



# Foods and Dietary Supplements for Healthy Aging

## As you age, your food needs change:

- You may need fewer calories.
- Your body may not be able to absorb all the nutrients from food.

## To get the nutrients you need for good health each day:

Eat a variety of whole foods including five to nine fruits and vegetables and three or more whole grain foods.

- Fruits, vegetables and whole grain foods contain not only vitamins, minerals and fiber, but also hundreds of disease-fighting phytochemicals. The health-promoting benefits come from the interaction of the many phytochemicals in the food.



- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables at each meal and as snacks in between. Eat a fortified whole grain cereal for breakfast, whole grain crackers for a snack, and whole grain bread or other whole grains like barley at dinner.

## Get enough calcium, and vitamin D.

- Dairy foods, green vegetables and calcium-fortified foods provide calcium and vitamin D that help maintain bone health and may protect against hypertension and some types of cancer.



## How much Calcium and Vitamin D do you need?

Recommended daily amount

### Age 51 to 70

Calcium: 1,200 mg  
Vitamin D: 400 IU

### Over 70

Calcium: 1,200 mg  
Vitamin D: 600 IU

Dairy foods provide the nutrients for bone health in the form and balance that are most available to the body.

### One 8-ounce glass of milk

Calcium: 300 mg  
Vitamin D: 100 IU

It takes four glasses of milk a day to meet the recommendations for calcium and vitamin D for people aged 51 to 70.

Ask your doctor if you need a supplement to meet your needs for calcium and vitamin D.



### Are other dietary supplements helpful?

The promise of many dietary supplements can sound appealing but they are not simple solutions to health problems.

It is best to talk with your doctor before taking any supplement to avoid potentially harmful reactions or interactions with other medication you may be taking.



### Getting Enough Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>?

Vitamin B<sub>12</sub> is found in meat, poultry, fish and dairy foods. As we age, atrophic gastritis, a condition that damages stomach cells, decreases the body's ability to digest the natural chemical form of Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>. After age 50, you may need to get vitamin B<sub>12</sub> in a crystalline form by eating fortified breakfast cereals and taking a multivitamin supplement.

Talk with your doctor about your need for a vitamin B<sub>12</sub> dietary supplement or injection.

Healthy living comes from choosing foods to maintain a healthy weight, staying physically active and mentally challenged, and having social connections with other people.

funded in part by USDA's FSP

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
 Extension

an equal opportunity/ADA institution