



# Food For Thought

TIPS ON TASTE, NUTRITION & HEALTH



## Eight Nutrients You Need As You Age

(NAPS)—Many seniors are taking charge of their health by choosing the right Medicare plan to meet their personal health needs. But that's not the only way to take charge of your health. Many seniors are doing so by eating foods their body needs as they age.

The following is some food for thought:

According to the American Dietetic Association, as you get older, your body doesn't need as many calories. That's because it uses energy at a slower rate. Calorie needs may vary from person to person.

What is true for everyone is that he or she needs to make those calories count because all of us need nutrients. According to the experts at Health Net, the following eight essential nutrients can help you stay healthy.

### Protein

Older adults need at least five ounces, or two servings of protein a day. You can get that protein from meat or dairy—milk, cheese and also yogurt supply protein. Try other protein sources, such as eggs, beans and peanut butter.

### Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps deposit calcium in bones and keeps bones strong. The body makes vitamin D after sunlight hits the skin. Twenty to 30 minutes of sun expo-



**Since you may not need as many calories as you age, it's a good idea to make those calories count by eating nutritious foods.**

sure two to three times per week is plenty. Most milk and cereals are fortified with vitamin D.

### Calcium

It's never too late to consume more calcium. If you are over age 50, you should get at least 1,200 milligrams of calcium each day. Milk, cheese and yogurt are the best sources of calcium. Dark green, leafy vegetables, calcium-fortified fruit juices and cereal also have a lot of calcium.

### Vitamin A

Dark green, leafy and yellow and orange vegetables (such as cantaloupe, carrots, yellow squash) all help eyes adjust to dim light and protect skin tissues.

### Vitamin C

One common problem with aging is iron deficiency. It can lead to anemia. Eating vitamin C in iron-rich foods helps your body absorb iron. Choose iron-enriched cereals, beans, whole grains, lean meat and poultry. Eat vitamin C-rich fruit (such as oranges, guava or papaya) or fruit juice at meals.

### Folate

It helps red blood cells develop to carry oxygen through the blood. Good sources are kidney beans, spinach, strawberries, green peas, broccoli and romaine lettuce. It's also in fortified breads.

### Vitamin B12

Too little vitamin B12 can also lead to anemia. Eat meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy foods for this vitamin.

### Water

Older adults need at least eight (8-ounce) cups of fluids per day—especially water. Remember that juice, milk and soup offer other nutrients as well.

Don't overdo it, say the experts at Health Net. Getting too much of some vitamins can hurt you. Certain vitamins can build up and become toxic. Also, some vitamins interact with medications or affect how medications work. Before you take any supplement—even vitamins—consult with your doctor.

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