NUTRITION FOR OLDER ADULTS

Nutrient needs change with aging due to decreased physical activity, changes in metabolism, and loss in bone and muscle mass.

Females ages 60+ require 1,600-2,200 calories per day and males ages 60+ require 2,000-2,600 calories per day. These calories should come from a variety of lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, & heart-healthy fats.

Foods to Include

Focus on eating a variety of nutrient-dense foods like vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, seafood, eggs, lean meat & poultry, low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Foods to Limit

Limit the amount of foods high in saturated fat, added sugar, & sodium, like fast food, red meat, soda, pastries & sweets, and full-fat dairy products.

Special Considerations

Protein

Muscle mass decreases naturally with age but can be worsened by not eating enough protein. This can increase levels of weakness that often result in falling or other injuries.

Food Sources: Chicken, tuna, eggs, peanut butter, yogurt, fat free or low fat milk

Hydration

Older adults are at an increased risk of dehydration due to declining sense of thirst, concerns with bladder control, & mobility issues.



Aim for around 8 cups of water per day

Vitamin B-12

Absorption of Vitamin B-12 decreases with age & the use of certain medications. This can cause fatigue, weight loss, & loss of brain function.

Food sources: Tuna, beef, eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified cereals

References: Stover P. J. (2010). Vitamin B12 and older adults. Current opinion in clinical nutrition and metabolic care, 13(1), 24–27. https://doi.org/10.1097/MCO.0b013e328333d157
I U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.