



## Nutrition Information for Older Oconto County Adults

# Healthful Eating Guide for Seniors

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Do you eat right? Do you feel the food choices you make improve your health and zest for life? Is your diet adequate enough to help improve the common health problems faced by older adults?

The Food Guide Pyramid provides good general eating advice, encouraging people of all ages to follow the concepts of balance, variety and moderation. Below are some additional guidelines which recognize the special nutrient needs of seniors.

**As a result of bodily changes that occur with aging, people over the age of 70 years have:**

- A need for nutrient density (generous amounts of nutrients in relation to calories) in daily food selections.
- An increased need for fiber (20 grams per day).
- An increased need for calcium (1200 to 1400 mg per day), vitamin D (600IU) and vitamin B-12 (from fish, milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, and fortified breakfast cereals).
- An increased need for adequate fluids. (8 cups per day are recommended).

**Some of the hallmarks of previous food selection guides remain important for older adults. These include:**

- Choosing a variety of foods.
- Eating a diet high in grains, fruits and vegetables.
- Eating a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Using low to moderate amounts of salt, sugar, and alcohol.
- Balancing the amount of food you eat with physical activity.

**Here are some specialized recommendations for seniors:**

- Choose the lower number of recommended servings from each food group.
- Choose whole grain products. Choose brown rice rather than white, and a high-fiber breakfast cereal fortified with vitamin B-12 and folic acid.
- Choose fruits and vegetables that are deeply-colored. Dark green, orange, red, and yellow ones should be chosen often. Choose the whole food rather than just the juice.
- Look for low fat dairy foods. Eat 3 calcium-rich sources daily. Milk and milk products, and calcium-fortified orange juice are the best sources.
- Lean cuts of meat and poultry are best. Eat fish at least once a week and legume (beans, peas) dishes at least twice a week instead of a meat main dish.
- Hydrogenated or saturated fats should be limited.
- Food selections with refined carbohydrates (sugar) should be kept to a minimum.