



Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

-Senior Adults 2004

Putting Knowledge to Work for Georgia Families

The University of Georgia

Cooperative Extension Service

The Problem

- Georgia's senior adult population will nearly triple by the year 2025, with the largest rate of increase among those over 85 years of age (US Census population projections). Of the total population in Georgia, 9.6% were 65 years or older in 2000 (US Census Bureau).
- Many seniors will remain healthy and vital to much older ages resulting in opportunities for volunteering, nontraditional jobs and recreation; there will also be increased demand for specialized services in housing, education, health and nutrition.
- Seniors are seeking to remain independent as long as possible and frequently choose personal care homes for assisted living as it becomes necessary.
- Identity theft and telemarketing frauds are growing problems among seniors.

Research-based Solutions

- New research findings regarding nutrition, activity levels, caregiving and assistance with activities of daily living are enabling seniors to maintain independence and an enhanced quality of life much longer.

Extension's Role

- Provide educational programs which allow seniors to meet their changing life needs in housing, financial management, health and nutrition and family care giving.
- Offer seniors opportunities for community involvement as volunteers.

Extension's Contribution to Solving the Problem

- Family and consumer sciences extension programs provided 26,760 contact hours of education to 31,963 senior citizens in 2004. Of the seniors who participated in family and consumer sciences extension programs, 76% were in nutrition and food safety educational programs; 7% were in financial management and consumer education programs; and nearly 11% were in weight control, diabetes and chronic disease prevention programs.
- Nutrition, food safety, and diabetes education programs reached 263 personal care home providers.
- The *Seniors Taking Charge* nutrition and health extension program provided 547 hours of education to 512 senior citizens in 2004.
- The newsletter, "*Senior Sense*," designed for senior citizens reached over 9,000 individuals.

Impact on Georgians

- Nearly 93% of the seniors who participated in Foods and Nutrition education programs said those programs were helpful in learning healthy nutrition concepts and meal planning practices. Most of the participants developed their food and nutrition knowledge and said that they plan to adopt healthy dietary practices. For example, 50% planned to drink calcium fortified orange juice at least three times a week and to include at least one new fruit or vegetable in their diet; 81% planned to eat whole grain cereals; 55% planned to eat at least five fruits and vegetables each day; and 58% planned to eat low-fat snacks and desserts.
- Ninety-two percent of the seniors who participated in food safety education programs said those programs were helpful to learn food safety and sanitary practices. The majority of the seniors who participated in the program said that they plan to apply safe food handling practices. For example, 92% planned to reheat liquid leftovers to a rolling boil and solids to 165 degrees Fahrenheit before

serving; 85% said that they plan to keep raw meats separate from other foods to prevent bacteria spreading from one food to another and all of them said that they plan to rinse vegetables well with running cool water before they are eaten.

- Ninety percent of the seniors who participated in the Diabetes Education program said that it was very helpful for them to learn how to manage diabetes. At the end of the training, most of the participants planned to apply recommended practices for controlling their diabetes. For example, 90% of the participants planned to have their blood pressure checked regularly; 100% of participants planned to have their A1C tested at least twice a year and to follow a meal plan to control portions and intake of carbohydrates.
- A readership survey with the *Senior Sense* newsletter subscribers revealed that 65% of them had prepared the healthy recipes they learned from the newsletter. Most of the seniors who read the *Senior Sense* newsletter cited improved dietary habits.

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