

Essential nutrients for the elderly

Older adults may have a reduced immune system, they often absorb nutrients less effectively and they can have reduced appetites and swallowing difficulties, which all may result in nutrient deficiencies and health problems.

Some of the most important nutrients to maintain health in older adults include:

- **Protein** - helps prevent muscle loss with age and supports general bodily functions including the immune system
- **Fibre** - helps maintain general bowel health, lowers cholesterol and the risk of heart disease.
- **Vitamin A** - plays an important role in healing and maintaining good vision and immune system health.
- **Vitamin D** - helps the body absorb calcium and maintain bone health.
- **Thiamine** - plays an important role in many bodily processes such as enzymes, the nervous system and muscle function.
- **Folate** - plays a role in many bodily functions and is critical in red blood cell production.
- **Vitamin B12** - is important for memory, the nervous system and red blood cell production.
- **Iron** - enables the blood to transport oxygen and plays an important role in cell regeneration.
- **Calcium** - is essential for bone health and muscle and heart function.
- **Sodium** - low sodium diets can help reduce high blood pressure, stroke, heart and kidney disease
- **Potassium** - is important to maintain healthy bones, kidneys, nerves, muscles and regulating blood pressure.