



ThriveAlliance

Enhancing lives. Building communities.

March 2024

# Caregiver Connection

*Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.*

## MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

National Nutrition Month is an educational campaign focusing on the significance of physical fitness as well as eating nourishing meals. Taking charge of your health contributes to overall well-being.

Our overall health is a balance of diet, exercise, rest, and hereditary traits. While we do not have control over heredity, we do control the other three. Nutrition is one of the biggest factors in our health. What we eat can significantly increase or decrease our risk factors for disease and injury. We are often bombarded by a variety of diet programs that aim to improve our health and keep us slim. Making sense of them all can become a daunting task. However, most studies agree that including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, and proteins comprise a healthy diet.

Watch the Thrive Alliance Facebook page and Blog at [thrive-alliance.org](https://thrive-alliance.org) for posts all month.

## How Your Nutritional Needs Change as You Age

Aging is linked to a variety of changes in the body, including muscle loss, thinner skin and less stomach acid.



Some of these changes can make you prone to nutrient deficiencies, while others

can affect your senses and quality of life.

For example, studies have estimated that 20% of elderly people have atrophic gastritis, a condition in which chronic inflammation has damaged the cells that produce stomach acid. Low stomach acid can affect the absorption of nutrients, such as vitamin B12, calcium, iron and magnesium.

Another challenge of aging is a reduced need for calories. Unfortunately, this creates a nutritional dilemma. Older adults need to get just as much, if not

more, of some nutrients, all while eating fewer calories. Fortunately, eating a variety of whole foods and taking a supplement can help you meet your nutrient needs.

Another issue people may experience as they age is a reduction in their body's ability to recognize vital senses like hunger and thirst. This could make you prone to dehydration and unintentional weight loss. And the older you get, the harsher these consequences may be.

### SUMMARY:

Aging is linked to muscle loss, thinner skin and reduced stomach acid. Your ability to recognize hunger and thirst may also be reduced as you age.

For deeper dive follow this [LINK](#):

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/nutritional-needs-and-aging#How-Does-Aging-Affect-Your-Nutritional-Needs?>

## Our Allies in Caregiving. You are Important! By Page Melton Ivie, chair of the board, BIAA

I walked past Tommy dozens of times before I really saw him. He was a slight man, who sat out of the way in the Starbucks at our local Target store, and I'm sure for many months that I didn't give him a second thought. In retrospect, I can see myself hurrying past, anxious to get errands done, to get back to my work.

In that Target, I'm usually with, and very focused on, Robert, who in 2003 lost most of his memory from an anoxic brain injury. It was the often-overlooked Tommy who gave me a valuable lesson about caregiving.

Robert stopped me one day as I hustled past Tommy and said, "There's my friend," whose name he couldn't remember. We got tea and coffee and sat down so I could meet Tommy, who spent most mornings at the Starbucks nursing a cup of coffee, waving at children, talking with their harried parents, joking with staffers. Robert knew Tommy because the facility where Robert lives takes a group to Target at least once a week. Tommy told me that he'd look out for Robert on those visits when I wasn't there, keep him company, and make sure he got back on the bus with his group. "He can't remember very much," Tommy said, "so I've got my eye on him. He's a gift."

After that, our store visits included coffee for me, tea for Robert, and a visit with Tommy. He always had a compliment, and would wink and point to Robert, saying, "We have to look out for this young man, keep him out of trouble." Tommy had introduced Robert to employees who often stopped to chat. His empathy for Robert was a beautiful thing to see and I felt like I had an ally in caregiving, knowing this unlikely friend was in it with us.

One January a few years later, we showed up to shop and found flowers at the seat where Tommy usually sat. He had died earlier that week, just shy of his 75th birthday that we had been planning to celebrate/ The folks at Target had added the flowers, then a framed photo of Tommy, and shoppers and employees left cards and more pictures. I met Tommy's sister a few days later and we hugged; she had come by to thank everyone for the outpouring of sympathy. I learned then that she had been providing caregiving for Tommy, and her husband had been driving Tommy to Target once he wasn't able to get there on his own. Quietly, with little fanfare, they were providing care for someone who meant a lot to so many.

Chef Solus Protein Group Word search Puzzle!



Word search grid:

S	T	U	N	A	E	P	I	L	J
A	A	K	W	H	K	R	O	P	O
F	U	G	M	A	U	E	F	F	S
I	Y	Q	N	X	L	X	U	E	G
S	O	Y	B	E	A	N	S	E	G
H	M	V	X	H	K	V	U	B	E
N	A	E	L	X	S	C	P	T	Y
S	N	A	E	B	T	E	I	H	S
N	I	E	T	O	R	P	E	H	L
N	E	Y	F	L	F	Q	F	D	C
S	E	L	C	S	U	M	T	A	S

Protein Group

- CHICKEN
- SOYBEANS
- PORK
- FISH
- BEANS
- BEEF
- WALNUTS
- PROTEIN
- SEEDS
- PEANUTS
- LEAN
- MUSCLES
- EGGS

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### March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Every March, the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) leads the nation in observing **Brain Injury Awareness Month**. In addition, Brain Injury Awareness Day is March 5.

The Brain Injury Awareness Association has



many activities and events planned to help raise awareness about this important issue. Their website is [www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org).