



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

# Good food habits essential for every age bracket

Dear Jo: My mother, who taught all her children good food habits, seems to be surviving on a diet of tea and toast. She says that she doesn't like to cook all that food just for herself. I know she doesn't like to eat alone. Would you print some basic nutritional advice for her as she follows your column?

Perhaps your mother could join in one of the hot lunch programs that are available for older persons in central locations. This way she wouldn't have to eat alone and could meet new friends.

Many older people attempt to survive on this type of diet, sometimes because of boredom, lack of energy to prepare a proper meal or, sadly, due to lack of funds.

Here is some basic nutritional advice for your mother and other older adults:

THE 1980 EDITION of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) outlines a good diet for healthy people of any age. They recommend the basic

food groups, the number of servings and what each food group contributes to the diet.

Four servings of the fruit and vegetable group are recommended; these contribute B vitamins and fiber. Two to three servings of the meat and legume supply protein, iron, vitamin B12 and folacin to the diet. Two servings of milk and milk products provide calcium and protein.

And lastly, fats and sugars as needed add calories and essential fatty acids. I hope your mother reads this review of the basic diet and becomes more interested in a proper diet again.

Dear Jo: I have read and enjoyed your column for some time now. It is heartwarming to know that an elderly person has someone to tell his or her problems to and to ask questions about physical and mental health.

You take time to research, so you can give the right answer and you open up your heart to solve problems of loneliness and related states. We all

thank you for that. At this point I would like to suggest an additional helper for the elderly and handicapped.

I have an opportunity to teach art to senior citizens at the Salvation Army in Ann Arbor. Besides having a

worthwhile goal to look forward to, it provides companionship, stimulation and a strong feeling of accomplishment for senior students.

I feel that centers (even private homes) should be established, where in-

terested persons could meet and receive art instructions of all kinds.

Art is a beautiful subject matter and should be taught, appreciated and practiced more. The life of older people, even if they have never participated in

art before, could be extremely enriched with art.

Sincerely,  
Erika Jensen

Dear Erika: Your letter says so much. Thank you for writing.

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