

HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR SENIORS

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Health & Wellness
for Seniors

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January is the perfect time to start a healthy lifestyle. Caregivers can help seniors maintain health with proper nutrition, exercise and lifestyle habits.

January is the perfect time to start living a healthy lifestyle. Caregivers can play a large role in helping seniors maintain their health with proper nutrition, exercise and other lifestyle habits.



Healthy Eating After 50

1,600 to 2,800 calories/day, depending on physical activity and weight.

- **Fruits** | 3–5 servings (one serving = one small peach, ¼ cup dried fruit, ½ cup sliced apples)
- **Vegetables** | 2–4 cups leafy vegetables (spinach, kale)
- **Protein** | 5–7 servings lean protein (one serving = one egg, ¼ cup cooked beans, tbsp peanut butter)
- **Grains** | 5–10 servings (one serving = one small bran muffin, ¼ cup brown rice, 1 slice whole wheat bread)
- **Dairy** | 3 servings (one serving = one cup milk, one cup yogurt)
- **Oil** | 6–8 servings (one serving = ¼ cup avocado, 1 tsp olive oil, 8 olives)
- **Sugar & Solid fats** | Keep to a minimum (chips, cookies, animal fats)
- **Eat fish 2x per week.**
- **Drink plenty of liquids** including water, milk, soup & juice.
- **Limit caffeine & alcohol intake.**

Nutrition

It is extremely important for seniors to practice good nutrition. Poor nutrition affects the body, but also affects the mind, energy levels, and can lead to other health issues. The more caregivers know about nutrition for seniors, the better they will be able to care for them.

Tips to making meals and snacking easier:

1. If the person has a hard time using a knife and fork, serve finger foods. Try bite-sized pieces of sandwich, meat, or cut-up fruit or veggies.
2. Serve one or two foods at a time. Too many choices can be overwhelming.
3. If chewing or swallowing is a problem, mash, puree, or moisten foods with broth, sauce, or milk.
4. Add flavor to meals with spices and herbs.
5. Put out bowls of nuts and fruit to encourage snacking.
6. Serve nutritional supplement drinks or smoothies with protein powder and fruits.

Vitamins/Supplements

As a person ages, some nutrients become more important:

- Fiber to stay regular
- Potassium for blood pressure and to help avoid fatigue and depression
- Healthy fats to lower chances of heart disease
- Vitamin B12 for energy and brain function
- Vitamin D and Calcium for bone health



Vitamin and Mineral Intake Guidelines for Seniors

- **Vitamin B12**—2.4 mcg (micrograms) daily. Some foods, such as cereal are fortified with B12. Up to one-third of older adults can no longer absorb natural vitamin B12 from food.
- **Calcium**—1200 mg (milligrams), but not more than 2500 mg per day. As people age, they need more calcium and vitamin D to keep bones strong. Bone loss can lead to fractures in both older women and men.
- **Vitamin D**—400 IU (international units) for people ages 51 to 70 and 600 IU for those over 70.
- **Iron**—Men and postmenopausal women need 8 mg of iron per day. Extra iron may be necessary for women past menopause who are using hormone replacement therapy. Iron helps keep red blood cells healthy.
- **Vitamin B6**—1.7 mg for men and 1.5 mg for women daily. B6 is needed for forming red blood cells and to keep overall health.

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Benefits of exercise in older age

Increases mental capacity

Research links physical activity with slower mental decline. Exercise increases blood flow to all parts of the body, including our brain.

Prevents disease

Exercise is beneficial in preventing dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Exercise can also delay or prevent many diseases associated with aging, such as diabetes, colon cancer, heart disease, stroke, and more.

Improves healing

Injuries can take longer to heal as people age. Regular exercise may speed up the wound-healing process by as much as 25 percent.

Increases balance

Exercise can help improve balance, which can help prevent falls. Falls are a major cause of broken hips and other injuries that often lead to disability and hospitalization in older adults.

Help seniors become more active:



Find something they enjoy doing.



Make sure it is geared to their fitness level.



Start at a level they can manage and work their way up slowly.



Do exercises at home with them. You can rent videos at the library and modify as necessary.

Weekly Exercise Routine for Seniors

(www.healthline.com)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
15-minute walk twice a day	15-minute walk twice a day	30 minutes of swimming, water aerobics, Zumba, etc.	Rest	15-minute walk twice a day	30 minutes of swimming, water aerobics, Zumba, etc.	Rest
Strength	Rest	Rest	Rest	Strength	Rest	Rest
Balance	Balance	Balance	Rest	Balance	Balance	Rest
Flexibility	Flexibility	Flexibility	Rest	Flexibility	Flexibility	Rest



Home Care Tip:

Many seniors will not want to grocery shop alone or cook food for just themselves. Work grocery shopping into part of your time together and prep meals so they can easily prepare a meal for one on their own.



60% of people 64 and older are sedentary

According to the AARP, 40% of people between 45 and 64 are considered sedentary. At age 64 and older, that number jumps to 60%.

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Contact Information

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