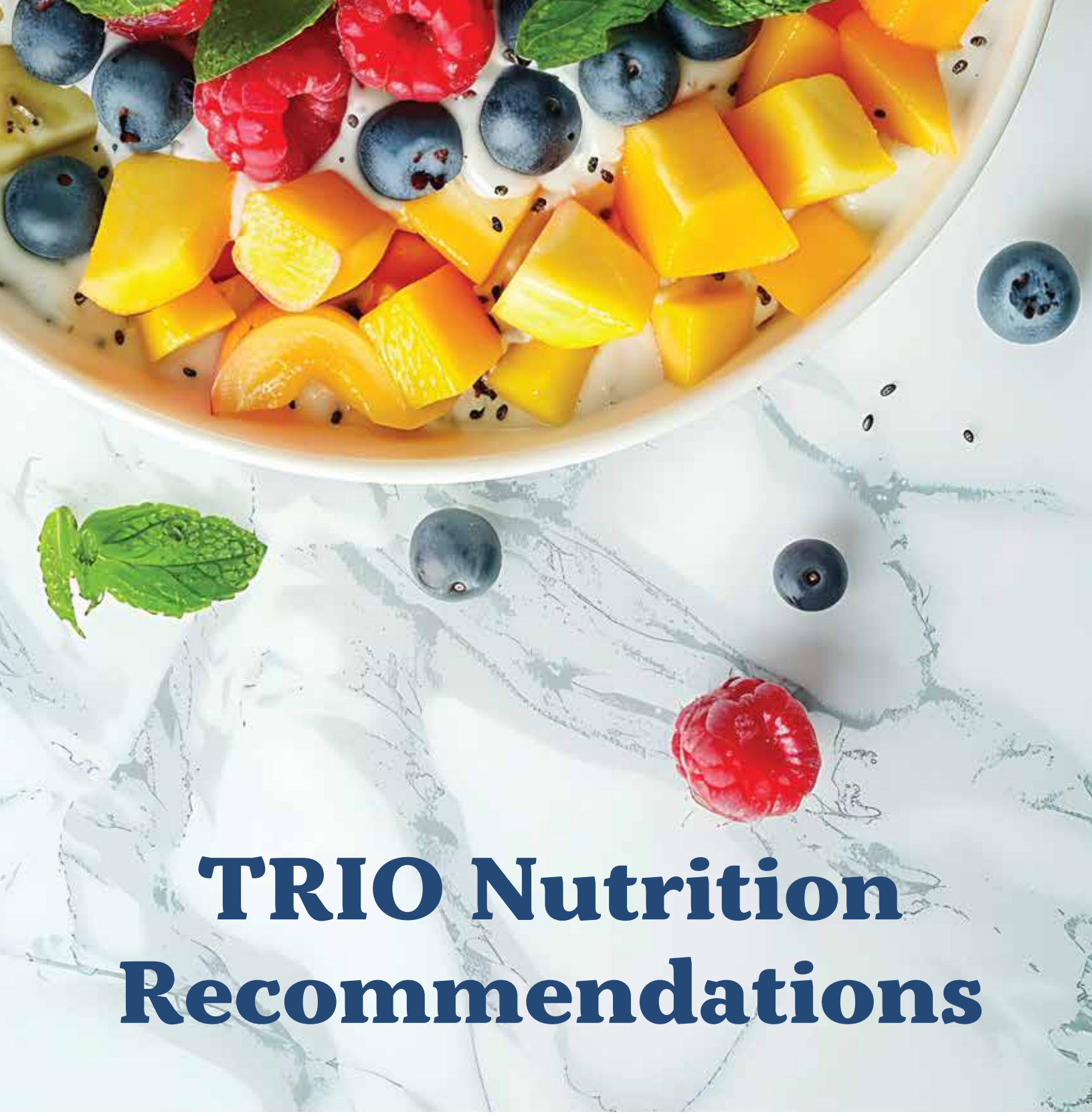


TRIO Nutrition Recommendations

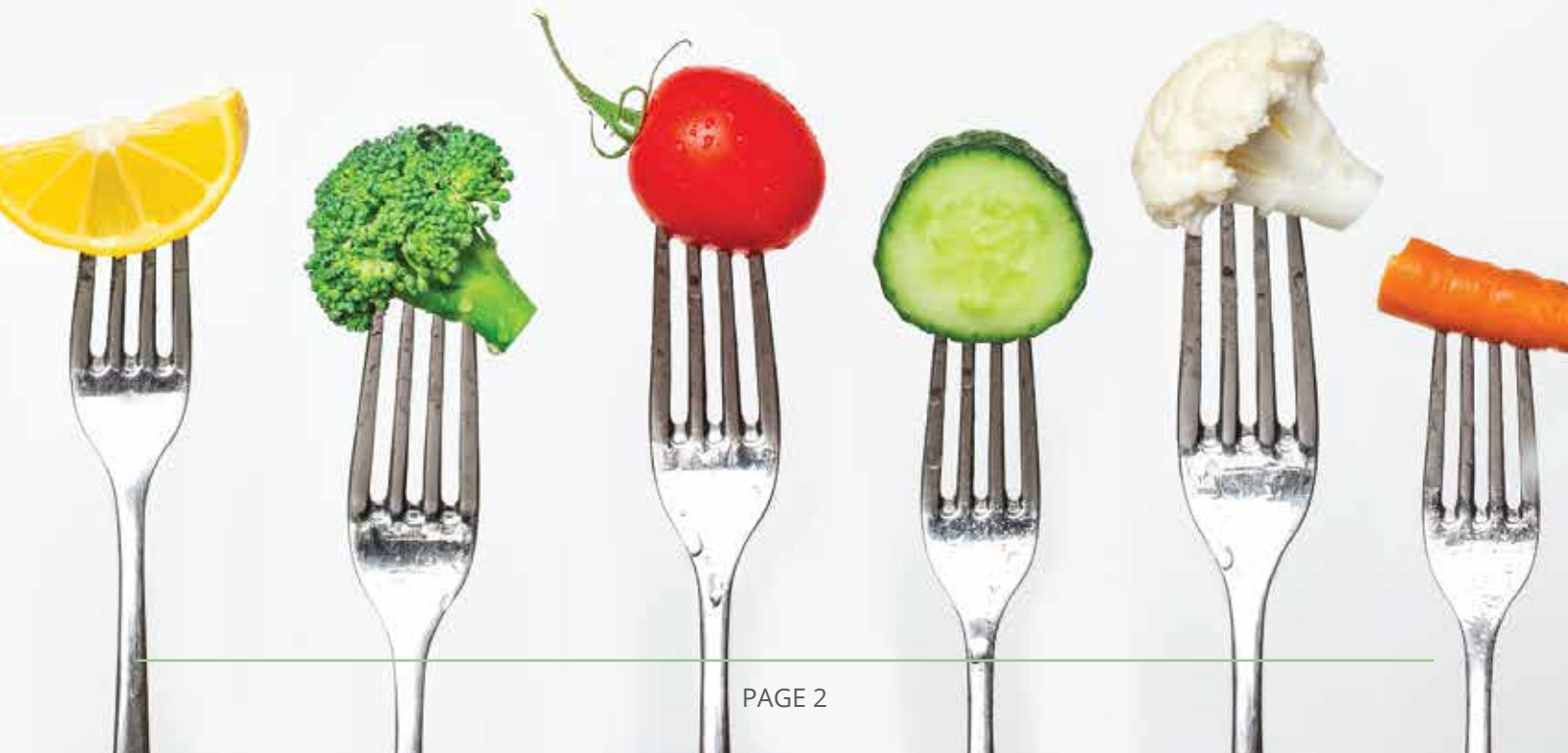
Guidance for Standard and Medically Tailored Meal Programs

TRIO Community Meals

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TRIO's Approach to Nutrition

As the nation's largest senior nutrition meal provider, TRIO Community Meals brings nearly 50 years of experience serving older adults and supporting community-based nutrition programs across the country.

That experience, combined with the expertise of our registered dietitians, gives TRIO a unique understanding of what it takes to develop nutrition standards that are evidence-informed, practical and designed for the populations our partners serve.

TRIO developed these nutrition recommendations to provide a framework for standard and medically tailored meal programs. Informed by national nutrition guidance, TRIO's recommendations balance nutritional needs with variety, choice and palatability.

Nutrition Standards at a Glance

Standard

Balanced nutrition recommendations supporting the general nutritional needs of older adults.

Diabetic Aware

Balanced nutrition emphasizing protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates, and fiber.

Heart Health

Nutrition focused on lean proteins, plant-based foods, fiber, sodium and saturated fat.

Renal Aware

Specialized nutrition addressing protein, sodium, potassium and phosphorus for chronic kidney disease.

A Foundation for Balanced Nutrition

TRIO's Standard Nutrition recommendations provide a practical framework for programs serving older adults that do not have established nutrition standards through state requirements, funding sources or other program guidelines.

The recommendations are informed by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Recommended Dietary Allowances and TRIO's experience supporting hundreds of programs providing meals to older adults under the Older Americans Act.



Recommended Nutrition Standards

Values Met Daily

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Calories	OAA±	≥600 kcal
Protein	RDA, DGA	≥23 gm
Vitamin C	RDA	≥25 mg

Values Met Weekly

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Fat	RDA	≤35% of total calories
Saturated Fat	DGA	≤10% of total calories
Sodium	DGA	≤767 mg
Calcium	RDA	≥400 mg
Fiber	RDA	≥7 g
Vitamin A	RDA	≥233 mcg

Source Key

DGA = Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2026-2030

OAA = Older Americans Act

RDA = Recommended Dietary Allowance

± The Older Americans Act does not specify a standard for this nutrient. TRIO's recommendation reflects our experience supporting hundreds of programs operating under the Older Americans Act.

The Thinking Behind Our Standards

Calories

Designed around real-world program needs

Based on TRIO's experience with hundreds of programs, calorie requirements commonly fall within the 500 to 700 calorie range per meal. TRIO recommends a minimum of 600 calories per meal as a practical standard that can support a variety of program and individual needs.

Protein

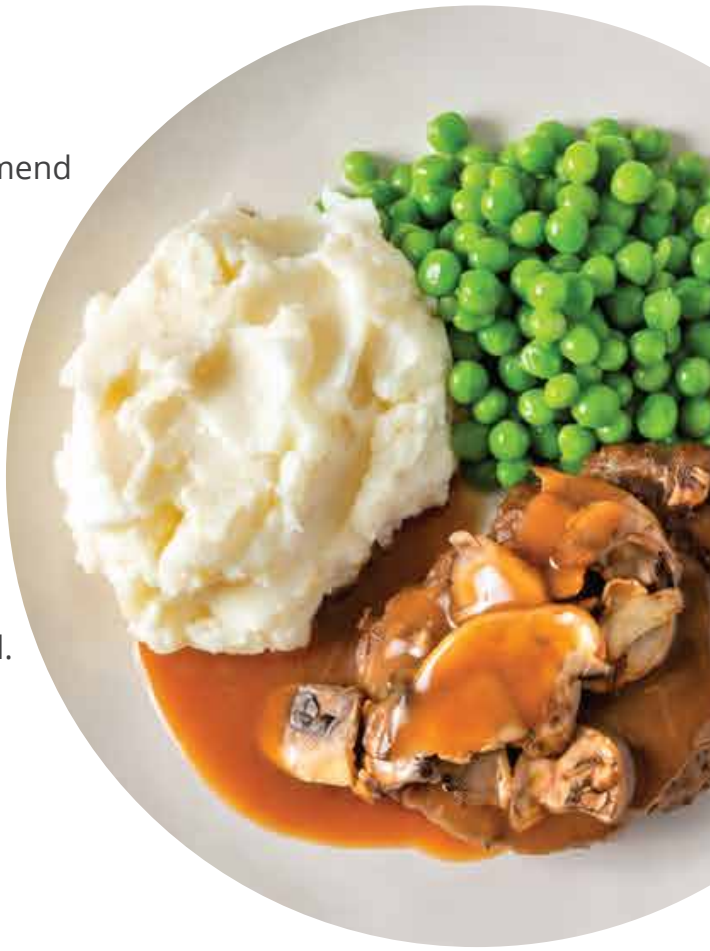
Supporting adequate protein intake

TRIO recommends at least 23 grams of protein per meal. Rather than prescribing a single protein source, our approach encourages variety across animal and plant-based proteins to support a balanced eating pattern.

Sodium

Finding the right balance

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sodium to 2,300 mg per day, or approximately 767 mg per meal. TRIO recognizes that sodium levels can impact taste and meal acceptance, particularly among older adults. Our dietitians work with programs to determine an appropriate sodium target that considers nutrition guidance, program requirements and the needs of the population being served.



TRIO's recommendations are informed by: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Recommended Dietary Allowances and TRIO's experience supporting programs operating under the Older Americans Act.

A Balanced Approach to Diabetes Nutrition

TRIO's Diabetic Aware recommendations are designed to support balanced meal patterns for older adults managing diabetes. Guided by American Diabetes Association recommendations, the framework emphasizes appropriate portions of protein and carbohydrates while incorporating whole grains, fruits, vegetables and other nutrient-dense foods.

Rather than focusing on restriction alone, TRIO's approach prioritizes balanced nutrition, variety and meal satisfaction while supporting healthy blood sugar management.

Recommended Nutrition Standards

Values Met Daily

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Calories	OAA±, DASH	≥550 kcal
Protein	ADA	≥20% of total calories
Carbohydrates	ADA	≤60% of total calories†

Values Met Weekly

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Fat	ADA, RDA	≤35% of total calories
Saturated Fat	ADA, RDA, DGA	≤7 to 10% of total calories
Sodium	ADA, DGA	≤767 mg
Fiber	ADA	≥7.5 g
Vitamin B12	ADA, RDA	≥0.8 mcg

Source Key

ADA = American Diabetes Association Standards of Care in Diabetes, 2026

DASH = Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension

DGA = Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2026–2030

OAA = Older Americans Act

RDA = Recommended Dietary Allowance

± The Older Americans Act does not specify a standard for this nutrient. TRIO's recommendation reflects our experience supporting hundreds of programs operating under the Older Americans Act.

† Emphasize whole grains and complex carbohydrates while limiting simple carbohydrates and added sugars.



The Thinking Behind Our Standards

Carbohydrates

Focusing on carbohydrate quality

TRIO allows carbohydrates to comprise up to 60% of total calories to provide flexibility in meeting individual program needs. The emphasis is placed on complex carbohydrates and whole grains while limiting simple carbohydrates to support more gradual blood sugar response, increased fiber and satiety.

Fiber

Building fiber into the meal

TRIO recommends at least 7.5 grams of fiber per meal, based on American Diabetes Association guidance of approximately 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories consumed. Fiber is an important part of a balanced eating pattern and can support blood sugar management and overall health.

Vitamin B12

An important consideration for older adults with diabetes

TRIO includes Vitamin B12 within its Diabetic Aware standards because some commonly prescribed diabetes medications, including metformin, may contribute to Vitamin B12 deficiency.

Balanced Nutrition for Heart Health

TRIO's Heart Healthy recommendations emphasize lean proteins and plant-based foods while limiting higher-fat protein sources. Informed by American Heart Association guidance, the DASH eating plan and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, these standards support heart health while maintaining balanced, satisfying meals.

The recommendations also align closely with TRIO's Diabetic Aware standards, allowing programs greater flexibility when serving older adults with multiple dietary considerations.

Recommended Nutrition Standards

Values Met Daily

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Calories	OAA±, DASH	≥550 kcal
Protein	AHA	≥20% of total calories

Values Met Weekly

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Fat	AHA, RDA	≤35% of total calories
Saturated Fat	AHA, RDA, DGA	≤6 to 10% of total calories
Sodium	DASH	≤767 mg
Fiber	AHA	≥7.5 g

Source Key

AHA = American Heart Association
DASH = Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension
DGA = Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2026-2030
OAA = Older Americans Act
RDA = Recommended Dietary Allowance
± The Older Americans Act does not specify a standard for this nutrient. TRIO's recommendation reflects our experience supporting hundreds of programs operating under the Older Americans Act.

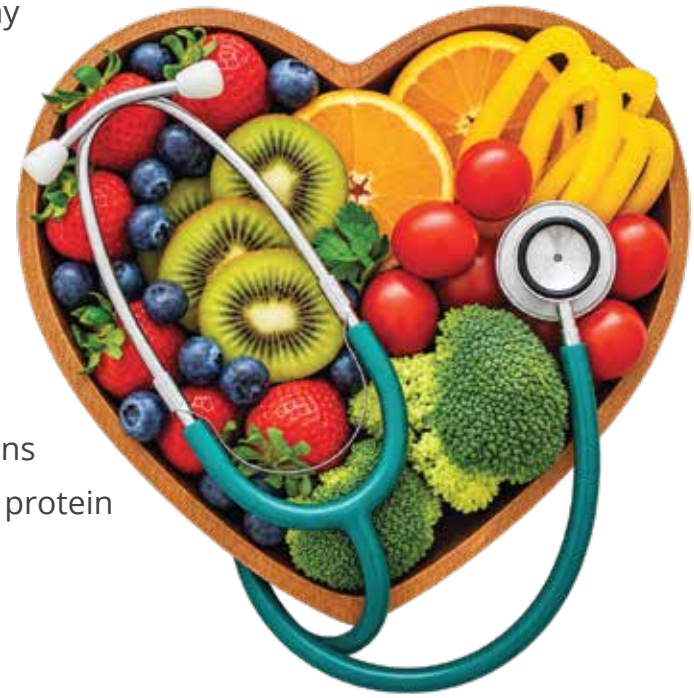


The Thinking Behind Our Standards

Protein

Prioritizing lean and plant-based sources

TRIO recommends protein provide at least 20% of total calories, with an emphasis on lean proteins and plant-based sources as part of a heart-healthy eating pattern.



Saturated Fat

Limiting saturated fat while supporting balanced meals

TRIO recommends saturated fat account for no more than 6 to 10% of total calories. This range supports heart-health recommendations while allowing flexibility to provide adequate protein and maintain meal variety.

Sodium

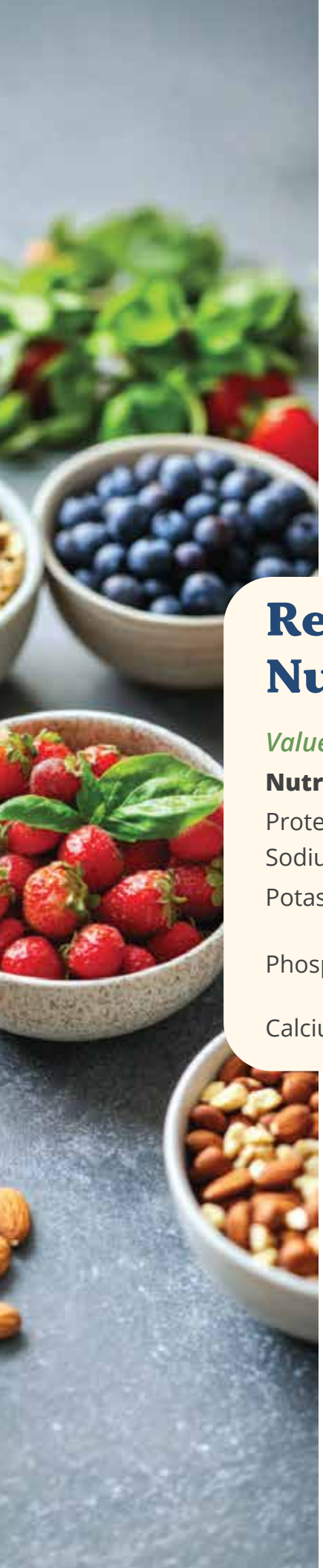
Balancing heart health and meal acceptance

TRIO recommends no more than 767 mg of sodium per meal. This provides a meaningful sodium limit while recognizing that taste and meal acceptance are important considerations when developing meals for older adults.

Fiber

Building fiber into heart-healthy meals

TRIO recommends at least 7.5 grams of fiber per meal. Fiber-rich foods, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes, are an important part of a heart-healthy eating pattern.



Nutrition for Kidney Health

TRIO's Renal Aware recommendations are designed for older adults with chronic kidney disease (CKD), rather than end-stage renal disease (ESRD). This approach reflects the broader population of older adults living with CKD and allows for nutrition standards that support kidney health while maintaining balanced, satisfying meals.

Guided by National Kidney Foundation recommendations, TRIO's approach focuses on protein, sodium, potassium, phosphorus and calcium while recognizing that individual needs can vary.

Recommended Nutrition Standards

Values Met Daily

Nutrient	Source	Value Per Meal
Protein	NKF	≤21 g
Sodium	NKF	≤767 mg
Potassium	NKF	Exclusion of high K+ foods; <800 mg±
Phosphorus	NKF	Exclusion of high Ph foods
Calcium	NKF	>333 mg

Source Key

NFK = National Kidney Foundation Kidney Disease Quality Initiative

± A specific potassium limit is not always recommended. For programs that require a defined limit, we recommend <800 mg per meal.

Foods to Consider

Higher in Potassium

Dairy products, nuts, beans and legumes, potatoes, tomatoes, bananas, oranges, greens, raisins, whole wheat bread and brown rice

Higher in Phosphorus

Dairy products, nuts, beans and legumes, bran cereals and whole grains, beef and chicken liver, processed meats and organ meats

These lists are not all-inclusive and highlight foods commonly served in senior nutrition programs or consumed by older adults.

The Thinking Behind Our Standards

Protein

Finding the right balance

TRIO recommends no more than 21 grams of protein per meal. This recommendation reflects National Kidney Foundation guidance for individuals with CKD who are not receiving dialysis while balancing adequate protein intake and meal satisfaction.

Potassium

A more individualized approach

Current kidney nutrition guidance does not recommend a single potassium limit for everyone with CKD. TRIO recommends limiting foods particularly high in potassium and provides an optional target of no more than 800 mg per meal for programs that require a defined standard.

Phosphorus

Focusing on phosphorus sources

Rather than establishing a single phosphorus limit, TRIO recommends limiting foods particularly high in phosphorus. This approach considers differences in how phosphorus is absorbed from various food sources while maintaining the overall nutritional value of the meal.

Calcium

Supporting adequate intake

TRIO recommends at least 333 mg of calcium per meal, reflecting the upper end of the National Kidney Foundation's recommended daily range when distributed across three meals.



Your Partner Behind the Plate.

For nearly 50 years, TRIO Community Meals has worked alongside community-based nutrition programs to provide meals that support the health and well-being of older adults.

From standard nutrition to medically tailored meal programs, our registered dietitians and culinary experts bring the knowledge and experience to develop nutrition solutions that meet the needs of the populations our partners serve.

triocommunitymeals.com • 844-773-0370

