



## FEATURE ARTICLE FROM Always Best Care

### Focusing on Nutrition Trends and Ideas for Seniors

As we age, our nutritional needs change. Seniors and older adults have different needs than children and younger adults. Many seniors also require fewer calories than they once did depending on their level of physical activity. Older women need between 1,600 and 2,200 calories while older men need between 2,000 and 2,800 calories.

Certain medications and health conditions can also impact senior nutrition. For instance, someone with diabetes or high blood pressure will have different dietary guidelines than someone who doesn't. There are several things that seniors should keep in mind when it comes to nutrition:

#### **Increase Protein**

Seniors can often benefit from adding more protein to their diets. Not only can this help reduce muscle loss, it can also boost mood and support clearer thinking. Lean meat can be a good source of protein, but nuts, seeds, and beans can be as well for more plant-based protein.

#### **Increase Fiber**

Fiber promotes improved digestion and can reduce risk of heart disease and diabetes. It can also enhance your immune system. Foods high in fiber include whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and beans and lentils.

#### **Mediterranean Diet**

Studies have shown that a Mediterranean-type diet can be beneficial for seniors. This type of diet involves eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, and olive oil. It also includes pasta and fresh bread. It includes very little processed foods so that seniors gain more benefits from the natural vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. The Mediterranean diet can be beneficial for helping to manage high cholesterol and diabetes.

#### **Spice Things Up**

As we age, our sense of taste can change. Medications can also affect how foods taste. A healthy option is to add more herbs and spices to meals to enhance the flavor. Fresh herbs can make dishes more flavorful without increasing calories, sodium, or other unwanted elements.

#### **Incorporate Tomatoes**

Tomatoes hold a lot of nutritional benefits. They're high in antioxidants, lycopene, vitamin A, vitamin C, fiber, beta-carotene, and potassium. They're also very versatile and low in calories. Tomatoes can boost heart health and reduce risk of cardiovascular disease, build stronger bones, support improved eyesight, aid in digestion, and potentially help lower cancer risk - all of which can be concerns for seniors.

### **Find the Right Texture**

Dentures and difficulties with swallowing can affect senior nutrition. Preparing foods that are easy to eat and digest can promote a healthier appetite and diet. Ensure that foods are still flavorful and diverse even when softened, thickened, or pureed.

### **Stay Hydrated**

Along with eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains, seniors should also ensure that they're drinking plenty of fluids – especially water. Staying hydrated helps with digestion and overall wellbeing. Seniors may feel less thirsty as they age, but it's still important to

keep drinking throughout the day. Add more flavor to beverages with slices of lemon, lime, or other fresh fruits.

Eating a well-balanced diet is important at every age but can help support a healthier, more active lifestyle for seniors. If making meals is a challenge, or your senior struggles because they're eating alone, consider the benefits of an in-home caregiver. A caregiver can keep your loved one company, assist them in meal prep and grocery shopping, and ensure they're eating right each day.

If you're looking for a companion for your senior and someone to provide the level of support they need to live more safely as they age in place, call Always Best Care today at 1-855-470-CARE (2273). We'll work with you to ensure your senior receives the care they need to maintain as much independence as possible.