



MAY 2021

# MALNUTRITION CONNECTION

Providing Malnutrition Awareness and Advocacy Information to Share

## Advancing Policies for Quality Malnutrition Care in Older Adults Toolkits

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads our nation's observance of [Older Americans Month](#). The theme for 2021 is "Communities of Strength." Older adults have built resilience and strength over their lives through successes, failures, joys, and difficulties. Their stories and contributions help to support and inspire others.

In conjunction with Older American's Month, Defeat Malnutrition Today and Women In Government are releasing new and updated versions of two Toolkits: *Advancing Policies for Quality Malnutrition Care in Older Adults: A Toolkit for Constituents and Driving Change* and *A Toolkit for State Legislators*.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted social determinants of health. It has increased the challenges for already vulnerable populations and revealed the increased need for strengthened systems and policies to support them. Malnutrition, particularly lack of adequate protein, can have deleterious effects on health, especially when other medical conditions are present. Specifically, it can increase mortality rates, readmission rates, and complication rates such as increased length of stay and cost of care.

But it is also preventable. With effective screening, assessment, diagnosis, and intervention, malnutrition can be identified and addressed to benefit older adults and health outcomes. These two toolkits provide guidance on how to address malnutrition issues through community and policy actions.

### A Toolkit for Constituents and Driving Change

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information on the issues of malnutrition and how to communicate to state policymakers about the impact of malnutrition on the older adult population. Included are resources addressing how malnutrition is a growing but preventable problem in America today, what policy changes can help decrease malnutrition, how multiple states are taking action to end malnutrition, and how constituents can help influence state policymakers to do the same.

### A Toolkit for State Legislators

This toolkit highlights specific policy actions to develop the framework for successfully preventing and intervening for malnutrition among older adults. Defeat Malnutrition Today and Women In Government encourage legislators to use this toolkit to raise constituent awareness about malnutrition and develop policies and implement feasible solutions to combat this public health crisis affecting so many older adults and their families in America today.

The Toolkits are available for download [here](#).

### New Film Emphasizes the Role of Nutrition in Healthy Aging throughout Lifespan

The latest Dietary Guidelines from the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services address nutrition at various life stages and provide important recommendations on achieving a well-rounded diet. The guidelines emphasize that the foods and beverages we consume have a profound impact on our health—now and in the years to come. We all have the power to maximize and improve our health, add vitality to our years, reduce the risk of disease, and increase our healthspans—the number of years we live in good health. And research shows that it's never too late to make improvements.

Watch [Food For Thought: The Role of Nutrition in Healthy Aging](#)

Also available in [Spanish](#) and [closed captioning](#)

Learn more at [www.agingresearch.org/nutrition](http://www.agingresearch.org/nutrition)