\- Health

Healthy food for a healthy heart

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Nutrition for older people is becoming increasingly important in New Zealand as people aged 65 and over make up a large and growing proportion of the population. Health status is closely related to ageing, and good nutrition can have beneficial effects on the rate of ageing.

Maintaining good nutrition is essential to prevent malnutrition, reduce the risk of chronic disease, support physical and mental health and, ultimately, preserve independence.

Fruit and vegetables are a great source of dietary fibre to help maintain healthy, regular bowels, and also contain a range of vitamins and minerals.

Other great sources of dietary fibre include whole grain breads and cereals, which also contain protein, vitamins and minerals, including calcium and iron.

As we get older, bone density can weaken. Calcium and vitamin D are essential for keeping bones strong and preventing fractures. Women need to increase their calcium intake 20 years earlier than men; women require more at age 51 and men at 70. Drinking milk and milk products daily will help meet the increased dietary requirements for protein, riboflavin, vitamin B6, vitamin D and calcium. Milk and milk products are the main dietary sources of calcium. Other sources include broccoli, dried fruit, canned fish and nuts. Protein sources such as red meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, nuts and seeds help provide amino acids, fats, vitamins and minerals to maintain lean muscle mass.

The Heart Foundation has a wealth of free nutrition advice available through nutrition advisors and online, heartfoundation.org.nz. We're here to help

Heart Foundation cardiology nurses are just a phone call away for advice and support for heart health. The service is confidential and the experienced nurses have up-to-date information about many aspects of heart health, including information on Covid-19 for heart patients. The service is available on 0800 863 375 or (09) 571 9191 between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.