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Importance of Physical Activity for Seniors

The beginning of the year is often a time where many make goals related to health, wellness and financial goals. New Year's resolutions are most common to live healthier lifestyles and increase physical activity. Though both go hand in hand to achieve a healthy lifestyle, physical activity is crucial for optimum aging. Due to a decrease in hormone production and changes on how the body changes protein to muscle tissue, older adults could lose muscle mass. According to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, adults who are physically inactive could lose between 3-8% of lean muscle mass every 10 years.

There are two types of physical activity that should be included in your healthy lifestyle: cardio and resistance training. Cardio exercise is when you get your heart rate up and keep it up for a certain amount of time. Examples of cardio exercise is: walking, running, dancing, elliptical, and riding a bike. Cardio exercise should be completed at least 5 days a week for a mini-

mum of 30 minutes per day. Cardio exercise can be completed in intervals throughout the day if you are unable to complete it all in one setting. The other form of exercise is resistance training. Resistance training is weight lifting and stretching to help build up muscle and strength. Other examples are: set-ups, yoga, pull-ups, and even gardening.

Eating the appropriate diet is crucial in maintaining muscle as well. Eating a well-balanced diet helps with muscle health. Protein is important to help repair and rebuild the muscle. Carbohydrates are important to provide quick energy for the body to burn during physical activity. Focus on eating healthy carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables that contains fiber and many vitamins and minerals. Healthy fats also help supply energy to your muscles.

If you need you would like help planning a healthy diet that meets your needs, reach out to a local registered dietitian nutritionist in your area!

Source: [4 Keys to Strength Building and Muscle Mass \(eatright.org\)](http://eatright.org)

Understanding the Thyroid

The thyroid is a small butterfly-shaped gland located in the neck that produces thyroid hormones. These hormones help every tissue in the body function properly. The hormones are carried throughout the blood to their designated tissues throughout the body. The thyroid hormone produces 3 hormones: thyroxine (T4), triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH). Lab tests can determine the functionality of each of the hormones.

If your thyroid is over working and producing too much of a hormone, it is called hyperthyroidism. According to American Thyroid Association, symptoms of over active thyroid are: irritability, brittle hair, thin skin, muscle weakness, and could increase metabolism. At the beginning of hyperthyroidism, someone may experience an increase of energy and appetite; however, over time the energy may decrease and someone may become very weak and tired. Graves' Disease is a common form of an overactive thyroid and can make both eyes bulge. It is recommended to seek medical treatment from an endocrinologist to make sure the appropriate medications and treatment plans work for you.

If your thyroid is under active, it is called hypothyroidism. This causes a decrease in thyroid hormone and decreases the function throughout the body. According to the American Thyroid Association, causes of under active thyroid are: Hashimoto's thyroiditis, removal of the thyroid gland and radiation treatment. Listed symptoms are: easy to tire, drier skin, coldness, forgetfulness, depression and

possibly constipation. The only way to diagnose hypothyroidism is the TSH blood test. Hypothyroidism often runs in families. It is important to remind family members of this and continue to get tested periodically. It is possible to manage your hypothyroidism with medications and live without additional complications from hypothyroidism.

According to the American Thyroid Association, an enlarged thyroid, a goiter, is a common complication with the thyroid that is caused by an iodine deficiency. It can occur with a thyroid that is functioning properly and hyper-/hypothyroidism. Please seek medical attention if a goiter is present.

Thyroid disease symptoms and treatments for older adults are similar to those who diagnosed at a younger age. It is important to monitor symptoms and see if anything changes. Hypothyroidism can develop later in life and affect more older adults. Please talk to your doctor if you have any concerns with your thyroid function and may have a family history of it.

Source: <https://www.thyroid.org/thyroid-information/>

