



# Nutritional Changes & Aging

Older adults may not get all the nutrients and sustenance they need due to a variety of physical, psychological and situational factors. The good news is that many of the factors that affect an older person's nutrition doesn't have to impact health and longevity.

## DECREASED TASTE

Older adults have fewer taste buds than younger adults, according to Medline Plus, a service of the National Institutes of Health. The number of taste buds begin decreasing between ages 40 to 50 in women and ages 50 to 60 in men. The sense of smell also diminishes, particularly after age 70, perhaps due to loss of nerve endings in the nose. Loss of smell makes food less tasty and enjoyable.

make food more appetizing.

## FINANCIAL ISSUES AND LACK OF MOBILITY

Seniors living on fixed incomes may not be able to afford the amount of nutritious food needed to maintain good health. Food banks and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, can help by providing low-income people access to free food. For seniors with disability or transportation issues, delivery-meal services, such as Meals on Wheels, bring nutritious, prepared meals to those who are immobile.

## LOSS OF APPETITE

Some people have less appetite and eat less as they age; making it difficult to get all the nutrients they need for good health (Alberta Caregiver College). Vitamin supplements and a change in the way food is prepared, such as using different spices, may help fill in the nutritional gaps and

## NUTRIENT ABSORPTION

Vitamin B12 deficiency is particularly common because the digestive tract of an older adult doesn't absorb this vitamin. A blood test can detect deficiencies; supplements or vitamin B12 shots are the recommended therapy.



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# Nutritional Changes & Aging (continued)

## MENOPAUSE AND PROSTATE PROBLEMS

As estrogen production declines, women lose bone mass, increasing the risk of osteoporosis. Annual decreases of 3 to 5 percent per year frequently occur in the first few years of menopause (NIH). Consuming adequate amounts of calcium may help slow the loss. Women 51 and older need 1,200 milligrams of calcium daily.

Prostate problems are more common in older men, but research suggests a diet low in fat and calories and high in fruits and vegetables may help prevent prostate diseases.

## HEART DISEASE RISK

A heart-healthy diet is recommended for people of all ages, but it is especially important after midlife, when the risk of heart disease is highest. A diet that protects against heart disease limits saturated fat

and salt, while incorporating walnuts, almonds, avocados, olive or canola oil and potassium-rich foods, such as bananas and low-fat milk. Calories from fats should be limited to between 20 and 35 percent of an older adult's diet and most of the fats should be heart-healthy and unsaturated.

Developed by Carolyn Robinson,  
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Sources: Healthline; National Institutes of Health; Albertha Caregiver College; Medline

Recipe



Source: © 2020 Allrecipes.com

## Quick & Easy Vegetable Soup

*"A low calorie, but filling, tomato-based vegetable soup. Use fresh vegetables when in season, frozen or canned in winter."*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (14 ounce) can chicken broth
- 1 (11.5 ounce) can tomato-vegetable juice cocktail
- 1 cup water
- 1 large potato, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped fresh green beans
- 1 cup fresh corn kernels

- Salt and pepper to taste
- Creole seasoning to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

In a large stock pot, combine broth, tomato juice, water, potatoes, carrots, celery, undrained chopped tomatoes, green beans, and corn. Season with salt, pepper and creole seasoning. Bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes or until all vegetables are tender.

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**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410  
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