

NUTRITION

FOOD SUPPLEMENTS AND AGEING

TAKING certain nutritional supplements later in life can result in a healthier quality of life, although some of these supplements should be started at a younger age. It is also important to remember that most nutrients are boosted by regular physical activity.

OMEGA-3 – Taking omega-3 is particularly recommended after the age of 65 because it inhibits age-related brain decline, as is the case with Alzheimer's and other chronic brain diseases. Some studies refer that cognitive function is optimised, the cardiovascular system is improved and there is a reduction of chronic inflammation, where symptoms of joint pain and stiffness are reduced.

COLLAGEN – Type I Collagen hydrates the skin, reduces wrinkles and strengthens nails and hair. Type II Collagen, on the other hand, plays an important role in the formation of bone cartilage, which usually reduces with advancing age and obesity. When taken together with vitamins and minerals, collagen also helps to reduce inflammation.

FIBRE – Fibre is fundamental for calcium and magnesium absorption and, therefore, helps with the symptoms of osteoporosis. Fibre also seems to have a positive influence on cognition and moods; that is, improvement in the symptoms of depression, anxiety and dementia. Fibre stimulates peristalsis (bowel movements) and is also responsible for intestinal cleansing, thus reducing alterations associated with bowel disease. Soluble fibre – prebiotic – forms a gel that mixes fat particles, delaying their absorption by the body, as well as increasing the feeling of satiety and providing a favourable environment for the development of probiotics (beneficial bacteria), such as lactobacillus. On the other hand, insoluble fibres help in constipation.

ENZYMES – With increasing age, there is a decrease in the production of some digestive enzymes, essential for a correct digestion. Therefore, enzyme supplements are

important in order to avoid symptoms such as indigestion, bloating and gas.

VITAMINS – They are determinant in various body functions, such as immunity and cell protection in the fight against antioxidant free radicals. In addition, some vitamins also help to lower cholesterol and inflammation, beneficial to cardiovascular health, as well as delaying muscle fibre atrophy associated with age.

PROTEIN AND AMINO ACIDS – Both are important in muscle mass decrease associated with age. A protein and amino acid supplement together with physical activity results in the maintenance and even an increase of muscle strength.

MINERALS – Iron, calcium and zinc supplements are an important trio for the elderly. Calcium intake must be associated with the consumption of vitamin D, as vitamin D helps the body to absorb calcium. Zinc is responsible for synthesis of the cells, strengthening the immune system, particularly against fungi, viruses and bacteria.

Here are some super foods that are beneficial for healthy ageing:

Sweet potato: increases lean mass as it is a rich

source of complex carbohydrates; prevents insulin peaks as it has a slow absorption and it has a high content of vitamins A, C, E and the B complex, essential in the formation of collagen.

Whole grain: they are all beneficial to the human body. Whole grain, such as oats, quinoa, flaxseed, sunflower seeds, chickpeas and brown rice, are rich in magnesium and fibre, which all provide an improved digestion and more satiety.

Citrus fruits: rich in vitamin C, they are antioxidant defending the body against infections and are essential for all body tissues. Skin, bones and cartilage all benefit from fruit such as oranges, lemons, pineapples, kiwi and others.

Dark green leafed vegetables: the dark green colour of vegetables is synonymous with health. In addition to having several minerals and vitamins, they are rich in fibre, calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus and potassium. The nutrients in lettuce, kale, spinach, watercress, broccoli and arugula are beneficial for brain and skin health.



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