

A photograph of two women in a kitchen. The woman on the left is wearing a purple polo shirt with the 'Home Instead' logo. She is pointing at a recipe book on a granite countertop. The woman on the right is an older woman with white hair, wearing a light pink jacket. They are both looking down at the book. A plate of food is visible on the counter. The background shows a kitchen with a sink and cabinets.

*Nutrition and Aging:
Eating Right, Eating Well*

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Every Bite Counts—

As we age:

- Caloric needs decline
- Less active
- Less social
- Smaller food budget
- Changing nutrient needs

So it's even more important
to make good choices about
what to eat.

Healthy Eating for Seniors

A Day of Great Eating at a Glance:^{1,2}

Low- and Fat-free Milk, Yogurt and Cheese	3 cups
Brightly Colored Vegetables	2 to 2½ cups
Deep-Colored Fruits	1½ to 2 cups
Dry Beans, Nuts, Fish, Poultry, Lean Meat, and Eggs	5 to 5½ ounces*
Whole-grain bread, cereals, rice, pasta	6 ounces**

¹ <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/docs/guidelines.pdf>

² USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. www.choosemyplate.gov<<http://www.choosemyplate.gov>>

* "one ounce" also means ¼ cup cooked dry beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds.

**"one ounce" is equivalent to 1 slice bread, 1 cup dry cereal, ½ cup cooked rice, pasta or cereal.

Resources

<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-plan>

MyPlate Plan shows individual food group targets based on Age, Gender, Height, Weight and Physical Activity

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/human-nutrition-and-food-safety/dri-calculator>

This tool will calculate daily nutrient recommendations based on the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)..

Enter height, weight, age, and activity level to generate a report of the following items:

- Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Estimated daily calorie needs
- Recommended intakes of macronutrients, water, vitamins, and minerals based on DRI data

Nutrients of Concern for Senior Americans

Calcium

This bone-building nutrient helps keep bones strong and prevents fractures.

Calcium sources:

- Dairy products such as low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt.
- Green leafy vegetables,
- Calcium- fortified orange juice and soy products.
- Fortified RTE cereal

Vitamin D

Vital for bones by helping the body absorb calcium. The body makes vitamin D when skin is directly exposed to the sun.

Vitamin D sources:

- Fortified foods: Fluid Milk (required), cheese, ice cream, and yogurt.
- Orange juices may also be fortified.
- Fatty fish and eggs your doctor
- Vitamin D supplement may be recommended

¹ <http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/healthyeating.htm>.

² <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/Dietary-Reference-Intakes-for-Calcium-and-Vitamin-D/DRI-Values.aspx>.

See also "Healthy Eating after 50," National Institute on Aging.

Protein

Helps maintain muscle mass, supports vascular and immune function.

Protein sources:

- Meat, poultry and seafood
- Dairy and eggs
- Nut, beans, legumes

Fiber

Helps keep foods moving along in the digestive tract--helping seniors stay regular, along with other health benefits.

Fiber sources:

- Whole- wheat bread products
- Ready-to-eat cereals made with whole grain
- Beans and legumes,
- Most vegetables and the edible skins of fruits and vegetables.

Vitamin B12

With aging, it becomes harder for the body to absorb this vitamin that's essential for healthy nerves and blood cells

Sources:

- Meats, fish and shellfish and
- Fortified cereals
- Supplementation may be required

Fluids

The ability to regulate our body's fluid levels with thirst tends to decline as we get older. One-third body weight in fl oz.

(e.g. 150 lb person needs 50 oz)

- Water, Selzer
- Tea, coffee (preferably decaffeinated)
- Soup, gelatin, and pudding

Obstacles to Healthy Eating As We Age

Taste and Appetite Changes

- Tastes and smell diminish with age.
- Medications can affect taste and smell
- Serve food at it's proper temperature
- Arrange it attractively on the plate.
- Serve smaller meals more often

Mechanical Difficulties with Eating

- Dental problems
- Less ability to produce saliva
- Chewing and swallowing can be challenging.
- Arthritis and other conditions can make it difficult to hold utensils or open food containers.
- Emphasize soft foods like pastas, mashed potatoes, tender- cooked vegetables, eggs and yogurt; puree cooked vegetables into creamy soups and make smoothies from fresh fruits.
- Adaptive Utensils

¹. "Senior Health: How to prevent and detect malnutrition." <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/senior-health/HA00066>. ². American Institute of Cancer Research, "Nutrition after fifty: Tips and resources," http://preventcancer.aicr.org/site/DocServer/Nov2007_After_50_FINAL.pdf?docID=1571. ³. "Senior Nutrition: The joy of eating well and aging well," http://helpguide.org/life/senior_nutrition.htm.

Flavour Boost to Increase Appeal

- Healthy, flavorful fats like olive or walnut oil.
- Acids such as lemon juice and vinegar—brighten flavors, increase savor without salt.
- Seasonings like fresh or dried herbs and spices—add variety and (salt-free) flavor excitement.
- A touch of sweet—Even with diminished senses, seniors tend to retain their taste for sweetness; a little can go a long way. Use naturally sweet foods like sweet potatoes, fruits, and caramelized onions in dishes; adjust flavors with a little sugar, honey or maple syrup.

³ Adapted from “One Bite at a Time: Nourishing Recipes for People with Cancer, Survivors, and their Caregivers” by Rebecca Katz (Celestial Arts, 2004). Katz’s bio can be found at: www.innercook.com.

Obstacles (continued)

Monotonous Diet

- Can cause loss of interest in eating
- Inability to consume required nutrients

Illness and Medications

- Recovering from an illness or surgery, or living with a chronic condition such as heart disease or arthritis affects appetite;
- Medications can alter sensations of taste or cause side effects such as constipation or nausea.
- Suggest changing the timing of meals and serving smaller portions of nutrient-rich foods,

Obstacles (continued)

Cognitive Problems

- Dementia and other cognitive problems can cause seniors to forget to eat, or be unable to prepare foods safely.
- They may lose the ability to determine if a food is spoiled or unfit to eat.
- As a result, they can become malnourished.
- Caregivers play a vital role in recognizing onset of malnutrition.

Difficulty Shopping/Finding Healthy Foods

Budget Concerns

The Loneliness Factor.....

Loneliness – it's one of the most serious obstacles to good nutrition in seniors.

In the United States, approximately 40 percent of the population age 75 and older lives alone.



Signs of Malnutrition in Seniors

- Sudden or unintentional weight loss
- Edema in hands, feet and face
- Obviously ill-fitting clothing
- Loss of appetite
- Frequent coughing, gagging or choking
- Lack of energy, fatigue
- Little to no movement
- Weak immune system
- Infrequent bowel movements

Shopping Smart^{1,2}

Navigating the grocery store to get the most nutrition for your money

Have your senior bring a friend along.

Shop at off-peak hours.

Don't Go Hungry—and Bring a List

Stock Up at Sales—Wisely

Ask for Help

¹ Lichtenstein AH, Rasmussen H, Yu WW, Epstein SR, Russell RM. Modified MyPyramid for Older Adults. J Nutr. 2008; 138:78-82.

² National Institutes of Health (NIH) Senior Health: "Be a Smart Shopper," and "Shopping Smart on a Budget" - <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/eatingwellasyougetolder/eatwellonyourbudget/05.html>.

Top 10 Staples for Seniors^{1,2}

Dark Green Leafy Vegetables

Kale, spinach, turnip greens, collards and/or broccoli for potassium, vitamin C and fiber. And, hard-to-get vitamins K, E and even some iron.

Sweet Potatoes

Vitamin C, carotenoids and fiber. Serve as mashed potatoes, blend into soups, stews, croquettes or casseroles

Berries

Vitamin C and fiber make these great choices for sprinkling on cereals and salads or eating as a snack; blueberries are especially rich in antioxidants. Enjoy them fresh or frozen.

Citrus Fruit

Oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and other citrus fruit are some of nature's best sources of vitamin C and fiber

Frozen Vegetables and Fruits

Convenient and easy. Source of many micro nutrients and fiber

Yogurt

An easily digested, source of protein, calcium, and vitamin D

¹ "Senior Health: How to prevent and detect malnutrition." <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/senior-health/HA00066>.

² "Senior Nutrition: The joy of eating well and aging well." http://helpguide.org/life/senior_nutrition.htm.

Shopping Staples - Continued

Eggs

A protein-and-nutrient-rich food that's as economical and versatile.

Fish

The American Heart Association[®] recommends eating at least two servings of fish weekly—especially fatty fish like salmon, sardines and tuna, which are sources of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

Cereals made with Whole Grain

Cereal is a wholesome breakfast choice, but making sure the cereal is made with whole grain will make it an even better one! Look for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain’s name in the ingredient list, and make sure it’s near the top of the list.

Canned Beans

With both fiber and protein, beans add staying power to any meal. Try adding them (whole or pureed) to soups and stews, or toss them with cooked whole-grain pasta or brown rice for quick healthy meals.

Inspiring Healthy Eating

Simple activities and resources to help inspire easy, happy mealtimes.¹

Share Cooking Activities

Dine with Others When Possible

Remember the Pleasure of Eating

Make a Pleasant Setting

Create Conversation

Resources: National Senior Nutrition Program.

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/celebrate-our-senior-nutrition-program-march-2021>

- Nutritionary
- Did You Know? Game

¹Dubé, L., Paquet, C., Ma, Z., McKenzie, D., Kergoat, M., & Ferland, G. (2007). Nutritional implications of patient-provider interactions in hospital settings: evidence from a within-subject assessment of mealtime exchanges and food intake in elderly patients. *Eur J of Clin Nutr*, 61(5), 664-672.

Healthy Basics Shopping List

Fruits & Vegetables

- Sweet Potatoes
- Salad greens (spring mix, romaine lettuce)
- Citrus fruits (oranges, tangerines, grapefruit)
- Apples
- Bananas
- Dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots)
- Frozen Vegetables
- Canned Vegetables
- Frozen Fruit

Dairy

- Low-fat (1%) milk or vitamin D-fortified soymilk
- Vitamin D-fortified yogurt
- Eggs
- Low-fat cheese/cottage cheese
- Margarine

Protein (Meat/Poultry/Fish)

- Lean ground beef
- Chicken
- Fresh or frozen Fish
- Canned or pouch tuna

Whole Grains & Other Dry Groceries

Whole-wheat bread

Ready-to-Eat Cereals made with Whole Grain

Oatmeal

Whole-wheat

pasta Instant

brown rice

Instant mashed

potatoes Peanut

butter

Jam/Jelly

Canned soups

Canned beans

Canned tomatoes/Spaghetti sauce

(reduced-sodium) Coffee and/or Tea

(preferably decaffeinated)

Other
