

How To Create Healthy Eating Habits As You Age

As you age, your metabolism slows down, your bone density and muscle mass decrease, your cognition may deteriorate, and you're more likely to develop chronic diseases. These may all sound scary but fortunately, [healthy eating for seniors](#) is a way to prevent them. An apple a day keeps the doctor away but a healthy eating habit as you age, may bring longer life ahead and may keep illnesses at bay.

1. Eat a variety of foods

Contrary to popular belief, you should not focus on a single diet as you age. For instance, a plant-based, or ketogenic diet alone may be missing vital food groups, thus, offers a limited amount of nutrients. Having this said, an overall nourishing meal must comprise a quality and variety of foods that adhere to wide health concerns.

According to the National Council on Aging, a healthy meal should consist of lean protein from fish, beans, and peas; whole grains from bread, crackers, rice and pasta; low-fat dairy from milk, yogurt, or cheese; and fruits and vegetables.

2. Make a rainbow meal

In addition to the prior eating tip, another fundamental habit to consider is to consume the nutrition rainbow. Colorful foods do not only contribute to optimal health, but it also stimulates appetite. Each distinctive color of fruits and vegetable contain antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Their benefits are as follows:

- Red: for fighting the risks to cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.
- Orange and yellow: for fighting age-related macular degeneration, improving immune function, and reducing the risk to heart disease.
- Green: for detoxifying the body, restoring energy, and vitality.
- Blue and purple: for anti-inflammation, anti-cancer, and anti-aging benefits

There are a lot of colorful recipe ideas to create your rainbow plate.

3. Make eating a social event

Loss of appetite among seniors is linked to isolation. Join others when eating your meals. Dine in the communal dining, or invite friends and families over. This is a primary but necessary step to help you keep up a healthy and regular eating habit.

4. Create a meal plan

Keeping up with the healthy food choices can be overwhelming if you have to do it for every meal preparation. To reduce the hustle, and to easily stick up with the routine, plan your meals a week ahead. Consider a meal plan in which breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and a few snacks are scheduled strictly. This is important since eating on time aids digestion, regulates blood sugar, and balances appetite. Meal plans should also adhere to the recommended serving sizes and nutritional amount, which varies according to your health concern, age, and gender. There are sample menus online to make your meal planning easier.

5. Start healthy eating shifts

Older adults must also take a lot of dietary adjustments. This includes minimizing salt and sugar consumption and shifting to healthier food and beverage choices. Cutting salt and sugar consumption is necessary to avoid diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, and kidney disease. The recommended sodium amount for older adults is 2,300 mg which is equal to 1 tsp. This can be adhered through following low sodium food options. Healthy food shifts also include shifting from high-calorie snacks to nutrient-dense snacks, products with added sugars to naturally sweet whole foods, refined grains to whole grains, and solid fats to oils. It is also best to avoid unhealthy beverages like sodas, and drink more water for hydration.