



The Senior Sentinel

Happy Father's Day! June 20th

Free Audio Books for Blind or Disabled Seniors

Seniors with low vision or disabilities can still enjoy reading.

Many older adults still enjoy reading even though their eyesight may have declined with age, they've become blind, or they've developed a physical disability. If that happens, traditional books won't work anymore. And it's no fun if they're always forced to rely on someone to read to them. Audio books and braille books allow these seniors to continue reading on their own. There's a free braille and audio book service from the National Library Service, part of the Library of Congress, that allows vision impaired or physically disabled older adults to continue reading independently. We explain how this excellent free service works, who's eligible, and how to sign up.

Free service sends audiobooks and braille books to the house.

The National Library Service (NLS) is a free braille and talking book library service for people with vision impairments or physical disabilities that prevent them from holding traditional books.

The free service works through local libraries that send NLS talking or braille books and magazines via mail straight to the home or via *instant downloads*.

Plus, they also provide the easy-to-use playback equipment designed for people with low/no vision.

The NLS offers:

- Braille or audio books formats
- Free mailing to your door or instant downloads
- A wide variety of the most current reading material, including best sellers, biographies, fictional works, how-to books, magazines, and music scores
- BARD mobile app for download and playback anywhere

Who is eligible for NLS books

- Blind persons with 20/200 vision or less in the better eye with correcting lenses
- Persons whose visual disability with correction is certified to prevent reading of standard printed material
- Persons certified as unable to read or use standard printed material due to physical limitations

Who can certify eligibility

- Doctors of medicine or osteopathy
- Ophthalmologists or optometrists
- Registered nurses
- Therapists
- Social workers
- Professional librarians

How to sign up for NLS books

To apply for NLS service, follow the instructions:

<https://www.loc.gov/nls/enrollment-equipment/apply-for-nls-service/>

For additional assistance, call (202) 707-5100 or 1-800-NLS-READ (1-800-657-7323) toll free. Your call will be connected to a participating library near you.

From Our Dietitian:

Dairy: On Your Plate

June is National Dairy Month. Dairy has been one of the most controversial food groups. We often hear people state that they have gone off Dairy for various reasons such as “it causes inflammation” or “it’s unnatural for humans to drink cow’s milk”. Truth is people have been drinking milk and consuming dairy products for centuries. So, is dairy healthy or is it a health risk? Existing science around dairy is not always clear. One study warns about too much dairy and another showing benefits from regular Dairy consumption. To answer this question, it really depends on what you need nutritionally.

Dairy is still a recommended food group on the *ChooseMYPlate.gov*. Most health experts recognize that milk and other dairy products are an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D to keep bones healthy. While these nutrients may be able to be obtained from other sources such as green leafy vegetables, calcium-fortified foods or vitamin/mineral supplements, dairy products provide a more concentrated and bioavailable source of each. It can prove difficult to meet one’s calcium and vitamin D from nondairy food sources unless foods are fortified and/or supplements are taken. Women over 50 and men over 70 require 1200 mg/calcium per day. One glass of milk provides approximately 300 mg calcium whereas it would take 6 cups of broccoli to provide this same amount. Research supports dairy consumption to help increase bone density as well as preventing age-related fractures.

Another reason to consider including dairy products in your diet is for protein. Protein helps minimize the natural age-related loss of muscle and strength known as sarcopenia. Dairy is a decent source of protein with one cup of milk providing 8 grams. Low fat cheese and yogurt are also good sources of protein.

There have been studies suggesting a reduction in diabetes with dairy consumption. A study done in Sweden found that adults that consumed more full fat dairy products had a 23% reduction in the development of diabetes compared to those with low intakes of dairy products. Researchers believe that full fat dairy products have a lower glycemic index, which may help with blood sugar reduction. People with high cholesterol may need to limit full fat dairy products or use lower fat options to prevent increases in serum lipids. Emerging research however, is indicating that full fat dairy may be cardio-neutral and fermented dairy foods such’s yogurt and kefir may be cardio protective. Until there is consensus on this however, sticking to non- or low-fat dairy as recommended by the American Heart association may be best.

With the mention of low-fat dairy products, low-fat dairy products are advised as part of the DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). Studies indicate that diets containing high calcium and high potassium foods, including milk, cheese and yogurt, aid in reducing blood pressure.

One reason people may be concerned about conventional dairy products is the addition of Recombinant Bovine Growth hormone (rBGH) also known as recombinant bovine somatotropin hormone (rBST). Although cows produce this hormone naturally (known as Bovine Growth Hormone), the noted synthetic version (rBGH or rBST) is an FDA approved, growth hormone used on dairy cows to increase milk production. The concern is that the hormone is harmful to humans. The good news, according to the American Cancer Society, is that rBGH is not active in humans. There may be concern, however that rBHG-treated cows have increased levels of IGF-1, a hormone that naturally increases cell growth. Previous studies suggested a relationship between levels of IGF-1 and the risk of breast, prostate and colon cancers, but newer research has not confirmed this. Research has found no difference in dairy products from cows treated with rBST versus those not treated. Although not required, many farmers pledge that they do not use rBST and often state this on their products.

While some may choose to avoid dairy products, most nutrition experts promote them as part of a healthy, balanced diet to maintain bone health, reduce blood pressure and reduce risk for diabetes. The US Dietary Guidelines advises three servings of dairy per day for most age groups.



Good Sleep for Good Health

Sleep is as important for good health as diet and exercise. Good sleep improves your brain performance, mood and health. Not getting enough quality sleep regularly raises the risk of many diseases and disorders. These range from heart disease and stroke to obesity and dementia. There's more to good sleep than just the hours spent in bed, says Dr. Marishka Brown, a sleep expert at NIH. "Healthy sleep encompasses three major things," she explains. "One is how much sleep you get. Another is sleep quality-that you get uninterrupted and refreshing sleep. The last is a consistent sleep schedule." People who have irregular schedules may find getting quality sleep extra challenging. And times of great stress-like the current pandemic-can disrupt our normal sleep routines. But there are many things you can do to improve your sleep.

Sleep for Repair

Dr. Maiken Nedergaard, who studies sleep at the University of Rochester states, "While you sleep, your brain is working. For example, sleep helps prepare your brain to learn, remember, and create. Nedergaard and her colleagues discovered that the brain has a drainage system that removes toxins during sleep. She explains, "It becomes almost like a kidney, removing waste from the system." Her team found in mice that the drainage system removes some of the proteins linked with Alzheimer's disease. These toxins were removed twice as fast from the brain during sleep. Everything from blood vessels to immune system uses sleep as a time for repair. "There are certain repair processes that occur in the body mostly, or most effectively, during sleep," Dr. Kenneth Wright Jr. from University of Colorado, states. He explains, "If you don't get enough sleep, those processes are going to be disturbed."

Sleep Myths and Truths

Most adults need at least seven hours or more of sleep each night. There are many misunderstandings about sleep. One is that adults need less sleep as they get older. This isn't true. Older adults still need the same amount. But sleep quality can get worse as you age. Older adults are more likely to take medications that interfere with sleep. Another sleep myth is that you can "catch up" on your days off. Researchers are finding that this largely isn't the case. This is not a healthy behavior and cannot benefit you. On the flip side, more sleep isn't always better. For adults, if you sleep more than nine hours a night and you still don't feel refreshed, there may be some underlying medical issue.

Sleep Disorders

Some people have conditions that prevent them from getting enough quality sleep, no matter how hard they try. These problems are called sleep disorders. The most common is insomnia, is that when you have repeated difficulty getting to sleep and /or staying asleep. This happens despite having the time to sleep and a proper sleep environment. Insomnia can be short-term, where people struggle to sleep for a few weeks or months. Sleep apnea is another common sleep disorder. In sleep apnea, the upper airway becomes blocked during sleep. This reduces or stops airflow, which wakes people up during the night. The condition can be dangerous. If untreated, it may lead to other health problems. If you regularly have problems sleeping, talk to your health care provider.

Getting Better Sleep

Treatments are available for many common sleep disorders. Cognitive behavioral therapy can help many people with insomnia get better sleep. Medications can also help some people. Many people with sleep apnea benefit from using a device called CPAP machine. These machines keep the airway open so that you can breathe. Other treatments can include a special mouthguards and lifestyle changes. Do the best you can to make sleep a priority.

- ◆ Stick to a sleep schedule
- ◆ Get some exercise everyday
- ◆ Go outside
- ◆ Avoid nicotine and caffeine
- ◆ Don't take naps after mid-afternoon
- ◆ Avoid alcohol and large meals before bedtime
- ◆ Limit electronics before bed.
- ◆ Create a good sleeping environment
- ◆ Don't lie in bed awake
- ◆ See your health provider

What is medication non-adherence?

Maximizing medicine benefits starts with addressing “non-adherence”. Non –adherence is also known as “non-compliance.”

This means not taking your medicine as prescribed according to the directions of your healthcare provider or the directions on the medicine label.

The importance of medication adherence.

Nearly three out of four Americans report they do not always take their medication as directed. Medication “non-adherence” or “non-compliance,” either intentionally or inadvertently, can include:

- Failing to initially fill a prescription
- Failing to refill a prescription
- Stopping a medication before the course of therapy is complete
- Taking more or less of a medication than prescribed
- Taking a dose at the wrong time
- Missing a dose completely

In fact, lack of prescription adherence can be considered America’s “other drug problem.” This can lead to unnecessary disease progression, disease complications, a lower quality of life, and even the possibility of premature death. Not taking your medicine as prescribed may lead you to experience longer or more serious illnesses. It may also lead to you not getting the full relief that the medicine is intended to provide.

The U.S. pays a high price for poor adherence: About 125,000 people die each year in the United States because of not taking medicine as directed. About one third of medicine-related hospital admissions in the United States are linked to non-adherence. Additionally, it costs the country nearly \$3000 billion each year in added costs for doctor visits, emergency room visits, hospital admissions and more medicine. Taking your medicines for as long as prescribed , at the right time and dose, and according to instructions, can help you feel and stay well. Practicing medication adherence assures the maximum beneficial impact of the medicines you take. It also minimizes risk.

Medication adherence

Tips for keeping track of your medications and remembering to take them

Explore ways to reduce medicine costs. Due to high prescription prices, people don’t fill their prescriptions. Or, they skip doses so the medicine lasts longer. Yet, there are programs that help you afford your meds. For example, prescription assistance programs provide free or low cost prescription medications. Search for more ways to save with NeedyMeds.com.

- **Keep things simple:** Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about how to simplify your medication schedule. If possible , take your medicines at the same time each day.
- **Work with one pharmacy:** Use one pharmacy for all prescriptions and refills. This way the pharmacy can help you manage your medications at the same time.
- **Use a reminder tool:** Try the Health Story app, use a printed pill reminder sheet, or write down your medication schedule. This will help you keep track of what to take, when to take it, and special instructions like “take with food.”
- **Explore other reminder tools:** For instance, in addition to reminder apps, there are alerts on phones or computers. Some people use adherence packaging or “blister packs.” Some rely on weekly pillboxes to sort medicines by day or time of day. If you do this, keep the packaging to reference dosing information and other instructions. Also, pillboxes are generally not child-resistant. Keep them up and away and out of sight of young children..
- **Establish a routine:** Try to tie your medication schedule to your daily activities. For instance, leave your medicine by your toothbrush as a reminder to take your pills when you brush your teeth.

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