



## Dietary recommendation for older people

**Nutrients for which reliable data are available directly from experiments conducted with older persons have been reviewed. Wherever possible, the recommendations that follow take into consideration not only the amount of a nutrient required to prevent a deficiency state but also a chronic disease. Additional studies are needed to determine the appropriate level of essential nutrients to maintain optimal immune response and to reduce the burden of disease.**

- **Energy**  
1.4–1.8 multiples of the basal metabolic rate (BMR) to maintain body weight at different levels of physical activity.
- **Calcium**  
In addition to reducing fracture rates, 800–1200 mg/day (in the presence of adequate vitamin D nutrition) are beneficial for bone mineral density of the femur, neck and lumbar spine.
- **Copper**  
1.3–1.5 mg/day should be adequate for older persons.
- **Chromium**  
50 µg/day should achieve chromium balance in older persons.
- **Fat**  
30% in sedentary older persons and 35% for active older persons. Consumption of saturated fats should be minimized and not exceed 8% of energy.
- **Folate**  
400 µg/day have been shown to result in healthy homocysteine levels.
- **Iron**  
10 mg/day are adequate for older men and women assuming there are no excessive iron losses (e.g. from hookworm or schistosomiasis).
- **Magnesium**  
Dietary intakes of magnesium, which have been estimated in western countries to be between 225–280 mg/day, appear to be sufficient for individuals over the age of 65.
- **Protein**  
Generally speaking, protein intakes of 0.9–1.1 g/kg per day are beneficial for healthy older persons.
- **Riboflavin**  
Riboflavin requirements for older persons appear to be the same as for the young. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) is 1.3 mg for men and for 1.1 mg for women.
- **Selenium**  
50–70 µg/day should be more than adequate for older persons.
- **Vitamin A**  
600–700 µg retinol equivalents/day represent an adequate intake for older persons.
- **Vitamin B12**  
2.5 µg/day either from a vitamin B12 supplement or foods fortified with vitamin B12.
- **Vitamin C**  
Requirements for vitamin C are the same as for younger people; 60–100 mg/day appear to be adequate.
- **Vitamin D**  
10–15 µg/day are needed to ensure optimal bone health in older persons.
- **Vitamin E**  
100–400 IU/day have been shown to reduce recurrent cardiovascular disease.
- **Vitamin K**  
60–90 µg/day are an adequate intake for older persons.
- **Zinc**  
Required intake for dietary zinc in people over 65:  
High Zn availability (50+%): men 4.2 mg/day, women 3.0 mg/day  
Moderate Zn availability (30%): men 7.0 mg/day, women 4.9 mg/day  
Low Zn availability (15%): men 14.0 mg/day, women 9.8 mg/day

*Source: Keep Fit for Life: meeting the nutritional needs of older persons. WHO, 2002*