

Healthy Living for Seniors

HELPFUL TIPS

- What is general wellbeing
- Why is healthy eating important
- Important nutrients you need
- The Dietary Guidelines

RECIPE IDEAS

- Raspberry and yoghurt bircher muesli
- Mexican style stuffed capsicum with rice
- Salmon and soba noodle salad
- Berry and banana smoothie bowl

Wellbeing and Quality of Life for Seniors

Continuing to feel healthy and living life to the fullest is important at any stage of life. Getting older often comes with its fair share of hardship, and at times it can be challenging to stay mentally strong and support a healthy lifestyle. That's why we are here to support you.

Physical, mental and social wellbeing are all equally important to support quality of life as you age, and opting for healthier foods, enjoying regular exercise and staying socially connected plays a large role in promoting optimal wellbeing.

However many older people try to minimise physical activity in order to prevent injuries. Surprisingly, about half of the physical decline in older age may be secondary to a lack of physical activity. This greatly impacts wellbeing by leading to a higher risk of falls, reduced muscle mass, and increased susceptibility to mental health and mood disorders. So, staying physically active at an older age is just as important - if not more - than it is for younger adults. Regular fitness classes, such as those offered by SHARE SMR Inc, are a great place to start.

Staying physically and socially active as a senior supports enhanced mental health. The positive encouragement from meaningful relationships and engaging in movement which brings joy provides a host of benefits for the mind - including improved stress management, resilience and self esteem as well as positive effects on memory and brain functioning. Simply chatting with a friend or doing gardening regularly can be a way to support mental health as you age.

In this booklet, we dive into the ways that healthy eating can support and enhance the positive effects of physical and social activity - with delicious recipe ideas to boot!



BENEFITS OF HEALTHY EATING IN SENIORS

- Maintain muscle mass
- Prevent malnourishment
- Reduce disease complications
- Improve quality of life
- Strengthen immunity to minimise recurrent infections
- Promote wound healing such as pressure sores
- Reduce risk of falls
- Shorten duration of treatment and hospitalisation
- Reduce risk of morbidity and mortality

COMMON REASONS FOR CHANGES IN NUTRITION AT OLDER AGE

- Decreased taste and/or smell
- Decreased appetite
- Reduced mobility and ability to shop and prepare food
- Reduced physical ability to feed self
- Difficulty in biting/chewing/swallowing
- Reduced social eating occasions
- Medical conditions and use of medications

HOW HEALTHY EATING SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH

- Fueling your body with fibre-rich and gut-friendly food such as whole grains and beans helps your brain produce happy chemicals
- A diet with less processed food supports the growth of the good bacteria in your gut
- Enjoying a wide variety of fresh foods provides important nutrients to support the production of hormones which aid in sleep quality and mood regulation
- Including vegetables and fruits in your diet provides antioxidants which protect your body from inflammation and have numerous benefits for mental and physical health
- A balanced diet maintains healthy weight and body function so you can be energised to manage daily tasks and stress every day

Important Nutrients and Foods for Seniors

INCREASE PROTEIN

As you age, you lose total body protein more quickly than those younger than you. This means there is an increased risk of falls and fractures. However, by eating good quality sources of protein, this risk can remain low.

Tips:

- Include a source of protein in each meal and most snacks including dairy, meat, chicken, eggs, or beans (see recipes at the back of book for some inspiration).
- Always try to eat the protein items on your plate first before you get too full.

USE LESS SALT

As you age, you become more sensitive to salt which can have an effect on blood pressure levels. Therefore, you need to reduce the amount of salt in the diet.

Tips:

- Rather than adding salt to your food, try adding herbs and spices instead.
- Choose low salt, or no added salt varieties of packaged foods.
- Restrict intake of high salt foods such as cured meats (like ham, corned beef and bacon) and packaged snack foods.



DRINK MORE WATER

As you age, the risk of dehydration increases. This is because your body becomes less effective at maintaining water balance. Water not only helps to keep you hydrated but it can help with digestion as well as maintaining good blood volume.

Tips:

- Drink at least 6 times a day (or more).
- Set reminders and always have a drink bottle nearby.
- Add lemon or lime in water if you prefer some flavours!

MAXIMISE NUTRIENT INTAKE

As you age, it can become more challenging to be physically active. This means that your body is not spending as much energy. In order to maintain a healthy weight, choose foods that are more rich in nutrients such as vegetables, fruits and lean meat, as opposed to those that are rich in energy, such as high fat or high sugar foods. Important nutrients include Vitamin B2, Vitamin B6, Calcium, Vitamin D and fibre.

Tips:

- Avoid food that is high in fat and added sugars such as packaged foods.
- Enjoy a wide variety of colorful foods from the core food groups (see the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating) to ensure that we are getting enough of these.
- Add plenty of fruits and vegetables to every meal as they are full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre.
- Dairy products can be consumed as snacks, for example low fat yoghurt or cheese with wholegrain crackers.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Don't forget to exercise! Try to have a good calcium intake combined with some resistance training to support healthy muscles.

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Dietary guidelines are a path for people to follow in order to live long and healthy lives. They promote good health and wellbeing by providing information about the types and amounts of food, food groups and dietary patterns we should be following. In the long run, it can help reduce the risk of certain conditions, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating visually represents the proportion of each food group that should be eaten each day. To help achieve these recommendations, at least 3 meals a day are encouraged.

WHEN EATING PER THESE GUIDELINES, REMEMBER TO:

- Eat a mix of colourful fruits and vegetables - aiming for at least 5 portions of vegetables and 2 servings fruits daily
- Include grains and cereals - choosing wholegrain and high fibre options where you can
- Add lean meats and poultry, oily fish, eggs, tofu, legumes/beans, nuts and seeds in your diet
- Choose reduced fat varieties of milk, yoghurt and cheeses
- Drink approximately 8 to 10 cups of water daily for hydration
- Limit the amounts of processed, packaged foods and drinks that are high in saturated fat or added sugars





Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.
Drink plenty of water.



Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties



Vegetables and legumes/beans



Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans



Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat



Fruit



Use small amounts



Only sometimes and in small amounts



Follow the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating on the five food groups to eat each day.

Quick and Easy Recipes

RASPBERRY AND YOGHURT BIRCHER MUESLI

- 1 + ½ cup rolled oats
 - 250ml milk (reduced fat)
 - 1 apple (grated)
 - 2 tablespoons (metric) pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
 - ¼ cup orange juice (freshly squeezed)
 - ½ teaspoon orange rind (grated)
 - 200g raspberries (fresh or frozen)
 - 200g natural yoghurt
 - 2 tablespoons pistachios (chopped)
1. Combine oats, milk, pepitas, apple and orange juice in a bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
 2. Stir orange rind through muesli, divide between serving bowls and top with fresh raspberries, a dollop of natural yoghurt and pistachios.

LAMB, LENTIL AND TOMATO SALAD

- 2 cans lentils (drained and rinsed)
 - 250g cherry tomatoes (quartered)
 - 1 bunch parsley (leaved picked)
 - 200g green beans (blanched ends trimmed, halved)
 - 1 medium red capsicum (diced)
 - 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 lemon (rind, grated, and juiced)
 - Ground black pepper (to taste)
 - Extra virgin olive oil spray
 - 400g lamb backstraps
 - 1 cup Greek or natural yoghurt
 - 2 tablespoons sunflower seeds (toasted)
 - Mint leaves (for garnish)
1. In a bowl combine lentils, parsley and green beans. Season salad with lemon juice, rind, olive oil and freshly cracked pepper. Add sunflower seeds and mix through.
 2. Spray lamb back-straps with olive oil spray. On a hot non-stick pan or grill cook lamb for approximately 2 minutes on each side (or to your liking). Transfer to a plate to rest for 5 minutes before slicing.
 3. Serve salad with topped sliced lamb, yoghurt and mint leaves as garnish.

Quick and Easy Recipes

SALMON AND SOBA NOODLE SALAD

- 180g soba noodles
 - 1 tablespoon sesame oil
 - 4 salmon fillets (80-120g per fillet)
 - ¼ red onion (finely sliced)
 - 1 carrot (grated)
 - 1 small Lebanese cucumber (halved, sliced diagonally)
 - 1 red capsicum (finely sliced)
 - 3 cups rocket (chopped roughly)
 - ¼ cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
 - 4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 - 3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce
1. Boil noodles for 3-5 minutes or until al dente. Drain water and fill pot with cold water. Set aside.
 2. Heat pan with half the sesame oil on medium heat and place the salmon fillets skin down. Cook salmon fillets for 3-5 minutes on skin side and then turn over to cook for another 2 minutes and set aside.
 3. In a large salad bowl, add vegetables, and pumpkin seeds.
 4. Pour vinegars, remainder of sesame oil and soy sauce over salad and combine well.
 5. Drain noodles. Toss through salad, mix well.
 6. To serve, divide the noodle salad between bowls and place salmon on top.

HARDBOILED EGG AND AVOCADO ON RICE CRACKERS

- 2 eggs
 - 2 rice crackers
 - ¼ Avocado (mashed)
 - Salt, pepper (to taste)
1. Cover eggs with water in saucepan approximately ¾ full and bring to the boil. Turn off heat and leave eggs to sit in hot water for 10-12 minutes then place eggs into cool water. Remove shell from eggs and cut into slices.
 2. Spread avocado on rice crackers and place sliced egg on top. Add salt and pepper to taste.



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Disclaimer: All content in this booklet is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice and should not be relied on as health or personal advice. Always seek the guidance of your doctor or other qualified health professional with any questions you may have regarding your health.

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Recipes sourced from Nutrition Australia.

