

Fuel for Movement: The Role of Food in Staying Active

As we age, nutrition plays an increasingly important role in maintaining strength, energy, balance, and independence. The right food and hydration habits can support mobility, reduce fall risk, and help seniors continue doing the activities they enjoy safely.

This guide explains how nutrition and movement work together – and offers simple, practical strategies that seniors, families, and care professionals can use every day.



How Nutrition Affects Energy, Mood, and Mobility

When seniors do not eat enough or skip meals, they may experience:

- **Low energy**
- **Fatigue during daily activities**
- **Slower recovery after injury, exercise or physiotherapy**
- **Lower cognitive function**

Balanced meals that include **carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats** help maintain steady energy throughout the day.

Why Protein & Hydration Matter

 As we age, muscle mass decreases. Eating enough protein helps maintain strength and balance.

Good protein sources include:

- Eggs
- Fish and poultry
- Greek yogurt
- Beans and lentils

 Dehydration is common among older adults and can affect energy and balance.

Ways to stay hydrated include:

- Drinking fluids with meals & medications
- Drinking soups, smoothies, or tea
- Keeping a water bottle with you



Common Nutrition Challenges for Seniors

Many seniors experience barriers that can make eating well more difficult. These small adjustments can help!

Reduced Appetite:

- Eat smaller meals more often
- Choose nutrient-dense snacks such as yogurt, cheese, or nuts
- High calorie, nutrient-dense shakes or smoothies

Chewing or swallowing concerns

- Choose softer foods such as soups, stews, smoothies, and yogurt
- Use broth, gravy, sauces, butter, sour cream, or yogurt to moisten dry foods, especially meat, poultry, and fish.

Forgetting to eat or drink

- Set reminders
- Pair meals with daily routines

Nutrition and Movement Working Together

Helpful strategies include:

- Eat a small snack before exercise or your physiotherapy appointment
- Include protein after physical activity
- Stay hydrated throughout the day
- Avoid going long periods without eating

Create a safe kitchen to support mobility:

- Store commonly used foods at easy-to-reach heights
- Use stable seating while preparing meals
- Keep walkways clear to prevent trips and falls

Need more support with staying mobile?

Call Physio2U to book an in-home physiotherapy appointment



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