

During menopause, it's important to eat a variety of foods to get all the nutrients you need. These guidelines are designed to help.



1. Get enough calcium

Eat and drink two to four servings of dairy products and calcium-rich foods a day. Calcium is found in dairy products, fish with bones (such as sardines and canned salmon), broccoli and legumes. Aim for 1,200 milligrams per day.



2. Pump up your iron

Eat at least three servings of iron-rich foods a day. Iron is found in lean red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, leafy green vegetables, nuts, and enriched grain products. The recommended dietary allowance for iron in older women is 8 milligrams a day.



3. Get enough fibre

Help yourself to foods high in fibre, such as wholegrain breads, cereals, pasta, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables. Most adult women should get about 21 grams of fibre a day.



4. Eat fruit and vegetables

Have at least 1 1/2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables each day.



5. Read labels

Use the package label information to help yourself make the best choices for a healthy lifestyle.



6. Drink plenty of water

As a general rule, drink eight glasses of water every day. That fulfils the daily requirement for most healthy adults.



7. Maintain a healthy weight

If you're overweight, cut down on portion sizes and eat fewer foods that are high in fat. Don't skip meals, though. A registered dietitian or your doctor can help you figure out your ideal body weight.



8. Cut back on high-fat foods – Fat should provide 25% to 35% or less of your total daily calories. Also, limit saturated fat to less than 7% of your total daily calories. Saturated fat raises cholesterol and boosts your risk for heart disease. It's found in fatty meats, whole milk, ice cream, and cheese. Limit cholesterol to 300 milligrams or less per day. And watch out for trans fats, found in vegetable oils, many baked goods, and some margarine. Trans fat also raises cholesterol and increases your risk for heart disease.



9. Use sugar and salt in moderation

Too much sodium in the diet is linked to high blood pressure. Also, go easy on smoked, salt-cured, and charbroiled foods -- these foods have high levels of nitrates, which have been linked to cancer.



10. Limit alcohol

To one or fewer drinks a day.