

# Healthy Eating for Older Adults

## Why is healthy eating important?

As you get older, good nutrition and healthy eating are key to maintaining your independence and quality of life. Eating well can help you stay healthy and strong by:

- Providing you with essential energy and nutrients
- Preventing or managing diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis
- Keeping you at a healthy weight.

## What can affect my ability to eat well?

As you age, your ability to eat well may be affected by changes to your body and your lifestyle. You may:

- Have a weaker sense of taste and smell
- Not be able to chew or swallow as well as before
- Not be able to move around as much, which may affect your ability to get groceries, prepare meals, etc.
- Be taking medicines that affect the taste of foods, your appetite, or digestion
- Have changes to your living or financial situation, which may affect your ability to cook or buy healthier foods.

## What can I do to make sure I continue to eat well?

The following tips can help you overcome appetite and eating changes as you age, and help you continue to eat well as an older adult.

### TELL

Your healthcare team if you have:

- Lost weight without trying in the past 6 months, AND
- Been eating less than usual in the past week.

### ASK

Your healthcare team:

- To assess whether you are at risk for under nutrition.
- How you can improve your diet to optimize your health and independence.

### KNOW

- When you are hungry and when you are full.
- The healthy eating recommendations from Canada's Food Guide [food-guide. \[canada.ca/en\]\(https://www.canada.ca/en/food-guide\)](https://www.canada.ca/en/food-guide)

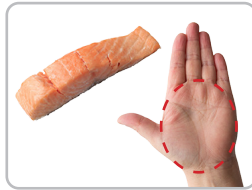


## DO

- Eat **fruits and/or vegetables** several times a day.
- Eat **whole grain foods** (such as whole grain bread or pasta, brown rice, rolled oats, quinoa) several times a day.
- Aim to eat at least 2 to 3 servings of **protein-rich foods** a day by including a protein with every meal and snack. The table below lists the serving sizes of common protein-rich foods:



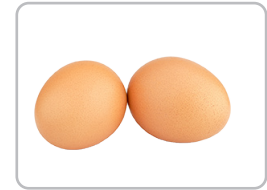
2 ½ oz (75 g)  
Lean red meat  
and Poultry



2 ½ oz (75 g)  
Fish and Seafood



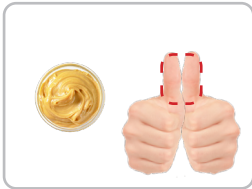
¾ cup (175 ml)  
Tofu



2 Eggs



¼ cup (60 ml)  
Nuts and Seeds



2 tbsp (30 ml)  
Peanut butter



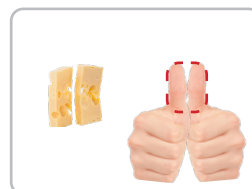
¾ cup (175 ml)  
Legumes  
(lentils, kidney  
beans, chick peas)



1 cup (250 ml)  
Milk or Fortified soy  
beverage



¾ cup (175 ml)  
Yogurt



1 ½ oz (50 g)  
Cheese

If you are unable to eat these protein foods, speak with your healthcare provider about a protein supplement or protein shake/drink.



- Choose whole foods more often than processed foods, which are often high in chemicals, sugars, salts, and unhealthy fats.
- Choose healthy fats (such as extra virgin olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, or fish) more often than unhealthy fats (such as fatty meats, or high-fat dairy products)
- Drink water instead of juices or carbonated drinks.

## DO

- Eat at regular times every day.
- Plan your meals and snacks ahead of times.
- Eat 2 or 3 snacks if you notice you are eating less than usual.
- Consider drinking an oral nutritional supplement drink, such as Boost® or Ensure® in between meals, if you are having difficulty eating.
- Use food and grocery delivery services, such as:

### **Lumacare**

<https://lumacare.ca/care-services/food-services>

155 Deerhide Cres., North York, ON M9M 2Z2

Tel: 1 (833) 338-5862

### **Reconnect Community Health Services**

<https://www.reconnect.on.ca/communitysupportservices>

1281 St. Clair Ave. W., Toronto, ON M6E 1B8

Tel: (416) 248-2050

### **Meals on Wheels**

<https://www.mealsonwheels.ca>

Tel: (416) 256-3010

### **Grocery Gateway (by Longo's)** (order online to deliver to your home)

<http://www.grocerygateway.com>

Toll-free: 1 (877) 447-8778

### **Heart to Home Meals** (order online to deliver to your home; meals for seniors)

<https://www.hearttohomemeals.ca>

Toll-free: 1 (866) 933-1516

### **Instacart** (order online to deliver to your home)

<https://www.instacart.ca>

- Stock your pantry with a variety of non-perishable food items, such as:

Peanut butter

Skim milk powder

Canned fish

Low sodium canned soups

Canned beans

Canned vegetables and fruits

Oatmeal or other cereal



**TIP!** Ask your local grocer or supermarket if they offer grocery delivery services.



## Speak with a dietitian for more nutrition information.

If you are unable to speak with a dietitian in person, you can call **Health811 (formerly Telehealth Ontario)** at 8-1-1 for over-the-phone food and healthy eating advice from a dietitian.

For articles, recipes, videos and interactive healthy eating tools, visit **Unlock Food** [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca). You can search the site by topic, "seniors," for more specific information.