



Healthy Eating for Healthy Seniors

A healthy diet is an important part of active, healthy aging. When we have more time for food shopping and preparation, cooking can be more enjoyable and less of a chore. Treat yourself well – you deserve it!



Aging affects nutrition. As you get older, you need to eat less food (fewer calories) but you need the same amount, or even more, of certain vitamins and minerals.

Planning meals

- ✓ Ensure you are eating a well-balanced diet with choices from all 4 food groups: whole grains, fruits and vegetables, low fat dairy products, meat and alternatives (meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dried beans, peas or lentils).
- ✓ Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods each day, at all three meals and one to three snacks. Try something new each week.
- ✓ Protein-rich foods such as meat, chicken, fish, eggs and dairy products at each meal are very important for keeping your muscles and bones healthy. We lose muscle strength as we age.
- ✓ Fibre, found in vegetables, fruit and whole grains such as oatmeal, brown rice, or whole grain wheat, helps to prevent constipation and soften stools. Fibre also helps prevent and treat a variety of conditions such as high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to stay properly hydrated, and to help the fibre work well.





Easy meals that require little or no cooking

- Yogourt with cheese and crackers, canned peaches
- Cottage cheese, fruit salad , banana loaf and milk or juice
- Tuna with melba toast or crackers, pudding cup and a banana
- Whole grain English muffin with melted cheese, strawberries , milk
- Bran or oatmeal muffin, boiled egg, applesauce
- Pasta with meat sauce, a bag of premade salad and a glass of milk
- Canned beans, whole grain toast, microwaveable frozen vegetables, fruit cocktail, milkshake
- Soup with extra beans added (chickpeas, lentils or black beans), ½ cup vegetables, frozen blueberries with pudding
- Toast with peanut butter, banana and a glass of milk

Easy shopping tips

- Consider a pre-made meal delivery service (e.g., Meals on Wheels) one or two times a week. The frozen meal option gives you more flexibility, but if your independence or mobility are limited, a hot meal delivered by a friendly volunteer may be a good option.
- Some communities offer group grocery store trips.
- Many grocery stores offer delivery services, or online shopping.
- Shop with a friend, and split larger quantities. For instance, share a package of muffins or buy a package of four chicken breasts so that you and your friend can each cook two.
- Stock an “emergency shelf” with canned beans, tuna, canned fruit and skim milk powder and nutritional supplements such as Boost or Ensure, in case you can’t get to the store.

Easy food preparation tips

- Prepare an extra chicken breast for supper and have it in a sandwich or wrap the next day for lunch.
- Freeze leftovers in single portion containers.
- Share with your neighbor or friend and alternate cooking days.

Cooking for one

- If you live alone it can be hard to motivate yourself to cook a variety of healthy meals.
- Cook a little extra and use leftovers creatively! Extra vegetables can be used in a pasta dish, pureed with milk for soup, or added to an omelette or stir fry.
- Consider getting together with others who also live alone can create a good environment for healthy eating and socializing.

Coping with changing abilities

- **Taste:** Sometimes our taste buds do not work as well as they used to. Try a different seasoning or spice to liven them up.
- **Chewing and swallowing:** Nutritious meals can be prepared with softer, more moist foods.

Changing appetites

- You may have less appetite due to medical conditions that require changes in eating, such as dietary restrictions.
- Food preparation and eating can cause fatigue or a feeling of being tired.

If cooking is new to you

- Basic cooking skills can soon be mastered! Many grocery stores offer cooking classes.
- Shop for easy, ready to eat meals. Be sure to read food labels.



Always follow specific diet instructions provided by your doctor or dietitian.