



DIETITIAN'S CORNER



A Monthly Newsletter by BMA Dietitian Arelis Torres



Spring Nutrition for Seniors

Spring can serve as a time to re-examine health regimens. We think about tidying everything up and starting fresh. The start of a new season is a great opportunity to add fresh nutritious foods to enjoy that can also benefit our health.

Meeting nutrition needs is important across all life stages. For senior adults in particular, nutrient requirements might be higher as the ability to absorb nutrients decrease. It is important to make the most out of what is being consumed. These tips will set you on the right path for your fresh start,



Nutrition tips for the older adult:

1. Consume adequate amounts of protein: Consuming enough protein is important to prevent the loss of lean muscle mass that occurs naturally with age. A mix of strength exercises and adequate protein intake can help slow this process. Older adults age 65+ should aim to consume at least 15-25 grams of protein or 3 ounces of protein at each meal. Choose lean proteins such as: chicken, fish, turkey, lean beef or include plant-based proteins such as legumes, tofu, soy, tempeh, nut spreads.

2. Pay attention to your B12 levels: Vitamin B12 is of concern for some older adults because the ability to absorb this nutrient can decrease with age and use of certain medications can decrease absorption. Some of the foods that are good sources of vitamin B12 are: chicken, beef, fish, dairy products, eggs, fortified foods, like cereal, non-dairy milks, and soy products.

3. Hydrate well: Many older adults do not drink enough fluids to stay hydrated. One reason for that is the sensation of thirst tends to decline with age. Concerns about bladder control or issues with mobility also may affect fluid intake. Older adults should consume at least 8-10 (8oz) glasses each day. In addition to water choosing 100% fruit or vegetable juice, and low fat or fat free milk or fortified soy beverage can support fluid intake to prevent dehydration while helping to achieve food groups recommendations.

4. Limit or avoid alcohol intake: To help you move towards a healthy dietary pattern and minimize risks associated with drinking, you can choose not to drink or drink in moderation, limiting intake to 2 drinks or less for men per day and 1 drink or less per day for women.

5. Focus on food safety: As you age there is an increased risk of foodborne illnesses mostly due to a decline in the immune system function. Make sure to practice safe food handling practices by washing hands, utensils and surfaces often, separating raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other ready to eat foods and cooking foods to the right temperature.

6. Eat a well balanced diet: Eating healthy includes eating adequate servings of macronutrients: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Following my plate method by making $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate fruit and/or non-starchy vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate protein, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate starch, plus a serving of milk (dairy- or plant-based) will ensure an adequate diet. Set up your MDVIP nutrition appointment if you have any questions about how to follow a healthy diet!

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy spring season!

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