

Healthy Aging: Changing Nutritional Needs

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WHICH NUTRIENT NEEDS CHANGE AS WE AGE?

Proper nutrition is essential at every stage of life. This can help prevent some diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers. As we age different nutrients become more important to keep our body functioning properly. Some nutrients that have a recommended higher intake for older adults are seen as calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, dietary fiber, and potassium. Dietary sources of these nutrients may not always be the first option for some people, you may need to consult with your doctor or dietitian about the use of proper supplements. It is important to check with your doctor before taking any supplements or increasing your intake of certain nutrients.

CALCIUM & VITAMIN D

Adults 70 years of age and older need more calcium and vitamin D to help maintain bone health.

Selecting calcium-rich foods and beverages such as can be beneficial for health.

Calcium Sources:

- Fortified cereals, juices
- Dark leafy greens
- Canned fish with soft bones
- Fortified plant-based beverages

Vitamin D Sources:

- Fortified cereals, juices
- Fatty fish (salmon)
- Eggs

VITAMIN B12

Adults 50 years of age and older may not be able to absorb vitamin B12 as well as before. Due to this diminished absorption, increasing dietary sources of this vitamin can help.

Vitamin B12 Sources:

- Fortified cereal
- Lean meats, fish, seafood
- Low-fat dairy products

DIETARY FIBER

Fiber-rich foods help our bowel movements stay regular and digestive tract properly working. Dietary fiber is may aid in lowering your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Dietary Fiber Sources:

- Whole-grain breads and cereals
- Legumes (beans, peas, lentils)
- Whole fruits and vegetables



POTASSIUM

Having an adequate intake of potassium while reducing sodium (salt) intake, may reduce the risk of high blood pressure. When preparing meals and you need to add flavor, try adding herbs and spices to increase the flavor instead of salt.

Potassium Sources:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Beans
- Low-fat and fat-free dairy products

Healthy Aging: Food Safety for Older Adults

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Why is This Population at Risk?

Adults at the age of 65 years or older are at an increased risk for complications of foodborne illness. Due to changes that occur within the body as we age, these changes make an elderly person at risk. A few changes that occur can be seen as the motility within the gastrointestinal tract, slows and allows bacteria to grow. The function of organs such as the liver and kidney does not function as efficiently and does not allow proper filtering of bad bacteria and toxins. Underlying health conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, or kidney disease can also increase the risk of foodborne illness.

How to Avoid Foodborne Illness Through Food Choice:

Food Type	HIGHER Risk	LOWER Risk
Meat and Poultry	Raw or uncooked meat and poultry	Meat and poultry cooked to a correct internal temperature: 145 → Roast and steak 160 → Ground meat 165 → Poultry
Seafood	Any (or containing) raw or undercooked fish or shellfish. Including: Refrigerated smoked fish Partially cooked seafood (shrimp and crab)	Seafood cooked to 145 degrees Previously cooked seafood heated up to 165 degrees
Milk	Unpasteurized (raw) milk	Pasteurized milk
Eggs	Foods that contain raw or undercooked eggs, including: Homemade Caesar salad dressings Homemade raw cookie dough Homemade eggnog	When cooking at home, cook with pasteurized eggs if the recipe calls for raw or undercooked eggs. When eating outside of the home, ask if the dish is prepared with pasteurized eggs.
Vegetables	Unwashed fresh vegetables	Washed fresh vegetables, including salads Cook vegetables
Cheese	Unpasteurized (raw) milk: feta, brie, blue-veined, queso fresco, camembert	Hard cheese, processed cheeses, cream cheese, mozzarella, soft cheeses that are clearly labeled "made from pasteurized milk"

Safety Tips:

Clean → Surfaces, utensils, and hands

Separate → Raw meats, poultry, seafood from ready-to-eat foods during meal prep and in grocery cart

Cook → Use a food thermometer when cooking and reheating foods

Chill → Refrigerate/freeze any raw and prepared foods if not consuming immediately