

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



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Grand Challenge: SNAP-ED Nutrition Education— *Fresh Conversations for Seniors*

Why is this issue important?

Good nutrition is vital for optimal health and well-being. Yet many older adults face a variety of challenges with eating a healthful diet such as changes in taste, smell and appetite; limited incomes; illness and restricted diets, medications that affect appetite or nutrient absorption; and social isolation.

All of these factors can lead to malnutrition in older adults which weakens the immune system and increases risk of infections leading to poor wound healing. In addition, poor nutrition can result in muscle weakness and decreased bone mass, and an increased risk of falls and fractures.

How did Extension address this issue?

Shawnee County SNAP-Ed offers *Fresh Conversations*, a nutrition education program designed to support healthy aging and independence. Each month, seniors at East Topeka Senior Center and Papan's Landing meet to discuss current nutrition and health topics, taste low-cost healthy recipes, and discover new ways to stay active and independent.



What was the impact?

So far over 50 seniors have participated in *Fresh Conversations*. Besides nutrition education, seniors are linked to nutrition programs that can increase their access to healthier foods such as SNAP¹, Double Up Food Bucks² and the Seniors Farmers Market Program³ which provides vouchers for fresh produce.

1. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>
2. <https://www.doubleupheartland.org/>
3. <https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/1041/Kansas-Senior-Farmers-Market-Nutrition-P>

Success Story:

Marcella, who has diabetes and high blood pressure started reading food labels to reduce her sodium and sugar intake after a *Fresh Conversations* discussion on diabetes.