

Meal Components & Nutrient Needs for Older Adults

Eating right and staying fit are important at any age. As we age our bodies have different needs, so certain nutrients become especially important for good health.

Calcium & Vitamin D- Important for maintaining bone health. Try to get 3 servings of calcium-rich foods & beverages per day including milk, fortified cereals and fruit juices, dark green leafy vegetables, canned fish with soft bones, and fortified plant beverages.

Potassium- Helps manage blood pressure. Dark green leafy veggies, squash, tomatoes, bananas, potatoes, beans, & avocados are rich in this.

Magnesium- Helps with muscle and nerve function, controlling blood sugars and regulating blood pressure. Foods rich in this are dark green leafy vegetables, beans, fish, nuts, seeds, whole grains, yogurt, and dried fruit.

Vitamin B12- Very important for people over 50. Fortified cereal, lean meat, fish, & seafood are good sources.

Folate- Important for making red blood cells & DNA. Dark green leafy veggies, beans & citrus are rich in this.

Meal Component Guidelines for The Senior Nutrition Program

Needed daily:

Grains- 1 serving (half of all grains are whole)

Fruits & Vegetables- 3 servings

Protein foods- 3 oz.

Fluid Milk- 1 serving

Fats & Oils- 1 serving

Needed Weekly:

Dark Green Vegetables- 1 serving

Red/Orange Vegetables- 2 servings

Beans/Peas- 1 serving

Starchy Vegetables- 2 servings

Other Vegetables- As Desired

Nutrition Standards for Average Weekly Menu	Minimum Requirements
Calories	675 calories
Protein	19g
Dietary Fiber	8g
Saturated Fat	<10% calories
Calcium	400mg
Potassium	1565mg
Sodium	1200mg max
Magnesium	110mg
Zinc	4mg
Vitamin A	275 mg RAE
Vitamin B6	0.6mg
Vitamin B12	0.8mcg
Vitamin C	30mg
Vitamin D	120 IU
Folate/Folic Acid	135mcg



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Protein– Very important to maintain muscle mass, strength, & promotes wound healing. Lean meats , poultry, fish, and eggs are a great source as well as beans, lentils, nuts & quinoa.

Dietary Fiber– May help lower cholesterol, control blood sugars, & important for bowel function. Fruits, vegetables & whole grains all contain dietary fiber.

Sodium- Sodium has a direct correlation with high blood pressure and lower sodium may help reduce the risk of heart disease. Choose fresh foods or lower sodium canned & frozen foods.

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