

Planning Meals using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide



Good nutrition is important at every age. Eating well will help you feel your best every day and can help prevent heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and some types of cancer.

Aging affects nutrition. As you get older, you need to eat less food (fewer calories) but you need the same amount, or even more, of certain vitamins and minerals. To get the food and nutrients you need, plan your meals using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

Planning Meals

- ✓ Plan for three meals and one to three small snacks each day. Skipping any meal, but especially skipping breakfast, will make it difficult to get all the nutrients you need each day.
- ✓ Choose foods from the four food groups at each meal.
- ✓ Plan your meals around vegetables and fruit, These foods should cover about half of your plate. The remaining half of the plate should be:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ grain products such as brown rice or whole grain pasta
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ protein-rich foods such as dairy products, chicken, fish, meat, tofu, eggs or beans.



Vegetables and Fruit

7 servings per day

Choose dark green, bright yellow and orange vegetables and fruit more often as they contain the most nutrients. Try spinach, broccoli, carrots, squash, oranges, cantaloupe and peaches.

Examples of one serving

- 1 medium sized piece of fruit or vegetable (e.g. apple, banana, carrot).
- 125 mL (½ cup) fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetables.
- 125 mL (½ cup) cooked leafy vegetables.
- 250 mL (1 cup) raw leafy vegetables.
- 125 mL (½ cup) fruit or vegetable juice.

Grain Products

6-7 servings per day

Grains provide you with energy, fibre and some important vitamins and minerals. At least half of your daily grain choices should come from whole grain products, such as oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain wheat, pot barley, bulgur or buckwheat.



Examples of one serving

- 1 slice of bread.
- half a bun, bagel, pita, tortilla or naan bread.
- 30 grams cold cereal. That's about 1 cup depending on type of cereal. Check the food label.
- 175 mL (¾ cup) cup hot cereal.
- 125 mL (½ cup) pasta or rice.
- 1 medium (35 grams) bannock.

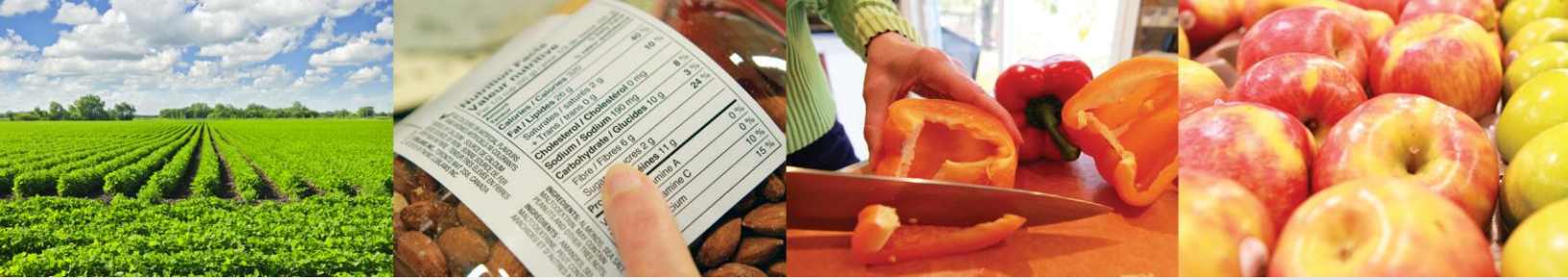
Milk and Alternatives

3 servings per day

Milk products contain calcium and vitamin D, important for keeping your bones healthy. Choose lower fat milk products more often.

Examples of one serving

- ✓ 250 mL (1 cup) skim, 1% or 2% milk, or fortified soy beverage.
- ✓ 50 g (1 ½ oz) cheese.
- ✓ 175 mL (¾ cup) of yogurt or kefir.



Meat and Alternatives

2 to 3 servings per day

Meat and Alternatives are good sources of protein, iron and B, vitamins that are key for keeping your muscles strong and your immune system healthy. Choose lean meats, fish and poultry, and alternatives such as dried beans, lentils and peas more often.

Examples of one serving

- 75 g (2 ½ oz) meat, fish or poultry (about the size of a deck of cards).
- 175 mL (¾ cup) tofu or cooked beans, chickpeas or lentils.
- 2 eggs.
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) peanut butter.
- 60 mL (¼ cup) shelled nuts and seeds.

Oils and Fats

Include a small amount (30-45 mL or 2-3 tbsp) of unsaturated fats each day. Examples of unsaturated fats are oil (such as canola, olive or soy), salad dressing, non-hydrogenated margarine and mayonnaise.

Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening, which are higher in saturated fat and/or trans fat.



Other foods

Limit foods and beverages that are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt, such as: jam, candies, chocolate, cakes, pies, pastries, cookies, deep-fried foods, fast foods, chips and pretzels.

Fluids

Fluids are essential to life, yet many seniors do not drink enough. As we age, our sense of thirst declines so we need to drink regularly whether we feel thirsty or not. To stay hydrated, sip fluids often during the day and with each meal and snack. Satisfy your thirst with water first, but remember that juice, milk, soup, tea and coffee also count towards your total fluid intake.

Canada's Food Guide suggests adults age 50+ take a daily vitamin D supplement of 15 µg (600 IU). Talk to your doctor, registered dietitian or pharmacist before taking any other supplements since they may interfere with some medications.

You can get a copy of Canada's Food Guide by calling 1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Healthy Eating: Variety and Balance

A healthy diet is essential to feeling well and enjoying life to the fullest. Healthy eating starts with following Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Enjoying the type and amount of food recommended in the Food Guide can help meet nutrient needs and promote health.

Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods

Try something new each week, whether it is a new fruit, vegetable or grain product. Who knows—you may find a new favourite.

Eat grain products to provide energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre

- Make at least half your grain product choices whole grains each day. Try whole grains such as oatmeal, bulgur, barley, or quinoa.
- Have a bowl of hot cereal, such as oatmeal, or whole grain ready-to-eat cereal for a meal or snack.
- Enjoy a small bran muffin for a snack, or with cheese and fruit as a mini-meal.
- Try brown rice in casseroles and soups.
- Eat whole grain bread, buns, bagels or muffins, whole wheat pastas and brown or wild rice.

Eat more vegetables and fruits for health-promoting nutrients

- Enjoy at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Add fresh or frozen spinach to an omelette, pasta dish or casserole.
- Bake a sweet potato for lunch or dinner. Sprinkle with cinnamon and enjoy.
- Start lunch off with a bowl of low sodium tomato or vegetable soup, a salad or some raw vegetables.
- Make a vegetable stir-fry. Add some black beans and leftover brown rice for a quick supper.
- Craving candy? Try some naturally sweet dried fruit instead.
- Eat more whole vegetables and fruit and drink less juice.
- Enjoy no more than 125 mL (1/2 cup) of 100% fruit juice per day.



Eat dairy products and other calcium rich foods to keep bones healthy

- Have 500ml (2 cups) of skim, 1% or 2% milk every day. Sip a glass of skim or one per cent milk as a bedtime snack.
- Add milk instead of water to canned soup. Add skim milk powder to sauces, soups, casseroles and omelettes.
- Use grated cheese on salads, casseroles or soups.
- Enjoy yogurt topped with fruit for dessert.
- Eat salmon or sardines in a sandwich, or add them to salads or pasta dishes.
- Sprinkle almonds on salads or casseroles or enjoy a handful as an afternoon snack.

Choose leaner meats and more meat alternatives

- Choose lean cuts of meat, such as round, flank and loin.
- Trim all visible fat from meats before cooking. Remove skin from poultry.
- Enjoy a serving of fish (75grams/2.5oz) at least twice a week. Try salmon in a stir-fry.
- Limit deli meats such as sausages, bacon and luncheon meats. Instead, enjoy cooked leftover chicken, turkey, pork or beef in sandwiches.
- Enjoy meatless meals more often. Try eggs, tofu or nuts in a stir fry. Enjoy soups and casseroles made with kidney beans, black beans, or lentils.

Oils and fats

It's healthy to choose lower fat foods more often, but remember that some fat is essential in the diet. Prepare foods with small amounts of unsaturated fat; choose vegetable oil, non-hydrogenated margarine or mayonnaise instead of saturated fats like butter and lard. Avoid trans fats from hydrogenated oil, hard margarine and shortening.



Use salt, caffeine and alcohol in moderation

- Buy lower sodium foods to prepare healthier meals at home.
- Cook without adding salt. Try using lemon juice, pepper or herbs to flavour food rather than salt.
- Drink no more than 3 (250 ml / 8 ounce) cups of brewed coffee or no more than 4 (250 ml / 8ounce) cups of instant coffee per day.
- Alternate cups of coffee with cups of hot water or milk.
- Try decaffeinated teas and coffees.
- Enjoy water to quench your thirst
- If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to no more than:
 - 10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks on any day
 - 15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks on any day
- a “drink” means
 - a 341 ml (12 oz) bottle of beer,
 - a 142 ml (5 oz) glass of wine or
 - 43 ml (1.5 oz) of distilled alcohol (e.g. rye, gin, rum).
- Be sure to have days where you don’t drink alcohol.

For more nutrition information visit www.dietitians.ca

You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1-800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



This fact sheet is distributed compliments of:

Planning Meals: Fibre Facts

Fibre is found in foods such as vegetables, fruit, whole grain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds and legumes (dried peas, beans, soy and lentils). A diet high in fibre, along with exercise and healthy eating, can help you maintain normal bowel habits. Fibre helps prevent constipation by adding bulk and absorbing water, thus softening the stool. High fibre diets may also help prevent and treat a variety of diseases and conditions, such as heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes. A healthy diet for seniors should include 21-30 grams of fibre per day.

Use Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide to help you choose foods that are higher in fibre. Small changes can add up to a big difference in your fibre intake.

Best sources of fibre:

Vegetables and Fruit

- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables, especially those with edible seeds or skins, such as potatoes with skin, broccoli, corn, peas, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, pears, apples, prunes, dates, figs, dried apricots or raisins.

Grain products

- Whole grain breads, such as 100 per cent whole wheat bread.
- Whole grain cereals, such as oatmeal or shredded wheat.
- High fibre cereals such as any cereal containing wheat bran, wheat germ, oat bran or psyllium.
- Whole grain and higher fibre crackers, muffins and cookies, such as whole wheat or rye crackers, bran muffins, oatmeal cookies, date squares.
- Whole grains such as brown or wild rice, barley, bulgur, wheat germ, whole grain wheat, buckwheat or millet.
- Whole grain pasta, such as spaghetti or macaroni.



Milk and Alternatives

- While dairy products are not a natural source of fibre, some yogurts may contain added fibre. Read the label to check out the amount of fibre.

Meat and Alternatives

- Cooked dried peas, beans and lentils, such as kidney beans, soybeans, black beans, chick peas and yellow or split peas.
- Nuts and seeds, such as whole almonds, sunflower seeds and ground flax.

High fibre menu ideas

Breakfast

- High fibre cereals such as bran cereals or shredded wheat. Or add a scoop of high fibre cereal mixed with one of your favourites.
- Cooked oatmeal sprinkled with ground flax and wheat germ.
- Cereal topped with raisins, sunflower seeds or a handful of frozen or fresh blueberries.
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter and sliced banana.
- Whole fruit instead of juice.
- Prunes – plain or stewed.
- Pancakes made with whole wheat flour and added ground flax seed.

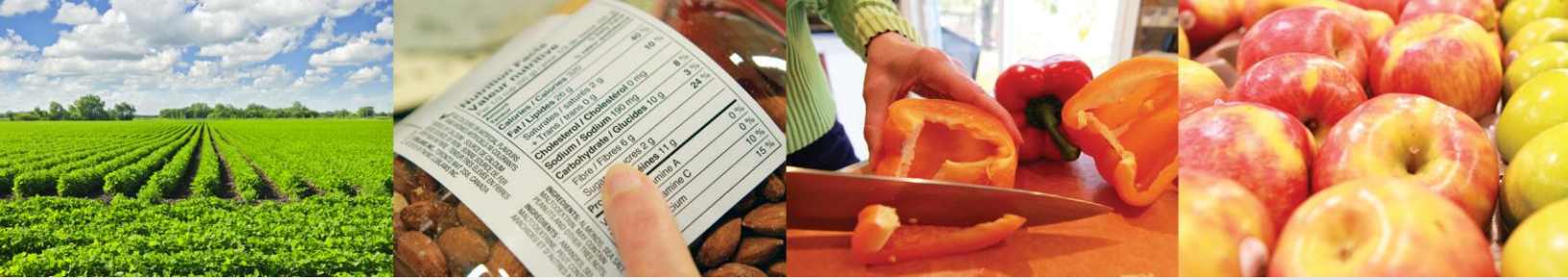


Lunch

- Soups made with dried peas, beans, lentils or barley, such as split pea or minestrone.
- Sandwiches made with higher fibre bread such as whole wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.
- Green salad with vegetables and fruit such as shredded carrot, snow peas, strawberries and pear slices. Add chickpeas or sprinkle with sunflower seeds or almonds.
- Marinated bean, spinach or carrot and raisin salad.
- Fruit salad with a bran muffin made with whole wheat flour and added raisins, figs or dates.

Supper

- Baked beans or chili with lots of kidney beans.
- Casseroles with added beans, lentils, barley and vegetables and a handful of raw bran.
- Baked potato in skin topped with steamed broccoli and black beans. Sprinkle with a little cheese.
- Meat loaf or meatballs made with added raw bran.



Tips for Staying Regular

- Eat a higher fibre diet. To minimize stomach bloating and gas, increase your fibre gradually.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to help the fibre work. Sip on fluids such as water, juice, milk, soup, herbal teas, decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- Exercise regularly. Even a short, daily walk is a good idea.
- Avoid laxatives unless your doctor has prescribed them.

You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1 800 622-6232 or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



This fact sheet is distributed compliments of:

Shopping for One or Two: Planning

Shopping for one or two people can be a challenge, but careful planning makes it easier. The following suggestions will make your trips to the store easier and help you save money at the same time.

At home

Plan meals and make a list.

- Make a shopping list and keep it handy so you can add to it as supplies run low.
- Plan what you will be eating for the week, using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- Look for food bargains in newspapers and flyers.
- Keep a list of prices for foods you usually buy and check it against advertised specials. The price in the flyer may not really be a sale price.
- Organize your shopping list in the same way that the store is laid out, to save time and energy while shopping.
- Find coupons that match your shopping list. Use coupons to buy only the foods that you need and want.

Shop with a friend.

- Arrange to shop with a friend. You can share the taxi fare and some of the larger grocery items.
- If you can't get to the store yourself, check whether your grocer offers a delivery service. Or contact a local senior centre, which may know volunteer drivers.
- Grocery shopping online is another option.



At the store

Look for better buys.

- Take your list, your coupons and glasses or magnifying glasses to read labels and prices. You might also want a calculator for figuring out which items are better buys.
- Buy canned or frozen vegetables and fruits. You don't need to clean or chop them, you save money, and they won't rot in your crisper! You get the same health benefits whether your vegetables and fruits are fresh, frozen or canned.
- Buy canned vegetables and fruit packed in water or juice, not in syrup, and have no added sugar or salt.
- Buy frozen vegetables and fruit without sauces or added salt or sugar.
- Shop when the store is not as busy, so employees will have time to help with items that are hard to reach or lift.
- Take advantage of discount days for seniors offered by some grocery stores.
- Compare prices between brands. Store brands are often cheaper.
- Check the "unit price" such as the price per gram (ounce) or per kilogram (pound). Most grocery stores display unit prices on shelf labels above or below the item. Bigger sizes are not always the best buy.
- Buy the size that is right for you. Smaller portions are available for a variety of foods (soup, fruits, vegetables, baked beans, stews, pudding, yogurt, cheese) and may be worth the extra cost if you can avoid throwing any away.
- If the larger size is less expensive but more than you can use, share the extra with a friend.



- Bulk bins allow you to buy exactly as much as you want of many staples. Bulk items are usually cheaper, but not always. Check unit prices to be sure.
- The grade or quality of a product is determined by looks, not by nutritional value. You can save money by buying lower grade, such as Utility Grade or Grade B chickens and Canada Choice fruits and vegetables.

Read labels.

- Read labels to be sure you are getting what you want. Here's what to look for:
 - Check the list of ingredients. These are listed from the most amount in the food to the least amount.
 - Look at the Nutrition Facts table and check the serving size to compare it to how much you eat.
 - Look at the %DV (daily value) for nutrients. A simple rule of thumb: 5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot for any nutrient. Choose foods that are lower in salt, sugar and saturated/trans fat.
 - Check the “best before” date to make sure the food won't spoil before you can eat it.
- When the store is not busy, ask cashiers to ring your groceries through more slowly so that you can check for correct pricing.

Cooking for One or Two People: Easy Meals to Make

Can't think of anything to eat? Enjoy these simple meal ideas. Use ingredients you have on hand. Try switching up mealtimes. Eat breakfast foods for lunch or dinner.

Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs, whole wheat toast, orange juice.
- Pancakes, applesauce, milk.
- Oatmeal topped with yogurt and banana slices.
- Whole grain or bran cereal, milk, fruit.
- French toast topped with fruit salad.
- Yogurt topped with berries, bran muffin.
- Almond butter and thinly sliced apple sprinkled with cinnamon on whole wheat pita, orange juice.
- Fruit smoothie made with milk, yogurt and frozen fruit.

Lunch

- Peanut butter and banana sandwich, milk.
- Beans on toast, tomato slices, low sodium vegetable juice.
- Macaroni and cheese (add tuna and frozen or leftover peas).
- Tuna melt: mix tuna, celery, mayonnaise and shredded cheese, spread on buns and melt in oven.
- Canned low-sodium bean or lentil soup, whole wheat roll, yogurt.
- Soft boiled egg, whole grain toast, orange slices.
- Low sodium vegetable soup, whole grain crackers or cut-up vegetables with hummus or black bean dip, apple.
- Leftover chicken or turkey, tomato slices and lettuce on whole wheat bread, milk.
- Cottage cheese, fruit salad, small oatmeal muffin.
- Broiled open face cheese and tomato sandwich, baked apple.



- Leafy green salad topped with sunflower seeds and chickpeas whole wheat bun.
- Egg salad sandwich, carrot sticks, low sodium vegetable juice.

Supper

- One-pot casserole. Put these together, and bake:
 - One part meat, poultry or beans, such as kidney beans or black beans
 - Two parts vegetables (e.g. peas, carrots, tomatoes or celery)
 - Two parts rice, macaroni or noodles
 - Sauce to moisten (e.g., low sodium canned cream soup or tomato sauce).
- Salmon, rainbow trout, halibut or other baked fish with side-dishes of broccoli and whole wheat pasta.
- Pasta, tomato or meat sauce, leafy green salad, milk.
- Meat loaf baked in muffin tins (ground beef, chopped onion, spices) baked potato, mixed vegetables.
- Salmon chowder (salmon, creamed corn and evaporated milk), whole grain toast.
- Meatless chili (kidney beans, frozen corn, low sodium canned diced tomatoes, chili powder) on brown rice, pear slices.
- Whole grain pancakes topped with almond butter and sauteed apples, milk.
- Stir-fries (any fresh or frozen vegetables with small pieces of chicken, beef, pork, shrimp, almonds or peanuts, soy sauce) on brown rice or noodles, milk.
- Fried egg, cheese, tomato and lettuce on whole grain toasted bun, vegetable sticks.
- Lentil soup, mixed green salad, whole grain toast and cheese.
- Peanut butter and banana wrapped in a tortilla, milk.
- Flatbread pizza – low sodium tomato sauce, vegetables and mozzarella cheese baked on pita, tortilla or naan.
- Cheese omelette, whole grain toast, tossed salad.

Fact sheet adapted from Leduc-Strathcona and Mount View Health Units.



Vegetable Chowder with Cheddar

Makes 6 1-cup (250 mL) servings

- 1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 cup (250 mL) diced carrots
- ½ cup (125 mL) diced celery
- 1 cup (250 mL) diced peeled potato
- 3 cups (750 mL) chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup (250 mL) hot milk or evaporated milk
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup (250 mL) whole wheat croutons
- ½ cup (125 mL) shredded Cheddar cheese

In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onion, carrots and celery until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in potato. Add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 25 minutes

or until vegetables are just soft. Stir in milk, cayenne pepper and salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into warmed bowls and garnish with croutons and cheese.

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This fact sheet is distributed compliments of:

Cooking for One or Two People: Creative Use of Leftovers

When cooking, make a little extra so you have leftovers. Using leftovers can make meal preparation easier, reduce food waste and save you time in the kitchen.

Some ideas to get you started

Just about anything left over can go into a stir-fry, casserole, soup or salad. Can't finish the whole tin of soup? Use it in sauces, gravies and casseroles. Be creative!

Vegetables and Fruit

- Cook a bunch of broccoli, a head of cauliflower or larger amounts of other vegetables. Eat one serving hot; marinate some in vegetable oil, vinegar and spices and add to a salad.
Use the rest in an omelette, pasta dish, soup or casserole.
- Top casseroles with slices of left-over cooked potatoes.
- Use extra cut-up fruit to top cereal, pancakes or waffles, or mix fruit with yogurt or cottage cheese. Add extra fruit to baked goods such as muffins.
- Peel and freeze overripe bananas and use in loafs and muffins.
- If you bought too much fruit, use the leftovers to make compote, chutney or fruit sauces (like apple sauce).
- Cook extra vegetables and puree what you don't eat with broth or milk for a quick soup.
- Add any combination of cooked vegetables into a pasta dish, gratin, salad, lasagna or quiche.
- Freeze leftover tomato paste in little spoonfuls on a foil-lined baking sheet. Store the frozen blobs in a freezer bag and use to enrich sauces.
- Use leftover stir-fried vegetables in an omelette or a wrap.
- Blend leftover fruit into a smoothie (blend milk and fruit).



Grain Products

- Chill leftover pasta for pasta salad, soups or casseroles.
- Use extra rice in rice pudding, soups, or casseroles.
- Make individual sized pizzas using tortillas, English muffins or pita breads for the crust. Spread on some lower sodium tomato sauce and add your favourite toppings.
- Crush dried bread to make crumbs to coat chicken or fish, or as casserole topping.
- Use dried bread in bread pudding or cube as croutons (sprinkle with spices and toast in the oven) for salads or soups.

Meat and Alternatives

- Serve tomato or meat sauce over noodles one day, then add kidney beans, chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen or leftover) and chili seasoning for another meal.
- Sauté ground beef, use some in a casserole and freeze the rest for chili, pasta sauce or stuffed peppers.
- Bake larger pieces of meat such as whole chicken, ham or beef, serve hot and use the leftovers in stir-fries, hearty soups, casseroles, sandwiches or salads.
- Use chicken, tuna or egg salad in sandwich one day and stuff the extra into a tomato or a green, yellow or red pepper the next.
- Turn leftover roast and potatoes into shepherd's pie or stew.
- Turn leftover salmon into salmon cakes or use as a filling for pita with sliced tomatoes, lettuce, red peppers and cucumber.
- Roasts can be minced and used as fillings for burritos, crepes, stuffed vegetables or cannelloni.
- Add extra liquid and sautéed onions when making pot roast for French onion soup.



- Use leftover chicken or turkey in a sandwich. Use whole slices or make chunky chicken salad by adding a little mayonnaise, celery, onion and other vegetables you enjoy.

A note on food safety:

Leftovers can spoil quickly, so take care to keep the food safe to eat:

- Promptly refrigerate leftovers in uncovered, shallow containers so they cool quickly.
- Keep leftovers in the fridge for a maximum of two to three days. Freeze leftovers if storing them for longer.
- Leftovers can be frozen and used within two or three months. Be sure to label and date all packages, and use the oldest ones first
- Thaw frozen leftovers in the fridge, not on the counter. Eat or reheat thawed leftovers right away.
- Heat food thoroughly to at least 165°F (74°C). Check temperatures using a food thermometer.
- Ensure soups, gravies and sauces are brought up to a boil before you eat them.
- Only reheat leftovers one time. Throw away any uneaten leftovers after they have been reheated. Do not refreeze thawed leftovers.

Cooking for One or Two People: Your Emergency Food Shelf

Having an emergency shelf stocked with non-perishable foods and some frozen foods is a big help if you can't get out to the store. You can plan quick and creative meals with just a few basic items. Even though the non-perishable foods will last for a long time on the shelf, it is a good idea to use and replace them occasionally. Items stored in the freezer should be used within two to three months.

Suggested items to have on hand

Vegetables and Fruit

- Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables. Look for brands without any added salt or sugar.
- Canned, boxed or frozen juice.
- Dried fruit (raisins, dates, apricots).
- Sodium-reduced canned soup (mushroom, vegetable, tomato).
- Canned or jarred pasta sauces. Look for lower sodium choices.

Grain Products

- Whole grain bread, rolls, muffins. Keep extras in the freezer.
- Crackers, melba toast, breadsticks.
- Enriched or whole grain pasta.
- Brown rice and other grains such as couscous, millet or quinoa.
- Biscuit mix.
- Hot cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat).
- Ready-to-eat cereals. Look for cereals made with whole grains – the word “whole” should be in front of the grain in the ingredient listing.
- Flour.



Milk and Alternatives

- Canned evaporated milk.
- Dried skim milk powder.
- Shelf-stable milk. Look for boxed milk or unsweetened soy beverage in tetra pack containers on the grocery store shelves.

Meat and Alternatives

- Lower sodium canned salmon, tuna, chicken or sardines.
- Lower sodium canned beans, stew, chili.
- Dried or lower sodium canned lentils and beans.
- Peanut butter.
- Nuts and trail mix. Keep small amounts in the freezer to keep them fresh.
- Plain, unbreaded frozen meat, poultry, fish.
- Frozen dinners. Choose ones with more vegetables and less sodium.

Other

- Sugar
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Low sodium bouillon
- Coffee/Tea

Cooking for One or Two People: Eating Alone

Eating alone can be difficult for people of any age. Cooking alone may seem like more work. But there are ways to put the fun back into eating. Start with keeping your cupboards full of nutritious foods that you enjoy. Studies show that when you eat with others, you eat healthier. So, sit down with some friends, family members or neighbours and enjoy their company while you dine. Treat yourself well; you deserve it!

Make it a pleasure

- Create a pleasant place to eat. Set a table with flowers, place mat and napkin, even candles. Listen to music.
- Sometimes eating in different places is helpful. Take your meal out on the porch, sit near a window or go to the park for a picnic. Enjoy a dinner out in a restaurant occasionally. Ask for a “doggie bag” to take leftovers home.
- Want a break from cooking? Try these simple ideas:
 - No-cook meals such as sandwiches, wraps or salads. A hardboiled egg, whole grain crackers, cheese and fruit makes a tasty light lunch
 - Ready-made meals from the grocery store such as grilled salmon with roasted vegetables or lasagna with a leafy green side salad.
- Use convenience food to make simple meals such as:
 - Frozen vegetables to make a stir fry.
 - Cheese tortellini heated with low sodium canned tomatoes.
 - Pre-cut fresh vegetables, such as butternut squash, to make soup.



- Consider taking Meals on Wheels a few times a week or more.

Find companions

Beyond the nutritional benefits of eating with others, starting a supper club or joining an eating group can also help you meet new people and make new friends.

- Share a potluck dinner with friends, or form a regular lunch group.
- Start an eating club, such as a SOUPer Supper Club: The host makes soup and others bring bread, salad or fruit.
- Join a collective kitchen or share cooking with friends. Find a place where a few of you can meet to plan, shop and prepare several meals together. Take those meals home, freeze them and reheat them when you don't feel like shopping or cooking.
- Ask other seniors who are alone for ideas and suggestions, and share yours.
- Exchange recipes.
- Teach your grandchildren how to cook or bake.
- Check your local senior or community centres; many serve weekly meals.

If you have lost your appetite for more than a day or two, talk with your doctor or ask for a referral to a dietitian.