

## Nutritional requirements of older people

These days there is access to a wide array of foods. Picking the right foods on your budget can sometimes appear difficult. Eating well will improve your appetite, give you more energy to enjoy life, help heal wounds and sores, reduce risk of illness and keep you strong so that you are less likely to fall and break bones.

## Healthy eating

As you get older, it's important to continue choosing healthy foods rich in nutrients. However as you get older lifestyles and appetite can change and this can affect the types and amounts of foods you eat. A decreasing appetite or reduced ability to buy and prepare healthy foods can mean that many older people don't get enough essential nutrients which can exacerbate some chronic illnesses. It's important not to under eat either and miss out essential nutrients.

## Vitamins and minerals

Vitamin and mineral supplements may be of benefit to those who have a medical condition that limits their dietary intake of certain foods.

Try to enjoy a variety of foods from the core foods groups (protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, calcium, fruit and vegetables).

### Use less salt

- A lot of salt consumed is hidden in premade foods and sauces.
- For extra flavouring try using herbs and spices instead of salt. Before, adding salt taste it first. Often salt is added out of habit.

## Drink more water

Sometimes, you may not feel thirsty, even when your body needs fluid. In fact, if you are feeling thirsty you are already dehydrated. If your urine is dark in colour this is a sign you are not drinking enough water.

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- Too much salt can cause hypertension which is a risk factor for cardiovascular and kidney disease.



## Fats, the good and the bad

The good fats include olive oil, canola oil, salmon, tuna, nuts, seeds and avocados. Good fats help to keep your heart healthy and reduce inflammation.

Try to reduce pies, pastries, fried and battered foods, chips, sweets and chocolate. If you are into desserts, try to avoid high fat and high sugar foods. You can try fresh fruits with reduced fat yoghurt for sweetness and flavour, and choose wholegrain and/or oat-based options for crumbles or cakes.

## Maintaining Bone Health

It is important to get as much calcium from your diet as possible. It is recommended we have 3 serves of calcium rich foods per day. One serve of dairy is equal to 1 glass (250ml) of milk which is the same as 2 slices (40g) of cheese or 1 tub (200g) yoghurt. Vitamin D is also essential and the best source is from the sun, otherwise supplements and some foods contain small amounts. Being overweight can also aggravate pain in weight bearing joints such as hips, knees and ankles.

## Dealing with constipation

- To prevent constipation it is important to include foods in your diet that are high in fibre
- Wholegrain cereals, wholemeal bread, fruit, dried fruit, dried peas, beans, lentils and vegetables are excellent sources of fibre
- Adequate water intake prevents constipation

## Healthy teeth and gums

Maintaining healthy teeth and gums is essential to help you enjoy eating and to eat well.

Missing teeth, sore gums and dentures that don't fit properly can all make it difficult to chew food. Have your teeth checked regularly and book appointments in advance to and ensure your dentures are adjusted correctly.

## Shopping for food

Shopping can be difficult for people who live alone, have poor mobility or lack transport means. So it is a good idea to have your cupboard and freezer well stocked with foods that can keep for a long time without going stale. This makes it easier to prepare a nutritious meal.

If transport and mobility are an issue consider contacting your local community centre and enquire about assistance with shopping programs. There are many things to consider with regard to diet, health and getting older and an Accredited Practising Dietician or your GP can be a great source of advice. You may also want to consider something like meals on wheels or other services in your area if you have trouble finding time to prepare regular meals.

## Resources

ACON

[acon.org.au](http://acon.org.au)

The Heart Foundation

[heartfoundation.org.au](http://heartfoundation.org.au)

LGBTI Health Alliance

[lgbthealth.org.au](http://lgbthealth.org.au)

Get Healthy NSW

[gethealthynsw.com.au](http://gethealthynsw.com.au)

Health NSW

[www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

Nutrition and older adults

[www.nutritionaustralia.org](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org)

Health Direct

[healthdirect.gov.au](http://healthdirect.gov.au)

Stroke Foundation

[strokefoundation.com.au](http://strokefoundation.com.au)

Healthy eating essentials and tips for eating on a budget

[eatforhealth.gov.au](http://eatforhealth.gov.au)

Contact HACC for services

in your area **1800 200 422**

[health.gov.au/hacc](http://health.gov.au/hacc)

Meals on Wheels

(02) 8219 4200

[nswmealsonwheels.org.au](http://nswmealsonwheels.org.au)

Integrated living meal

service **1300 782 896**

[integratedliving.org.au/meal-service.htm](http://integratedliving.org.au/meal-service.htm)

Dinner Ladies Meal Service

(02) 9666 4194

[dinnerladies.com.au](http://dinnerladies.com.au)



The LOVE Project is an ACON initiative aimed at creating better conversations and improved social engagement with older LGBTI community members. By understanding people's needs and preferences the LOVE project aims to facilitate greater social connectivity, improve social inclusion and provide appropriate health information for LGBTI elders.

[facebook.com/LivingOlderVisiblyEngaged](https://facebook.com/LivingOlderVisiblyEngaged) | [twitter.com/LOVEproject](https://twitter.com/LOVEproject) | [Loveproject.org.au](http://Loveproject.org.au)

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