



## Nutritional Resilience Aging and its Influence on Physiological Changes

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### DESCRIPTION

Aging is a natural process that involves physiological, psychological, and social changes. Aging also affects the nutritional status and needs of individuals, as they may experience reduced appetite, altered taste and smell, decreased absorption and metabolism of nutrients, increased risk of chronic diseases, and reduced physical activity. Therefore, it is important for older adults to adopt a healthy dietary pattern that meets their nutritional requirements and promotes their health and well-being. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a healthy dietary pattern for older adults should include a variety of nutrient-dense foods from all food groups, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, low-fat dairy, and healthy fats. Older adults should also limit their intake of added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and alcohol, as these can contribute to obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and cognitive decline. Additionally, older adults should drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration and avoid beverages that are high in calories, caffeine, or alcohol. Water, milk, juice, and herbal teas are good choices for hydration. Older adults can benefit from consulting with a qualified health care provider or a registered dietitian to assess their nutritional status, identify any deficiencies or excesses, and receive individualized recommendations for supplementation or dietary modification. Older adults should also be encouraged to maintain an active lifestyle that includes regular physical activity, social interaction, and mental stimulation, as these can enhance their quality of life and well-being. Aging affects the nutritional status of individuals in several ways.

- Reduced calorie needs, but increased or similar nutrient needs, compared to younger adults. This means that older adults need to eat more nutrient-dense foods and limit their intake of added sugars, saturated fats, sodium, and alcohol.
- Reduced appetite, taste, and smell, which can affect food intake and preferences. Older adults may need to eat more frequently, choose foods with different flavors and textures, and use herbs and spices to enhance the taste of foods.
- Reduced stomach acid, which can impair the absorption of nutrients, such as vitamin B12, calcium, iron, and magnesium.

Older adults may need to consume more foods rich in these nutrients, or take supplements as advised by their health care provider.

- Reduced muscle mass, strength, and function, which can lead to sarcopenia, frailty, and disability. Older adults need to consume enough protein, preferably from a variety of sources, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, soy, beans, nuts, and seeds.
- Reduced bone density, which can lead to osteoporosis and fractures. Older adults need to consume enough calcium and vitamin D, preferably from foods, such as dairy products, fortified foods, green leafy vegetables, and canned fish with bones. Vitamin D supplements may also be needed, especially for those with limited sun exposure.
- Reduced fluid intake and sensation of thirst, which can lead to dehydration and impaired cognitive and physical function. Older adults need to drink enough fluids, such as water, milk, juice, tea, and soup, and avoid beverages that can cause dehydration, such as alcohol and caffeine.

### CONCLUSION

Social isolation can have negative effects on nutrition in older adults, as it may reduce their access to food, their motivation to eat, and their dietary quality. Some of the possible mechanisms and consequences may limit older adults' ability to obtain food, especially if they have mobility or transportation issues, low income, or live in rural areas. This may lead to food insecurity, which is associated with poor nutritional status and health outcomes. It may reduce older adults' appetite and enjoyment of food, as eating alone may be less satisfying and stimulating than eating with others. This may result in reduced food intake, weight loss, and malnutrition. Social isolation may impair older adults' dietary quality, as they may have less variety, balance, and moderation in their food choices. They may also rely more on processed, packaged, or ready-made foods, which are often high in sodium, sugar, and fat, and low in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. As a result, social isolation can present a significant risk to the nutritional health and overall well-being of older adults. It is

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important to identify and address the causes and consequences of social isolation, and to provide older adults with adequate

social support and resources to improve their nutrition and quality of life.