



“Excellence in Home Care”

Nutrition Education

www.BethanyHealthcare.com

Nutrition for Seniors

During the aging process, changes occur in the body that can affect nutrition. There may be less absorption and greater excretion of nutrients. This means that we need to take in more nutrients to maintain the same level of absorption. Yet, calorie needs decrease with age because metabolism slows down. So, nutrient-dense foods are needed.

Nutrient-dense foods are those that provide vitamins and minerals without too many calories. They should be the basis of your diet.

These include:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Plain breads and cereals
- Low-fat dairy products
- Lean meats and low-fat meat substitutes such as beans, peas, lentils, fish, eggs, and low-fat cheese

As you age, you also need more water. Dehydration puts you at risk for hypotension (low blood pressure), heat stroke, nausea, vomiting, and constipation. Nutritionists advise drinking six to eight glasses of water a day, even if you aren't thirsty.



Nutrition and Chronic Diseases

About eighty-five percent of seniors have one chronic disease—and sometimes more than one. If you are living with a chronic disease, you may benefit from a diet that is low in fat, low in sodium, and/or low in sugar—yet high in nutrients.

Decreasing fat plays a role in minimizing the effects of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. Decreasing sodium is recommended for those who suffer from hypertension.

Medications can also interfere with nutrition. Check with your doctor and pharmacist to determine if your medicines have any interactions. Each medicine is unique and works with your body differently, so make sure you tell them all the medications you take as well as any vitamin and mineral supplements.

Bethany HomeHealth Can Help

The Bethany HomeHealth nutritionists and certified diabetic educators help patients manage their diets in their homes by providing nutrition education for these disease conditions:

– *Decreased Appetite or Weight Loss*

Our nutritionists teach you how to fortify foods and beverages with extra calories and protein. They also provide appetizing meal and snack ideas so you can maintain strength and build a strong immune system.

– *Wound Care*

You'll learn about a high calorie, high protein diet along with appropriate supplements recommended for promoting proper wound healing.

– *Diabetes*

Blood sugar control is necessary in preventing the onset of diabetes-related complications. You'll get instruction about carbohydrate counting, and nutritional facts listed on food labels. You'll also receive diabetes-friendly recipes to try at home.

Licensed Medicare and Medicaid agency by the State of Texas.

Dallas Corporate
972-248-2441
DFW
817-589-8811

Nacogdoches
936-569-2949
Nacogdoches Specialty
936-559-8555

Lufkin
936-699-2744
Livingston
936-329-0400



Bay City
979-244-5265
Lake Jackson
979-297-1414

Longview
903-553-0056
Tyler
903-593-1234

Carthage
903-690-9669
Corsicana
903-872-0642

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—Cardiac Conditions

Patients suffering from heart disease benefit from a low sodium and low cholesterol diet. Our nutritionists provide options in selecting from the food groups to lessen your carbohydrate and sodium intake, showing you how to change your diet to improve heart function.

—Cancer

Cancer patients need a unique diet to function well while on chemotherapy treatment. A neutropenic diet (one that is recommended for people with weakened immune systems) helps to fight off harmful bacteria. Fresh foods and raw or under-cooked meats, fish, and eggs are to be avoided on this diet. You’ll receive direction about this specialized diet.

What we put in our bodies has a significant impact on how well they perform for us. A healthy diet can prevent disease by maintaining a strong immune system, helping us to live longer lives. If you aren’t on a special diet, the tips in the column at right will give you an idea of what to eat (and avoid) for general good health.

Maintain Good Health By Eating a Healthy Diet

DO EAT THESE FOODS

- Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- Three meals per day
- Choose lean sources of protein (red meat, poultry, fish, and eggs)
- Include forms of dairy foods for a good source of calcium
- Drink plenty of water, eight glasses a day
- Include good bacteria (found in yogurt)

LIMIT THESE FOODS

- Fats (butter)
- Caffeine (less than three cups of coffee/tea per day)
- Refined sugar (sweets from candy and pastries)

Good Bedtime Snacks

- Three graham crackers with one cup of milk
- 1/2 cup cereal with 1/2 cup of milk
- 1/4 cup of cottage cheese with one cup of fruit
- Two slices of bread with one slice of cheese
- Fresh fruit with one slice of cheese
- Twelve low sodium crackers with one tablespoon of peanut butter

—Obesity and Diet

Obesity (body fat) has become an epidemic in our society. The United States had the highest availability of calories (with 3,654 calories per person) in 1996. Obesity increases the likelihood of developing heart disease as well as Type 2 diabetes, difficulty breathing at night (sleep apnea) and osteoarthritis. It is caused by consuming more calories than our bodies need while not getting enough physical activity.

Body Mass Index (BMI) is an indication of obesity and is expressed in terms of the amount of body fat a person carries in relation to their height. A normal BMI is 18.5–24.9. If your BMI is over this, you are considered overweight.

A combination of a healthy diet and an exercise program will decrease your weight and help you live a healthier lifestyle. For those individuals who already suffer from chronic diseases, it is advisable to check with your doctor first before beginning any diet or exercise regime. Even though exercise may be difficult for some, a recent study showed that it could even improve the affects of conditions like heart failure.

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