



Food for Aging Well!!

A Guide to Healthy Eating for Older Adults

Take a look inside...

You and your weight

Oops... I forgot to eat breakfast.

How is your appetite doing?

Eat your veggies... and fruit!

What about protein?

Bone up on calcium!

Drink water often!

Troubles swallowing, biting or chewing?

Are you eating alone?

Cooking feels like a chore!

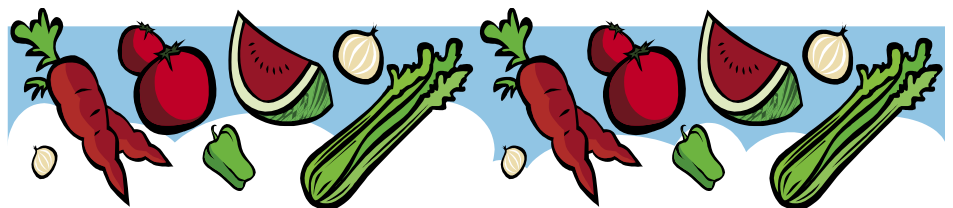
Get the best nutrition for your money.

Tips to make grocery shopping easier.

Good nutrition is important at any age. Eating well will help you feel your best each day. You may even help to prevent or manage heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

This guide is designed for older adults. The content will help guide you in making healthy eating choices. You will find many ideas that will make healthy eating easy and enjoyable!

Remember, it is never too early to start eating a healthy, balanced diet!



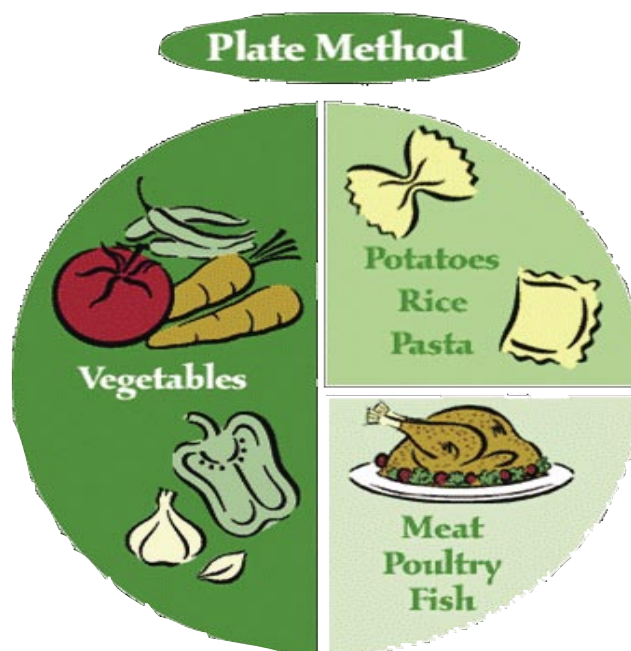
Is Weight Gain a Concern?

Instead of dieting to lose weight quickly, it is better to eat a balanced diet and exercise as you are able. Drastic weight loss is not healthy. Older adults tend to lose muscle when they diet which can affect their health.

Remember that adults come in a variety of sizes and shapes!

- Try to eat at least the minimum of servings from all four food groups each day:
 - grain products (6 - 7 servings)
 - vegetables and fruit (7 servings)
 - milk products (3 servings)
 - meat and alternatives (2 - 3 servings)
- Watch serving sizes. A “serving” is not the amount of food you put on your plate. Read food labels for the correct serving size.
- Eat regularly. Three meals and 2 snacks each day.
- Limit high fat/high sugar foods.
- Eat your meals slowly and enjoy each bite.
- Limit fruit juice to ½ cup per day

- Eat when you are hungry. Stop when you are full. You don’t need to finish all the food on your plate.
- Use the plate method to help you with servings of food.



Quick and Healthy Snack Ideas (Aim for 2 snacks per day)

Applesauce	Cold hard-cooked eggs	Toast and peanut butter
Low fat popcorn	Hot or cold cereal	Canned soups (low sodium)
Low fat cheese and crackers	Frozen yogurt with berries	Trail mix – nuts and fruit
Canned fruit in own juices	Milk and oatmeal cookie	Veggies and dip
	Yogurt and fruit	

Are You Losing Weight?

It is natural for weight to change within a few pounds from day to day. However, sometimes older adults lose weight quickly and without trying. If you lose weight, especially without trying, there may be a problem. Speak with your doctor to help you see why you might be losing weight.

Here are some tips you can use to help stop weight loss.

- Eat smaller amounts of food more often.
- Try eating every 1–2 hours.
- Eat the most food at the time of day your appetite is best.
- Have a snack before bed at night. For example, cheese with crackers or a yogurt.
- Eat favourite foods any time of the day.
- Use milkshakes or meal replacements (Ensure™, Boost™, Resource 2.0™) as snacks or take them with your pills.
- Make every bite count! Fill up on high calorie foods.
- Avoid smoking, as it lowers the appetite and limits taste.



Sunny Orange Banana Milk Shake

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vanilla yogurt
2 tbsp skim milk powder
1 banana

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice

In blender, combine yogurt, skim milk powder, banana and orange juice; blend until smooth.

Quick and easy ways to add calories to your diet...

Add These Foods	To These Foods
Table cream, skim milk powder	Cream soups, hot/cold cereal, milkshakes, pudding, scrambled eggs, pancakes
Whipping cream	Pudding, custard, cake, pie
Ice cream	Fruit, milkshakes, cake
Butter, margarine, oil	Soups, mashed potatoes, hot cereals, rice
Hard Cheese	Scrambled eggs, sandwiches, potatoes
Nuts (cashews, walnuts, sunflower seeds), peanut butter	Hot/cold cereal, yogurt, ice cream, toast, pancakes
Jam, sugar, syrup, honey	Bread, crackers, cereal

Oops... I Forgot to Eat Breakfast!



If you skip any meal, especially breakfast, it will make it hard to get all the nutrients you need each day.

Skipping meals is not a healthy way to lose weight.

- Eat at regular times every day.
- Plan what you are going to eat during the day ahead of time.
- If you don't feel like cooking replace a meal with 2 or 3 easy snacks. (See page 3 for ideas.)
- Meals don't have to be complex or require cooking. Have toast with peanut butter, fruit and a glass of milk.
- Pack healthy snacks to take with you when you are away from home.



How is Your Appetite?

When you live alone, sitting down to eat a meal can be hard. You may not feel like making meals for just yourself. Food may not interest you and may not taste as good.

You may find these ideas helpful to increase your appetite and interest in eating again.

- Choose a comfortable place to eat.
- Exercise lightly, if you are able, or take a walk before meals to increase your appetite.
- Increase the flavour of food by adding herbs and spices.
- Eat meals with family and friends, if possible.
- Try cooking a new recipe.
- Ask your doctor if your medications are causing appetite or taste problems.



Eat Your Veggies... and Fruit!

You should strive to eat at least seven servings of fruit and vegetables each day. This may seem like a lot of food, but a serving is smaller than you think! Fruits and vegetables taste great and contain lots of vitamins, minerals and fibre.



Choose dark green, or bright coloured vegetables and fruit more often.

Examples of one serving of fruit or vegetables:

- 1 medium sized fruit
- ½ cup of fruit or vegetables
- 1 cup salad
- ½ cup fruit juice



Some easy ways to add fruit and vegetables to your diet:

- Slice bananas on top of cereal. Have a salad with lunch and an apple for an afternoon snack. Include two vegetables with dinner. Now you have 5 servings of fruit and vegetables!
- Keep cut and ready-to-eat vegetables available in the fridge.
- Add veggies to pizza, omelettes, pasta sauce and soups.
- Use frozen or canned vegetables. They are just as healthy as fresh!
- Your community may offer a “Good Food Box.” Fresh produce is available at a very low cost. Call your local Health Unit for more information.

Bone Up on Calcium!

Milk products contain calcium and vitamin D, which are important for keeping your bones healthy.

Soy beverages and calcium fortified orange juice are also great sources of calcium.

If you do not eat enough milk products or calcium-rich foods, consider taking a 300 mg calcium one to three times daily, and one 400 IU vitamin D supplement daily.

- Add skim milk powder to baking or cooking.
- Sprinkle grated cheese on sandwiches, salads and vegetables.
- Eat other calcium-rich foods — beans, almonds, sesame seeds, broccoli & figs.
- Add milk, instead of water, to recipes such as soup or hot cereal.



What About Protein?

Meat, beans, nuts and seeds are excellent sources of protein, iron and B vitamins.

You don't always need to rely on meat, fish or poultry to get your protein needs. Using other foods with good sources of protein such as nuts, beans, eggs and lentils is quick and easy, and saves time cooking!

Try to eat 2-3 servings of protein food per day.

One serving is:

- 2 ½ ounces of meat, fish or poultry (the size of a deck of cards)
- ¼ cup nuts or seeds, 2 large eggs
- ⅓ can of salmon or tuna
- ¾ cup cooked beans

Easy ways to add protein-rich foods to your diet!

Use beans and lentils in salads, soups or pasta sauce.

Bake and freeze many pieces of meat at once. Meat is ready when you need it!



Nuts make great snacks! Add them to muffins, salads & yogurt.

Spread peanut butter on toast, crackers or apple slices.

Add canned fish to salads, soups and pasta.

Beans and Gas?



Beans sometimes get a bad reputation! Here are some ways to still enjoy nutritious beans, without the gas!

- Rinse canned beans well under cold water
- Change water several times if soaking dried beans
- Eat beans only a few times per week at first.
- Drink lots of fluid to help digest the fibre found in beans.

Are Eggs Healthy?

Eggs are a very healthy food that provide high quality protein and many vitamins and minerals. Eggs are an ideal food choice since they are nutritious, inexpensive and easy to prepare.



You may be worried about the cholesterol in eggs. Recent research shows that it is more important to reduce the total amount of saturated fat and trans fat you eat (eggs are low in saturated fat and have no trans fat), rather than avoiding foods that contain cholesterol.

Eating one or two eggs per day is healthy. Just make sure you are using a lower-fat cooking method like hard-cooking, instead of frying.

Troubles swallowing, biting or chewing?

If you have trouble swallowing you may not want to eat as much or may avoid foods that you find hard to swallow.

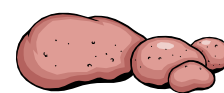
Symptoms of swallowing problems are coughing and choking when eating or drinking. **You should talk to a doctor if you have trouble with swallowing.**



If you are having problems with your teeth, gums or dentures, **it is worth taking the time to see your dentist.** If you still find chewing difficult, changing the way foods are prepared and choosing softer foods may help.

Here are some tips to make foods easier to swallow, bite or chew.

- Thicken liquids to help with swallowing. Try stirring in a small amount of instant potato flakes or cooking with cornstarch or flour to thicken the liquid.
- To help swallow liquids safely, tuck your chin towards your chest while swallowing.
- Chop, mash or puree foods – use a blender or food processor.
- Add gravy or sauce to help soften food.
- Try different food textures to see which you can swallow best.



Soft Food Ideas

Grain Products	Soft fresh breads; mashed or boiled potatoes; cooked pasta; hot oatmeal
Meat and Protein Foods	Canned fish; ground beef, chicken or pork; canned beans; eggs
Milk Products	Yogurt; pudding; ice cream; tapioca
Fruit and Vegetable Products	Cooked vegetables; canned fruit in own juices; 100% fruit or vegetable juice
Foods from two or more food groups	Shepard's pie; perogies; spaghetti with sauce; chili, hearty soups

Try these Food Textures

Texture	Food example
Blended or pureed liquid (can run off spoon slowly)	Smooth, creamy soups, applesauce, puddings
Soft foods and thick liquids (pudding-like)	Custards, yogurts, mashed potatoes, smooth hot cereals
Semi-solid foods (firm but not tough)	Soft fruit, pasta, pureed entrees, scrambled eggs
Solid Food (firm, but not hard)	Soft cooked vegetables, soft fruit, diced meat, toast

Are You Eating Alone?

When you eat alone, it can sometimes be hard to stay motivated about cooking meals. These tips will help you to stay interested in eating, even when you are alone.

- Have a nice place to eat. Set a table with flowers, and place mat.
- Take your meal outside, watch TV, put the radio on or read a book.
- Enjoy a dinner in a restaurant, or order take-out.
- Consider taking Meals on Wheels a few times a week or more.
- Share a potluck dinner with friends.
- Join a collective kitchen or share cooking with friends.
- Exchange recipes with others.
- Check your local senior centres; many serve weekly meals.



Cooking Feels Like a Chore!



You might find that making meals feels like a challenge. Perhaps, it is hard for you to use utensils or stand for a long time.

With a little bit of planning you can enjoy a variety of foods.

- Collect simple recipes that use few ingredients and are fast to make.
- Prepare foods when you have the most energy. Chop veggies in the morning for later use or cook meals ahead of time.
- Buy frozen, ready-to-eat dinners.
- If you have trouble using kitchen utensils, see your doctor, who can refer you to an Occupational Therapist.
- Consider moving to a place where someone else can cook for you.

Drink Water Often!



Many seniors do not drink enough water. As we age, our sense of thirst declines. We need to drink whether or not we feel thirsty.

- Try to drink 6-8 cups of fluid each day. This includes water, milk, juice, soup, coffee/tea.
- Keep a bottle or glass of water nearby.
- If you are used to drinking coffee or tea, it is not dehydrating.
- Drink water in the morning – we are naturally thirsty when we wake up.
- Drinking water will help to prevent constipation.

How to Get the Best Nutrition for Your Money!

Many seniors are on tight budgets and food may be the one part of the budget that can be changed. Eating well is vital to your health.

With a little planning, you can buy a variety of foods without spending a lot. Here are some tips to help you eat well on a budget.



Best Buys for Each Food Group

<p>Grain Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dry pasta Parboiled or brown rice Hot cereals Freeze loaves of bread 	<p>Meat and Protein Foods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried or canned beans Pork loin or chops Canned fish Less tender cuts of beef Eggs
<p>Milk Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powdered milk Plain yogurt and add fruit Try store brand cheese and yogurt products 	<p>Vegetables and Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frozen veggies Buy fruit/veggies in season Buy staples like carrots, potatoes, oranges, bananas

Find out if your local church, legion or recreation centre offers low cost, hot meals.



Tips to Make Grocery Shopping Easier



You may find it hard to get to the grocery store. Once you are there, it may be a challenge to shop for yourself. These tips can help make buying food from the grocery store easy.

Before you go:

- Make a list of groceries you need. Organize the list in the same way the store is laid out.
- Find a shopping buddy. You can split large food items with them.

Transportation:

- Order your groceries by phone and have them delivered.

- Look into community services that offer rides to the grocery store.
- Share a taxi with a friend and split the cost of transportation.

At the store:

- Shop when the store is not as busy.
- Read labels to be sure you are getting what you want. Don't forget your glasses!



Cook books for Easy Everyday Cooking

The Senior Chef

This book offers easy recipes in single and double serving sizes. It also provides helpful tips on menu planning, shopping, food storage and cooking. Available from Crown Publications Inc. Tel (250)386-4636

The Basic Shelf Cookbook

(Revised 2000) City of York Health Unit

These recipes use 36 basic ingredients and suit people on a budget and with limited time to shop. Available from Canadian Public Health Association. Tel (613) 725-3769

Great Food Fast

(2000) Dietitians of Canada

This cookbook is filled with healthy recipes that are quick and easy to make. It also features time-saving tips. Available at your local bookstore or through the Dietitians of Canada website: www.dietitians.ca



Need More Nutrition Information?

Contact your local Health Unit to find more nutrition information:

- Other handouts on healthy eating, food budgeting, label reading and other health related information
- Contacts for local dietitians in the community, who can offer further support
- Nutrition workshops or seminars
- Good Food Box information — produce at a low price



About this resource: The Food for Aging Well: A Guide to Healthy Eating for Older Adults was developed as part of the SCREEN© (Seniors in the Community Risk Evaluation for Eating and Nutrition) Project. This resource is not meant to replace the advice of a qualified Health Professional. Talk to your doctor or dietitian for individualized guidance on diet and your health. For more information, contact Prof. Heather H. Keller, Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition — University of Guelph, 519-824-4120 ext 52544

Healthy and Easy Recipes

Microwaved Eggs

Preparation: 1 minute

Cooking: 45 seconds

Standing: 1 minute

Directions:

In a mug, small dessert bowl or ramekin, microwave ½ tsp (2 mL) butter on HIGH (100%) for about 15 seconds. Rotate bowl to butter all sides. Crack one egg into bowl. Pierce egg yolk with a toothpick or fork. Cover with plastic wrap leaving a small steam vent. Microwave on MEDIUM-HIGH (70%) for 45 seconds to 1 minute or until cooked as desired. Before serving, let stand for 1 to 2 minutes without removing the plastic wrap.

Makes 1 serving.

For a complete meal, serve with whole wheat toast, a wedge of cheese and orange juice.

Source: Canadian Egg Marketing Agency
Visit the Web site at www.eggs.ca

Egg Burger

Preparation: 2 minutes

Cooking: 2 minutes

Directions:

Top a fried microwaved egg with a slice of cheese. Place egg in a warmed hamburger bun. If desired, add lettuce and a slice of tomato.

Makes 1 serving.

For a complete meal, serve with a glass of milk, followed by a fruit salad.

Source: Canadian Egg Marketing Agency
Visit the Web site at www.eggs.ca



Tasty Lentil Salad

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp chili powder
- 1 can (14 oz/398 mL) brown lentils
- ½ red onion
- 2 chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp olive or canola oil

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine vegetables and lentils.
2. Mix lime juice and olive oil with spices; pour over bean mixture. Cover and chill thoroughly.

Makes 4 servings

Source: Cook Great Food © 2001.
Published by Robert Rose. Visit the Dietitians of Canada Web site at www.dietitians.ca

Fabulous Peach Cobbler

Ingredients:

Filling

- 1 can (28oz/796 mL) sliced peaches, drained, reserving 1/2 cup juice
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp lemon juice

Topping

- 1 cup biscuit baking mix
- ½ cup milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F

Directions:

1. Filling: Place peaches in 8-inch square baking dish, combine sugar and cornstarch; whisk in reserved peach juice. Stir in lemon juice. Pour mixture over peaches. Set aside
2. Topping: In a medium bowl, combine baking mix with milk to form a sticky dough. Drop dough by spoonfuls on top of filling. Bake in oven for 40 - 45 minutes.

Source: Cook Great Food © 2001.
Published by Robert Rose. Visit the Dietitians of Canada Web site at www.dietitians.ca

