

**total nutrition**

Vitamin and Mineral Needs Change With Age

One challenge seniors face is getting proper amounts of certain vitamins and minerals, says Mary Helen Gunkler, registered dietitian and staff nutritionist for Total cereal.

Current research indicates that these are among the vitamins and minerals that may be of particular concern to seniors:

- Vitamin B6, vitamin B12, riboflavin (B2) and folic acid (folacin) are essential B vitamins that seniors may need more of for good health. Scientists are currently trying to learn if seniors use more of certain B vitamins or if their bodies use the vitamins less efficiently. B-complex vitamins are necessary for almost every reaction in every cell of the body and are widely distributed throughout the food groups.

- Adequate vitamin D, needed to maintain strong bones, may be a special concern with aging because the skin becomes less efficient at making vitamin D from sunlight, which is the primary source of vitamin D. Foods rich in vitamin D include fortified milk and fatty fish.

- Calcium can play a role in helping seniors maintain bone mass so that bones do not become weak and fragile. Dairy products are important sources of calcium in the American diet.

- Seniors also should take steps to assure adequate iron intake. Because metabolism slows with age, calorie needs decrease, but iron needs remain the same. Foods rich in iron include meat, eggs, vegetables and cereals fortified with iron, such as Whole Grain Total cereal.

- Research suggests that with aging, the body may develop a decreased ability to absorb zinc. Therefore, greater quantities may be needed from zinc-rich foods, such as meats and some vegetables. Also, look for cereals fortified with zinc.

Gunkler concludes that a dietitian can assess your overall diet and show you what changes will help make up for possible nutrient shortages.

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**COOKIN' GOOD**  
By Deanna Gugel

**Pasta And Bacon Bake**

This is a simple dish that can be prepared in about 30-45 minutes at the end of a busy day. You may serve it as a side dish or as a complete meal.

- 3 strips lean bacon
- 2 quarts water
- 1 tap. salt
- 16-oz. jar of processed cheese
- 32 oz. pasta shells (your choice)
- 2 slices Italian bread
- 4 T butter
- 1 tap. garlic powder

In a large frying pan, cook bacon slices until they are very crispy. Remove the bacon from the pan, place it on an oven-safe plate, and continue to heat the bacon on low in the oven until you are ready to use it. Pour water into a large three-quart pot and add salt. Bring water to a boil. While the water is heating, rinse pasta in a colander to clean. As soon as the water starts to boil, add pasta and cook until the water is almost completely boiled off. Gradually stir in the cheese until the pasta is completely covered. In a small boiler, melt four T butter. Add garlic powder and mix thoroughly. Tear up slices of bread into one-half-inch pieces, and drop them into the butter-garlic mixture. Stir with a fork until the bread soaks up all the butter. Remove the bread from the burner before the bread starts to burn. Remove the bacon strips from the oven and crunch into little pieces. Drop those pieces into the pasta and cheese and stir until they are evenly distributed in the pasta. Put the macaroni-bacon mixture in a small casserole dish, and top with bread crumbs. Bake at 300 degrees for about 10 minutes, or until the bread starts to brown.

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