

Maximum Nutrition for Seniors

The baby boom generation is interested in aging gracefully with health and vitality. To do so takes attention to diet, especially because many problems developed with aging are diet related. Three key components of good anti-aging nutrition are consuming healthy food, maintaining a healthy weight, and exercising daily. A healthy diet includes adequate water (9-15 cups/day), high quality lean protein (50-65 gm/day), plenty of fiber (25 gm /day), while keeping intake of refined, sugary and processed foods (especially those containing high fructose corn syrup and trans fats) to an absolute minimum, preferably eliminated. As we age, absorption of nutrients decreases; we have more medication interactions; decreased appetite & taste sensations; and restrictions on eating from gastrointestinal problems, dentures & age related health problems. As a result, it is imperative to consume a diet of highly nutritious, tasty foods in small quantities throughout the day, in 4 to 5 small meals and leave out the less nutritious desserts, snacks, refined & fast foods. Since overweight increases risks for developing ALL diseases of age and lifestyle, it is imperative to bring your weight to a healthy BMI (body mass index) between 19-25. The following are specific nutrients which are often too low in seniors diets: Calcium & Vitamin D, (for bones & muscles) found in yogurt & lean dairy products plus sunshine; Vitamins A, C and E, (the ANTIOXIDANTS for overall body stress and cancer prevention) found in fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains; and B Vitamins, especially B6 and B12 (for nerves & brain function) found in whole grains, protein foods, nuts and legumes. Omega 3 Fatty Acids, found in fatty fish, walnuts, flaxseed and dark leafy greens are extremely important for heart protection and reducing the inflammation associated with ALL disease processes. Eat these 2-4 times weekly. For more specific info call Healthy Directions of Poway & consult a dietitian - Donna Wolf R.D. 858-335-2140. www.healthydirectionspoway.com.