

# FOOD SAFETY

FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Food Safety Month

## Diets for Seniors Who Are Discharged from the Hospital

*Diet and nutrition changes as an individual ages. Find out how to eat healthy after age 50, while still enjoying food.*

### Diets for Seniors Who Are Discharged from The Hospital

Seniors who have been discharged from the hospital do not always have guidance and follow-up on how to get proper nutrition.

Caregivers should work nutrition into their care plan and be knowledgeable about nutrition guidelines for seniors, and the different factors that affect dietary intake and nutrient absorption.

**Follow these three principles to guide your nutrition plan:**

#### ① Dietary Guidelines and Nutritional Requirements for Older Adults (Source: [National Institute on Aging](#))

**The USDA Food Patterns Plan recommends that individuals over 50 eat a variety of healthy foods from the following:**

- **Fruits:** 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 cups (Deep colors including berries, peaches, and pumpkin)
- **Vegetables:** 2 to 3-1/2 cups (Dark greens such as kale, broccoli and spinach)
- **Grains:** 5 to 10 ounces (One ounce would be a small bran muffin or slice of whole-wheat bread)
- **Protein:** 5 to 7 ounces (One ounce would be one egg or one tablespoon peanut butter)
- **Dairy:** 3 cups (1 cup fat-free milk or one cup yogurt)
- **Oils:** 5 to 8 teaspoons (Avocado, nuts, and olives)
- **Solid fats and added sugars:** Keep these amounts to a minimum. (Cookies, chips, etc.)

### Healthy Eating After 50

**1,600 to 2,800 calories/day,**  
depending on physical activity & weight



#### Fruits | 3–5 servings

(one serving = one small peach, 1/4 cup dried fruit, 1/2 cup sliced apples)



#### Vegetables | 2–4 cups

leafy vegetables (spinach, kale)



#### Protein | 5–7 servings

lean protein (one serving = one egg, 1/4 cup cooked beans, tbsp peanut butter)



#### Grains | 5–10 servings

(one serving = one small bran muffin, 1/4 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 = 1/4 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 and juice.

**Limit** caffeine and alcohol intake.

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## ② Be Aware of Individual Nutrition Concerns

Individuals with high cholesterol, diabetes or malnutrition may need to be extra cautious with their diets and follow more strict nutrition guidelines.

- **High Cholesterol:** Eat foods with omega-3s such as fish, nuts and avocados. Stay away from foods that are high in saturated fat such as margarine, hamburgers and fried foods.
- **Diabetes:** Restrict or eliminate alcohol use to maintain optimal glucose levels. Seniors with diabetes are more likely to be nutrient deficient in vitamins B1, B12, C, D, folate, calcium, zinc and magnesium. Make sure to get foods full of these nutrients or foods that are fortified.
- **Malnutrition:** Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing can make older individuals more susceptible to malnutrition. Add snacks like dried fruit and nuts throughout the day to add nutrients. Add herbs and spices to meals to give food flavor without added salt.

## ③ Factors Affecting Dietary Intake and Nutrient Absorption

There are many factors that may affect an individual's dietary intake and nutrient absorption with age.

- Difficulty swallowing or lack of mobility can make eating and enjoying food more difficult.
- Medication, depression and isolation can cause a loss of appetite or change the way foods taste.
- Older adults may not absorb nutrients properly because of slower metabolism.

As our bodies age, our daily eating habits change. Older individuals can make minor adjustments to continue enjoying foods and beverages.

### Mindful Eating Habits



Instead of salting foods for flavor, add herbs and spices.



Add fruits and vegetables to snacks and meals. Buy pre-sliced fruits and vegetables such as apples, baby carrots and cut up melons.



Drink water and milk instead of sugary drinks.



Enjoy yogurt, hard cheese and lactose-free foods throughout the day.



Eat foods that are fortified with vitamin B12.



### Home Care Tip:

Many discharged patients neglect their diet simply because they can't transport themselves to purchase groceries. A professional caregiver referred by a home care agency can assist with trips to and from the grocery store and meal preparation.