

Nutrition for Older Adults

Eating a healthy diet is important throughout all stages of life, but it is particularly important as we get older. Although it is impossible to prevent aging, following these nutrition tips can help you to feel your best, prevent health problems and stay fit and active as long as possible.

- Eat a well-balanced diet- The easiest way to provide your body all the nutrients that it needs for health is by eating a variety of foods from each food group. Aim for a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned), dairy foods, whole grains and lean meats.
- Don't forget the fiber- Fiber is often referred to as "nature's broom" and helps contribute to bowel regularity. A fiber-rich diet can also help with weight management and may reduce risk for heart disease and Type 2 Diabetes. Make sure $\frac{1}{2}$ of the grains in your diet come from whole grains (brown rice, whole grain breads, cereals and pasta) and also eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. When increasing fiber in your diet, make sure to do it gradually and drink plenty of water.
- Bone up on calcium and vitamin D- To keep your bones healthy and strong, and prevent bone loss and fractures, it is important to eat foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D. Aim to include 3 servings of milk, cheese or yogurt in your diet each day. Be sure to choose lower fat dairy if you consume higher fat meats. If you have problems with lactose intolerance, try lactose-free options as well as cheese and yogurt which are often better tolerated than milk.
- Power up with protein- Protein serves many functions in our body and can help to maintain muscle mass. Aim for lean protein sources such as lean meats, fish, eggs, peanut butter and legumes. Lean meats include: skinless chicken breasts, turkey cutlets, beef cuts that include the words "round" or "loin", ground meat that is 90% lean or higher and pork or lamb cuts that include the words "loin" or "leg."
- Balance food and physical activity- As we get older we may require fewer calories than we did in our younger years. To maintain a healthy weight, it is important to combine a healthy diet with physical activity. In addition to boosting your metabolism and helping with weight management, regular exercise can boost your mood and help to keep your muscles, heart and bones strong. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
- Stay hydrated- Dehydration can become a problem for some older adults who become less able to sense when they are thirsty. Rather than depending on thirst, drink water or other fluids (100% fruit juice, milk, etc.) regularly throughout the day. Try filling a large water bottle each morning and keep it with you all day to remind you to drink regularly. Make sure to increase your fluid intake during physical activity and in warmer weather.

This medical and/or nutritional information is not intended to be a substitute for individual advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.