

March 2023

Boomers, Elders, & More E-Newsletter

Monthly Elder Care Newsletter of the Vanderbilt Child & Family Center



OLLI

The [Osher Lifelong Learning Institute \(OLLI\) at Vanderbilt University](#) helps adults over 50 rediscover the joy of learning and build community through diverse social interaction.

Just some of the upcoming Spring classes:

China's Modernization

Choral Singing

Consider the Birds of the Air

How to Write a Memoir

OLLI Steel Drum Band

Passion, Fashion, and Murder in 19th Century Paris

The Aging Brain in Health and Disease

SPRING 2023

Registration opens: **Monday, February 13**

Registration deadline: **Friday, March 10**

First day of classes: **Sunday, March 19**

VCFC Resources

VCFC seeks to establish a community of support. Understanding the changing needs of the Vanderbilt community helps to create impactful programming. [VCFC maintains a list of resources](#) for caregivers. If you have ideas for activities or speakers that would benefit seniors and/or caregivers, please contact: famcenter@vanderbilt.edu

Boomers, Elders, and More! [E-Newsletter available.](#)

Upcoming Event: Lunch & Learn
"VA Caregiver Support Program"

Time: Mar 30, 2023 12:00 PM Central Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://vanderbilt.zoom.us/j/99585140643?pwd=OEZtSXhIN0c1TjBjK1ByMlZ5cTJBdz09>

Meeting ID: 995 8514 0643

Passcode: 730012

One tap mobile

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Speaker: **Takisha Woolfolk, LCSW**

Caregiver Support Program Manager

Tennessee Valley Healthcare/Nashville Campus

Department of Veteran Affairs

Highlight on FiftyForward



The goal of FiftyForward is to assist adults 50+ in Middle Tennessee to live longer, more fulfilling lives through innovative programs and services. Committed and compassionate staff, volunteers, and partners form a powerful leadership team positively impacting older adults, their families, and the community.

Founded in 1956, FiftyForward annually touches the lives of more than 20,000 individuals – senior adults, children and families in Middle Tennessee.

Through seven locations and a variety of programs in Davidson and Williamson counties, FiftyForward provides enrichment opportunities for adults 50 and older to remain engaged in living their lives to the fullest.

If you know of an older adult in need, please call us Monday-Friday at 615-743-3416.

Vanderbilt University transitioned to [new well-being and employee assistance program](#) services starting in 2023. For more information please email Wellbeing@vanderbilt.edu.



6 WAYS TO GET SENIORS WITH NO APPETITE TO EAT

<https://dailycaring.com/6-ways-to-get-seniors-with-no-appetite-to-eat/>

First, rule out serious health problems

The first and most important thing to do is rule out serious health conditions, medication side effects, or dental problems as the cause of their loss of appetite.

If these issues aren't causing the loss of appetite, your best bet is to experiment with different ways to get your older adult to eat.

6 ways to get seniors with no appetite to eat

1. Have a regular meal and snack schedule

Having a regular daily routine and serving food at roughly the same times every day helps their body be ready to eat at those times.

Don't rely on your older adult's ability to feel their hunger (it declines with age) before giving them food.

2. Serve smaller portions of high nutrient foods

Some people may feel overwhelmed if they see a large amount of food in front of them. Instead of a big plate, serve smaller portions.

Or, you could try switching to a daily routine where your older adult eats 5 small meals instead of 3 larger ones.

Boost the healthy calories in those smaller servings by adding:

- Avocado
- Finely chopped meat, cheese, egg
- Olive oil
- Peanut or other nut butters
- Soft cheeses like ricotta or mascarpone

To save time, you can still cook food in larger batches. Just store it in smaller individual containers so it's easy to heat and serve.



3. Reduce the need for utensils

The frustration of not being able to use a spoon, fork, or knife could make some older adults not want to eat at all.

To help them eat more easily, try serving foods that can be eaten without utensils or trying [adaptive utensils](#).

Some suggestions:

- Chicken strips or nuggets
- Fish sticks
- Steamed or raw veggies like carrots, broccoli, bell pepper strips, or cucumber pieces
- Meatballs

4. Have plenty of easy-to-eat snacks on hand

Some people might prefer to graze throughout the day rather than eat full meals. That's ok too. Keep plenty of healthy, delicious, and easy-to-eat snacks available so they're choosing from nutritious options.

Some suggestions:

- Cheese sticks or string cheese
- Full-fat yogurt
- Diced fruit, fresh or packaged
- Peanut butter and crackers
- Cheese and crackers
- Full-fat cottage cheese
- Whole milk or chocolate milk

5. Make milkshakes or smoothies

If chewing is difficult or tiring, even with small pieces of food, consider serving softer or more liquid-y foods.

Some suggestions:

- Nutritious soups – enhanced with cream, olive oil, or pureed meats and veggies
- Healthy smoothies – add bananas, fruit, full-fat yogurt, or veggies like carrots and spinach
- Hot cocoa
- Full-fat milk
- Milkshakes – good quality ice cream is better than eating nothing!

Important: This is **not** a safe solution for those with [dysphagia](#) (swallowing problems).

6. Keep track of what works

Take notes so you can keep track of the foods that your older adult enjoys, things they don't like, and things that might be difficult to eat or are harder to digest. You can also track what times of day they're more willing to eat or when they have a better appetite. Keeping track lets you experiment more with things that are working and avoid the things that aren't.



Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University offers professional and student performances in both live and virtual formats.

[How Music Impacts Quality of Life for Seniors](#)

Simply put: Music is powerful “medicine.” It holds the power to reduce stress, improve symptoms of depression, and enhance productivity, among others—and, ultimately, improve a person’s quality of life.

Pleasant melodies play an important role in life for people of all ages. But for seniors, the benefits are even greater.

One of the most significant benefits of music for seniors is its seemingly magical ability to improve memory. Specifically, music can stimulate feelings of wellbeing in seniors by evoking strong memories and emotions. For seniors who have age-related memory issues—or even dementia—music has the power to actually bring back memories. In addition, music can help slow age-related cognitive decline by improving aging adults’ cognitive processing speed.

Social Hour

When it comes to quality of life for seniors, some may not consider the important role that socialization plays. Remaining socially active has been linked to a number of health benefits—and remaining in good health is important for quality of life for seniors.

For seniors who are struggling with loneliness or looking to improve their social life, music may be just the ticket. In many cases, music can broaden seniors’ social networks. Joining in with others to make and/or listen to music can spark discussions that improve connections with both friends and family members.

Infusing Music Into Everyday Life

By incorporating music into their everyday life, seniors can give their quality of life a much-needed boost. Older adults benefit from music that improves their moods, brings back older, happy memories, encourages socialization, and promotes overall mental and physical health.

By harnessing the power of music, your aging loved one’s communication, memory, socialization—and overall, his or her quality of life—stands to greatly improve.



[Guest Masterclass with Flutronix](#)

Vanderbilt Blair School of Music presents Flutronix in a special Masterclass event, Thursday, March 23, 5-7 p.m., in Ingram Hall. This is a free event and open to the public.

Flutronix is Nathalie Joachim and Allison Loggins-Hull, two distinguished performers and composers who are paving the way from their classical roots to the future of music. Founded in Brooklyn, NY, in 2007, the duo has evolved as influential creators and socially conscious changemakers.