

As we age, maintaining a balanced and nutritious diet becomes increasingly important for overall health and well-being. Here are some essential nutrition tips for seniors to help make mealtimes healthier and easier.



- **Meal Planning:** Think about what meals you are going to eat before you go shopping. Planning for the week ahead can make mealtimes less stressful, reduce food waste and help you stay on budget.
- **Shop Smart:** Choose whole foods from all food groups - protein, fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy - over processed foods and make sure to check labels so you can avoid things like added sugars, high sodium and saturated fats
 - o Vegetables - contain important vitamins and minerals that help your body function, carbohydrates which give your body energy, and fiber to help keep your digestive system moving
 - o Fruits - also contain carbohydrates and provide extra fiber; vegetables and fruits should fill up one-half of your plate at each meal
 - o Grains - contain carbohydrates; at least half the grain foods you eat should be whole grains which provide extra iron, B vitamins, and fiber
 - o Protein Foods - used to build and repair tissues, help your body fight infection, and provide extra energy; choose low-fat meats and poultry or even eggs, beans, nuts and seeds; seafood is a great option as well because it contains omega-3 fatty acids, such as EPA and DHA, which are good for your heart; shoot for 8 to 10 ounces per week
 - o Dairy - helps maintain strong bones and provides several vital nutrients, including calcium, potassium, and vitamin D but opt for the low-fat versions
 - o Oil - an important source of nutrients like vitamin E, gives you energy and helps the body absorb certain vitamins, daily allowance ranges from 5 to 8 teaspoons depending on activity level
- **Meal Prep:** If you find yourself grabbing something quick and easy (but maybe not as healthy) because you're short on time, try prepping your meals ahead of time. Try a slow cooker meal that can be prepped in the morning and will be ready by dinnertime and make extra servings so you can eat leftovers the next day (or freeze leftovers for an easy meal when you're in a pinch!)
 - o You can even try breaking meal prep into smaller pieces so you don't have to do it all at once - cut up some veggies in the morning, cook some protein for lunch, and put everything together for dinner - or save even more time with pre-cut fruits and veggies

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- **Try new things:** Enjoying a variety of foods from each food group is key to staying healthy and will help keep mealtimes more interesting.
 - **Drink plenty of water:** Water keeps us hydrated and helps digest food and absorb nutrients.
 - **Treat yourself:** Foods and drinks that are high in added sugar or saturated fats that don't offer much nutritional value should generally be avoided but can be enjoyed in moderation.
 - **Finally:** Aim to get your necessary vitamins and minerals from the food you eat, but, if needed, ask your doctor about taking a supplement

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