

# Nutrition News for Seniors



Provided by the Nutrition Division of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

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## "Think Healthy, Eat Healthy, Act Healthy...Be Healthy"

Wednesday, May 29 is National Senior Health & Fitness Day. This year's theme is "Think Healthy, Eat Healthy, Act Healthy...Be Healthy." Join an estimated 100,000 seniors across the country in participating in events to help promote active and healthy lifestyles through physical fitness and good nutrition.

Today, we know a lot more about older adults and their need to exercise. Regardless of health and physical abilities, as an older adult you can gain a lot by staying physically active. Even if you have difficulty standing or walking, you can still exercise and benefit from it. In fact, in most cases, you have more to lose by not doing anything.

Physical activity benefits every area of your life. It:

- helps maintain and improve your physical strength and fitness.
- helps improve your ability to do the things you want to do.
- helps improve your balance.
- helps manage and prevent diseases like diabetes, heart disease, breast and colon cancer, and osteoporosis.
- helps reduce feelings of depression, may improve mood and overall well-being. It may also improve or maintain some aspects of cognitive function, such as your ability to shift quickly between tasks, plan an activity, and ignore irrelevant information.



As you've probably noticed, the key word is **you**. The benefits you gain from physical activity depend on your starting point and how much effort you put into it. You should match your physical activity to your own needs and abilities. For example, some people can swim a mile without thinking twice about it. For others, a slow walk to the corner and back is a big achievement. Exercise and physical activity are good for just about everybody, and there are many activities to choose from.

Think about a typical weekday and weekend day. How much time do you spend sitting? How much time are you active? When you're up and moving, what kinds of activities are you doing?

Just like using a food diary to record the foods you eat, an activity log will help you figure out your activity level. For a couple of weekdays and a weekend, keep track of how much time you exercise or are physically active. Write down how much time you spend doing each activity.



**Quick Tips - There are many ways to fit exercise and physical activity into your regular routine.**

- Try something new. If you baby-sit for your grandchildren, how about walking to the park instead of playing video games?
- Rethink your priorities. How important is an entire afternoon of TV? How about a walk after lunch instead?
- Work harder at the things you already do. Rake the leaves instead of using the leaf blower.



*Adapted from the National Institute on Aging website at [www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/exercise](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/exercise) February 12, 2013. Visit the site for more information about starting an exercise plan.*

## **In the Kitchen: Vegetable Puree Soup, Four Variations**

*Recipe by Natalia Stasenko, MS, RD, CDN*

### **Fresh Green Pea Version**

- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- 1/2 cup of chopped onions or shallots
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 4 cups of fresh or frozen green peas
- 4 to 6 cups water, vegetable stock or chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Additional olive oil or butter, if desired.
- 1 generous handful of mint, as garnish.

1. Sautee the onion and garlic in olive oil in heavy bottom pot until soft and translucent.
2. Add your choice of vegetables and about 3-4 cups of stock or water. Add just enough liquid to cover the vegetables when they are cooking and keep some extra aside.
3. Cook the vegetables until soft, 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Puree the soup using a stick blender or puree in batches in a stationary blender.
5. Transfer the puree back into the pot, adjust the seasoning, add more water or stock if needed and reheat.
6. Drizzle with some extra virgin olive oil or add a couple of small pieces of butter in a plate right before serving. Add a handful of fresh mint just before blending the soup and use some for garnish alongside with some half-and-half if desired.

<b>For Butternut Squash Soup</b>	<b>For Mushroom Soup</b>	<b>For Tomato Soup</b>
4 cups of butternut squash 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon 1/2 teaspoon cumin	6 cups of sliced mushrooms 1 teaspoon of fresh thyme	4 cups of fresh or canned chopped tomatoes A pinch of sugar
Toasted pumpkin seeds for garnish	Sautéed mushrooms for garnish	Several basil leaves for garnish

*Source: <http://foodandnutritionmagazine.com/kids-vegetable-pureed-soups>*