



Nutrition News - March 2024

Practice Mindful Eating During National Nutrition Month

Men and women are living longer, enjoying energetic and active lifestyles well into their 80s and 90s. Study after study confirms eating well and being active can make a dramatic difference in the quality of life for older adults.

You are never too old to enjoy the benefits of improved nutrition and fitness. With nutrient-rich foods and activities with friends, you can feel an immediate difference in your energy levels and enjoyment of life. In fact, as we get older, our food and activity choices become even more important to our health.

Focus on Nutrient Density

As adults age, they need fewer total calories, but higher amounts of certain nutrients, especially calcium and vitamin D. In terms of nutrition, you need to focus on quality, not quantity. For both optimal physical and mental health, older adults truly need to make every calorie count. For a healthy eating plan, choose a variety of foods from all the MyPlate food groups regularly. See myplate.gov for details.

Retired people on limited incomes may have trouble buying enough nutrient-rich foods to meet all their nutritional needs. If this is a problem for you or someone you love, explore the options for OFA Friendship Center meal sites, Meals on Wheels, or supplemental nutrition assistance programs in your community.

The golden years are not the time for extreme diets or drastic weight loss. Your goal should be to eat better while staying within your calorie needs. Fad diets frequently eliminate entire food groups,

which can lead to serious nutrient gaps. Rapid weight loss often leads to a loss of lean body mass, which is exactly the opposite of what older people need for good health.

Aim for a stable weight as you get older. If you want to lose a few pounds, talk to your healthcare provider or a registered dietitian/nutritionist at OFA about the best plan for you. Contact us at **845-486-2555** or ofa@dutchessny.gov. The right balance of foods and activities can help you maintain strong muscles and bones.

Enjoy the Power of Protein

People of all ages need protein for strong, healthy bodies. Some older adults do not get the protein they need to maintain muscle mass, fight infection and recover from an accident or surgery. Chewing protein-dense foods such as meat also can be a problem for some older adults. Here are a few tasty tips to pump up your protein intake, without upsetting your food budget or energy balance.

- **Enjoy More Beans.** Add canned beans to salads, soups, rice dishes and casseroles.
- **Make Your Crackers Count.** Spread peanut butter on whole-grain crackers and eat them as snacks or alongside soup, chili or salad.
- **Pump Up Your Eggs.** Mix grated, low-fat cheese or extra whites into scrambled eggs.
- **Cook with Milk.** Use fat-free or low-fat milk rather than water to make soup or oatmeal.
- **Use Dry Milk Powder.** Mix a spoonful of dry milk into fluid milk, cream soups and mashed potatoes.

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OFA Clip-and-Saves

(Need a fresh copy? Visit dutchessny.gov/ofanutrition and click on the "Nutrition News" link)

Foods High In Protein (a fairly complete list)

Beef
Yogurt
Salmon
Chicken
Lentils
Almonds
Milk
Quinoa
Chickpeas
Eggs
Oatmeal
Spinach
Green peas

Simple Protein Bowls

Pick one or two proteins:

Grilled chicken breast • Black beans •
Grilled lean beef or ground beef • Pinto
beans • Tofu • Shredded pork • Chickpeas •
Ground turkey • Eggs (hard boiled, poached,
scrambled) • Tuna • Shrimp • Grilled salmon

Pick one or two carbohydrates:

Brown rice • Quinoa • White Rice • Couscous
• Diced cooked potatoes • Sliced cooked
sweet potatoes

Pick one or two healthy fats:

Avocado • Chopped walnuts • Olive oil
(drizzle) • Chopped peanuts

Pick two, three or four veggies:

Lettuce • Spinach • Kale • Sprouts •
Tomatoes • Carrots • Cucumbers • Jicama
• Beets • Bell pepper • Roasted Brussels
sprouts • Red cabbage • Edamame • Peas •
Red onions • Butternut squash

Add sauces and/or seasonings:

Freshly squeezed lime juice • Lemon juice
• Fresh Cilantro • Balsamic vinegar • Fresh
Basil • Ranch • Ginger • Hot sauce • Creamy
dressing • Pepper • BBQ sauce • Sesame
seeds • Cayenne pepper

Source: the geriatic dietitian.com

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