

## Nutrition for 50+ Wellness

### Why does nutrition matter?

- Adopting a healthy living approach can support a positive aging experience
- Balancing our meals and snacks with a variety of food groups will help supply us with our daily vitamin and mineral requirements in a natural way
- Ensuring we are eating regular meals and snacks can help to increase our energy levels
- Incorporating healthy foods and cooking methods can lower our risk of some chronic diseases
- Consuming adequate portions, such as “The Plate Method” can help us achieve and maintain our body’s natural healthy weight
- Following a healthy eating pattern has been linked to improved mood

### Keeping up with our body:

Over time, certain vitamins and minerals become harder for the body to absorb. It is important to pay special attention to the following vitamins and minerals:

**Calcium and vitamin D** are important for our bones and teeth. Our needs increase after age 50. Both men and women are at risk for developing osteoporosis, which can increase the risk of developing fractures, so it is important to make sure you are including calcium rich foods in your diet every day.

	Calcium (mg per day)	Vitamin D (IU per day)
Women age 50 - 70 years	1200	600
Women age 70+ years	1200	800
Men age 50 - 70 years	1000	600
Men age 70 + years	1200	800

Source: Health Canada Dietary Reference Intakes

**Vitamin B12** is important for DNA repair and nerve function. It can be more difficult to absorb for some people after age 50—10 to 30% of adults have a difficult time absorbing adequate B12. Vitamin B12 can be found in all foods that come from animals, like eggs, milk, fish, meats, and is also found in fortified foods like soy or rice beverages. If you are vegetarian, it is especially important to ensure that you are getting eggs, milk products or fortified foods to make sure you are getting enough.

After 50, our needs for **Vitamin B6** increase. B6 helps our body to breakdown or make and use proteins and carbohydrates for our every day functions. Including meats, poultry and fish, fortified cereals, nuts and legumes will help you meet your B6 needs

For women, our **iron needs decrease** after age 50. Iron plays a role in carrying oxygen through the blood to the tissues. It is still important to include iron rich foods every day, but our needs are less due to menopause. For men, iron requirements remain the same after 50.

**There are 5 main areas of your health where nutrition can play an important role in prevention or management of the disease.**

- **Heart Health**
- **Cancer—Breast, Ovarian, Colorectal, Prostate**
- **Osteoporosis**
- **Weight management**
- **Chronic diseases, like diabetes**

### **Type of fat matters—Heart Health:**

The amounts and types of fats in your diet are important in your overall health, to help with weight management and to help manage cholesterol and diabetes. It may also reduce your risk of developing certain types of cancers.

The goal with fats is to choose the healthy fats most often, like your omega-3s, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats while limiting or avoiding the unhealthy fats. Choose healthy fats for your cooking like vegetable oils (canola, olive, grapeseed etc). Healthy fats are mostly liquid at room temperature. Also, nuts, seeds and their butters, fatty fish and avocado are great sources of healthy fats.

Use canola oil for cooking, olive oil for salad dressings. Add ground flaxseeds, chia or hemp seeds to yogurt, cereal or smoothies—just be careful of the amounts. Health Canada recommends a maximum of 2-3 tablespoons of added fats per day!

Saturated and trans fats can clog the arteries, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. To lower your cancer risk (colorectal) and to improve your heart health, it is best to avoid or limit processed meats like lunch meats (salami, mortadella, and other sliced cold cuts), hot dogs and sausages. It is also a good idea to eat the following foods less often or not at all: higher fat cuts of meat or meats where you can see the marbling of the fat, processed foods, fried foods and fast foods, butter, coconut oil or palm kernel oil.

## **Incredible, Edible Fibre—Heart health, cancer, chronic diseases:**

Daily Recommended Intake for fibre for men and women over the age of 50 years (Health Canada).

<b>Age (years)</b>	<b>Amount of Fibre (grams per day)</b>
Males >50	30
Females > 50	21

Eating enough fibre is important to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, GI disorders like diverticular disease, constipation. It can also help manage chronic diseases by helping to reduce cholesterol and manage blood sugars in diabetes. Most Canadians consume about half of the recommended amounts of dietary fibre daily. Try to get fibre from whole food sources, rather than fortified foods e.g. frozen yogurt.

### **To get enough fibre in your diet:**

- Try to include 7 servings of fruits and vegetables (combined) per day. One serving = ½ cup (125mL) of fruits or vegetables, or 1 cup of leafy green vegetables.
- Choose a cereal that has at least 4 g of fibre per serving.
- Choose whole grains—there are some great ones out there that you can use as side dishes, add to soups, make as side salads or make into a hot breakfast cereal. Experiment with different ones and look for new recipes online. They are available at most grocery stores, or bulk food stores. Try Quinoa, Teff, Freekeh, Millet, Farro, Wheat Berries, Bulgur or Barley.
- Choose breads that have whole grain flour as the first ingredient and have at least 2-3 g of fibre per slice.
- Beans and legumes are packed with fibre and add great texture to different dishes. Top green salad with chick peas, try a lentil soup or stew, use legumes as a side dish instead of rice or make chili, curries and soups with added beans, substituting for some of the animal proteins in the recipes. ¾ cup (175mL) of legumes can provide 6-12 g of fibre per serving.
- Add nuts and seeds to cereals, yogurt, salad or have them on their own as a snack. Get a variety of different nuts and seeds—each has its own unique benefit, flavour and texture.

## **Bone Health:**

- Optimal calcium and vitamin D can slow or stop bone loss; and contribute to osteoporosis prevention
- Other factors that contribute to bone loss include:
  - Caffeine, salt, smoking, excessive alcohol, lack of physical activity, poor diet

See recommended intakes for Calcium and Vitamin D above.

### **A Day's worth of Calcium:**

**Breakfast** : 1 cup (250mL) milk (325mg Calcium)

**Morning Snack** :  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175mL) yogurt (330mg Calcium)

**Lunch** : 1.5 oz (50 g) cheese (400mg Calcium)

**Afternoon Snack** :  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup almonds (95mg Calcium)

**Dinner** : 1 cup spinach (130mg Calcium)

**= 1280 mg Calcium**

### **A Day's worth of Vitamin D:**

It is hard to get enough Vitamin D from food alone so taking a vitamin D supplement is necessary. Health Canada suggests a supplement of 400 IU, but other groups suggest 1000 IU/day. Here is what a typical day may look like to be able to get 1000-2000 IU of vitamin D. Fish are the best source of vitamin D. Fortified milk products and eggs also provide smaller amounts.

### **Vitamin D Supplement 1000 IU**

**Breakfast** : 1 cup milk (105 IU Vitamin D)

**Lunch** : 2 eggs (60 IU Vitamin D)

**Dinner** : 75 g Salmon (500 IU Vitamin D)

**= 1665 IU Vitamin D**

## Getting Active and Building Muscle Mass:

Commercial Break Exercise:

Finding it difficult to work some activity into your daily routine? Consider:

- doing some sit-ups, squats, push-ups or jumping jacks during commercials while watching TV
- take the stairs more often, or do stairs in your house during commercials
- use canned foods or books as weights to do bicep curls or shoulder exercises
- sit on an exercise ball instead of chair at your desk or while watching TV

Check out this YouTube video by Dr. Mike Evans with some suggestions for ways to make your lifestyle more active: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whPuRLil4c0>

## Plate Method and Mindful Eating:

Mindful Eating: [www.eatingmindfully.com](http://www.eatingmindfully.com)



- Avoid distractions while you are eating; turn off the TV or computer, avoid reading books, newspapers or magazine and just focus on the food.
- Consider how the food looks and smells, and how it feels and tastes in your mouth.
- Think about how you feel before, during and after the meal. Are you hungry? Are you satisfied? Are you full or feeling stuffed?