

Vibrant Health for Seniors

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It is now possible for most people to live active, healthy lives throughout their senior years. 65 really is not “old” anymore. However, nutritional needs do change. As that youthful “bullet-proof” feeling fades, we realize that maintaining good health requires much more diligence than it used to! Here are some tips on how to maintain great health:

Regular Physical Activity

For anyone who wants to live a long and healthy life, physical activity is not optional! Exercise helps prevent cardiovascular disease and diabetes and even improves symptoms of arthritis. Other benefits include increased immune function, elevated sense of well being and reduced risk of debilitating bone breakage. Bone mass is constantly being broken down and recycled within the body. Weight-bearing exercise such as walking is essential for stimulating specialized cells in the bone that fill in the gaps with new bone mass. Furthermore, exercise improves balance and strength, reducing the risk of falling. An active lifestyle is also essential for proper digestion and prevention of constipation.

Reduce Pain and Inflammation with an Anti-inflammatory Diet

Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables (5-12 servings per day), and choose whole grains over foods made with flour. Keep sugary foods to a minimum. Eat wild fish several times per week and/or take a daily fish oil supplement. Other healthy oils such as walnut and hemp can be added cold to salad dressing, soups or stews. Try to eat a balance of carbohydrates, protein and fats with each meal and focus on whole foods, reducing your intake of high sodium canned and processed foods.

Increase Fibre Intake

The recommended daily intake of fibre is 25-35g. The average person gets half this amount. Fibre helps to absorb and remove toxins and cholesterol from your digestive tract, reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. There is no single perfect type of fibre: you need to get a balance of soluble and insoluble fibres from a variety of different sources, including nuts and seeds such as Salba™ or




flax, oats, wheat bran, barley, legumes, beans, fruits such as apples, pears and berries and vegetables. Some whole grain breakfast cereals offer up to 13 g of fiber per serving, almost half your daily requirement!

Vitamins, Minerals and Antioxidants

As we age, absorption of vitamins and minerals becomes less efficient. Taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement with meals can help ensure that you are getting enough B vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin D, iron, calcium, magnesium and zinc. Your healthcare

provider can help you determine which supplements are best for you. To increase the absorption of minerals, reduce your caffeine intake and drink coffee or tea away from meals. Antioxidants are important for combating free radicals, which can lead to the development of cancer and heart disease. Eat plenty of dark green and brightly coloured fruits and vegetables. Try snacking on superfoods such as dried Goji berries, raw Cacao nibs or juices made from Acai or Pomegranate.

Protein

For some seniors, as caloric needs decline, so does appetite, making it hard to take in enough essential nutrients. To make sure you are getting enough protein to maintain muscle mass and provide the basic building blocks for your immune system, try snacking on nuts and seeds or drinking smoothies made with protein, fruit and a liquid such as water or juice. 

Christine is a nutritionist at Choices Markets. If you have a question for one of our nutritionists, please call (604)952-2273, or email nutrition@choicesmarket.com. Please also visit the nutrition section of our website for information on nutrition and special diets: www.choicesmarket.com/nutrition.htm