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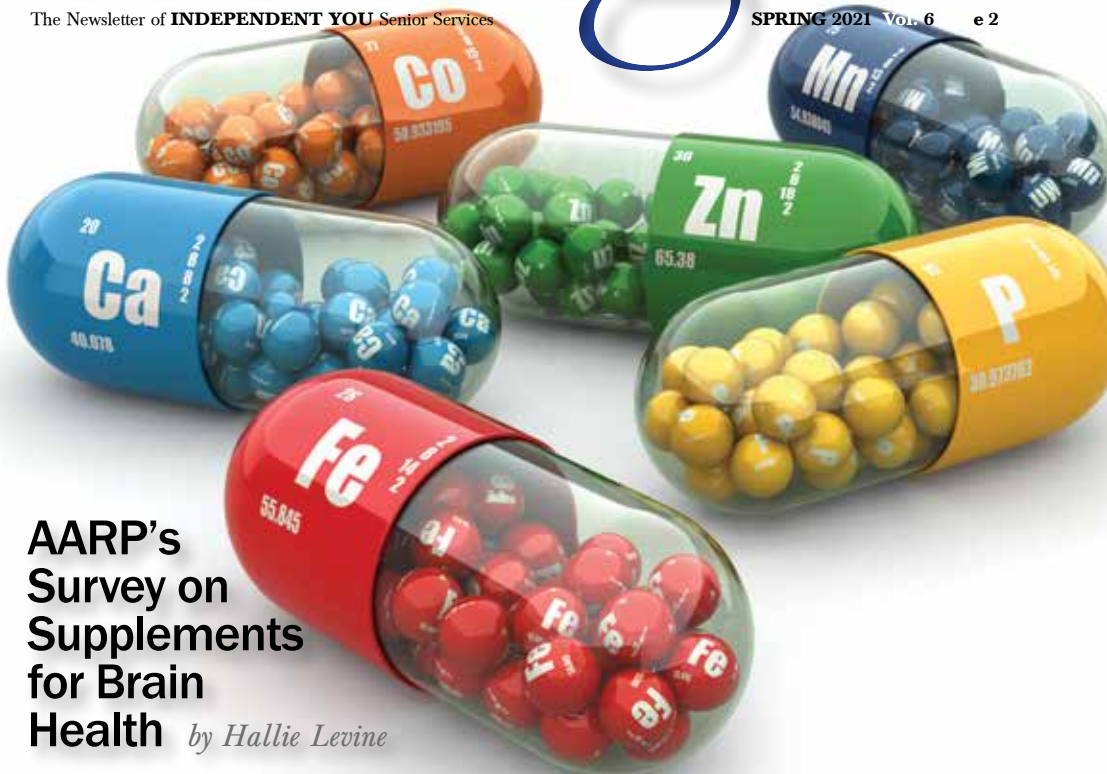


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The Newsletter of INDEPENDENT YOU Senior Services

SPRING 2021 Vol. 6 e 2



AARP's Survey on Supplements for Brain Health *by Hallie Levine*

AARP's Brain Health and Dietary Supplements Survey, released today, shows that Americans age 50 and older are wolfing down the biggest slice of the very large brain-health supplements market, one expected to reach \$5.8 billion in sales by 2023.

The survey, which sheds light on the both supplement buying behavior and the possible motivations behind it, also reveals some major misconceptions — for one, that supplements are regulated by the government for things like purity of their ingredients or validity of their claims.

The results also show that effectiveness of supplements for boosting memory or brain power is a major concern of

those who regularly purchase them — a concern that appears to be more than valid, according to a separate report from AARP's Global Council on Brain Health, also released today. Here's a closer look at who's taking which vitamin, herb or nutraceutical and why.

Survey results show that members of the Greatest and Silent generations are the most likely to be buyers of all supplements, and of those for brain health in particular.

More than three-quarters of adults over age 74 take some sort of vitamin or dietary supplement, as do almost 70 percent of boomers (those between 55 and 73). "The older people are, the more likely they are to turn to supplements

because they begin to develop concerns about their health, especially conditions such as dementia,” says Tod Cooperman, president and founder of ConsumerLab.com, an independent evaluator of dietary supplements.

AARP’s survey backs that up: It shows that more than a quarter of Americans ages 50 to 73 are regularly taking supplements for their brain health, and that this figure rises to 36 percent for those over 74.

Among adults taking something like ginkgo biloba or omega-3 tablets, 21 percent report taking dietary supplements to maintain – and 20 percent to improve – their brain health. In addition, 11 percent report currently taking a supplement to delay the onset of dementia, and 8 percent say they take a supplement to reverse dementia.

The most popular supplements adults take for memory enhancement, according to the survey, are omega-3, turmeric/curcumin and green tea.

Three-fourths of respondents were extremely or somewhat concerned about the effectiveness of the ingredients in such supplements – and with good cause, it seems. Though more than 75 percent of those surveyed said they think supplements can help maintain and improve brain health, and though nearly half think they can help prevent and reverse dementia, there’s no scientific evidence to support such beliefs, according to an exhaustive look at recent studies by the *AARP Global Council for Brain Health*.

AARP’s survey found that almost 70 percent of adults who report eating healthfully most days of the week also take some sort of vitamin or dietary supplement. “This may be because these are people who tend to be more conscious of their health in general,” says Cooperman.

What’s more, adults who say they eat the recommended amount of fruits and veggies every day reported better brain

health, regardless of whether they take supplements.

“There may be something protective about getting nutrients from food – for example, they’re better absorbed by the body – rather than supplements,” Cooperman says.

Seventy percent of survey responders were very or somewhat concerned about supplements’ safety, and three-fourths were worried about purity of ingredients. This is a very valid concern, says Cooperman. While about half of the people surveyed believe that vitamins and minerals are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and almost 40 percent believe that supplements like herbs are, they’re not.

“People assume that there’s more oversight by the FDA than there really is,” Cooperman says. Under current law, dietary supplements are considered food, not drugs. That means they aren’t put through the same strict safety and effectiveness requirements that both prescription and over-the-counter drugs are.

As a result, they’re considered safe until proven otherwise. The FDA can’t stop a company from making a certain supplement until it has proof that it causes harm. “The FDA doesn’t regulate these companies, so there’s no way to make sure that a product contains what’s listed on the label, in the right dosage – and some products even have ingredients that aren’t listed,” Cooperman says.

If you’re considering taking a supplement, “put as much time into it as you would shopping for a car,” stresses Cooperman. Take the following steps to make sure you’re safe:

Look for the right label. Look for a product that has a seal of approval from U.S. Pharmacopeia, ConsumerLab.com or NSF International. These three independent organizations all test supplements to make sure that they

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were properly manufactured, contain the ingredients (and proper doses) listed on the label, and don't contain harmful contaminants.

Always check for interactions between supplements and drugs. Certain supplements can interact powerfully with meds you already may be taking. St. John's wort, for example, can interact with the blood-clotting drug coumadin, and red yeast rice, often taken for heart disease, can magnify effects of cholesterol-lowering drugs such as statins. Your doctor or pharmacist can provide guidance; you can also go to ConsumerLab.com for more details.

Be wary of health claims. By law, dietary supplements can't claim that the product treats, cures or prevents a certain disease. That means if you see a supplement that states on its label or in its advertising that it can prevent

Alzheimer's or can naturally treat your high blood pressure, stay away.

Take supplements correctly.

Certain ones, like coenzyme Q-10, curcumin or vitamin D, are fat soluble, which means that they're much better absorbed if you take them with food, Cooperman says. You can always check a reputable website to find out the best way to take a certain supplement.

Be wary of gummies. They may be tasty, but they often flunk ConsumerLab's testing, says Cooperman. The reason: Gummies are hard to manufacture, and are more likely to break down, so manufacturers often put in more than the listed amount of a given ingredient. As a result, you may get more than you bargained for.

—AARP



Popular Food Service Options for the Elderly

By Angelike Gaunt

If your aging parents live in an assisted living community, where meals are often available, nutrition is one less thing to worry about. But if your loved ones live with you or on their own, grocery delivery and food service options can help ensure they still get nourishing, healthy meals.

What to consider when selecting a food service option for seniors

Before choosing a food service, think about **Ability to cook.** Consider whether your loved one would do better with a grocery or meal delivery service. Mobility, balance, and memory

issues can make it difficult or unsafe for older adults to cook. For some older adults, prepared meals that just need to be heated up may be a better option.

Budget. If you choose a meal kit or prepared meal delivery service, research options that fit your budget. Costs for these services vary and, in some cases, may be available at reduced rates based on need.

Diet restrictions. Look for options that accommodate your loved one's dietary needs. Certain services cater to specific diets, such as diabetic-friendly, vegetarian, or low-sodium.

Frequency. Thinking about going the meal kit or prepared meals route? Consider whether your loved ones need these types of meals every day. Either you or they may be able to cook a few times a week, alternating with kits or prepared meals.

While grocery delivery services allow you to shop supermarket aisles from the comfort and safety of your home, meal kit delivery services let you choose from weekly menu options to deliver pre-portioned ingredients and recipes that you or your loved one can follow.

Grocery delivery services such as Shipt require a yearly-subscription, while Instacart allows for more flexibility, offering the option to pay a fee each time you order. These services offer door drop-offs to increase safety and minimize any contact.

Blue Apron, Hello Fresh, and Sun Basket are just a few of several popular meal kit delivery services that offer a variety of plans to fit your loved one's needs. You can select from options for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, and decide how often you want meals delivered. Some services also offer meal selections based on your dietary needs and preferences.

However, meal kit delivery services may be expensive. Each serving tends to cost around \$9 to \$13. Additionally, if you're thinking about using a grocery or meal kit delivery service, consider

whether your aging loved one will have the ability and the energy to cook if you're not present. While some older adults may enjoy preparing their meals, others may find it challenging, especially if they live alone.

Prepared meal delivery services: when cooking is not an option

Older adults may struggle with cooking for many reasons. They may lack the skills, time, or motivation to prepare healthy, nutritious meals. In some cases, physical or memory issues may make cooking more difficult. Or they may simply appreciate the convenience of having prepared meals delivered right to their home.

Prepared meal delivery services, such as MagicKitchen.com or Silver Cuisine, specialize in senior nutrition and cater to specific dietary needs, such as heart-healthy, diabetic-friendly, low-sodium, and more.

Several food service groups offer the option of ordering meals a la carte, mixing and matching menu options, or setting up plans that include complete meals, which can start or stop at any time.

As with meal kit delivery services, expect to pay around \$9 to \$13 per individual meal. But note that in some cases you may be required to order two or more servings each time, so budget accordingly.

Budget-friendly food service options for seniors

Meals On Wheels is the largest national provider of senior meal services, offering affordable options and financial assistance programs based on need. The organization is comprised of 5,000 nutrition programs across the country and even offers catered menus and diet-specific food options in some states and counties.

Generally, you must be 60 or older to be eligible for the program, but age requirements may vary by location. Those with mobility challenges may

qualify for home delivery while others can get meals delivered to senior centers and cafes. You can look for available services in your area by entering your zip code in the search tool.

Many local community senior centers and churches also offer hot meals for local residents. Check with your local organizations if carryout or other options are available.

The National Care Planning Council provides more information on helpful community meal options across America. Community centers and churches can also provide additional information on meal delivery options in your family's area, so they're a great place to start to find affordable, nutritious meal options near you.



7 Benefits of Being Outdoors for Seniors

Did you know there's a magic cure that can boost your mood, lower the need for pain medication, provide your daily dose of vitamin D, strengthen your relationships, improve your sleep and more? This remedy doesn't come in a pill or potion, but it's free and abundantly available. You get it by lacing up your shoes, opening the door and heading outside.

Seniors can benefit in multiple ways

from spending time in nature, as AARP notes. Whether you're living in your long-time home, a downsized condo or a retirement community in Massachusetts, you can improve your health in a number of ways by getting out into the great outdoors.

1. Lift your Spirits

A recent study from the University of Michigan found a link between group

nature walks and significantly reduced levels of depression, along with a lowered perception of stress and better mental health and well-being. Smelling the fresh-cut grass, seeing the vivid colors, breathing fresh air and feeling the sunshine on your face simply makes most people feel happier.

2. Improve your Sleep

When you're outdoors, you're more likely to be exercising. And when you exercise, research has found, you sleep better and more restfully. As a result, you're more bright-eyed and bushy-tailed the next day, ready to engage in any number of vitality-promoting activities.

3. Strengthen your Immune Function

Research has found that being outdoors increases your count of white blood cells, and the effect can stretch over several days. One study found that women who spent several hours in a forest over two days showed an increase in white blood cells that lasted for a week.

4. Keep your Vitamin D Levels Healthy

Research indicates that vitamin D — known as the “sunshine vitamin” — may help protect against osteoporosis, heart disease and some types of cancer. Supplements work, but isn't spending time out in the actual sunshine more enjoyable?



Whether you're living in your long-time home, a downsized condo or a retirement community in Massachusetts, you can improve your health in a number of ways by getting out into the great outdoors.

5. Give your Energy a Jolt

Anyone who spends time outside knows that connecting with nature makes you feel more alive, and research backs up that good vibe. Being outdoors provides you with greater feelings of vitality and makes you more resistant to illnesses. A number of studies have identified a link between time spent in nature and greater energy.

6. Boost Overall Health

Patients recovering from surgery may get well more quickly, experience less pain and spend less time in the hospital when they're exposed to natural light, research has found. Breathing fresh air also can benefit your health, and many pulmonologists recommend short walks to ward off osteoporosis and vitamin D deficiency in pulmonary patients.

7. Enhance Relationships

Getting outdoors is a wonderful way to interact socially with other people, whether through participating on a recreational sports team or spending time with friends and loved ones. Seniors benefit from spending time outdoors in so many ways, from boosting overall health to sleeping better, improving mood and engaging with other people.

—AARP

Quality Takes Time

lon·gev·i·ty: /lon-jev-i-tee,
noun
long life.
long existence or service.

Longevity; in any business, is an important component but in the world of caregiving, it's an essential ingredient.

Everyone hopes that when you hire a caregiver, that person will stay with you for years. Time, money and energy is spent on training, learning to work as a team and having everyone share a similar vision. A business that has a low employee turnover rate is typically well-run with satisfied, productive employees and well on its way to being successful.

Qualified, responsible caregivers are hard to find, so as a home care agency, when Independent You brings on a new caregiving team member we hope that person will be with us for years. Many of our caregivers come to us through referrals from our current caregivers. That tells us that our caregivers are happy working with us and are willing to recommend other professionals that they have worked with. Independent You spends the time and energy necessary with new team members by having a rigorous skills assessment as our first step, and then an orientation process where they can begin working with a client.

Change is difficult for many of our senior clients, so longevity is most important when it comes to delivering quality care for them, their families and their happiness with our services.

As with any relationship, trust is built over time. When a client is able to consistently work with the same caregiver they come to know the caregiver, and this trust is built. The caregiver learns the client's likes and dislikes, learns where things are located in the client's home and a strong relationship bond is built. Often, the client and their family come to feel like a caregiver is a part of their family.

At Independent You we work hard to find and develop the best caregivers available and retain those caregivers with strong

relationships histories. While Independent You is a smaller agency we deliver specialized, quality care that the bigger corporate agencies can not provide.

In 2020 we hired 34 new caregivers to accommodate our growing family of clients. By the end of the year, 22 of those caregivers were still with us giving us a 65% retention rate. On our current roster we have about 81 caregivers —of which 57% have been with us since 2018 or, going on 4 years.

As we celebrate our 10 year anniversary, we're proud of the team that we have built and the quality of care we deliver to our clients. We consider our team to be among the finest.

If you're an experienced caregiver, looking for a great group to work with, I hope you'll contact us. We're always looking for good caregivers to join our team and find a permanent home with Independent You.

—*Mary Beth Crosson*





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*Providing
personalized,
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