

# Geriatric Nutrition

**Definition-Geriatric nutrition applies nutrition principles to delay effects of aging and disease, to aid in the management of the physical, psychological, and psychosocial changes commonly associated with growing old.**

**When we grow older, the rate at which we burn calories (our metabolic rate) slows, we lose muscle mass, and even our organs start to slow. However, people can still give their bodies the fuel they need to maintain or even improve their health by adhering to a proper diet.**

**What follows are general guidelines for seniors and geriatric nutrition. Specific medical conditions may require different adjustments to a person's diet**

The importance of eating well does not lessen as we age. Continuing with a **Healthy lifestyle** and **balanced** diet enables us to:

- ⇒ **Live longer & stronger**
- ⇒ **Keep a sharp mind**
- ⇒ **Feel better in our bodies**



As we continue to age, there are many Changes occurring that may change the way we eat, or our ability to eat. These include:

- Slowed Metabolism
- Weakened Senses
- New Medications/ Illnesses
- Slowed Digestion

Don't loose hope! Keep reading to arm yourself with the knowledge you need to keep a healthy body and mind

## What is a *balanced* diet?

Eating foods from every food group is important for all ages. Your body needs:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Calcium
- Whole grains
- Lean Protein

# Unintentional Weight loss

Although certainly not all senior citizens are underweight, unintentional weight loss in the elderly population is one of the most dangerous health risks.

## Factors Effecting Weight Loss as we Age:

- Taste changes & Loss of appetite
- Oral health & Dental problems
- Compromised mobility
- Reduced social activity



## Taste Changes:

Our sense of taste and smell naturally weaken with age. This often leads to diminished appetite or adding more salt to foods to try and recover the flavor we once remembered. Similarly, our sense for sweet tastes linger, leading many Elderly to over indulge.

## Loss of Appetite:

Many factors contribute to loss of appetite in the elderly population. While it's true that metabolism slows as we age, a significant change in weight in a short period of time

Can be dangerous and should be avoided.



Season foods with herbs, spices and citrus to add flavor without adding sodium!

## Try These Ideas!

- Have small frequent snacks throughout the day
- Eat more nutrient and calorie dense foods
- Eat with company

Nutrient dense foods are foods that have more vitamins and minerals per bite.

# Unintentional Weight loss

## Oral Health & Dental Problems:

**Dry Mouth:** As we age, many people experience dry mouth as a side effect of medications or reduced saliva production.

**Ill-Fitting Dentures:** If you wear dentures, over time they may become ill-fitting. When dentures are not properly fitted, one may experience pain with eating or chewing.

**Dysphagia:** This condition is where it becomes more difficult to move food or liquid from your mouth to your stomach. Dysphagia can occur at any age, but is most common in older adults. People who experience dysphagia will most likely need a texture modified diet.



Many people find that softer textures are more tolerable when they are faced with chewing and swallowing difficulties.



Smoothies and shakes are a great way to pack in nutrients and calories when chewing becomes difficult.

- Blend a frozen banana, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, 3 dates, 1 tablespoon of cocoa powder or chocolate syrup and 6 ice cubes together to create a protein packed breakfast shake.
- Jump on the green smoothie bandwagon! Blend 1 cup of orange juice, a hearty handful of kale or spinach, half an avocado and 6 ice cubes for a delicious way to get in those hard-to-chew leafy greens.

Or grab a blender and your favorite ingredients and start mixing up your own favorite smoothie creations!

# Unintentional Weight loss

## Compromised Mobility:

If you cannot cook or shop for yourself, eating a balanced healthy diet can seem impossible at times. There are many options available to you, so don't get discouraged.

Say "no" to eating alone:

- Make a lunch date with a friend or your favorite niece.
- Join a class or a volunteer group where you can meet likeminded people and make new friends.
- Adult day care services will provide activities and a healthy meal.

- **Home Delivery**– Many grocery stores and restaurants will deliver right to doorstep.
- **Swap Services**– Maybe a student or neighbor would be willing to shop. Reach out and ask for help. You may find they don't want anything in return.
- **Share your Home**– If you live in a larger house, consider having a housemate who would be willing to do the grocery shopping for you.
- **Meals on Wheels**– There are local services in most towns that will deliver hot meals and sandwiches to qualifying participants.

## Reduced Social Activity:

Eating with other people is almost as important as eating a variety of foods, as it creates a more enjoyable atmosphere around eating. We tend to eat better if we enjoy meal times.

# Osteoporosis:

## 5 Nutrients for Healthy Strong Bones

Osteoporosis is a medical condition where the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue, typically as a result of hormonal changes, or deficiency of calcium or vitamin D.

*Did you Know???*

**1 in 3** women & **1 in 5** men over the age of **50** will experience an osteoporotic fracture.

Although there is no known cure for osteoporosis, you can increase your bone health by eating a diet rich in these 5 nutrients:

### Calcium

Calcium is not only important for bone strength, but also for heart, nerves, and muscles. If you don't eat enough calcium, your body will start to take calcium that is stored in your bones to be use in other places in your body, leaving you with weak brittle bones.

Milk, cheese, yogurt  
leafy greens, beans,  
almonds, chia seeds,  
salmon, sardines



Cheese, egg yolks, fatty fish, soy, fortified cereals, mushrooms, cod liver oil



### Vitamin D

Vitamin D has many important jobs in the body, and is needed to help you absorb calcium from the food you eat. The best way to get vitamin D naturally is from sunlight, but some foods also provide vitamin D.

### Magnesium

In order for vitamin D to help the body metabolize calcium, it must first be converted to the active form. Magnesium is the mineral that is necessary to convert vitamin D to the active form. Magnesium is also important for bone mineralization that prevents gout and arthritis.

Nuts, fish, lentils,  
beans, whole grains,  
dried fruit, bananas,  
leafy vegetables



Dark leafy greens,  
bananas, potatoes,  
oranges, squash,  
yogurt, coconut water,  
tomatoes

### Potassium

Potassium helps to maintain fluid balances in the body and protects bones by counterbalancing bone damaging acids.

Kale, collard greens,  
spinach, turnip greens,  
broccoli, cabbage, prunes



### Vitamin K

In addition to improving cardiovascular health, having adequate vitamin K in your diet reduces the risk of bone fractures in osteoporotic patients by playing a role in improving bone mineralization.



# Alzheimer's and Dementia:

## 7 Nutrition Tips for Maintaining Brain Health

Dementia is an overall term that is defined as the loss of memory, cognitive reasoning, awareness of environment, judgment, and/or abstract thinking as well as a loss of the ability to perform usual tasks associated with self-care and day-to-day function

### Limit Intake of saturated and

#### 1 Trans fats

Saturated and trans fats have been associated with dementia. Saturated fat is found in animal products like meat, eggs, and dairy while trans fats are found in many packaged foods. Avoid words like "partially hydrogenated oil" on food labels.



#### 2

#### Increase your intake of plant based foods

Vegetables, fruits, legumes (beans, peas, and lentils) and whole grains should become primary staples of the diet. Increasing plant based foods in the diet will help you eat less saturated fats from meat and dairy as well as provide an abundance of phytochemicals.

### Take a B<sub>12</sub> supplement

#### 4

Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> is important for healthy nerves and red blood cells. Some dementias are caused by a deficiency in vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and are reversible when treated. Choose a reliable source of B<sub>12</sub> such as fortified foods or a supplement that provides at least the recommended daily dose (2.4 micrograms for adults)

*\*\*Consult your doctor or dietitian before taking any new supplements*

#### 3

#### Consume 15 milligrams of vitamin E from foods every day

Vitamin E is an antioxidant which scavenges toxic free radicals, which may contribute to cognitive impairment. Eat more seeds, nuts, leafy green vegetables, and whole grains to increase vitamin E in your diet.



#### 5

#### Avoid vitamins with iron and copper

We now know there is a confirmed link between high levels of iron and copper and increased risk of Alzheimer's. If you are using a multivitamin, choose one without iron and copper and only take an iron supplement if advised by your physician.



#### Choose aluminum-free products

#### 6

While the details as to how aluminum contributes to Alzheimer's is under continuous investigation, it is recommended to reduce exposure to aluminum. Minimize aluminum cookware, antacids, baking powder, and other aluminum containing products



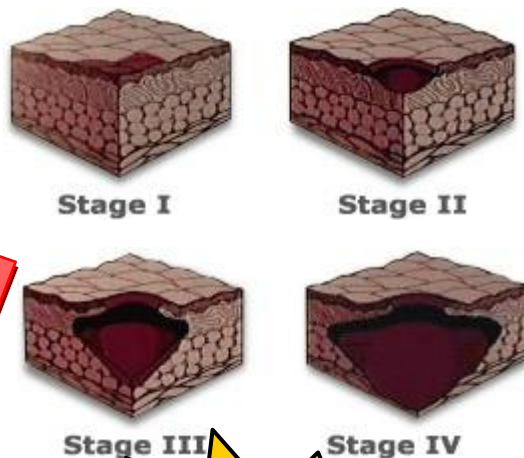
#### 7

#### Exercise at least 120 minutes each week

Aerobic exercise is associated with a reduced risk of cognitive impairment and dementia. Walking, swimming, raking the yard, or any other activity that increases your heart rate and breathing counts!

# Pressure Ulcers & Other Skin Conditions

Pressure ulcers form when an area of skin is subjected to constant pressure or friction. However, what many people don't know is that you can arm yourself from getting pressure ulcers and heal faster if you are receiving adequate nutrition.



Have you seen any of these pressure ulcers on yourself or a loved one?

## Eat enough calories:

If you are losing weight or are eating less than 75% of your daily needs or less than 75% of your normal intake, consult your physician or dietitian.



For a quick estimation of calories that your body needs, multiply 11 by your weight in pounds.

## Eat protein at every meal:

Your body needs protein to grow new cells and heal your wounds, or prevent wounds from occurring. Including one protein source at each meal will help to make sure you are getting enough protein

### Protein foods:

- Chicken, Beef, Pork
- Fish Eggs
- Tofu Beans
- Nuts and Nut Butters
- Cheese, Milk, Yogurt

## Drink fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated:

The body is made up of 50-60% water. Water also moves nutrients where they are needed to help heal wounds. Aim for **6-8 cups** of water each day.



## Take a multivitamin with minerals:

Unless there is a known deficiency, there is no need to mega dose on any particular vitamin or mineral but taking a daily multivitamin will help you to receive all the essential vitamins that you need each day.  
**\*\*Always consult your physician or dietitian before starting a new supplement**

### *Did you know?*

12-25% of residents in long-term care facilities are dehydrated.

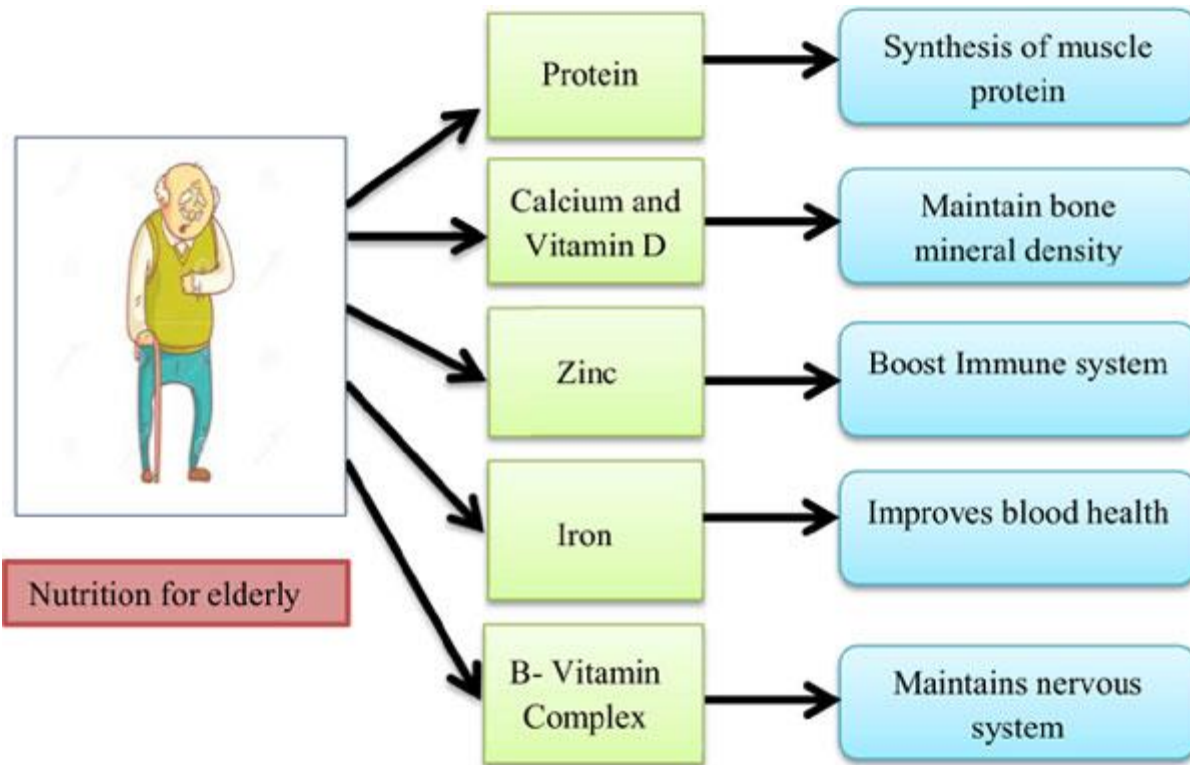
## Water Intake is Important for Old age people.

Dehydration is more common in older adults due to a reduced sense of thirst. “The part of the brain (hypothalamus) which controls our thirst mechanism slows a bit as we age, because it may not be sending out a strong signal to our bodies indicating that it needs to drink.

Some over-consume water, causing an imbalance in the nerves, muscles, and bodily tissues.

An average older female who requires 1,600 calories per day would need about 3 liters of water each day. For a man burning 2,200 calories per day, the requirement would be around 4 liters. If the woman is physically active, add another litre. A physically active man would need an additional 2 litres.





## OMEGA-3

Foods rich in omega-3 can lower elevated triglyceride levels, and help with stiffness and joint pain. Sources include salmon, halibut, herring, sardines, tuna, walnuts, flaxseed, and canola oil.

## FOLATE/FOLIC ACID

Another one of those B vitamins—folic acid—also helps in maintaining the metabolic cycle that creates energy for your body. Fortunately, many

breakfast cereals today are fortified with folic acid (read the food label on the side of the box). Folic acid also is found in fruits and vegetables.

## CALCIUM

Vital to maintaining bone density, calcium is particularly important for women as their bones thin with age. Some sources include milk, kale, broccoli, sardines, and tofu.

## VITAMIN D

Vitamin D aids in the absorption of calcium. Milk or calcium-fortified almond milk, yogurt, kale or broccoli, also, a little sunlight on the skin before you cover up and lather on the sunscreen—15-30 minutes per day—will provide vitamin D.

## POTASSIUM

Among its many functions, potassium aids in maintaining muscle tissue, and facilitates heart and kidney functions. It also helps lower blood

pressure and decreases the risk of stroke.

Avocados, bananas, spinach, and sweet potatoes are good sources of potassium.

Note: if one is taking a diuretic, one may be vulnerable to potassium loss through frequent urination. A sign of this is your urine turns darker.

Often, a potassium supplement is prescribed by doctor to counter this effect.

## MAGNESIUM

“Magnesium is very calming for the body. People who might have sleeping problems or have sore, achy muscles could eat a handful of almonds each day, or consume other high-magnesium foods.

One of its key functions is in maintaining energy levels.