



EXTENSION

Nutrition for Older Adults: Strength, Coordination, Range of Motion and Nutrition

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Changes in Muscles, Bones and Joints

Good nutrition can help keep the body healthy. However, changes in muscles, bones and joints can get in the way of good nutrition.

Muscle, bone and body water tend to decrease with age.

Muscle loss can result in a decreased strength and coordination. Bone loss can increase the risk of fractures. These changes can affect ability to walk and maintain balance. This can make falls more likely.

Arthritis is a problem for many older adults. Arthritis can affect older adults' range of motion.

These changes can make grocery shopping, cooking and even eating difficult.

Maintaining Muscle and Bones

Good nutrition and physical activity can help maintain muscle and bone.

Protein is needed to maintain both muscle and bone. Calcium and vitamin D are also needed to maintain bone.

Strength training can increase muscle and decrease body fat. Weight bearing and resistance activity can build muscle and bone.

Since muscle has more water than fat, building muscle also helps increase body water.

Tips if Strength, Coordination and Range of Motion Decline

- Keep a supply of food on hand for times you don't feel like shopping. Some ideas to keep on hand are:
 - **Protein Foods:** tuna in water, canned meats, canned beans.
 - **Fruits:** canned fruits, dried fruits.

- **Vegetables:** canned vegetables, frozen vegetables.
 - **Dairy:** nonfat dried milk, canned evaporated milk.
 - **Grains:** ready to eat cereal, cooked cereals, crackers, rice, pasta.
 - **Convenience Foods:** macaroni and cheese mixes, canned soup, dry soup mix, pudding mix, peanut butter, jelly.
- Arrange the house for safety. Allow enough space for wheelchairs, walkers and canes. Be aware rugs can cause tripping.
 - Carrying groceries, lifting heavy pans, opening jars and food packages and cutting meat can be difficult. Assistive technology devices can make grocery shopping, cooking and eating easier.
 - Some changes in how food is prepared or served can help with eating:
 - Finger foods require less effort to eat.
 - Precut sandwiches are easier to hold.
 - Foods that hold together may be easier to eat; spaghetti pre-mixed with sauce, casseroles or thicker soups or stews.
 - Thin soup may be easier to drink from a cup than to eat from a bowl.

Sources

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