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## Pulled pork

Suzanne Weakly scoops pulled pork during the Story Woman's Club lunch fundraiser Saturday, Aug. 25, 2018. Story's social groups and Story Days committee continue to encourage younger volunteers.

# PROPER NUTRITION FOR THE FALL SEASON OF LIFE

**S**ound nutrition is an important determinant of health in everyone but is especially important in those older than the age of 65. In fact, malnutrition in seniors is often underdiagnosed or at least not addressed correctly. To understand what malnutrition is, it's important to first know what nutrition is.

We are, literally, what we eat. There are some 50 nutrients, which is any substance or molecule that sustains life. Water is a nutrient — without it, life stops being sustained in 3-4 days. Oxygen is a nutrient — without it, life stops being sustained in just a few minutes.

Malnutrition comes from too little of a nutrient over time and can happen if one lacks a single vitamin in his or her diet, called a deficiency. This can happen in many ways including:

- Poor diet
- Starvation due to food not being available
- Poor appetite
- Poor dental conditions
- Eating disorders
- Medication that hinders appetite (like Chemotherapy)
- Problems absorbing or digesting food

Sometimes malnutrition is very mild and causes no symptoms; other times it's so severe that the damage to the body is permanent, even though one may survive. There are diseases from throughout history that have resulted from shortages of nutrients. For instance, rickets is a condition caused by Vitamin D deficiency. This, or a low dietary intake of calcium or phosphorus, likely caused the bowed legs often associated with cowboys.

Remember hearing about Navy sailors with scurvy? It's a disease that occurs

from lack of Vitamin C or ascorbic acid.

In the U.S. we see malnutrition, more often than you might think, from too much nutrition (too much food or too much of the wrong kind of food), rather than from too few nutrients. However, either extreme is amplified as you get older because as the body ages it becomes less able to handle or process surpluses or shortages. Diabetes, heart disease and cancer are all strongly linked to eating too many fatty calories or too much sodium or salty foods or too much sugar.

Sound nutrition suggests having the right allotment and right kind of food.

How do you know? Take a look at what you eat. On most days, do you eat a variety of foods, avoid skipping meals, include three or more whole grain foods, choose foods low in sodium, limit sugar drinks and sweet foods, use oils instead of solid fats and use lean meats? Do you use low-fat or fat-free milk? Generally, regardless of age, it's important to eat a balanced diet consisting of one serving from each food group per meal:

- 1 dairy or milk group (the leaner the better)
- 1 fruit, fresh is best
- 1-2 vegetables fresh or frozen is best
- 1 protein (about 3-3.5 ounces is best)
- 1-2 serving in the bread/cereal or grain group (whole wheat is better than white)

These suggestions can be a great starting point for a healthier diet, but it's important to talk to your doctor and nutrition professionals to find out what's right for you. Veteran with the VA? Call 675-FOOD for a consultation.

**GREG LOFTUS, MS.** is a Registered Dietician for the Sheridan VA Health Care System.

# The doctors want in: Democratic docs talk health care on campaign trail

BY SHEFALI LUTHRA  
KAISER HEALTH NEWS  
VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dr. Rob Davidson, an emergency physician from western Michigan, had never considered running for Congress. Then came February 2017. The 46-year-old Democrat found himself at a local town-hall meeting going toe-to-toe with Rep. Bill Huizenga, his Republican congressman of the previous six years.

"I told him about my patients," Davidson recalled. "I see, every shift, some impact of not having adequate health care, not having dental insurance or a doctor at all." His comments triggered

cheers from the audience but didn't seem to register with Huizenga, a vocal Obamacare critic. And that got Davidson thinking.

"I've always been very upset ... about patients who can't get health care," he said. But it never inspired him to act. Until this June, that is, when the political novice joined what is now at least eight other Democratic physicians running in races across the country as first-time candidates for Congress.

Democrats hope to gain control of Congress by harnessing what polls show to be voters' dissatisfaction with both Capitol Hill and President Donald Trump. The president maintains

Republican support but registers low approval ratings among Americans overall, according to news organization FiveThirtyEight. Democrats also see promise in candidates such as Davidson, a left-leaning physician who may have a special advantage: firsthand health system experience.

Polls by Quinnipiac University, The Wall Street Journal and the Kaiser Family Foundation suggest health care is among voters' top concerns as midterm elections approach. (Kaiser Health News is an editorially independent project of the foundation.)

Of the Democratic doctors running for office, all but one are seeking House seats. In addition to the nine newcomers, there are two incumbents up for re-election. Each candidate is campaigning hard on the need to reform the health care system.

And they present a stark contrast to Congress' current physician makeup.

Twelve of the 14 doctors now in Congress are Republicans. Three are senators. Half of the 14 practice in high-paying specialties such as orthopedic surgery, urology and anesthesiology.

By contrast, these stumping Democratic physicians hail predominantly from specialties such as emergency medicine, pediatrics and internal medicine, though one is a radiologist. They're fighting to represent a mix of rural, urban and suburban districts.

"Electing Democratic doctors would certainly change the face of medicine in Congress, and perhaps lend more credence in that body to more liberal health care policies," said Dr. Matthew Goldenberg, a psychiatrist at Yale School of Medicine who has researched political behavior and advocacy among doctors.

Physicians once trended Republican. The infusion of female and minority doctors, experts said, has changed this.

Now, more than 50 percent of party-affiliated doctors are Democrats, and the medical establishment has — following Republican efforts to undo Obamacare — emerged as a staunch defender of the law.

Indeed, many doctor-candidates point to the GOP's repeal-and-replace efforts as their motivation.

"It's at a boiling point for many of these physicians,"

said Jim Duffett, executive director of the left-leaning Doctors for America, which supports universal health care.

While health care consistently emerges as a top issue, Democrats are more likely to rank it No. 1. For independents and Republicans, though, it's neck and neck with the economy — and some political analysts question how effective it will be in flipping conservative districts.

"Democrat voters blame Republicans for the problems with health care right now. Republicans blame Democrats. Independents say, 'A pox on both your houses,'" argued Jim McLaughlin, a Republican pollster working on several 2018 races who has previously worked with Trump. "They're making a big mistake thinking they can run on [health care]."

That said, doctors can be effective messengers, especially in their communities. Research suggests Americans hold their own physicians in high regard.

"Voters listen carefully to what physicians have to say about health policy," said Jonathan Oberlander, a professor of social med-

icine and health policy at the University of North Carolina. "In a district that's not so one-sided red or blue, there's no question that the white coat confers prestige. It's something physician candidates can speak to with authority."

Davidson, for instance, supports a "Medicare-for-all"-style overhaul, an approach that involves expanding the federal insurance program for seniors and disabled people to all Americans.

If elected, he said, he intends to join Democrats' burgeoning support for a single-payer system, in which the government runs the sole health insurance program, guaranteeing universal coverage.

He did not have a primary challenge and is running against Huizenga, the Republican incumbent, in the general election for Michigan's 2nd Congressional District.

Or there's Dr. Kyle Horton, an internist running in the North Carolina 7th District. She supports expanding Medicare, by lowering the eligibility age from 65 to 50. She also supports a "public option" health insurance plan sold


### SENIOR HAPPENINGS

- The "When I'm 64.... or more" lecture series will continue Sept. 4 with "The Benefits and Pitfalls of Putting Your Kids Names on Your Bank accounts and Other Assets." The event will take place at The Hub's café on 211 Smith Street at 5:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. This is a free presentation for all ages.
- A Green Boomerang warehouse sale will feature furniture, file cabinets, kitchen items and bag sale for

clothing. The sale will take place Sept 7-8 from 8 a.m. to noon at 1201 Bowie Road.

- The Community Room at the Hub will present "Hemingway's Unrequited High School Crush," by Robert Elder Sept. 8 at 9 a.m. Robert Elder is a writer and Hemingway scholar. Elder's essay documenting his discovery of love letters was the featured article in the most recent edition of The Hemingway Review. Elder is the award-winning author of

eight books and founder of Odd Hours Media. He also serves as a mentor at Tech Stars, 1871 Chicago and Northwestern College and is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities Grant: Creating Humanities Communities along Wyoming's Hemingway Highway. Elder's book, Hidden Hemingway, will be available for sale. A book signing will follow. Refreshments will be provided. This event is open and free to the public.



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