

Healthy Eating for Seniors



Acknowledgements

The Healthy Eating for Seniors handbook was originally developed by the British Columbia Ministry of Health in 2008. Many seniors and dietitians were involved in helping to determine the content for the handbook – providing recipes, stories and ideas and generally contributing to making Healthy Eating for Seniors a useful resource. The Ministry of Health would like to acknowledge and thank all the individuals involved in the original development of this resource.

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Healthy Eating for Seniors Handbook Update

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Foreword

The saying, “You are what you eat,” is true.

A healthy diet provides the ingredients to build and repair bones and tissues, and keep the complex workings of the human body functioning optimally. It also provides the mental and physical energy necessary for daily life – work, recreation, relationships and time with family. It is clear that a healthy diet also protects us from infectious illnesses and chronic diseases so that we may age with a minimum of ill health, pain and disability.

A substantial number of people in British Columbia are considered to be malnourished, either through overconsumption of foods that should be consumed in moderation, under-consumption of nutritious food, or both. With British Columbia’s ever-expanding food choices, many people are not sure how to choose the best food for themselves and their families.

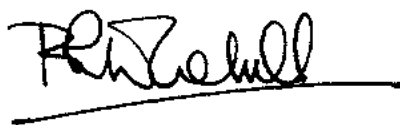
As people age, the need for calories decreases while the need for nutrients often increases. This can pose a challenge for seniors.

In my 2005 Annual Report, Food, Health and Well-being in British Columbia, I called for public education and health promotion regarding healthy eating and physical activity. I called for British Columbian consumers to be educated and encouraged to choose foods with high nutritional quality and to know the benefits of regular physical activity.

I am happy to introduce the updated guide, *Healthy Eating for Seniors 2017*, to help seniors make decisions about healthy eating.

Healthy Eating for Seniors addresses many of the barriers to healthy eating: time, effort, knowledge and skills, taste and cost. Healthy Eating for Seniors also addresses food safety – which is key for promoting health. It includes information about supplements and how to eat with a chronic disease. And it offers you simple ways to eat with less fat and salt, to shop for healthy food on a budget and to read labels.

The handbook also includes tips and recipes from other seniors, many of whom are dealing with new ways of eating after learning they have a chronic disease. Together with other societal efforts to promote active aging, *Healthy Eating for Seniors* will help seniors make the healthy choices that will enable them to enjoy more active and independent lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.R.W. Kendall', written over a horizontal line.

P.R.W. Kendall, MBBS, MSc, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer



Chapter 1

Eat Well, Age Well

The news is good: Canadian seniors age 65 and over are living longer than ever before. Well after they retire, they are continuing to participate in their communities and enjoy satisfying, energetic and well-rounded lives with friends and family.

However, surveys investigating the eating and activity habits of Canadians reveal that seniors could be doing even better.

Eating well is important at any age, but it is especially important as you get older to help maintain independence, good spirits and a well-functioning body and mind.

For many seniors, though, eating well all the time can be a challenge.





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Eat Well, Age Well

- FACT:** Seniors have higher rates of heart disease, cancer, high cholesterol and high blood pressure than the rest of the adult population.
- FACT:** These diseases can be prevented or managed through healthy eating and regular physical activity.
- FACT:** Most seniors are not as physically active as they could be.
- FACT:** Only 44 per cent of British Columbians meet the minimum servings of vegetables and fruit per day and those over 65 years are eating even less of this essential food group.
- FACT:** It is possible to change and improve the way you eat—and the way you feel—at any age.

Why do I need to eat well to age well?

No matter when you start, healthy eating can help you maintain and even improve your health—especially if you combine it with being active.

Growing older means getting used to a body that's different from the one you had when you were younger. It doesn't mean that you will immediately have all sorts of health problems or diseases—bad health and poor quality of life is not automatic as soon as you become a senior. In fact, many people find it a time of great growth and happiness.

Together, eating well and regular physical activity can help you adjust to the natural aging process and can mean the difference between independence and a life spent relying on others.

They can give you the energy to do the things you need and want to do, such as taking care of your home, working or volunteering, playing with your grandchildren, or enjoying a walk with friends.

They can also prevent or slow the progress of many chronic

illnesses, such as heart disease and diabetes, osteoporosis and some forms of cancer. And it can help you cope better with both physical and mental stress, surgery and even the common cold or flu.

Eating and appreciating wholesome foods can be enjoyable. The purpose of this handbook is to give you reliable information about the foods you should try to eat more regularly and give you practical information to get them on your plate in an easy way.

Aging: The basics

Everyone ages at a different rate, but it is natural for our bodies to experience the following changes throughout older adulthood:

Cardiovascular system

As we age, the heart muscle must work harder to pump the same amount of blood through the body. At the same time, blood vessels become stiffer and may narrow from fatty deposits on the walls of arteries. This makes the heart work even harder, which may lead to high blood pressure (also called hypertension).

Body mass

You may find that you need smaller portions of food as you age, often because of reduced physical activity and muscle loss. Seniors are at risk for being underweight, as well as carrying some extra weight, both of which have complications for aging well.

Bones and joints

Bones naturally shrink in size and in density (how thick or heavy they are) over time. You may become shorter and your bones may break more easily. Joints and tendons also become stiffer with age, which can make it harder to do the activities you've always done.

Taste, thirst and digestion

The senses can lessen with age, including taste and smell, which can make eating well more challenging. You may feel less thirsty as you get older, so you may not drink as much water as you should. Your ability to digest certain foods may also change. This lack of water, changes in digestion and decreased mobility can cause changes in your usual bowel habits.



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Kidneys

Kidneys become less efficient with age and do not remove waste from the bloodstream as well as they once did. Common chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure, must be managed well to keep them from damaging the kidneys.

Eyes

As we age, our eyes are less able to produce tears, retinas get thinner and lenses gradually turn yellow. Eye problems, such as cataracts, glaucoma or macular degeneration, may be delayed with good nutrition and well-managed blood pressure and diabetes.

The basics of eating well

Healthy eating promotes and supports social, physical and mental wellbeing. It also minimizes the risk and supports the management of many chronic diseases.

Healthy eating is a pattern of eating that contributes to your best possible health through positive relationships with food and diverse, balanced food choices that meet your needs for nutrients and energy.

How do I eat well?

- eat regular meals and snacks
- try not to get too hungry as this may lead you to choose less healthy foods or portion sizes that are too big
- eat a variety of nutritious foods
- pay attention to your fullness cues so you know when to stop eating.

How do I eat well? *(continued)*

- limit consumption of highly processed foods
- eat at home more often than eating out
- share meals with family, friends, or others
- try not to eat with distractions, such as the TV or computer
- choose water to drink most often.

CHOOSE MORE	CHOOSE FEWER
• vegetables and fruit (fresh, frozen or canned) • whole grains (oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, pasta, bread, roti, bannock made from whole grain flour) • legumes (beans, peas, lentils) • fish and seafood • calcium-rich foods (milk, yogurt, leafy greens, fortified soy beverage) • unsaturated fats (vegetable oils, nuts and seeds) • lean meat and poultry • tofu • eggs	• highly processed foods (frozen dinners, packaged foods such as chips and cookies) • deli meats, bacon and sausages • deep-fried foods • trans fats and hydrogenated oils • refined grains (white bread, flour, rice, pasta) • salty foods (chips, pickles, condiments) • added sugar (candies, ice cream, baked goods, jams) • sugary drinks (pop, sweetened coffees, energy and fruit drinks)



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What can I do to eat better for my age?

Eating well is important at all ages, but as you get older your body needs more of certain nutrients to stay strong and healthy. For example, you need more of some vitamins and minerals for energy and strong bones. See chapters 2 and 3 for details on important nutrients for seniors.

The best place to start is *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (see Appendix B), designed to help you meet all your nutrient needs for the day. It explains the four main food groups and provides guidance on how much to eat depending on your age and sex.

If Canada's Food Guide seems complicated, don't worry. The purpose of this handbook is to help you put it into practice. It will explain how to create a balanced meal (Chapter 2), how to eat with a chronic condition (Chapter 4) and provide you with tasty recipes (Chapter 10) and a one-week meal plan (Appendix A).

MY FOOD GUIDE

If you have a computer, you can customize *Canada's Food Guide* to include the kinds of food and physical activities you like most.



Go to www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide and click *My Food Guide*.

Why am I finding it harder to eat well now that I am a senior?

You are not alone. For many seniors, eating healthy, well-balanced meals can be a real challenge.

You may be cooking for just one or two people. You may find that you are much less active than you were when you were younger or that your sense of taste or smell is not as sharp as it used to be, so you are not as hungry or interested in food. You may also find it difficult to get out to the grocery store or to spend a lot of time in the kitchen.

It may be tempting to live on just tea and toast or rely on processed foods (e.g., frozen dinners or dry mixes where you add water or cooked meat). But eating well can give you more energy, prevent or manage disease and help you remain more independent.

Reading through this handbook is a good start to healthy eating. You can also talk to a dietitian or your health-care provider for nutrition information and advice.

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC specializes in easy-to-use nutrition information for self-care, based on current scientific sources. Registered dietitians offer telephone, email and web-based nutrition services to support the nutrition information, education and counselling needs of B.C. residents and health professionals. If you need more in-depth counselling, they will guide you to hospital outpatient dietitians, community dietitians or other nutrition services in your community. This service does not replace the medical counsel of your health-care provider. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

Call Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC by dialing **8-1-1**.

For deaf or hard of hearing assistance (TTY), call **7-1-1**.

Visit **www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian-services** or email a HealthLink BC Dietitian at **www.healthlinkbc.ca/emaildietitian**.



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Eat Well, Age Well

How to use this handbook:

- Read from cover to cover, or if you prefer, by topic of interest
- Use the Table of Contents and the Appendix to guide you to specific sections of the handbook
- To find a digital copy of this resource and all resource links throughout the handbook, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources

It's not always easy, but it is important



World War II veteran Reginald (Rusty) Wilson participated in the very first focus group we held to help decide the content and format for this handbook, at K'la How Eya Aboriginal Centre in Surrey, B.C.

Rusty has diabetes, which means he needs to be very careful about what and when he eats, but he gets tired of cooking for himself and trying to eat properly all the time.

He spoke for many seniors when he said: "Sometimes you don't feel like getting up and boiling your vegetables, so you just have a slice of bread."

This handbook is our attempt to provide Rusty – and anyone else who gets tired of cooking – with information about the importance of nutrition, along with easy ways to enjoy healthy eating.

Chapter 2

Finding Balance

Knowing about Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix B) and how many servings from each of the four food groups you should try to eat each day is the first step to eating well. Building a balanced plate by following Health Canada's Eat Well Plate (see Appendix C) at each meal is an easy way to put Canada's Food Guide into practice.





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As your body ages, you may require fewer calories but your need for essential nutrients, which provide nourishment for life and growth, stays the same and in some cases even goes up. For example, you need more calcium, folate and vitamins D, B12 and B6 as you get older.

Healthy eating, with a balance of different foods, helps ensure we get all of our nutrients, even as our energy needs change.

If what you eat does not give you quite enough nutrition for your specific needs, you may need to take a supplement. See Chapter 3 for more information on if you need to take a supplement.

Why are vegetables and fruit so important?

Vegetables and fruit have vital nutrients that we need for every aspect of our body to function and thrive. They are rich in fibre, vitamins C and E and other antioxidants. Researchers are continuing to discover the connection between eating lots of vegetables and fruit and the prevention and management of chronic disease in aging well.

Vegetables and fruit make up a rainbow of colours—dark green, purple, red, orange, yellow, white and brown. These colourful foods are packed with essential vitamins and minerals and disease-fighting phytochemicals, which are compounds produced by plants that protect against chronic diseases, especially certain types of cancer and eye disease.

Small changes make a big difference to your health. Add an extra vegetable or fruit to meals and snacks, such as:

- cherry or grape tomatoes
- sautéed kale, chard or spinach with fresh lemon
- roasted cauliflower or sweet potatoes with a sprinkle of cinnamon

- a banana, apple, orange or pear with some nuts
- sautéed mushrooms with garlic and herbs
- cut-up cucumbers and carrot sticks
- celery spread with peanut butter
- steamed broccoli with a sprinkle of parmesan cheese
- dried seaweed for snacking or adding to soups
- apple or pear baked with raisins and cinnamon
- smoothies – made with vegetables and fruit (see Chapter 10 for recipe ideas).

REDUCING YOUR CANCER RISK

Healthy eating, including enjoying a variety of plant-based foods, keeping physically active and maintaining a healthy body weight can reduce the risk of some cancers.

Following Canada's Food Guide and having 7 to 10 servings of colourful vegetables and fruit can reduce your risk of cancer.



Fresh, canned or frozen?

You receive the same health benefits from canned and frozen vegetables and fruit as you do from fresh – and they are often cheaper!

Canned and frozen vegetables and fruit are packed at the height of their nutritional value, when they are ripe. Choose canned fruit packed in water or juice, rather than syrup, and canned vegetables packed with little or no salt (sodium). Look for frozen vegetables and fruit that have nothing else listed in the ingredient list (e.g., not in a sauce or syrup).

Protein

Protein is an essential part of your diet. It helps build, maintain and repair your body. It keeps muscles strong and your hair,



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nails and skin healthy. It can help you heal if you've been ill or have had surgery.

An easy way to get the protein your body needs at each meal is to follow the Eat Well Plate and fill less than a quarter of your plate with protein-rich foods.

Adding protein is easy

Try to have one good source of protein at each meal. The best sources of protein are meat, fish, poultry, milk, eggs, cheese, yogurt, legumes (such as dried peas, beans and lentils), nuts, nut butters, seeds and soy foods (such as tofu or soy beverages). Whole grains, vegetables and fruit can also provide small amounts of protein.

If your plate is short on protein, try the following ideas:

- snack on a handful of unsalted nuts, like almonds or walnuts
- add a slice of cheese to your favourite sandwich
- cut up a hard-boiled egg into your salad
- snack on plain yogurt with some fruit
- drink milk or fortified soy beverage instead of water at one meal
- sprinkle nuts and seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower seeds, on your cereal, salad or stir fry
- enjoy dahl (a South Asian lentil dish) and other lentil, bean and chickpea dishes often
- spread nut butter on a slice of whole grain toast, roti or bannock in place of butter
- add chickpeas or lentils to a salad or pasta sauce.

If you still can't get enough protein through your diet, talk to a dietitian for more tips about what's right for you. See the back cover to contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.

WHAT DOES PLANT-BASED MEAN?

A plant-based diet is made up of mostly plant foods: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. These foods provide the body with fibre, vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals while usually being lower in calories than other types of foods. Animal foods like poultry, lean meat and dairy may make up a smaller amount of the foods eaten in a plant-based diet.

There are many advantages to a plant-based diet. It can lower your risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer, and improve your overall health. Eat vegetarian meals using lentils, beans or tofu, more often than red meat.

Cancer prevention: Meats, processed meats and barbequing

A diet high in red meat and processed meat has been shown to increase the risk of colorectal (bowel) cancer because these foods can damage the colon lining. In addition, processed meats contain food additives called nitrates or nitrites that may increase your risk of cancer. Choose other protein sources more often than red meat and limit processed meats such as ham, bacon, sausage, salami, hotdogs and bologna. Wild meat, like moose or deer (venison) does not appear to have the same risk as red and processed meat.

Cooking meat at high temperatures can produce cancer-causing substances in meat. Avoid charring meats and deep-browning your food. On the barbeque, cook your food slowly and as far as possible from the hot coals.

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates—including vegetables, fruit, whole grains and milk products—fuel your heart, lungs and other organs. They deliver essential vitamins and minerals and help give you the energy you need to walk another block or swim a few more laps. Many are also important sources of fibre (see below).

Some carbohydrates, however, are less healthy—particularly the



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ones that are easily digested and that quickly raise your blood sugar. These include:

- white rice
- white or all-purpose flour (in foods like white bread, bagels, muffins, cookies and cakes)
- white pasta
- refined sugar.

It's become clear that Canadians eat too much added sugar (separate from the naturally occurring sugar in fruit and milk products), which can increase the risk of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and weight gain.

A lot of foods have added sugars: cakes, cookies, pies, ice cream, candy, etc. But they can also be found in less obvious foods, such as flavoured yogurt, ketchup and salad dressings. The best way to limit your added sugars is to read ingredient lists and eat fewer processed and packaged foods. See chapter 6 for how to read an ingredient list.

Some fad diets say to cut down on or cut out all carbohydrates because they make you gain weight, but that severely limits what you can eat and you miss out on many important nutrients. Instead, choose healthy carbohydrates, like whole grains, and be mindful of how much you consume.

Fibre

Fibre is a non-digestible component of plants. You need fibre to keep your digestive system working well and bowels regular. Eating a lot of high-fibre foods can also help lower blood cholesterol levels, control blood sugar levels and help prevent high blood pressure. Fibre also makes you feel more satisfied and full for longer.

Over the age of 51, women should consume 21 grams of fibre per day and men should consume 30 grams. Most Canadians – especially seniors—only get about half the fibre they need each day.

Fibre can be found in:

- vegetables and fruit
- beans, lentils and chickpeas
- nuts and seeds
- whole grains such as oats, barley, wheat, quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat and popcorn.

It's important to choose grain products that are high in fibre, including breads, pasta, tortillas and roti made of whole grain wheat, wheat bran, mixed grains, corn, dark rye or pumpernickel flours. Look for “whole” grains to be the first ingredient on the ingredient label. “Enriched wheat flour,” “all-purpose flour” and “unbleached flour” are all refined white flours and have much less fibre than whole grain flour. The term “multigrain” is often used on grain products; however, it may just mean that a small amount of whole grain has been added to white flour.

When choosing breads and cereals, look for more than four grams of fibre per serving. Learn more about reading ingredient lists on food packaging in Chapter 6.

Adding fibre is easy:

- fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit
- enjoy beans, lentils and chickpeas regularly through the week
- pop your own popcorn as a healthy snack
- enjoy hummus with vegetables or whole grain pita
- add fruit and bran or ground flaxseed to yogurt for breakfast or a snack
- choose rolled (large flake) or steel cut oats often for breakfast
- make a big pot of chili and freeze in individual portions for easy dinners
- add barley to soups or stews.



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WATCH OUT!

Drink plenty of fluids to help fibre work properly: 2–3 L (8–12 8 oz glasses) per day. See page 29 for more information on fluids.

If you haven't been eating much fibre, add high-fibre foods slowly to avoid any problems with gas or cramps, and make sure to drink lots of fluids.

If you have an intestinal or bowel disease, you may not be able to eat large amounts of fibre. Check with your health-care provider or dietitian.



Fats

Everyone needs to eat some fat to stay healthy. Fat gives you energy and helps with nutrient absorption and brain and nerve function, but it should be healthier fats in appropriate amounts—fat is higher in calories than protein and carbohydrates so the calories can add up quickly.

Healthy fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. One type of polyunsaturated fat—omega 3 fatty acid—is particularly helpful in reducing the “stickiness” of your blood so you are less likely to develop clots. Omega 3 fatty acids also help lower triglycerides, reducing your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Healthy fats are found in:

- oily or fatty fish*, such as salmon, anchovies, rainbow trout, sardines, mackerel, eulachon, char and herring
- nuts and seeds, such as cashews, almonds, walnuts*, peanuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds* and ground flaxseeds*

- vegetable oils, including olive, peanut, canola* and sesame oil and soft-tub margarines made from these oils (provided they have “non-hydrogenated” on the label)
- flaxseed and walnut oils* (do not heat these oils: use them cold)
- wheat germ
- avocados
- foods fortified with omega 3, including eggs, yogurt and soy beverages.*

**These items are all particularly high in omega 3 fatty acids.*

Less healthy fats are trans and saturated fats. Trans fats come mostly from vegetable oils that have been made solid through a process called hydrogenation. Saturated fats are mostly found in food that comes from animals. They are also found in palm and coconut oils.

Trans and saturated fats may be found in:

- deep-fried foods (such as chips, French fries, samosas, spring rolls)
- cream (including half & half), sour cream and ice cream
- fatty red meat (sausage, pork hock, bacon, Chinese preserved meats)
- hard margarines and vegetable shortening
- partially hydrogenated vegetable oil
- lard
- condensed milk, often used in Hong Kong-style milk tea and Vietnamese coffee
- butter and clarified butter or ghee
- high-fat cheese
- chicken feet, chicken, duck and turkey skin or fat
- dim sum (including pork pastry, pot stickers and sticky rice wraps)
- palm and coconut oils
- coconut cream and milk



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- baked items (including cookies, cakes, pies and pastries, pineapple buns, cocktail buns and moon cakes)
- South Asian sweets (such as jalebi, laddoo, barfi and gulab jamun).

For good health, start by choosing foods that are naturally low in fat (rather than products labeled “low-fat”), then add no more than 30-45 mL (2–3 Tbsp) of healthy, unsaturated fats to what you eat every day in your cooking, dressings, sauces and spreads.

Also try to substitute healthier fat for less healthy fat where you can, and remember to read food labels carefully for the amount of fat, especially trans and saturated fat, in the Nutrition Facts Table. For information on reading food labels, see Chapter 6.

In addition:

- choose lean meats, then trim off any fat you can see
- remove the skin from chicken and turkey (this could be after cooking as the skin helps retain moisture)
- grill, broil or roast your meat and poultry in a way that allows the fat to drain off
- enjoy fish twice a week
- choose legumes instead of meat often through the week—make baked beans, dahl (lentils) or chickpeas, or cook a batch of chili
- cook with lower-fat milk products made with skim, 1% or 2% milk or yogurt
- use milk instead of cream in your coffee and tea or to make a latte
- choose a lower-fat salad dressing, like a vinaigrette instead of creamy dressings, or make your own - see our recipe in Chapter 10

BUTTER vs. MARGARINE

For years, researchers said that margarine was better for the heart than butter. But now they know that hard-stick margarine is actually worse for the heart because it contains large amounts of trans fats.

The best choice is healthy liquid oil for cooking and baking, such as olive and canola. For toast, swap butter or margarine for a more nutritious choice like nut butter or avocado. On a baked potato or vegetables, consider regular or Greek yogurt, herbs and green onions for flavour.

If you buy a soft-tub margarine, ensure that it is labeled “non-hydrogenated.”

If your overall diet does not contain a lot of saturated fat from fried foods, meat and high-fat dairy, then a little bit of butter is likely not harmful. You can also try blending half butter with half olive or canola oil, which is easy to spread or use in baking.

- try steamed or boiled brown rice instead of pilau or biryani
- substitute olive or canola oil for butter or margarine in your baking and cooking
- reduce the fat in your favourite recipes - see Chapter 7 for tips on how to cook with less fat.

Fluids

Fluids are essential to life. They help you to think clearly and keep your body temperature where it is supposed to be. They also help your bowels stay regular, because even mild dehydration can cause constipation.

As you get older, your body's signals tend to become a bit weaker. You may not know when you're thirsty. And by the time you feel thirsty, you could already be dehydrated, which means you've lost too much water and may soon start feeling tired, confused, hot, flushed and even nauseous. Being dehydrated can also make you dizzy, which could increase your risk of a fall.



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Try to drink fluids regularly, whether you feel thirsty or not.

How much fluid do I need?

Each day, women need approximately 2.2 L (about nine 8 oz glasses) of fluid, and men need approximately 3 L (about 12 8 oz glasses).

Drink more:

- when it is hot outside
- after you exercise
- if you have been vomiting or have diarrhea.

Your current total fluid intake is probably okay if your urine is colourless or slightly yellow and you feel well.

Adding fluids is easy

You can get your fluids by drinking water (try adding berries, citrus, cucumber or mint for refreshing flavour). But there are also other healthy sources of fluids, including:

- low-sodium vegetable juices
- sparkling or mineral water
- lower-fat milk and buttermilk
- fortified soy and other milk alternatives
- lower-sodium soups
- coffee and tea (including black, green, herbal and chai)
- 100% fruit juices, to a maximum of 250 mL (1 cup) a day
- a healthy smoothie (See our recipe in Chapter 10).

** Remember: Alcohol does not count as a source of fluid.*

Less is best when it comes to sugary drinks, including energy drinks, fruit drinks, pop, sports drinks, slushies, specialty coffee and tea drinks and vitamin-enhanced waters.

Don't forget, fresh vegetables and fruit also contain water—another reason why it's so important to fill half your plate.

WATCH OUT!

Talk with your health-care provider if you have heart, kidney, liver, adrenal or thyroid disease. You may have different fluid needs.

What about coffee and tea?

Experts used to think that caffeinated coffee and tea caused the body to lose water. However, research shows that coffee and tea can provide necessary fluid, if you are careful about how much caffeine you take in each day.

A moderate amount of caffeine appears to be fine – no more than 400 mg/day (that's about three 8 oz (250 mL) cups of coffee). Black or green tea contain less caffeine, so you can drink a bit more of them. Herbal teas contain no caffeine at all, but most flavoured teas contain some caffeine. Cola and soda pop also contain caffeine.

GOING FOR COFFEE

Coffee cups have grown. Ordering one large coffee may be your maximum amount of coffee for the day. Be mindful of the amount of cream and sugar you're adding to your coffee. Try an unsweetened latte to get an extra serving of milk.



What about alcohol?

Your body becomes more sensitive to alcohol as you age and your metabolism slows down. The one drink you may have previously enjoyed with dinner may now feel more like two or three. In addition, you may be taking more medications than you used to, which can dangerously magnify the effect of



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alcohol. If you have a balance problem or a chronic illness, such as heart disease and diabetes, alcohol can make it worse and increase your risk for falls.

Added to all that, research indicates that consuming alcohol over many years, even in moderate amounts, increases your risk of developing certain types of cancer as well as type 2 diabetes.

If you are taking any medications or have a chronic illness—especially if you have diabetes or your triglyceride levels are high—ask your health-care provider or a dietitian at HealthLink BC whether it is safe for you to drink alcohol at all.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

For more information about alcohol consumption and aging, see the BC Ministry of Health web page on *Alcohol and Aging* at www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources.

It can be easy to drink more than you should, particularly if you've experienced the loss of your spouse or someone important to you, or are feeling lonely or depressed. If you are drinking too much, or you think a friend is, call the Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Services at **604-660-9382** in the Lower Mainland. Elsewhere in B.C., call **1-800-663-1441**.



As an older adult, the Centre for Addictions Research BC recommends you drink below the limits suggested for the adult population:

- per week: fewer than 10 drinks for women and 15 for men
- on any one occasion: fewer than 3 drinks for women and 4 for men

What is one drink?

- one mixed drink containing 43 mL (1.5 fl oz) of 40% hard liquor, such as vodka, gin, rye whiskey, or rum
- one 142 mL (5 fl oz) glass of 12% wine
- one 341 mL (12 fl oz) bottle of 5% beer or wine cooler.

Drink slowly, have no more than two drinks in three hours, and have at least one non-alcoholic drink for every alcoholic one. Eat before and while you are drinking, as food slows down alcohol absorption and reduces its effects.

What about sodium?

You probably know that eating too much sodium (sodium is found in salt) can raise blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and may be a risk factor for diabetes, kidney disease and osteoporosis.

While most adults need only 1500 mg of sodium per day to stay healthy, many Canadians consume much more than that. If you do not have chronic disease, limit your intake of sodium to no more than 2300 mg per day (about one teaspoon of salt) for optimal health. If you have high blood pressure, osteoporosis, kidney disease or diabetes, aim towards a daily intake of 1500 mg of sodium. See Chapter 4 for more information.

The best way to control your sodium intake is to eat vegetables and fruit more often, prepare your own food rather than eating out and limit highly processed foods.

If you buy processed foods, look for labels that say “no salt added” or “low sodium.” But watch out for labels that say “reduced sodium” or “less salt” because the food may still have a lot of salt. See Chapter 6 for more on reading food labels.



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There are lots of ways to control your sodium intake:

- limit meats that have been processed, cured or smoked, including sausages, hot dogs, ham, bacon, pepperoni or smoked fish
- choose lower-sodium canned soups, or try making your own with sodium-reduced or no-salt-added broth
- limit frozen dinners or look for lower-sodium options
- limit salty snack foods, such as crackers, chips, popcorn and nuts—choose unsalted or low sodium instead
- choose no-salt-added canned vegetables and beans, or try rinsing them to wash away some of the salt
- use smaller amounts and lower-sodium versions of store-bought sauces, condiments and gravies, including salsa, dips, soy sauce and salad dressings
- flavour your foods with garlic, herbs, ginger, lemon and lime instead of salt
- limit pickled foods, relishes and olives
- limit processed cheese
- take the saltshaker off the dining table
- limit eating out, and when you do ask if there are lower sodium options.

Common foods and their sodium content

Pancake, from mix – 10 cm (2.5 inch)	250 mg
Donut – 1	250 mg
Canned green beans – 1/2 cup	180 mg
Frozen green beans – 1/2 cup	6 mg
Canned mushrooms – 1/2 cup	350 mg
Canned spaghetti sauce – 1/2 cup	650 mg
Tomato juice – 1 cup	930 mg
Canned salmon, salt added – 1 can	370 mg

Canned salmon, no salt added – 1 can	50 mg
Bacon – 1 slice	100 mg
Luncheon meat – 1 slice	200 mg
Pork sausage – 2 oz	530 mg
Canned baked beans – 1 cup	1065 mg
Salted mixed nuts – 1/2 cup	450 mg
Kraft™ dinner – 3/4 cup	430 mg
Chicken broth – 1 cup	820 mg
Tomato soup, with milk – 1 cup	950 mg
Mushroom soup, with milk – 1 cup	1140 mg
Italian dressing – 1 Tbsp	230 mg
Salt – 1 tsp	2375 mg
Soy sauce, regular – 1 Tbsp	1040 mg
Hoisin sauce – 1 tsp	70 mg
Oyster sauce – 1 tsp	250 mg

Are organic foods better for my health?

That question is hard to answer.

Organic food started as just vegetables and fruit. Today, however, organic food includes milk, cheese, meat, poultry and grains for bread and cereal and other products.

Organic farmers follow regulations for producing their food without using chemical pesticides or fertilizers, hormones or antibiotics—which means organic foods may be more environmentally friendly than non-organic foods. Some people think organic food is more nutritious, but science does not show that to be true.

Conventionally grown vegetables and fruit may contain small traces of pesticides, but experts don't have enough evidence to say whether they are a health risk. It is still wise to wash all produce, throw away the outer leaves of leafy greens, and scrub vegetables with edible skins, such as potatoes and carrots.

Whether you chose to eat organic is really up to you. The most important thing is that you eat vegetables and fruit more often, whether organic or not. If you do decide to buy organic food,



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always look for the Canada Organic logo on food labels to know they have been certified.

Get moving! Where does physical activity fit?

Being active is essential for our bodies and minds! It's just as important as eating well to keep you doing all the things you love or need to do, as well as prevent or manage chronic diseases. Just some of these benefits include:

- maintaining independence
- maintaining mobility
- improving fitness
- maintaining a healthy muscle mass and strength
- stronger bones
- improving mental health and feeling better.

It used to be that people with a chronic illness were told to either “take it easy” or just take a pill or two. That advice has changed. Today, researchers know that just a moderate amount of physical activity combined with healthy eating helps maintain a healthy body weight and prevent a number of life-threatening diseases, including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and possibly even cancer.

And it helps those who already have these conditions manage them better. For example, if you have diabetes, you know that watching what you eat is essential. But so is physical activity. Moving more can help control blood sugars, especially right after meals.

For those with arthritis or osteoporosis, physical activity can help reduce joint pain and joint damage, prevent further bone loss, and build stronger bones. It can also build the muscles you need for better balance and to help prevent falls.

As an older adult, you should try to do at least 30 minutes of activity on most and preferably all days of the week (150 minutes/week). Try to add muscle- and bone-strengthening activities using major muscle groups at least twice a week.

Getting started

Talk to your health-care provider first to make sure you are ready to increase your physical activity. If your health-care provider says you are, you should also consult with a qualified exercise professional for advice about what physical activity—and how much—is best for you.

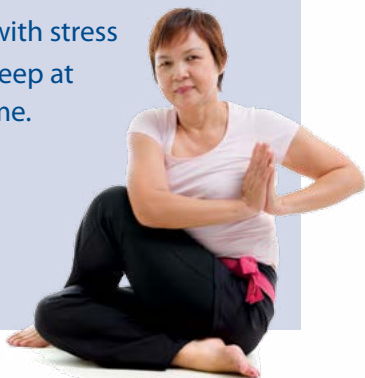
To find an exercise professional near you, try your local recreation centre or YM/YWCA. You can also call or visit:

- HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/physical-activity>
- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology at 1-877-651-3755 or www.csep.ca
- B.C. Recreation and Parks Association at 1-866-929-0965 or www.bcrpa.bc.ca, or
- B.C. Association of Kinesiologists at 1-604-601-5100 or www.bcak.bc.ca.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: THE RESULTS ARE DRAMATIC

Once you start, you won't want to stop because you'll soon find that it's easier to:

- climb a flight of stairs
- carry a bag of groceries
- lift your grandchild
- cook a healthy meal
- stand up straight
- avoid or prevent a fall
- cope with stress
- fall asleep at bedtime.





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Also read the Public Health Agency of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults. It's free, and you can order copies by calling 1-866-225-0709 or emailing publications@hc-sc.gc.ca.

A return to basics



*When 78-year-old Joan Reichardt of Nelson, B.C., first arrived in Canada as a war bride, she was given a copy of the **Canadian Cookbook for British Brides**.*

"It had all sorts of good advice – especially for someone like me," she says. "I could scarcely boil water.

I'd done a bit of cooking in school, but food was too scarce during the war to allow anybody who didn't know what they were doing near the food!"

The war bride cookbook explained the differences between Canadian and British meal patterns, shopping habits, foods and food names. It also included some common Canadian recipes that were "very basic, very down to earth, like baked ham slice," says Joan, "that we sort of abandoned for fancier food later."

Today, as a widow, Joan finds herself returning to much the same kind of plain and simple cooking. "Interestingly enough," she says, "I've reverted to the basics. Not that I was ever a really fancy cook – you can't be with five children – but today I find I really enjoy simple and healthy food. Last night, for example, I had a small piece of salmon, new boiled potatoes and carrots. Delicious."

Types of physical activity

To keep your body moving well as you get older, try to incorporate four types of physical activity into your life:

- 1 Endurance or aerobic activities** to increase your heart rate and body temperature, and strengthen both heart and lungs. These can include brisk walking, swimming, cycling and dancing, as well as household chores such as vacuuming or washing floors. For those just starting out, even light walking, gardening and golfing can be aerobic.
- 2 Strength activities** to keep bones and muscles strong. These can include using your upper body weight by doing push-ups or sit-ups and using hand weights or weight machines. Daily strength activities can include household chores, yard work, climbing stairs and lifting and carrying groceries or laundry.
- 3 Flexibility activities** to keep your muscles relaxed and your joints mobile. Stretching routines before and after physical activity are important. Stretching classes, Tai Chi, yoga and pilates can be great exercise, especially for those just starting out. These flexibility activities can help you with your household chores, such as putting away groceries and dusting or sweeping, as well as raking or digging in the yard and other bending.
- 4 Balance activities** help you improve your coordination and reduce your risk of falls. Try standing on one leg for 10 seconds (you may need to hold onto a chair for safety). Or try yoga or Tai Chi to improve your balance.





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MOVING WITH LIMITED MOBILITY

You don't have to have full mobility to experience the health benefits of being active. If you have limited mobility, there are lots of ways you can stay active. If you have limited mobility in your legs, try getting your heart rate up by doing chair aerobics and using resistance bands and weights for upper body strength training. If you have limited mobility in your upper body, try doing aerobic and resistance activities to strengthen your legs. If you have access to a community pool or recreational facility, try exercising in the water. Many people find it can help to minimize discomfort.

Stretching is also important and can be done sitting down or laying on the floor. It can help to increase your range of motion, prevent injury and reduce pain and stiffness.

Dividing it up

You should work towards more activity within your day, but it doesn't all have to be done at once and it doesn't have to be moderate to vigorous exercise. If you just can't do 30 minutes at a time, even 10 minutes of light physical activity will help you feel more vibrant, energetic and physically and mentally refreshed. For example, you may walk for 10 minutes in the morning, spend 10 minutes gardening or doing household chores after lunch and add in 10 minutes of stretching before bed to keep your muscles and joints relaxed and unwind from your day.

SAFE LIFTING

No one is immune to having a back injury. Whether you have a strong back or have hurt your back before, it is well worth it to:

- stop yourself before casually picking up a light or heavy load
- plan in your mind for the best way to lift what's in front of you (this could include enlisting help from others)
- lift and move slowly and carefully.



Making it happen

It's sometimes hard to get all the physical activity you know you should. Not every town has specialized programs for seniors; some neighbourhoods may be unsafe to walk, while arthritis, osteoporosis or other medical conditions may make any activity difficult.

However, there are ways around these and other barriers. For example:

BARRIER	STRATEGIES
Unsafe or isolated neighbourhood to walk	Walk with a friend, walk in a mall or the halls of your building, join a walking group or invest in a treadmill.
Difficulty getting places	Take the bus, car pool with friends or have an exercise professional come to your home.
Unsuitable or uninteresting programs	Check program listings at seniors' centres, churches and private fitness clubs or use a book or video to start your own program.



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BARRIER	STRATEGIES
Too busy caring for others	Be active while the person you are caring for is resting or occupied (even five or 10 minutes at a time will help), have a friend come over and take care of your partner while you go out for a walk or class, or include the person you are caring for in the activity.
Stiffness, arthritis or osteoporosis	Choose gentle activities, such as walking, or classes designed to accommodate seniors with physical challenges, such as aqua-fit.
Bad weather and icy roads	On a rainy or snowy day when getting outside can be a challenge, do some stretching, dance to your favourite music, or go for a walk in the mall.

Setting goals and overcoming barriers to change

Making changes to your usual eating pattern may seem overwhelming, but even one positive change can benefit your health!

The easiest way to move towards healthy eating every day is to set goals that you really can meet. For example, say to yourself:

- I will eat one more vegetable and one more fruit today
- I will try one vegetable or fruit this week that I have never tried before
- I will eat fish once this week
- I will choose whole grain bread when shopping this week
- I will drink one more glass of water today
- I will add 10 extra minutes of activity today
- I will taste my food before adding salt.

Similar goals can be useful for trying to be more active. If you hit a barrier—and most people do—get support. Talk to your family members and friends to see if someone wants to cook a meal together, be active with you or cheer you on.



Chapter 3

To Supplement or Not To

Vitamins and minerals are important for good health at any age. But some become even more important as you get older—particularly vitamins B6, B12, C and D, as well as calcium and magnesium.





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To Supplement or Not To

The best way to get the vitamins and minerals you need is by eating a wide variety of healthy foods recommended in Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix B). But sometimes even people who have healthy eating habits find it hard to get all the vegetables, fruits and other healthy foods they need. Also, your ability to absorb nutrients from food may change as you age. You may need to eat fortified foods (foods with added vitamins and minerals) or take supplements. A supplement is intended to complement what you eat and can't make up for unhealthy eating habits.

It's easy to get carried away with the latest fad. New research comes out constantly on the benefits of different vitamins, minerals and other supplements, and you may be feeling overwhelmed by what the news and latest advertisements are telling you about what they can do to improve your health.

Before taking a new supplement or jumping on the latest trend, consult with your health-care provider or a dietitian. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC. Also see Chapter 9, "How do I know I am getting reliable information?" for tips on how to tell if the information you're getting is trustworthy.

What vitamins and minerals do I really need?

Vitamin B12

Your body needs vitamin B12 to form healthy red blood cells, which carry oxygen around your body. It also keeps your nervous system—the control centre of your body—working properly, and helps you feel energetic and alert. Adults need 2.4 micrograms (mcg) of B12 every day.

When you were younger, your body could obtain all the vitamin B12 it needed from natural sources, including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk yogurt and cheese.



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But as we age, our bodies absorb more vitamin B12 from fortified foods and supplements than from natural food sources. After age 50, you need to eat foods fortified with this vitamin or a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement to meet your vitamin B12 requirements. Foods fortified with B12 include meat alternatives, such as tofu patties, some breakfast cereals and soy and other plant-based beverages.

A vitamin B12 deficiency can make you feel weak, tired and lightheaded. If you feel this way, see your health-care provider or a dietitian to make sure you're getting enough of this essential nutrient.

Vitamin B6

Vitamin B6 helps carry oxygen through the blood much like B12, but it also helps your body make and use protein and store energy in your muscles and liver.

However, many seniors do not get enough vitamin B6 through the foods they eat. Women over the age of 51 need 1.5 mg/day and men need 1.7 mg/day.

Good sources of vitamin B6 include:

- meat, chicken, fish and organ meats
- bananas, green beans and sweet potatoes or other starchy vegetables
- whole grains and fortified cereals
- lentils, chickpeas and sunflower seeds.

If you are not eating many foods that contain vitamin B6, or you are not eating much in general, talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian about taking a multivitamin/mineral supplement.

ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH CALCIUM?

The BC Dairy Association's Calcium Calculator will tell you how much calcium you are getting from your diet. Go to www.bcdairy.ca or call 1-800-242-6455.

Calcium and vitamin D

Calcium works together with other bone-building nutrients—particularly vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium—to maintain strong and healthy bones and teeth.

A life-long diet rich in calcium and vitamin D, combined with regular physical activity, helps prevent osteoporosis (a condition where bones become smaller, more fragile and more likely to break). See Chapter 4 for more about osteoporosis.

Recent studies have also shown that eating foods rich in calcium and vitamin D helps protect against muscle weakness, which in turn helps prevent falls.

Women over the age 51 need 1200 mg of calcium a day from food sources and/or supplements. Men need 1000 mg of calcium until the age of 70, and 1200 mg afterwards. If you already have osteoporosis, your health-care provider may recommend even higher amounts of calcium.

Try to include calcium-rich foods as a part of your healthy meals every day to make sure that you get the recommended amount of calcium. Good sources of calcium include:

- milk and milk products, including yogurt, cheese and kefir
- firm and extra-firm tofu made with calcium
- salmon and sardines with bones
- almonds and almond butter
- sesame seeds and sesame butter (tahini)
- calcium-fortified milk alternatives, such as soy and rice beverages.



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You also get small amounts of calcium from foods such as turnip greens, bok choy, kale, broccoli and whole grains.

However, many seniors do not get enough calcium from their diets. Talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian to help you determine if you are getting enough calcium, whether you need a calcium supplement and how much you should take. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

Vitamin D is unique in that it can be made by the body after exposure to sunlight, which is our main source of vitamin D.

However, in a northern country such as Canada, it can sometimes be hard to get as much sunlight as you should. And as we age, our bodies make less vitamin D from exposure to sunlight.

About 15 minutes of sunlight twice a week between April and September is enough for your body to make vitamin D. But from October to March, the Canadian sunlight is too weak, and you need to look for other sources of vitamin D.

Both men and women need 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D a day. Seniors over age 70 should boost their intake of vitamin D to 800 IU per day. If you already have osteoporosis, your health-care provider may recommend even higher amounts of vitamin D.

Food sources of vitamin D include:

- fatty fish, such as salmon, eulachon and herring
- egg yolks
- foods fortified with vitamin D, including milk, soy and other plant-based beverages and non-hydrogenated margarine.

CALCIUM OVER-SUPPLEMENTATION

Studies suggest that getting too much calcium from supplements can damage your kidneys and may increase your risk of heart disease. Try to meet your daily calcium needs through your food when possible, and ask your health-care provider or a dietitian for more information on calcium.

Because many seniors do not get the recommended amount of vitamin D from the food they eat, Canada's Food Guide recommends a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU each day.

If your health-care provider or a dietitian says you should take a calcium supplement, work with them or a pharmacist to find the right one.

Choose either calcium carbonate or calcium citrate in whatever form you like: chewable, liquid or caplet/tablet. Antacids, made from calcium carbonate, are a good source of calcium too. Many calcium supplements also include vitamin D.

Take no more than 500 to 600 mg of calcium at any one time. In fact, it is best to take smaller doses more frequently rather than large doses once a day. Try a different brand or a different form of calcium if you experience stomach upset, constipation or nausea.

Take your calcium with plenty of water. If you choose to take calcium carbonate, take it with your meals or immediately after eating. Calcium citrate is absorbed well at any time.

If you're taking medications, check with your health-care provider or pharmacist before taking a calcium supplement. Some medications should not be taken within four hours of a calcium supplement.



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WATCH OUT!

Look for supplements with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Products Number (NPN). These numbers indicate that the product meets Health Canada manufacturing and safety standards. Avoid coral calcium if you are allergic to shellfish.

Vitamin C and vitamin E

Vitamins C and E are antioxidants—substances that protect cells from some of the damage caused by free radicals, which can come from a variety of dietary, lifestyle and environmental factors. Antioxidants may also help prevent cancer and heart disease.

Vitamin C also helps your body form collagen, essential for making skin, tendons, ligaments and blood vessels, as well as for healing wounds and repairing and maintaining bones and teeth.

Men need 90 mcg of vitamin C every day and women need 75 mcg. The recommended daily amount of vitamin E is 15 mg for both men and women. A healthy diet that includes a variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, nuts and seeds will meet your recommended daily amount of vitamins C and E.

SMOKERS

Smokers need 35 mcg more vitamin C than non-smokers. Try adding an extra serving of vitamin C-rich vegetables or fruit every day.

If you're ready to quit, help is available. Call QuitNow at **1-877-455-2233** or visit **www.quitnow.ca**.

Vegetables and fruit are great sources of vitamin C, especially:

- oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes
- kiwi fruit
- strawberries
- broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- red, green, yellow and orange peppers
- potatoes
- tomatoes
- pineapple.

Good sources of vitamin E include:

- vegetable oils (olive, canola)
- nuts and nut butters (including peanut butter)
- sweet potatoes
- leafy greens
- avocados
- sunflower seeds
- wheat germ.

You can take too much!

You can get your daily amount of vitamin C and E from eating a balanced diet, with a variety of vegetables and fruit. If you choose to take more vitamin C, be careful as it may cause digestive problems. You should take no more than 2000 mg of vitamin C a day. Similarly, consult your health-care provider or a dietitian before taking vitamin E supplements.

If you are not eating a variety of foods, or you are not sure about how well you are eating, talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian. They may recommend a multivitamin/mineral supplement. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

Iron

Iron helps carry oxygen to all parts of your body, giving you the energy to live a healthy life. Too little iron can lead to iron-deficiency anemia, which makes you feel tired and can cause you to get sick more easily. However, too much iron can also be bad for your health.

As a senior, you should get 8 mg of iron a day from your food. If you are a vegetarian, this amount increases to 14 mg.



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Why does a vegetarian need more iron than someone who eats meat? Because not all iron is created equal. There are two important sources of iron. Your body absorbs heme iron, found in most animal products like beef, pork, chicken and fish, better than non-heme iron, found in legumes, lentils, grains, nuts, seeds, tofu, fruit, vegetables and eggs.

If you are a vegetarian, you need to ensure you are getting enough iron by eating lots of iron-rich foods regularly throughout the day. To maximize your absorption of non-heme iron, eat foods high in vitamin C at the same time, such as red and green peppers, broccoli, strawberries and grapefruit.

Eating a variety of iron-rich foods will, in most cases, ensure you get all the iron you need. Some people may find it hard to get enough iron from their diet and could benefit from an iron supplement. Only take iron supplements when recommended by your health-care provider or dietitian. Do not take calcium supplements at the same time because they may decrease the amount of iron that is absorbed by your body. If you are taking a calcium and iron supplement, talk with your pharmacist or dietitian about the best time of day to take them.

If you are feeling tired and weak, and are finding it hard to get enough iron in your diet, talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian. They may recommend a multivitamin/mineral supplement. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

Magnesium

Magnesium is needed for proper muscle, nerve and enzyme function. It also helps the body use energy from food.

Older men need 420 mg of magnesium a day, while older women require 320 mg a day. Eating a balanced diet with a

variety of magnesium-rich foods will make sure you get all the magnesium your body needs.

Good sources of magnesium include:

- legumes, such as beans and peas
- nuts and seeds
- spinach and other leaf greens
- whole grains
- fish
- fruits.

Do I need to take a multivitamin/mineral supplement?

Most of us can and should get the vitamins and minerals we need by eating a wide variety of healthy foods. However, if you are ill or recovering, have a low appetite or have food allergies that keep you from eating certain foods, you may need a multivitamin/mineral supplement to get your recommended amounts.

Multivitamin/mineral supplements come in pills, chewable tablets, or liquids and usually contain a combination of water-soluble vitamins (C and B vitamins), fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K), and minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc. Choose a multivitamin that provides a variety of vitamins and minerals, rather than a supplement that provides only a single vitamin or mineral (unless your health-care provider or dietitian has recommended that you take an individual vitamin or mineral).





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WHICH MULTIVITAMIN/ MINERAL SUPPLEMENT IS THE BEST?

Choose a multivitamin that is specifically intended for adults over 50 to ensure it includes an adequate amount of vitamin D (400 IU). Ask your pharmacist for help in selecting one that is right for you.

Always take supplements as directed. It can be tempting to think that more is better, but you can get too much of a good thing: large amounts of certain vitamins and minerals can be harmful to your health.

What about other supplements, such as herbal and botanical supplements, and fibre and meal replacements?

Natural health products

Plants and other natural products have been used for thousands of years to maintain health and treat illness, and many are helpful. However, just because a health product is “natural” does not mean it is safe.

Like conventional drugs, natural health products may have potentially serious side effects or trigger allergic reactions. These supplements may also interact with prescription drugs.

Talk to your health-care provider before you take any natural health products—including herbal or botanical supplements, and Chinese, Ayurvedic or other traditional medicines—especially if you have a medical condition. Your health-care provider can tell you which supplements may be helpful, which may have negative side effects, and how the supplements will interact with any medications you may be taking. You should

also speak with your pharmacist before taking any supplements. See back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

If you do decide to use an herbal or natural product, always look for the Natural Products Number or NPN. This number indicates that the product meets Health Canada manufacturing and safety standards.

Fibre

Many seniors take fibre supplements to help with constipation. However, these products should only be used as a last resort. Instead, increase your fibre intake from fibre-rich foods, such as vegetables and fruit, and legumes and nuts, and drink enough water to manage and reduce the risk of constipation.

If that does not work, talk to your health-care provider about whether a fibre supplement or laxative would be a good idea and which type is best for you. See Chapter 6, “What should I eat if I’m constipated?” for more information.

Liquid nutritional supplements

Liquid nutritional supplements or meal replacement drinks can be convenient, but they should only be used when you can’t eat a balanced diet or enough food to maintain a healthy weight.

If you think you might need a liquid nutritional supplement, talk to your health-care provider and see a dietitian for a nutrition assessment. See back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

Before you have surgery

Tell your health-care provider about any vitamins, minerals, natural health products or anything else you are taking to supplement your diet.

Supplements can cause difficulties before, during and after surgery by changing your blood pressure or heart rate. They may also lead to too much bleeding.

Your health-care provider may ask you to stop taking supplements several weeks ahead of your surgery.

Chapter 4

Eating Well with Chronic Illness

Following the recommendations in chapters 1 and 2 is a solid basis for eating well, no matter your age or health.

But sometimes a chronic illness requires special attention. Today, health experts agree that even small changes to what you eat can make a tremendous difference to your overall health.





CHAPTER 4

Eating Well with Chronic Illness

This chapter provides general guidelines for eating well with the chronic illnesses that are most common among seniors in Canada. For more details, or for information on an illness not covered here, please talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC. Because some prescription drugs can cause you to lose or retain nutrients, also ask your health-care provider, pharmacist or a dietitian about whether you need to add or reduce certain foods in your diet.

What should I eat if I have heart disease and/or high cholesterol?

Statistics Canada reports that 64 per cent of adults between the ages of 60 and 79 are at high risk for heart disease. Risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, type 2 diabetes and smoking. Research is also pointing to a link between periodontal (gum) disease and heart disease.

The fats in our body and bloodstream

Cholesterol is a waxy substance made by the liver and transported throughout the body in the bloodstream. Cholesterol is also found in many foods, particularly meats, poultry, seafood and dairy products.

High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is “good” cholesterol. HDL carries cholesterol from your tissues to the liver to be broken down. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) carries cholesterol from the liver to other tissues. It is called “bad” cholesterol because high levels of LDL can cause plaque build-up in your arteries and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Triglycerides are another type of fat found in your blood. Carrying extra weight, poorly controlled diabetes, kidney disease, regularly consuming more calories than you burn and



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drinking a lot of alcohol are all factors that raise triglyceride levels, with an associated increase in heart disease.

Drugs and surgery alone don't resolve the health impacts of heart disease. Eating well and being active are necessary to manage and even improve this condition, as is keeping gums and teeth healthy, and giving up smoking.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Heart and Stroke Foundation is a good source of information about diet and its connection to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Visit www.heartandstroke.ca or call 1-888-473-4636.

You do not, however, have to give up all the foods you love. Instead, follow the healthy eating guidelines in chapters 1 and 2 as well as the following:

Limit trans fats and reduce saturated fats

Our bodies need fat for proper cell structure and functioning, as well as the absorption of certain nutrients. But there is a big difference between healthy and less healthy fats.

Trans fats are one type of less healthy fat. They raise LDL cholesterol levels, which can clog blood vessels and lower HDL or "good" cholesterol—a dangerous combination, especially for people who have or are at risk of developing heart disease.

The most common source of less healthy trans fats are vegetable oils that have been made solid through a process called hydrogenation, such as hard margarine. Trans fats are found in many commercial baked goods like cakes, cookies and pastries, as well as some crackers and other snacks. Avoid

Innocently ignorant



"I was innocently ignorant," says James Ludvigson of Penticton, B.C. "I thought I was eating well when I chose the Cheezies over the fries."

But it turns out that James was not eating as well as he thought. On Feb. 19, 2003, when he was just 59 years old, he suffered a heart attack that landed him in hospital for eight days.

"They told me my cholesterol was through the roof," he says. "I was eating my vegetables and fruit, but then way too much junk on top. And I realized that I had to decide. Do I want to die now or in a year or two, or do I want to watch my grandchildren grow up and continue to contribute to my community? I guess I'm a little bit greedy and I decided I wanted to stay around for a lot longer."

Today, with a truly healthy diet (no more Cheezies) and exercise, James has more energy than ever. He gets up at seven or eight in the morning and stays mentally and physically alert to 11 at night. "I used to get bogged down. Now I feel healthy, even robust."

products with ingredients such as shortening, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils and mono- and di-glycerides.

Saturated fats, in large amounts, may also increase the risk of heart disease. They are mostly found in animal products, such as fatty red meat and high-fat milk products, such as cream. Choose leaner meats and lower-fat milk products, and keep portions in check by using Canada's Food Guide in Appendix B.

Dietary cholesterol

Our bodies produce all the cholesterol we need, but it still makes up a small portion of dietary fat, particularly from certain foods (including egg yolks, organ meats and some shellfish).



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Still, eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruit, whole grains and legumes that includes healthy fat is more important for heart health than limiting dietary cholesterol.

However, if you have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood lipids or fats, you may need to reduce the amount of cholesterol in your diet to help prevent heart attack and stroke. Speak with your health-care provider about the type and amount of dietary fat and cholesterol recommended for you.

Healthy fats

Healthy fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. They are found in a variety of foods, including oily or fatty fish, olive and canola oil, ground flaxseed and nuts. Healthy fats can reduce your LDL cholesterol level and boost your “good” HDL cholesterol, which helps to prevent clogged blood vessels that can cause heart disease and stroke.

Increase omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are one type of polyunsaturated fat that can help lower triglycerides and boost HDL cholesterol. Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include:

- oily or fatty fish, such as salmon, anchovies and herring
- walnuts and ground flaxseeds
- canola and avocado oil
- foods fortified with omega-3s, such as eggs, yogurt and soy beverages.

Eat more nuts and seeds

Nuts and seeds—including pecans, peanuts, walnuts, almonds, pumpkin and sunflower seeds—are a great source of healthy fats as well as vitamins and minerals. Choose unsalted and either raw or dry-roasted options, and try to eat about one-quarter cup (60 mL) five or more days a week.

Increase phytosterols

Phytosterols (also known as plant sterols) are natural plant substances that can help reduce LDL cholesterol. They can be found in plant foods like vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds and vegetable oils. Eating more plants at every meal can help add these important nutrients. Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian before using phytosterol supplements or fortified foods, as some individuals may be at risk of getting too much of these. See back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

See Chapter 2 for more about healthy and less healthy fats and tips on how you can reduce the amount of less healthy fat you eat. Also see Chapter 7 for tips on how you can change the fat in your recipes and Chapter 10 for easy, tasty and heart healthy recipes.

Increase your fibre

Eating high-fibre foods can help lower blood cholesterol levels and control blood sugar levels. It may also help with maintaining a healthy weight by making you feel full for longer.

Good sources of fibre include:

- vegetables and fruit
- beans, peas and lentils
- whole grains like oats, barley, brown rice and quinoa
- breads, pastas and cereals made from only whole grains.

See Chapter 2 for more on the importance of fibre.

Limit your added sugar and refined starches

Added sugars and refined starches are carbohydrates that can negatively affect your blood sugar levels, your weight and the fats found in your blood. Try to choose whole grains over refined “white” starches.

Limit the amount of added sugar you eat to about 50 grams (13 tsp) per day. Four grams of sugar is about one teaspoon or one cube of sugar. Read the labels on packaged foods, try to buy products that are unsweetened (e.g., yogurt) and limit how much sugar you add to coffee or tea. Try to consume even less added sugar if you have high triglycerides or diabetes.



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See “Choose healthy carbohydrates” on page 67 for more information.

Limit your caffeine and alcohol

A moderate amount of caffeine appears to be fine, even for people with heart disease or high blood pressure. Moderate means about 400 mg, or three 8 oz (250 mL) cups of coffee a day. Tea contains much less caffeine than coffee.

Alcohol can make some heart conditions worse because it increases your blood pressure. In addition, mixing alcohol and most heart medications can be very dangerous. If you do choose to drink, you should have a maximum of one drink a day. See Chapter 2 for alcohol recommendations.

HIGH TRIGLYCERIDES

If your triglyceride levels are high, talk to your health-care provider about how much alcohol is safe for you to drink. High triglyceride levels may be associated with a higher risk for heart disease and stroke.

What should I eat if I have high blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force that pushes your blood to all parts of your body, including your brain, hands, feet, kidneys and liver.

Two numbers show blood pressure. If your blood pressure is 125 over 80, for example, the higher number (125) is the pressure when your heart beats. It is called the systolic pressure. The lower number (80) is the pressure when your heart relaxes between beats. It is called the diastolic pressure.

CHECK YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE REGULARLY

Seniors with high blood pressure are more likely to have a heart attack or a stroke, as well as chronic kidney disease, where the kidneys gradually become less able to filter out waste and excess fluids.

But many people with high blood pressure don't even know they have it. There are no symptoms, so make sure you check your blood pressure regularly. See your health-care provider or visit your local pharmacy—most have self-check machines.



Blood pressure levels are generally grouped into three types:

- 1 Normal: the systolic pressure (or higher number) is below 120 and the diastolic pressure (lower number) is below 85.
- 2 High normal or medium-risk: the systolic pressure is between 121 and 139, and the diastolic is between 85 and 89. People in this group should see their health-care provider every year to have it re-checked.
- 3 High blood pressure (hypertension): the systolic blood pressure is 140 or higher, and the diastolic pressure is over 90.

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease, and 19 per cent of adults ages 20 to 79 have high blood pressure.

Many people can treat their high blood pressure by changing their eating and drinking habits and by adding more physical activity. Others will require medication. However, medication alone is not enough, and you should still try to keep a healthy diet even if you are placed on blood pressure pills.



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If you know you have high blood pressure or you want to prevent it, follow the advice provided in chapters 1 and 2, about eating well with Canada's Food Guide, and:

- stay physically active
- maintain a healthy weight
- don't smoke
- limit alcohol.

In addition, you should:

Cut back on sodium

People with high blood pressure should cut back to 1500 mg of sodium per day—about two-thirds of a teaspoon of salt. See Chapter 2 for a chart of the sodium content in common foods and tips for reducing sodium.

As well, a diet that is rich in vegetables and fruit, whole grains, protein from plant sources, and low-fat milk products—and limited in sweets, sugary drinks and red meat—is an effective way to lower high blood pressure. This pattern of eating is called the DASH diet: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. A DASH diet is low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol, and rich in calcium, potassium, magnesium and fibre. For more information on the DASH diet, search *High Blood Pressure: Using the DASH Diet* on www.healthlinkbc.ca.

Avoid grapefruit, grapefruit juice, pomelos and Seville oranges if on blood pressure medication

If you are taking medication for high blood pressure, avoid these fruits completely. They can affect how your body absorbs the drug and limit its effectiveness.

What should I eat if I have diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition where the body cannot make or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas and used to control the amount of sugar (also called glucose) in your blood. With type 2 diabetes—the most common form of diabetes for seniors—the pancreas produces insulin but the body is unable to use it. In Type 1 diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin. In both cases, the result is blood sugar levels that are too high over a long period.

More than two million Canadians are living with diabetes, and an additional 2.5 million are at risk of developing it. If you have diabetes, you are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease. You are also more likely to go blind, develop kidney disease, lose an arm or leg or suffer from erectile dysfunction (impotence). Diabetes also increases your risk of developing periodontal (gum) disease, which can make controlling your blood sugar levels even more difficult.

Are you at risk of type 2 diabetes?

The risk of developing diabetes increases over age 40. Talk to your health-care provider about diabetes if you:

- are carrying extra weight, especially if that weight is mostly carried around the stomach
- are of Aboriginal, Hispanic, South Asian, Asian, or African descent
- have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- have been diagnosed with prediabetes
- have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or heart disease
- have had gestational diabetes or given birth to a baby that weighed more than nine pounds
- have been diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea.

Even with these risk factors, studies show that you can reduce your risk for developing diabetes significantly by eating well, being active for 150 minutes a week and maintaining a healthy weight.



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Remember that many people with diabetes have no symptoms. You should have your blood sugar levels checked by a health-care provider every year.

To help manage diabetes, follow the healthy eating guidelines in chapters 1 and 2 and be physically active.

While there is no cure for diabetes, its harmful effects can be prevented or delayed by:

- getting eating advice specifically designed for you from a dietitian
- having regular check-ups and taking all medication as prescribed by your health-care provider.

To help your body control blood sugar levels even more:

Eat regularly

Eat three meals a day at regular times and space each meal between four and six hours apart.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

Early diagnosis of diabetes is critical. See your health-care provider immediately if you:

- are suddenly very thirsty
- are urinating more frequently
- feel extremely tired
- lose weight for no reason
- feel a tingling or numbness in your hands or feet
- notice your vision is blurred
- find that cuts or bruises are slow to heal.

Have a healthy snack of raw vegetables or a piece of fruit between meals if you need one. Talk to a dietitian about the best snack choices for you.

Choose healthy carbohydrates

Carbohydrates turn to sugar in your blood. Foods high in carbohydrates include baked goods, rice, pasta, breads, flat breads like roti and pita, cereals, starchy vegetables (potatoes and corn), fruits and milk, as well as white and brown sugar, honey, molasses and syrups.

You need some of these foods as a source of energy, but do not eat too many at once—instead, space them evenly throughout the day. Follow the Eat Well Plate in Appendix C to keep portions in check at each meal.

Try to choose healthy carbohydrates that give you the most nutrition, such as vegetables and fruit, legumes, whole grains and whole grain products, and low-fat milk products.

Limit refined starches and concentrated sweets, such as baked goods, rich desserts, candy and icing. Compare packaged foods and choose those that have less sugar and more fibre. Sugar can be found under many words on labels. Words that end in “ose” are sugars, including sucrose, glucose and fructose. Sugars are also naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates, which are also added to many packaged foods.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Diabetes Canada has lots of good information on nutrition and diabetes. Call **1-800-226-8464** or visit: **www.diabetes.ca**.

Your local diabetes education centre will also be able to answer your questions. Ask your health-care provider to refer you to the closest centre or find the link to HealthLink BC's *Find Services* directory on HealthLink BC's website which can be found at **www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources**.



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Limit sugary drinks which include energy drinks, fruit drinks, pop, sports drinks, slushes, specialty coffee and tea drinks and vitamin-enhanced waters.

Sugar alternatives

When shopping, the best choices are products labeled “unsweetened,” which means there is no added sugar. Products labelled “sugar free” or “no sugar added” may contain sugar alternatives such as sugar alcohols or artificial sweeteners. Sugar alcohols, including sorbitol and xylitol, can be found in cough and cold syrups, and medications such as antacids, as well as chewing gum, soda, sweets and candy. Sugar alcohols are generally not recommended for people with digestive problems. Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian if you have questions or experience diarrhea after consuming them.

Some artificial sweeteners may increase blood glucose levels. Others, including aspartame, saccharin, sucralose and cyclamate, do not—if taken in moderation. However, emerging research suggests that limiting artificial sweeteners and trying to develop a taste for “less sweet” foods is beneficial to health.

Talk to a dietitian about how to fit sugars and sweeteners into your daily diet.

Drink water instead of fruit juice

According to Health Canada, more than one serving of fruit juice (125 mL, or 1/2 cup) can contribute too much sugar to your diet. Even 100% fruit juices will raise your blood sugar.

Adults should limit fruit juice to no more than 250 mL (1 cup) each day. Stick with water the rest of the time. If you don't like plain water, try sparkling water or herbal tea, or add cucumber slices or fresh fruit.

Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian about alcohol

Alcohol can affect blood glucose levels. It can also raise triglycerides and add calories. Ask your health-care provider or a dietitian about whether you should drink alcohol and how much is safe for you.

If you do drink, limit the sugar content by choosing light beer, dry wine and cocktails served without sugary drinks or fruit juice.

What should I eat if I have cancer?

The same healthy eating recommendations from chapters 1 and 2 apply to people living with cancer. However, during treatment, some side effects may arise that need further consideration.

Dry mouth and taste changes

Chemotherapy and radiation can cause dry mouth and changes to the way food usually tastes.

If your mouth is dry, take extra care to clean your teeth to prevent decay. Brush your teeth and gums with a fluoride toothpaste and rinse your mouth with fluoride rinses.

If your food does not taste good, try rinsing your mouth before eating to remove any bad tastes. If food tastes metallic, try plastic cutlery and kitchen utensils. Also try your food at room temperature (instead of hot or cold), and experiment with new foods and new seasonings, such as herbs, spices, garlic, onions, mustard, ketchup and barbeque sauce. If your mouth isn't sore, acidic seasonings like lemon juice and vinegar can also add flavour. You can also add a little extra sugar to lessen bitter tastes.

After eating, rinse your mouth with water or use sugarless mints, candy or chewing gum to remove any leftover tastes.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the BC Cancer Agency at www.bccancer.bc.ca.

HealthLink BC's oncology nutrition service supports the nutrition needs of people living with cancer before, during and after cancer treatment. Call 8-1-1 or visit Dietitian Services at www.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian-services.

As well, the Canadian Cancer Society publishes an easy-to-read booklet called Good Nutrition: A guide for people with cancer. Call 1-888-939-3333 or visit www.cancer.ca.

Nausea and vomiting

Chemotherapy and radiation can cause nausea and vomiting. You may also lose your appetite and/or experience a drop in your usual energy levels. But you must keep eating and drinking.

Try eating small snacks and meals through the day, every one to two hours. Eat whenever you are not feeling nauseous, and exercise lightly (if you have the energy) before eating to increase your appetite. Avoid strong-smelling foods if they ruin your appetite, and keep quick, easy foods and snacks in the house that require little effort to prepare.

For more information, see Chapter 5 for *"What should I eat if I have low appetite?"*

If vomiting is prolonged, talk to your health-care provider as there are medications that may help.

Try to keep up your fluids by drinking 2-3 L (8-12 8 oz glasses) of fluids each day.

And remember that alcohol can interfere with some medications and treatments. Talk to your health-care provider about drinking alcohol while you are receiving treatments.

Cancer can weaken your immune system and your body may be less able to fight off an infection caused by bacteria in your food. See Chapter 8 for more information on keeping your food safe.

What should I eat if I have osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis, a thinning of the bones that makes them more likely to break, affects about 1.4 million Canadians. While more women than men develop osteoporosis—because they lose essential hormones that protect bones after menopause—men’s bones also thin with age. In Canada, osteoporosis affects one in five women and one in eight men over the age of 50, and causes more than 88,000 hip fractures every year.

Osteoporosis can change your life, making it hard to do the simplest activities, such as climbing a flight of stairs or going for a walk, without worrying that you will break a hip, wrist or even your spine. Once you have broken a bone, especially a hip, it can be very hard to recover and can often lead to permanent disability and loss of independence.

Ask your health-care provider to send you for a bone density test if you are over 65 or if you are between 50 and 65 and:

- your family has a history of osteoporosis
- you broke a bone recently
- you tend to fall often
- you went through menopause early (before age 45)
- you have problems absorbing nutrients (from celiac disease or colitis, for example)
- you smoke
- you weigh less than 60 kg (132 lb)
- you have low levels of physical activity



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- you are a long-term user of certain oral medications, such as cortisone, prednisone or anticonvulsants
- you drink a lot of alcohol, coffee, tea or soft drinks.

If you have osteoporosis or you want to prevent it, take any medications recommended by your health-care provider, quit smoking, follow Canada's Food Guide and stay physically active. Weight-bearing activities, such as walking, running and dancing are great for strengthening bones. In addition:

Add extra calcium and vitamin D

Studies of seniors show that calcium—along with vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium—can slow bone loss and lower the risk of fracture. See Chapter 3 for more information on how much calcium and vitamin D you need.

To add calcium and vitamin D, make sure to have three servings of milk and alternatives and include calcium-rich foods throughout the day. For example, enjoy a glass of cow's milk or fortified soy beverage, a bowl of plain yogurt, cheese, or a serving of tofu. Also try canned salmon or sardines, and eat the soft bones. You may also need to take a calcium supplement with vitamin D added. For more information on serving sizes, see Appendix B for Canada's Food Guide.

Talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian to help you determine if you are eating enough calcium and vitamin D. Do not take more than you need—too much calcium in the form of a supplement can be a health risk. See the back cover for contacting HealthLink BC.

Eat foods high in potassium

Potassium helps calcium protect your bones. Try to eat foods high in potassium every day, including bananas, oranges,

melons, kiwis, potatoes, tomatoes, milk, nuts, beans, clams, dried apricots, raisins, artichokes and whole grains such as oats.

Eat protein everyday

Protein is good for bones: it can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and help you recover from a fracture. Eat protein-rich foods throughout the day, such as:

- legumes (kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils, tofu)
- peanut butter
- eggs
- cheese
- nuts and seeds
- milk
- meat, fish, shellfish, chicken and turkey.

Limit your sodium, caffeine, alcohol and soft drinks

Experts have known for a long time that eating too much sodium can raise your blood pressure, but recent research now indicates that eating too much sodium (more than 3000 mg of sodium per day) can speed up the body's loss of calcium, which could lead to osteoporosis. See Chapter 2, "What about sodium?" for tips on easy ways to limit sodium.

Caffeine also can be hard on your bones since it seems to cause more calcium to be lost through urine. Stick to a maximum of three 8 oz (250 mL) cups of coffee a day. Depending on how long it is steeped, tea may contain much less caffeine than coffee. Choose green and black teas, which also contain polyphenols (phytochemicals produced by plants), which researchers now believe may help preserve bone health if consumed regularly.

Both alcohol and carbonated sugary drinks, such as pop, can be hard on bones if you drink a lot of them. Limit your intake of alcohol and pop to one or fewer a day, and choose carbonated mineral waters which contain calcium instead (read the label to be sure). And remember, limiting sugary soft drinks will not only reduce your risk for osteoporosis, but also help you maintain a healthy weight and help keep your blood sugar levels under control.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about nutrition and osteoporosis, call the Osteoporosis Canada at **1-800-463-6842** or visit **www.osteoporosis.ca**.

What should I eat if I have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)?

The esophagus is the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. Gastroesophageal reflux happens when the muscle at the bottom of the esophagus (called the lower esophageal sphincter) does not work properly and allows the stomach contents to flow back into the esophagus.

Everyone gets acid reflux now and then. But when it happens regularly, it's called gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD. About one-third of all Canadian seniors have GERD, with its most common side effect, heartburn.

If you think you have GERD, call your health-care provider. If you know you have GERD, you will need to modify your lifestyle and eating habits. It is important to treat GERD as it can cause ulcers.

Most health-care providers recommend that you stop smoking, maintain a healthy weight and take medications and/or vitamins as directed. They also recommend that you follow the healthy eating guidelines in chapters 1 and 2 and:

- Avoid foods that can aggravate your condition, including chocolate, coffee, alcohol, peppermint (tea, candy, gum), citrus fruits and juices (orange, lemon, grapefruit), tomatoes, onions, garlic, spicy and deep-fried foods.
- Avoid any other foods that you know give you heartburn.

- Eat smaller portions at mealtime or eat smaller meals more frequently. Try four to six small meals a day, and consume your liquids in between meals to prevent your stomach getting too full.
- Limit alcohol and coffee.
- Take 20 to 30 minutes to eat a meal. If you are a fast eater, think of ways to slow down and enjoy your meals. Put your fork down between bites. Chew and enjoy your food. Make meal times enjoyable.
- Avoid walking, bending or stooping immediately after eating.
- Avoid lying down right after eating—be cautious about snacks right before bedtime.
- Consider putting blocks about six inches (20 cm) high under the head of your bed to keep your head higher than your stomach.
- Talk to your health-care provider if your GERD gets worse. Over the long term, GERD can lead to more serious health problems.

What should I eat if I have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)?

Irritable bowel syndrome is a chronic condition that affects your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. It affects at least 6 per cent of the population and is often under-reported or mistaken for GI upset of unknown origin.

Common symptoms of IBS include:

- abdominal pain
- bloating
- constipation
- cramping
- diarrhea.

Symptoms come and go over time and are triggered by stress, illness, specific foods or eating patterns. The overall goal of dietary treatment for IBS is to find a pattern of eating that helps



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you manage your symptoms and get the nutrition you need for good health.

Improve your overall digestion:

- Eat at regular times each day.
- Avoid overeating at any one meal.
- Eat when you have enough time to do so slowly.
- Reduce the amount of air you swallow: chew your food well, avoid chewing gum and avoid carbonated beverages.
- If you wear dentures, make sure they fit properly so that you can chew your food well.

Drink plenty of fluids (2-3 L per day) and:

- choose water most often
- limit or avoid alcohol
- lower your caffeine intake (from coffee, colas, tea and chocolate) based on your symptoms as caffeine can stimulate the GI tract and make diarrhea worse.

Eat fibre-rich foods

See Chapter 2 for information about high-fibre foods. If certain high-fibre foods seem to make your symptoms worse, try eliminating them and focusing on others, especially those with soluble fibre such as oats and ground flax seeds, which are usually well-tolerated.

Avoid high fat meals and snacks

Eating too much fat at one time can cause cramping and diarrhea. Examples of high fat foods include cheese, cream, whipping and ice cream, prime rib and spareribs, regular ground beef, chicken with the skin on it, fried foods, pastries, cakes, cookies and chocolate.

Eating a moderate amount of healthy dietary fat, such as olive and canola oil, nuts and seeds, spread throughout the day, may help to improve your symptoms. Choose lower fat milk products, lean meats and lower fat cooking methods.

Reduce the amount of gas-producing foods that you eat

Gas-producing foods include: onions, garlic, wheat-based breads, cereals, pastas, crackers and baked goods, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, red kidney beans, navy beans, chickpeas and lentils.

Try gas reducing products such as Beano® to help you digest beans. Rinsing beans thoroughly under running water before you eat them also helps.

If you are lactose intolerant (unable to digest the sugar found naturally in milk products), reduce the amount of lactose you consume. If you think you are lactose intolerant, speak with your health-care provider. Try reducing the amount of lactose in your diet by choosing foods lower in lactose such as lactose-free milk, fortified plant-based beverages, such as soy or almond beverage and hard cheeses.

Limit fructose, the sugar found naturally in fruit and many processed foods

Limiting soft drinks, fruit drinks and 100% fruit juice, and having no more than one serving of fruit at a meal or snack may help to improve your symptoms.

Limit sorbitol, especially if you have diarrhea

Sorbitol is a sugar alcohol found in sugar-free sweets (including chewing gum) and drinks. Sorbitol is a strong laxative in large doses, even for people without IBS.

Probiotics

Probiotics are the healthy bacteria that live in our GI tract. Some people lack certain types of bacteria, making it harder to digest food and causing IBS symptoms. Probiotics are found in some milk products, such as yogurt, and other fermented foods (kefir, sauerkraut) as well as in supplements.



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When choosing probiotic-containing foods, ensure the label says “probiotic.” Some people may also require a probiotic supplement. Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian about which probiotic strains may be right for you.

Celiac disease

Symptoms of IBS can be similar to those of other conditions such as celiac disease, which causes an abnormal response to foods with gluten (the protein in wheat, barley, rye and triticale) and can damage the intestinal tract. If you have a family history of celiac disease, or you have diarrhea often, talk to your health-care provider about getting tested.

What should I eat if I have “fatty liver” disease or non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)?

Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH)—liver inflammation and damage caused by a buildup of fat—is one of a group of conditions called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Many people have a buildup of fat in the liver, and for most there are no symptoms or problems. But in some people, the fat causes inflammation and damages cells in the liver. Because of the damage, the liver doesn’t work as well as it should.

Things that put people at risk for NASH and for liver damage include:

- obesity
- insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes
- high cholesterol and high triglycerides
- metabolic syndrome.

If you have NASH, follow the advice for healthy eating in chapters 1 and 2 and for the specific conditions listed above if

you have one (or more). Also, ensure you are physically active each day.

You may also need to maintain a healthy weight and have your health-care provider review and possibly change your medication.

What should I eat if I have gum disease?

Periodontal (gum) disease is an infection of the gums and bone that support your teeth. It is caused by plaque, a sticky film of bacteria that forms constantly on the teeth.

When periodontal disease affects only the gums, it is called gingivitis. With poor oral care, gingivitis can lead to a serious gum disease called periodontitis, which can cause people to lose some of the bone that supports their teeth or even the teeth themselves.

To avoid periodontal disease and tooth decay, or stop them from spreading:

- brush your teeth and gums twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste
- floss your teeth once a day
- see your dentist regularly (at least once a year)
- quit smoking and chewing tobacco
- drink water more often than anything else, and limit sugary drinks, such as pop or fruit drinks
- follow Canada's Food Guide.

The better your nutrition, the better your teeth and gums will be. And the better your teeth and gums are, the healthier you will be.

Watch for the signs of gum disease

Periodontal (gum) disease is usually painless and it can be hard to know if you have it. You may have periodontal disease if:

- your gums bleed easily or are red, swollen and tender
- your gums have pulled away from your teeth or you can see the root of the tooth



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- you have persistent bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth
- your teeth are loose or separating
- your teeth no longer fit together the same way when you bite
- your partial dentures no longer fit as well as they once did.

What should I eat if I have eye problems?

Your chance of developing one of three eye diseases—cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration—goes up dramatically as you age.

- A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens, which lies behind the iris and the pupil. The lens works much like a camera lens, focusing light onto the retina at the back of the eye and helping you see clearly.
- Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, which carries images from the eye to the brain. It can gradually steal your sight without warning. People with high blood pressure or diabetes have a greater risk of developing glaucoma.
- Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness for those age 55 and older. The macula is the central portion of the retina, responsible for focusing central vision in the eye. It controls your ability to read, drive a car, recognize faces or colours and see fine detail.

You can reduce your risk of developing eye diseases by following Canada's Food Guide and taking a multivitamin/mineral supplement for people over age 50.

There is also some evidence that taking extra antioxidants—such as vitamins C and E and zinc—may help slow down

early-stage macular degeneration. However, researchers don't know yet exactly what level of these antioxidants is best for eye health. In the meantime, try to have seven servings of vegetables and fruit each day, especially those that are green, red, orange, yellow, purple and blue. If you already have macular degeneration, you may want to talk to your health-care provider about supplements with high levels of antioxidants and some minerals.

If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, make sure you keep them under control to reduce your risk of developing glaucoma. See "What should I eat if I have high blood pressure?" and "What should I eat if I have diabetes?" in this chapter.

Cataracts can be treated with surgery. There is no cure for either glaucoma or macular degeneration, but medication and/or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. See your optometrist or ophthalmologist for more detailed information.

What should I eat if I have arthritis?

There are many kinds of arthritis. The three that most commonly affect seniors are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and gout.

- Osteoarthritis is inflammation of the joints, which causes swelling, pain or stiffness.
- Rheumatoid arthritis is inflammation of the membrane (the synovium) lining the joints.
- Gout is a build-up of uric acid in the joints, causing pain.

It can be hard to eat well if you have any kind of arthritis. Painful joints may make it hard to stand or cut up vegetables and prepare meals, and you may simply feel too tired. As well, some arthritis medications decrease your appetite and cause your stomach to feel upset. If you are taking arthritis medications, talk to your health-care provider about whether you need a special vitamin or mineral supplement.

There is no special diet or herbal supplement that prevents or cures arthritis. Even glucosamine, while very popular, has not been proven to reduce the pain and stiffness of arthritis (although it will not harm you if you do take it).



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Eating Well with Chronic Illness

FOOD AND ARTHRITIS

Some people think their arthritis pain is linked to the food they eat, but there is no evidence that certain foods make arthritis worse for everyone.

If you think a specific food is affecting you, keep track of what you eat and what seems to make your arthritis worse.

If you identify a food that you think makes your arthritis flare up, don't eat it for two to four weeks and keep track of your symptoms—but do not eliminate a whole food group! For example, don't cut out all grain products if you think oatmeal is affecting you—just cut out oatmeal.

Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian for more information. See the back cover for contacting HealthLink BC.

However, you may feel better if you:

- follow the healthy eating recommendations in chapters 1 and 2
- stay physically active, even if your joints are stiff or painful (moderate activity can decrease the pain by strengthening the muscles around the joint) – see Chapter 2, “Get moving! Where does physical activity fit?” for more information on physical activity
- make sure you get 1200 mg of calcium and 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D a day from food sources and/or supplements (Canada's Food Guide recommends seniors take a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU a day).

In addition, research has shown that some foods, especially those containing fibre and omega-3 fatty acids, can help

reduce inflammation, while other foods, especially those high in saturated fats and trans fats, can increase it.

With any kind of arthritis, try to eat lots of foods high in:

- fibre, such as vegetables, fruit, legumes and whole grains
- omega-3 fatty acids, found in fatty or oily fish (salmon or herring, for example), ground flaxseed, walnuts and foods fortified with omega-3, such as eggs, yogurt and soy beverages.

If you have gout, you should also:

- choose plant-based proteins (beans, peas, lentils, unsalted nuts, seeds) more often as they do not raise uric acid levels
- avoid organ meats—such as liver, kidneys and brains—and keep portions of meat and seafood small (75 grams or 2.5 oz cooked) as these foods can increase uric acid build-up
- choose low-fat milk products (milk, yogurt, cheese) daily
- consume at least four servings of vegetables and three servings of fruit daily – choose whole fruit instead of juice
- avoid sugary foods and drinks
- limit alcohol to one drink a day to minimize risk of an attack and avoid completely if having an attack
- drink plenty of fluids: at least 2-3 L (8-12 8 oz glasses) each day.

What should I eat if I have Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that causes a gradual decline in memory, language skills, perception of time and space, and the ability to care for oneself. Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging; unlike wrinkles, not everyone will get it. The risk of developing the disease increases as you age.

People who eat more vegetables and fruit, high-fibre foods, fish and omega-3 rich oils (sometimes known as the Mediterranean diet) and who eat less red meat and dairy may have some protection against dementia. Adults who are physically active have a lower risk of developing dementia



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and Alzheimer's disease. For more information search "Mediterranean Diet" at www.healthlinkbc.ca.

Weight loss is one of the primary symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. People may be unaware of their hunger or forget to eat, and get confused if there are too many food choices or distractions around the table. Using utensils can also be a challenge. To help someone with Alzheimer's disease eat well:

- set routine meal times with more time to eat and stick to them
- offer regular snacks
- serve familiar foods
- try offering one food at a time
- avoid distractions during meals: turn off the television or radio and avoid talking too much, but still sit down and eat with them
- cut food into small pieces or serve food that can be eaten with the fingers
- ensure mouth and teeth are healthy—no sores or ill-fitting dentures
- limit coffee and tea to one cup a day and alcohol to one drink a day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

In addition to your health-care provider, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is a good source of information about Alzheimer's disease. Call 1-800-667-3742 or visit www.alzheimer.ca/bc.

Also ask a dietitian about liquid nutritional supplements for added nutrition. These are milkshake-like drinks that come in a variety of flavours and are available at grocery and drug stores. See back cover to contact Healthlink BC. Also see Chapter 5, “What should I eat if I have low appetite?” and Chapter 10 for a healthy smoothie recipe.

What should I eat if I have Parkinson’s disease?

Parkinson’s disease is a disorder of the nervous system that affects muscle control, so that arms and legs tremble and may become rigid. Over time, someone with Parkinson’s disease may find it difficult to walk and talk and possibly even think. It can also cause problems with swallowing as well as constipation, depression and low appetite. See “What should I eat if I have trouble swallowing?” (in this chapter) as well as Chapter 5 for information on constipation, depression and low appetite.

If you or a person you know already has Parkinson’s disease, proper nutrition and regular physical activity is vital to maintaining strength and preventing muscle loss.

Follow the recommendations in chapters 1 and 2 and add a daily multivitamin/mineral for people over age 50 (this may need to be a liquid for ease of swallowing). Talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian for more dietary information. See the back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

What should I eat if I have trouble swallowing?

Having trouble swallowing or feeling like food is caught in your throat or esophagus is common at any age, but even more so for seniors.

Trouble swallowing can be caused by eating too fast, taking bites that are too big, having dentures that do not fit well, or having a loose tooth that prevents proper chewing. It can be made worse by not drinking enough while eating or by eating while lying down. People with Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease and Lou Gehrig’s disease (ALS) may not chew their food enough or may actually forget to chew.



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However, it may also be related to a condition like GERD, hiatus hernia or stroke.

If you have trouble swallowing, do not restrict yourself to eating only soft or liquid food (that can cause other problems). Instead, first try to take smaller bites and eat more slowly, and see your dentist if you have dentures or a loose or missing tooth.

See your health-care provider if the trouble goes on for more than a few days, or if you have had a more serious health problem, such as a stroke or Parkinson's disease. Your health-care provider may refer you to a speech language pathologist for a full assessment.

Chapter 5

Staying Strong

Your body changes as you age. Many people lose muscle strength and gain fat as their metabolism slows down, putting them at greater risk for falls.





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The healthy eating recommendations and resources (including Canada's Food Guide) introduced in chapters 1 and 2 provide a solid basis for eating well as you age. They are also the foundation for preventing or dealing with some of the problems associated with age, such as losing muscle, having less appetite and dealing with constipation, depression and anemia.

This chapter provides general guidelines only. For more detailed information, talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian. See the back cover for contacting HealthLink BC.

What should I eat to maintain muscle and a body size that is right for me?

People come in different shapes and sizes and being slender doesn't necessarily mean you are healthier than someone with a different body size. In fact, you can improve your health at any size by adopting healthy behaviours: eating more vegetables and fruit, drinking more water, getting enough sleep, being more active and eating foods prepared at home more often.

Your body composition (the amount of muscle, fat and water that makes up your body) is more important than a number on the scale to prevent muscle loss at any size, keep you strong and reduce the risk of falls.

In fact, new research is emerging that shows seniors may need to weigh slightly more than younger adults to protect against muscle loss.

If you are concerned about muscle loss or a changing body composition that's impacting your health, talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian. They can determine whether there are other factors such as medication or fluid retention that may

need to be addressed, as well as help you make the best food choices to keep you strong.

A dietitian can help you develop a plan for eating that is tailored to you: what you like to eat, your age and activity level. Dietitian Services is part of HealthLink BC—see the back cover for contact information.

If your health-care provider recommends you make lifestyle changes to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, keep the following in mind:

Be realistic

Losing weight in a healthy way takes time and effort. A crash diet may work in the short term, but the weight will come back almost immediately. A weight loss of no more than 0.5-1 kg (1-2 lb) per week is healthy and realistic. Or, you may simply need to maintain your weight.

Try to make one simple, healthy change at a time, such as switching to milk instead of cream for coffee, or walking to a neighbour's house instead of driving.

Remember: your goal is not to be thin. It is to be healthy and fit.

Variety is key

Eating a variety of different foods from each food group will keep meals exciting and help you get all the nutrients you need.

Try to include at least three of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide at every meal and at least two in a healthy snack.

Eat breakfast

Eating a good breakfast helps maintain muscle mass. During the night, your metabolism slows down. Eat a balanced, high-fibre and high-protein breakfast to kick-start your body in the morning and burn fuel more efficiently throughout the day. Enjoy oats, fruit and yogurt, or eggs with whole grain toast and vegetables, and limit foods that provide little nutrition and a lot of less healthy fats and calories, including bacon, hash browns and pastries.



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Staying Strong

Don't skip meals

Try to eat three meals a day. When you skip meals, you tend to eat more at the next meal or choose a less healthy snack, and you miss an opportunity to eat the foods that keep you healthy and strong.

Boost your fibre and watch your fats

High-fibre foods keep you satisfied for longer, so eat more vegetables and fruit, legumes (such as beans, lentils and chickpeas) and whole grains.

While you need some fat to stay healthy, remember that fat is high-calorie compared to proteins and carbohydrates. It's best for your health to have 2-3 added tablespoons of healthy oils and fats in your day, so be mindful of how much you're using. Instead of simply pouring oil into a pan or dressing on a salad, try measuring them for a couple of days to get a sense of what an added tablespoon looks like. See Chapter 2 for more about the best fats to include.

Make the healthy choice the easy choice

Try to have healthy food choices in your cupboards and your fridge. If it's not there, you can't eat it.

Fresh or dried fruit, hard-boiled eggs, cut-up vegetables, and canned tuna and beans are all great foods to keep around.

Also see our list of essentials for your shelves in Chapter 7. With these supplies, you'll be able to eat well and make all the tasty recipes we've included in Chapter 10.

Be aware of your servings

Most people underestimate how much they eat in a day by as much as one-third. Canada's Food Guide provides clear information about how much food equals one serving for each of the four major food groups.

The Eat Well Plate in Appendix C helps you figure out how to put Canada's Food Guide recommendations into practice and fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Don't forget to check the size of your plates, as we tend to fill them no matter the size.

Choose your fluids wisely

What you drink can be just as important as what you eat. Most sugary drinks provide little to no nutrition, add calories we don't need and take the place of healthier choices such as water and milk. Sugary drinks include energy drinks, fruit drinks, pop, sports drinks, slushes and vitamin-enhanced waters. Specialty coffees and teas, such as flavoured lattes and cappuccinos, can be as calorie-rich as a slice of cake. Water is the best choice to satisfy your thirst.

Move your body

Include activities designed to preserve muscle mass as well as strength and flexibility. Remember that physical activity does not have to be hard or exhausting: gardening, dancing, walking, lawn bowling, household chores and even grocery shopping can give you the activity you need. See Chapter 2, "Get moving! Where does physical activity fit?" for more information.

What should I eat if I have a low appetite?

Having a low appetite and not eating enough nutrients can be dangerous as it can cause:

- an increased risk for falls
- poor memory and confusion
- a decrease in the body's ability to resist food-borne illnesses, colds, the flu and pneumonia - see Chapter 8 for information on safe food handling
- excess bone loss and osteoporosis – see Chapter 4 for more information on osteoporosis
- decreased muscle strength and the ability to do simple things like walk or sit up straight
- hypothermia (low body temperature).

Many people lose their appetite as they age. This happens for a variety of reasons. You may simply not want to cook any more,



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or you may feel too tired to shop or prepare food. You may even be on a restricted income that makes grocery shopping a challenge. Depression and loneliness can also lead to poor appetite, as can problems with chewing or swallowing. Some medications, too, can lead to weight loss, as can too much alcohol. Or food may simply not taste as good to you as it used to.

But not eating enough can be the beginning of a vicious cycle. You don't feel particularly well, so you don't eat. You don't eat, so you feel worse.

To deal with low appetite or prevent unintentional loss of muscle, try to:

Eat more often

Try eating smaller amounts more often, such as four or five small meals rather than one or two large meals, and eat calorie-rich foods first. You need to eat more calories overall, but make sure the extra calories you add come from healthy foods. Consider the following high-calorie snacks or light meals:

- peanut butter on whole grain toast with sliced apple or banana
- milk or yogurt and bananas or strawberries, mixed in a blender for an easy-to-consume drink
- a handful of nuts and seeds or trail mix
- cheese on whole grain crackers
- a bowl of cereal with milk and raisins
- vegetables or corn chips dipped in hummus.

You might also want to try a liquid nutritional supplement, also called a “meal replacement drink” by some manufacturers. These are milkshake-like drinks that you can buy in grocery or drug stores. While they can help supply your body with missing

nutrients, they do not provide enough energy and protein to actually replace a meal—they are for snacks only! Focusing on food is more important.

Make every mouthful count by choosing foods that are high in both protein and calories. To add extra calories to meals:

- sprinkle nuts or wheat germ on yogurt, fruit or cereal
- eat eggs often—try a scramble or omelette with cheese
- add whole milk to soups, milkshakes, cheese sauces, pancakes or scrambled eggs
- melt cheese on toast or add it to sandwiches, vegetables, soups, brown rice and whole grain pasta.

Pack in the protein

Protein is crucial for your body to retain lean muscle and keep your heart and other muscles working efficiently. Include meat, fish, chicken, turkey, milk and milk alternatives, nuts and nut butters, legumes (such as beans and lentils) or soy foods (such as tofu) at each meal and snack.

Spice up your food

Nothing can kill an appetite like bland food. Try using lemon juice, herbs and spices, such as black pepper, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, turmeric, dill seeds, basil, ginger, coriander and onion, to make your food more interesting.

Drink fluids between meals, rather than with them

Drinking fluids (including water, tea, coffee or juice) can make you feel full faster. Try to drink between meals so you have more room for food.

Make meals social events

Invite a friend over or set a regular “eat out” date and always ask to take home any extra food. Ask your local community health or seniors’ centre about monthly lunches or community kitchens you could join.

Get moving

Physical activity stimulates the appetite, improves mood and strengthens bones and muscles. See Chapter 2 for types of activities to try.



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Check into Meals on Wheels and grocery delivery

Some communities have Meals on Wheels or another meal delivery service. If you can't prepare healthy meals for yourself any more, call HealthLink BC to find out what's available in your area. See back cover to contact HealthLink BC.

Some grocery stores provide delivery services, especially for seniors. Contact your local store to see if they deliver and how much it costs.

Consider more ready-to-eat convenience foods at the grocery store—they can be a healthy option. See Chapter 6 for information on convenience foods and reading labels to make healthy choices.

What should I eat to prevent a fall?

Drinking enough fluids (approximately 2–3 L) per day can prevent dizziness and decrease the risk of falling. Drink more fluids in the morning so that you don't have to get up too often at night. See Chapter 2 for more details on fluids.

Vitamin D and calcium help keep your bones strong. Canada's Food Guide recommends that all older adults take a supplement of 400 IU of vitamin D daily. See Chapter 3 for whether you are getting enough through your diet, or talk to a dietitian.

At each meal, focus on protein-rich foods as discussed in Chapter 3. They keep your muscles strong, which helps with balance. It's also important to get enough iron as low iron or anemia can cause weakness and fatigue.

Vision problems also increase risk of falls. Make sure your eyes are in good health. See Chapter 4 for more on eye health.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the BC Fall & Injury Prevention Coalition at www.findingbalancebc.ca or call HealthLink BC. See back cover for contact information.

What should I eat if I am constipated?

Your mother may have told you that you should have a bowel movement every day, but it's not true. For some people, three bowel movements a day is normal, while for others it's three per week. Changes in your normal pattern may mean you are constipated.

Constipation takes different forms with different people. You may have no bowel movement for several days, or have stools that are hard to pass, or feel like you are unable to empty your bowels completely.

Constipation can be caused by not consuming enough fibre or fluids, too little physical activity, depression or overuse of laxatives. It can also be caused by side effects from certain medications, such as iron or calcium supplements, antacids, antihistamines, tranquilizers and some heart medications. Or it can be a sign of an undetected medical condition, such as diabetes, hemorrhoids or IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome—see Chapter 4 for more on IBS).

If you are constipated:

- Eat more fibre. Have at least six (for women) or seven (for men) servings of whole grains a day, including high-fibre breads and cereals. Vegetables, fruit (including dried fruit), beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts and seeds are also great sources of fibre, especially wheat bran, ground flax and chia seeds. Be sure to add fibre slowly, to avoid any problems with gas or cramps. See Chapter 2 for more fibre tips.
- Drink more fluids. Women should consume about 2.2 L (nine 8 oz glasses) of fluids each day, while men should aim for about 3 L (12 8 oz glasses). Water, milk, yogurt



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drinks, soups and coffee and tea (a maximum of three 8 oz cups of caffeinated coffee a day) are all sources of fluids.

- If eating more fibre and drinking more fluids doesn't help, add some prunes (a natural laxative) to your morning cereal, drink some prune juice with lunch, or try our Fruit Lax recipe in Chapter 10.
- Don't use a fibre supplement or store-bought laxative right away. First, try changing your diet. If that doesn't work, talk to your health-care provider about whether laxatives—and which kind—would work for you.
- Be mindful of your body's cues and try not to miss an opportunity to have a bowel movement. Try sitting on the toilet after meals when the digestive tract has been stimulated.

WATCH OUT!

See your health-care provider if you:

- experience a sudden change in your normal bowel habits
- have been constipated for some time and changing your eating habits has not made any difference
- have any blood in your stool.

What should I eat if I am depressed?

Depression is a serious illness that affects roughly 1 in 10 adults over age 65. It can be triggered by a number of factors, including illnesses such as dementia, heart disease, cancer, stroke or arthritis, or grief at the loss of a spouse or a friend.

IF YOU HAVE DIVERTICULOSIS

Constipation can sometimes lead to diverticulosis, particularly in seniors. This is where diverticula (small pouches) form on the wall of the colon. When diverticulosis flares up, it's called diverticulitis, which can cause diarrhea, pain, fever, cramping, bleeding or bloating.

If you have diverticulosis:

- eat lots of vegetables and fruit
- drink plenty of fluids
- enjoy nuts or seeds as part of a healthy diet – despite common advice to avoid seeds, nuts, corn, popcorn and tomatoes, there is no proof that this is needed or helpful.

Also talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian. See back cover to contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. Diverticulosis can become diverticulitis, and you may need a special diet.

Symptoms of depression in seniors vary widely. They may include feeling sad for more than two weeks, feeling slowed down and/or withdrawing from regular social activities, sleeping too much, crying and struggling to take care of yourself. They may also include loss of appetite and weight changes. If you are feeling depressed, or you think someone else is, get yourself or your friend to a health-care provider as soon as possible.

The most important thing to remember is that depression is treatable. Your health-care provider may prescribe medication and/or therapy. If your depression is causing you to lose weight, your health-care provider might also suggest you work with a dietitian to find ways to modify what you eat or to help with any underlying condition, such as heart disease, that may be contributing to your depression. Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.



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Physical activity is one of the best ways to prevent and cope with depression. See Chapter 2, “Get moving! Where does physical activity fit?” for activities you can try and call 8-1-1 for more information.

What should I eat if I am anemic?

Anemia is a blood condition caused by a lack of red blood cells—the cells which carry oxygen to the body’s tissues—leading to exhaustion, dizziness and shortness breath.

Anemia is usually caused by a shortage of certain nutrients, including iron, vitamin B12 and folate. Chronic illnesses, such as cancer, kidney disease and diabetes, may also lead to anemia.

If you are taking medications for any of these conditions, they may be affecting the way your body absorbs key nutrients—talk to your health-care provider for more information.

If you think you are anemic, talk to your health-care provider about having your blood tested. If the blood test confirms that you are anemic, your health-care provider will identify the cause and determine the best course of treatment.

What you eat can also make a big difference. If you are low in folate or vitamin B12, add Vitamin B12-rich foods including meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy products. Some vegetables meats and soy beverages are fortified with vitamin B12, and it is also found in some multivitamin/mineral supplements. You can also increase the amount of folate (another type of B vitamin) in your diet by eating more beans, lentils, dark green leafy vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds. For more information on B vitamins see Chapter 3.

Only take an iron supplement if your health-care provider recommends it. Otherwise concentrate on healthy eating. See Chapter 3 for more on iron.

What should I eat if I am allergic to certain foods?

Most bad reactions to food are due to food intolerance (see below) rather than true food allergies. Only three to four per cent of adults have a physician-diagnosed food allergy.

True food allergies are very serious: they cause a chain reaction of chemical changes that lead to swelling and irritation in certain parts of the body. Most food allergies are to nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, mustard, sulphites, soy, wheat and milk.

Most people with true food allergies have known about them since childhood, when they first encountered the food. However, we can develop food allergies later in life. If you think you might have a food allergy, talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian to find out what foods, if any, are causing your problems and how to avoid them if necessary.

WATCH OUT!

Call 9-1-1 immediately if, after eating:

- you feel light-headed (like you might faint)
- you feel confused
- your lips, tongue or face are swollen
- you are wheezing or finding it difficult to breathe.

Food intolerance

Food intolerances are common. Many people are lactose intolerant, meaning they produce too little lactase (the enzyme that digests lactose, the sugar in milk), and consuming milk products causes them to have gas, bloating, cramps and diarrhea.

Other people cannot tolerate wheat protein, caffeine or hot sauce, while some break out in hives after eating certain fruits, such as strawberries. Still others are allergic to pollens and find that their symptoms, such as itchy mouth, burning lips, watery eyes, runny nose and sneezing, get worse after eating certain raw vegetables and fruit.



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There are few simple tests to determine most food intolerances. If you suspect that you have a food intolerance, consult with your health-care provider or a dietitian before you cut certain foods completely from your diet. See back cover for contacting HealthLink BC. Even if it turns out that you do have a food intolerance, you may simply need to cut down on how much of it you eat.

For example, if you have mild lactose intolerance:

- eat small amounts of milk products, or try them with snacks or meals
- eat lactose-free yogurts
- drink lactose-free milk
- try enzyme tablets (such as Lactaid®) that will digest the lactose for you
- try a milk alternative such as fortified soy beverage
- choose harder cheeses that may say “lactose-free.”

If you have severe lactose intolerance, read food labels carefully and look for non-dairy sources of calcium. You may also need to talk to your health-care provider or a dietitian about calcium and vitamin D supplements. See Chapter 3 for more information on supplements.

Chapter 6

Recipe for Success

Many seniors find it challenging to cook, especially if they are living and eating alone. It may be difficult to get to the grocery store, or easier to skip a meal than find the time or energy to prepare something healthy.

This chapter is devoted to the idea that cooking and eating healthy food does not have to be difficult, time consuming or expensive. It will guide you to put the previous chapters into practice by providing helpful tips and ideas for the way you plan, shop and cook.





CHAPTER 6

Recipe for Success

Plan

- Start by building a healthy pantry. Having some simple staple foods and ingredients in the cupboard can make it much easier to prepare a balanced meal. See Chapter 7 for a list of basic foods to keep in your cupboard, fridge and freezer for easy meal preparation. (You will also need these items to make some of the recipes in Chapter 10.)
- Plan your meals using the Eat Well Plate in Appendix C, with vegetables and fruit taking up half your plate, and smaller amounts of food from the other food groups making up the rest.
- Plan for a week's worth of meals at a time, thinking about what you want to eat for the next week and the activities in your calendar. Try to use what's in your fridge and freezer before buying fresh.
- Check the weekly grocery flyers for good buys that may inspire your menu planning.
- For meal planning ideas, check out our one-week meal plan for a week's worth of healthy meals and snacks (see Appendix A).
- Try making at least one meal a week that you can break into smaller portions and freeze for another easy meal, such as a soup, chili or stew.
- Make a grocery list throughout the week so you know what you need ahead of time. This also helps avoid impulse purchases that may bust your budget.

Make it easy on yourself

- Consider frozen, canned, pre-washed and pre-cut vegetables to save yourself time and energy peeling and chopping.
- Choose convenient foods like barbequed rotisserie chicken, or canned legumes or fish for easy sources of protein. Remember to trim off the fat and skin from chicken.

- Some grocery stores offer free delivery for seniors if you have a reasonably large order and are in the delivery area, so save your energy if you need to! Make sure you say how much of each item you want: you don't want to order more than you can eat.
- Don't let pain or stiffness interfere with healthy eating. If you find it difficult to open a jar or a can or use certain kitchen utensils, help may be available. Electric can openers, for example, are easier to use if you have arthritis, while grip pads can help with jars.

It can be done



Surjit Lalli's husband had his first heart bypass operation in 1978. He's had two more since then, but today, at 78, he is slim, healthy and "always active, always on the go."

"I've spent the last 28 years looking for new things, for new ways to cook our traditional food in a healthy way," says

Surjit, "and we're both doing really well. We believe in good food and exercise."

In 2001, Surjit helped lead a series of 11 workshops for 120 other Indo-Canadian women in the Lower Mainland. "There are a number of people in the South Asian community with lots of health problems, mostly from eating fried things and lots of sugar," she says. "It's hard when you are used to one way of cooking and sometimes people don't like to try new things. But if you can see that it's not really difficult to modify your traditional recipes and you start to like the way something tastes, you'll eat it more and it will just become a part of your food and the way you eat."

Surjit also points out that, while 120 women may seem like a small number, they all have family, friends and neighbours, so "the knowledge about healthy eating just keeps on going."



CHAPTER 6

Recipe for Success

Shop

With so many foods and products to pick from, choosing nutritious foods can feel overwhelming. Older adults may also face other challenges with grocery shopping, including cooking for one, mobility and energy limitations, difficulty getting to a store (transportation, weather, living in a remote area, etc.), or reliance upon others.

In addition, seniors may be on a tight budget and need to be mindful of grocery costs. But healthy eating can fit any budget. You may be surprised by how much money you can save if you plan your meals ahead of time. Here are some tips for making the most of your shopping trip and your budget:

Before you shop

- Shop with a list! Planning your shopping trip around a list will encourage you to make healthier choices, keeping your time and budget in mind.
- Check grocery store flyers and plan your meals around the items that are on sale.
- Be smart and realistic. Include healthy snack foods (e.g., nuts, popcorn or whole grain crackers) and a special treat on your shopping list.
- Don't shop while hungry. Have a snack before you go to avoid buying less-healthy convenience foods to satisfy your hunger.
- Check if your local stores offer discount days for seniors.
- Do you find it hard to carry your groceries? Some grocery stores offer delivery services for free or for a small charge.

In the store

- Look for store brands: they are usually cheaper than name brands, but always check the prices.

- Check if discounts on multiple items (“Buy four for \$5”) still apply if you only buy one or two.
- Buy from the bulk section if possible, where you can choose exactly how much you need and you avoid wasting food. Some bulk items may also be cheaper, but be sure to check the unit price.
- Buy smaller quantities so that food does not go bad before you have a chance to eat it.
- Check the “best before” dates on all fresh foods, and especially items such as milk and yogurt, to make sure you will be able to eat all you’ve bought before it spoils.
- If you’re budget-conscious, stay away from convenience foods. A lot of these foods are higher in fat, salt and sugar and they often cost quite a bit more than cooking from scratch.

Vegetables and fruit

- Shop the flyers. Buying what’s on sale is great way to get a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit you may not have had before—the more colour, the better!
- Buy fresh vegetables and fruit in amounts you can use before they go bad. Consider the spoilage of different produce—apples and oranges will keep better than bananas; root vegetables including carrots and sweet potatoes don’t go bad quickly; and cabbage lasts much longer than lettuce and is often sold in cut halves.
- Local, seasonal vegetables and fruit can be cheaper than imported ones.
- Canned and frozen vegetables and fruit cost less than out-of-season fresh vegetables and fruit, and are just as nutritious. Look for low-sodium or no-sodium-added canned vegetables, and canned fruit packed in water or juice instead of syrup.
- Bagged and unflavoured frozen vegetables are lower in fat and salt, and cost half as much as vegetables that are boxed and packaged with added sauces.

Whole grains and grain products

- Buy whole grains, such as brown rice, oats, barley or bulgur (cracked wheat), in bulk or on sale.



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- Buy whole grain pasta when it's on sale. It's a healthier choice than refined white pasta and it stores well in your pantry for a quick and easy meal.
- Choose whole grain breads instead of white bread. Check the packaging for "100% whole grain." Look for ingredients such as whole grain flour or whole grain whole wheat flour. See "What is a food label?" on page 107 for more information on choosing breads.
- Buy bread when it's on sale and keep it in the freezer for up to three months, using one or two slices at a time.
- Whole grain cereals, such as oats, are a cheaper and healthier choice than sugary, refined cereals.

Milk and alternatives

- Buy milk in smaller cartons (1 L or 2 L): they are cheaper than the smaller plastic jugs.
- Buy cheese in blocks when it's on sale. It's cheaper to slice or grate it as you need it. Some cheeses, like parmesan, can also be frozen.
- Buy plain, unsweetened yogurt and add some fruit for sweetness and fibre. Larger containers are cheaper than single serving sizes.
- Buy unsweetened soy beverage or other non-dairy beverages when on sale. Some varieties keep well in the pantry and will only need refrigeration after they are opened.

Meat and alternatives

- Cook with dried or canned beans and lentils more often than meat. They are more affordable than meat, lower in fat and a good source of fibre.
- Cheaper and leaner cuts of meat (blade, chuck, flank, or rump

roast) can be marinated or slow cooked in low-sodium broth or tomato juice to make them tender.

- Buy a whole chicken instead of individually wrapped pieces. It's cheaper and you can cut it up the way you like it.
- Freeze in individual portions for easy meals. You can also cook a whole chicken in low sodium stock then remove the skin and bones. Add some meat back for a soup, then save the rest for a meal the next day.
- Unseasoned frozen fish and low-sodium canned tuna and salmon are inexpensive alternatives to fresh fish and just as nutritious.
- Eggs are an inexpensive and complete source of protein.
- Use tofu more often. It is inexpensive and has a relatively long shelf life in the fridge, making it an ideal protein source for an easy meal.

Do I really need to read food labels?

Yes! You need to read food labels. It's the best way you put what you've learned in previous chapters into practice. You need to know what you are eating to make informed and healthy food choices. This is especially important if you are managing any chronic conditions, such as heart disease or diabetes.

Packaged food—food that comes in a box, can, bag, carton, plastic container or heat-sealed wrap—has a lot of important information printed on the label. Remember to bring your glasses to the store if you need them to read small print.

What is a food label?

Food labels are found on packaged food to help you make informed choices. They include:

- a Nutrition Facts Table
- an ingredient list
- possible nutrition and health claims.

Nutrition Facts Table

The Nutrition Facts Table is an important tool for comparing foods to make a healthier choice. It may seem complicated, but it gets easier once you know what to look for.



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On the next page there are two typical Nutrition Facts Tables for two kinds of bread: a white bread made with refined flour on the left, and a whole grain bread on the right. Each of the tables include:

1. **Serving size.** The information provided on a food label is based on the serving size, listed at the top of the label. In these examples, the serving size is one slice. If you eat two slices, you will eat twice the amounts listed on the label.

Not all products have the same serving sizes, so be sure to check when you're comparing products, and be mindful of how much you actually eat. Don't be fooled by less healthy products with very small serving sizes. If you want to better understand portion sizes, try measuring your food for two or three days to see how much you are eating.

2. **Calories.** The label tells you how many calories you will consume if you eat that serving of food.
3. **Per cent daily value (% DV).** This value tells you whether a food has a little or a lot of a certain nutrient. A serving with % DV of 5 per cent or less has some of a particular nutrient, while 15 per cent or more means it has a lot. This information can be helpful when trying to limit a certain nutrient, such as saturated fat or sodium.

When choosing bread, look for labels that say high or very high source of fibre (which mean the food has at least four to six grams of fibre per serving) or check the Nutrition Facts Table to see if there is at least four grams of fibre per slice.

White bread - refined flour

Nutrition Facts			
Per 1 slice (37 g)			
Amount		% Daily Value	
Calories 90			
Fat 1 g		2 %	
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g		0 %	
Cholesterol 0 mg			
Sodium 200 mg		8 %	
Carbohydrate 17 g		6 %	
Fibre 1 g		4 %	
Sugars 1 g			
Protein 3 g			
Vitamin A	0 %	Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron	8 %

Whole grain bread

Nutrition Facts			
Per 1 slice (39 g)			
Amount		% Daily Value	
Calories 90			
Fat 1.5 g		2 %	
Saturated 0.4 g + Trans 0 g		2 %	
Cholesterol 0 mg			
Sodium 190 mg		8 %	
Carbohydrate 15 g		5 %	
Fibre 4 g		16 %	
Sugars 2 g			
Protein 4 g			
Vitamin A	0 %	Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron	8 %

Source: Health Canada

FOODS THAT DO NOT HAVE A NUTRITION FACTS TABLE

By law, most packaged food in Canada must have a Nutrition Facts Table. However, the following foods do not need one:

- fresh vegetables and fruit
- raw meat, poultry and seafood
- individual servings of food meant to be eaten immediately
- foods prepared or processed in-store, such as bakery items and salads.

Ingredient list

In addition to Nutrition Facts Tables, food labels also include a list of ingredients. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight, meaning the first ingredient on the list is what the food contains the most of, and the last food on the list is the ingredient the food contains the least of.

The ingredient list is just as important as the Nutrition Facts Table. By knowing that the ingredient list appears in descending order, you can better identify the primary ingredients of foods and use this information to compare products and make informed, healthy choices. You should generally choose products with fewer ingredients.



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BUYING WHOLE GRAIN BREAD

When buying whole grain bread, look for ingredients such as whole grain wheat, bran, oatmeal or rye flour. Enriched wheat flour and unbleached flour are both refined white flour, and are not good sources of fibre.

"Multigrain" does not mean that the food is a good source of fibre: it may simply mean that a small amount of whole grain has been added to enriched flour.



Nutrition claims

Many packaged foods also have nutrition claims on the package or label. There are two kinds of nutrition claims: nutrient content claims and health claims. Nutrient content claims, such as "low in fat," "high in fibre," "low in sodium," "no sugar added" or "an excellent source of vitamins C and E" describe the amount of a nutrient in a food.

These claims must, by Canadian law, meet strict standards. For example, foods labeled "low in fat" must contain no more than three grams of fat per serving, and "high in fibre," foods must contain at least four grams of dietary fibre per serving.

Watch out for claims such as "less salt" or "lower in salt or sodium than our regular product." If the regular product was very high in salt to begin with, the lower-salt version may still have too much for someone on a sodium-reduced diet.

Health claims, on the other hand, are statements about the beneficial effects of a certain food in a healthy diet, such as "A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease."

FOR MORE ON FOOD LABELS

For more information on food labels, find the link to the *Understanding Food Labels* page by Health Canada at www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources.

Also visit the Health Canada and HealthLink BC websites for up-to-date information and useful tips for making healthy choices.

What about convenience foods? Are they healthy?

Convenience foods include a variety of packaged or canned foods that have been processed in some way to make them easier to eat, such as frozen dinners, canned soups, pre-seasoned side dishes, potato chips, ready-made desserts and packaged snacks. They are typically made with less healthy ingredients, making them higher in fats, salt and sugars. Manufacturers also use additives to make these foods taste good and last longer in the pantry or freezer. It's best to limit these foods and opt for homemade meals instead.

Still, some convenience foods can be a good choice, if you know what to look for. Manufacturers may offer healthier versions of their usual products in response to consumer concerns about health. For example, canned beans, fish and vegetables, such as tomatoes, can be found with both low-sodium and no-sodium added. Lower-sodium broths, sauces and condiments are also available. These foods allow you to better control your intake of sodium. Cook with low-sodium canned vegetables, beans and broths and taste your food, adding salt only if needed. You can also find baked goods, such as crackers and cookies, made without trans fats.

Always read the label, look at the serving size and be mindful of nutrients that are important to your particular health concerns. Remember, convenience foods can be more expensive than making your own meals at home. If you do have a convenience food on occasion, try to have a healthier version of that food and make sure your other meals for the day are healthy and balanced. See Chapter 2 for information on making balanced meals.



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Cook

Cooking is the key to healthy eating at home. Cooking at home is not only more affordable, but it also allows you to control what goes into your meals. For seniors, cooking can be a challenge as it requires time and energy for shopping, preparing and cleanup. You may also not have much of an appetite and would rather have a piece of toast or bowl of cereal. The good news is that there are ways to make cooking easier and more enjoyable:

- Prepare extra and plan for leftovers. Add your leftover vegetables to a salad or whole grain wrap, or have leftover chicken on a sandwich with whole grain bread and vegetables.
- Prepare complete, balanced meals when you have the most energy. This may mean having your main meal at lunch time, and having a bowl of soup with whole grain crackers and cheese for dinner.
- Use a blender, chopper or food processor to make chopping your vegetables fast and easy.
- Cook with a friend or family member. Enjoy making a nice meal with company, sharing the time to prepare, eat and clean up.
- Eating alone can be just as enjoyable as eating with others. You can cook what you want and eat where and when you want. Sit near a window where you can watch the birds or take your lunch to the park or the beach for a picnic. Listen to music or the radio while cooking and eating if this makes meal times more enjoyable.
- Try to clean up and put things away while your food cooks, so you won't have as much to do later.

Make it easy on yourself. It doesn't need to take a lot of time or effort to make a healthy meal. For example:

- Add leftover chicken, canned beans or tuna and leftover or frozen vegetables to whole grain pasta with a simple tomato sauce.
- Add tofu cubes and leftover or frozen vegetables to cooked rice, and bake with a sprinkle of cheese.
- Scramble two eggs with chopped vegetables, top with grated, low-fat cheese and serve with whole grain toast.
- Add canned lentils to a low-fat, sodium-reduced vegetable soup.
- Sauté onions and garlic with a can of chickpeas. Add Indian spices such as a teaspoon of turmeric and cumin and serve over brown rice and spinach.
- Make a Mediterranean platter with hummus (a chickpea dip), vegetables, unsalted nuts and whole grain pita or crackers.
- Take leftover dahl (lentils) or sabji (a vegetable dish) and spread them on a whole grain roti or chapatti.
- Buy pre-made salmon or veggie burger patties and serve on a whole grain bun with a side salad.

Leftover tips

Cook once, eat twice!

- Make a large pot of soup, stew or chili and freeze in individual containers for easy meals.
- Add leftover cooked vegetables to a salad, pasta sauce, casserole, soup, omelette or stir fry.
- Use leftover fruit as a tasty topping for your oatmeal, whole grain pancakes or waffles, yogurt or add it to a salad. You can also blend your leftover fruit with some milk and yogurt for a healthy fruit smoothie. See Chapter 10 for a smoothie recipe.
- Add leftover meat, chicken, tofu and legumes to a casserole, salad, pasta sauce or soup.
- Put leftover meat and vegetables on a whole grain pita with some tomato sauce and cheese for a quick and easy personal pizza.



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- Cook and freeze extra ground beef for use in other recipes (chili, pasta sauce, stuffed peppers).
- Add leftover whole grain pasta to a salad, soup or casserole.
- Use leftover rice for rice pudding or add it to soups or casseroles.
- Use leftover bread to make croutons for salads, or grind it up into breadcrumbs for coating chicken, fish or tofu.
- Add kidney beans, chopped vegetables and chili powder to leftover spaghetti and meat sauce to make an easy, delicious chili.
- To ensure your food remains safe to eat, only reheat leftovers once. See Chapter 9 for handling leftovers.

The Empty Nest

It's harder to shop and cook for one or two after spending years cooking for a family. You may find you are buying and making too much food and a lot of it is going to waste. Or you may find

TWO COOKING IDEAS

Consider starting up a cooking group with friends or neighbours. Get together to plan, shop for and prepare several meals together at one time. After you enjoy a nice meal together, each person can take home leftovers for another meal during the week.

Or try a healthy eating club, where once a week one member hosts the club and makes the soup or an entrée and others bring a salad, bread and fruit for dessert.



you are freezing too many portions of the same thing and it's boring to keep eating it! Here are a few tips:

- Look for recipes intended for one or two (like those in Chapter 10), or cut recipes meant for four to six people in half.
- Buy from the bulk food bins. These bins let you choose exactly how much you want of such essentials as brown rice, bran, cereals, whole grain pasta, dried fruit and nuts. Store bulk foods in sealed plastic or glass containers.
- Buy fresh fruit at different stages of ripeness, so you don't waste any. Eat the ripe ones right away. Keep frozen fruit on hand to ensure you have your daily servings.
- Look for small portions of items like chicken and fish, or buy larger portions and divide them into freezer bags when you get home (try to use within a few months), or share with a friend.

Skip the cooking occasionally

Not all meals require cooking! For an easy and balanced meal, try:

- peanut butter and banana on whole grain bread, with a glass of milk
- cottage cheese and fruit, with a whole grain muffin
- pre-made low-fat, low-sodium vegetable soup, with whole grain crackers and yogurt for dessert
- plain yogurt mixed with granola and topped with fruit
- green salad with pumpkin or sunflower seeds, cheese slices or canned tuna and a piece of fruit
- half of an avocado spread on toast with a boiled egg.

IF PAIN OR STIFFNESS MAKES IT HARD FOR YOU TO COOK

Ask your health-care provider to refer you to an occupational therapist who can help you make adjustments and suggest ways to make cooking easier for you.

Or call the Arthritis Society of Canada's Arthritis Answer Line at 1-800-321-1433 or visit www.arthritis.ca/bc.

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Your body changes as you age, and so may your situation in life. Some men suddenly find themselves cooking for the first time in their lives when they are seniors. Many senior women find they need to downsize their kitchens as they move to a smaller home.

This chapter has advice on how to cook healthy food as well as what to stock in your kitchen cupboards and fridge to make sure you continue to eat well. And, because everyone needs a break from the kitchen now and then, we've also included a section on healthy eating at restaurants.





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Is one method of cooking better than another?

Frying food is the least healthy cooking method. Grilling, steaming, stir frying, baking, microwaving, broiling and roasting are all healthier ways to cook both meat and vegetables. Barbecuing is also a good way to maintain both flavour and nutrients—just be mindful not to char your foods. See Chapter 2 on cooking meats.

If you boil your vegetables, use only a half inch of water, then use the leftover cooking water in a soup to “get back” the lost nutrients. Or, steam your vegetables to retain more nutrients.

What things should I always have in my kitchen?

Every now and then, you may not feel well, the weather may be bad or it may be just too far to the grocery store. If your cupboards, fridge and freezer are stocked with healthy options, you will still be able to cook healthy, tasty and simple meals and snacks at any time (including the recipes in Chapter 10).

In your cupboards, keep:

- canned salmon, sardines or tuna packed in water
- canned or dried kidney and black beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas
- peanut butter (no added salt, sugar or fat)
- unsalted nuts (peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, soy nuts)*
- seeds (sunflower, sesame, pumpkin)*
- whole grain pasta and noodles
- brown rice and brown rice noodles (vermicelli)
- whole grains, like oats, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, cornmeal*
- whole grain and/or rye crackers (low-fat and low-salt)
- dried, canned or boxed low-fat milk
- canned or boxed fruit and vegetable juices, such as apple juice or low-sodium tomato juice



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- canned fruits in unsweetened juice
- dried fruit, such as prunes, raisins, cranberries, apples
- dried or canned soups (low-fat and low-salt)
- canned vegetables, such as tomatoes, pumpkin, corn
- low sodium vegetable bouillon
- olive, canola and/or sesame oil
- vinegar (red wine and balsamic are both good for salads)
- cornstarch
- flours (whole wheat, beans, soy or millet)
- brown sugar
- honey
- herbs and spices, such as basil, chili powder, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, dill, garlic powder, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, red pepper flakes, thyme
- shelf-stable milk alternatives, such as soy or almond beverage in a carton
- tea and coffee.

** if buying nuts, seeds and whole grains in larger quantities, consider storing them in the fridge or freezer to keep them from going rancid*

In your freezer, keep:

- frozen vegetables without sauces
- frozen fruit, including blueberries and mixed berries, with no added sugar
- frozen fish, turkey or chicken, meat
- whole grain sliced bread, buns, bagels, flatbread, roti and pitas.

In your fridge, keep:

- lower-fat milk, cheese and yogurt
- eggs

- ready-to-eat vegetables, such as snap peas or cherry tomatoes
- ready-to-eat (pre-washed) salad greens
- ripe avocados (ripen on the counter then store in fridge)
- fresh fruit, such as oranges, grapefruit, pears and apples
- tofu—try smoked tofu which is ready-to-eat
- condiments, such as salsa, mustard, low-sodium soy sauce.

How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?

There are many easy ways to modify your favourite recipes to be lower in sodium and sugar and made with healthier fats. You can also easily increase the fibre. Experiment a bit to find what tastes best to you.

To reduce and swap healthier for less healthy fats:

- For baking, use about one-quarter less fat than the recipe calls for. For example, if a recipe calls for one-quarter cup of shortening or butter (four tablespoons), use three tablespoons of olive or canola oil instead. If this changes it too dramatically, try substituting half the butter for half olive or canola oil.
- Cut the liquid fat your recipe calls for by one-third. For example, if your recipe calls for one cup of oil, use two-thirds of a cup instead.
- Use skim, 1% or 2% milk instead of whole milk.
- Try steamed or boiled brown rice instead of fried rice, pilau or biryani.
- Use canned evaporated skim milk instead of either whipping cream or regular evaporated milk.
- Use lower-fat sour cream, cheese, mayonnaise and yogurt instead of regular products. Or, instead of sour cream, substitute cottage cheese or Greek yogurt. Regular yogurt can be a good substitute as well, but Greek yogurt is thicker, like sour cream, and has more protein.
- Make yogurt cheese by draining plain yogurt overnight. Use it in recipes calling for cream cheese.
- Replace some of the fat in your baking recipes with an equal amount of applesauce, mashed bananas, pureed prunes, pureed pumpkin or grated zucchini.
- For baking, replace one egg with a 'flax egg' by mixing one tablespoon of ground flax seeds with three tablespoons water and allowing it to sit for 10 minutes. This also adds fibre.



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SIMPLE SWAP!

Swap plain Greek yogurt for sour cream on baked potato or chili:

1/2 cup sour cream (14%) = 220 calories and 17 grams total fat.

1/2 cup Greek yogurt (2%) = 87 calories and 2.5 grams total fat



- Always choose lean red meats and trim off the excess fat. Trim the fat and skin from chicken and turkey.

To reduce sodium:

- Use low-sodium or unsalted ingredients in your recipes or replace the salt with other interesting ingredients, such as herbs, dry mustard, spices, lemon juice, ginger or garlic.
- Choose fresh or frozen food to use in your recipes.
- Limit processed cheese and processed, cured or smoked meats, such as sausage, hot dogs, ham, bacon and pepperoni.
- Limit pickles, pickled foods, relishes, dips and olives and prepared salad dressings. Use salsa and oyster or low-sodium soy sauce in small amounts.

To reduce sugar:

- Cut the sugar in your baked goods by one-quarter to one-third. Your cookies and muffins will still taste the same. Do not decrease sugar in yeast breads because sugar feeds the yeast.
- Add spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla to your recipes to give them more flavour.
- Limit using sweet sauces in your recipes, such as sweet plum, barbeque or hoisin sauce.
- Use fresh or frozen vegetables instead of preserved sweet and sour vegetables.

To increase fibre:

- Choose whole grains, such as whole wheat pasta and brown rice, instead of white or refined products.
- Use whole wheat flour, oats (ground into flour in the blender) and whole cornmeal in your recipes instead of all-purpose or enriched white flour.
- Add ground flax seeds or bran from oats and wheat to recipes like muffins.

Can I eat out and still eat healthy food?

You can eat a healthy meal no matter where you are. Don't hesitate to phone ahead and ask questions about what meals would be right for you or how the food is prepared. Also:

- To start your meal, choose vegetable soup or salad. Ask for the dressing on the side so that you can add it to taste.
- Instead of fries, ask for extra vegetables or salad, steamed rice or baked potato with sour cream on the side.
- Look for entrées that are steamed, baked, broiled, braised, poached or grilled. Limit foods that are sautéed, pan-fried or deep-fried.
- If you can't find what you want, tell your server how you would like your meat or fish cooked: grilled or broiled, for example, without added salt or high-fat sauces. Restaurants want your business and most chefs are very accommodating.
- To reduce the serving size, ask for a small or senior's portion, share your meal with a friend, or eat half and take the other half home for leftovers tomorrow.
- Choose tomato instead of cream sauce for your pasta and sauces without cream for your curry.
- For pizzas, ask if thin and/or whole wheat crust is available, and choose pepperoni, sausage and bacon less often.
- When at a salad bar, choose mostly vegetables and use dressing sparingly. Limit salty toppings such as bacon bits, croutons, olives and pickles.
- Order fresh fruit, sorbet or frozen yogurt for dessert instead of ice cream, sherbet pie, dessert soups such as red bean, and South Asian sweets, such as barfi, gulab jamun and jalebi less



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often. Share desserts with the table so everyone can enjoy just a few bites.

- Order your chai made with lower-fat milk, or consider having your coffee or tea and dessert at home, where you know you have healthy choices available.

MAKE INFORMED CHOICES WHEN EATING OUT

Have you heard of Informed Dining?

The Informed Dining program was developed in 2011 by the Province of British Columbia, in collaboration with the restaurant industry.

Informed Dining 

It gives you the nutrition information you need to make informed choices when eating out at a participating restaurant. The nutrition information is based on the portion size served, with a focus on calories and sodium.

At the restaurant

- Look for the Informed Dining logo on the menu or menu board at participating restaurants.
- Check the nutrition information before ordering to make an informed choice.

At home

- Visit www.InformedDining.ca to find out if your favourite restaurant is an Informed Dining participant.
- Check the nutrition information online to make an informed choice next time you eat out.

Chapter 8

Food Safety

Health Canada estimates that one in eight Canadians (four million people) are affected by food-borne illness every year.

You can get a food-borne illness without even realizing it. You may think you have a stomach bug or a touch of flu—nothing terribly important. But food-borne illness can be very serious, even deadly, especially for seniors.





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Our immune systems generally grow weaker with age and don't fight illnesses as well as they used to. Stomach acid, which helps keep intestinal bacteria under control, may also decrease. Chronic illnesses, including diabetes, cancer or kidney disease, also increase vulnerability to spoiled food.

What is a food-borne illness?

A food-borne illness occurs when a person eats food infected with tiny disease-causing organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and parasites.

The most common symptoms of a food-borne illness are stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and/or fever. These symptoms usually occur within a few hours after eating the contaminated food and usually last only a day or two. But in some cases, symptoms may take several days to appear and may last as long as a week to 10 days.

Meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, vegetables and fruit, and milk and milk products can all carry the germs responsible for food-borne illnesses. When you handle these foods, you can also transfer the germs to other foods, as well as to your kitchen counters, cutting boards or utensils.

How can I prevent food-borne illness?

Avoid foods that carry a higher risk of contamination:

- raw or unpasteurized cow or goat milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk
- unpasteurized cheeses (feta, brie, camembert)
- raw fish
- raw shellfish (oysters, clams, mussels and scallops)
- raw or under-cooked meat, chicken or turkey

- raw sprouts
- unpasteurized or freshly pressed fruit juice or cider, usually sold at roadside stands or juice bars
- raw or lightly cooked eggs, including uncooked cake or cookie batter, salad dressings and sauces made with eggs.

At the grocery store:

- Grab refrigerated and frozen foods last, just before you go to the checkout counter.
- Keep raw meat, seafood and poultry well wrapped and away from other items in your grocery cart (they can drip onto other foods). Ask the checkout clerk to put them in a separate bag.
- Read the “best before” dates on food items and make sure you have enough time to eat what you buy. For example, do not buy a big container of yogurt that expires in two days unless you will be able to eat it all in that time. “Best before” dates on canned and packaged foods are not the same as expiry dates: they refer to when the quality (freshness, flavour and texture) of the food will start to go down, but you may still be able to eat them. But if in doubt, throw it out.
- Wash your reusable grocery bags frequently.

As soon as you get home:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods (foods with a limited shelf life, including milk and other milk products, vegetables, meat and poultry) and prepared foods that have “keep refrigerated” or “keep frozen” on the package.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, fish and seafood in the fridge only if you intend to cook it no more than two to three days after purchasing. Otherwise, store it in the freezer.
- Place raw meat, seafood and poultry in a drawer or container on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator so they won’t drip onto other foods.

Before handling food

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

Regular soap is fine; you do not have to use an anti-bacterial soap.

Dry your hands with a clean hand towel.



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After handling food

Wash everything—your hands, cutting board, bowls, utensils and counter tops—with soap and warm water before you go on to the next food. This will prevent the transfer of germs from one food to another. For example, chop and prepare all the other foods before handling the chicken. Then skin the chicken and wash everything in warm soapy water, next sanitize to kill the germs, as washing will remove most but not all, then wash your hands thoroughly.

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

- Keep two cutting boards (wood or plastic) and use one for raw meat, poultry and seafood and the other for washed vegetables and fruit and other ready-to-eat food, such as cheese. Mark each one so that you know which board is for which purpose.
- Replace your cutting boards as soon as they become worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves.
- Sanitize your wooden cutting boards every time you cut raw meat or at least once a week with a bleach solution. Use 5 mL (one tsp) of household bleach to 750 mL (three cups) of water. Flood your board with the mixture. Let it stand a few minutes, then rinse thoroughly with clean water.
- Use the hot cycle to wash your dishcloths. Wash them often. Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces.
- It is not always possible to tell when food is no longer safe: it may not look, smell or taste bad. When in doubt, throw it out.

A GOOD RESOURCE

For more information about storing food safely, call HealthLink BC or find the link to the Food Safety page by Health Canada at www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources.

If you are using a marinade on meat or vegetables for extra flavour, marinate the food in the refrigerator, not on the counter at room temperature.

Before cooking or serving vegetables and fruit

Wash all vegetables and fruit under clean or purified running water (the water must be safe enough to drink), even those with a hard rind that you do not eat, like oranges, melons and squash. You may transfer bacteria from the outer skin to the inner flesh when you cut or peel them.

Do not use detergent or bleach to wash vegetables and fruit. These cleaners can be absorbed into your food. Clean running water is enough.

In addition:

- use a vegetable scrub brush on vegetables and fruit that have a firm skin, such as carrots, potatoes, melons and squash
- throw away the outer leaves of leafy vegetables before you wash the rest. Make sure all dirt is gone.

Storing uneaten or unused food

At room temperature, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes. Refrigerate or freeze all perishable or leftover food within 2 hours – within 1 hour in summer or if the room is warm.

Never put very hot food, such as soup, stew or pasta sauce, directly from the stove into the refrigerator. Instead, let your dish cool at room temperature for 30 minutes and then transfer it to a shallow, covered container and place it in the refrigerator. Use several shallow containers, if necessary – they cool more quickly than deep containers. Today's refrigerators can handle warm food better than older ones, so don't be afraid of putting dishes that are still a bit warm into your fridge!



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Food Safety

Throw out any perishable or leftover food that has been sitting for more than one hour in summer heat or two hours at room temperature.

If your hard cheese becomes mouldy on the outside, carefully cut off the mould and 1 inch (2.5 cm) away from the mould and use the cheese as soon as possible. You cannot cut the mould out of bread though as the spores will have transferred to the entire loaf. Consider freezing your bread instead of keeping it on the counter.

Set your refrigerator at 40°F (4°C) or colder and your freezer at 0°F (-18°C). Use an appliance thermometer, available at any grocery or hardware store, to make sure your refrigerator and freezer are cold enough.

Store eggs in their original carton, even if you have an egg tray in your refrigerator. Trays, especially in the door, are often not cold enough.

Leave some room for cold air to circulate: don't pack your refrigerator too tightly with food.

WATCH OUT!

The danger zone for germs is between 40°F (4°C) and 140°F (60°C):

- hot food should be hotter than 140°F (60°C)
- cold food should be colder than 40°F (4°C).

Thawing frozen food

Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature (on the counter). The outside can thaw first, while the inside remains frozen, creating a breeding ground for bacteria. Frozen foods should be thawed in one of the following ways:

- in the refrigerator, which can thaw 500 g (1 lb) of frozen meat or poultry in about five hours
- in the microwave, following the manufacturer's directions for thawing food, and cooking the food immediately after you have thawed it (remember never to microwave plastic wrap or foam containers)
- under cold water that is refreshed every half an hour, in its original wrapping or container.

Always ensure thawing food is stored in a container or tray large enough to catch any drips, and store on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

Dealing with leftovers

Have you ever pulled out a container from your fridge or freezer and wondered what on earth's inside? Put a label on the containers you put leftovers in, with both the date and the name of the dish. Eat refrigerated leftovers as soon as possible, preferably within two to four days.

Reheat leftovers once only. Compost or throw out what's left.

Cooking food

Heat food thoroughly to at least 140°F (60°C). For meat, poultry and eggs, the internal temperature should be even higher: 165-180°F (74-82°C). Leftovers should also be heated to at least 165°F (74°C).

Use a food thermometer—available at any grocery or hardware store—to make sure your food is really cooked. A digital thermometer is easiest to read.

If you are using a microwave, first cover the dish, then stir and rotate it at least once during cooking to make sure there are no cold spots where germs can survive.

How do I keep food safe during a power failure?

If your power is out for less than four hours, the food in your refrigerator or freezer will be fine, provided your refrigerator and freezer are set properly beforehand and you do not open them.



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Food Safety

Food in a full chest or upright freezer will last even longer: about 24 hours for a half-full freezer and 48 hours for a full freezer.

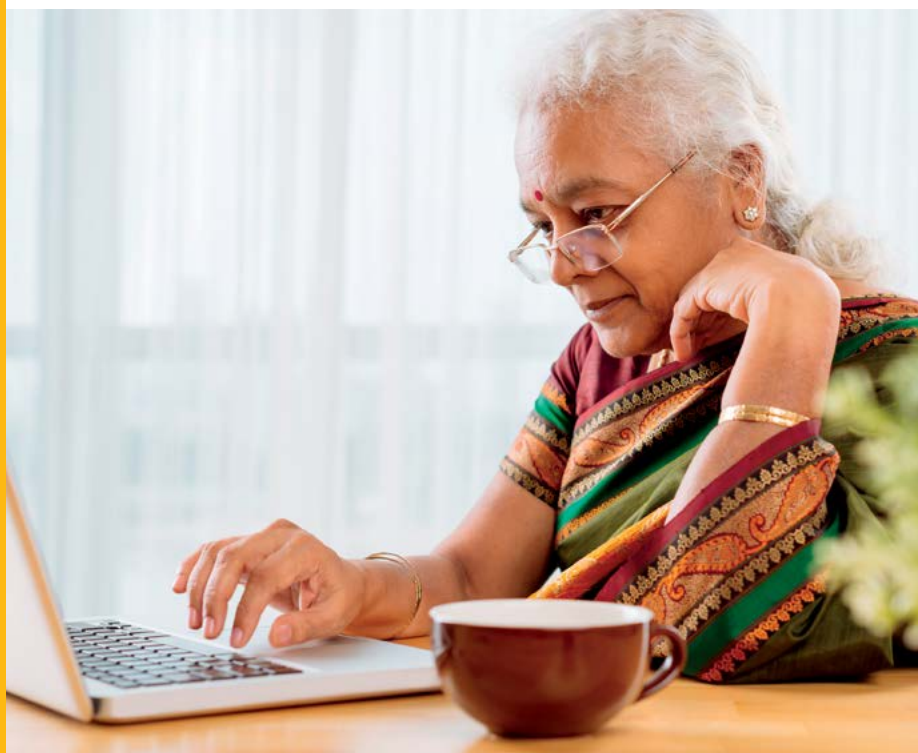
- Discard any thawed food that has been at room temperature for two or more hours, and any food that has an obvious, unusual colour or odour. Keep in mind that food contaminated with bacteria does not necessarily smell bad or appear spoiled.
- Food that still contains ice crystals and has been kept in the refrigerator can be refrozen, but if the food is meat, it is safer to cook the food before refreezing.
- If raw food has leaked during thawing, clean and disinfect the areas the food has touched. It is best to use disposable towels to mop up any leaked thawing juices as they can be thrown away after use. Then thoroughly wash your hands with warm soapy water. Finally, sanitize the surface using a suitable sanitizer.

Chapter 9

Information You Can Trust

You see them everywhere: ads for a miracle diet ("Lose 10 pounds in 10 days!") or that complete cure ("No more arthritis pain, ever!") But how do you know if these products will really work? Whose advice should you take?

For questions of health or physical activity, ask your health-care provider first. You can also use HealthLink BC's Dietitian and Physical Activity Services by calling 8-1-1. For questions about nutrition and healthy eating, talk to a dietitian. For questions about physical activity, talk to a qualified exercise professional. See the back cover for contacting HealthLink BC.





CHAPTER 9

Information You Can Trust

How do I know I am getting reliable information?

Unproven remedies give people false hope and may even be dangerous, either because they can keep you from getting proper medical attention or because their ingredients are harmful. They can also cost a lot of money.

You know you are getting good information if it comes from a reliable source. Here are some basic truths that can help you judge whether information is reliable:

- Aging is a fact of life. There is no cure for it and no treatment will slow it down. Healthy eating, staying active and not smoking are the only things experts know for sure can help prevent the diseases that happen more often with age.
- There is no proven way to prevent all types of cancer. There are, however, treatments that can help once you get cancer, but talk to your health-care provider first.
- Drinking a particular type of juice, eating a low-protein diet or embarking on treatments that claim to “cure” cancer can be harmful, especially if you delay starting on treatments that are proven to work.
- There is no cure for most types of arthritis. Arthritis symptoms can come and go, so it is easy to be tricked into thinking that a special diet, pill or oil has made it disappear. Talk to your health-care provider about what may work for you.
- Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight takes effort and time. It's most important to maintain a healthy lifestyle of balanced eating and regular physical activity. Losing weight too quickly is unsafe, as is following a low-carbohydrate or liquid diet for any length of time.
- “Natural” does not automatically mean safer. Some plants can be harmful and even deadly, especially if you are already taking medication for a condition such as heart disease.

Always question what you see on TV, read in an ad or hear from a friend. Depend on the sources that you know are objective and have nothing to gain from whether you buy a product or not, including your health-care provider, a dietitian, HealthLink BC, Health Canada or a non-profit foundation.

Watch out for personal testimonials, such as “this oil cured my husband’s Alzheimer’s disease” or “I was diabetic, but taking this pill cured me in five days.” They are usually not scientifically proven, and may even be completely made up.

Remember, too, that just about anybody can set up a website. Look for websites run by reputable sources.

CHECK IT OUT

Before you try a health-related product, talk to your health-care provider, dietitian or pharmacist for a medical opinion or find the link to Health Canada’s Natural and Non-Prescription Health Products Directorate at www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources.

Where can I find reliable information?

All health issues

HealthLink BC provides access to non-emergency health information and advice in British Columbia. Services and resources include:

- HealthLink BC Files are easy-to-understand fact sheets on a range of public health and safety topics. Copies are available at your public health units. Most files are available in Chinese, English, Farsi, French, Korean, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Navigation Services helps you navigate the health care system, provides health information and can help you access services across the province. Health services navigators can also connect you with a registered nurse, registered dietitian, qualified exercise professional or a pharmacist. Health services navigators are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Translation services are available in over 130 languages. Call 8-1-1 (or 7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing assistance), or visit www.healthlinkbc.ca/navigation-services.



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- Nursing Services provides non-emergency, confidential, health education and advice. HealthLink BC's registered nurses can help you check your symptoms, determine if you should seek medical attention and provide education about your illness. Nurses are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Translation services are available in over 130 languages. Call 8-1-1 (or 7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing assistance), or visit **www.healthlinkbc.ca/nursing-services**.
- Physical Activity Services provides general physical activity information and professional guidance to B.C. residents. Qualified exercise professionals are available at certain times and on certain days. Translation services are available in over 130 languages. Call 8-1-1 (or 7-1-1 for deaf or hearing-impaired assistance), or visit **www.healthlinkbc.ca/physical-activity-services**.
- Pharmacist Services provides information about medications and answer to medication-related questions. Pharmacists are available every evening from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. Pacific Time. Translation services are available in over 130 languages. Call 8-1-1 (or 7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing assistance), or visit **www.healthlinkbc.ca/pharmacist-services**.
- Dietitian Services specializes in easy-to-use nutrition information for self-care, based on current scientific sources. Registered dietitians offer telephone, email and web-based based nutrition services to support the nutrition information, education, and counselling needs of B.C. residents and health professionals. If you need more in-depth counselling, they will guide you to hospital outpatient dietitians, public health dietitians or other nutrition services in your community. This service does not replace the medical counsel of your health-care provider. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

Dial 8-1-1 to reach Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC and speak to a registered dietitian between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Time. For deaf and hard of hearing assistance (TTY), call 7-1-1. Or visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian. E-mail a dietitian your questions about food and nutrition: www.healthlinkbc.ca/emaildietitian.

Other reliable sources of information for specific illnesses include:

- **Alzheimer Society of B.C.**
1-800-667-3742 | www.alzheimer.ca/bc
- **Arthritis Society of Canada**
Arthritis Answer Line at 1-800-321-1433 | www.arthritis.ca/bc
- **Canadian Cancer Society**
1-800-663-2524 | www.cancer.ca
- **Alcohol and Drug Information and Referral Services**
604-660-9382 in the Lower Mainland
1-800-663-1441 in the rest of the province
- **QuitNow** (for help with quitting smoking)
1-877-455-2233 | www.quitnow.ca
- **Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions**
(free six-week course offered throughout the province)
1-866-902-3767 | www.selfmanagementbc.ca

Healthy eating

Canada's Food Guide is a great source of information on healthy eating (see Chapter 2) as is Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See Appendix B for Canada's Food Guide. You can also find helpful resources from other organizations:

- **Dietitians of Canada** has reliable advice and terrific recipes.
www.dietitians.ca
- The **Canadian Cancer Society** publishes a number of easy-to-read booklets including *Eating Well When You Have Cancer* and *Eat Well, Be Active*, a guide to preventing cancer through healthy eating. 1-888-939-3333 or www.cancer.ca
- **Diabetes Canada** offers detailed information on nutrition and diabetes. 1-800-226-8464 or www.diabetes.ca
(Many communities also have excellent local diabetes education programs. Ask your health-care provider for a referral.)



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Information You Can Trust

- The **Heart and Stroke Foundation** can answer your questions about nutrition and its connection to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. They also have some great recipes for easy, tasty and nutritious dishes. 1-888-473-4636 or www.heartandstroke.ca
- **Osteoporosis Canada** has a number of easy-to-use resources for determining how much calcium you are receiving from your current diet. 1-800-463-6842 or www.osteoporosis.ca
- The **B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society** publishes guides to healthy eating with traditional Aboriginal foods. 1-888-815-5511 or www.bcands.bc.ca
- The **First Nations Health Authority** publishes useful health information in their BC Elders' Guide. A link to the BC Elders' Guide can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/seniors-healthy-eating-resources. 604-693-6500 (Toll free: 1-866-913-0033) or info@fnha.ca
- **Health Canada's** website (click on Food & Nutrition in the left-hand navigation bar) offers information on such topics as food safety, food labeling and genetically modified foods. www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Exercise

If you're thinking of starting a physical activity program, consult your health-care provider to see how it might affect any underlying health concerns, and then contact an exercise professional/registered kinesiologist for advice about what physical activity, and how much physical activity, is best for you.

To find an exercise professional near you, contact:

- **Physical Activity Services at HealthLink BC** at 8-1-1 to speak with a qualified exercise professional
- **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology**
1-877-651-3755 | www.csep.ca

- **B.C. Recreation and Parks Association**
1-866-929-0965 | www.bcrpa.bc.ca
- **B.C. Association of Kinesiologists**
604-601-5100 | www.bcak.bc.ca

Also read the Public Health Agency of Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults. It's free, and you can order copies by calling 1 866 225-0709 or emailing publications@hc-sc.gc.ca.

What's the difference between a dietitian and a nutritionist?

Only qualified health professionals who have met strict registration requirements, and have a high level of expertise for providing safe, ethical, science-backed nutrition services, can legally use the titles "dietitian" or "registered dietitian," and the initials "RD".

"Nutritionist" is not a reserved title in British Columbia. Dietitians are uniquely trained to advise on whole foods, healthy eating and nutrition for overall health and wellness. Additionally, dietitians are legally recognized as nutrition experts qualified to provide medical nutrition therapy for the prevention, delay and management of disease.

Dietitians must be part of a regulatory body, like physicians, pharmacists and nurses. All dietitians in B.C. are registered with the College of Dietitians of BC and listed in the college's public registry at www.collegeofdietitiansbc.org.

A dietitian can:

- give you advice about what foods to eat to lower your risk of certain diseases and lead a healthy lifestyle
- help you plan meals for specific health problems, such as diabetes or high cholesterol
- assess whether you are eating correctly and whether you need to change the way you eat.

To find a dietitian:

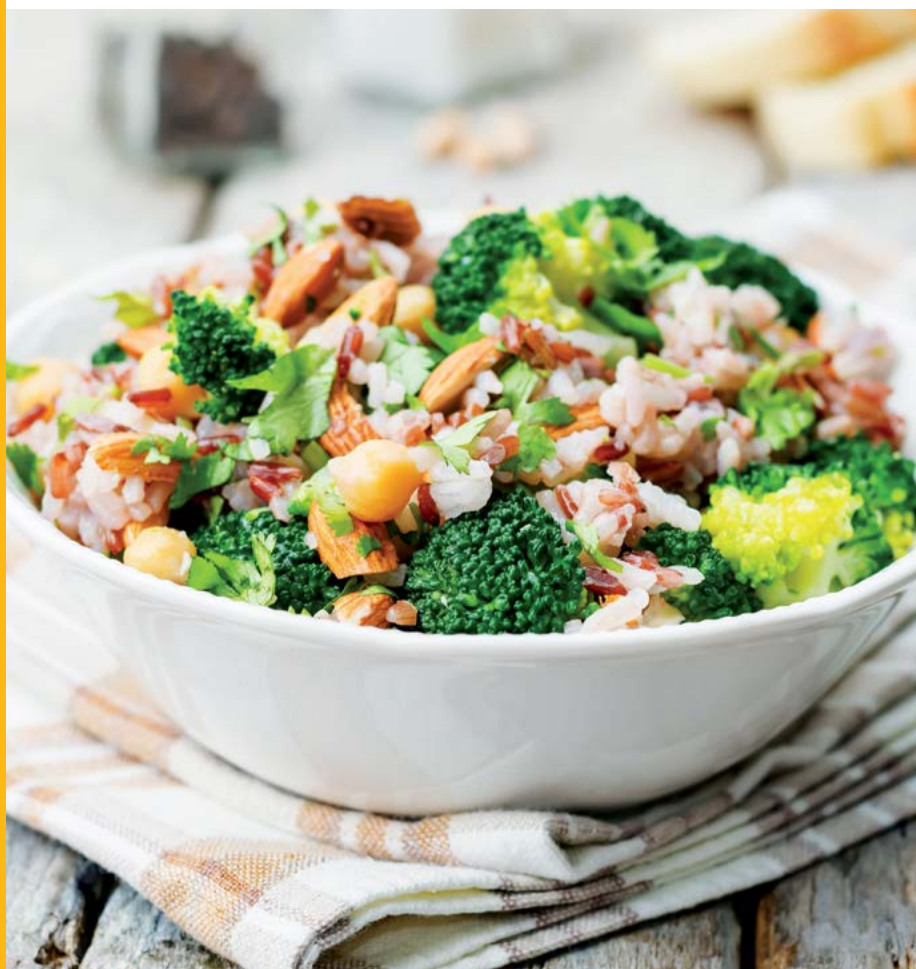
- contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (see back cover)
- visit the Dietitians of Canada website at www.dietitians.ca
- ask your health-care provider to refer you to a dietitian
- call your local public health department.

Chapter 10

Fast and Easy Recipes

We have included a few recipes to illustrate how fast, easy and tasty healthy eating can be.

Most of these recipes include suggestions for preparing a complete healthy meal, covering all four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (see Appendix B).





Most recipes in this section are intended to serve one or two, rather than a big family or group, but you can double them easily. For recipes that keep well in the refrigerator or freezer, we have made the quantities a bit larger (to serve three or four), so you will be able to enjoy the meal again another day.

The nutritional information has been calculated for each recipe. The cooking methods are simple, but if you are not sure how to do something, such as use a steamer, you can call Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See back cover for contact information. Or check the cookbooks you have around your home; many include a section on basic cooking techniques.

Some of these tasty dishes have come from seniors in B.C.

We hope you will enjoy these recipes and that they will encourage you to choose other healthy recipes. And don't forget, you do not have to throw out all your favourite recipes. You can modify just about any recipe to be healthier – see Chapter 7 for ideas.



Fast & Easy Recipes

Breakfast and Snacks

- Berry Delicious Shake
- Pumpkin Raisin Muffins
- Fruit Lax

Lunch or Dinner

- Lentil Venison Soup
- Quick and Delicious Salads
- Easy Greek Salad
- Speedy Salmon Patties with Dill Yogurt Sauce
- Quesadilla
- Tofu Stir Fry
- Quick Steamed Fish Fillets with Potatoes and Asparagus



- Skillet Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Couscous
- Meatloaf at its Very Best
- Chickpea and Kale Curry
- Spinach Frittata
- Sweet and Sour Chicken and Vegetable Casserole
- Barley Tomato Casserole

Desserts

- Quick Fruit Compote
- Berry or Peach Crisp
- Fresh Fruit and Nut Desserts

Extras

- Universal Seasoning
- Salt-Free Vinaigrette
- Salad Dressing

Berry Delicious Shake

Makes: 1 1/4 cups (300 mL)

Serves: 1

Preparation and

Cooking Time: 5 minutes

Making a fruit smoothie for an easy breakfast or snack is a simple way to get more fruit and even vegetables in your diet. For those with low appetite or trouble chewing, drinking a nutritious smoothie can help get food down with less stress.

Experiment with different ingredients to change the flavour, boost protein or add fibre depending on what you have in the fridge and your tastes. Have whole grain toast or a Pumpkin Raisin Muffin to complete the meal.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) berries

1 small or 1/2 large avocado (or 1/2 banana)

3/4 cup (175 mL) plain yogurt

1/2 cup (125 mL) orange juice

1/2 tsp (2.5 mL) cinnamon (optional)

Instructions:

1. Combine ingredients together in a blender and blend until smooth.
 2. Serve right away. If the fruit is not frozen, you may want to blend in a few ice cubes.
-

Variations:

- For added protein, try Greek yogurt, swap juice for milk or fortified soy beverage.
- To minimize waste, freeze ripe, peeled, halved bananas in a sealable plastic bag and use in smoothies.

- Store ripe avocados in the fridge not on the counter to prevent spoilage; if you only need half an avocado for a recipe, save the other half covered with the pit in it to minimize browning. Use the next day.
- Stock up on berries when in season or on sale. Freeze them on a baking sheet in a single layer before storing them in a sealable plastic bag in the freezer. This prevents them from freezing in a big clump.
- Try peanut butter or other nut butters mixed with banana, milk and yogurt for a fun flavour.
- Try a green smoothie! Add 1 cup of spinach, kale or cucumber and perhaps some fresh mint. Combine with yogurt or milk and fruit that is light in colour like pear, mango or pineapple.

Per Serving:

Calories: 348

Carbohydrate: 43 g

Sodium: 119 mg

Protein: 11 g

Fibre: 8.5 g

Calcium: 340 mg

Fat: 16 g



Pumpkin Raisin Muffins

Makes: 12 muffins**Preparation Time:** 25 minutes**Baking Time:** 20 minutes

Have one of these delicious muffins with fruit and a cooked egg for a tasty, healthy breakfast. The muffins freeze well, so you may want to double the recipe and freeze extras in an airtight freezer bag. You can then take them out one at a time as you need them.

Ingredients:

1 cup (250 mL) whole wheat flour
3/4 cup (175 mL) all-purpose flour
1/2 cup (125 mL) sugar
2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder
1/2 tsp (2 mL) baking soda
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) cinnamon
1/2 tsp (2 mL) nutmeg
1/2 tsp (2 mL) powdered ginger
3/4 cup (175 mL) raisins
2 eggs
1/2 14 oz (200 mL) can pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
1/4 cup (60 mL) vegetable oil
1 cup (250 mL) buttermilk or sour milk

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a large bowl, combine the whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, spices, and raisins.
3. In a smaller bowl, beat eggs, then add pumpkin, oil and buttermilk.
4. Make a large well in the centre of the dry ingredients, and pour the pumpkin mixture into this well.

5. Gently fold wet and dry ingredients together until just combined. Do not beat.
6. Spoon batter into paper-lined or lightly greased muffin tins.
7. Bake in preheated oven for 18 to 20 minutes or until firm to touch.

Sour Milk:

To make sour milk, add 2 tsp (10 mL) vinegar to 1 cup (250 mL) milk and let sit for five minutes.

Per Serving:

Calories: 195

Carbohydrate: 33 g

Sodium: 132 mg

Protein: 4 g

Fibre: 2.3 g

Calcium: 65 mg

Fat: 6 g

Adapted, with permission, from Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.



Fruit Lax

Makes: 2 1/2 cups (625 mL) **Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

Serves: 25 portions of 2 Tbsp (25 mL) each

This is a high fibre recipe that's great for regularity. Use Fruit Lax as a spread on toast or mix it into hot cereal or plain low-fat, unsweetened yogurt. Fruit Lax keeps for two weeks in the fridge or you can freeze it.

Ingredients:

1 cup (250 mL) dried, pitted prunes
1 cup (250 mL) raisins
1 cup (250 mL) pitted dates
1/2 cup (125 mL) orange juice
2/3 cup (150 mL) prune juice

Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and soak overnight in the refrigerator.
 2. Blend in a blender until smooth and serve.
-

Variations:

For even more fibre, add 1 cup of natural wheat bran to the fruit mixture.

Per Serving:

Calories: 75	Carbohydrate: 20 g	Sodium: 2 mg
Protein: 0.6 g	Fibre: 1.7 g	Calcium: 12 mg
Fat: 0 g		

Thanks to Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.



Lentil Venison Soup

Serves: 4

Cooking Time: 2 1/2 hours

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Traditional foods such as wild game, sea mammals, fish and seafood are major sources of protein, iron and other nutrients including healthy fats. Compared to domesticated animals and their products (bologna, lunch meats and wieners) they are higher in nutrients and often lower in fat.

This soup is easy, healthy, colourful and delicious. Made with lentils and venison (or beef), it's a great source of fibre and protein. It is also inexpensive and freezes well. You can serve it with a slice of whole wheat bread, a small green salad and yogurt or fruit for dessert.

Ingredients:

1 cup (250 mL) ground deer, moose or elk meat*

3/4 cup (175 mL) split lentils, washed

3 Tbsp (45 mL) barley

2 cubes beef bouillon, low salt**

6 cups (1.5 L) water

1 medium onion, chopped

1 carrot, diced

1 can (284 mL) tomatoes, chopped***

1 bay leaf

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 stalk celery, chopped

Dash of thyme

Dash of basil

Pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. In a large stockpot, brown the meat and drain off any fat.
2. Add lentils, barley, bouillon cubes and water.
3. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, cover for 30 minutes.
4. Add remaining ingredients, except for pepper, and simmer for 1 1/2 hours.
5. Add pepper to taste.

**Ground beef or turkey can be used instead of ground venison*

***Low-sodium beef broth (1 cup of broth = 1 beef bouillon cube) in a carton can be used instead of bouillon cubes. If using broth, add 4 cups of water and 2 cups of broth in Step 2 instead of 6 cups of water.*

****Try to buy low-sodium or no-salt-added canned tomatoes*

Per Serving:

Calories: 300

Carbohydrate: 39.4 g

Sodium: 926 mg

Protein: 30.1 g

Fibre: 7.3 g

Calcium: 73.2 mg

Fat: 2.5 g

Thanks to Diabetes Canada Food Skills for Families.

Quick and Delicious Salads

Try this incredible salad formula for a delicious new salad every day!

Dressing: (Combine this in a small jar or bowl)

- **1-2 Tbsp of some kind of oil** – grape seed, olive, sunflower, sesame, canola, hazelnut, safflower, (or substitute with mashed avocado)
 - **1-2 Tbsp of some kind of acid** – vinegar (white, rice, balsamic, or apple cider) or juice (lemon, lime, orange, pineapple)
 - **1/2 tsp of something salty** – reduced-sodium soy sauce (if available), or salt
-

Add various proportions of the following to a large salad bowl, depending on whatever you have on hand:

- **Something leafy and green** – lettuce, kale, spinach, arugula, cress, mustard greens, watercress, mache, cabbage (or a mixture of all these!)
- **Something spicy or strong flavoured** – fresh basil, thyme, cress, arugula, kohlrabi, cabbage
- **Something red or purple** – cranberries, watermelon, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, strawberries, raw or cooked beets, carrots
- **Something crunchy** – toasted nuts (slivered almonds, hazelnuts, toasted peanuts) or seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, pine nuts) or croutons
- **Something soft** – avocado, cheese, olives, hard-boiled egg, canned beans, cooked leftover vegetables of any kind, cooked grains
- **Something sweet** – dates, raisins, cranberries, fresh pear, mandarin oranges, grated apple, melon slivers or honey in the dressing

The key is to use only *one* from each group so that the unique attributes of each item can stand out.

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
1 Tbsp sunflower oil	1 Tbsp sesame oil	1 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp white vinegar	1 Tbsp rice vinegar	1 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp salt	1 tsp soya sauce	1/2 tsp salt
4 cups mixed salad greens	3 cups of romaine lettuce	3 cups of mustard greens (both spicy and green)
1/2 cup chopped watercress leaves	2 Tbsp fresh basil	4 fresh tomatoes, diced
1/2 cup red pepper, chopped	1/2 cup slivered radishes	1/4 cup garlic croutons
1/4 cup toasted hazelnuts	1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds	2 hard-boiled eggs
1/4 cup feta cheese	1/2 avocado, diced	1/4 cup dried cranberries
Handful of sliced apple	1 can of mandarin oranges	

Thanks to Annette Anderwald, RD.



Easy Greek Salad

Serves: 2
about 1 cup (250 mL) each

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
hands-on; 60 minutes marinating

Easy, delicious and so nutritious! Any leftovers will keep well in the refrigerator for one day.

Salad Ingredients:

1 medium tomato, cubed or handful of grape
or cherry tomatoes, halved

1/4 of a cucumber, cubed

1/2 of a bell pepper, chopped

1/4 of a medium onion, thinly sliced

Pinch of salt

Pinch of dried oregano

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp (5 mL) olive oil

1 tsp (5 mL) red-wine vinegar

1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese (or small cubes)

Several olives (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine tomatoes, cucumber, bell peppers, onion, salt, oregano, garlic, olive oil, and red-wine vinegar.
2. Stir occasionally while letting marinate at room temperature for an hour.
3. When ready to serve, portion into two bowls. Garnish with feta and olives. (Those with high blood pressure or on a sodium-reduced diet, may want to omit the olives to reduce the sodium content).

Per Serving:

Calories: 101

Protein: 4 g

Fat: 6.5 g

Carbohydrate: 7.5 g

Fibre: 1.5 g

Sodium: 370 mg

Calcium: 109 mg

Thanks to Nicole Fetterly, RD and Carley Nicholson, RD.



Speedy Salmon Patties with Dill Yogurt Sauce

Serves: 2

Preparation and

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

These patties come together very quickly and are a great way to use leftover bread, like the ends, or even cooked potatoes. Canned salmon is a very affordable, healthy and convenient food to keep stocked in your pantry. It is packed with protein and omega-3 fatty acids for heart and brain health and is a great source of calcium if it contains the bones. They are extra tasty with the yogurt sauce but if time or ingredients are not available, they are good as is too. For a complete meal, serve with a side salad.

Leftover patties will keep in the fridge for 2 or 3 days and can be heated in the microwave or a frying pan.

Patty Ingredients:

3 slices bread (preferably pumpernickel, rye, sourdough or whole grain) or 1 cup leftover cooked potatoes, chopped

1/2 small onion, diced

1 stalk celery, diced

1 170 g can salmon (choose unsalted, preferably with the bones and skin)

2 Tbsp (30 mL) fresh dill, chopped (or 2 tsp dried dill)

2 eggs

1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt (omit if the canned salmon is salted)

2 Tbsp (30 mL) olive oil

Optional Dill Yogurt Sauce Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) fresh dill, chopped

1/2 cup (125 mL) plain yogurt

1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt

1 tsp (5 mL) olive oil

1 clove garlic, minced

Instructions:

1. In a toaster or oven, crisp the bread slices. When cool, chop finely or crumble with your hands into a medium-sized bowl. See next step if using leftover potatoes.
 2. Add onion, celery, salmon, dill, eggs and salt, if using, to the bread. If using potato, simply mash in with the other ingredients. Using clean hands or a wooden spoon, mix together thoroughly. Form into 6 patties.
 3. If making the yogurt sauce, simply mix all the ingredients in a small bowl.
 4. Heat a large skillet or frying pan on medium heat and add 1 Tbsp of olive oil. Place 3 patties in the pan and cook on each side for 3 to 4 minutes until golden brown and crisped. Remove to a paper towel-lined plate.
 5. Repeat step 4, adding the remaining 1 Tbsp of olive oil and cooking the remaining 3 patties.
 6. Serve warm with sauce (if using).
-

Per Serving:

Calories: 330

Carbohydrate: 33 g

Sodium: 266 mg

Protein: 25 g

Fibre: 4.3 g

Calcium: 86 mg

Fat: 6 g

Thanks to Nicole Fetterly, RD and Carley Nicholson, RD.

Quesadilla

Serves: 1

Preparation and

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Quesadillas are a warm, tasty way to use up leftover cooked vegetables and small amounts of cooked meat. For a complete meal, serve with a piece of fresh fruit and a glass of milk.

Ingredients:

- 1 whole wheat soft tortilla (7 inch or 18 cm)
 - 1/4 cup (60 mL) shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese
 - 3/4 cup (175 mL) vegetables, chopped and cooked (use leftovers if you have them)*
 - Cooked meat or beans (optional)
 - Sliced olives or sun dried tomatoes (optional)
 - 1/4 cup store bought salsa
-

Instructions:

1. Heat a non-stick frying pan over medium heat.
2. Place tortilla on heated pan.
3. Quickly place chopped vegetables on top of tortilla and cover with grated cheese.
4. Lift up half the tortilla and fold over the other half, enclosing the vegetables and cheese, and lightly press on top to hold together.
5. Cook until the tortilla is lightly browned and crispy.
6. Flip over and cook the other side.
7. Cut in half and serve with a small amount of salsa.

** Try to include vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, yams, red peppers, carrots, mushrooms and/or onions.*

Helpful hints

Vernis McCuaig of Penticton, B.C. likes to divide a fresh bottle of salsa into small portions. She then pops the small portions into the freezer, where they stay fresh and are quick to thaw when she needs them. Extra tortillas will also keep well in the freezer for a short period.

More hints:

Fill leftover tortillas with a piece of grilled or baked fish, some tartar sauce and salad greens. Or try warm refried beans, grated cheddar cheese, chopped tomatoes and salsa.

You can also use traditional meat or fish sandwich fillings and lettuce and roll the tortillas like a log.

Lightly bake tortillas in the oven until they are crispy and eat them with your soup instead of salty crackers.

Per Serving:

Calories: 252

Carbohydrate: 33 g

Sodium: 308 mg

Protein: 12 g

Fibre: 3.4 g

Calcium: 236 mg

Fat: 7 g

Thanks to Georgina Lawlor of Penticton, B.C.



Tofu Stirfry

Serves: 2**Preparation and
Cooking Time:** 30 minutes

If you are not familiar with tofu, this is an easy and flavourful way to introduce it to your diet. If you dislike tofu, this recipe also works well with fresh fish. Just slice the fish into 3/4 inch cubes, toss with soy sauce and add once the vegetables are almost cooked. The fish will flake when it is cooked. Serve over brown rice, with a glass of milk and fruit or yogurt for dessert.

Ingredients:

7 oz (200 g) (1/2 block) extra firm tofu
2 tsp (10 mL) low-sodium soy sauce
1 tsp (5 mL) brown sugar
2 tsp (10 mL) vegetable oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp (5 mL) grated fresh ginger (optional)
1/2 medium sliced onion, sliced
2 cups (500 mL) chopped fresh vegetables *
1 tsp (5 mL) cornstarch
1 Tbsp (15 mL) cold water

Instructions:

1. Cut tofu into 1/2 inch (1 cm) cubes and toss in a bowl with soy sauce and brown sugar.
2. Heat oil in heavy skillet or frying pan on medium high. When the oil begins to shimmer, add garlic, ginger and onion. Stir gently for about four minutes.
3. Add chopped vegetables and stir fry another four to five minutes until almost cooked. Turn heat down.
4. Dissolve cornstarch in cold water, then add to stir fry.

5. Add the tofu cubes and heat through, approximately three to four more minutes.

** We suggest you use three to four vegetables for this recipe.*

Our picks: asparagus, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, celery, green beans, green cabbage, mushrooms, bok choy, snow peas, Swiss chard, spinach, wax beans or zucchini.

For more flavour add one or two of these after cooking:

- a dash of hot sauce
- 1/2 tsp sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp Universal Seasoning (see page 183)
- 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 Tbsp fresh lemon

Leftover Tofu?

Most tofu is packaged in 400 g blocks, twice the amount needed for this recipe. Cover the leftover tofu with cold water in a small covered container and place in your refrigerator. Keep refreshing the water covering the tofu and use within a week.

Per Serving:

Calories: 291

Carbohydrate: 25 g

Sodium: 406 mg

Protein: 21 g

Fibre: 5.2 g

Calcium: 274 mg

Fat: 13 g

Adapted from The Senior Chef and Dietitians of Canada cookbooks.



Quick Steamed Fish Fillets with Potatoes and Asparagus

Serves: 1

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Steaming is a fast and low-fat way to prepare fish. It's also a great way to cook vegetables so that they retain their natural goodness. Serve this dish with the Berry Cobbler or a Pumpkin Raisin Muffin and a glass of milk.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) small new potatoes, quartered
1/2 cup (125 mL) asparagus or green beans, cut into two-inch pieces
1 4 oz (125 g) fish fillet
2 Tbsp (25 mL) fresh tomatoes, diced
1/4 tsp (1 mL) dried basil
Black pepper, to taste
1/2 tsp (2 mL) non-hydrogenated soft-tub margarine or butter
1/2 tsp (2 mL) lemon juice
Universal Seasoning (see page 180 for recipe) to taste

Instructions:

1. Place potatoes in a large steamer set over a pot of boiling water. Cover and steam for eight to 10 minutes until they begin to soften but are not fully cooked.
2. Place asparagus on top of potatoes in steamer, then place fish fillet on top of the asparagus.
3. Top with chopped tomatoes and sprinkle with basil and pepper.
4. Cover and steam for five to six minutes until fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
5. Dot the fish with margarine. Cover and steam for 30 more seconds.
6. Remove the fish, potatoes, and asparagus from the steamer. Sprinkle with lemon juice and a dash of Universal Seasoning, to taste.

Variations:

Pat Mesic of Penticton, B.C., likes to steam her fish over chopped spinach (2 cups for one person) instead of asparagus. She serves the dish with a small amount of salsa.

Per Serving:

Calories: 183

Carbohydrate: 15 g

Sodium: 110 mg

Protein: 25 g

Fibre: 2.5 g

Calcium: 78 mg

Fat: 3 g

Adapted, with permission, from Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.

Skillet Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Couscous

Serves: 2**Preparation and Cooking Time:** 35 minutes

This is a “meal in a skillet” that uses couscous, a fine pasta made from durum wheat, often used in recipes from North Africa. You’ll find it near the rice in your grocery store. Serve this dish with a salad (try the Spinach and Orange Salad) and a glass of milk. This meal tastes great the next day, too.

Ingredients:

- 1 tsp (5 mL) vegetable oil
- 2 boneless pork loin chops
- 1 cube (11 g) low-sodium vegetable bouillon base
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) water
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) celery, chopped
- 1 cup (250 mL) sweet potato, yam or carrots, diced
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) dried rosemary or dried sage
- 2 Tbsp (25 mL) dried cranberries or raisins or chopped apple
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) orange juice or apple juice
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) couscous

Instructions:

1. In a large non-stick fry pan (skillet) heat oil over medium heat. Add pork chops and cook, turning once, for seven to eight minutes or until juices run clear. Put chops on a plate in a warm oven.
2. Dissolve bouillon cube in 1/2 cup of boiling water. Set aside.
3. Put chopped onions and celery in skillet and cook for three minutes.
4. Add sweet potatoes, bouillon mixture, rosemary and cranberries. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover the skillet and

simmer for seven to eight minutes, until sweet potatoes are tender.

5. Stir in orange juice and couscous. Put pork chops back into the skillet and simmer for two more minutes.
6. Remove the skillet from the heat, let stand two minutes, fluff couscous with a fork before serving.

Per Serving:

Calories: 389

Carbohydrate: 44 g

Sodium: 154 mg

Protein: 22 g

Fibre: 3.5 g

Calcium: 49 mg

Fat: 13 g

Adapted, with permission, from Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.



Meatloaf At Its Very Best

Serves: 3

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 - 40 minute

This old-fashioned meatloaf is delicious – and even tastier if you add shredded cheese. Serve it with a baked potato and a Quick and Delicious Salad with fruit for dessert. If you have leftovers, pop a portion in the freezer for another day or enjoy it the next day cold in a sandwich.

Meatloaf Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 1/2 lb (220 g) lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) low-fat milk (skim or 1%)
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) rolled oats (regular or quick cooking)
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) carrot, grated
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) low-fat shredded cheddar cheese

Topping Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) ketchup
 - 1 Tbsp (15 mL) brown sugar
 - 1 tsp (5 mL) mustard, prepared
-

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. Break egg into medium mixing bowl and beat with fork.
3. Add meat, milk, rolled oats, onion, carrot and cheese and mix together well with a large spoon.
4. Pack meat mixture into small loaf pan or small casserole dish.
5. Combine ketchup, brown sugar and mustard in a cup. Spread over top of meat mixture.
6. Bake about 30 to 45 minutes, or until the meat is fully cooked (no longer pink, and loaf begins to get a bit crusty on the edges).

Per Serving:

Calories: 255

Protein: 20 g

Fat: 11 g

Carbohydrate: 15 g

Fibre: 1.4 g

Sodium: 225 mg

Calcium: 143 mg

Thanks to Linda Quilty of Vancouver, B.C. (recipe adapted).



Chickpea and Kale Curry

Serves: 2 - 3

Preparation and Cooking Time: 30 minutes

This is a flavourful curry, full of vegetables, fibre and protein. Serve it with brown rice or quinoa. Leftovers can be saved in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) olive oil
 - 1/2 small onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 tsp (10 mL) cumin
 - 1 tsp (5 mL) turmeric
 - 1 tsp (5 mL) chili powder (*if you don't have any cumin, turmeric, or chili powder, you can substitute 1 Tbsp (15 mL) curry powder to replace all of these spices)
 - 1 can (398 mL) diced tomatoes
 - 1/2 cup (125 mL) plain yogurt
 - 1/8 tsp (1 mL) salt
 - 1 can (398 mL) chickpeas, drained (or 1 1/2 cups cooked)
 - 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) kale or other dark leafy green (e.g., spinach, chard)
 - 1/4 cup (60 mL) cilantro, chopped (optional)
-

Instructions:

1. In a heavy skillet (fry pan), heat oil on medium heat, add onion and cook for five minutes until softened.
2. Add garlic and spices and cook another 3 minutes, stirring often.
3. Add tomatoes and cook for 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Place yogurt in a small bowl or measuring cup and stir in 1 tablespoon of the tomato mixture to warm it. Set aside.

5. Stir in the salt, chickpeas and kale to the skillet mixture. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until the kale is wilted.
 6. Stir the yogurt into the pan and cook for 1 more minute.
 7. Serve on brown rice, garnished with cilantro.
-

Variation:

Use cooked kidney beans, shrimp or diced cooked chicken instead of chickpeas.

Per Serving:

Calories: 375

Carbohydrate: 54 g

Sodium: 512 mg

Protein: 18.5 g

Fibre: 10.5 g

Calcium: 344 mg

Fat: 11.5 g

Thanks to Nicole Fetterly, RD and Carley Nicholson, RD.

Spinach Frittata

Serves: 1

Preparation and Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Serve this frittata with a slice of whole grain toast and your favourite vegetables.

Ingredients:

- 2 eggs
 - 1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) water
 - 1/2 tsp (2 mL) olive oil
 - 2 Tbsp (25 mL) chopped onion
 - 1/4 tsp (1 mL) minced garlic
 - 1 cup (250 mL) chopped spinach or Swiss chard, packed
 - 1/4 tsp (1 mL) dried basil
 - 2 Tbsp (25 mL) grated parmesan cheese
-

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, whisk eggs and water together. Set aside.
2. In a small non-stick skillet (fry pan), heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, cook for one to two minutes.
3. Stir in chopped spinach or Swiss chard and basil, and cook for three to four minutes or until wilted.
4. Add the egg mixture and cook for three to five minutes or until browned on the bottom but still not completely set on top.
5. Sprinkle with cheese.
6. Flip frittata over and cook for one to two minutes until browned and completely set.
7. Remove from pan and cut in half.

Per Serving:

Calories: 362

Carbohydrate: 19 g

Sodium: 562 mg

Protein: 23 g

Fibre: 3.8 g

Calcium: 316 mg

Fat: 14 g

Adapted, with permission, from Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.



Sweet and Sour Chicken and Vegetable Casserole

Serves: 2

Preparation Time: 40 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

This tasty dish is made with simple ingredients. It takes a little time, but it will reward you with great leftovers for the next day. It freezes well too! Serve over steamed rice, with a lightly cooked green vegetable on the side. Enjoy a glass of milk or yogurt for dessert.

Ingredients:

1 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed
1 cup (250 mL) water
1 Tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil
1/2 cup (125 mL) carrots, chopped
1/2 cup (125 mL) celery, chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 14 oz (398 mL) tin chopped tomatoes, with juice
2 Tbsp (25 mL) brown sugar
2 Tbsp (25 mL) vinegar
1 pinch cinnamon
Pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (170°C).
2. Place chicken in pot, add water, bring to boil and simmer for five minutes. Drain off cooking liquid and save one cup to be used in sauce.
3. In a heavy skillet (fry pan) or heavy large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add chopped vegetables, onion and garlic and cook with lid on for five minutes or until vegetables are tender.

4. Add tomatoes, brown sugar, vinegar, cinnamon and liquid saved from cooking chicken. Cover and cook for 10 minutes.
 5. Place chicken pieces into a baking casserole. Cover with tomato and vegetable sauce.
 6. Cover with foil or casserole lid and bake for 15 minutes.
-

Per Serving:

Calories: 235

Carbohydrate: 23 g

Sodium: 467 mg

Protein: 23 g

Fibre: 2.9 g

Calcium: 77 mg

Fat: 6 g

Adapted, with permission, from Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.

Barley Tomato Casserole

Serves: 3

Cooking Time: 60 - 75 minutes

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Love the flavour of pizza but want a healthier option? This dish is just as comforting as a slice of pizza, but is packed with vegetables and fibre. It does take some time to bake but the preparation is very quick and simple. Once it is finished baking, this casserole goes well with a green salad sprinkled with sunflower seeds or beans.

Leftovers will keep in the fridge for three days or can be frozen for three months and heat up well in the microwave or oven.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup pearl barley
 - 3/4 cup water or low-sodium stock
 - 1/2 small onion, finely diced
 - 1/2 green bell pepper, seeded and diced
 - 2-3 mushrooms, chopped
 - 1 can diced tomatoes, including liquid (best to buy unsalted)
 - 1 tsp dried oregano
 - 1/2 tsp dried thyme
 - 1/2 tsp salt and pepper (omit salt if tomatoes are salted)
 - 3/4 cup cheddar or mozzarella cheese, grated
-

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a small casserole dish or loaf pan, combine all ingredients except cheese. Cover with foil and bake for 45-60 minutes until barley is plump.
3. Stir in cheese and bake uncovered for another 15 minutes, then serve.

Variations:

- Try out other vegetables that you might want to use up, like chopped spinach or kale.
 - Add cooked, chopped chicken or chickpeas to boost the protein.
 - Try other grains, like brown rice instead of barley.
-

Per Serving:

Calories: 302

Carbohydrate: 41 g

Sodium: 368 mg

Protein: 14.1 g

Fibre: 8.9 g

Calcium: 277 mg

Fat: 10.7 g

Thanks to Nicole Fetterly, RD and Carley Nicholson, RD.



Quick Fruit Compote

Makes: 3 cups (750 mL)

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 9

This is a fancy and tasty variation on traditional stewed prunes – a great source of fibre. Eat it for breakfast with oatmeal or muesli, or enjoy it as a healthy dessert with a scoop of plain, low-fat yogurt on top.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup (125 mL) pitted prunes

1/4 cup (60 mL) dried apricots

1/4 cup (60 mL) pitted dates or dried apples

2 Tbsp (25 mL) raisins or dried cranberries

2 cups (500 mL) boiling water (or hot black tea for a variation)

1 tsp (5mL) lemon juice

Instructions:

1. Put dried fruits in a 1 litre canning jar or medium-size bowl.
2. Pour boiling water over fruit.
3. Add lemon juice.
4. Cool on counter.
5. Cover and refrigerate at least overnight before using.
6. Keep refrigerated.

Per Serving:

Calories: 61

Carbohydrate: 16 g

Sodium: 2 mg

Protein: 0.5 g

Fibre: 1.8 g

Calcium: 12 mg

Fat: 0 g

Thanks to The Senior Chef, BC Ministry of Health, 1992.



Berry or Peach Crisp

Serves: 3

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Baking Time: 30 minutes

A great way to highlight summer fruit! Or bring back the flavours of summer using frozen or canned summer fruit in the winter months.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups (375 mL) berries (fresh or frozen) or canned peaches (cut fruit as needed to ensure fruit pieces are no bigger than 1 inch)

1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) whole grain flour

1/2 cup whole grain flour

1/2 cup rolled oats

1 1/2 Tbsp (22 mL) butter or non-hydrogenated soft-tub margarine

1 1/2 Tbsp (22 mL) brown sugar

pinch salt

1 tsp (5 mL) cinnamon

1/4 cup (60 mL) almonds or other nuts, chopped

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (190°C).
2. Place fruit in a small casserole dish with 1 1/2 tsp flour. Stir to combine.
3. In a small bowl, add the 1/2 cup of whole grain flour with the oats, brown sugar, salt and cinnamon. Stir to combine. Cut in butter with two knives, forming a crumbly mixture.
4. Spread crumble topping evenly over top. Sprinkle with chopped nuts.
5. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes until crisp and bubbly.
6. Serve warm and keep leftovers refrigerated.

Per Serving:

Calories: 238

Protein: 8 g

Fat: 12.5 g

Carbohydrate: 38 g

Fibre: 7 g

Sodium: 202 mg

Calcium: 68 mg

Thanks to Nicole Fetterly, RD and Carley Nicholson, RD.



Fresh Fruit and Nut Desserts

Serves: 2**Preparation Time:** 10 - 15 minutes

Most of us love a sweet dessert, so how about one that's sweet and healthy at the same time? These desserts provide fibre as well as important vitamins and minerals. Choose one and make it before you cook your main meal, then refrigerate it until you are ready for dessert. This will allow the flavours to blend. These recipes also make great snacks.

Combination 1:

- 1 banana, sliced
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) pineapple chunks
- 2 tsp (10 mL) raisins
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) pineapple juice
- 1 pinch allspice
- 2 tsp (10 mL) crushed peanuts

Combination 2:

- 1 pear
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) blueberries, fresh or frozen
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) apple juice
- 1/8 tsp (1/2 mL) almond flavouring
- 1 pinch dried basil
- 1 pinch nutmeg
- 2 tsp (10 mL) toasted sliced almonds

Combination 3:

- 1 chopped apple
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) mixed berries, fresh or frozen
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vanilla yogurt
- 2 Tbsp (25 mL) apple juice
- 1 pinch cinnamon
- 2 tsp (10 mL) toasted walnut pieces

Instructions:

1. Combine fruits in a bowl.
 2. Add juice and spices and mix gently.
 3. Refrigerate or leave at room temperature to thaw frozen berries.
 4. Sprinkle with nuts just before serving.
-

Toasting Nuts

To toast walnuts or almonds, preheat oven to 350°F (190°C). Spread the nuts on a baking sheet or cake pan and bake for about five minutes or until lightly browned.

Per Serving: (Based on banana/pineapple combination)

Calories: 111	Carbohydrate: 22 g	Sodium: 2 mg
Protein: 2 g	Fibre: 1.8 g	Calcium: 12 mg
Fat: 2 g		

Adapted from Eileen Faughey's Quick Flip to Delicious Dinners, 1999.

Universal Seasoning

Here's one version of a great salt-free seasoning. Notice the use of garlic and onion powder, not garlic or onion salt. Make sure you buy the right one. There are also several commercially prepared salt-free seasoning mixes available at your local grocery store.

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) dried mustard
 - 1 Tbsp (15 mL) paprika
 - 1 Tbsp (15 mL) garlic powder
 - 1 Tbsp (15 mL) onion powder
 - 1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) black pepper
 - 1 tsp (5 mL) dried basil
 - 1 tsp (5 mL) dried thyme
-

Instructions:

1. Mix in a small bowl or cup and store in a salt or pepper shaker.
-

Thanks to Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.



Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

Makes: 6 portions of 2 tsp each **Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

This is an easy, salt-free dressing that tastes great on any kind of salad.

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp (50 mL) vegetable oil (we recommend olive or walnut)
2 Tbsp (50 mL) vinegar (we recommend red wine or balsamic)
1/4 tsp (1 mL) dry or hot mustard
1 tsp (5 mL) dried herbs (your choice)
1 clove garlic, finely chopped OR 1/2 tsp garlic powder

Instructions:

1. Place all ingredients in a small jar.
 2. Shake until mixed.
 3. Portion carefully onto salad.
 4. Refrigerate leftover dressing for other salads.
-

Per Serving:

Calories: 45

Carbohydrate: 0 g

Sodium: 0 mg

Protein: 0 g

Fibre: 0 g

Calcium: 0 mg

Fat: 5 g



APPENDIX A

One-Week Meal Plan

This one-week meal plan is based on Canada's Food Guide recommended servings for a senior woman. Senior men should add one more Food Guide Serving of grain products a day. For example, a senior man could add a second slice of whole grain toast to his breakfast on Day 1.

Please note: *Canada's Food Guide recommends that seniors take a vitamin D supplement of 400 IU a day. Look for a multivitamin/mineral specially formulated for people over 50 or a calcium supplement with vitamin D added. Read the labels carefully to make sure the supplement you choose provides enough vitamin D.*

DAY 1

Breakfast

- 1 banana
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage
- 2 slices (70 g) whole grain toast
- 2 Tbsp (15 mL) unsweetened peanut butter

Lunch

- 1 serving Quesadilla
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) broccoli
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage
- 1 pear

Dinner

- 1/2 (75 g) roast chicken breast, skin removed
- 1 small baked potato with 3 Tbsp (45 mL) Greek yogurt, chopped herbs
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) carrots
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad from **Quick and Delicious Salads* with 1 Tbsp (15 mL) Salt-free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

Snacks

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) berries
 - 3/4 cup (175 mL) plain yogurt
 - 1 Pumpkin Raisin Muffin
-

DAY 2

Breakfast

- 1/2 cup berries, fresh or frozen
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) unsweetened oatmeal or other hot cereal
- 2 Tbsp (30 g) chopped nuts or seeds
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Lunch

- Spinach Frittata
- 1 (70 g) whole grain pita or 2 slices (70 g) whole grain toast
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Dinner

- Quick Steamed Fish Fillets with Potatoes and Asparagus
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad from Quick and Delicious Salads with 1 Tbsp (15 mL) Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) Berry or Peach Crisp with 3 Tbsp (45 mL) plain yogurt

Snacks

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) low sodium tomato juice
- 2 rye crisps or 6 whole grain crackers (30 g)
- 1 1/2 oz (50 g) cheese

APPENDIX A

One-Week Meal Plan

DAY 3

Breakfast

- 1 1/4 cup (300 mL) Berry Delicious Shake
- 1 Pumpkin Raisin Muffin

Lunch

- 1 1/2 cup (375 mL) Lentil and Venison Soup
- 1 small (35 g) whole grain roll or bannock
- 1 orange
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Dinner

- 1 serving (1/2 recipe) Skillet Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Couscous
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad from Quick and Delicious Salads
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) Berry or Peach Crisp (leftover)

Snacks

- 1/4 cup (60 mL) nuts or seed
 - 3/4 cup (175 mL) cottage cheese
 - 2 cups plain popcorn
-

DAY 4

Breakfast

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) orange juice
- 1 1/2 oz (50 g) cheese
- 2 slices (70 g) whole grain toast
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped tomato or avocado

Lunch

1 serving Skillet Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Couscous (leftover from previous night)

1/2 cup (125 mL) cucumber, cubed or sliced

1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Dinner

1 serving (1/2 recipe) Speedy Salmon Patties

1 serving (1/2 recipe) Easy Greek Salad

1/2 cup (125 mL) peaches

Snacks

1/2 cup (125 mL) berries

3/4 cup (175 mL) plain yogurt

1/4 cup (60 mL) nuts or seeds

DAY 5

Breakfast

3 stewed prunes

3/4 cup (175 mL) hot cereal

1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

2 Tbsp (30 mL) nuts or seeds

Lunch

1 serving Speedy Salmon Patties (leftover from previous dinner)

1 serving Easy Greek Salad (leftover from previous dinner)

1/2 cup (125 mL) grapes

1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Dinner

1 serving (1/3 recipe) Barley Tomato Casserole

1 cup (250 mL) brown rice or whole grain noodles

1 cup (250 mL) steamed green beans or broccoli

APPENDIX A

One-Week Meal Plan

Snacks

- 2 rye crisps or 6 whole grain crackers (30 g)
 - 1 1/2 oz (50 g) cheese
 - 1 apple, sliced, dipped in 3 Tbsp (50 mL) plain yogurt spiced with cinnamon
-

DAY 6

Breakfast

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) blueberries
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) plain yogurt
- 2 Tbsp (60 mL) nuts or seeds
- 1 small bran and raisin muffin

Lunch

- 3/4 cup (175 mL) baked beans (canned or homemade)
- 1 slice (35 g) whole grain bread
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad from Quick and Delicious Salads with
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage

Dinner

- 1 serving Barley Tomato Casserole
(1/2 of leftovers from previous dinner)
- 1 cup (250 mL) broccoli
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) custard or pudding

Snacks

- 2 cups plain
- 1 1/4 cup (300 mL) Berry Delicious Shake

DAY 7

Breakfast

- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or fortified soy beverage
- 2 slices (70 g) whole grain toast
- 2 eggs, cooked to your liking
- 1 cup (250 mL) vegetables, such as spinach, mushrooms and/or tomatoes

Lunch

- 1 serving Barley Tomato Casserole (leftover from previous dinner)
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) cottage cheese
- 1 banana

Dinner

- 1 cup (250 mL) Lentil Venison Soup (from freezer)
- 1 (35 g) whole grain roll or bannock
- 1 cup (250 mL) salad from Quick and Delicious Salads
- 1/2 recipe Fresh Fruit and Nut Dessert

Snacks

- 2 rye crisps or 6 whole grain crackers (30 g)
- 1 1/2 oz (50 g) cheese
- 1 apple

APPENDIX B

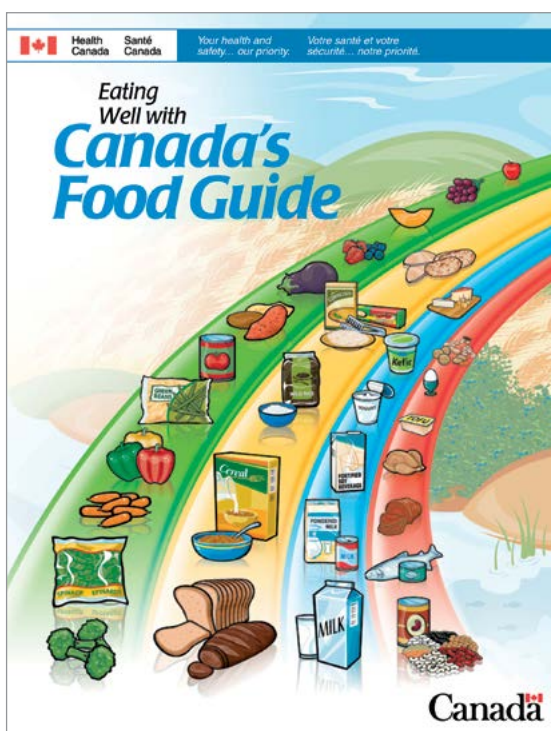
Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

This information has been adapted from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

To get your copy of *Canada's Food Guide*, visit:

www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

or call 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). TTY: 1-800-926-9105



Also, visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide to create a copy of *My Food Guide*, an interactive tool that will help you personalize the information found in *Canada's Food Guide*.

Source: *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (2007), Health Canada

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What is One Food Guide Serving? Look at the following examples.

Vegetables and Fruit

*Females need 7 servings a day
Males need 7 servings a day*

Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables
125 mL (½ cup)



Leafy vegetables
Cooked: 125 mL (½ cup)
Raw: 250 mL (1 cup)



Fresh, frozen or canned fruits
125 mL (½ cup) or
1 fruit



100% Juice
125 mL (½ cup)



Grain Products

*Females need 6 servings a day
Males need 7 servings a day*

Bread
1 slice (35 g)



Bagel
½ bagel (45 g)



Flat breads
½ pita or
½ tortilla (35 g)



Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa
125 mL (½ cup)



Cereal
Cold: 30 g
Hot: 175 mL (¾ cup)



Cooked pasta or couscous
125 mL (½ cup)



Having the amount and type of food recommended and the following the tips in Canada's Food Guide will help:

- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and the other nutrients
- Reduce your risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Contribute to your overall health and vitality.

Adapted from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (2007), Health Canada.

Health Canada does not assume the responsibility for any errors and omissions which may occur during adaptation.

Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings per Day for Adults Aged 51+

Milk and Alternatives

Females need 3 servings a day
Males need 3 servings a day

Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted)
250 mL (1 cup)



Canned milk (evaporated)
250 mL (1 cup)



Fortified soy beverage
250 mL (1 cup)



Yogurt
175 g (¾ cup)



Kefir
175 g (¾ cup)



Cheese
50 g (1½ oz.)



Meat and Alternatives

Females need 2 servings a day
Males need 3 servings a day

Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat
75 g (2½ oz.) / 125 mL (½ cup)



Cooked legumes
175 mL (¾ cup)



Tofu
150 g or 175 mL (¾ cup)



Eggs
2 eggs



Peanut or nut butters
30 mL (2 Tbsp)



Shelled nuts and seeds
60 mL (¼ cup)



Oils and Fats

- Include a small amount – 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) – of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.
- Choose soft margarine that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.

Adapted from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* (2007), Health Canada.

Health Canada does not assume the responsibility for any errors and omissions which may occur during adaptation.

Make each Food Guide Serving count... wherever you are – at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- ▶ **Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.**
 - Go for dark green vegetables such as broccoli, romaine lettuce and spinach.
 - Go for orange vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash.
 - ▶ **Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.**
 - Enjoy vegetables steamed, baked or stir-fried instead of deep-fried.
 - ▶ **Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.**
- ▶ **Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.**
 - Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
 - Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal or whole wheat pasta.
 - ▶ **Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.**
 - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on labels to make wise choices.
 - Enjoy the true taste of grain products. When adding sauces or spreads, use small amounts.
- ▶ **Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day.**
 - Have 500 mL (2 cups) of milk every day for adequate vitamin D.
 - Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.
 - ▶ **Select lower fat milk alternatives.**
 - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on yogurts or cheeses to make wise choices.
- ▶ **Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.**
 - ▶ **Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.***
 - Choose fish such as char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout.
 - ▶ **Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.**
 - Trim the visible fat from meats. Remove the skin on poultry.
 - Use cooking methods such as roasting, baking or poaching that require little or no added fat.
 - For luncheon meats, sausages or prepackaged meats, choose those lower in salt (sodium) and fat.

* Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.healthcanada.gc.ca for the latest information.

The need for **vitamin D** increases after the age of 50. In addition to following Canada's Food Guide, everyone over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 µg (400 IU).

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Eat
Well

Oils
and Fats



Water

Milk and
Alternatives

Vegetables
and Fruit

Grain
Products

Meat and
Alternatives

BUILD A HEALTHY MEAL.
Use the **Eat Well Plate**



Health
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Santé
Canada

Canada

LEARN MORE AT:

Canada.ca/foodguide



Antioxidants: Substances that block some of the damage caused by free radicals, which are created when your body transforms food into energy. Antioxidants may also help prevent cancer and heart disease. Vitamins C and E are examples of antioxidants.

Blood sugar level: The amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. It is also known as serum glucose or blood glucose level. You have diabetes when your blood sugar levels are higher than normal. The goal of diabetes treatment is to keep blood sugar levels within the normal range.

Calorie: A measure of the amount of energy found in food and fluids. You need a certain number of calories every day for your body to work properly. The number of calories you take in should be balanced by how many your body uses each day. If your calories are out of balance, you will either gain or lose weight.

Cataracts: A painless, cloudy area in the lens of the eye that blocks the passage of light and usually causes vision problems.

Cholesterol: A natural waxy substance found only in animal foods. Meats, poultry, fish and dairy products contain the most. Your body needs cholesterol to work properly. But there is “good” cholesterol and “bad” cholesterol. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) is “good” cholesterol. HDL carries cholesterol from your tissues to the liver. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) carries cholesterol from the liver to other tissues. It is called “bad” cholesterol because high levels of LDL can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Chronic illness: An illness that lasts a long time, for months or years or possibly for life.

Daily Value: A phrase that appears on all nutrition facts labels. The Daily Value is the average amount of the vitamin or mineral needed to meet the nutritional requirements of a person who is at least two years old. The number shown will be the percentage of the daily value that one serving of the food provides.

Glossary

Diabetes: A condition where the body has trouble maintaining normal blood sugar levels.

Dietary fats: Fats that are found in food. Everyone needs to eat some fat to stay healthy—fat supplies your muscles with energy and helps build the protective coat around each cell in your body. Some fats are healthier than others: less healthy fats are saturated and trans fats, while healthy fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (such as omega-3 fatty acids).

Enriched: A food is enriched when manufacturers add vitamins and minerals to replace those that were lost during the refining process. For example, if the ingredients originally contained iron, but the iron was lost when the food was manufactured, the food is enriched by adding the iron back.

Food-borne illness: Occurs when a person eats food infected with tiny (too small to see without a microscope), disease-causing organisms, such as bacteria, viruses and parasites.

Fortified: A food is fortified when the manufacturer adds more vitamins or minerals than the food originally contained.

Glaucoma: A group of eye diseases that damage the optic nerve, which is responsible for carrying images from the eye to the brain. It can gradually steal your sight without warning. People with high blood pressure or diabetes have a greater risk of developing glaucoma.

Grains/whole grain: Edible plant products, including wheat, rice, barley, oats, millet and various other cereals. Whole grain refers to the entire edible part of any grain. Multigrain means that a product contains a number of grains, but not necessarily whole grains.

High blood pressure: When the force of blood moving through your body is too strong. Also called hypertension.

International units (IU): Vitamins A, D and E are measured in international units (IU). There is no fixed definition for IU, unlike milligrams (mg) or micrograms (mcg), because IUs are based on the potency of each substance. For example, one IU of vitamin A equals 0.3 micrograms, but one IU of vitamin E equals one milligram.

Legumes: The dried seeds of plants, such as beans, lentils, peanuts, peas and soybeans. Legumes are high in protein and fibre.

Liquid nutritional supplements: Also called meal replacement drinks. These are milkshake-like drinks that can provide needed calories, protein, vitamins and minerals, but should be used as snacks, not as meals.

Mcg/mg: Common units of measurement for minerals and some vitamins, such as vitamin C. Mg means milligrams and mcg means micrograms. A milligram is 1/1000 of a gram and a microgram is 1/1000 of a milligram, so 1000 micrograms = 1 milligram.

Macular degeneration: An eye disease that destroys central vision.

Meal replacement drinks: See Liquid nutritional supplements.

Meat and alternatives: One of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide. Meat is an important source of protein and iron and includes wild meat, beef, pork, lamb, chicken and turkey. Meat alternatives also provide protein. These include nut and butters, tofu and dried peas, beans and lentils.

Milk and alternatives: One of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide. Milk and milk products—such as cheese, kefir and yogurt—provide many nutrients, especially calcium and vitamin D for strong bones and teeth. Milk alternatives include fortified soy beverages.

Glossary

mL: The abbreviation for millilitres, a metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a litre. A common measurement: 1 oz equals 30 mL.

Minerals: Substances that occur naturally in the ground. Your body needs small amounts of many different minerals.

Monounsaturated fats: Healthy fats that help lower cholesterol. They are found in nuts, seeds, olive and canola oils.

Multivitamin/mineral: A supplement that includes a variety of vitamins and minerals.

Natural food: A term that is widely used but has little meaning: all foods are natural.

Nutrient: A substance that provides nourishment essential for life and growth. Nutrients include protein, fats, carbohydrates (especially fibre) and fluids, as well as certain vitamins and minerals.

Nutrition Facts Table: A label found on most food products that summarizes the nutritional content of a specific amount of that food.

Omega-3 fatty acids: A type of polyunsaturated fat that is essential for the brain and nervous systems. Omega 3 fatty acids are found in plant oils, such as olive, canola and soybean oil, and in flaxseed and flaxseed oil. They are also found in nuts (particularly walnuts) and fatty or oily fish such as salmon, anchovies, rainbow trout, sardines, mackerel, eulachon, char and herring. You can also find foods that have been fortified with omega 3, including eggs, yogurt and soy beverages.

Organic food: Food labeled “Certified Organic” is produced according to certain standards without using chemical pesticides, fertilizers, hormones or antibiotics.

Osteoporosis: A thinning of the bones that makes them more likely to break.

Pasteurization/pasteurized: The process of heating food to kill harmful organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, moulds and yeasts. Store-bought milk and milk products—including most cheeses—are pasteurized.

Periodontal disease: An inflammation in the gums, bone and tissues that surround and support the teeth.

Phytochemicals: Chemical compounds produced by plants that researchers now think may protect against disease, especially cancer and possibly osteoporosis and eye disease as well. The brightest and most colourful vegetables and fruit—the dark green, orange, yellow and red ones—are packed with essential vitamins and minerals, as well as disease-fighting phytochemicals.

Phytosterols: Natural substances found in plants that can help to reduce cholesterol. Vegetable oils, tofu and soy products, legumes, seeds and most vegetables and fruit contain phytosterols.

Plant-based diet: An eating pattern that is mostly plant foods: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Animal foods including poultry, lean meat and dairy may make up a smaller amount of the foods eaten in a plant-based diet.

Polyunsaturated fats: Healthy fats that help lower cholesterol. They are found mainly in plant products such as safflower, sunflower, corn and soybean oils.

Processed food: Food that has been subjected to various processes intended to improve taste, texture, appearance and shelf life.

Risk factor: Something that increases your risk of getting a particular disease or condition. For example, obesity is a risk factor for heart disease.

Glossary

Saturated fats: Fats that are hard at room temperature and can increase cholesterol. They are found mostly in fatty meats, whole milk and milk products and palm and coconut oils.

Soy/soy products: Vegetarian sources of protein made from soybeans. Includes soy beverages, which can replace milk for people who can't drink it, as well as tofu and tempeh.

Starch: A type of carbohydrate found in grains, breads, cereals and starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and corn.

Tofu: A firm, custard-like soybean cake.

Trans fat: A less healthy fat that is created when hydrogen is added to liquid fat to make it solid.

Triglycerides: Fats found in food (and in blood) that provide the body with calories to burn for energy.

Unsaturated fats: Fats that are liquid at room temperature and can help lower cholesterol. They are found mostly in vegetable oils, nuts and seeds.

Veggie meats: Vegetarian patties and hot dogs made from soybeans and/or mushrooms or a variety of other vegetables.

Vitamins: Organic nutrients that are necessary in small amounts for normal metabolism and good health.

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For Your Information

Government programs and services for seniors:

SeniorsBC:

SeniorsBC is a website that provides information on programs, services, events and resources for older adults in B.C.

Visit www.SeniorsBC.ca.

Office of the Seniors Advocate:

The Office of the Seniors Advocate provides information and referrals for individuals who are navigating seniors' services.

Call toll -free: 1-877-952-3181.

Visit www.SeniorsAdvocateBC.ca.

Nutrition and health information and advice:

HealthLink BC:

Call 8-1-1 to speak with a registered dietitian or nurse.

Translation services are available in over 130 languages.

For deaf and hearing impaired assistance (TTY), call 7-1-1.

Or visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca.

To order additional copies of Healthy Eating for Seniors:

Call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

Or visit the Resource Order Form at

www.HealthLinkBC.ca/services-and-resources/resource-order-form.



SeniorsBC

