



Supplements for Seniors

Normal aging brings metabolic changes. It's a fact. How the changes affect each person individually is another story. Because there is no single food that supplies all the nutrients we need for health, it is very important to eat a well balanced food plan. However, anyone (generally) over the age of 50, may still need certain supplements, even if eating habits are good!

Talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian about the most beneficial supplements for you. Depending on your personal health needs, your doctor might suggest some or all of the following supplements.



Here is some information about important supplements useful for people 50 years or older.

Vitamin B6: Vitamin B6 is needed for protein metabolism. It is also essential for red blood cell metabolism. The nervous and immune systems need vitamin B6 to function efficiently. We use Vitamin B6 to make hemoglobin, which carries oxygen to tissues. Vitamin B6 helps to maintain blood glucose (sugar) levels within a normal range.

Vitamin B6 is found in a wide variety of foods including fortified cereals, beans, meat, poultry, fish, and some fruits and vegetables. Too much vitamin B6 can result in nerve damage to the arms and legs.

Vitamin B12: Up to one-third of older people can no longer absorb natural vitamin B12 from food! This vitamin is needed to keep blood and nerves healthy. It is also needed to help make DNA, the genetic material in all cells.

Vitamin B12 is naturally found in foods that come from animals, including fish, clams, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and milk products. Fortified breakfast cereals are a particularly valuable source of vitamin B12 for vegetarians.

Calcium: It is a fact that calcium absorption declines with age. As calcium levels change, the strength of bone also weakens, which can lead to osteoporosis. Weak bones can lead to fractures, mainly of the hip, spine, or wrist, in both older women and men.

Calcium supplements do help to provide an essential bone nutrient and are recommended in higher amounts for people over 50. To reduce the risk of serious fall related injuries, talk to your doctor about calcium supplements.

Calcium can be naturally found in milk, yogurt and cheese. Other foods do have calcium (such as Chinese cabbage, kale and broccoli), but have to be eaten in larger amounts compared to the consumption of dairy products.

***Did you know, each year, Americans suffer from
1.5 million fractures because of osteoporosis?
(Riggs, Melton, 1995)***

Vitamin D: Vitamin D helps improve calcium absorption. Without vitamin D, bones can become thin, brittle, or misshapen. The body obtains vitamin D from food and from sunshine! As people age, skin does not absorb Vitamin D from sunshine as well as it did in youth. As a result, it is believed Americans age 50 and older are at increased risk of developing vitamin D deficiency.

Cod liver oil, salmon, mackerel, tuna fish are good natural foods with Vitamin D. Other sources are milk fortified with Vitamin D.

Vitamin E: Vitamin E has been shown to play a role in immune function, in DNA repair, and other metabolic processes. Vegetable oils, nuts, green leafy vegetables, and fortified cereals are common food sources of vitamin E in the United States. Wheat germ oil, dry roasted almonds, sunflower seed kernels are another source of Vitamin E.