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## Healthy Eating Tips for Seniors

Eating well as you age is easier than you think. Some common-sense choices may help you eat better and smarter with age.

**Focus on whole grains.** Choose whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread, rolled oats, and barley, not refined white flour or white rice.

**Enrich foods.** Boost nutrition by spreading a nut butter such as peanut butter on toast or crackers. Add cheese, lean meat, and extra veggies to sandwiches, soups, rice, and noodles. Add protein and vitamins to plain foods to increase nutrition.

**Spice up bland food.** Use flavoring to make bland food more enticing. Try using lemon juice, herbs, and spices to make food more enjoyable.

**Eat the right snacks.** Convenient between-meal snacks are helpful for people with small appetites. Bite-sized pieces of low-fat cheese, peanut butter, or a piece of fruit can add a boost to nutrition. Meal replacement drinks, such as Ensure® or Boost®, have complete nutrition if you cannot eat enough food to maintain or gain weight.

**Eat vegetables and fruits raw.** Try to eat at least one raw serving of fruits and vegetables each day. Raw fruits and veggies are loaded with fiber, vitamins, minerals, and enzymes to aid digestion. If you have difficulty biting or chewing, cut food into small pieces or grate and add to other dishes.

**Choose lean protein and calcium-rich dairy.**

Fish, poultry, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, and tofu are good choices for protein. Eat red meat and cured meats like bacon and ham in moderation. Low-fat milk, cheese, cottage cheese, and yogurt provide calcium. Use butter, cream cheese, and cream sparingly. Try adding a calcium supplement if you are lactose intolerant.

**Encourage exercise.** Daily exercise stimulates appetite, helps alleviate depression, and strengthens muscles and bones. Join a community group for senior exercise. Group exercise activities also provide a valuable social outlet. Check with your physician when beginning any new exercise routine.

**Help find ways to make meals positive experiences.** Social interaction may improve your enjoyment of food.

**Other things to consider:** Choose good fats, including olive oil. Drink plenty of water. Add vitamins or other supplements to bolster nutrition. Keep in close communication with physicians if there are changes in appetite and/or medication.

*Note: Seniors, their families, or their caregivers should consult a doctor about the senior's nutritional requirements.*



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