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Senior Nutrition for Good Health

Nutritional Needs and Aging

As you age, a balanced and varied eating pattern remains important, but your nutritional needs change. This is especially true if you take medications that may impact your appetite and vitamin and mineral needs. Also, the risks for nutrition-related diseases such as heart disease, the bone disease osteoporosis, and diabetes increase as you age.

Eating for Good Health

Americans are living longer, so good nutrition and regular physical activity through the years are key to good health. Eating smart means including a variety of foods each day. Foods provide the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water you need for good health.

Even though Americans are living longer - maintaining good health can sometimes be difficult. Loss of mobility, difficulty shopping or cooking, and loss of taste can affect seniors' healthful eating habits. If you are a senior, or know a senior who could benefit from some nutrition help, here are some tips.

1. Plan a morning meal that provides energy to get going.
2. Buy foods that provide a good source of fiber, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals - cereal and milk, yogurt and toast, a whole grain muffin topped with peanut butter and a glass of skim milk are a few quick, tasty, healthful options.
3. Attend a congregate meal site regularly. Meal programs provide seniors with a nutritious hot meal at noon and a chance to socialize. To find out where the congregate meal sites are in your area, go to the [SeniorNavigator website](#), and in the "Topic Search" box on the top right-hand side type in "meals" and your zip code or county.

4. Or, if you prepare lunch at home-sandwiches, pasta, or soups can be packed with nutrition, easy to prepare, and full of flavor. Top a sandwich with green peppers, leaf lettuce, carrots and cucumbers, or choose soup full of veggies, potatoes, and beans.

5. To make dinner a winner, bake or broil poultry or fish with a light coating of crushed high-fiber cereal and chicken broth. Dip chicken or fish in broth and then coat with cereal before baking or broiling.

6. Round out your meal with rice and beans and a fruit salad. For another winning dinner, toss cooked pasta with a package of cooked frozen vegetables. Top with your favorite marinara sauce and a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese. Add a mixed green salad with vinaigrette dressing and you have a delicious, flavorful, and easy meal.

Shopping Tips for Older Adults

Hot or cold days, long nights and inclement weather can make getting out difficult. Do you know an older adult who might need some help getting to the grocery store? Shopping for one person can result in limited supplies so that frequent shopping becomes necessary. Older adults often feel the depression of winter and do not eat as well as they should. Favorite foods may not taste like they used to and overall interest in food can decrease with age.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with a healthful eating plan these tips may help: include plenty of calcium-rich foods, yogurt with cereal or canned fruit, milk with vanilla wafers or in pudding or cream sauce, or macaroni and cheese are some ways to get calcium. Herbs and spices provide a different flavor to the same foods - try pasta with basil, then flavor with rosemary. Season a baked potato with dill and steamed veggies for a quick meal. Steam, stew or saute chicken breasts for a quick entree. Use canned fruits with longer storage.

Meet Your Changing Needs

Eating for good health can be a challenge for seniors. However, with a little knowledge, planning, and know-how, you can achieve a balanced and varied eating pattern that matches your changing needs.

Home-Delivered Meals Available for Those in Need:

Meals on Wheels provides home-delivered meals to seniors in need. For information on local Meals on Wheels, do a "Search" on the [SeniorNavigator website](#). In the "Topic Search" box on the top right-hand side of the Home Page, type in "meals" and your zip code or county, or do a search on the [Meals on Wheels America](#) website.

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