

# Wellness in Retirement

Feeling good all the time is a condition we often take for granted—until something happens to remind us that our bodies are not the same as they once were. Many factors help determine whether we feel great or just okay.



## Practice food safety rules

As we age, we are less able to fight off bacteria causing foodborne illnesses. Symptoms of foodborne illness include upset stomach, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness, headache, and body aches. Focus on four simple concepts: clean, separate, cook, and chill to prevent foodborne illness.

### 1. Clean

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap before preparing foods, after going to the bathroom, and after touching pets.
- Wash all cutting boards, utensils, and other equipment with soap and warm water after using with each and every food item.
- Replace older cutting boards that have deep, hard-to-clean grooves with new ones.
- When cleaning kitchen surfaces, use paper towels or replace washcloths frequently.
- Rinse raw produce in water and, if necessary, use a vegetable brush to remove dirt on the surface.

### 2. Separate

- Keep raw meat, fish, and poultry separate from other foods in your shopping cart and the refrigerator.
- If possible, designate a specific cutting board for exclusive use with raw meat. Use a different one for produce, breads, and other foods.
- Wash hands, cutting boards, and other kitchen utensils after they have come into contact with raw meat, eggs, or unwashed produce.
- Place cooked or grilled food on a clean plate. (Do not place on an unwashed plate that held raw food.)

### 3. Cook

- Use a clean food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, casseroles, and other foods are cooked thoroughly.
- Cook chicken and turkey to 165°F, pork chops, fish, and steaks to 145°F, ground meat to 160°F.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Do not consume raw or partially cooked eggs.
- When using a microwave oven, stir the food several times and use a food thermometer to ensure it is cooked throughly.
- Heat leftovers to 165°F and use within four days. Leftovers more than four days old should be thrown away.
- Cook (and/or reheat) sauces, gravies, and soups to a boil.

### 4. Chill

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours.
- Divide large amounts of prepared foods and leftovers into smaller, shallow containers for quicker cooling.
- Refrigerator temperature should be set no higher than 40°F and the freezer no higher than 0°F.
- Never thaw food at room temperature; thaw foods in the refrigerator, microwave (if cooking right away), or immerse in cold water while changing water every 30 minutes.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- Do not pack the refrigerator so full that air cannot circulate.

More information about food safety can be found by contacting the United States Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition by calling 1-888-SAFEFOOD or by visiting their website – [www.fda.gov/food/](http://www.fda.gov/food/).



### Practice “long-life” habits

- Get seven to eight hours of sleep every night.
- Maintain a reasonable weight.
- Eat regular meals every day.
- Exercise every day.
- Do not use tobacco products.
- If you drink alcohol, use only moderate amounts.

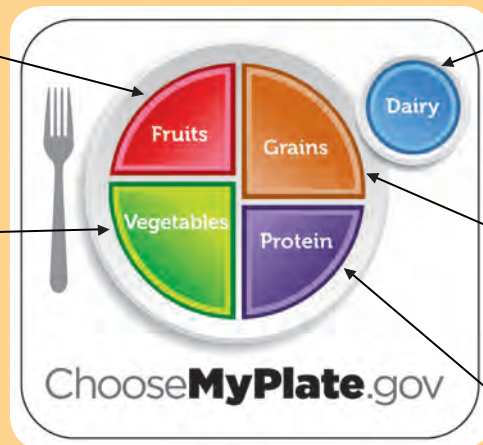
## Know your food and nutrient needs

Nutrient requirements change with age. Certain lifestyle factors can magnify nutrition problems. For example, those who live alone may have less interest in preparing and eating food. Medications can affect food intake or interact with foods or nutrients. *MyPlate* has some key messages for making the most of nutrition during retirement.

**Focus on fruits.** Eat a wide variety of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned or dried). Choose whole fruit more often than 100% juice.

**Vary your veggies.** Choose dark green vegetables like broccoli, salad greens, and cooked greens, and orange vegetables such as sweet potatoes or carrots.

**Find your balance between food and physical activity.**



**Get your calcium-rich foods.**

Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt and other milk products. If you don't consume dairy foods choose other calcium sources like fortified beverages and foods.

**Make half your grains whole.** Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain foods daily (e.g. cereal, bread, rice, crackers, pasta). Choose cereals that are fortified with vitamin B12.

**Go lean with protein.** Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry. Vary your lean protein choices and include eggs, dried beans, soy, fish, nuts, and seeds.

**Keep food safe to eat.**

## Beyond MyPlate... Nutrition tips to enjoy the golden years

- **Eat at regular times**—the number of meals you eat each day is up to you. It can be three, four, five, or more times a day. Each meal should contain two or more *MyPlate* food groups.
- **Monitor your fat intake**—eating less total fat helps control the number of calories you consume and risk for chronic disease such as heart disease and cancer. Use low-fat or non-fat milk; plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; lean meats; and low-fat preparation methods (bake, broil, steam, grill).
- **Maintain a reasonable weight**—Smaller food portions and daily physical activity will keep your weight reasonable. (See page 3 for specific recommendations).
- **Maximize your fiber intake**—Fiber decreases the likelihood of constipation and lowers blood cholesterol. Get more fiber from your food, including whole grain versions of bread, cereal, pasta, and brown rice; fresh fruits and vegetables; beans, nuts, and seeds.
- **Moderate caffeine and alcohol intake**—caffeinated beverages and alcohol should be consumed in moderation.



- **Supplementation may be necessary for the following nutrients.** Consult a healthcare provider (physician, pharmacist, Registered Dietitian) before taking a supplement.
  - **Calcium:** Men and women over the age of 50 need 1200 milligrams of calcium each day to prevent age-related bone loss. One cup of milk provides approximately 300 mg of calcium.
  - **Vitamin D:** Adult men and women need 600 International Units (IU), and those over 70 need 800 (IU) daily. Although adequate sunlight (5-15 minutes, three times per week) can meet these needs, it can be difficult in the winter. Vitamin D-fortified milk has just 100 IU per cup. Vitamin D affects risk of cancer, heart attacks, stroke, type 2 diabetes, falls, and autoimmune diseases.
  - **Zinc:** Men and women need 11 milligrams per day. Zinc may enhance your sense of taste. Good food sources include meat, liver, eggs, shellfish, and milk.
- **Supplementation may not be recommended for:**
  - **Folic acid:** Men and women over the age of 50 need 400 micrograms of folic acid daily for the formation of hemoglobin to prevent anemia. Get folic acid from green leafy vegetables, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and fortified grains.

- **Be alert for possible food and drug interactions.** Food can have both short- and long-term effects on the way drugs behave in the body. Food can influence drug activity by:
  - Speeding up or slowing down the absorption of a drug.
  - Influencing the time it takes for the drug to pass through the gastrointestinal tract.
  - Altering the way in which the drug is broken down for use in the body.

### Follow daily food recommendations

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides recommendations based on age, gender, and activity level at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).

Older adults need foods daily:

- **6 ounces of grains** (3 ounces of whole grains)  
This includes bread, cereal, rice, and pasta; at least half should be whole grains.
- **2½ cups of vegetables**  
Include a variety of colors – dark green, yellow, and orange.
- **1½ cups of fruits**  
Include a variety of colors – red, orange, yellow, and purple.
- **3 cups of milk or yogurt**  
One ounce of cheese is equivalent to one cup of milk.
- **5 ounces of protein foods**  
Choose lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts, or peanut butter.
- **6 to 8 cups of liquid**  
At least three cups should be water; the rest can come from juice, milk, tea, coffee, or soup. Sip water or other beverages throughout the day to prevent dehydration.



### Enjoy the benefits of exercise

A regular physical activity program helps maintain weight, improves bone strength, and provides an overall sense of well-being. In addition, exercise can make activities of daily living easier by improving balance, coordination, and endurance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommend that **older adults accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days per week**. For best results, the following types of exercise should be included on a regular basis.

**Flexibility**—the range of motion of joints and limbs. Greater flexibility makes moving around easier and reduces pain in joints. Examples of flexibility exercises include stretching, yoga, and tai chi. Flexibility exercises should be done every day.

**Aerobic**—strength of heart and lungs. Aerobic exercise strengthens your heart and lungs by raising your heart rate and lowering your blood pressure; it also relieves anxiety and depression. Examples of aerobic physical activities include brisk walking, jogging, swimming laps, dancing, skating, hiking, and biking. Aerobic activities should be done at least 30 minutes, three to five times a week.

**Strength**—muscle and bone mass. Strength training prevents sarcopenia (age-related loss of muscle) and loss of bone. Examples of strength-training activities include lifting weighted cans, carrying groceries and laundry, washing the car, scrubbing the floor, and performing chair exercises or stretch band exercises. Strength building activities should be done two or three days a week with at least one or more days between each session.

Before starting a physical activity program, make sure you visit with your healthcare provider about the type and amount of exercise you are considering. Your physician will want to make sure you are not putting your health and/or safety at risk.

## Prepare for body changes

Several body functions decrease as age increases. The type and rate of change, however, varies from person to person. Being aware of these probable physical changes and learning how to adapt to them helps us maintain our desired quality of life.

Lean Body Mass and Basal Metabolic Rate	
<b>What happens?</b> Lean body mass, or muscle, decreases and is replaced by fat tissue. Less muscle and more fat means fewer calories are burned.	<b>What can you do?</b> A physical activity program emphasizing both strength training and aerobic exercise can slow these changes; see page 3.
Digestion	
<b>What happens?</b> Decreased secretion of digestive juice decreases absorption of some necessary nutrients. Vitamin B12 deficiency can occur as stomach acid secretion decreases.	<b>What can you do?</b> Eat a variety of wholesome foods to meet nutrient needs (see page 2). Supplementation of some nutrients (e.g., B12) may be required to meet nutrition needs – consult with your physician or a Registered Dietitian.
Hormones	
<b>What happens?</b> Estrogen production decreases in women as they age, which leads to calcium loss in bones. Post-menopausal women are at highest risk for bone loss in the first five years of menopause.	<b>What can you do?</b> See your physician for possible remedies to hormone changes and osteoporosis.
Intestinal tract	
<b>What happens?</b> The movement of the intestinal tract can slow with age, which may lead to constipation.	<b>What can you do?</b> Drink enough fluids. Exercise and dietary fiber can counteract this change; see page 2 and 3.

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... and justice for all

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Kidney function	
<b>What happens?</b> The kidneys, which work to remove waste products from the body, are less effective after age 40.	<b>What can you do?</b> Drink plenty of water to promote kidney function. Do not rely on thirst to guide your fluid intake; your thirst mechanism decreases with age.
Small intestine	
<b>What happens?</b> This organ loses some of its ability to make lactase, an enzyme that digests the sugar in milk (lactose). Undigested lactose can cause gas, bloating, and diarrhea after eating dairy foods.	<b>What can you do?</b> Some people can tolerate small amounts of dairy products by spacing small portions of them with meals throughout the day. Yogurt, buttermilk, and aged cheeses are sometimes easier to digest than milk. Commercial products that predigest lactose, such as Lact-Aid, also can be used.
Smell and taste	
<b>What happens?</b> Both senses often become less sharp.	<b>What can you do?</b> Although it's tempting to simply add more salt or sugar to enhance flavor, a healthier solution is to season foods with herbs or spices. Also, make sure you are consuming zinc-rich foods, which may enhance your sense of taste. Food safety also becomes a concern when 'off' flavors aren't detected.
Teeth	
<b>What happens?</b> Missing teeth or poorly fitting dentures can limit food choices.	<b>What can you do?</b> Substitute cooked fruits and vegetables for raw. Choose tender, lean meats. Try cottage cheese, beans, soft cheeses, and pureed soups. Regularly visit your dentist for checkups and cleaning.

## For More Information

Additional information about health and wellness topics is available from these agencies and organizations.

### American College of Sports Medicine

317-637-9200 | [www.acsm.org](http://www.acsm.org)

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

800-CDCINFO | [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

[store.extension.iastate.edu/Topic/Food-Nutrition-and-Health/](http://store.extension.iastate.edu/Topic/Food-Nutrition-and-Health/)

### United States Department of Agriculture

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

888-SAFEFOOD | [www.fda.gov/Food/](http://www.fda.gov/Food/)