

Nutrition for Older Men

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The Difference a Healthy Eating Style Can Make

Eating right can help keep your body and mind sharp and extend quality of life.. Older men need:



Calcium and Vitamin D

Older adults need more vitamin D and calcium than younger adults to help maintain strong and healthy bones. Calcium-rich foods include low-fat and fat-free dairy products, like milk and yogurt, as well as fortified foods and beverages, such as some cereals, non-dairy milks and 100% fruit juices. Dark green leafy vegetables and canned fish with soft bones are also sources of this important nutrient. Foods that provide vitamin D include fatty fish, like salmon, eggs and fortified foods and beverages. Three servings of dairy are recommended every day. If you take a calcium supplement or multivitamin, be sure to choose one that contains vitamin D.

Dietary Fiber

Fiber helps keep bowel functions normal and may influence digestive health by promoting the survival of good bacteria. Higher intakes of dietary fiber also have been shown to help decrease the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Many fiber-rich foods take longer to digest and can help keep you full longer. Men older than 50 need 30 grams of dietary fiber a day; good sources include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans and lentils. Try to make at least half your grains whole grains. Oatmeal, whole-wheat breads and pastas and whole-grain cereals can all be good sources. For products with a Nutrition Facts Label, such as cereals and breads, choose foods with at least 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving. Also aim to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout your day.

Potassium

Increasing potassium intake along with decreasing sodium (salt) may lower your risk of high blood pressure. Sources of potassium include fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, sweet potatoes, spinach and white beans. Choose low-sodium foods and replace salt with herbs and spices to reduce your sodium intake.

Healthy Fats

Most of the fats you consume should come from heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Try extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil, walnuts, almonds and avocados. Saturated fat, which comes from sources such as meat and full-fat dairy, should be limited to less than 10 percent of calories.

Make Calories Count

Most older men cannot eat the way they did in their 20s and maintain a healthy weight. As men age, they typically become less active, lose muscle and gain fat. All of these things combined can cause metabolism to slow down. More physical activity is needed to keep metabolism up.

How many calories you need each day depends on your age, gender and activity level. The daily calorie needs for men over the age of 50 are approximately:

- 2,000 to 2,200 calories if not active.
- 2,200 to 2,400 calories if moderately active.
- 2,400 to 2,800 calories if regularly active.

Despite needing fewer calories, the same or higher amounts of nutrients are required when we age. Including wholesome foods on a regular basis, including fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, low-fat or fat-free sources of dairy, whole grains and healthy plant-based fats will provide those nutrients and help to control calories.

It also will help to balance your calorie intake by getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Being physically active helps older men rev up metabolism, build and strengthen muscles, maintain bone health and increase energy levels. Physical activity also helps to lift your spirits.

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