

# Older Adult Nutrition

## Healthy Eating Tip of the Month– June 2015

Managing Conditions as you Age with Nutrition

Unintentional Weight Loss | Osteoporosis | Alzheimer's and Dementia | Pressure Ulcers

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 overindulge.

## Loss of Appetite:

Many factors contribute to loss of appetite in the elderly population. While its 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.



To relieve dry mouth, sip on water during meals and suck on sugar-free hard candies

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 like minded 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 your doorstep.
- **Swap Services**– Maybe a student or neighbor would be willing to shop for you. 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 loss of the ability to perform usual tasks associated with self-care and day-to-day function

### 1 Limit Intake of saturated and 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.



### 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.

### 4

### Take a B12 supplement

Vitamin B12 is important for healthy nerves and red blood cells. Some dementias are caused by a deficiency in vitamin B12 and are reversible when treated. Choose a reliable source of B12 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*



### 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!

### 6

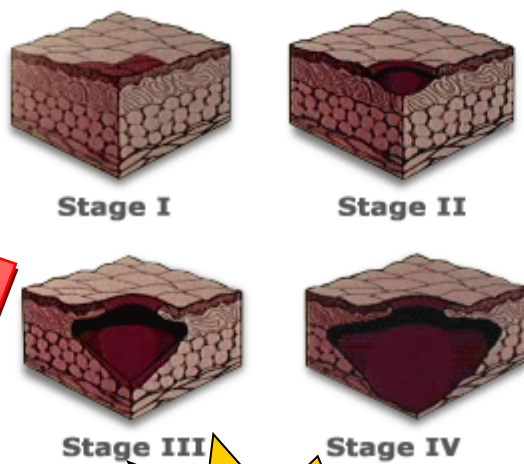
### Choose aluminum-free products

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



# 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.

*Did you know?*

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

## 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**

## References

1. Agrawal, Mukta. "Nutrients That Prevent Osteoporosis and Their Natural Food Sources." *INLIFE*. N.p., 29 Aug. 2014. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
2. Ahlskog, J. Eric, Yonas E. Geda, Neill R. Graff-Radford, and Ronald C. Petersen. "Physical Exercise as a Preventive or Disease-Modifying Treatment of Dementia and Brain Aging." *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 86.9 (2011): 876-84. *PubMed*. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
3. Barnard, Neal D. "Saturated and Trans Fats and Dementia: A Systematic Review." *Neurology of Aging* 35 (n.d.): S65-73. *Elsevier*. Web. 7 Apr. 2015.
4. "Common Dental Problems." *Mouth Healthy*. American Dental Association, Web. 11 Apr. 2015.
5. "Dietary Guidelines for Alzheimer's Prevention." *Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine*. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
6. Donini, L. M. "Eating Habits and Appetite Control in the Elderly: The Anorexia of Aging." *International Psychogeriatrics* 15.1 (2003): 73-87. *PubMed*. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.
7. "Dysphagia." *Mayo Clinic*, 15 Oct. 2014. Web. 11 Apr. 2015.
8. "Eating Well as You Age." : *Nutrition and Diet Tips for Healthy Eating as You Age*. HelpGuide.org, 2015. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.
- Farina, N. "Vitamin E for Alzheimer's Dementia and Mild Cognitive Impairment." *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2008): n. pag. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
9. Loef, Martin, and Harald Walach. "Copper and Iron in Alzheimer's Disease: A Systematic Review and Its Dietary Implications." *British Journal of Nutrition* 107.01 (2012): 7-19. *PubMed*. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
10. "NPUAP White Papers." *The National Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel NPUAP*. N.p., Apr. 2015. Web. 12 Apr. 2015
11. "Older Adult Nutrition." *NCM*. American Dietetic Association, Web.
12. Osimani, A. "Neuropsychology of Vitamin B12 Deficiency in Elderly Dementia Patients and Control Subjects." *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology* 18.1 (2005): 33-38. *PubMed*. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
13. "Osteoporosis & Musculoskeletal Disorders." *International Osteoporosis Foundation*. N.p., 2015. Web. 6 Apr. 2015.
14. "Pressure Ulcers and Other Skin Conditions." *Nutrition Care Manual*. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Web. 09 Apr. 2015.
15. Smith, Glen, PhD. "Can Vitamin B-12 Improve Memory in Alzheimer's Disease?" *Alzheimer's Disease*. Mayo Clinic, 30 May 2014. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
16. Tomljenovic, L. "Aluminum and Alzheimer's Disease: After a Century of Controversy, Is There a Plausible Link?" *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* 23.4 (2011): 567-98. *PubMed*. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
17. Tucker, K. L. "Osteoporosis Prevention and Nutrition." *U.S. National Library of Medicine*. Current Osteoporosis Reports, Dec. 2009. Web. 07 Apr. 2015.
18. Zwiefelhofer, Debbie, RD,LD. "Pressure Ulcers." Novartis Medical Nutrition, Oct. 2007. Web. 10 Apr. 2015.



Created by Katrina Koller, Dietetic Intern

Patient Food and Nutrition Services

300 N. Ingalls Street

NIB N18E20

Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5407

(734) 936-5197