

## Make This Year Count: Get and Stay Healthy

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention less than 50% of Maryland adults achieve the recommended level of physical activity or consume sufficient fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. As we age, the number of calories we need to sustain our health declines, but the number of nutrients needed remains the same and can even increase. Balancing proper nutrition and a healthy weight relies on eating smart and avoiding sedentary behavior. In addition to helping to maintain a healthy weight, physical activity has a myriad of benefits including lowering the risk of heart disease and other chronic conditions and helping to maintain strength and balance necessary for completing daily tasks independently. See the tips and resources for maintaining a healthy diet and staying active later in life below:

### Eating Healthy:

- Many older adults have deficiencies in Vitamin B12, Folic Acid and Calcium, which can lead to brittle bones and fractures. Great sources of these important nutrients include: fish, eggs and poultry (B12), dried beans, avocado, and juice (Folic Acid), and dark leafy greens and milk (Calcium). Learn more about these vital nutrients from the National Institute on Aging here:  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/whats-your-plate/vitamins-minerals>
- As we age we are less likely to feel thirsty and more likely to experience dehydration. Make sure to hydrate throughout the day and avoid sugary drinks. Learn more about drinking enough fluids here: <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/tip-sheets/drinking-enough-fluids>
- Get a well-rounded diet that does not exceed 2,200 calories for women or 2,800 calories for men. Learn about nutrition guidelines from the US Department of Agriculture here.  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/whats-your-plate>
- Dental Health declines as we age and can lead to pain during meal times. Learn more about dental health and nutrition from the American Dental Association here.  
<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/a/aging-and-dental-health>
- Eating alone can be a chore and lead to poor and repetitive meals. Connect to meal programs and social events through local senior centers and Area Agencies on Aging. Connect to your county here.  
<http://aging.maryland.gov/Documents/AAADirectoryOct2016.pdf>
- Are financial limitations impacting your ability to put food on the table? You may be eligible for benefits and programs:
  - Learn more about the Food Supplement Program here.  
<http://dhr.maryland.gov/food-supplement-program/>
  - Learn about the My Groceries to Go! food program offered in the Baltimore area here: <https://www.mdfoodbank.org/our-programs/my-groceries-to-go/>
  - Learn more about programs through the Maryland Food Bank here: <https://mdfoodbank.org/> and Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland here: <http://www.mealsonwheelsmd.org/>

- Contact your AAA about local food programs for Seniors.  
<http://aging.maryland.gov/Documents/AAADirectoryOct2016.pdf>

### **Getting Active**

- Maintaining physical activity throughout the lifespan is important for your health and can help you stay independent for longer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week and muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days per week. Learn more about the recommendations here  
[https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older\\_adults/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm).
- It can be hard to maintain physical activity as we age due to joint pain, but exercise does not have to be strenuous to be beneficial. Try low-impact exercises like swimming for endurance, chair exercises for strength, and Tai-Chi for balance. Find more activity ideas at <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/exercises> and contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn about local classes  
-<http://aging.maryland.gov/Documents/AAADirectoryOct2016.pdf>
- If physical activity is new for you or you're recovering from an illness that impacted your regular routine, make sure to start slow and work your way up to more strenuous and frequent activities. Check with your doctor before beginning a new routine and find more tips about incorporating physical activity into your life at <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adding-pa/activities-olderadults.htm> or <http://food.unl.edu/physical-activity-older-adults>
- Physical activity has been linked to healthy brain function, along with social interaction. Combine the two to keep your mind active and connect to others in your community. Reach out to your local Area Agency on Aging for information about classes and programs. -<http://aging.maryland.gov/Documents/AAADirectoryOct2016.pdf>

### **Get started!**

That first step can be the hardest. The USDA's SuperTracker tools can help you outline goals, plan out your physical activity and diet, and track your progress. Visit <https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspxand>, click on one of the trackers and fill out your profile to get started. Don't forget to talk to your doctor about your plans, especially if you have health conditions like heart disease or diabetes to make sure you're on a healthy path.