

Prevention and Management of Sarcopenia for Healthy Aging





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Every year, each of us has a shared experience: we get one year older. Aging is a normal process of life but the consequences of aging do not happen uniformly and can be influenced by the actions we take today.

Although we know what we can do to do to support healthy aging – eating a balanced diet, regular physical activity, keeping up with [brain exercises](#) – there are some aspects about aging that are not so commonly discussed. One of them is sarcopenia.

What Is Sarcopenia?

One of the most significant processes of aging has to do with our muscles. As we age there is an involuntary loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength. This condition is known as sarcopenia.

The impact of sarcopenia can be serious. One very concrete example of this is the rise of hip fractures as we age. Over 95 percent of all hip fractures are because of a fall. Hip fractures highlight the compounding effect of aging and the vital role of our muscles. One consequence of aging is the possible loss of calcium in our bones, known as osteoporosis. Thus, bones may be more easily fractured. However, when we lose our muscle mass and strength, we are more prone to falls.

Moreover, Herbalife Nutrition expert Susan Bowerman observed that there is an [increasing](#)

[trend of muscle loss](#), even amongst younger women. This is due to a high carbohydrate and low protein diet as well as lack of exercise— factors that are crucial for muscle building.

When we have adequate muscle strength, we can reduce the likely event of a fall and thus minimize the risk of fractures.

How to Prevent and Manage Sarcopenia for Healthy Aging

The good news is we can take preventative actions to reduce the consequences of aging on our muscle mass and strength. There is strong evidence suggesting that nutrition has an important role in the prevention and management of sarcopenia.

Slowing the rate of sarcopenia, by consuming a sufficient amount of protein and improving muscle strength, can improve quality of life.

In fact, [according to the ESPEN \(European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism\) Expert Group](#), the following consensus and recommendations are made on protein intake by older adults to help them sustain muscle strength and function:

- For healthy older people, their diet should provide at least 1.0-1.2 g protein/kg body weight/day.
- For older people who are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition because they have an acute or chronic illness, their diet should provide 1.2-1.5 g protein/kg body weight/day, with even higher intake for individuals with severe illness or injury.
- Daily physical activity or exercise (resistance training, aerobic exercise) should be undertaken by all older people, for as long as possible.

Following a healthy diet earlier on in your life such as a Mediterranean Diet, which [studies suggest](#) a positive impact on muscle function, can lower the risk of sarcopenia in older adults.

Other [data](#) demonstrate that protein intake plays a critical role in muscle mass, strength, and functionality in general and especially important for elder people.

The Role of Nutrition Policy

While we frequently rely on general guidelines for nutrition, there may be unique nutritional needs for optimal health in specific age groups and life stage conditions.

In the U.S., the upcoming [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025](#) will be based on life stage approaches to help prevent disease and keep Americans healthy from birth into older adulthood.

Herbalife Nutrition provided [comments](#) to the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, providing science-based evidence on the need for a higher amount of protein intake in older sarcopenic adults compared to the current general nutrition recommendation.

Our Global Nutrition Philosophy has protein as an important macronutrient coupled with living a healthy active lifestyle – two important ingredients to healthy aging. As we age, our main

philosophy is to focus on the critical steps we can take to improve our overall health and wellbeing through optimal nutrition and keeping up with an active lifestyle.

I have witnessed individuals who are living with more vitality today than they did 10 years ago.

If you make the right lifestyle choices, you may be one of those individuals, too. Even though aging is gua