

Healthier Eating and Physical Activity: Tips for Older Adults

Healthy Eating
Made Easier®

As an older adult, you see changes in the foods your body needs and the physical activities you are able to do. Here are some ideas on how to eat well and be active to feel your very best.

What is important to you today?

- my bone and muscle strength
- being physically active
- planning better meals
- eating food lower in calories and high in nutrients
- choosing foods to maintain a balanced diet

Here is what you can do to eat healthy:

Choose a mix of nutrient-rich foods every day from all of the food groups to get more nutrients for fewer calories. Plan for your meals and snacks to include:

- ★ Fruits and vegetables of all different colors to get a variety of nutrients.
- ★ Bread, pasta, cereal, rice or tortillas that are whole grain and high in fiber.
- ★ Milk, cheese or yogurt that is low-fat or fat-free, which provides calcium and vitamin D.
- ★ Lean beef, chicken, turkey, fish or eggs that are high in protein.
- ★ Beans and nuts which are nutrient-rich and contain protein, fiber and B vitamins.



Pay special attention to vitamin D and calcium:

- ★ Older adults tend to need more vitamin D and calcium to maintain bone strength and prevent osteoporosis. Plan for your meals and snacks to include:
 - ★ Milk and yogurt that is fortified or has vitamin D added.
 - ★ Reduced-fat cheeses or cheese made from part-skim milk.
 - ★ Salmon, tuna, eggs or fortified breakfast cereal.



Consuming at least three servings of milk or dairy foods each day is a good way to get your vitamin D and calcium.

If you experience symptoms of lactose intolerance try:

- ★ Drinking milk with meals or snacks. Symptoms are generally milder if milk is consumed with other foods.
- ★ Eating low-fat yogurt or aged cheese, which has less lactose.
- ★ Purchasing lactose-free products at the supermarket.



Three Easy Steps to Being More Physically Active

1

Plan to reach at least 30 minutes per day of physical activity that increases your heart rate.* Start out by walking around your community, taking a water-aerobics class, golfing without a cart or dancing.

2

Add balance activities as part of your plan. Try rising up and down on your toes or do side leg raises while standing and holding a stable chair or table. Walk a straight line heel to toe.

3

Make muscle-strengthening activities part of your weekly routine. Use canned food as weights to do arm curls or elastic bands to strengthen your shoulders or chest.

* Consult your physician before starting any exercise routine.



Maintain your mobility and independence by preserving muscle strength.

- ✦ Increasing muscle can help prevent sarcopenia, which is the muscle loss associated with aging.
- ✦ Make sure to eat food high in protein with each meal or snack.
- ✦ Milk, yogurt, lean meats, turkey, fish, nuts, beans and eggs have protein and are nutrient-rich.
- ✦ Stay active; if you don't move it, you lose it!

Practical tips for everyday eating decisions:

- ✦ Keep your pantry and freezer stocked with the basics such as frozen fruits and vegetables, whole-grain bread and pasta, canned tuna, peanut butter and dried beans and peas.
- ✦ Eat high-fiber foods like whole grains, dried or fresh fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts to help prevent constipation. Remember to drink plenty of fluids as well!
- ✦ Make your shopping list ahead of time.
- ✦ Develop your shopping list around items on sale or sold with a coupon.
- ✦ Do not skip meals! You need energy throughout the day.

Feeling tired?
You may be dehydrated and do not have enough water in your body. Set a timer on your watch to remind yourself to drink water or other fluids.

Get started today! Read over what is important to you today and circle three changes that you can make to eat healthy and be physically active to feel your best.

