

Nutrition and Health Benefits for ADULTS AGED 55+

The American population is aging. According to the US Census Bureau, the population of older adults is now on par with the child population.

Age Impacts Nutritional Needs:

- Naturally decreasing metabolism
- Decreased appetite
- Nutrient deficiencies
- Loss of muscle mass and strength

Risk of common health concerns, such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and cognitive decline, increases with age.



A nutrient-dense diet that limits excess sodium, added sugar, and saturated fat can help older adults maintain independence, mobility, and overall quality of life – especially in combination with a healthy, active lifestyle.

Choose nutrient-dense foods higher in whole grains, protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals, while meeting caloric needs, to help meet a healthy diet.



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Whole Grains

- Dietary Intake:** The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommend that most adults aim for three oz. eq. of whole grains per day (48g). Data* indicates that, on average, Americans aged 55+ consume just under one oz. eq. of whole grains per day, and only 3% of the total population of adults aged 55+ meets DGA recommendations for whole grain.
- Good Sources:** The top sources of whole grains among adults aged 55+ include pasta, sandwiches, rice, bread, and ready-to-eat cereal.*

Fiber

- Dietary Intake:** The DGAs fiber recommendations for 50+ adults are 21g/day for women and 30g/day for men. According to data*, the average daily fiber intake among adults aged 55+ is 16.9 grams with only 15% of adults aged 55+ meeting the fiber recommendation.
- Good Sources:** Top sources of fiber for adults aged 55+ include mixed dishes, ready-to-eat-cereal, bread, nuts and seeds, beans, peas and legumes, soup, and bananas.*

Cereal Spotlight

Ready-to-eat cereal is the top source of fiber and whole grain and among the top 10 contributors to dietary protein for cereal eating adults aged 55+.

Ready-to-eat cereal eaters aged 55+ get **37% more fiber** than non-cereal eaters and cereal contributes over 23% of the daily fiber for cereal eaters.

Protein

Dietary Intake: The DGAs recommend consuming a variety of protein foods, including meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, and soy products. Data* suggests that approximately 5% of Americans aged 55+ do not consume enough total protein.

Even when older adults get adequate total protein, they typically do not meet DGA recommendations for specific protein foods. These foods include nuts, seeds, beans and seafood.

Good Sources:

The top sources of protein among adults aged 55+ include cheese, beef, chicken, fish, eggs, meat dishes, pasta dishes, burgers, soup, and bread.*

References:

- *NHANES 2017-March 2020
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