

## Nutrition May Help Women Age Gracefully

(NAPSA)—Women can find that the years of their lives ranging from 40 to 55 can be among the most satisfying of their life even though their bodies are experiencing changes. These changes are due, in large part, to the reduced production of the hormone estrogen.

Estrogen helps keep blood vessels elastic and functioning smoothly, helping regulate how much cholesterol the liver makes while helping preserve bone density. As menopause approaches and estrogen levels dip, the risk for heart disease and osteoporosis rises. Preliminary studies suggest that lower estrogen levels may also have an impact on memory.

Eating healthfully can help you manage these life changes. You should add these important foods:

**Whole grains**—Whole grains contain lignans, which are a type of phytoestrogen. Scientists believe that these substances, found only in fruits, vegetables and grains, may act like a weak form of the hormone estrogen. Preliminary research suggests phytoestrogens may help fill in for the diminishing levels of estrogen in the body by, for example, helping to maintain healthy bones. Phytoestrogens may also help blood vessels retain their elasticity and perhaps protect against the hardening of arteries to the heart and brain.

Whole grains also contain fiber, B vitamins, antioxidants, and several phytonutrients. Together they can have a significant impact on the heart health of middle-aged women. The internationally famous, ongoing Nurses Health Study found that women who ate an average of 2½ servings of whole-grain foods a day were 30 percent less likely to develop heart disease than those who ate only one serving a week.

**Soy**—Like whole grains, soy contains phytoestrogens. The bone, heart and memory benefits that may come from the phytoestrogens in whole grains might also be possible with soy. The protein in soy shows promise too. Eating 25 grams of soy protein a day, coming from whole soy foods, can help heart health by lowering

### What To Eat

3 servings per day of whole grains

Sample foods: Whole wheat bread, crackers, pasta Whole-grain cereals, like Total Bulgur, brown rice, barley

2-3 servings (25 grams of soy protein) per day of soy

Sample foods: Soymilk, tofu, soy nuts, tempeh, miso

3+ servings per day of bone-saving foods

Sample foods: Low-fat dairy products, (these don't have enough calcium to be "bone saving") fortified ready-to-eat cereal



artery-clogging cholesterol as much as 10 percent. A good source of soy protein can be found in such products as 8th Continent soy milk.

**Bone-saving foods**—No matter how gracefully you're aging, calcium, magnesium, vitamin D, phosphorus and perhaps boron are ingredients for strong bones. Eating foods that are rich in these vitamins and minerals, plus exercising daily, will help stem the loss.

**Weight-friendly ideas**—Weight gain can become an issue for women as they get older—often because of changes in physical activity. Physical activity is critical to staying at a healthy weight and should be part of your routine every day. Becoming calorie conscious helps as well. Foods rich in vitamins and minerals yet lower in calories contribute to the cause, so that means plenty of fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole-grain breads and cereals.

### A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition

Breakfast has been shown to be a key meal occasion for getting these important nutrients. Total cereal is a good choice because it's made with whole grains and is fortified with 100% of the DV for calcium, iron, folic acid and vitamin D. It packs a lot of nutrition in very few calories, which is ideal for the years that we hope are your best!