



# Fifty Plus

• • • Your 'at a glance' guide to staying healthy for life By Quest Vitamins • • •

Life expectancy has increased substantially over recent decades. A healthy lifestyle can help optimise the post-50 years when health can be more fragile but life can be packed with as much, if not more, activity than in earlier years. Although calorie requirements fall with age, nutrient requirements do not, creating special nutritional demands for individuals within this life stage.

## Nutrition & Aging

National survey data show that a proportion of older people, have low intakes or low blood levels of a range of vitamins and minerals. There are a number of factors that help explain this.

As we age metabolic rate slows as a reflection of decreased lean body mass, meanwhile physical activity decreases. This adds up to decreased food intake. Furthermore the use of prescription drugs increases with age, many of these drugs can interfere with nutrient absorption or metabolism. For older adults with mobility problems shopping for fresh food can become a problem. Finally real poverty and shopping on a very restricted budget is a reality for many retired people.



## Health Concerns of The Older Adult

**Aged related macular degeneration:** AMD occurs when the macula, the small centre of the retina responsible for reading vision, deteriorates. AMD is the leading cause of vision loss in people over 60.

**Alzheimer's disease:** Alzheimer's disease (AD) is an irreversible, progressive disorder in which neurons (brain cells) deteriorate resulting in the loss of cognitive function, primarily memory, judgment and reasoning. Although the ultimate cause of neuron death in AD is not known, evidence suggests that a malignant form of the protein beta-amyloid may be the cause. The disease most commonly affects the over 65s.

**Arthritis:** Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis and is associated with age. Cartilage (connective tissue) between the bones gradually wastes away (degenerates), and this can lead to painful rubbing of bone on bone in the joints and inflammation.

**Cardiovascular disease:** Heart disease is the UK's biggest killer, and the chances of getting it increase with age. It is usually caused by a build up of fatty deposits on the walls of arteries, life-style factors such as smoking, poor diet and stress heavily influence the risk of developing the disease.

**Parkinson's disease:** Parkinson's disease is caused by a loss of nerve cells that are responsible for producing a chemical called dopamine which helps to transmit messages from the brain that control, and co-ordinate, body movements. The condition generally develops in the over 50s.

**Pneumonia:** Pneumonia occurs when an infection causes inflammation of the tissues in one or both of your lungs. Pneumonia is more common and more serious among the elderly.

**Stroke:** Strokes can occur either when clots interrupt blood supply to the brain, or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. The over 65s are most at risk of stroke; hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and excessive alcohol consumption increase the risk.

**Varicose veins:** Veins return blood to the heart, to do so they must work against gravity. Inside veins, there are tiny valves, which open to let blood through, and then close to stop it from going backwards. When the valves fail to function properly, blood can leak and flow backwards. It then collects in the veins, causing them to become swollen and enlarged (varicose veins). Varicose veins most commonly affect older women.

## Life-Style Tips:

- Try to ensure a good intake of whole-grains, nuts and fresh fruit and vegetables combined with high quality protein (chicken, beef, eggs, pulses such as lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans).
- Keep a stock of frozen, canned and dried fruit and vegetables.
- Eat oats, they are high in fibre and phytosterols which may help keep cholesterol levels under control. Oat-cakes are an excellent alternative to bread and porridge makes a warming, filling breakfast.



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- Eat oily fish (salmon, herring, mackerel, pilchards) at least twice a week; this is one of the most important measures you can take to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease and dementia. To increase the benefits avoid excess consumption of omega-6 fatty acids, found in crisps, vegetable oil, meat and margarine.
- Switching to semi-skimmed milk, using butter sensibly, choosing lean meat and grilling rather than frying will help keep your heart healthy. Steer clear of trans fats, the "hydrogenated vegetable oil" found in low quality margarine, crisps, biscuits and confectionary as well as fast food. While a high fat intake itself will not increase your risk of heart disease, to maintain a healthy weight calorie intake should reflect needs and fatty foods tend to be the highest in calories.
- Enjoy a cup of tea. Tea and other foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries, grapes, prunes, tomatoes, brazil nuts and dark chocolate, are linked to a longer healthier life.

## Key Supplements

**Multivitamin and mineral:** A quality, potent multivitamin and mineral formulated to meet the nutritional requirements of older adults is an insurance policy against developing nutritional deficiency.

**Coenzyme Q10:** Coenzyme Q10 is a powerful antioxidant and is required for the final stage of the process of energy generation. Statin drugs deplete levels and a supplement may be advised.

**Calcium and Vitamin D:** As we age bone density can decrease as the rate at which bone is broken down exceeds that at which new bone is formed. Calcium is the main structural component of bone; vitamin D is required for normal utilisation of calcium. Vitamin D is obtained mainly from exposure to sunlight; it is recommended that house-bound and institutionalised elderly in particular take a supplement of 5µg of vitamin D.

**Vitamin B12:** As we age secretion of intrinsic factor in the intestine, which is necessary for the absorption of vitamin B12, decreases. For this reason a supplement is recommended. The vitamin is found in meat, fish and dairy.

**Omega 3:** Omega-3 is found in the form in which it used in the body, EPA and DHA, only in oily fish (sardines, salmon, mackerel). EPA and DHA can be synthesised from α-linoleic acid, found in flaxseeds and soy; this conversion process is very inefficient and decreases with age. EPA serves as a source of eicosanoids, chemicals with major regulatory roles in blood pressure, blood clotting and inflammation. A wealth of evidence has emerged linking the omega-3 fatty acids to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease and arthritis.

**Lutein and zeaxanthin:** The pigments lutein and zeaxanthin are concentrated in the macula, where they perform the crucial function of absorbing blue light, in this way protecting the light receptive cell layer from light damage. Evidence suggests supplements may help prevent the onset of AMD.

**Choline:** Choline is a major building block of the fatty substance in cell membranes called lecithin. Choline is a precursor to acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter involved in the formation of memories.

**Glucosamine Sulphate** is used by the body to manufacture substances that make up cartilage, the tissue that cushions joints and prevents bones from rubbing together. Evidence supports the use of glucosamine to maintain and promote the health of joints, particularly knee joints.

**Aged Garlic:** As garlic ages an array of beneficial sulphur compounds are formed that are not normally present in garlic. Aged garlic extract has a powerful ability to enhance circulation, thin the blood, reduce blood pressure, reduce free fatty acids in the blood and reduce cholesterol, particularly LDL ("bad") cholesterol, while also helping to prevent oxidation, which is damaging to heart health.

## Further Support

**Ginkgo Biloba:** Ginkgo biloba has been used medicinally for thousands of years. It is well-known for its ability to improve circulation to the brain and for its antioxidant potential. Several studies have found that ginkgo may be as effective as leading AD medications in delaying the symptoms of dementia.

## Key Nutrients For The 50 +

Multivitamin & Mineral  
Coenzyme Q10  
Calcium & Vitamin D  
Vitamin B12  
Omega 3  
Lutein & Zeaxanthin  
Choline  
Glucosamine Sulphate  
Aged Garlic  
Ginkgo Biloba

**A healthy life-style combined with key supplements can help optimise the post-50 years**

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