



FACT SHEET



Criteria to Receive Home Delivered Meals:

Any Person 60 or older provided:

- Person is incapacitated due to accident, illness or frailty
- Lacks the support of family, friends or neighbors
- Is unable to prepare meals due to lack or inadequacy of facilities, or an inability to shop, cook or prepare meals safely, or lack of knowledge or skill.

Additional parameters:

Spouses may receive home delivered meals if, according to criteria determined by the Area Agency on Aging, it's in the best interest of the eligible elderly person. Non elderly disabled persons living with an eligible person also may receive meals.

Revised January 2019

Nutrition: A Foundation for Wellness

The Benefits of Healthy Diet

Eating well is important at any age. As people age, they may lose interest in preparing nutritious meals and resort to a piece of toast and a cup of tea for breakfast, a bowl of soup or dish of cottage cheese for lunch and similar items for supper. Those eating habits tend to contribute to a downward spiral of physical well being.

Numerous benefits of a healthy diet and proper nutrition include: increased mental acuteness; resistance to illness and disease; higher energy levels; a more robust immune system; faster recuperation times; and better management of chronic health problems.

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), through the state's 59 mostly county-based Area Agencies on Aging, administers the federal Nutrition Program for the Elderly (NPE) designed to:

- reduce hunger and food insecurity;
- promote socialization of older adults; and
- promote the health and well-being of older individuals with access to nutrition and disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of health conditions from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.

Although this fact sheet focuses on Home Delivered Meals, the nutrition program also provides congregate meals and nutrition counseling. Nutrition services funding is provided through the federal Older Americans Act, the state Wellness in Nutrition (WIN) program, and local resources.

Home Delivered Meals: The Profile

The largest age group receiving home delivered meals through the nutrition program is the 85+ year olds at 42.2%. The 85+ population is the fastest-growing segment of America's senior population, according to the Population Reference Bureau in Washington, D.C., and is expected to grow fivefold, from 4 million in 2000 to 21 million by 2050.

	Home Delivered Meals
Average Age	81
Age 75+	73%
Age 85+	42%
Female	65%
Live Alone	61%
Low Income	40%
Rural	
Minority	24%
ADL Count average	1.90
ADL 3+	29%
IADL Count average	5.05
IADL 3+	86%
High Nutrition Risk	42%

Nutrition Risk

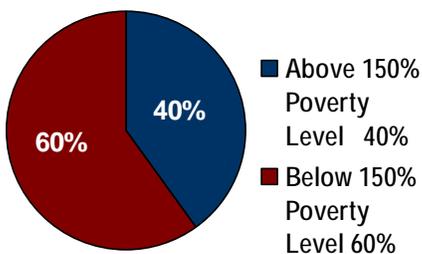
A significant number of seniors fail to get the amounts and types of food necessary to meet essential energy and nutrient needs. Just under 42% of home delivered meal recipients in New York State fall into the high nutrition risk category; meaning they are at risk for health complications due to poor nutrition.

Factors that increase the risk for poor nutritional status in older persons can include limited income, presence of medical problems, use of multiple medications, inability to shop or cook, and social isolation. Home delivered meals mitigate the effects of several of these factors.

Economic Status

One of the factors that increases the risk for poor nutritional status in older persons is limited income. Data shows that of those receiving home delivered meals, 40% fall below 150% of the poverty level standard. A senior may cut back on grocery expenses or buy cheaper and less-nutritious foods to stretch his/her budget. Lacking money to pay for adequate foods can result in a host of nutrition problems. The meals received through the HDM program provide the nutritional balance that many seniors cannot afford to buy with the financial resources they have.

Economic Status of Those Receiving Home Delivered Meals



Additional Services

Of those persons receiving home delivered meals, many also receive additional services. Those additional services include, but are not limited to, nutrition counseling, transportation, personal care, medication management, and housekeeping. The benefits of maintaining someone in the home delivered meals program go beyond providing nutrition; the program is instrumental in keeping people home.

Number of Chronic Conditions	Home Delivered Meals
0 to 1	11.1%
2 to 3	24.4%
4 to 5	31.3%
6 +	33.2%

Quality of Life

Older people most in need of sound daily diets are, in fact, those who are least able to maintain their nutritional well being. Eating well can be the key to staying mentally sharp, emotionally balanced and energetic, with a strong immune system and a positive outlook.

Home delivered meals offer one solution to relieving a family's worry about a loved one's poor eating habits or inability to cook. Without the home delivered meals program, combined with Expanded In-home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) services, many of these seniors could require institutional care. These programs are instrumental in helping vulnerable elders remain at home in their community. Good nutrition in later years helps both in reducing the risk of disease and in managing symptoms of chronic diseases once diagnosed. Good nutrition contributes to a higher quality of life.

Impact on the Lives of Seniors

Mr. Jackson* is a widower who has also lost both of his sons. He has a number of physical disabilities including the need to wear braces on his legs. He's unable to cook for himself and without home delivered meals would not have adequate nutritional intake. Home delivered meals have allowed him to remain in his home where he has chosen to be for over three years.

Mrs. Patterson* was involved in an auto accident. She had multiple fractures, and while it was determined that she could be discharged home with intermittent help, she was not able to prepare meals. Part of her discharge plan was for home delivered meals which the county was able to provide. Had there been a waiting list for meals, Mrs. Patterson would have been forced to seek alternatives to returning home. Having meals has also produced the side benefit of introducing Mrs. Patterson to other Office for the Aging services including transportation and information and assistance.

Ms. Graham* is alone with no family nearby to care for her. She can't cook for herself or maintain her own home as she once did. "I don't go anyplace," she said. "I don't do anything." For an older woman who can't shop or cook for herself, let alone entertain as she once did, Citymeals is a blessing. The nutritious meals and friendly visitors she receives each day nourish her fragile body and soul. Even though Evelyn can no longer host parties, Citymeals still gives her something to look forward to each day. "Citymeals is just a godsend. You don't have to worry. They give you everything. For the holidays they always send a package, so thoughtful." (story from www.citymeals.org)

**Names have been changed to protect client privacy.*