



**LIVING STRONG**  
NORTH IDAHO

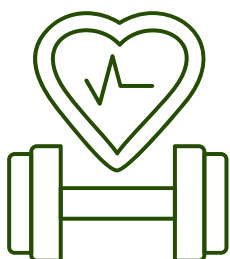
# Nutrition Foundations for Healthy Aging

Living Strong North Idaho Educational Resource

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Nutrition plays a critical role in maintaining strength, energy, metabolic health, and overall well-being as we age. The body's nutritional needs change over time, and many adults do not consume enough of the key nutrients needed to support muscle, bone health, and long-term vitality.

A balanced approach to nutrition that emphasizes whole foods, adequate protein, healthy fats, and nutrient-dense carbohydrates can help support healthy aging, maintain muscle mass, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.



### **KEY INSIGHT**

Good nutrition provides the foundation for healthy aging. A balanced diet rich in whole foods, adequate protein, healthy fats, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains helps support muscle maintenance, metabolic health, brain function, and long-term vitality. Small improvements in daily eating habits can significantly improve overall health and quality of life.

## WHAT RESEARCH SHOWS



Adequate protein intake helps preserve muscle mass and strength as we age.



Nutrient-dense diets help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes



Older adults often require more protein than younger adults to support muscle maintenance



Key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, fiber, and B-vitamins become increasingly important with age



Balanced nutrition supports energy, immune function, bone health, and cognitive health

#### Sources:

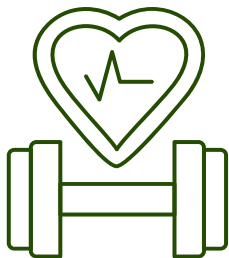
- National Institute on Aging — Nutrition for Older Adults
- National Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging — Protein Needs for Older Adults
- PROT-AGE Study Group — Dietary Protein Recommendations for Older Adults
- MedlinePlus — Nutrition for Older Adults

## FOUNDATIONS OF A HEALTHY DIET

- ✓ Prioritize protein-rich foods such as fish, eggs, dairy, beans, and lean meats to support muscle health
- ✓ Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber
- ✓ Include whole grains and high-fiber foods to support digestion and metabolic health
- ✓ Choose healthy fats such as olive oil, nuts, seeds, and fatty fish
- ✓ Stay well hydrated by drinking water regularly throughout the day

### Sources:

- National Institute on Aging — Healthy Eating for Older Adults
- PROT-AGE Study Group — Protein Intake Recommendations for Older Adults
- National Council on Aging — Protein Needs for Adults Over 60
- Campbell et al., Dietary Protein Needs and Muscle Health in Older Adults



## KEY TAKEAWAY






Healthy aging begins with consistent daily nutrition habits. Diets rich in whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats help support muscle health, bone density, metabolic health, and brain function. Small improvements in daily eating habits can significantly improve long-term health and quality of life.

Living Strong North Idaho – A Program of the Inland Northwest Healthy Aging Alliance

Educational Disclaimer: The information provided in this resource is for educational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice.

Individuals should consult with a qualified healthcare professional before beginning any exercise, nutrition, or health program.

## KEY NUTRIENTS FOR HEALTHY AGING

-  Protein – Supports muscle maintenance and helps prevent age-related muscle loss
-  Calcium – Helps maintain bone strength and reduce osteoporosis risk
-  Vitamin D – Supports calcium absorption, immune function, and muscle health
-  Fiber – Supports digestive health, blood sugar control, and heart health
-  Vitamin B12 – Important for nerve function, red blood cells, and brain health

### Sources:

- National Institute on Aging — Healthy Eating as You Age
- MedlinePlus — Nutrition for Older Adults
- Kassis et al., Nutritional and Lifestyle Management of the Aging Journey (2023)
- NIH — Nutrition Concerns for Aging Populations

Key nutrients that become increasingly important with age include protein, calcium, vitamin D, fiber, and B-vitamins, which support muscle health, bone density, metabolic health, and overall vitality.