How the Elderly Can Change Diet to Accommodate Body Changes
Energy Supply

- Compared to young adults nutritional requirements for the elderly remain about the same, but their energy needs DECREASE.

- Energy sources such as oils, butter, cold cuts, whole-milk products, baked goods, and candy should be eaten sparingly, because they contain a lot of calories in the form of sugar and fat which can contribute to obesity.
Hunger and Thirst

- Hunger and thirst as well as the senses of taste and smell can decrease in older people.

- Eating and drinking should be planned.
  - It is often useful to develop an eating pattern in which several small meals are eaten throughout the course of a day.
The sensation of thirst often diminishes; the body’s signals for lack of fluids get weaker with age.

We should drink at least 1.5 liters (3 pints) of liquid a day. Preferably water.

- Coffee, black tea, and alcoholic drinks cannot be counted because they draw fluid from the body.
Older people are more susceptible to certain digestive disorders as well as constipation, diarrhea, bloating, feelings of fullness, or loss of appetite. This is due to the capacity of the digestive organs decreasing with age. Other causes lie in the way individuals eat:
- Too little fiber-rich foods
- Lack of fluids
- Eating too fast
- Habitually eating too much
The causes may also be related to medications or diseases, as well as to personal circumstances involving stress, mental tension, or depression.

These problems can be dealt with by:

- Eating fiber-rich foods
- Drinking at least 1.5 liters of liquids
- Properly chewing food
- Exercising regularly
- Using simple relaxation techniques
- Discussing situation with a specialist
Foods to help counteract constipation:

- Whole grain bread
- Whole rice
- Granolas
- Figs
- Berries
- Bran
- Vegetable
- Lots of fluids
Foods to help counteract diarrhea:

- Bananas
- Black tea
- Blueberries
- Dark chocolate
- White bread
Calcium in the diet

- Milk and milk products supply the body with calcium which helps to maintain bone strength.
- If bones decrease in density, then osteoporosis develops over time.
- Bone loss can be slowed down by including vitamin D-rich nutrients in the diet.
- Calcium requirements for the elderly is high-about 1,000 mg. a day.
Nutrition Hints for Quality Living

- If you have concerns about elderly nutrition, start by considering quality of life issues.

- Meet w/ a physician, dietician, or a nutritionist who can design a food plan to meet the patient’s medical needs, medications, and most importantly, food likes and dislikes.
References

- [www.healthandage.com](http://www.healthandage.com).