Vitamins, Minerals and Finding Information You Can Trust
Today’s Session

1. What vitamins and minerals do seniors need to think about?
   - Vitamins B12 and B6
   - Calcium and Vitamin D
   - Iron and Magnesium
   - Vitamin C and E
   - Multivitamins

2. How do you know if you’re getting reliable information?

3. **Activity:** Thinking Critically about Nutrition
Healthy Eating Quiz

TRUE OR FALSE?

1. All seniors need a calcium supplement.
2. You can never take too much vitamin C.
3. Herbal supplements must be safe because they’re natural.
Are you concerned about getting enough vitamins and minerals?
Rule of thumb

The best way to get the vitamins and minerals you need is by eating a variety of healthy foods recommended in Canada’s Food Guide.
What vitamins and minerals are important for healthy aging?

• Vitamins B12 and B6
• Calcium and Vitamin D
• Iron and Magnesium
• Vitamins C and E
Why do we need vitamin B12?

- Forms healthy red blood cells
- Keeps your nerves working properly
- Helps you feel energetic and alert
- Deficiency can make you feel weak and tired

The body’s ability to absorb vitamin B12 decreases as we age.
Sources of B12

Found in foods:
- meat, fish and poultry
- eggs
- milk, yogurt and cheese

Added to foods (fortified):
- veggie meats
- breakfast cereals
- soy beverages

Make sure you are getting enough vitamin B12 by eating fortified foods or taking a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement. Talk to your healthcare provider or a dietitian.
Why do we need vitamin B6?

- Carries oxygen through the blood
- Helps your body to make and use protein
- Promotes growth and repair
- Helps regulate blood sugar (glucose) levels

The body’s ability to absorb vitamin B6 decreases as we age.
Sources of vitamin B6

- Meat, chicken, fish and organ meats
- Bananas, green beans, sweet potatoes and other starchy vegetables
- Whole grains and fortified cereals
- Lentils, chickpeas and sunflower seeds

Make sure you are getting enough vitamin B6 by eating a variety of healthy foods or taking a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement. Talk to your healthcare provider or a dietitian.
Why do we need calcium?

• Builds bones and keeps them strong
• Maintains healthy and strong teeth
• Prevents muscle weakness and falls
• Helps prevent osteoporosis
Sources of calcium

- Milk and milk products
  - Yogurt, cheese and kefir
- Firm and extra-firm tofu made with calcium
- Salmon and sardines with bones
- Almonds and almond butter
- Sesame seeds and sesame butter (tahini)
- Fortified milk alternatives like soy and rice beverages
Can you take too much calcium?
Caution with calcium

• Too much calcium from supplements may increase health risks
• It is best to get calcium through food when possible

Talk with your healthcare professional or a dietitian to help you determine if you are getting enough calcium, whether you need a calcium supplement and how much you should take.
Why do we need vitamin D?

- Allows your body to absorb calcium
- Calcium and vitamin D work together
- The body makes vitamin D with exposure to sunlight

Canada’s Food Guide recommends seniors take a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU a day.
Sources of vitamin D

- Fatty fish (salmon, trout and herring)
- Egg yolks
- Foods fortified with vitamin D:
  - Milk
  - Soy beverages
  - Non-hydrogenated margarine

Canada’s Food Guide recommends seniors take a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU a day.
Why do we need iron?

• Carries oxygen to all parts of your body
• Gives you energy
• Deficiency can lead to anemia:
  - Feeling tired and weak
  - Can get sick more easily
Sources of iron – not all iron is equal

Heme iron
• Found in animals (beef, chicken, pork, fish)
• Absorbed easily

Non-heme iron
• Found in plants (legumes, nuts, grains, vegetables and fruit)
• Not absorbed as easily

If you are feeling tired, weak and are finding it hard to get enough iron in your diet, talk to a dietitian.
Why do we need magnesium?

- Proper muscle, nerve and enzyme function
- Helps the body use energy from food

Good sources
- Legumes, such as beans, peas and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Spinach and other leaf greens
- Whole grains
- Fish
- Fruits
What about vitamins C and E?

- Known as antioxidants – protect cells from damage

Vitamin C
- Helps body form collagen
- Helps with wound healing and repair of bones and teeth

You can get the amount of vitamins C and E that you need by eating a healthy diet, rich in vegetables and fruit.
Sources of vitamins C and E

Vitamin C:
Vegetables and fruits are great sources

Vitamin E:
- Unsaturated vegetable oils (canola, olive)
- Nuts and nut butters (including peanuts)
- Sweet potatoes, leafy greens, avocados

Caution - it is possible to take too much vitamin C and E

If you have questions or are not sure, talk with your healthcare professional or a dietitian.
Do you need to take a multivitamin/mineral supplement?
A supplement is intended to complement what you eat, not replace a healthy diet.
Do you need to take a multivitamin/mineral supplement?

Supplements contain a combination of key vitamins and minerals as a pill, chewable tab or liquid.

If you need extra nutrients to support your diet as recommended by your healthcare provider, choose a multivitamin that is specifically intended for adults over 50 to ensure it includes an adequate amount of vitamin D (400 IU).

Take it as directed. Ask your pharmacist for help in selecting one that is right for you.

Talk to your doctor before you take any natural health products, including herbal or botanical supplements.
Questions?
How do you know if you’re getting reliable information?
How do you know if you’re getting reliable information?

- Good information comes from a reliable source
- Misinformation can be dangerous
- Always question what you see on TV, the internet, read in an ad or hear from a friend
- Be critical
How do you know if you’re getting reliable information?

**Truths:**
- There is no cure for aging
- There is no proven way to prevent all types of cancer
- There is no cure for most types of arthritis
- Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight takes time
- “Natural” does not automatically mean safer

For more information, ask a dietitian
Information you can trust

- HealthLink BC: Call 8-1-1
  - Nursing Services
  - Dietitian Services
  - Physical Activity Services
  - Pharmacist Services
Information you can trust

Healthy Eating

- Canada’s Food Guide
- Dietitian Services, HealthLink BC
- BC Ministry of Health
- Health Canada
- First Nations Health Authority
What is the difference between a dietitian and a nutritionist?

The title of dietitian is regulated by law in Canada

• Only those who have met national standards of education and training can use this title

The title of nutritionist is not regulated in all provinces

• Anybody can use the title
Thinking critically about nutrition

What is the source?
What is the message?
What is the context?
What do you think?

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Is this information reliable?

Quick Diet to Lose 10 pounds

Everytime I need to lose weight fast – whether for a party, holiday or just for the summer – I start following this exact method, and I ALWAYS LOSE AT LEAST 10 POUNDS IN 6-7 DAYS
Is this information reliable?

Healthy Eating and Healthy Aging for Adults

Healthy eating is important at any age. It gives your body the nutrients and energy it needs for good health.

The following information will help you choose foods to help you feel your best, achieve or maintain a healthy weight, and prevent or manage chronic disease, such as heart disease and diabetes.

What does healthy eating mean?

Healthy eating is:

- Eating in a way that meets your energy and nutrient needs, and supports your physical and mental wellbeing.
- Being able to shop for, buy and prepare a variety of healthy and affordable foods.
- Being able to enjoy the food that you eat.
- Getting pleasure from sharing meals with family and friends.

If you need help with any part of healthy eating, talk to your health care provider or a registered dietitian. To speak with a dietitian, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

What nutrients are important as we age?

As you get older, your body's ability to use or absorb some nutrients may change. In particular, it is important to get enough of the following nutrients.

Protein

Protein is needed to build muscles and keep them strong. It is also used to keep hair, nails and skin healthy. Protein is found in meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk products, legumes, tofu, soy beverage, nuts, and seeds.
Is this information reliable?
Food Sources of Vitamin B12

Posted Mar 7, 2017

Information About Vitamin B12

- You need vitamin B₁₂ to form DNA, make healthy blood cells and keep nerves working properly.
- Vitamin B₁₂ is found only in animal foods and fortified foods. People who avoid all animal products should look for meat alternatives, such as soy products fortified with vitamin B₁₂.
- Ten to thirty percent of older people may not absorb vitamin B₁₂ well. Health Canada advises adults over 50 years to consume foods fortified with vitamin B₁₂ or a supplement containing vitamin B₁₂.

How Much Vitamin B₁₂ Should I Aim For?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Aim for an Intake of micrograms (mcg/day)</th>
<th>Stay below mcg/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men and Women 19 and older</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women 19 and older</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding Women 19 and older</td>
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<td></td>
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Vitamin B₁₂ Content of Some Common Foods