

How the Elderly Can Change Diet to Accommodate Body Changes



Energy Supply

- Compared to young adults nutritional requirements for the elderly remain about the same, but their energy needs DECREASE.
- Energy sources such as oils, butter, cold cuts, whole-milk products, baked goods, and candy should be eaten sparingly, because they contain a lot of calories in the form of sugar and fat which can contribute to obesity.

Hunger and Thirst

- Hunger and thirst as well as the senses of taste and smell can decrease in older people.
- Eating and drinking should be planned.
 - It is often useful to develop an eating pattern in which several small meals are eaten throughout the course of a day.

Hunger/Thirst Cont.

- The sensation of thirst often diminishes; the body's signals for lack of fluids gets weaker with age.
- We should drink at least 1.5 liters (3 pints) of liquid a day. Preferably water.
 - Coffee, black tea, and alcoholic drinks can not be counted because they draw fluid from the body.



Digestion

- Older people are more susceptible to certain digestive disorders as well as constipation, diarrhea, bloating, feelings of fullness, or loss of appetite.
- This is due to the capacity of the digestive organs decreasing with age.
- Other causes lie in the way individuals eat:
 - Too little fiber-rich foods
 - Lack of fluids
 - Eating too fast
 - Habitually eating too much

Digestion Cont.

- The causes may also be related to medications or diseases, as well as to personal circumstances involving stress, mental tension, or depression.
- These problems can be dealt with by:
 - Eating fiber-rich foods
 - Drinking at least 1.5 liters of liquids
 - Properly chewing food
 - Exercising regularly
 - Using simple relaxation techniques
 - Discussing situation with a specialist

Digestion Cont.

- Foods to help counteract constipation:
 - Whole grain bread
 - Whole rice
 - Granolas
 - Figs
 - Berries
 - Bran
 - Vegetable
 - Lots of fluids

Digestion Cont.

- Foods to help counteract diarrhea:
 - Bananas
 - Black tea
 - Blueberries
 - Dark chocolate
 - White bread



Calcium in the diet

- Milk and milk products supply the body with calcium which helps to maintain bone strength.
- If bones decrease in density, then osteoporosis develops over time.
- Bone loss can be slowed down by including vitamin D-rich nutrients in the diet.
- Calcium requirements for the elderly is high-about 1,000 mg. a day.

Nutrition Hints for Quality Living

- If you have concerns about elderly nutrition, start by considering quality of life issues.
- Meet w/ a physician, dietician, or a nutritionist who can design a food plan to meet the patient's medical needs, medications, and most importantly, food likes and dislikes.



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