

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for Older New Yorkers

We've all heard the saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," reminding us of the large influence that eating habits have on overall health. Eating well can help us lower our risk of chronic disease, maintain a healthy weight, and increase overall health. By the way, it is true, the fiber and probiotics in apples promote good gut bacteria, which may help keep the doctor away!

Good nutrition is key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but it's not always easy or accessible. Fresh fruits and vegetables may sometimes be hard to find or more expensive to buy, making them unaffordable for low-income individuals.

To help older adults purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA)'s annual Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides low-income seniors with access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Participants receive coupons that can be used to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables, and fresh cut herbs for cooking at participating farmers markets and farm stands.



The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides coupons that older New Yorkers can exchange for fresh fruit and vegetables. Applications for the program are currently open.

The Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is federally funded by the Farm Bill. Not only does the farmers market nutrition program allow older adults to purchase nutritious foods, it supports local farmers. In addition, outdoor farmers markets and farm stands often allow more space for social distancing than indoor grocery stores. Older adults can apply online through our website, nyc.gov/aging. Coupon booklets are distributed on a first come first served basis.

For older adults in need of supplemental meals, the City continues to deliver emergency meals through the City's GetFoodNYC initiative, which continues enrollment for older adults during the pandemic.

In addition to eating well, older New Yorkers should continue to stay active to maintain their overall health. While congregating centers remained closed due to the pandemic, classes and workshops continue to be offered virtually. Many of the classes offered online include fitness and exercise classes designed for older adults. Some of the virtual classes offered include chair yoga and Zumba and are hosted on video conferencing platforms like Zoom. To find virtual programs, call your local senior center for a schedule of activities. DFTA partner, Older Adult Technology Services (OATS) also provides online virtual programs through their website seniorplanet.org.

Connecting individuals with healthy food and fitness options is essential to DFTA's mission of ensuring quality of life for older New Yorkers. As we continue providing programs and services that help older New Yorkers age within in their

communities and their homes, healthy eating and an active lifestyle plays an important role in overall wellness.

To learn more about virtual programs or to apply for the Senior Farmers' Market Program, call Aging Connect at (212) 244-6469. You can also visit DFTA's website, nyc.gov/aging, to fill an online application for the Seniors Farmers' Market Program.



**NYC Department for the
Aging Commissioner
Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**