

Nutrition As We Age



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Happy Earth Month

- Ways to help the earth:
 - Reusable bags
 - Reusable storage bags
 - Use your food scraps
 - Make vegetable broth
 - Put into other recipes
 - Compost
 - Purchase items with less packaging
 - Shop in the bins
 - Whole food, plant-based diet
 - Shop local and in season



Hot off the Press

- *Long-term dietary patterns are associated with pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory features of the gut microbiome*, published April 2, 2021 by [Gut](#)
- Looked at 1,425 adults with and without GI diseases (Irritable bowel, Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn's)
- Found that higher intake of animal foods, processed foods, alcohol and sugar was associated with a dysbiotic gut microbiota and increased markers of intestinal inflammation.
- Found that consumption of plant-based foods was connected to short-chain fatty acid (SCFA)-producing bacteria and a healthier gut microbial pattern.

Challenges As We Age

- Weight
- Trouble eating
- Specific nutrients
- Alcohol intake
- Polypharmacy
- Excess sodium
- Risk of dehydration
- Finances
- Food Safety
- Community



Healthy Weight

- Reduction in lean body mass
 - Lower metabolic rate
 - Less physical activity
- Fewer calories needed
- Focus on portions
- Plate method
- Increase activity
- Develop more muscle



Trouble Eating?

- Eating alone:
 - Senior meals
 - Potlucks
 - Cook with friend
- Trouble chewing:
 - See dentist for help with dentition
 - Soft foods
 - Well-cooked foods
- Swallowing:
 - May need swallow study – see PCP



Trouble Eating?

- Lack of smell and taste:
 - Add more spices and textures
 - Add color to the plate
- Poor appetite:
 - Small, frequent meals
 - Healthy snacks
 - Calorie-dense foods
 - See a dietitian
- Difficulty cooking/feeding
 - See PCP, ask for Occupational Therapist
 - Meal delivery: Home Chef, Hello Fresh, Fit Eats, Purple Carrot, etc.

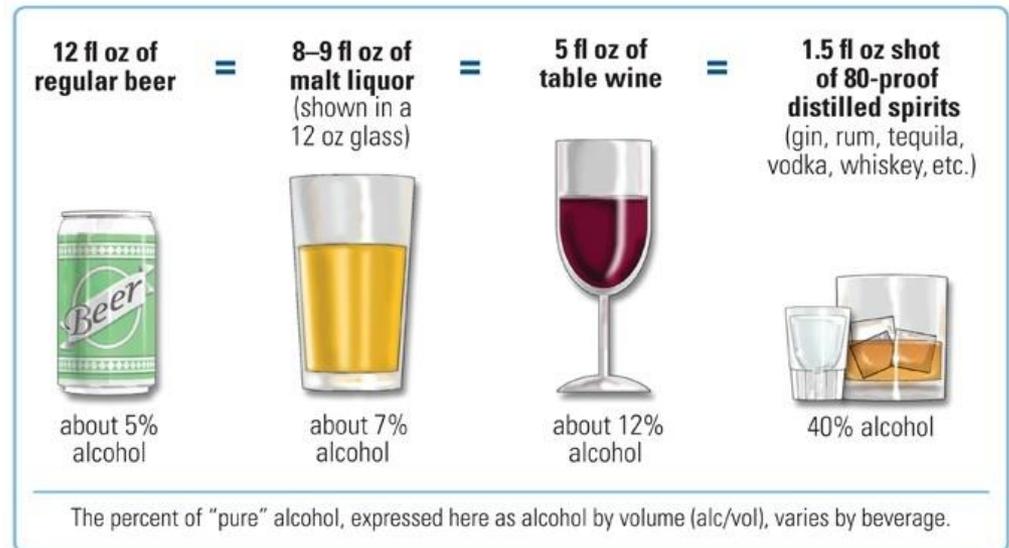


Specific nutrients of concern

- Protein
 - Helps maintain immune system
 - Prevents muscle wasting
- Vitamin D
 - Needed for bone health and prevention of chronic disease
 - Less conversion from the sun in the elderly
 - Sources: fatty fish, eggs, fortified dairy, some mushrooms
- Vitamin B12
 - Inefficient absorption
 - Metformin
 - Deficiency leads to neurological damage
 - Frequent falls is red flag
- Dietary fiber

Alcohol Intake

- Contributes to sleep disorders
- Interactions with medication
- Replace nutrient-rich calories
- Risk of dehydration
- Moderation:
 - 1 drink/day women
 - 2 drinks/day men
- One drink =
 - 12 oz beer
 - 1.5 oz spirits
 - 5 oz wine



Polypharmacy

- Only 25% of adults take meds as Rx'd
- Very complicated medication regimens
- Need simple, written instructions
- Create system to ensure you are taking meds properly
- Talk to PCP or Case Manager if too complicated
- Diabetes educator can help with diabetes meds



Beware of Sodium intake

- Why?
- Blood pressure and arterial function!
- High blood pressure associated with:
 - more severe COVID symptoms
 - Alzheimer's
 - stroke
 - heart disease
 - kidney disease
 - poor eye health



Reducing Salt

6 Step Process

1. Eat whole, real foods from plants (not made in a plant)
2. Eliminate the Salt Shockers
3. Read Nutrition Labels
4. Make Healthy Substitutions
5. Modify Recipes
6. Eat at Home More Often



Salt Shockers!

Prepared soup:

1 pkg Ramen Noodles = 1660 mg sodium

1 cup Campbell's Tomato soup = 960 mg

1 cup Campbell's Healthy Request = 810 mg

1 cup Progresso Vegetable Soup = 500 mg

Better choice: homemade soups

Hydration

- Less total body water as we age – more sensitive to fever, heat
- Take sips of water between bites during meals.
- Add liquids throughout the day – don't wait until thirsty
- Drink a full glass of water when taking pill
- Have a glass of water before exercise
- Have fluids without added sugar
- Alcohol in moderation
- Urinary control problem? – talk to PCP
- Aim for 6-8 glasses water daily



Foodborne Illness

- Higher risk when >65
- GI tract holds food for a longer period of time, allowing bacteria to grow.
- The liver and kidneys may not properly rid the body of foreign bacteria and toxins.
- Less acid production
 - acidity helps to reduce the number of bacteria GIT

Keep Food Safe

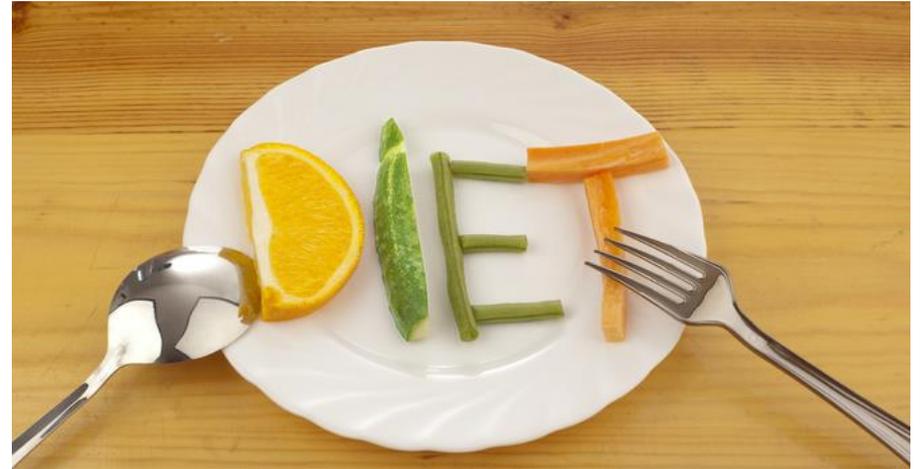


Senior Food Services

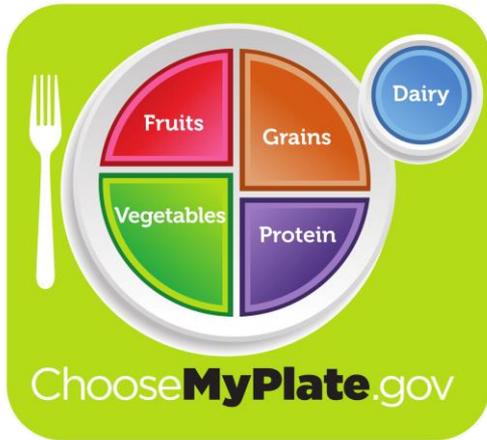
- Older Americans Act Nutrition Program
- Aim:
 - Improve nutrition status in the elderly
 - Low-cost, nutritious meals
 - Opportunities for social interaction
 - https://www.aging.ca.gov/Find_Services_in_My_County/My_County/?cc=37
- Provided through:
 - Congregate meals
 - Meals on Wheels
 - Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition program for low income
 - SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Refer to Case Manager

What is the best diet as we age?

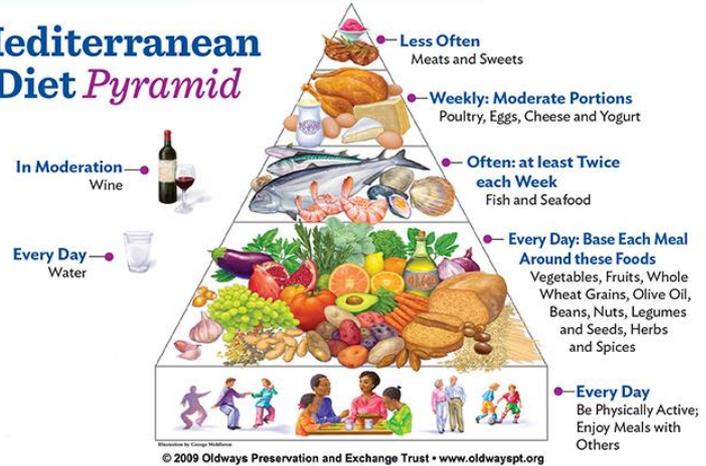
- DASH?
- High protein?
- Keto?
- Mediterranean?
- Vegetarian?
- Intermittent fasting?
- **Only a whole food plant-based diet has been shown to reverse diabetes**
 - Are you willing to make some adjustments?



Eating Plans



Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



The DASH Diet for Healthy Blood Pressure

Follow these DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) guidelines for a healthier, more balanced diet



Live to be 100 – Blue Zones

- Blue Zone: areas of the world where people live to >100



- They are less likely to get the common ‘aging’ diseases

Characteristics of Blue Zoners

- Eating a (mostly) plant-based diet
- Engaging in moderate, regular physical activity
- Ensuring a balanced caloric intake
- Having a life purpose
- Maintaining low levels of stress
- Drinking limited amounts of alcohol (emphasis on “limited”, not “drinking”)
- Being spiritual
- Emphasizing family
- Being involved in the social life of a community

Macronutrients

- Protein –
 - Provide 20 or more amino acids
 - Muscle building, enzymes, required for the structure, function and regulation of the body's cells, tissues and organs.
 - Structural components of body tissues (muscle, hair, collagen) and as enzymes and antibodies
- Fat –
 - Fuel source
 - Storage form of energy
 - Insulation, satiety, carries fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K)
- Carbohydrates –
 - Simple forms such as sugars and in complex forms such as starches and fiber.
 - The body breaks down most sugars and starches into glucose, a simple sugar that the body can use to feed its cells.

Healthy Eating Choices

- Focus on:
 - Fruits
 - Vegetables
 - Whole grains
 - Plant (or lean) proteins
 - Healthy fats
- Limit:
 - Processed foods
 - Fruit juice, canned fruit
 - Refined grains
 - High-fat proteins
 - Desserts
 - Drinks with calories



Moderation is Key!

Carbohydrates

- Carbs don't cause diabetes
- Typical American diet does!
- Eliminating carbs just puts band aid on the problem
- Animal fats and oils build up inside the cells causing insulin to not work well



Best Food Choices

- Protein
 - Plant-based protein – beans, legumes, lentils, soy, nuts and seeds
 - If not plant-based: leaner proteins, fish, organic chicken/turkey, egg whites (occasional yolk)
 - Whole grains and vegetables also contain some protein!
- Carbohydrates
 - Fruit – fresh or frozen
 - Vegetables – fresh or frozen
 - Dairy or plant-based dairy
 - Whole grains – oats, quinoa, whole grain bread, tortilla, brown rice
 - Starchy vegetables – potatoes, corn, peas, winter squash
- Fat = Plant fats – avocado, olive oil, nuts and seeds (small amounts). Animal fats = butter, lard, meat and dairy



Fiber

- Found in plants and whole grains!
- Helps reduce constipation and diverticulitis
- Important to maintain gut microbiome
 - Fruits & veggies
 - Beans, lentils, & peas
 - Nuts & seeds
 - Whole wheat bread/pasta
 - Wild/brown rice
 - Barley, bulgur, quinoa, Israeli couscous & farro
 - Bran, wheat, & oats



Inflammation – a sign of “injury”

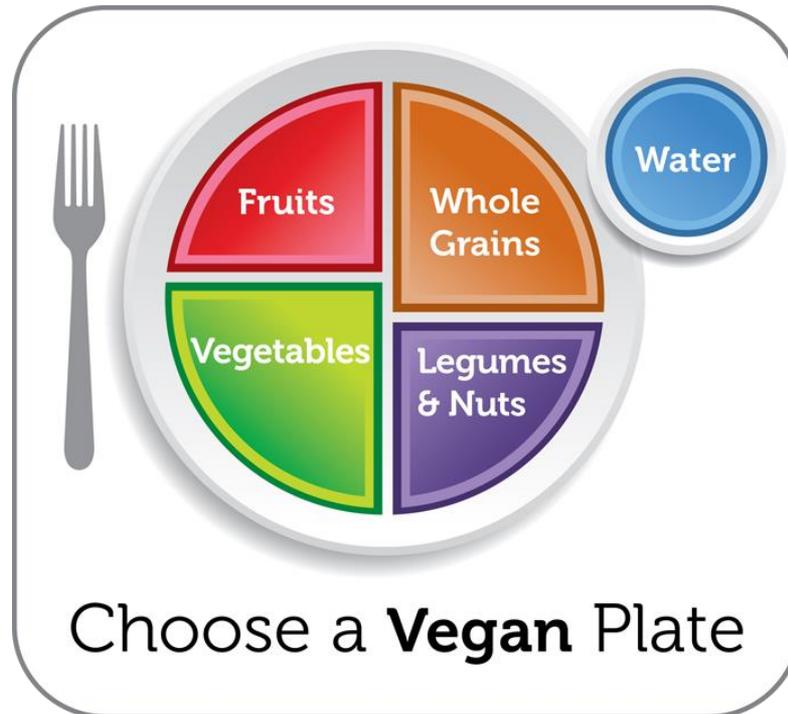
- Acute inflammation
 - normal and healthy response to injury or attack by germs.
- Chronic inflammation
 - Whole body involved
 - Contributes to chronic disease
 - Heart disease, cancer, and neurodegenerative conditions (Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s)
 - Result of genetics, a sedentary lifestyle, **poor quality diet**, too much stress, and exposure to environmental toxins such as secondhand tobacco smoke.
- “Symptoms” may include:
 - Obesity, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome
 - Cancer, fatigue, allergies
 - Behavior and mood disorders
 - Neurological conditions (tremors, headaches, cognitive difficulties)

Anti-Inflammatory Food Choices

- The most anti-inflammatory foods = higher in Fiber!!!
- Examples of anti-inflammatory foods –
 - Turmeric
 - Green and black tea
 - Omega 3 fatty acids
 - Onions
 - Apples, citrus fruits, berries, grapes, pomegranate
 - Vitamin D
 - Spices: ginger, garlic, red chili peppers, basil, rosemary, anise, fennel, cloves, cumin
 - Legumes, nuts and seeds
 - Intact whole grains

Meal Planning

- **Fruit** and/or a **vegetable** with every meal
- A **whole grain** or starch with every meal
- A **protein** with every meal



Prep for Success

- Plan menu for the week
- Batch cook for the week
 - Cook a pot of beans
 - Cook a pot of grains
 - Roast/grill veggies for use during the week
- Chop up veggies/fruit for your recipes once a week
 - Chop onions: diced, wedges, rings
 - Wash greens and have them ready to go
 - Make big salad in advance
 - Wash strawberries and have them cut up in bowl
- Try some short-cuts:
 - Instant pot, food processor



Develop 5 go-to meals

- Oats?
- Pasta?
- Tacos?
- Salad?
- Veggie Burger?
- Bowls?
- Pizza?



Try changing one meal a week

Week #1 - Breakfast

- Look online for breakfast ideas and get a few recipes that will be simple for you
 - Oats – overnight oats are easy
 - Cereals, grains
 - Fruits/veggies
 - Plant milks
 - Scrambled Tofu
 - Smoothies



Week #2: Lunch

- Do you eat anything that is already a healthy choice?
 - Bean burrito
 - Peanut butter sandwich
 - Salads
 - Veggie Soup
- What do you eat that could easily be modified?
 - Beans on salads instead of chicken
 - Leave the cheese off of burritos
 - Hummus on sandwich instead of turkey?
 - Add veggies to your usual meal



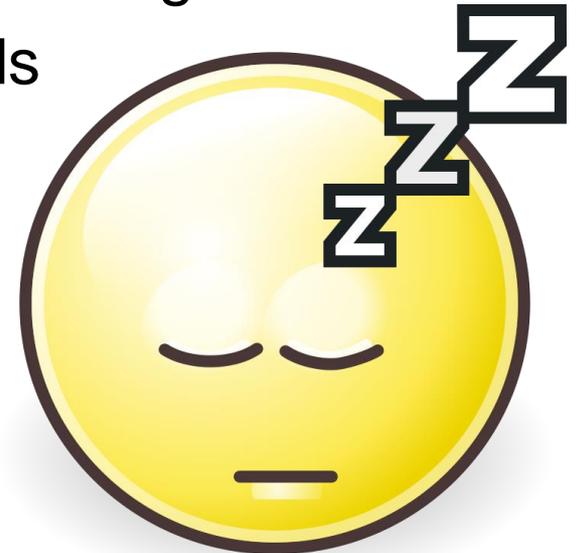
Week #3: Dinner

- What can you easily modify from your usual meals?
 - No meat (or leaner protein) in spaghetti sauce?
 - Beans instead of meat?
 - Stir fry with veggies and tempeh/tofu
- What recipes have you found that you would like to try?
 - Buddha bowls
 - Beans/Rice/Greens
 - Plant or lean proteins?
 - Grain-based salads/sides



Other important 'fuels'

- Adequate sleep – goal is 7-9 hours nightly
- Stress management
- Improved mental health
- Exercise – 150 – 300 minutes per week
- Relaxation - Yoga, meditation, deep breathing
- Connection to community, family, friends
- Sense of purpose



SMART Goals – What is your WHY?

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable / Action Oriented
- Realistic
- Time



- Example – I plan to eat (Action) 1 serving (Measurable) of berries with my breakfast (Specific) for 5 days (Realistic) this week (Time)
- Example – I will walk the dog for 10 min before breakfast, after lunch, and before bed each day.
- Example – I will eat beans instead of meat one meal a day
- Example – I will take the salt shaker off the table when I get home and keep it hidden.

Nutrition As We Age- Bottom Line

- Follow plate method of choice
- Aim for variety of colorful foods
- Strive for less processed foods, more plant foods
- Greens, beans, whole grains, fruits, veggies daily
- Consider B12 and Vit D supplement
- Limit high sodium foods
- Seek out meal assistance as needed
- Try new foods
- Cook a pot of beans and a grain every week for meals

Eat as if your life depends on it!

Thank you!

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