

The Importance of Diet Plans and Exercises in Different Age Groups



**Special attention to
DIET & EXERCISE
is imperative in
different life stages**

Good nutrition and plenty of activity are the building blocks for a person's strong growth, healthy development and lifelong well-being. Over time, these requirements may vary in different age groups. The general physical and nutrition needs based on age are given in the following sections.

Diet Plans at Different Life Stages

Let us look at the nutritional needs at different life stages. It is to be understood that the body demands nutrients in recommended daily allowances (RDA) varying from age to age:

- **Infancy (0 to 12 months)** – Babies usually double their length and weight at this time. The requirement for iron, protein, thiamine, niacin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, magnesium, zinc, sodium and chloride increase over time.
- **Pre-School and School Going Children** – Solid food, including the need for carbohydrates, protein, vitamins and minerals, increase with age. Nutrients are stored to support the growth spurt for appropriate weight gain and development.
- **Adolescence** – Now, adolescents around 11 to 12 years for girls and 12 to 13 years for boys, require plenty of nutrients for their growth. An emphasis on nutrient-dense food such as fruits, legumes, nuts, vegetables and meat should be placed.
- **Young Adults** – Nutrients for good health depend now on the lifestyle and physical activity of the person. Calcium and phosphorus requirements are lower for both men and women than in adolescents, and there is a reduced need in women for magnesium and men for iron.
- **Old Age** – Since physical activity is reduced, carbohydrates and fat must be restricted. There is an evidence of muscle loss and the fragility of bones and protein is required to compensate for the loss and maintain the growth of cells.

Physical Exercise at Different Age Groups

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to improve their health. People must engage in exercise for their well-being. With time, the physical requirement of a person changes. As such, the demand for activity varies from person to person, age to age.

- **Pre-School-Aged Children** – Physical activities are crucial for their development and can be incorporated in several ways.
- **Children and Adolescents** – Physical exercise includes moderate-to-vigorous daily physical activity, such as running, climbing or jumping rope.
- **Adults** – They require at least 150 minutes a week of moderate activity such as brisk walking to strengthen muscles.
- **Older Adults** – Senior adults can also benefit from physical activity to improve coordination, muscle strength and balance.

Role of a healthy lifestyle in children

Sports and fitness are essential to channel the energy levels of the children in a positive way. Children should be encouraged to indulge in physical activities and avoid a sedentary lifestyle. Chips and soft drinks cannot be an ideal diet pattern to accompany this lifestyle. It may eventually lead to obesity and diseases like diabetes and cardiac arrest later in life.

Children who play sports are more robust and more independent. They learn teamwork and how to manage their time. Parents should encourage them to participate in physical activities such as exercise, dance, fitness games, swimming, etc. Children need physical activity to stay in shape and have a healthy mind. Furthermore, physically healthy children mostly perform well academically and develop motor and coordination skills.

Parental Support for a proper diet and exercise for a child is of prime importance. Parents should be role models, eat healthy foods, and indulge in fitness routines. Moreover, they should be committed to the child's good growth and development and be responsible for providing proper nourishment to the child.