

## Maintaining a Healthy Weight Over 65

**The Power of Sleep**  
Why It Matters For Your Health

**Smart Nutrition**  
For Healthy Aging

**Summer Sun Safety**  
Protecting Your Skin Every Day





## YOUR 24-HOUR HELP NURSE Trusted Advice That Can Save You Time and Money

Not sure if your symptoms warrant a trip to the doctor? Wondering if your medication side effects are normal—or if you should head to urgent care? That’s where our 24-Hour Help Nurses come in.

**Call anytime—day or night—for trusted guidance from a registered nurse** who knows how to help you decide your next best step. Whether it’s a question about your child’s fever at 10 pm or sudden back pain on a Sunday morning, our nurses are here to provide reliable advice when you need it most.

But here’s something many members don’t realize: **Using the 24-Hour Help Nurse line can also help you avoid unnecessary visits—and unexpected medical bills.** A quick call can give you peace of mind and potentially save you the cost of an emergency room or urgent care trip that might not be needed.

Common reasons members call:

- “Do I need to be seen for this cough?”
- “Is this medication side effect normal?”
- “Can I wait until my clinic opens tomorrow?”
- “My child has a rash. What should I do?”

Every call is answered by a real nurse—not a recording—and you’ll get clear, compassionate advice tailored to your situation.

Best of all?  
It’s included  
in your health  
plan, at no  
extra cost.

Keep the number handy—you never know when you might need it:

**24-Hour Help Nurse Line**  
**563-556-4357 | 800-325-7442**



## Here’s How We Support Your Health

We believe healthcare should be personal, convenient, and cost-effective. That’s why we built a system where your care team communicates, coordinates, and works together on your behalf. Whether you’re scheduling a check-up, navigating benefits, or need support after hours, **we’ve got you covered.**

### 24-Hour Help Nurse

**563-556-4357**  
**800-325-7442**

Call anytime—day or night—for trusted advice on symptoms, medications, and when to seek care.

### Member Services

**563-584-4885**  
**866-821-1365**

Have questions about your plan, benefits, or claims? We’re here to help with friendly support.



### My eLink

A secure online portal where you can view benefits, manage your ID card and pharmacy info, check claims, and send secure messages. **Sign up at [mahealthplans.com](https://mahealthplans.com).**

## Health Management



### Health Coaching

Our health coaches are real people here to support your wellness journey with personalized, sustainable guidance tailored to your goals.



### Disease Management

Get support for managing diabetes and hypertension with personalized education, care guidelines, and regular check-ins from our dedicated nurse.



### Case Management

Our nurses are here to guide you through complex conditions, answer questions, and be your advocate—helping you navigate the system with confidence.

If you are a member and feel that you would benefit from any of these programs, please **contact Member Services at 563-584-4885 or 866-821-1365.**

**YOU HAVE US.**



# Maintaining a Healthy Weight Over 65

## Why It Matters and How to Keep Track

As we age, maintaining a healthy weight becomes more important than ever—but also more complex. For those over 65, healthy weight management supports mobility, reduces the risk of chronic illness, and helps preserve independence. But aging also brings changes to metabolism, muscle mass, and appetite, which can make weight gain—or unhealthy weight loss—a real concern.

Here's what you need to know about weight management in your senior years, and practical tips to help you feel your best.

### Why Healthy Weight Matters After 65

**Reduces risk of chronic disease:** Being overweight or underweight can increase your risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

**Supports joint and bone health:** Carrying extra weight adds stress to joints, especially hips and knees. On the other hand, unintentional weight loss can lead to frailty and osteoporosis.

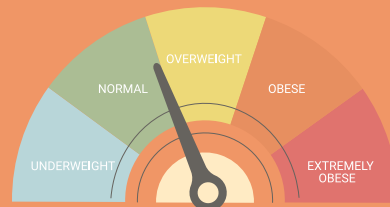
### Boosts energy and independence:

Maintaining muscle through proper diet and activity can help you stay active and enjoy daily life with more ease.

### What's a Healthy Weight for Older Adults?

Rather than focusing only on the number on the scale, healthcare providers often look at Body Mass Index (BMI) alongside muscle mass, strength, and overall function.

**A BMI between 23 and 30 is often considered acceptable for older adults,** though individual needs may vary.



Talk to your provider to find out what's healthy for you.

### Healthy Habits That Make a Difference



#### 1. Focus on balanced nutrition

##### Include:

- Lean proteins (chicken, fish, eggs, legumes)
- Whole grains (brown rice, oats, whole wheat bread)
- Healthy fats (olive oil, nuts, avocado)
- Plenty of fruits and vegetables

##### Limit:

- Added sugars
- Processed foods
- Saturated fats and excess sodium

#### 2. Stay active most days

##### Aim for:

- 150 minutes of moderate activity per week (like walking or swimming)
- Strength training exercises twice a week to maintain muscle

*Always check with your provider before starting new exercise routines.*

#### 3. Hydrate and monitor portion sizes

- As we age, we may not feel as thirsty, but hydration remains essential
- Eating smaller, more frequent meals can help manage appetite and blood sugar

#### 4. Watch for unintentional weight changes

Sudden weight loss or gain could be a sign of an underlying health issue. Report any changes to your provider.

#### 5. Consider support

Registered dietitians, physical therapists, or weight management programs can help tailor a plan that works for your health and lifestyle.

### The Bottom Line

Managing weight after 65 isn't about strict diets or quick fixes—it's about creating healthy, sustainable habits that help you feel strong, energetic, and independent. If you're unsure where to start, talk to your primary care provider or a dietitian for personalized guidance.

*Sources: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet/maintaining-healthy-weight>; <https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/about/index.html>*

## Did You Know?



Starting around age 30, adults begin to lose 3–8% of muscle mass per decade—and that rate increases after age 60. This natural process, called sarcopenia, can lead to weakness, fatigue, balance issues, and even falls if not addressed.

The good news? It's never too late to slow it down.



**Protein power:** Aim to include protein at every meal—like eggs, beans, fish, or lean meats—to help your body rebuild and maintain muscle.



**Move with purpose:** Strength-based exercises such as lifting light weights, resistance bands, or chair stands (sitting and standing repeatedly) help build muscle and improve balance.



**Stay consistent:** Even 10–15 minutes a day can make a difference in your strength and energy.



Talk to your primary care provider or a physical therapist about starting a safe routine that works for your goals and mobility level.



# The Power of Sleep

Why It Matters  
For Your Health



## Sleep might seem like downtime, but your body and brain are actually hard at work.

While you rest, sleep supports your immune system, processes information, and helps your body repair itself. It also plays a key role in your mood, memory, and physical health. Sleep happens in cycles, made up of several stages including light, deep, and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep. Each stage plays a different role in helping you feel rested, think clearly, and stay healthy. During deep sleep, for example, your body restores itself and releases important hormones, while REM sleep supports learning and memory.

### Sleep is essential for many of your body's daily functions:

- It helps your heart and blood vessels rest and recover.
- Promotes a strong immune system by helping your body fight off illness and infection.
- Stimulates the release of hormones for growth, fertility, and cell repair.
- Supports emotional balance and mental clarity.

When you don't get enough sleep—or the sleep you get is low quality—it can take a toll on your health. Sleep deprivation affects focus, reaction time, and decision-making. It can also lead to irritability, depression, and a higher risk of chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and obesity. People who are sleep-deprived are also more likely to have accidents and make risky decisions.

zzz

So, how much sleep do you need?

### Here are general recommendations:

- **Newborns:** 16–18 hours
- **Preschool-aged children:** 11–12 hours
- **School-aged children:** At least 10 hours
  - **Teens:** 9–10 hours
  - **Adults:** 7–8 hours

Older adults may wake more often at night or spend less time in deep sleep, but their total sleep needs remain about the same as younger adults.

If you find yourself struggling to wake up, dozing off during the day, or having trouble focusing, your sleep may not be as restorative as it should be.



### Tips to Improve Your Sleep:

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends.
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine in the afternoon and evening.
- Limit alcohol and large meals before bedtime.
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark, and quiet.
- Turn off screens at least 30 minutes before bed.
- Get sunlight during the day and stay physically active.
- Wind down with a calming bedtime routine.
- Avoid long naps late in the day.
- Don't lie in bed awake for long—if you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do something relaxing.

If sleep problems continue, talk with your doctor. You may be dealing with a sleep disorder such as insomnia or sleep apnea. A provider can help identify the issue and recommend treatment options, including a sleep study if necessary.

Prioritizing sleep is one of the most important things you can do for your overall health and well-being. A good night's rest is more than just refreshing—it's vital.

Source: <https://medlineplus.gov/healthysleep.html>

## MOVE MORE, ANYWHERE!



Summer's busy pace and warm weather make it a great time to rethink your routine and add simple movement to your day. Whether you're traveling, juggling activities, or just enjoying time outdoors, fitting in short bursts of exercise can help boost your energy, lift your mood, and even improve your sleep.

### You should try:

- ➔ Walking instead of driving short distances.
- ➔ Stretching while you wait for your coffee.
- ➔ Doing a few bodyweight moves like squats or wall push-ups during screen time breaks.
- ➔ Keeping a resistance band or light hand weights nearby for quick at-home workouts.
- ➔ Taking 10-minute walks or light movement breaks throughout the day to improve circulation, lower stress, and support better rest at night.

You don't need a gym or special equipment—just a little creativity and consistency. Every step counts!



# Smart Nutrition for Healthy Aging

How the right foods help you stay strong, sharp, and independent.



As we get older, our bodies change—and so do our nutritional needs. You may find you're not as hungry as you once were, but your body still relies on quality nutrition to stay strong and energized. Making thoughtful choices about what (and how much) you eat can help you maintain muscle, support heart health, improve digestion, and even boost memory.

### Here's what to keep in mind when eating healthy over 65:

#### Focus on Nutrient-Dense Foods

With a slower metabolism, every bite counts. Fill your plate with:

- Colorful fruits and vegetables for vitamins, minerals, and fiber
- Lean proteins (like fish, chicken, eggs, and legumes) to maintain muscle
- Whole grains like oats and brown rice to support heart and digestive health
- Low-fat dairy or calcium-rich alternatives to protect bones

#### Don't Forget Fluids

Older adults are more likely to become dehydrated. Drink water throughout the day—even if you don't feel thirsty. Herbal tea, soup, and water-rich foods like cucumbers or oranges can also help.

#### Time Your Meals

Some older adults benefit from eating smaller meals more often—especially if they take medications that affect appetite. Try:

- Three smaller meals a day with one or two healthy snacks
- Eating at the same time each day to help regulate hunger and digestion

#### Watch the Sodium and Sugar

Too much salt and sugar can increase your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes. Choose:

- Fresh or frozen vegetables without added sauces
- Low-sodium soups or broths
- Whole fruits instead of fruit juices or sugary snacks

#### When to Ask for Help

Nutrition needs can vary if you have diabetes, heart disease, kidney issues, or are recovering from illness or surgery. If you've experienced unintended weight changes, appetite loss, or difficulty shopping or preparing food, talk to your primary care provider.



Eating well doesn't mean eating fancy—it means giving your body the fuel it needs to keep you feeling your best. **A few small changes can make a big difference over time.**

### Suggested Servings From Each Food Group

#### VEGETABLES

- 2½ c. recommended daily
- **1 c. examples:**
  - 2 c. raw leafy salad greens
  - 1 c. cut-up vegetables
  - 1 c. 100% vegetable juice, low-sodium or no-salt added

#### FRUITS

- 2 c. recommended daily
- **1 c. examples:**
  - 1 medium whole fruit
  - 1 c. cut-up fruit
  - ½ c. 100% fruit juice/ dried fruit

#### GRAINS

- Whole grain rather than refined grain products
- 3-6 servings (or oz.) recommended daily (at least half should be whole grains)
- **1 serving examples:**
  - 1 slice whole-grain bread
  - 1 small tortilla
  - 1 oz. (1 c.) ready-to-eat cereal flakes
  - 1 oz. (1 c.) uncooked pasta or brown rice
  - 3 c. popped popcorn

#### DAIRY

- Low-fat (1% and fat-free)
- 3 servings or 3 c. daily
- **1 serving examples:**
  - 1 c. milk
  - 1 c. yogurt
  - 2½ oz. hard cheese

#### PROTEIN

- Mostly from plant sources (legumes and nuts); fish and seafood; fat-free and low-fat dairy products in place full-fat versions
- 1-2 servings or 5½ oz. daily
- **1-2 serving examples:**
  - 5 oz. of nuts, seeds, beans, peas or lentils
  - 6-8 oz. of seafood

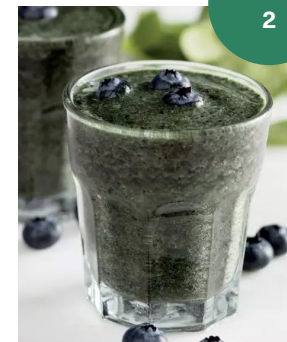
Source: [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/suggested-servings-from-each-food-group](http://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/suggested-servings-from-each-food-group)

## Superfood Smoothie

Serves 2

#### Nutrition (2 servings)

- Calories:** 120
- Total Fat:** 2 g
- Saturated Fat:** 0.1 g
- Cholesterol:** 0 mg
- Sodium:** 115 mg
- Total Carbs:** 26 g
- Dietary Fiber:** 4 g
- Total Sugars:** 14 g
- Protein:** 2 g
- Potassium:** 510 mg



#### Ingredients

- 1 c. unsweetened almond milk.....25-30
- 1 c. frozen blueberries.....53
- 2 c. baby spinach.....15
- 1 banana.....51 (ripe), 42 (under ripe)

#### Glycemic Index Info

#### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth and thick.

Recipe Source: <https://diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/superfood-smoothie>

#### What is the Glycemic Index and why should I pay attention to it?

The Glycemic Index (GI) ranks how quickly foods raise blood sugar. Originally created for people with diabetes, it's useful for anyone looking to avoid blood sugar spikes.

Carbs are your body's main energy source, but they're not all the same. Simple carbs (like sweets and white bread) cause quick blood sugar spikes. Complex carbs (like beans and veggies) digest slowly, providing steady energy.

Foods are rated from 0 to 100—lower numbers mean slower digestion. For example, spinach has a GI of 0; sweet potatoes are higher, around 70.

Knowing a food's GI can help you manage energy, avoid crashes, and lower your risk of chronic conditions.

Focus on whole foods like vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and legumes. Limit processed foods, and talk to your provider before making big dietary changes.

Source: <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/ask-the-doctors-what-is-the-glycemic-index-and-why-does-it-matter>



# Summer Sun Safety

## PROTECTING YOUR SKIN EVERY DAY

*Your guide to enjoying the sunshine—safely.*

Written by Jessica Walker, BSN, RN, Quality Improvement, Medical Associates Health Plans

The Midwest's harsh winters and unpredictable seasons make summer perfect for enjoying the outdoors—baseball, picnics, pool days, and more. But with all that sunshine, practicing sun safety is key. While sunlight helps us make vitamin D, too much can lead to long-term issues like wrinkles, age spots, and skin cancer. Sunburns may fade, but their effects can last a lifetime. Thankfully, simple, accessible steps can help protect your skin all season.

### Why Sun Safety Matters

Your skin is your body's largest organ—and your first line of defense. It shields you from the environment and helps regulate your temperature, but it's also vulnerable to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

#### UV rays come in two types that affect the skin:

- UVA rays cause premature aging (think wrinkles and sunspots)
- UVB rays cause sunburn

Both types of rays contribute to skin cancer, including melanoma, the most dangerous form. In fact, according to the American Academy of Dermatology, 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer, making it the most common type of cancer in the U.S. The good news? Most cases are preventable with the right precautions.

### What Everyone Should Know

**Everyone, regardless of skin color or ethnicity, can experience sun damage.** If you have darker skin, you naturally produce more melanin, which offers some protection by absorbing UV rays and reducing their penetration into skin cells. However, you are still at risk for developing skin cancer and should use sun protection consistently (Cleveland Clinic, 2022).

### Sunscreen Tips

When selecting sunscreen, look for:

- **Broad-spectrum protection (blocks UVA and UVB rays)**
- **SPF 30 or higher**
- **Water resistance, especially if swimming or sweating**
- **SPF lip balm to protect your lips**

Apply sunscreen generously (about 1 ounce) 15 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply every 2 hours—or immediately after swimming or sweating. Don't forget often-missed areas like ears, feet, and any exposed scalp.

### Go Beyond Sunscreen

Sunscreen alone isn't enough. The CDC recommends combining multiple protective measures, including:

- **Seek shade, especially between 10 am and 4 pm**
- **Wear wide-brimmed hats, UV-blocking sunglasses, and lightweight long sleeves**
- **Be aware that water, sand, and even clouds can reflect or allow UV rays through**

Making sun safety a daily habit is one of the simplest, most effective ways to protect your long-term health. Melanoma most often develops on sun-exposed areas like the face, back, arms, and legs—but it can also appear in places you might not expect, such as the palms, soles of the feet, or even under fingernails. Exposure to both natural sunlight and artificial sources like tanning beds increase the risk of skin damage and cancer.

In addition to daily sun protection, regular self-skin checks are a smart way to monitor for changes. For those at higher risk, annual full-body exams by a dermatologist are also recommended. Detecting changes early gives you the best chance of effective treatment.

**And if you notice any unusual spots on your skin, don't wait—early detection can save lives.**

Sources: [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org); [www.skincancer.org](http://www.skincancer.org); [www.my.clevelandclinic.org](http://www.my.clevelandclinic.org); [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov); [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

## Skin Cancer Awareness: Know the ABCDEs of Melanoma.

Melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer, but it's also highly treatable when caught early. Use the ABCDE rule to spot potential warning signs:

**A** **Asymmetry:** One half doesn't match the other

**B** **Border:** Edges are uneven, jagged, or blurred

**C** **Color:** Multiple colors or uneven shading

**D** **Diameter:** Larger than 6mm (about the size of a pencil eraser)

**E** **Evolving:** Change in size, shape, color, or behavior (itching, bleeding, etc.)

If you see a mole or spot that looks different or is changing, schedule a skin check with your provider or a dermatologist. Annual skin exams are especially important if you have risk factors like a history of sunburns, tanning bed use, fair skin, or a family history of skin cancer.

Source: <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/skin-cancer/find/at-risk/abcde>

# Let's Talk About Your Health!



Your primary care provider wants to hear about the everyday things that impact your health. At your next visit, take a moment to discuss how you're feeling—even small conversations can lead to big improvements in your well-being. **Here's a quick list to help guide your visit:**

**1) In the past 12 months, have you experienced any of the following?** *Check all that apply.*

- Physical health limiting moderate activities
- Physical health limiting climbing stairs
- Pain interfering with normal activities
- Unusual tiredness or having little energy
- Problem with balance or walking
- Dizziness  Accidentally leaked urine

**2) In the past 2 weeks, how often have you felt:**

- a. Little interest or pleasure in doing things
  - Not at all  Several days
  - More than half the days  Nearly every day
- b. Down, depressed or hopeless
  - Not at all  Several days
  - More than half the days  Nearly every day

**3) Have you fallen in the past year?**  Yes  No

**4) Are you afraid of falling?**  Yes  No

**5) In the past 4 weeks, has your health limited your social activities with family, friends, or groups?**

- All of the time  Most  Some  A little  None

**6) Do you exercise 20+ minutes, 3+ times/week?**

- Yes, most of the time  Yes, sometimes  No

**7) Has your living situation changed?**  Yes  No

If yes, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Bring this list to your next appointment—your provider can help with practical steps to improve your energy, mood, movement, and confidence. **Let's keep you feeling your best—every day.**

## FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Information related to MAHP's quality improvement plan, case management, disease management, member rights, communications, appeals process, after-hours assistance, accreditation/awards, and privacy/confidentiality may be viewed at: [www.mahealthplans.com](http://www.mahealthplans.com). Persons without access to the internet may request paper copies by contacting MAHP at 563-556-8070 or 1-800-747-8900. Please ask to speak with a member of the QI team for assistance.

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Call us at 563-584-4885 or email [memberservices@mahealthcare.com](mailto:memberservices@mahealthcare.com)

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