

Smart Choices

Nutrition News for Seniors

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MyPyramid for Seniors

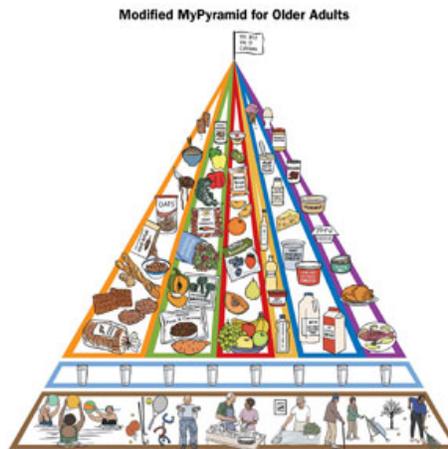
Older adults over the age of 70 have nutritional needs that are unique to their age group. Older adults usually need to eat fewer calories as they age because they are not as physically active as they once were. Metabolism also slows down as we get older and that in turn also decreases calorie needs. However, seniors still need the same or higher levels of nutrients in order to maintain good health.

In 2005, the USDA introduced MyPyramid, an Internet-based program for the general population. The program can be personalized based upon an individual's age, gender, height, weight and physical activity habits. When MyPyramid was introduced, researchers from Tuft's University became concerned that senior adults would have limited access to the MyPyramid program. As a result of these concerns, a Modified MyPyramid was developed for older adults.

Dietary recommendations for older adults based upon the modified MyPyramid include:

- Whole, enriched, and fortified grains and cereals such as brown rice and 100% whole wheat bread.

- Bright colored vegetables such as carrots and broccoli.
- Deep colored fruits such as berries and melons.



- Low-fat and non-fat dairy products such as yogurt and low-lactose milk.
- Dry beans and nuts, fish, poultry, lean meats and eggs.
- Liquid vegetables oils and soft spreads low in saturated and trans fat.
- Fluid intake.
- Physical activity such as walking, house work and yard work.

Combining good nutrition and physical activity is a winning combination for older adults. Getting regular physical activity lowers the risk of developing chronic diseases and helps prevent weight gain. Statistics show that obesity rates for adults 70 and older are increasing. Being physically active is one way to avoid weight gain in later life. Being physically active can help older adults improve or maintain their quality of life as well.

The importance of drinking water every day is stressed by the row of glasses on the pyramid. Drinking eight glasses of water a day are recommended for older adults in order for them to stay hydrated.

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