



## Healthy Eating for Men

Food is more than just fuel. Your diet can help fight disease and keep you looking and acting younger. How a man eats throughout his life can help predict how well (or not) he ages.

### Eating Right

A healthy diet for men includes:

- At least 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables each day. At least once a week, eat tomatoes or something made from tomatoes like pasta sauce. The antioxidant lycopene found in tomato products is good for prostate health.
- At least five 1-ounce servings of whole grains each day. Replace refined grains with whole-grain bread, cereal, pasta, brown rice or oats
- At least two to three servings of fish per week
- At least 38 grams of fiber a day for younger men; 30 grams of fiber a day for men older than 50
- Unsaturated fats like oils, nuts and salad dressings in place of saturated fats like full-fat dairy foods, butter and high-fat sweets
- 4,700 milligrams a day of potassium from fruits, vegetables, fish and milk.

### Energy Foods

Since men have more muscle and are typically bigger than women, they require more calories throughout the day. Moderately active males should eat 2,000 to 2,800 calories per day. Your energy needs depend on your height, weight and activity level.

For energy, weight management and disease prevention, men should eat whole grains like whole-grain bread, pasta, cereal, brown rice, oats, barley; fruits and vegetables. These foods are high in fiber, help manage hunger and fullness and help fend off certain cancers, such as prostate and colon.

### Beyond Meat

Men are typically meat-eaters because of the perception that more protein equals more muscle mass. That is not the case unless exercise is involved. Men tend to view red meat as more masculine than other proteins; often this leads them to “order the steak.” It’s not the steak that’s unhealthy, it’s skipping the whole grains and vegetables. In addition, excessive meat eating is linked to heart disease and colorectal cancer in men.

Eat red meat less frequently. Instead, focus on more fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products. This will not only help you keep weight off, but it can help keep blood pressure down. Obesity increases your risk of developing high blood pressure by eight times. Cut down on saturated fat from meat, cheese and fried foods. Instead, opt for foods with unsaturated, heart-healthy fats such as olive oil, canola oil, nuts, seeds and avocados.

### Weight and Disease Risk

More than women, men gain weight around the middle; that’s due to the male hormone testosterone. If your waist measures more than 40 inches around, it’s time to shed some pounds. This fat around the waist is typically buried deep in the abdomen and increases your risk for diabetes, heart disease and dementia.

The good news is, belly fat is easy to lose. If you take fewer calories in than you burn, your body breaks down belly fat first for energy.

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# Nutrition for Older Men

What is the best line of defense for older men to stay healthy? Eating a well-balanced diet filled with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean animal and plant-based proteins, low-fat dairy products and heart-healthy fats.

## The Difference Diet Can Make

Healthy eating can keep your body and mind sharp and extend quality of life. Older men need:

- **Calcium and Vitamin D:** Older adults need more vitamin D and calcium to help maintain strong and healthy bones. Calcium-rich foods include low-fat and fat-free dairy like milk and yogurt, fortified cereals and fruit juices, dark green leafy vegetables and canned fish with soft bones. Older adults need three servings of calcium and vitamin D every day. If you take a calcium supplement or multivitamin, be sure to choose one that contains vitamin D.
- **Fiber:** Fiber helps keep bowel functions normal and is good for your heart. If you need to lose weight, fiber keeps you full longer so you do not feel hungry as often. Men older than 50 need 30 grams of fiber a day; good sources are whole grains, fruits and vegetables. For products with a label, choose those with at least 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving.
- **Potassium:** Increasing potassium intake along with decreasing sodium (salt) may lower your risk of high blood pressure. Good sources of potassium include fruits, vegetables and low-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt. Choose low-sodium foods and replace salt with other herbs and spices to reduce your sodium intake.
- **Healthy Fats:** For weight control and overall health, limit fat calories to 20 percent to 35 percent of your diet. Most of the fats you consume should come from heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Try extra-virgin olive oil, canola oil, walnuts, almonds and avocados. Healthy older men without heart disease should limit your saturated fat, which comes from meat, full-fat dairy and fried foods, to 10 percent of your total fat calories. Men with high cholesterol need to cut more saturated fat from your diet; limit it to 7 percent of total fat calories.

## Make Calories Count

Older men cannot eat the way you did in your 20s and keep weight off. As men age, you are typically less active and lose muscle and gain fat; these things combined cause metabolism to slow down. More work is needed to keep metabolism up.

How many calories you need each day depends on age, gender and activity level. For men over the age of 50, your daily calorie needs are:

- Not active: 2,000
- Moderately active: 2,200 to 2,400
- Active: 2,400 to 2,800.

Balance your calorie intake by getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Exercise helps older men rev up metabolism, build and strengthen muscles and increase energy levels. Exercise also helps to lift your spirits.

Visit a registered dietitian or [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to develop an eating plan that is right for you.

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