

CITY NEWS

NUTRITIONIST

Seniors need to take charge of their health

By Edna Manning

Canadians, including seniors, are becoming increasingly aware of the need to take charge of their health. They are recognizing there are steps they can take to build their immune system and prevent illness.

"I'm receiving more and more requests to do talks for seniors," says Paulette Millis, a nutritional consultant, writer and speaker. She's been conducting healthy living and eating workshops for over 20 years and has written five books on health and nutrition, including *Eat Away Illness: Strategies and Recipes for Healing* which hit the non-fiction best-seller list at McNally Robinson in Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

"By changing our lifestyles we can build healthy habits that will restore our immune systems, give us more energy and keep our minds sharp and clear. Drugs may get rid of symptoms but they don't heal the body. Healing and rebuilding occurs from the inside and takes time," she explains.

The following are four areas seniors may wish to focus on when it comes to nutrition and wellness, Millis says.

The first is dealing with the fact that digestion becomes less efficient as we age. "When we can't digest certain foods properly, the nutrients are not being assimilated. In addition, we tend to eat less, particularly if we're living alone. These factors result in a huge deficit of nutrients."

Streamlining the diet is vital to good digestion. This means correcting protein intake, eating only complex carbohydrates such as raw nuts and seeds, whole grain products and legumes and making sure our diet includes healthy fats and oils. Using natural enzymes will also improve digestion.

The second area of attention is

the brain. Healthy fats and good quality protein trigger the production of brain chemicals that improve concentration, alertness and clear thinking. Natural fats include avocados, raw nuts and seeds, naturally occurring fats in organic meats and wild fish, cold-pressed olive oil, organic coconut oil and butter. We need the correct amount of protein throughout the day, such as yogurt, eggs, chicken and fish or legumes and grain if you are eating a vegetarian meal.

Dealing with memory issues is also of concern to many seniors. Millis says B-Vitamins are essential for the health and proper function of brain cells. "They help to control moodiness, restlessness, insomnia and fatigue. Green leafy vegetables and whole grains like oatmeal are good for memory."

Bone health is important as we age. Two major nutrients — calcium and Vitamin D — are essential and it's necessary to have them together, Millis stresses. These nutrients are found in eggs, butter, blackstrap molasses, greens such as spinach and kale, sesame seeds, broccoli, salmon, sardines and yogurt. "I suggest taking a Vitamin D supplement, particularly during the winter," she adds.

In addition to good nutrition, what other lifestyle habits are important for seniors to implement?

- Learning something new all the time will help keep the brain active.

- Studies show that regular exercise three or four times a week decreases the risk of dementia by 35 to 40 per cent.

- Socialize regularly — get out and do things with family and friends.

- Hobbies are important — gardening, puzzles, needlework, reading, woodworking, etc.

Millis is offering free shipping with online purchases of all five of her books. Visit www.healing-withnutrition.ca or phone 306-244-8890.



Paulette Millis, a nutritional consultant, writer and speaker has written five books on health and nutrition. BRIDGES PHOTO BY MICHELLE BERG