



ON CALL

Lay Community Health Advisors

Healthy diet planning for different age groups

Introduction

This short handbook will provide you with some additional information about how to plan healthy diet according to the age.

This handbook will be useful in promoting positive mental health with members of your local health network. Thanks to reading this handbook you will know how your diet should change with your age, even if main principals of healthy eating always stay the same.

As we go through different life stages our bodies require specific nutrients to enable us to look and feel our best. What we do at specific time of life (e.g. spending a lot of time at work in 20-60ies, being an active child or junk-eating teenager), has an enormous influence on what do we need and what do we lack in our everyday diet.

This resource aims to communicate to people that they should listen to their bodies, and provide it what does it need at specific time of life.

Happy, healthy kid

Nourishments are super important from the day one. At least until baby is 6 month old the best food it can eat is his mother's breast milk. While we expand toddler's diet we have to make sure, that he or she

will get all vitamins and minerals needed for his or her development.

Healthy diet for small ones needs to be low in sugar, which gives them too much energy in empty calories. At the same time their diet needs to be rich in all kinds of minerals and vitamins needed for the right physical and psychical development.

Kids should:

- Eat foods rich in calcium, iron and zinc.
- Avoid salt, sugar, honey and cow milk (if they are below 1 y.o.)
- Supplement vitamin D if not exposed to sun enough

Energetic teenager

When we think of teenager's diet the very first think that comes to our mind is eating way too much junk food.

Of course it is not the rule yet many teenagers don't care about healthy eating. Most of them don't see the point, as even eating lots of fast food they can stay slim and feel healthy. Still, even if we feel healthy it doesn't mean that our health is really that good. Bad eating habits have a long-term effects, so even if they may not affecting young people know, they may lead to serious problems with health in the future.

Teenagers should:

- Eat nutrient-dense foods like wholegrain bread, fruits, vegetables, nuts, fish and lean meats,
- Eat foods rich in calcium

Busy young adult

Young adults have a lot on their plate (not necessarily literally) putting their life together. While they are trying to balance their often stressful work life with personal life and starting new family they often don't pay great attention to healthy eating. The group who needs to focus on healthy eating and providing body all needed nourishments are women who are pregnant or want to become pregnant.

Adults should:

- Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamins K and D
- Avoid eating in rush and skipping breakfast
- Supplement folic acid, iron, vitamin B12 and iodine (especially during pregnancy)

People in their 40ies and 50ies

Fully grown adults should focus now on taking a lot of antioxidants, because in future they may help them avoid certain health problems such as heart disease, Alzheimer's, or some types of cancer. Eating foods low on fat and sugar will help

with preventing them from heart diseases, diabetes and osteoarthritis.

People in their 40ies and 50ies should:

- Eat foods rich in antioxidants and iron
- Avoid fat and sweetened food
- Supplement folic acid, iron, vitamin B12 and iodine (especially during pregnancy)

Healthy senior

As seniors' body slowly loses their ability to regenerate and overall efficiency it requires bigger vitamins and minerals intake.

Lowering level of stomach acid can affect the absorption of vitamin B12, calcium, iron and magnesium.

Postmenopausal women should eat foods rich in calcium in order to avoid bones thinning. A diet rich in phytoestrogens (they can be found in tofu, soymilk) lentils, cracked wheat, barley etc..) helps to reduce many symptoms of menopause.

Seniors should:

- Eat variety of whole foods, rich in all kind of nourishments especially protein, vitamin D, calcium and vitamin B12.
- Avoid skipping meals due to the lack of the appetite
- Supplement lacking vitamins and minerals

How to use this Resource with your Local Health Group?

This handbook presents information on the topic of healthy diet planning for different age groups. It helps us understand that eating accord to our nutritional needs, which slightly change during our lifetime can benefit our health.

Reviewing this handbook before each session with the group will help you to lead a discussion about the topic. However, you have to be aware that handbook generalise people by age group, and it doesn't have to relate to each individual. Bear in mind that even if most youngsters prefers to eat junk food, or lot of people in their 50iest are in the risk or having a stroke, it doesn't mean that each and everyone from this age group is like that.

In the resources you will also find a PowerPoint presentation which will help you to explain the topic to your group and start a conversation with them.

Group Activity

After you have shared the digital resource and the PowerPoint presentation with your group, you can start a group discussion asking if all group members think that they eat accordingly to their age.

Once they are finished ask them to think about members of their community and their lifestyle. Does all of them eat and exercise according to their age?

Let your group think how they can promote composing diet according to age to all of community members and let them share ideas with the whole group.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project Number: 2018-1-UK01-KA204-048095