

# Smart Choices

## Nutrition News for Seniors

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### Keep The Germs Away

Fall brings cooler weather, turning leaves, fairs and festivals, as well as the beginning of flu season. According to the CDC, 5 to 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu each year. For most people that means the inconvenience of being sick for a number of days. For others, it can lead to complications and even death.

Senior adults over the age of 65 are at a greater risk of developing serious complications from the flu when compared to young, healthy adults. This is because our immune system weakens as we age.

The flu is caused by a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. Just like a cold virus, it is usually spread from one person to another by way of a cough or sneeze. Additionally, we can get infected by touching a person or surface that is contaminated with flu germs and when we go on to touch our eyes, nose or mouth we can

infect ourselves with the flu virus.

#### Strategies for Preventing the Flu

**No. 1: Get a flu shot.** The CDC recommends flu shots for all adults age 50 and older. The flu shot is essential because there is no cure for the flu, and flu complications can be really serious for elderly adults and people with heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and other chronic medical problems. Talk to your doctor to confirm that the flu shot is right for you. It is also important that those around you are immunized against the flu as well.

**No 2: Disinfect kitchen surfaces.** The kitchen is one of the hotspots in the home for germs. Keep your sink and countertops clean and disinfected. You can make a disinfecting solution of 1/4 cup chlorine bleach to a gallon of cool tap water. Pour mixture into a spray bottle and

spray surfaces with mixture and let surfaces air dry for a few minutes. Homemade disinfecting solutions should not be kept longer than a day as they lose their strength.

**No. 3: Pay attention to bathroom surfaces.** Any surface that stays damp becomes a breeding ground for germs. You can disinfect bathroom surfaces with the same homemade disinfecting solution that you made for kitchen use.

**No. 4: Focus on other hotspots in the home** such as doorknobs, computer mouse and keyboard, phones and remote controls.

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# Roasted Root Vegetables



## Ingredients:

**2 medium-sized sweet potatoes, cut into large chunks**  
**2 medium-sized root vegetables (white potatoes, rutabagas, turnips, parsnips, beets), cut into large chunks**  
**2 carrots, chopped**  
**1 medium onion, chopped**  
**¼ cup vegetable oil**  
**3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese**  
**Season with your favorite spices**

## Preparation:

- 1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.**
- 2. In a medium bowl, add all chopped vegetables, and pour oil over top.**
- 3. Add Parmesan cheese and seasonings; mix well.**
- 4. Spread vegetable mixture evenly on a baking sheet.**
- 5. Bake for 1 hour or until tender.**

Source: SNAP-Ed Connection

**No 5: Follow good hygiene habits. Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Throw your used tissue into the trash. Wash your hands after sneezing or coughing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available you can use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow and not your hands.**

**No. 6: Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

**No 7: Practice other good health habits such as get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat a nutritious diet.**

**No 8: Stay home when you are sick. If possible, it is important to stay home from work, running errands and other events when you are sick. It will help prevent those around you from catching your illness.**

## What's the Purpose of SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP is about helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons. Food Stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic SNAP card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. This program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LA HELPU or visit [www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us).



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**References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**