

Healthy Eating and Older Adults

10 Tips for Good Nutrition

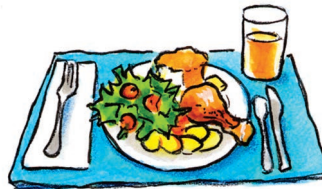


As you age, nutrition plays an important role in health. But for some people, health problems or trouble with taste, smell and chewing make it more difficult to get good nutrition. Below are 10 tips to help you get the nutrition you need.



1. Look at changing nutrition needs

- ✓ As you get older and less active, you may need fewer calories.
- ✓ You may be eating less and not getting enough vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ Medications or medical problems may affect your appetite.



2. Get a health checkup.

- ✓ If you are having trouble with food or eating, talk with a doctor.
- ✓ Ask your doctor or dietitian about how diet might help with health conditions. For example, cutting back on salt and sodium may help lower high blood pressure.

3. Aim for a variety of healthy foods.

- ✓ Choose healthy foods:
 - Lean protein such as fish, lean meat, chicken and tofu.
 - Whole grains such as whole wheat, brown rice and oatmeal.
 - Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
 - Low-fat or fat-free dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt.
- ✓ Cut back on fats, sugar and salt.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water and other fluids.

4. Address chewing problems.

- ✓ See a dentist if you have trouble with your teeth or dentures.
- ✓ Steam, grate, mash or finely chop foods. Try soups and other easy-to-eat foods.

5. Boost taste for better appetite.

- ✓ Our senses can fade as we age. Food may not smell or taste as good as it used to.
- ✓ Boost flavor with herbs, spices or favorite sauces.



6. Address stomach upset.

- ✓ Skip foods you know will upset your stomach.
- ✓ Avoid raw fish, meat, dairy, eggs and sprouts.
- ✓ Talk with your doctor if an upset stomach keeps you from eating.

7. Reach out.

- ✓ If you're lonely, you might not want to eat. Or, you might overeat.
- ✓ Try a new recipe and invite someone over for a meal.
- ✓ Search out social groups for seniors.



8. Be safe.

- ✓ Older adults may have a higher risk of serious health problems from foodborne illnesses.
- ✓ Wash hands, knives and surfaces often—and always after cutting or handling meats.
- ✓ Thaw food in cold water or your refrigerator, not at room temperature.
- ✓ Refrigerate food within two hours.
- ✓ If you think a food is bad or the date has expired, don't taste it! Just throw it away.



9. If your budget is a concern...

- ✓ Buy store (generic) brands and items on sale. Use coupons.
- ✓ Buy only as much fresh food as you can eat before it spoils.
- ✓ Prepare extra of the foods you enjoy and freeze them for another meal.



10. Find help—it's out there.

- ✓ Many communities have programs that provide free meals and meal delivery for seniors.
- ✓ Contact your local senior center or meal delivery program to get more information.

Did you know that nutrition needs may change as you age? Do you, or someone you care for, struggle with food or nutrition? These tips can help you understand and overcome eating and nutritional challenges for older adults.



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