

## Maintaining Healthy

### Weight (Continued)

Maybe you're having the opposite problem; a poor appetite with weight loss. Ask your doctor or registered dietitian for a weight gain plan for you. Also try these suggestions:

- Eat smaller more frequent meals.
- Try to eat foods that are higher in calories and nutrients. Limit the use of high calorie foods with fewer nutrients like candy, cookies, and cakes.
- At each meal, try to choose a meat and/or dairy food, a fruit and/or vegetable, and a bread and/or cereal.
- If necessary, your dietitian or doctor can suggest a nutrition supplement, such as Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast or Boost, that you can drink or a nutrition bar you can eat.

## Constipation

Constipation is a stubborn problem for many people young and old. Many people try to “control” the problem on their own with use of over-the-counter laxatives. DO NOT take these without your doctor’s approval. Speak with your doctor if the problem lasts for more than one week or if you have pain. The following suggestions may help reduce infrequent, short duration constipation:

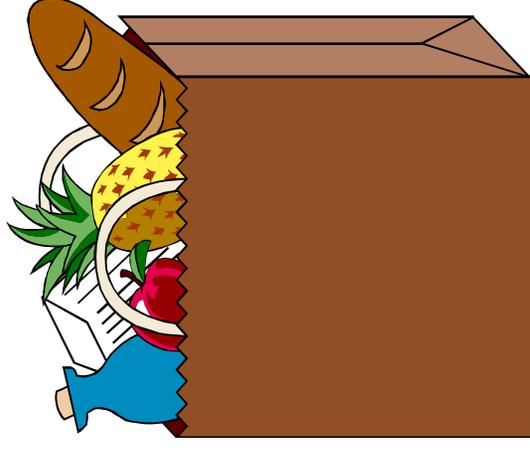
- Get enough exercise, with the approval of your doctor.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Try increasing the fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits and vegetables or whole grains.



**Produced for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging**

**By Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
Department of Food and Nutrition  
Author: Nicole A. Clark, MS, RD, CDE**

# Healthy Eating for Older Adults



## Staying Healthy Means Eating Healthy

As we age our nutritional needs change. We need more of some nutrients and foods like calcium, fruits and vegetables and water and less of others, like calories. This pamphlet will help to give you tips for choosing healthy foods to help you feel your best each day.

## **Eat Enough Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

What was the last fresh fruit or vegetable you ate? If you cannot remember, maybe you are not getting enough. Fruits and vegetables have many important vitamins that are different from other foods you eat, such as vitamins A and C and folacin.

Fresh fruits and vegetables have the added benefit of fiber that can help you guard against constipation.

If a chewing problem is the reason you eat few fruits and vegetables, try softer choices like ripe banana, baked winter squash, sliced peaches and steamed vegetables.

When choosing canned or frozen vegetables and fruits, look for ones without a lot of sauces or salt. Choose canned fruits and vegetables that are either low sodium or in their own juices or water.



*Eat 2 to 4 Fruits and 3 to 5 Vegetables Daily!*

## **Preventing Bone Loss**

As you age, you lose minerals from your bones. If you lose lots of minerals from your bones, you may develop a disease called osteoporosis. This disease may make your bones break more easily. You can protect your bones by eating enough calcium rich foods, such as milk, cottage cheese and yogurt. You need 1,200 mg of calcium or 4 (8-ounce) glasses of milk per day. You can also, with your doctor's approval, increase your exercise, quit or cut back on smoking, and drink alcohol in moderation or not at all. If you suspect you have osteoporosis, see your doctor for a bone density test.

## **Drink Plenty of Fluids**

You need at least 8 (8-ounce) glasses of beverages per day. Try to get at least 3 to 4 of these from water and the rest can come from other beverages. Try to limit beverages that are high in caffeine. Drinking liquids at mealtimes can make chewing and swallowing easier. Also, getting enough fluid helps reduce your chances of constipation.

## **Maintain Healthy Weight**

Have you gained some weight over the last several years? If your answer is yes, ask your doctor and / or a registered dietitian what a healthy weight would be for you. If your present weight is above your healthy weight, seek the advice of a registered dietitian for a weight control plan and try to follow these suggestions:

- Choose smaller portions of the foods you like. No food is a "bad" choice. You may just need to eat less of it.
- Start an exercise program with the approval of your doctor. Walking is a great way to exercise and all you need is a pair of tennis/walking shoes and a place to walk. You can enjoy the outdoors or walk in a mall.
- Try adding less fat to your foods and choose lower fat varieties of your favorites.
- If sweets are you vice, try keeping less in the house. Keep on hand instead, fresh fruit, frozen low-fat yogurt, sugar free puddings, fig bars, graham crackers, gingersnaps or other lower fat desserts.
- Eating smaller more frequent meals helps keep you full. Try eating three smaller meals and three snacks everyday.