



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

January 2025 Nutrition Article Healthy New Year's Resolutions for Older Adults

A new year is the perfect time for setting intentions that support a quality life full of vibrancy and fulfillment. For older adults, specifically, any New Year's resolutions should go beyond traditional goals and focus on enhancing health, well-being, and connection. New Year's resolutions offer older adults a unique opportunity to reflect on their lives, reassess priorities, and establish new goals that help promote longevity and satisfaction.

Granted, older adults are less likely to make New Year's resolutions as compared to their younger counterparts. Are you ever too old to make a New Year's resolution? No! Setting intentions for goals is important because the implication is you are looking towards the future. Encouragement to look forward can be a positive aspect of any older adults' life and focusing on health goals is important. Health resolutions are important because they help us take proactive measures to lead a balanced life. Prioritizing small, consistent changes can make a significant difference in overall wellness. To focus on specific health goals in 2025 there are several factors to consider and can help narrow down the focus to set reasonable intentions. These include taking into consideration top chronic conditions that affect older adults, recommended resolutions, and dietary guidelines most important as people age.

TOP COMMON CHRONIC CONDITIONS AFFECTING OLDER ADULTS

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), nearly 95% of adults 60 and older have at least one chronic condition, while nearly 80% have two or more. According to the National Institute of Health, chronic conditions are related to lifestyle choices like refraining from smoking, being physically active, and adhering to a healthful dietary pattern.

To be fair, age, family genetics, and gender make it quite impossible for older adults to avoid all chronic conditions, but resolutions can help you make progressive changes toward preventing the onset of a chronic medical condition or make it easier to manage an existing one.

NCOA lists the top five chronic conditions for older adults: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, arthritis, and heart disease. Regardless of the condition one has, refraining from smoking, increasing physical activity, and ensuring a healthful diet with wholesome and clean foods like fruits, veggies, plain dairy, and wholesome proteins, will help to manage and prevent chronic conditions.

NUTRITION GOALS FOR OLDER ADULTS

What we consume is important at every stage of life, and it is never too late to adopt better eating habits to support good health. [The Dietary Guidelines of Americans](#) (DGAs) — science-based recommendations published by the Department of Health and Human Services every five years — provide advice on what to eat to build a healthy diet that not only promotes healthy growth and development but also promotes eating patterns that help prevent and manage diet-related chronic diseases.

DGAs include guidance for specific population groups, from babies to older Americans over 60 years of age, and all populations in between. While these foundational guidelines can inform dietary planning for various federal nutrition programs, they can be used specifically to help individuals understand what they should be eating to stay healthy.

For older Americans, specifically in Chapter 6, the DGA guidance emphasizes the importance of healthy food and beverages because older adults are at a greater risk of chronic disease and cancer, as well as health conditions related to changes in bone and muscle mass. As a general group, older adults are recommended to consume more fruits, vegetables, and dairy to support their health.

TOP RESOLUTIONS RECOMMENDED FOR OLDER ADULTS

The American Geriatrics Society's Health in Aging Foundation recommends several healthy New Year's resolutions for older adults to help them achieve goals for becoming and staying healthy. The first is to eat a balance of nourishment from fruits, veggies, whole grains, proteins, and dairy. The second is to be active as movement is required at all stages of life, and most especially for older adults. Motion is lotion! The last is to visit a provider regularly to discuss a variety of specific topics particular to older adults, like specific health screenings, advance directives, medications, and immunizations, among others.

Setting New Year's resolutions that focus on health, wellness, and connection can empower older adults to live each day with greater vitality. By prioritizing physical activity and balancing nutrition, among other self-care measures, older adults can take meaningful steps to support both mind and body. This helps to embrace growth and wellness at any age.

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RECEIPE OF THE MONTH

Nutrition-Packed Smoothie

Ensuring you receive all essential nutrients in a single day can be a daunting task, especially for those who dislike cooking or face challenges with chewing or digestion. Smoothies offer a delicious and convenient way to consume a balanced diet, potentially including all five food groups. Experiment with different ingredients to create a smoothie that perfectly suits your nutritional needs.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup plain yogurt or whole milk
(If you are sensitive to dairy, use coconut milk or water)
- 1 cup fresh or frozen fruit of your choice
- 1 large handful of spinach
- ½ cup raw oats
(The oats will thicken, so using plain yogurt instead of Greek yogurt will work best)
- ¼ cup walnuts, sunflower seeds or pecans
- Sweeten as necessary with maple syrup or honey

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Place all ingredients in a blender, and blend until the desired consistency.
2. Add more milk or yogurt for a thinner consistency if needed.
3. Voila! You have all five food groups and a great way to drink your nourishment.

