



A healthy diet for seniors

by Pensiri Panyarachun, Absolute Living Thailand

A healthy diet helps maintain or improve general health. Food provides the body with essential nutrients and supports energy needs. Eating well is important for everyone at all ages. As we age, we might need less energy but still need just as many nutrients--which can be challenging. This article aims to provide tips on nutrition and diet to ensure healthy eating for seniors. Here are some important nutrients to keep in mind when planning a healthy diet for the elderly.

Calcium and Vitamin D are important for all ages. However, calcium seems to be more important as we age. Lack of calcium has been shown to increase the risk of brittle bones and fractures. Calcium-rich foods include low-fat and fat-free dairy products such as milk and yogurt, fortified cereals and fruit juices, dark green leafy vegetables, and canned fish with soft bones. Seniors need three servings of calcium and vitamin D every day. If you take a calcium supplement or multivitamin, be sure it contains vitamin D.

Vitamin B12 is important for creating red blood cells and DNA, and for maintaining healthy nerve function. The richest sources of B12 include fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and milk products. Consult your doctor before taking a B12 supplement.

Vitamin C deficiency in the elderly may lead to iron deficiency. Vitamin C helps in the absorption of iron from foods derived from plants. It also helps to heal wounds. Some foods rich in vitamin C include papaya, guava, bell pepper, spinach, strawberries and broccoli.

Vitamin A is essential for the eyes and helps form and maintain soft tissue. Sources of vitamin A include carrots, spinach, squash and sweet potato plants.

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps prevent cell destruction. Vitamin E is found in almonds, sunflower seeds, peanut butter and ketchup.

Fiber allows the bowels to function normally and is good for the heart. If you need to lose weight, fiber keeps you feeling full longer. Seniors older than 50 need 30 grams of fiber a



day. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. Eating more fiber helps prevent digestive problems like constipation. It also helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar.

Potassium: Increasing potassium intake along with decreasing sodium (salt) may lower your risk of high blood pressure. Good sources of potassium include fruits, vegetables and low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt. Choose low-sodium foods and replace salt with other herbs and spices to reduce your sodium intake.

Healthy fats provide energy and help your body use certain vitamins, but it is high in calories. Here are some tips to help reduce fat in your diet:

- Choose lean cuts of meat, fish, or skinless poultry with less fat.
- Trim excess fat before cooking.
- Use low-fat or no-fat dairy products and salad dressings.
- Use non-stick pots and pans, and cook without using fat.
- Choose an unsaturated vegetable oil for cooking—check the label.
- Don't fry foods. Instead, broil, roast, bake, stir-fry, steam, microwave, or boil them.

For weight control and overall health, limit fat calories to 20 percent to 35 percent of your diet. Most fats you consume should come from heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Try extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil, walnuts, almonds and avocados.



**ABSOLUTE
LIVING**Thailand

A perfect "Home"
for your retirement



Absolute Living Thailand introduces you "Long Lake Hillside Resort", an ideal lifestyle concept of retirement resort located at Banglamung, Pattaya. We combine resort-style living with special care and emphasize on quality of life for seniors.

Retirement Living at **Long Lake Hillside Resort** makes you feel right at home from the very first day you move in.

**Up to 40%
Special Discount
for Early Bird**

Contact us now at 092 265 1145
www.absolutelivingthailand.com

Water: As you age, you may lose some sense of thirst. Drink plenty of liquids like water, juice, milk, and soup. Don't wait until you feel thirsty. Have liquids throughout the day.

Why do most seniors not get sufficient nutrients? Apart from weakened senses like taste and smell, medications often leave a bitter taste in the mouth. Eat with the eyes by preparing and serving seniors a visually appealing meal. Make use of herbs and spices to compensate for unhealthy ingredients like salt.

Whatever your age, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health and in how you look and feel.