

## Healthy Measures: Healthy Eating for Healthy Aging

Good nutrition is important at any age. Eating well helps you feel your best every day and can help prevent heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and some types of cancer. Aging itself affects nutrition. As you get older, you need to eat less food (fewer calories) but you need the same amount or even more of certain vitamins and minerals. This can sometimes be a challenge, but the key to healthy eating is planning your food choices and meals using [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#).

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per day	Females Age 51+	Males Age 51+
Vegetables and Fruit	7	7
Grain Products	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	2	3

The need for vitamins and minerals, particularly vitamins B6, B12, D and calcium become even more important as you get older.

**Vitamin B6:** This vitamin is essential for a healthy immune system, maintaining blood sugar levels and you need more after age 50. Good sources include potatoes, beans, meat, chicken and fish.

**Vitamin B12:** Your body needs vitamin B12 to form healthy red blood cells and to keep your nervous system working normally. This vitamin helps you feel energetic and alert. As you get older, your body may not absorb vitamin B12 as well as it did before. This vitamin is found in meat, chicken, fish and milk products.

**Vitamin D:** Vitamin D is made in the body when our skin is exposed to sunlight and plays an important role in maintaining strong and healthy bones. Your vitamin D needs increase after the age of 50, in part because with age, the skin has a reduced capacity to produce vitamin D. Health Canada says that in addition to eating vitamin D-rich foods like milk and fish, everyone over age 50 should take a supplement with 400 IU of vitamin D daily.

**Calcium:** To keep bones strong, daily calcium needs increase to 1200 mg at age 50 for both women and men. The best sources include milk, cheese, yogurt and fortified soy beverages.

You can get enough of most of these vitamins and minerals by eating the foods recommended in *Canada's Food Guide*, but for some, a multivitamin/mineral supplement may be needed. Talk to your doctor or health care professional if you think you may need to take a supplement.

### For more information:

[Dietitians of Canada – Senior Friendly Fact Sheets](#)

If you have questions on nutrition or healthy eating, call *EatRight Ontario* at 1-877-510-5102 to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

**Healthy Measures: Eat Well, Be Active and Be Yourself!**