

Food and care for older people

FACT

Older people need less food but they still need good quality food

Older people are often less active and spend less energy. For this reason, they need smaller amounts of the foods which provide energy, e.g. fats and oils, staple foods and sugars.

But older people need plenty of foods that repair the body, protect against illness and keep them in good health. These foods are: fresh vegetables and fruits, animal foods, legumes and oilseeds.

ACT

To stay active and healthy, older people need to eat a balanced diet

- ❖ Have smaller meals, 2-3 times a day, plus healthy snacks between meals.
- ❖ Eat a variety of foods in the right proportions (see Fact Sheet 4).
- ❖ Eat staple foods (e.g. maize meal, millet, rice, bread, potato, yam, cassava, etc.) as the main component of the diet.
- ❖ Have plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. They protect against illness and keep the body healthy. Eat fruits with or after meals to absorb the iron better.
- ❖ Eat animal foods (eggs, meat, offal, poultry or fish) **or** legumes (beans, lentils, peas, nuts) every day. They help the body to function properly and repair itself.
- ❖ Use fat and oils only in small amounts. They help to absorb some vitamins.
- ❖ Oilseeds (e.g. groundnuts, soybeans) can provide extra energy and keep your body healthy.
- ❖ Drink plenty of clean water.

It is easier to eat well if you:

- ❖ eat soft foods if your teeth are missing or your gums are sore
- ❖ prepare food hygienically to avoid sickness (e.g. diarrhoea) (see Fact Sheet 2)
- ❖ take as much exercise as possible - it improves the appetite and keeps you healthy and active.
- ❖ get treatment for sore gums and other conditions that reduce the appetite.