes of appreciation all the time and the feedback on the chore services has been highly outstanding.

## Weighing the costs against the benefits of opioids

By KAREN TELLEEN-LAWTON

Senior Wire

Tylenol with codeine makes my occasional migraines bearable. I use them sparingly, always cognizant of the dangers of opioids. More than that, I am beyond grateful that I don't have to endure the chronic pain that can be a real problem for our age group. Which is worse, the pain or the cure?

Opioids weren't always reviled. The powerful class of painkillers was first discovered in

1804, when German pharmacist Friedrich Serturmer's painstaking research isolated morphine as a sleep-inducing molecule found in tarry poppy seed juice. His discovery created

an amazing new pharmacological tool in pain management.

Opioids make recovery bearable for surgery patients and normal life possible for the estimated 20% to 30% of Americans who suffer chronic pain. Opioids are "the cardinal feature of a diverse spectrum of diseases, including arthritis, migraine, cancer, metabolic disorders and neuropathies," according to the National Institutes of Health. They include legal medications such as oxycodone, fentanyl, codeine and morphine.

The dark side of opioids is their side effects, over-prescription, and black-market versions, including heroin. Dr. Anna Lembke, medical director of Stanford Hospital's Addiction Med-

icine department, calls it one of the worst drug epidemics in U.S. history. She urges attention to the role of Big Pharma, the medicalization of poverty, and the neuroscience of addiction.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) calls out the side effects of opioids in arcane medical language. There are opioids' analgesic tolerance (diminished pain-relieving effects), hyperalgesia (increased pain sensitivity), and drug dependence. Basically, you need more and more to provide the same effect against pain, but escalating the dosage puts patients at risk for dependence and other medical issues.

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# Medicare, benefits help at Anchorage Senior Activity Center

By **PATRICK CURTIS** and **NILA MORGAN**  
*Anchorage Senior Activity Center*

The Anchorage Senior Activity Center is proud to offer two services with a shared goal of maximizing access to available benefits for seniors in our state. The Medicare Information Office (MIO) and the Benefits Enrollment Center are both housed within the senior center and are available to the community.

The MIO is available to all who are on or want information about Medicare. Two full-time certified counselors offer up-to-date, pertinent information about Medicare enrollment periods, benefits under Part A (hospital), B (Medical), D (prescription drug coverage) and Supplemental or Medigap plans and costs. Free, local and often in-person private counseling is available to Medicare beneficiaries, families and



*Nila Morgan and Patrick Curtis.*  
*ASAC photo*

caregivers. The MIO provides regular educational presentations to the public at health fairs, community fairs and financial fitness fairs, often in partnership with the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office and AARP.

Each year during the Open Enrollment Period for Part D, Medicare beneficiaries can get assistance

to re-evaluate their Part D coverage and enroll in the best option for the upcoming year. Additionally, “How to Read Your Medicare Summary Notice” workshops are held each year to educate beneficiaries about these statements that explain how Medicare has processed their claims. The MIO will also investigate reports of errors,

Savings Program (MSP) which can pay a beneficiary’s Part A and/or B premiums. The MIO further refers limited income clients to the Benefits Enrollment Center for eligibility screening for additional benefits.

In January of 2018, Anchorage Senior Activity Center began operating the Benefits Enrollment

Center (BEC) as a result of an 18-month grant from the National Council on Aging’s Center for Benefits Access. Through funding from the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA), The Center for Benefits Access supports 84 BECs nationwide with the BEC at the senior center currently the only Alaskan member of this network. The primary goal of the BEC community is to assist Medicare-eligible individuals with limited income to apply for benefits that best suit their specific eligibility and needs. This includes screening and assistance with applications for core benefits including: Medicaid, SNAP food benefits, LIHEAP heating assistance program, Alaska Senior Benefit, Adult Public Assistance, housing, dental services and more.

The BEC also partners

*page H-11 please*

## Anchorage Senior Activity Center

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[anchorageseniorcenter.org](http://anchorageseniorcenter.org)





# Swimming: *Indoor activity ideal for bodies, old and young*

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852-8950. Lap swim.  
**Bethel** Yukon-Kuskokwim Fitness Center, 267 Akiachak Dr., 543-0390. Lap swim, water exercise.  
**Eagle River** Alaska Club Eagle River (membership required), 12001 Business Blvd., 694-6677. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Cordova** Bob Korn Memorial Pool, 609 Railroad Ave., 424-7200. Lap swim, open swim.  
**Craig** Craig Aquatic Center, 1400 Watertown Rd., 826-2794. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim, sauna.  
**Haines** Haines Pool, 274 Haines Hwy., 766-2666.

**High schools, gyms and community centers statewide offer lap swim hours for those interested in independent practice or open swim hours for those looking to spend extra time with children and grandchildren.**

Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Homer** Kate Kuhns Aquatic Center, Homer High School, 600 E Fairview Ave., 235-7416. Lap swim, senior exercise class, open swim.  
**Kenai** Kenai Central High School, 9583 Kenai Spur Hwy., 283-7476. Lap swim  
**Ketchikan** Gateway Aquatic Center, 601 Schoenbar Rd., 288-6650. Lap swim, senior swim, open swim.

**Kodiak** Kodiak Community Pool, 800 Upper Mill Bay Rd., 481-2519. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Naknek** Kvimarvik Pool, School Rd., 246-7665. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Nikiski** Nikiski Pool, 55525 Poolside Ave., 776-8800. Lap swim, open swim.  
**Ninilchik** Ninilchik School Pool, 15735 Sterling Hwy., 714-0351. Lap swim,

water exercise, open swim.  
**Nome** Nome Beltz Jr/Sr High School, 2920B Nome-Teller Hwy., 443-5717. Lap swim, open swim.  
**North Pole** Wescott Pool, 300 E. 8th Ave., 488-9402. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Petersburg** Community Center, 500 N. 3rd St., 722-3392. Lap swim, swim exercises, open swim.  
**Seward** Seward Jr/Sr High School Pool, 2100 Sweetmann Ave., 224-9050. Lap swim, open swim.  
**Sitka** Blatchley Pool, 601-B Halibut Point, 747-5677. Lap swim, swim lessons, open swim.  
**Soldotna** Soldotna High School Swimming Pool,

425 W Marydale Ave., 262-7419. Lap swim, swim exercises.  
**Unalaska** Unalaska Aquatics Center, 55 E Broadway Ave., 581-1649. Lap swim.  
**Valdez** Valdez Swimming Pool, 319 Robe River Dr., 835-5429. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Wasilla** Wasilla Pool, 701 E Bogard Rd., 861-7680. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.  
**Wrangell** Wrangell Pool, 321 Church St., 874-2444. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.

# Opioids: *Historic benefits, but catastrophic costs*

continued from page H-8

By **KAREN TELLEEN-LAWTON**  
*Senior Wire*

Tylenol with codeine makes my occasional migraines bearable. I use them sparingly, always cognizant of the dangers of opioids. More than that, I am beyond grateful that I don't have to endure the chronic pain that can be a real problem for our age group. Which is worse, the pain or the cure?  
Opioids weren't always reviled. The powerful class of painkillers was first discovered in 1804, when German

pharmacist Friedrich Serturner's painstaking research isolated morphine as a sleep-inducing molecule found in tarry poppy seed juice. His discovery created an amazing new pharmacological tool in pain management.  
Opioids make recovery bearable for surgery patients and normal life possible for the estimated 20% to 30% of Americans who suffer chronic pain. Opioids are "the cardinal feature of a diverse spectrum of diseases, including arthritis, migraine, cancer, metabolic disorders and neuropathies," according to the National Institutes of Health. They include legal

**Sara Murray, a West Virginia nurse who founded a facility for drug-addicted babies and mothers, says, "We have generational addiction .... It was their mother's normal. It was their grandmothers' normal. And now, it's their normal."**

medications such as oxycodone, fentanyl, codeine and morphine.  
The dark side of opioids is their side effects, over-prescription, and black-market versions, including heroin. Dr. Anna Lembke, medical director of Stanford Hospital's Addiction Medicine department, calls it one of the worst drug epidemics in U.S. history. She urges attention to the role of Big Pharma, the medicalization of poverty, and the neuroscience of addiction.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) calls out the side effects of opioids in arcane medical language. There are opioids' analgesic tolerance (diminished pain-relieving effects), hyperalgesia (increased pain sensitivity), and drug dependence. Basically, you need more and more to provide the same effect against pain, but escalating the dosage puts patients at risk for dependence and other medical issues.  
Paradoxically, many patients also develop an

increased pain sensitivity using opioids, causing an excruciating cycle of pain. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention statistics show the devastating result: 2.1 million Americans suffer from opioid substance use disorder; 44 deaths per day are attributed to opioid overdose.  
Drug overdoses are now the leading cause of death for Americans under age 50, with two-thirds of those caused by opioids, according to the CDC. The follow-on to drug addiction in the young population is drug-addicted newborns. Sara Murray, a West Virginia nurse who founded a facility for drug-addicted

## Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Senior Voice Staff

Interested in learning more about businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast (formerly known as the Interagency Breakfast), sponsored by Older Per-

sons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, with breakfast provided, the meeting is held the second Wednesday each month, 8 to 9 a.m. For more information and to be added to our e-mail reminder list, call Older Persons Action Group, 276-1059.

Follow Senior Voice on Twitter:  
**@seniorvoiceak**



We also have a page on Facebook with fun and informative posts. Search for "Senior Voice Alaska" then click on over!



# YMCA's evidence-based classes are proven to work

YMCA of Alaska

Be your own hero and maybe save your life! The YMCA has great opportunities for you to develop techniques for helping yourself and gain fitness. You can learn to prevent falls, control your blood pressure and learn how to live and eat in ways to prevent Type II diabetes. Curious? YMCA OF ALASKA offers three evidence-based classes that have been proven to work. **Enhance Fitness** shows you how to modify movement to get maximum results that prevent falls, a leading cause of unintentional death in older adults. **Blood Pressure Self Monitoring** empow-

ers you to take ownership of your heart and blood vessel health. A Healthy Heart Ambassador will teach you how to take your blood pressure at home using the cuff that will be given to you as part of the program. The **Diabetes Prevention Program** enrolls you in a year-long program with a life coach and a group of adults on the same journey as you. Altering your food choices and your physical activity can change your prediabetes diagnosis. Together, you and your support group members will learn about tracking what you eat and how to maximize your food and physical ac-

tivity choices for optimum healthy living. Get more information about these programs that have proven results – they really work and can work for you. To see if you qualify for any of these programs, or for more information call Erin Widener, Healthy Community Coordinator,

563-3211 ext. 104; or email [erin@ymcaalaska.org](mailto:erin@ymcaalaska.org). For more information, go to the YMCA website at [ymcaalaska.org](http://ymcaalaska.org)



YMCA of Alaska photo  
Working out with a group kicks up motivation, and fun.



## FIND WHAT MOVES YOU



## YMCA OF ALASKA

## Anchorage: Center helps with Medicare, benefits enrollment

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By **PATRICK CURTIS** and **NILA MORGAN**  
*Anchorage Senior Activity Center*

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