

# ADULT DAY STAY: FACT SHEET



## Nutritional Needs of Adult Day Stay Participants

### INTRODUCTION

Each adult day stay participant has a unique set of nutritional needs. Some needs are influenced by age and overall health, while others may be affected by chronic illness, disability, sensory losses, oral health problems, and multiple medications. Helping older adults and those with disabilities maintain a good nutritional diet is essential for their overall health.

One way to provide nutritional meals and snacks that support good nutrition is to use the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern for adults. These meal pattern guidelines will provide the nutritional standards that aim to safeguard the wellness of adult participants. Visit [Nutrition Standards for CACFP Meals and Snacks | Food and Nutrition Service](#) for a detailed description of the meal components. Here are some additional guidelines to help adult day stay participants meet their nutritional needs when planning menus to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

### APPLICATION

#### Do a Nutrition Assessment

Work with a registered dietitian (RD) to complete a nutrition assessment for each participant to identify individual nutritional needs.

#### Determine the Warning Signs of Poor Nutrition

The **DETERMINE** checklist was created through a national screening initiative to assess the risk and warning signs for malnutrition in older adults. This tool assesses the impact of various dietary, medical, physical, or social problems. An older adult who has three or more of these warning signs should see a doctor, RD, or other healthcare professional.

- **Disease**
- **Eating poorly**
- **Tooth loss/mouth pain**
- **Economic hardship**
- **Reduced social contact**
- **Multiple medications**
- **Involuntary weight loss/gain**
- **Needs assistance in self-care**
- **Elder years above age 80**

## Provide a Variety of Proteins and Healthy Fats

- Offer healthy sources of fat, such as nuts, seeds, avocados, and fish.
- Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry.
- Bake, broil, or grill meats.
- Vary protein choices with more fish, beans, and peas.
- Remember that older adults need slightly more protein than younger adults. Older adults use protein less efficiently and are more easily injured, often requiring more protein to repair tissues.
- Foods high in protein are often difficult to chew and swallow, so prepare and serve protein foods in ways that make it easier to chew and swallow.

## Limit Foods High in Sugar

- When using canned fruit, select fruit canned in 100% fruit juice or water.
- Serve yogurt that contains no more than 12 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.
- Serve breakfast cereals that contain no more than 12 grams of added sugar per 6 ounces.
- Limit juice to once per day.
- Remove grain-based desserts (e.g., cookies, cakes, and other sweet grains) from the menu. Offer these items only on special occasions as additional food.

## Focus on Fiber

- Serve whole grain-rich cereals, breads, rice, and pasta.
- Serve more beans, peas, and lentils.
- Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Use whole or cut-up fruits and vegetables rather than juice. Juice lacks the dietary fiber found in whole fruits and vegetables. For adults with chewing and swallowing problems, serve cooked fruits and vegetables.

## Meet Vitamin and Mineral Requirements

- Know the key vitamins and minerals and serve foods rich in vitamins D and B-12, calcium, magnesium, and potassium.
- Serve potassium-rich fruits, such as bananas, prunes, peaches, and oranges.
- Serve potassium-rich vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, spinach, and lentils.
- Vary fruits and vegetables to provide different nutrients.
- Serve a rainbow of colors—the darker and richer the color, the more nutrient-dense.
- Serve calcium-rich foods, such as low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, or cheese. If participants are lactose intolerant, choose lactose-free or nondairy sources of calcium, such as soy-based milk, yogurt, or cheese.

## Limit Sodium Intake

- Serve fresh vegetables.
- Buy canned vegetables labeled “no salt added.”
- Sauces and seasonings can add sodium to vegetables. Consider using herbs and spices to season food instead.
- Focus on reducing sodium in common sources: sandwiches; mixed dishes with meat, poultry, and seafood; soups; grain-based desserts; and cured meats and poultry.

## Provide Adequate Fluids

- Make water available and encourage participants to drink it throughout the day.
- Serve low-fat or fat-free flavored or unflavored milk.
- Offer fruit and vegetable smoothies as part of a meal or snack.
- Consult an RD or swallowing therapist to provide fluids to participants with swallowing difficulties, disabilities, medical conditions, and fluid-restricted diets. Follow any specific therapeutic diet for an individual outlined by a doctor, speech therapist, or dietitian.

## REFERENCES

Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/buy-american-provisions>

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National Institute of Aging. (2019). *Vitamins and minerals*. [www.nia.nih.gov/health/vitamins-and-minerals](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/vitamins-and-minerals)

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