

# Healthy Eating for Seniors



SeniorsBC

*Thank you.*

*The British Columbia Ministry of Health Services is grateful to all the seniors and dietitians who helped determine the content for this guide, provided recipes, stories and ideas, and generally contributed so much to making Healthy Eating for Seniors a useful resource. We would like to publicly acknowledge their contributions; their names are listed in Appendix F.*

*We couldn't have done it without you.*



SeniorsBC



# Contents

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**Foreword** **6**

---

**1. Seniors today** **8**

This handbook

---

**2. Eat well, age well** **12**

Why do I need to eat well?

What is the connection between eating well and aging well?

What can I do to eat better for my age?

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

How can I set goals that I can actually meet?

---

**3. Balance is everything** **21**

What is healthy eating?

It seems so complicated. Is there an easy way to make sure I get all the nutrients I need?

Okay. I understand the four food groups. But what's a serving?

Why are vegetables and fruit so important?

What about coffee, tea and alcohol?

What about salt?

Are organic foods better for my health?

Where does exercise fit?

---

**4. To supplement or not to supplement** **44**

What vitamins and minerals do I really need?

What about other supplements – herbal or botanical supplements, fibre or meal replacements, for example?



# Contents

## 5. Eating right with a chronic illness

55

### What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) ...

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Osteoporosis
- Gum disease
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Eye problems

### What should I eat if I have ...

- Arthritis
- Parkinson's disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Trouble swallowing

## 6. No body's perfect

85

### What should I eat if I am ...

- Overweight
- Constipated
- Anemic
- Underweight
- Depressed
- Allergic to certain foods

## 7. From soup to nuts

100

Is there an easy way to plan, shop for and cook healthy meals?

What about convenience foods like frozen dinners and canned soups – are they healthy?

Do I really need to read food labels?

How can I eat healthy meals when I'm on a tight budget?

## 8. In the kitchen

116

Is one method of cooking better than another?

What things should I always have in my kitchen?

What utensils do I need?

How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?

Can I eat out and still eat healthy food?



# Contents

## 9. Food safety 126

---

- What is a food-borne illness?
- How can I prevent food-borne illness?
- How do I keep food safe in a power failure?

## 10. Information you can trust 134

---

- How do I know I'm getting reliable information?
- Where can I find reliable information?
- What's the difference between a dietitian and a nutritionist?

## 11. Fast and easy recipes 142

---

**Breakfast and snacks:** Sunny Orange Shake, Pumpkin Raisin Muffins, Fruit Lax

**Lunch or Dinner:** Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup, Spinach Salad with Orange Seed Dressing, Broccoli Salad, Tuna Garden, Tofu Stir-Fry, Quick Steamed Fish Fillets with Potatoes and Asparagus, Skillet Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Couscous, Meatloaf, Indian Curry Sauté, Spinach Frittata, Sweet & Sour Chicken and Vegetable Casserole, Beef, Vegetable and Pasta Casserole

**Desserts:** Quick Fruit Compote, Berry Cobbler, Fresh Fruit and Nut Desserts

**Extras:** Universal Seasoning, Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing

## Appendices

---

- A. One-week meal plan 186
- B. Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide 191
- C. Is your weight healthy? 195
- D. Glossary 199
- E. Index 206
- F. Acknowledgements 210

# 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 over-consumption of foods that should be consumed in moderation, or through 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 *Healthy Eating for Seniors*, 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 keep a healthy body weight, 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', with a horizontal line underneath it.

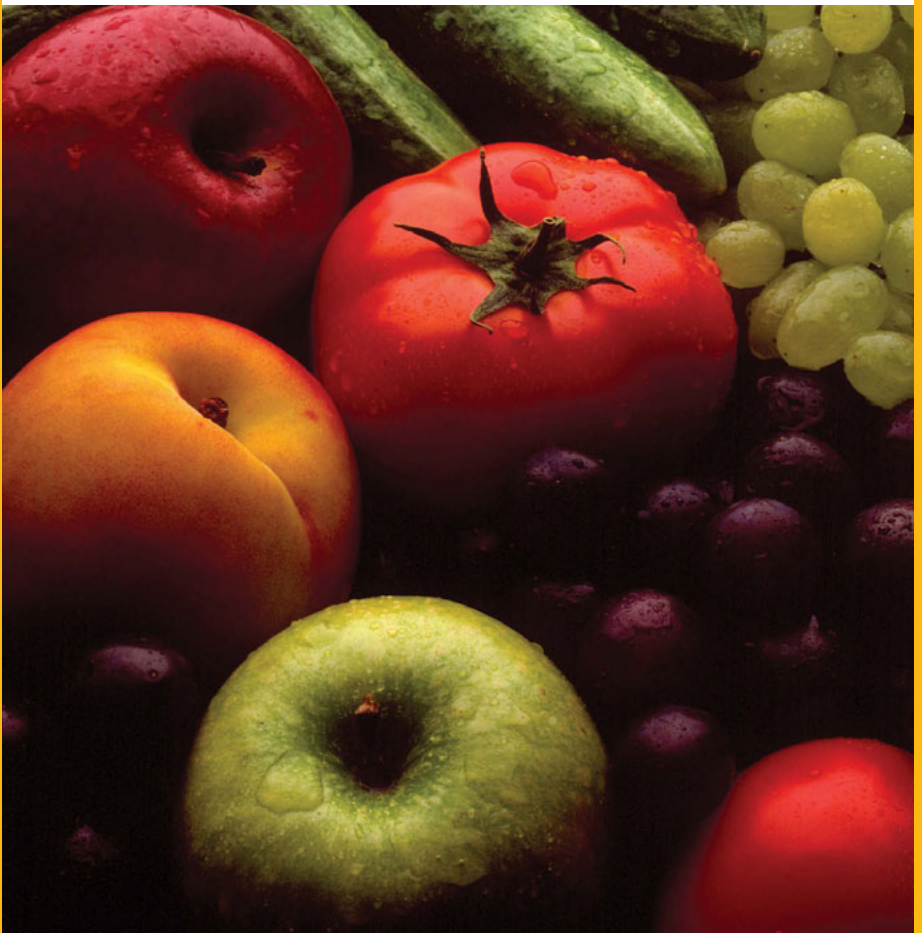
P.R.W. Kendall, MBBS, MSc, FRCPC  
Provincial Health Officer

# Chapter 1

## SENIORS TODAY

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 to enjoy satisfying, energetic, well-rounded lives with friends and family.

However, recent surveys investigating the eating and exercise habits of Canadians – age 65 to 84 – reveal that seniors could be doing even better.







## CHAPTER 1 SENIORS TODAY

### **Here are some important facts to consider:**

**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 controlled through healthy eating and regular physical activity.

**FACT:** The majority of seniors are overweight or obese.

**FACT:** It's also true that you are never too old to lose weight, and that losing just a little weight – even five pounds – can make a huge difference to your health.

**FACT:** Most seniors are not as physically active as they could be.

**FACT:** Seniors who are physically active for at least an hour each day have better heart health and are better able to control their weight than those who are not as active.

**FACT:** The majority of senior men and many senior women eat more than the recommended amount of sodium (salt).

**FACT:** Decreasing the amount of sodium you eat can substantially reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

**FACT:** Many seniors do not get enough calcium, folate, vitamin B6, vitamin B12 and vitamin C through the food they eat.

**FACT:** The right vitamins and minerals, in the right amounts, can help prevent anemia, depression and memory loss. They can also help you heal better after surgery or an injury, and help keep your bones and teeth healthy and strong.



## CHAPTER 1 SENIORS TODAY

**FACT:** Most senior women do not eat enough vegetables and fruit, grains, milk and milk products, meat and meat alternatives. Most senior men do not eat enough vegetables and fruit or milk and milk products.

**FACT:** It is possible to change and improve the way you eat – and the way you feel – at any age.

### **This handbook**

This handbook provides nutrition information tailored to seniors, to what you really need and want to know about healthy eating. It includes information on:

- how aging and eating go together (Chapter 2)
- what healthy eating means (Chapter 3)
- where vitamins and minerals fit in (Chapter 4)
- how to eat if you have a chronic illness, such as heart disease or high cholesterol (Chapter 5)
- how to lose weight, gain weight or deal with other problems (Chapter 6)
- how to cook when you don't like to cook anymore (Chapter 7)
- what to keep in your kitchen and how to modify your recipes to be healthier (Chapter 8)
- how to prepare your food safely (Chapter 9)
- how to find a dietitian and more information on nutrition and general health (Chapter 10)
- recipes for quick, easy and tasty dishes (Chapter 11).

The handbook also includes *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide* (Appendix B), along with a week's worth of healthy

menus (Appendix A), two easy methods for determining if your weight is healthy (Appendix C), and a glossary of health and nutrition-related words and phrases (Appendix D).

### **A note about the content**

There are many Canadian organizations currently providing clear, easy-to-read and up-to-date information and advice about nutrition for seniors. (We have listed the major ones, with contact phone numbers and Internet addresses, in Chapter 10 for readers looking for more information.)

To create this handbook, we depended heavily on print and online nutrition materials developed by:

Dietitians of Canada

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC

Canadian Cancer Society

Canadian Diabetes Association

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

Canadian Health Network

Health Canada, and

British Columbia Ministry of Health Services.

# Chapter 2

## EAT WELL, AGE WELL

Eating well is important at any age, but it is especially important as you get older.

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

Why do I need to eat well?

What is the connection between eating well and aging well?

What can I do to eat better for my age?

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

How can I set goals that I can actually meet?





## CHAPTER 2

### EAT WELL, AGE WELL

#### **Why do I need to eat well?**

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

Together, healthy eating and regular physical activity can mean the difference between independence and a life spent relying on others.

It can give you the energy you need to stay active and do the things you want to do – like working or volunteering, playing with your grandchildren or enjoying a walk around the block.

It can also prevent or slow down 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.

#### **What is the connection between eating well and aging well?**

Growing older means getting used to a body that's different from the one you had when you were younger. But it doesn't mean that you will immediately come down with 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.

Healthy living – which includes both healthy eating and getting regular physical activity – can help you adjust to the natural aging process and retain your youthful vigour.



## CHAPTER 2 EAT WELL, AGE WELL

### 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.

### Here are some basic facts about aging

Everyone ages at a different rate, but you can almost certainly expect:

- Changes to your cardiovascular system. As you get older, your heart muscle has to work harder to pump the same amount of blood through your body. At the same time, your blood vessels become stiffer and fatty deposits may form on the walls of your arteries.

This narrows the passageway the blood has to travel through and makes your heart work even harder, which may lead to high blood pressure (also called hypertension).

- Changes to your weight. You may find that you need fewer calories now than when you were young because you are less active. Your body may also lose muscle and gain fat. As a result, you may put on weight as you age, increasing your risk for a number of illnesses.
- Changes to your bones, muscles and joints. As you age, your bones will naturally shrink in size and in density (how thick or heavy they are). You may become shorter and may find your bones break more easily. Your muscles, tendons and joints may also become stiffer with age, and you may not be as strong as you once were.
- Changes to taste, thirst and digestion. All your senses dim a little with age, including taste and smell, which can make eating less interesting. You will also tend to feel less thirsty as you get older, so you may not drink as much water as you should. And it will take longer for digested food to move through your system, so you may experience chronic constipation.
- Changes to your kidneys. Your kidneys will become less efficient with age and will not remove waste from your bloodstream as well as they once did. At the same time, a chronic condition such as Type 2 diabetes or high blood pressure, which many people experience with age, may damage your kidneys.

### **FAST FACTS:**

Scientific studies have shown that vegetables and fruit – especially dark green, orange, yellow and red ones – contain natural disease-fighting ingredients called phytochemicals. (See Chapter 3 for more on these.)

If everyone simply ate five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruit every day, the current cancer rate could be reduced by as much as 20 percent.



## CHAPTER 2

### EAT WELL, AGE WELL

- Changes to your eyes. With age, your eyes are less able to produce tears, your retinas get thinner and your lenses gradually turn yellow. As a result, you may experience eye problems, such as cataracts, glaucoma or macular degeneration, as you get older. People with high blood pressure or diabetes are at the greatest risk of developing glaucoma.

### The Basics of Healthy Living

Eat a variety of foods.

Eat in moderation. Size matters, so watch your portions!

#### Eat more:

- vegetables and fruit
- whole grains (for example, breads, pasta, roti, oatmeal and brown rice)
- legumes (such as dried beans, peas, lentils)
- fish
- calcium-rich foods (including low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese)
- unsaturated fats (from vegetable oils, nuts and seeds)
- lean meat and poultry.

#### Eat less:

- saturated fats (found in butter, ghee, lard, deli meats, bacon and sausages)
- trans fats (found in processed foods, cookies, cakes and deep-fried foods)
- refined or enriched grains
- salt and sugar (including sugary drinks as well as jams, candies and baked goods).

Drink more water.

Do something active everyday.



## What can I do to eat better for my age?

Research proves that the need for certain nutrients (substances that nourish the body) increases with age.

For example, fibre becomes even more important as your metabolism slows down, to keep your bowels healthy and regular. You also need more of some vitamins and minerals for energy and strong bones. (See Chapters 3 and 4 for details on important nutrients for seniors.) And you may need greater amounts of protein, especially if you've had surgery or a chronic illness. (See Chapter 3 for more about protein.)

The challenge is to eat in a way that helps you maintain a healthy weight, while providing you with the nutrients you need for good health. The best place to start is with Canada's Food Guide (Appendix B).

Canada's Food Guide explains that the four main food groups are:

1. vegetables and fruit
2. grain products, including bread, rice, pasta and cereals
3. milk and alternatives, such as cheese, yogurt, kefir and fortified soy beverages
4. meat – fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat – and alternatives, such as eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and nut butters.

The guide also tells you how many Food Guide Servings you should eat in a day to make sure you are getting enough of the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients you need for good health. Then it's up to you to adapt the food guide to help you meet your particular needs and tastes. For example, if you are a vegetarian, you will want to focus on alternatives to meat, such as beans and tofu. If you are lactose intolerant (milk and milk products cause abdominal pain and bloating), you will want to substitute lactose-free products.

By following Canada's Food Guide and taking a multivitamin/mineral intended for people over age 50, you are well on your way to eating well, living well and aging well.



## CHAPTER 2

### EAT WELL, AGE WELL

### **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 now. 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 prepare proper meals.

It's tempting to live on just tea and toast. But you will feel better – you will have more energy, greater zest and interest in life – if you eat well.

Reading through this handbook is a good start to healthy eating. You can also talk to your doctor or a dietitian 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 can provide brief nutrition consultation by phone. If you need more in-depth counselling, they will guide you to hospital outpatient dietitians, community nutritionists or other nutrition services in your community. This service does not replace the medical counsel of your doctor. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

**Call Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1. For deaf or hearing-impaired assistance (TTY), call 7-1-1. Or visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian).**

## **How can I set goals that I can actually meet?**

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 fruit and one more vegetable today.
- I will try a fruit or vegetable this week that I have never tried before.
- I will eat fish once this week.
- I will choose whole grain bread for my sandwich.
- I will drink one more glass of water each day.
- I will be more active today.
- I will throw out my deep fryer.
- I will do most of my shopping around the outer edges of the grocery store, because that's where the fresh foods are.

A few small changes can mount up to a very big difference to your health – before you even know it's happening!

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #1

### True or False?

#### 1. Healthy eating is too expensive.

**False.** Some of the least expensive foods are also the most nutritious. Vegetables and fruit, whole grain breads, cereals and pasta, brown rice, baked beans – all are low in fat, high in fibre and cost far less than processed or packaged foods. (See Chapter 7 for tips on how to eat well on a budget.)

#### 2. Low-fat eating is boring and tasteless.

**False.** Healthy eating can taste every bit as good as high-fat eating. It is easy to adjust the meals you love to be lower in fat, without losing flavour (you may never even taste the difference). There are also many very tasty low-fat recipes out there. Believe it or not, you will eventually find that you enjoy healthy eating even more than your old style. (See Chapter 8 for tips on lowering the fat in your recipes and Chapter 11 for good low-fat recipes.)

#### 3. Snacking between meals is bad for you.

**False.** Eating a snack between meals or eating five or six small meals during the day can make you feel more energetic and help you manage your weight. Healthy snacks include fruit, vegetables, low-fat yogurt or a low-fat muffin. (We've included a great recipe for pumpkin raisin muffins in Chapter 11.)

# Chapter 3

## BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

What is healthy eating?

It seems so complicated. Is there an easy way to make sure I get all the nutrients I need?

Okay. I understand the four food groups. But what's a serving?

Why are vegetables and fruit so important?

What about coffee, tea and alcohol?

What about salt?

Are organic foods better for my health?

Where does exercise fit?





## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

**A NUTRIENT** is a substance that provides nourishment essential for life and growth.

As your body ages, you may require fewer calories – mostly because you are not as active – but your need for essential nutrients stays the same and in some cases even goes up. For example, you need more calcium, folate, vitamin D and B6 as you get older.

As a result, healthy eating becomes even more important as a way to make sure you get all the nutrients you need, without any extra calories or extra weight gain. And if what you eat does not give you quite enough nutrition, you can take a multivitamin/mineral and/or other supplements to help (see Chapter 4).

### **What is healthy eating?**

Healthy eating is balanced eating, where you consume a variety of foods. It includes protein, carbohydrates (especially fibre), fats and fluids.

### **Protein**

Protein helps repair your muscles, skin and nails. It can help you heal if you've been ill or have had surgery.

The best sources of protein are meat, fish, poultry, milk, eggs, cheese, yogurt, legumes (such as dried peas, beans and lentils), nuts, seeds and soy products (such as tofu or soy beverages). Whole grains, vegetables and fruit can also provide small amounts of protein.

Here's how you can easily get the protein your body needs in one day along with many other good nutrients, such as iron, calcium and vitamin B12:

- At breakfast, have one egg, one slice of whole wheat toast and a banana. Or try oatmeal made with an egg and milk or unsweetened, fortified soy beverage, or cold cereal made with low-fat buttermilk or lassi (a yogurt drink).
- At lunch, have a chunk of cheese and a bowl of lentil soup (see our recipe in Chapter 11). Or try steamed brown rice with cut-up chicken pieces and vegetables, such as green beans or bok choy, or a cup (250 mL) of dahl (lentils) with two whole wheat roti (flat bread).
- For an afternoon snack, have a handful of nuts with three-quarters of a cup (175 mL) of low-fat yogurt, or a small glass of milk or unsweetened, fortified soy beverage.
- For dinner, have fish (or tofu) with half a cup (125 mL) of brown or basmati rice, and half a cup (125 mL) of broccoli or other vegetable and one cup (250 mL) of mixed salad.

## ADDING PROTEIN IS EASY

Try to have one good source of protein at each meal, such as lean meat, chicken, turkey, eggs, low-fat cheese, fish, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts or peanut butter.

### Try:

- adding a slice of cheese to your favourite sandwich
- cutting up a hard-boiled egg into your salad
- preparing a dahl (a South Asian lentil dish)
- drinking milk instead of water at one meal
- eating a handful of unsalted soy nuts
- sprinkling nuts and seeds on your cereal, salad or stirfry
- spreading peanut butter on a slice of whole wheat toast or a whole wheat tortilla, or
- adding chickpeas or beans to a stirfry or pasta sauce.

If you still just can't get enough protein through your diet, add skim milk powder to your cereal, milk or juice.



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### **Carbohydrates**

Healthy carbohydrates – such as vegetables, fruit, whole grains and low-fat dairy products – provide your body with the fuel your heart, lungs and other organs need to function properly. 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).

A few carbohydrates, however, are unhealthy – particularly the ones that are easily digested and that quickly raise your blood sugar. These include white bread, white rice, cookies and cakes.

Some weight loss programs 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.

Permanent weight loss or weight management requires a permanent change in lifestyle and eating habits. (See Chapter 6 for tips on healthy ways to lose weight.)

### **Fibre**

Most Canadians – especially seniors – only get about half the fibre they need each day.

Fibre is a nutrient found in plants. You need fibre to keep your bowels regular and healthy. Eating a lot of high-fibre foods can also help lower blood cholesterol levels, control blood sugar levels and help prevent high blood pressure. Because fibre makes you feel full for longer, it can also help with weight control.

### **Watch Out!**

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



Grains and grain products are particularly high in fibre. In fact, a high-fibre cereal for breakfast (one with four grams or more of fibre) will help keep your hunger under control for the whole day. Follow up throughout the day with other high-fibre foods, such as whole wheat toast or pasta with vegetable sauce, a spicy bowl of chili, or low-fat yogurt with fruit and bran added on top.

Fruit and vegetables, beans, lentils and chickpeas are also great sources of fibre.

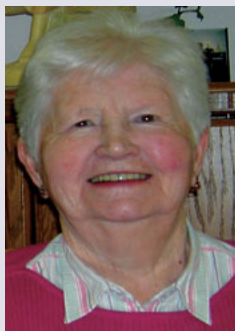
### **Fibre Tips**

- Look for labels that say “high” or “very high source of fibre.” This means the foods have at least four to six grams of fibre per serving.
- Eat breads, rolls and roti (flat bread) made of whole wheat, wheat bran, mixed grains, dark rye or pumpernickel flours, as well as brown rice and whole wheat pasta. Look for “whole” grains to be the first ingredient on the ingredient label. (“Enriched wheat flour” and “unbleached flour” are both refined white flour and have less fibre, iron and vitamins than whole grain flour, while “multigrain” may just mean that a small amount of whole grain has been added to enriched flour.)
- Eat lots of vegetables and fruit.
- Drink plenty of fluids to help fibre work properly. For women, that’s at least nine 8-ounce glasses (2.2 litres). For men, it’s at least 12 8-ounce glasses (three litres).
- If you haven’t been eating much fibre, add fibre slowly to avoid any problems with gas or cramps, and make sure to drink lots of fluids.



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### 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.”

## Fats

Research now proves that it is not fat that is bad for you, but the type of fat you eat that counts most.

Everyone needs to eat some fat to stay healthy. Fat supplies your body with energy and helps build a protective coat around your cells – but it's got to be healthy fat and in the right amount.

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

**Unhealthy** fats are found in:

- whole or full-fat milk, including coconut milk and Hong Kong-style milk tea
- cream, sour cream and ice cream
- butter and clarified butter or ghee
- cheese (including paneer)
- fatty red meat (sausage, pork hock, bacon, Chinese preserved meats)

## Some fat not a lot!

Everyone needs some fat, but all fat, even healthy fat, is very high in calories.

Too much fat can make you gain weight and increase your risk of diabetes and may also lead to clogged arteries and an increased risk of heart disease and cancer.

That means you must choose your fats wisely: don't waste your fat "quota" on cookies or cakes. Instead, choose foods that also provide lots of good nutrition, such as nuts and seeds, avocado, salmon and low-fat cheese.

Snacks that have almost no fat include fresh fruit and vegetables. Other low-fat choices include melba toast, fig cookies and gingersnaps. Or try low-fat yogurt or whole wheat crackers that have less than three grams of fat per serving (read the label!).



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

- chicken feet, chicken, duck and turkey skin or fat
- dim sum (including pork pastry, pot stickers and sticky rice wraps)
- palm and coconut oils
- hard margarines and vegetable shortening
- partially hydrogenated vegetable oil
- lard
- deep-fried foods (such as chips, pakoras and samosas)
- baked items (including cookies, cakes, pies and pastries, pineapple buns, cocktail buns and moon cakes), and
- South Asian sweets (such as jalebi, ladoo, barfi and gulab jatman).

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 and ground flaxseeds\*
- vegetable oils, including olive, peanut, canola\*, soybean\*, 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)
- wheatgerm
- avocados, and
- foods fortified with omega 3, including eggs, yogurt and soy beverages.\*

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

## Butter vs. Margarine

For years, researchers said that margarine is 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 option is to use liquid vegetable oils, such as canola, olive or soybean oil, or soft-tub margarine that is labeled “non-hydrogenated.” Also make sure the margarine is low in saturated and trans fat, and look for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada’s Health Check™ logo.

To make sure you are eating the right amount of fat, start by choosing foods that are naturally low in fat, then add no more than two to three tablespoons (30 to 45 grams) of healthy, unsaturated fats to what you eat every day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.

Also try to substitute healthy fat for unhealthy fat where you can, and remember to read food labels carefully. “Low fat” means that the food has less than three grams of fat per serving. “Fat free” means that the food has less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving.

In addition:

- Choose lean meats, then trim off any fat you can see.
- Remove the skin from chicken and turkey.
- Grill, broil or roast your meat, chicken or turkey to allow the fat to drain off.
- Eat fish at least twice a week.
- Choose legumes instead of meat at least once a week. Prepare a dish that uses baked beans, dahl (lentils) or chickpeas, or cook a batch of chili.
- Cook with low-fat dairy products made with skim or 1% milk or yogurt.



## CHAPTER 3

### BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

- Use low-fat milk in your coffee and tea or to make chai.
- Use whole wheat flour to make roti (flat bread), and leave out the butter.
- Use small amounts of mustard, ketchup, relish, cranberry sauce, or peanut butter instead of butter or margarine.
- Choose a healthy, low-fat salad dressing or make your own (see our recipe in Chapter 11).
- Try steamed or boiled brown rice instead of pilau or biryani.
- Substitute small amounts of canola or olive oil for butter or margarine in your cooking, including when you make dahl (a lentil dish) or cook vegetables.
- Reduce the fat in your favourite recipes (see Chapter 8 for tips).

### 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.

### To your good health

Start your lunch or dinner with a low-salt vegetable soup – you'll eat your veggies and drink your fluids all in one!

Try our milkshake recipe (see Chapter 11) for an easy way to increase your fluids while adding calcium, protein and vitamin D to your diet.

Avoid drinking a lot of sugary drinks, such as pop, slushies, sweetened fruit drinks and iced tea.

Have sparkling water instead of wine.

## Watch out!

Talk with your doctor if you have heart disease, kidney, liver, adrenal or thyroid disease. You may need to drink less.

Talk to your doctor, too, if you suddenly feel very thirsty or have to urinate more often than usual.

As a senior, you need to drink fluids regularly, whether you feel thirsty or not.

If you are a woman, try to drink about nine 8-ounce glasses (2.2 litres) of fluids each day. If you are a man, try to drink about 12 8-ounce glasses (three litres) of fluids each day.

Drink more:

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

You can get your fluids by drinking plain water, but there are also many different and healthy sources of fluids, including:

- vegetable and fruit juices
- low-fat milk and buttermilk
- unsweetened soy beverages
- low-fat yogurt drinks
- soups
- decaffeinated coffee and tea (including black, green, herbal and chai), and
- Ovaltine™ or Horlicks™ mixed with low-fat milk or unsweetened soy beverage.

Remember: alcohol does not count as a source of fluid.

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



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### **It seems so complicated. Is there an easy way to make sure I get all the nutrients I need?**

The easiest way to make sure you are getting all the nutrients you need is to follow *Canada's Food Guide* (see Appendix B) – specifically the guide's recommended Food Guide Servings, to make sure you eat from all four food groups.

The guide recommends that senior women have:

- Seven servings of vegetables and fruit per day.
- Six servings of grain products, including bread, rice, pasta, cereals, per day.
- Three servings of milk and alternatives, such as cheese, yogurt, kefir and fortified soy beverages, per day.
- Two servings of meat (cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat) and meat alternatives, such as eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and nut butters, per day.

It recommends that senior men have:

- Seven servings of vegetables and fruit per day.
- Seven servings of grain products, including bread, rice, pasta and cereals, per day.
- Three servings of milk and alternatives, such as cheese, yogurt, kefir and fortified soy beverages, per day.
- Three servings of meat (cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat) and meat alternatives, such as eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and nut butters, per day.

### **Fresh vs. canned or frozen fruit and vegetables**

You receive the same health benefits from canned, frozen or dried 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. Just make sure that canned fruit is packed in water or juice, rather than syrup, and that canned vegetables are packed with little or no salt (sodium).



## Some tips from Canada's Food Guide

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
- Eat at least two servings of fish per week.
- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- Make at least half your grain products whole grain each day, such as whole wheat bread and pasta, brown rice and oatmeal.
- Drink skim, 1 percent or 2 percent milk each day. Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.

For more tips, see Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (Appendix B).

## Okay, I understand the four food groups.

### But, what's a serving?

- One serving of fruit could be one apple, orange or banana, or half a cup (125 mL) of 100 percent fruit juice.
- One serving of vegetables could be half a cup (125 mL) of fresh, frozen or canned vegetables, or one cup (250 mL) of raw leafy vegetables or salad.
- One serving of grains could be one slice (35 g) of whole wheat bread, half a bagel, pita or tortilla. Or it could be three-quarters of a cup (175 mL) of hot cereal or one ounce (30 g) of cold cereal. It could also be half a cup (125 mL) of cooked pasta, couscous, rice, bulgur or quinoa.
- One serving of milk or fortified soy beverage is one cup (250 mL); one serving of evaporated milk is half a cup (125 mL). One serving of cheese is one-and-a-half ounces (50 g), while one serving of yogurt or kefir is three-quarters of a cup (175 g).
- One serving of cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meat is two-and-a-half ounces (75 g). For meat alternatives, one serving is three-quarters of a cup (175 mL) or 150 g of tofu or legumes, two eggs, two tablespoons (30 mL) of peanut butter, or one-quarter cup (60 mL) of shelled nuts or seeds.



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### **Why are vegetables and fruit so important?**

Researchers have known for a long time that vegetables and fruit are full of things that are vital to health, like fibre, vitamin C and E and other antioxidants (see Chapter 4 for more on these vitamins). Today, new research is revealing that there are even more good things hidden inside apples and green beans.

Phytochemicals are chemicals produced by plants. These chemicals contain compounds that may protect against disease, especially cancer, and possibly osteoporosis and eye disease.

The brightest and most colourful vegetables and fruit – the dark green, orange, yellow and red ones – are packed with both essential vitamins and minerals and disease-fighting phytochemicals. Soy products, beans and lentils, too, are full of phytochemicals – so remember to include them. And don't be afraid of flavouring your foods with herbs, spices and citrus peels to get extra nutrients.

### **What about coffee, tea and alcohol?**

Experts used to think that caffeinated coffee and tea caused the body to lose water. New research, however, shows that coffee and tea do provide necessary fluid, but you still have to be careful about how much caffeine you take in each day.

A moderate amount of caffeine appears to be fine – about 400 to 450 mgs a day. That's about three 8-ounce cups of coffee a day and a bit more if you drink black or green tea, which contain less caffeine. (Herbal teas contain no caffeine at all, but most

### **My Food Guide**

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

Go to [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) and click on My Food Guide.

## Help is available

It's easy to drink more than you should, particularly if you've lost a spouse and 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.

flavoured teas contain some caffeine. Cola and soda pop also contain caffeine.)

Researchers have not changed their opinion on alcohol, especially for seniors.

Your body becomes more sensitive to alcohol as you age and your metabolism slows down. Now, the two drinks you used to have before dinner feel more like four or five. In addition, you may be taking more medications than you used to, which can magnify the effect of the alcohol you drink and be very dangerous. And if you also have a balance problem or a chronic illness, such as heart disease and diabetes, alcohol can make it worse.

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 doctor or a dietitian (see back cover for contact information) whether it is safe for you to drink alcohol at all.

If you are not taking medications, or your doctor or pharmacist says it is okay, stick to the one-drink-a-day rule. That's one 12-ounce (354 mL) bottle of beer, one five-ounce (147 mL) glass of wine, or one-and-a-half ounces (44 mL) of hard liquor. And always eat before you drink. Food helps slow down how quickly your body absorbs alcohol and reduces its effects.

## What about salt?

You probably know that eating too much sodium (salt) can raise blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease. But recent research reveals that the effects of high blood pressure are even more wide-ranging.



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### Low-salt tips

- Do not add salt when you cook.
- When you are eating out, ask the cook to hold the salt.
- Take the saltshaker off the dining table.
- Substitute other seasonings for salt, such as herbs, dry mustard, spices, lemon juice, ginger or garlic – or see the recipe for Universal Seasoning in Chapter 11.
- Choose fresh food as often as possible.
- Avoid frozen dinners.
- Rinse canned foods, such as salmon, tuna fish and beans, under water to remove the salt.
- Avoid “instant” foods, including instant soups, oatmeal, pancakes and waffles.
- Avoid processed cheese.
- Avoid meats that have been processed, cured or smoked. These include sausages, hot dogs, ham, bacon, pepperoni or smoked fish.
- Limit snack foods, such as salted crackers, chips, popcorn and nuts.
- Limit pickles, pickled foods, relishes, salsa, dips, olives, barbecue sauce, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, oyster sauce and prepared salad dressings.

Researchers now know that high blood pressure can also speed up the body’s loss of calcium, which could lead to osteoporosis (thinning of the bones that makes them more likely to break). High blood pressure is also considered a “risk factor” for diabetes and kidney disease, which means you are more likely to develop these diseases.

You should limit your intake of sodium to no more than 2300 mgs per day (that’s about one teaspoon of salt) from all your foods. You should consume even less sodium if you have high blood pressure, osteoporosis, kidney disease or diabetes.

The best way to control your sodium intake is to eat fresh vegetables and fruit more often and prepare your own food. Try not to rely on frozen dinners or canned soup, meat or vegetables, because most contain a lot of extra salt. If you do buy these 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 7 for more on reading food labels.)

### **Common foods and their sodium content**

Pancake, from mix – 10 cm (2.5 inch)	250 mgs
Donut – 1	250 mgs
Canned green beans – ½ cup	180 mgs
Frozen green beans – ½ cup	6 mgs
Canned mushrooms – ½ cup	350 mgs
Canned spaghetti sauce – ½ cup	650 mgs
Tomato juice – 1 cup	930 mgs
Canned salmon, salt added – 1 can	370 mgs
Canned salmon, no salt added – 1 can	50 mgs
Bacon – 1 slice	100 mgs
Luncheon meat – 1 slice	200 mgs
Pork sausage – 1 2-ounce	530 mgs
Canned baked beans – 1 cup	1065 mgs
Salted mixed nuts – ½ cup	450 mgs
Kraft™ dinner – ¾ cup	430 mgs
Chicken broth – 1 cup	820 mgs
Tomato soup, with milk – 1 cup	950 mgs
Mushroom soup, with milk – 1 cup	1140 mgs
Italian dressing – 1 tbsp	230 mgs
Salt – 1 tsp	2375 mgs
Soy sauce, regular – 1 tbsp	1040 mgs
Hoisin sauce – 1 tsp	70 mgs
Oyster sauce – 1 tsp	250 mgs



## CHAPTER 3

### BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

#### **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 choose to produce their food without using chemical pesticides or fertilizers, hormones or antibiotics – which means organic foods may be more environmentally friendly than non-organic foods. However, scientists are just beginning to test whether organic foods are actually more nutritious than non-organic foods, and they have not come to any final conclusions yet.

So it's really up to you. The most important thing is that you eat vegetables and fruit more often – whether they are organic or not.

If you do decide to buy organic food, always check for a “certified organic” mark on food labels and try to buy locally grown produce whenever possible. And remember to wash all vegetables and fruit carefully.

#### **Where does exercise fit?**

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 (30 to

#### **Exercise: 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, and
- fall asleep at bedtime.

In short, regular physical activity can mean greater freedom and independence.

60 minutes a day) – combined with healthy eating – helps maintain weight. It also helps 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. Recent studies have shown that if you combine healthy eating with regular activity, you will improve your condition by more than 45 percent over healthy eating alone, even if you do not lose weight.

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.

## **Getting started**

Talk to your doctor first to make sure you are ready to increase your physical activity. If your doctor says you are, we recommend you also consult with an 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:

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology  
at 1 877 651-3755 or [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca)

B.C. Recreation and Parks Association  
at 1 866 929-0965 or [www.bcrpa.bc.ca](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca), or

B.C. Association of Kinesiologists at  
1 604 601-5100 or [www.bcak.bc.ca](http://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 1 888 334-9769 or online at [www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com).



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### Three types of physical activity

To keep your body moving well as you get older, try to incorporate three 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.

FITT	Just Starting Out	Regular Routine
<b>Frequency</b>	Most days	Four to seven days per week
<b>Intensity</b> Breathing Talk Test	Light Slight increase Can talk easily	Moderate Deep and consistent Can talk in short bursts
<b>Time</b>	At least 10 minutes at a time, up to three times per day	30 to 60 minutes
<b>Type</b>	Light walking, gardening, golfing	Brisk walking, swimming, cycling, dancing, as well as household chores such as vacuuming or washing floors

2. **Strength activities** to keep bones and muscles strong.

FITT	Strength Activities	Daily Activities
<b>Frequency</b>	Two to four days per week	Daily
<b>Intensity</b>	Weight you can lift eight to 15 times	Move objects in your daily routine
<b>Time</b>	20 to 30 minutes, two to four sets of each exercise	Periodically throughout the day
<b>Type</b>	Using your body weight by doing push-ups or sit-ups, using hand weights or weight machines	Household chores, yard work, climbing stairs, lifting and carrying groceries or laundry



3. **Flexibility activities** to keep your muscles relaxed and your joints mobile.

<b>FITT</b>	<b>Stretching Activities</b>	<b>Daily Activities</b>
<b>Frequency</b>	Daily	Daily
<b>Intensity</b>	Take stretch to just before point of pain	Move joint to end point without discomfort
<b>Time</b>	15 to 30 minutes, hold each stretch 10 to 20 seconds, no bouncing	Complete given task
<b>Type</b>	Stretching routines before or after physical activity, also stretch classes, T'ai Chi, yoga and Pilates	Household chores, such as putting away groceries and dusting or sweeping, as well as raking or digging in the yard and other bending, stretching and reaching movements that take your joints through a full range of motion

## **Dividing it up**

You should work towards 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day, but it does not have to be all at once.

For example, you could try walking for 10 minutes in the morning, and another 10 in the afternoon, with a short stretch before and after and a little gardening or vacuuming in between. You can also alternate walking days with days where you do some strength training – lifting light weights, such as soup cans, for example. And if you just can't do 30 minutes, even 10 minutes of light physical activity a day will help you feel more vibrant, energetic and alert.



## CHAPTER 3 BALANCE IS EVERYTHING

### Making it easy

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.

There are ways around these and other barriers however.

For example:

Barrier	Strategies
<b>Unsafe neighbourhood to walk</b>	Walk with a friend, walk in a mall or the halls of your building or join a walking group.
<b>Difficulty getting places</b>	Take the bus, car pool with friends or have an exercise professional come to your home.
<b>Unsuitable or uninteresting programs</b>	Check program listings at seniors' centres, churches and private fitness clubs or use a book or video/DVD to start your own program.
<b>Too busy caring for others</b>	Be active while the person you are caring for is resting or occupied (even five or 10 minutes at a time will help). Or have a friend come over and take care of your partner while you go out for a walk or class.
<b>Stiffness, arthritis or osteoporosis</b>	Choose gentle activities, such as walking, or classes designed to accommodate seniors with physical challenges, such as aqua-fit.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #2

### True or False?

- 1. I can drink as much alcohol as I did when I was 20 or 40.**

**False.** As you grow older, your body becomes more sensitive to alcohol, which means it will have a greater effect than it used to.

- 2. All fats are bad.**

**False.** You need some fat in your diet, but it should be the right fat, from sources such as nuts, seeds, avocado, salmon, tuna and low-fat cheese.

- 3. I don't feel thirsty, so I must be drinking enough.**

**False.** As your body ages, it's harder for you to tell when you need fluids. You must drink regularly, whether you feel thirsty or not.

- 4. I'm too old to exercise.**

**False.** You are never too old for physical activity. Even if you are in your 80s or 90s, staying active will help you feel better and do the things you want to do.

# Chapter 4

## TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

What vitamins and minerals do I really need?

What about other supplements – herbal and botanical supplements, fibre and meal replacements, for example?





## CHAPTER 4 TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

**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 folate, calcium and magnesium.

You can get enough of most of these vitamins and minerals by eating the foods recommended in *Canada's Food Guide* (Appendix B). For some vitamins and minerals, however, you may need to take a good multivitamin/mineral supplement or eat fortified foods (foods with added vitamins and minerals).

Remember, however, that a supplement is intended to add to what you eat, not to replace healthy eating.

Remember, too, that it's easy to get carried away with the latest fad. New research comes out practically every day on the benefits of different vitamins, minerals and other supplements, and you may be feeling overwhelmed by ads on TV and in newspapers telling you about the latest miracle.

Before jumping on the latest bandwagon, consult with your doctor or a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) Also read Chapter 10, *How do I know I am getting reliable information?*, for tips about how you can tell if a product is good for you to take.

### **What vitamins and minerals do I really need?**

#### **Vitamin B12**

Your body needs vitamin B12 to form healthy red blood cells and to keep your nervous system – the control centre of your body – working normally. This vitamin helps you feel energetic and alert.

When you were young, your body could obtain all the vitamin B12 it needed from natural sources, including meat, fish, poultry, eggs, milk, yogurt and cheese. But as you get older, your body does not absorb vitamin B12 as well.



## CHAPTER 4

### TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

Anyone over age 50 needs about 2.5 mcgs of B12 a day. Because many people over that age do not absorb the vitamin very well, we recommend that you eat foods fortified with B12, such as veggie meats (tofu patties, for example) and fortified soy beverages, or take a multivitamin/mineral that contains B12.

#### **Vitamin B6**

Vitamin B6 functions much like B12, except that it also helps maintain your blood glucose (also called blood sugar, your body's main source of energy) within a normal range.

Good sources of vitamin B6 include:

- green beans
- beef, chicken, fish
- bananas
- fortified cereals.

However, many seniors do not get enough vitamin B6 through the foods they eat.

If you are not eating many foods that contain B6, or you are not eating much in general, we recommend you take a multivitamin/mineral supplement with B6.

#### **Folate/folic acid**

Folate is another B vitamin. Folic acid is the form of folate found in vitamin supplements.

If you do not get enough folate, you may not form enough red blood cells.

#### **Which multivitamin/ mineral supplement is the best?**

Choose a multivitamin/mineral that is specifically intended for people over 50 and take it as directed.

Some people assume that, when it comes to vitamins, more is always better and they will take more than the recommended dose. But you can get too much of a good thing. Large amounts of certain vitamins and minerals can be harmful to your health.

## Are you getting enough calcium?

The BC Dairy Foundation's Calcium Calculator will tell you how much calcium you are getting from your diet.

Go to [www.bcdairyfoundation.ca](http://www.bcdairyfoundation.ca) or call 1 800 242-6455.

This can lead to the blood condition called anemia, which will make you feel very tired. Folate may also help prevent some types of cancer.

Seniors need 400 mcgs of folate a day. The best way to get that amount is to eat foods high in folate, such as beans, lentils, dark green leafy vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds. If you do not eat these high-folate foods regularly, we recommend you take a multivitamin/mineral with folic acid.

### Calcium and vitamin D

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

Eating foods rich in calcium and vitamin D throughout your life, combined with regular physical activity, will help prevent osteoporosis. With osteoporosis, your bones become smaller, more fragile and more likely to break. In Canada, one in four women and one in eight men over the age of 50 has osteoporosis. (See Chapter 5 for more about osteoporosis.)

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

Seniors should consume 1200 mgs of calcium and 600 international units (IU) of vitamin D a day from food sources and/or supplements. Seniors over 70 years of age may require up to 800 IU a day. If you already have osteoporosis, your doctor may recommend even higher amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

### An easy trick

Even if you take a calcium supplement, you should not stop eating calcium-rich foods!

One easy way to add calcium and other important nutrients to your diet: sprinkle some skim-milk powder over your cereal or mix it into your soup.



## CHAPTER 4 TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

Including milk, yogurt and cheese every day is the easiest way to make sure that you get the recommended amount of calcium. Other good sources of calcium include:

- soy beverages and orange juice fortified with calcium
- firm tofu made with calcium sulfate
- salmon and sardines with bones, and
- almonds and sesame seeds.

Vegetables such as turnip greens, bok choy, kale and broccoli also provide calcium, but in smaller amounts.

The major source of vitamin D is sunlight. However, because Canada is a northern country, it can sometimes be hard for you to get as much sunlight as you should. 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.

Good sources of vitamin D include:

- foods fortified with vitamin D, such as milk, soy beverages and margarine
- oily or fatty fish, such as salmon, eulachon and herring
- fish liver oils, and
- egg yolks.

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

### 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.



a day. Because many seniors also do not get enough calcium from their diets, we suggest you talk with your doctor or a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) Your doctor or a dietitian can help you determine if you are getting enough calcium and can also tell you whether you need a calcium supplement in addition to a vitamin D supplement, and how much you should take.

If your doctor or dietitian says you should take a calcium supplement, then you must be careful to choose the right one.

We recommend choosing either calcium carbonate or calcium citrate in whatever form you like: chewable, liquid or caplet/tablet. Antacids, made from calcium carbonate, are fine too. Many calcium supplements also include vitamin D.

Do not take more than 500 to 600 mgs of calcium at any one time. 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.

### **Vitamin C and vitamin E**

Vitamin C helps your body form collagen, something it needs to make skin, tendons, ligaments and blood vessels. It is essential, too, for healing wounds and for repairing and maintaining bones and teeth.

Vitamin C is also – along with vitamin E – what is known as an antioxidant. Antioxidants are 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.

### **Smokers**

If you smoke, you need more vitamin C than non-smokers. Try to add an extra serving of fruit or vegetables high in vitamin C every day.

If you're ready to quit, help is available. Call QuitNow at 1 877 455-2233 or visit [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca).



## CHAPTER 4 TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

The recommended daily amount of vitamin C is 90 mgs (for men) or 75 mgs (for women), with an additional 35 mgs for smokers. The recommended daily amount of vitamin E is 15 mgs for both men and women.

Good sources of vitamin C include:

- oranges and orange juice
- apple juice
- strawberries
- brussels sprouts
- red and green peppers, and
- potatoes and tomatoes.
- kiwi fruit
- broccoli

Good sources of vitamin E include:

- vegetable oils
- wheat germ
- nuts and nut butters (like peanut butter)
- sunflower seeds
- sweet potatoes, and leafy greens
- papayas and avocados

### **You can take too much!**

A multivitamin/mineral is most likely all your body needs. However, if you choose to take more vitamin C, be careful.

You should take no more than 2000 mgs of vitamin C a day.

In addition, recent studies show that vitamin E supplements do not appear to be necessary for most Canadians. You most likely get enough vitamin E through your diet.

If you do take a vitamin E supplement, make sure it is no more than 1000 mgs a day.

If you are not eating a variety of foods, or you are not sure about how well you are eating, talk with your doctor or a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) He or she may recommend a vitamin/mineral supplement.

## **Iron**

Iron helps to carry oxygen to all parts of your body so you can move and breathe efficiently. Too little iron can lead to iron-deficiency anemia, which makes you feel tired and irritable. However, too much iron can be bad for you, too.

As a senior, you should get 8 mgs of iron a day from your food. If you are a vegetarian, you should try to consume about 14.4 mgs of iron a day.

Not all iron is created equal. Your body absorbs “heme iron,” which is found in beef, organ meats (kidney, liver, heart), lamb, pork, veal, chicken, turkey and fish, better than “non-heme iron,” which is found in grains, dried beans, nuts, seeds, vegetables, fruit and eggs. But both are important sources of iron.

If you are a vegetarian, you should make an extra effort to eat lots of iron-rich foods.

Eating foods high in vitamin C, such as oranges and orange juice, can help your body absorb non-heme iron.

Do not take an iron supplement in addition to your multivitamin/mineral unless your doctor tells you to. Instead, concentrate on healthy eating. Eating a variety of foods and taking a multivitamin/mineral will, in most cases, ensure you get all the iron you need.

## **Magnesium**

Your body needs magnesium to help maintain your muscles and nerves, keep your heart rhythms steady and control your blood pressure.

Good sources of magnesium include:

- spinach
- legumes, such as beans and peas
- nuts and seeds



## CHAPTER 4 TO SUPPLEMENT OR NOT TO SUPPLEMENT

- whole grains
- meats
- fruits, and
- dairy products.

Senior men need 420 mgs of magnesium a day. Senior women require 320 mgs a day.

Some calcium supplements contain added magnesium because it was thought to help reduce the risk of hip fracture. However, this has not been proven by recent research. Healthy eating will make sure you get all the magnesium your body needs.

### **What about other supplements – herbal and botanical supplements, fibre and meal replacements, for example?**

#### **Herbal and botanical supplements**

Plants and other natural products have been used for thousands of years to maintain health and treat illness, and many are helpful. However, you should never assume that just because a health product is “natural” it is automatically “safe.”

Like conventional drugs, herbal medicines and other natural products may have potentially serious side effects or trigger allergic reactions. These supplements may also affect how your prescription drugs work.

Talk to your doctor before you take any supplements, including herbal or botanical supplements, Chinese, Ayurvedic or other traditional medicines. You should do this especially if you have a medical condition. Your doctor 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.

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, they should be used as a last resort only.

First, try changing what you eat. If that does not work, talk to your doctor about whether a laxative would be a good idea and which laxative is best for you. (See Chapter 6, What should I eat if I'm constipated? for more information.)

### **Liquid nutritional supplements**

Liquid nutritional supplements (often called meal replacement drinks) can be convenient, but they are better as a nutritious snack than as a meal.

If you think you might need a liquid nutritional supplement, talk to your doctor and then see a dietitian for a nutrition assessment. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

### **Before you have surgery**

Tell your doctor about any vitamins, minerals, herbal medicines and anything else you are taking to supplement your diet.

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

Your doctor may ask you to stop taking the supplements several weeks ahead of your surgery.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #3

### True or False?

#### 1. All seniors need a multivitamin/mineral.

**TRUE.** Look for a multivitamin/mineral intended for people over 50. There are some nutrients we might not get enough of from our food alone, especially vitamins D and B12.

#### 2. All seniors need a calcium supplement.

**FALSE.** If you are eating calcium-rich foods at every meal, you may not need to take a calcium supplement. But because many seniors do not get enough calcium or vitamin D (which helps our bodies absorb calcium), we recommend you talk to your doctor or a dietitian about your current eating habits and whether you should take a calcium supplement.

#### 3. You can never take too much vitamin C.

**FALSE.** You can usually get all the vitamin C you need by eating lots of vegetables and fruit and taking a multivitamin. If you decide to take more vitamin C, keep it to 2000 mgs or less a day. More than 2000 mgs is too much.

#### 4. Herbal supplements must be safe because they're natural.

**NOT ALWAYS.** If you are taking drugs for a medical condition, a herbal supplement may actually cause harm. Check with your doctor before taking any kind of supplement beyond a multivitamin/mineral and calcium with vitamin D.

# Chapter 5

## EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) ...

Heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), gum disease, eye problems.

What should I eat if I have ...

Arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, trouble swallowing.





## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

Following *Canada's Food Guide* (Appendix B) is a solid basis for eating well, no matter what 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.

This chapter provides general guidelines for eating right with the chronic illnesses that are most common among seniors in Canada. For more detailed information about healthy eating with these illnesses, or with an illness not covered here, please talk to your doctor and a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) Because some prescription drugs can cause you to lose important nutrients, also ask your doctor, pharmacist or a dietitian about whether you need to add any extra foods to your diet.

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) heart disease?**

Heart disease is currently Canada's number one killer.

Statistics Canada reports that a shocking 80 percent of Canadians between the ages of 20 and 59 have at least one major risk factor for heart disease. Eleven percent have three or more major risk factors. These risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, Type 2 diabetes and smoking. Research is also pointing to an association between periodontal (gum) disease and heart disease.

Drugs and surgery alone won't solve the problem. If you already have heart disease or you want to avoid it in the future, it is very important that you eat healthy foods and stay physically active, so that you maintain a healthy weight (see Appendix C to find out if your weight is healthy). You must also keep your gums and teeth healthy, and of course give up smoking.



You do not, however, have to give up all the foods you love. Instead, aim for variety and moderation – a little bit of pretty much everything – and, for a healthier heart:

## **Limit saturated and trans fats**

Your body needs some fat, but there is a big difference between “healthy” fats and “unhealthy” fats.

Saturated and trans fats are unhealthy fats. They can be particularly risky for anyone with heart disease or at danger of heart disease because they may raise cholesterol levels.

Saturated fats are mostly found in food that comes from animals, such as fatty red meat and whole milk. Trans fats come mostly from vegetable oils that have been made solid through a process called hydrogenation, such as hard margarine. (Choose soft-tub margarines that say “non-hydrogenated” on the label.) Trans fats are also found in many commercial baked goods, crackers and snacks. (Choose products that are labeled “trans-fat free.”)

Healthy fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. They are found in a variety of foods, including oily or fatty fish, canola and soybean oil, ground flaxseed and nuts. Healthy fats can actually reduce your cholesterol levels and your risk for heart disease and stroke. Remember, however, that all fats – even the healthy ones – are high in calories.

(See Chapter 3 for more about healthy and unhealthy fats and tips on how you can reduce the amount of unhealthy fat you eat. Also see Chapter 8 for tips on how you can lower the fat in your recipes and Chapter 11 for easy and tasty low-fat recipes.)

### **For more information**

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon is a good source of information about diet and its connection to heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Call 1 888 473-4636 or visit [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca).

## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS



### 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.”

### Increase your fibre

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

Good sources of fibre include:

- whole grain breads, and pastas and cereals

- brown rice, and
- vegetables and fruit.

(See Chapter 3 for more about fibre.)

### **Limit your sodium (salt)**

Sodium (salt) can raise blood pressure. Limit your intake of sodium to no more than 2300 mgs (or about one teaspoon of salt) per day from all your food. Use even less if you also have high blood pressure, kidney disease, osteoporosis or diabetes. (See Chapter 3, What about salt?, for tips on reducing salt.)

### **Limit your sugar**

Sugars are carbohydrates that can affect your blood sugar levels, your weight and the fats (triglycerides) found in your blood. You should limit the amount of sugar you eat to about six to 10 teaspoons (or about 30 to 50 grams) per day, and even less if you have high triglycerides or diabetes. (See What to eat if I have (or want to avoid) diabetes? in this chapter for more about sugar.)

### **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 three 8-ounce cups of coffee (400 to 450 mgs) a day. Tea contains much less caffeine than coffee.

Alcohol can make some heart conditions worse because it increases your blood pressure. In addition, alcohol and most heart medications don't mix and can be very dangerous. If you do choose to drink, you should have a maximum of one drink a day, which means:

- one 12-ounce (354 mL) bottle of beer
- one five-ounce (147 mL) glass of wine, or
- one-and-a-half ounces (44 mL) of hard liquor.

### **Watch out!**

If your triglyceride levels are high, talk to your doctor 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.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) high cholesterol?**

Cholesterol is a natural waxy substance found in many foods, especially meats, poultry, seafood and dairy products. Inside your bloodstream, you have carriers – called lipoproteins – that transport cholesterol around your body.

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.

If you have high LDL cholesterol, or want to avoid getting it, you need to stop smoking, maintain a healthy weight, stay physically active, and:

#### **Decrease saturated fats**

To reduce your cholesterol, reduce all fats, but especially avoid saturated and trans fats. Saturated fat increases your LDL (or “bad”) cholesterol level more than anything else.

Limit your intake of whole eggs to no more than four per week – 2 per week if you have high cholesterol, and reduce or cut out organ meats, such as liver and kidneys.

#### **Increase fibre**

The fibre found in legumes, whole grains, vegetables and fruit can “trap” the cholesterol in your blood and eliminate it from your body.

## A Healthy Plate

For a heart-healthy, low cholesterol meal (perfect for anyone with diabetes, too), cook with little or no fat and fill your plate with:

- one half colourful vegetables
- one quarter whole grain products, such as whole wheat pasta or brown rice, or a starch (potatoes or corn), and
- one quarter meat, poultry, fish, tofu or legumes.

Complete your meal with a piece of fruit or low-fat yogurt.





## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

### **Increase Omega 3 fatty acids**

Omega 3 fatty acids can help lower triglycerides. Good sources of omega 3 fatty acids include:

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

### **Eat more nuts**

Nuts are a great source of healthy fats as well as vitamins and minerals. Try to eat about one quarter of a cup (60 mL) of unroasted, unsalted pecans, peanuts, walnuts or almonds, five or more days a week.

### **Increase phytosterols**

Phytosterols are natural plant substances that can help reduce LDL cholesterol. Phytosterols can be found in:

- vegetable oils\*
- tofu and soy products (including tempeh, soy beverages, veggie burgers and veggie dogs)
- legumes (such as dried peas, beans and lentils)
- sunflower and sesame seeds\*, and
- most vegetables and fruit.

\* *While vegetable oils and seeds can lower your LDL, they are also high in fat, so eat in small amounts.*

### **Avoid alcohol**

If your triglyceride levels are high, talk to your doctor about how much alcohol is safe for you to drink.

## What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) 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.

- You have normal blood pressure if the higher number is below 130 and the lower number is below 85.
- Your blood pressure is high normal if it is between 130 over 85 and 139 over 89. You should see your doctor every year to have it re-checked.
- You have high blood pressure (also called hypertension) if it is 140 over 90 or higher.

Many people with high blood pressure can bring their blood pressure down by changing their eating and drinking habits and by adding more physical activity, while others require medication.

However, medication alone is not enough. Even if you are placed on blood pressure pills, you must still eat a healthy diet.

### Watch out!

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

But many people with high blood pressure don't even know they have it. There are no symptoms.

Make sure you check your blood pressure regularly. See your doctor or visit your local pharmacy – most have self-check machines.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

If you know you have high blood pressure or you want to prevent it, follow the advice provided earlier in this chapter for people with heart disease, especially the advice about following Canada's Food Guide, and:

- stay physically active
- maintain a healthy weight
- do not smoke, and
- limit alcohol.

In addition, you should:

### **Cut back on salt**

For people with high blood pressure, medical experts recommend 1500 to 2300 mgs of sodium per day – or about one teaspoon of salt – from all your foods. (See Chapter 3, *What about salt?*, for a chart of the sodium content in common foods and tips for reducing salt.)

### **Avoid grapefruit, grapefruit juice, pomelos and Seville oranges**

If you are taking medication for high blood pressure, these fruits can affect how your body absorbs the drug and how effective it is. You should avoid them completely.

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) diabetes?**

Nearly two million Canadians are living with diabetes right now, and an additional 2.5 million could be at risk of developing it.

Diabetes occurs when the body is not able to make or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that your body needs 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.

If your blood sugar is too high over a long period – which means 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 doctor about diabetes if you:

- are overweight, particularly if you carry most of the weight around your middle (you're an apple shape)
- are not physically active
- are of Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian or African descent
- have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- had gestational diabetes or gave birth to a baby that weighed more than nine pounds, or
- have high cholesterol, high blood pressure or heart disease.

Remember that, even with these risk factors, studies show that you can reduce your risk for developing diabetes by one half simply by being active two-and-a-half hours a week and losing five to 10 percent of your total body weight. That's just 10 to 20 pounds if you currently weigh 200 pounds.

Remember, too, that many people with diabetes have no symptoms. It's very important that you have your blood sugar levels checked by a doctor once every year.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

To help prevent diabetes follow Canada's Food Guide and be physically active.

While there is no cure for diabetes once you have it, the harmful effects can be prevented or delayed by:

- seeing a registered dietitian and following her/his eating advice which is specifically designed for you
- following the advice provided earlier in this chapter for people with heart disease and high cholesterol
- avoiding saturated and trans fats
- eating more fibre to help control blood sugar levels
- staying physically active
- keeping your gums healthy, and
- taking all medication as prescribed by your doctor.

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.

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

### **How are you feeling?**

Early diagnosis of diabetes is critical. See your doctor 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

## **Choose healthy carbohydrates**

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

You need some of these foods as a source of energy, but they can also be high in calories.

Try to choose the carbohydrates that give you the most nutrition, such as whole grain breads and cereals, vegetables and fruit and low-fat dairy products.

Limit or avoid refined starches and concentrated sweets, such as pop, candy and icing. And choose packaged foods with the smallest amount of added sugar (you must read the labels!). Sugar can be found under many words on labels. Words that end in “ose” are sugars, including sucrose, glucose and fructose.

## **Choose healthy sugar replacements**

Manufacturers use sugar alcohols to sweeten foods labeled “sugar free” or “no sugar added.” Sugar alcohols may be found in cough and cold syrups and other medications, such as antacids.

Some artificial sweeteners increase blood glucose levels. Sweeteners that do not increase blood glucose levels – if taken in moderation – include aspartame, saccharin, sucralose and cyclamate.

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

## **For more information**

The Canadian Diabetes Association has lots of good information on nutrition and diabetes.

Call 1 800 226-8464 or visit: [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca).

Your local diabetes education centre will also be able to answer all your questions. Ask your doctor to refer you to the closest centre.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

### **Drink water instead of fruit juice**

Even unsweetened fruit juices will raise your blood glucose. Limit fruit juice to a half cup (125 mL) at a time. Stick with water the rest of the time. (If you don't like plain water, try it with a lemon wedge.)

### **Talk to your doctor or dietitian about alcohol**

Alcohol can affect blood glucose levels. It can also raise triglycerides (essentially, the fat in your blood) and add calories.

Ask your doctor or 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 mixed drinks served with diet pop or soda water.

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) cancer?**

Healthy eating, regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy body weight can reduce the risk of some cancers by as much as 30 to 40 percent.

Obesity alone has been proven to increase the risk of five different types of cancer: cancer of the breast, uterus, colon, kidney and esophagus.

The latest research into the connection between nutrition and cancer reveals that fruit and vegetables are the foods most likely to help reduce the risk of cancer.

### **For more information**

The Canadian Cancer Society publishes an easy-to-read booklet called *Good Nutrition: A guide for people with cancer*. They also offer *Eat Well, Be Active*, a guide to preventing cancer through healthy eating and regular physical activity. Call 1 888 939-3333 or visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).

To reduce your risk of cancer:

- Eat at least seven servings of fruit and vegetables a day, as recommended by Canada's Food Guide. In addition to being good, healthy food, vegetables and fruit will give you lots of antioxidants and phytochemicals.

Antioxidants – such as vitamins C and E – may help to prevent some cancers by blocking some of the damage caused by free radicals, which are created when your body transforms food into energy. (See Chapter 4 for more on these vitamins.)

Phytochemicals are chemicals produced by plants that contain compounds researchers now think may protect against disease, especially cancer. (See Chapter 3, Why are vegetables and fruit so important?, for more on the foods that produce phytochemicals.)

## **Dry mouth and taste changes**

Chemotherapy and radiation can cause dry mouth and changes in 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 using 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 make food taste more interesting. You can also add a little extra sugar to lessen bitter tastes.

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



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

- Eat lots of fibre, such as whole grain products made with wheat bran, oat bran, whole wheat, oats, rye or flax.
- Limit all fats, but particularly saturated and trans fats. Choose low-fat milk, eat lean meats and prepare your food with healthy fats, such as vegetable oil or non-hydrogenated soft-tub margarine. (See What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) heart disease? in this chapter for more on fats and fibre.)
- Drink no more than one alcoholic drink a day. This means one 12-ounce (354 mL) bottle of beer, one five-ounce (147 mL) glass of wine, or one-and-a-half ounces (44 mL) of hard liquor.
- Limit your salt to no more than 2300 mgs (one teaspoon) a day from all your food. (See Chapter 3, What about salt?, for tips on easy ways to cut salt.)
- Avoid or cut down on smoked meat and meat preserved in nitrate, which is a known cancer-causing chemical. Preserved meats are also high in fat and salt.
- Avoid charring or deep browning your food. Cooking this way can produce a cancer-causing chemical called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons or acrylamide. When you are barbecuing, cook your food slowly and keep food as far as possible from the hot coals.
- Be food safe. Vegetables and fruit may contain small traces of pesticides. While experts do not consider these traces to be a health risk, it is still wise to wash all produce, throw away the outer leaves of leafy greens, peel vegetables and fruit that have skins, and scrub vegetables with edible skins, such as potatoes and carrots. (See Chapter 9 for more on food safety.)

### **If you already have cancer**

If you have cancer, following Canada's Food Guide will help you get the nutrition you need to fight back. Because everyone is different, you should also talk to your doctor and a dietitian about your particular nutritional needs. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

If you are going through chemotherapy or radiation, you may experience nausea and vomiting. You may also lose your appetite and/or experience a drop in your usual energy levels. But you must keep eating.

Even though it contradicts all the advice you've ever heard about healthy eating, follow your cravings and eat what you like. Make every mouthful count by choosing foods that are high in both protein and calories.

Eat lots of meat, fish, chicken, turkey, dairy products, nuts, nut butters and legumes, such as beans and lentils. And don't be afraid to:

- add high-fat milk products (such as whole milk, table cream or yogurt) to soups, milkshakes, cheese sauces, pancakes or scrambled eggs
- eat ice cream as a snack
- add butter or margarine on top of your potato
- add pasteurized cheese to eggs, sandwiches, potatoes, cream soups, sauces and casseroles, and
- put jam or honey on your whole wheat bread or cracker.

Also try eating small snacks and meals through the day, every one to two hours. Eat whenever you are not feeling nauseous, and exercise lightly before you eat to increase your appetite.

Avoid strong smelling foods if the smell turns you off. And keep quick, easy foods and snacks in the house that require little effort to prepare.

If you just can't eat enough to keep up your energy, try a liquid nutritional supplement. These are milkshake-like drinks that come in a variety of flavours and are available at grocery and drug stores. Talk to your dietitian about which supplement is best for you.

### **Watch out!**

If your cancer treatments cause you to vomit, rinse your mouth with water after each session to avoid damage to your teeth.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

You must also keep up your fluids. If you are a woman, try to drink about nine 8-ounce glasses (2.2 litres) of fluids each day. If you are a man, try to drink about 12 8-ounce glasses (three litres) of fluids each day.

And remember that alcohol can interfere with some medications and treatments. Please talk to your doctor about drinking alcohol while you are receiving treatments.

And, of course, be food safe. 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 9 for more on food safety.)

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) osteoporosis?**

Osteoporosis, a thinning of the bones that makes them more likely to break, affects about 1.4 million Canadians. More women than men develop osteoporosis because they lose essential hormones that protect bones after menopause, but men's bones also thin with age. In Canada, one in four women and one in eight men over age 50 has osteoporosis. The disease causes more than 88,000 hip fractures every year in this country alone.

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. And once you have broken a bone, especially a hip, it can be very hard to recover and can often lead to permanent disability.

Ask your doctor to send you for a bone density test if you are over 65 or if you are between 50 and 65 and:

#### **For more information**

To find out more about nutrition and osteoporosis, call the Osteoporosis Society of Canada at 1 800 463-6842 or visit [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca).



- your family has a history of osteoporosis
- you broke a bone recently
- you tend to fall often
- you are a woman and went through menopause early (before age 45)
- you have problems absorbing nutrients (you have celiac disease, for example, or colitis)
- you smoke
- you do not drink milk or eat milk products
- you weigh less than 125 pounds (57 kilograms), or
- you drink a lot of alcohol, coffee, tea or soft drinks.

If you have osteoporosis or you want to prevent it, take any medications ordered by your doctor, quit smoking, follow Canada's Food Guide and stay physically active. Weight-bearing activities, such as walking, running or dancing, are great for strengthening the 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.

Seniors should consume 1200 mgs 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 IUs a day.) If you already have osteoporosis or you are post-menopausal, your doctor may recommend even higher amounts of calcium and vitamin D for you.

Include lots of milk and alternatives throughout the day, like a glass of milk with each meal and a soy drink or orange juice fortified with calcium for a snack. Also try canned salmon or sardines for lunch (and eat the bones). You may also need to take a calcium supplement with vitamin D added.

We suggest you talk with your doctor or a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) They can help you determine if you are eating enough calcium and vitamin D, and whether you need a supplement. (See Chapter 4 for more about calcium and vitamin D.)



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

### **Eat foods high in potassium**

Potassium can help calcium to do its work in protecting your bones.

Try to eat foods high in potassium every day, such as bananas, oranges and orange juice, melons, kiwis, potatoes, tomatoes, milk, nuts and whole grain cereals (especially those that contain oats).

### **Eat protein everyday**

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

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

### **Limit your salt, caffeine, alcohol and soft drinks**

Experts have known for a long time that eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure, but recent research now indicates that high blood pressure can, in turn, speed up the body's loss of calcium, which could lead to osteoporosis. (See Chapter 3, What about salt?, for tips on easy ways to cut salt.)

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-ounce cups of coffee a day. Tea contains much less caffeine than coffee, so you may want to try it for a change. Green and black teas also contain polyphenols (phytochemicals produced by plants), which researchers now believe may help preserve bone health if you drink them regularly.

Both alcohol and soft drinks can be hard on bones if you drink a lot of them (for soft drinks, that's more than 21 cans a week). Limit your intake of alcohol and soft drinks to one a day or less. And remember that avoiding sugary soft drinks completely will not only reduce your risk for osteoporosis, but also lower your risk for obesity and help keep your blood sugar levels under control.

## **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) 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 a third of all Canadian seniors have GERD, with its most common side effect, heartburn.

If you think you have GERD, call your doctor. If you know you have GERD, you will need to modify your lifestyle and eating habits.

Most doctors recommend that you stop smoking, maintain a healthy weight, and take extra vitamin B12, either from a supplement or from fortified foods, and take any other medications or vitamins as directed. They also recommend that you follow Canada's Food Guide and:

- Avoid foods that might make you feel uncomfortable, such as chocolate, coffee, alcohol, peppermint, citrus fruits and juices (orange, lemon, grapefruit), tomatoes, onions, garlic and pepper.
- 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.
- Limit alcohol to one drink a day or less and caffeinated coffee and tea to a maximum of three regular cups a day.
- Avoid walking, bending or stooping immediately after eating.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

- Avoid lying down right after eating.
- Try to eat at least two to three hours before bedtime. You might also 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 doctor if your GERD gets worse. Over the long term, GERD may lead to more serious health problems.

### **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) gum disease?**

Periodontal 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 – and you may lose some of the bone that supports your teeth or even lose your teeth.

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
- drink water more often than anything else, and limit sweet drinks, like pop or sweetened fruit drinks, and
- 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
- 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, or
- your partial dentures no longer fit as well as they once did.

## **What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) 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 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.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

- Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness for those age 55 and older. It is caused when the central portion of the retina deteriorates. The retina's central portion, known as the macula, is responsible for focusing central vision in the eye. It controls your ability to read, drive a car, recognize faces or colors and see objects in fine detail.

You can reduce your risk of developing eye diseases by following Canada's Food Guide and taking a multivitamin/mineral 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, eat a minimum of 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 doctor 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 (or want to avoid) high blood pressure? and What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) diabetes? in this chapter.)

If you have already developed cataracts, they can be treated with surgery. There is no cure for either glaucoma or macular degeneration, but medication 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 different 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.

Eating well when you have any kind of arthritis can be difficult. Painful joints may make it hard to stand or cut up vegetables and prepare meals, and you may simply feel too tired. Some arthritis medications, too, can decrease your appetite and cause your stomach to feel upset. If you are taking arthritis medications, talk to your doctor about whether you need a special vitamin or mineral supplement.

Unfortunately, there is no special diet or herbal supplement that can help you avoid arthritis or cure it. Even the very popular glucosamine has not been proven to reduce the pain and stiffness of arthritis (although it will not harm you if you do take it).

### Food and arthritis

Some people think their arthritis pain is linked to the food they eat.

If you think a specific food is affecting you, it may be worth keeping 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 weeks to see what happens – but do not eliminate a whole food group! For example, rather than cutting out all grain products because you think oatmeal is affecting you, just cut out oatmeal.

Also talk to your doctor and a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

However, you may feel better if you:

- follow Canada's Food Guide
- lose any extra weight (joints affected by arthritis are already under strain, so extra weight can make your symptoms worse)
- stay physically active, even if your joints are stiff or painful (moderate activity can actually decrease the pain by strengthening the muscles around the joint – see Chapter 3, What about exercise?, for more information on physical activity)
- take a daily multivitamin/mineral for people over age 50, and
- make sure you get 1200 to 1500 mgs 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 IUs 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, can increase it.

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

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

If you have gout, you should also:

- limit or avoid organ meats, such as liver, kidneys and brains
- limit or avoid shellfish, sardines, herring, salmon, trout, mackerel, haddock, carp, herring roe, horsemeat, goose, liverwurst and porcini mushrooms
- limit alcohol to one drink a day or less, and
- drink plenty of fluids.



## For more information

In addition to your doctor, the Alzheimer Society of B.C. is a good source of information about Alzheimer's disease. Call 1 800 667-3742 or visit [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org).

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

Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that, over time, causes a person's memory, language skills and perception of time and space to decline. Eventually, people with Alzheimer's will be unable to care for themselves. Although Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging – not everyone will get it, unlike wrinkles – the risk of developing the disease increases as you grow older.

There is no conclusive evidence that any food causes Alzheimer's disease, so there is no special diet to eat to avoid it. However, if you or a person you know already has Alzheimer's, proper nutrition is vital.

Weight loss is one of the primary symptoms of Alzheimer's, because a person with it can literally forget to be hungry or forget to eat, and may even get confused if there are too many food choices or too many distractions around the table. It also may be hard for someone with Alzheimer's to use a regular knife, fork or spoon. So:

- set regular meal times and stick to them
- 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
- try cutting the food into small pieces or serve food that can be eaten with the fingers, and
- limit coffee and tea to one cup a day and alcohol to one drink a day.



## CHAPTER 5 EATING RIGHT WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

Also ask your doctor or 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 all grocery and drug stores. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) Also see Chapter 6, *What should I eat if I am underweight?*, for more on dealing with weight loss.

### **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 may find it difficult to walk and talk and possibly even think. He or she may also experience problems with swallowing (see *What should I eat if I have (or want to avoid) problems swallowing?* in this chapter) and with constipation, depression and weight loss (see Chapter 6 for information on these).

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 Canada's Food Guide and add a daily multivitamin/mineral for people over age 50. Also talk to your doctor and a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) They can give you advice about how to adjust meals to avoid problems with drug interactions as well as problems with swallowing.

## **What should I eat if I have trouble swallowing?**

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

Trouble swallowing can be caused by such things as simply 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 may not chew their food enough or may actually forget to chew.

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 doctor 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 doctor may refer you to a speech language pathologist for a full assessment.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ # 4

### Multiple Choice

**1. To reduce your chances of getting heart disease, you need to:**

- A. Avoid saturated and trans fats.
- B. Increase fibre.
- C. Limit salt, sugar, alcohol and caffeine.
- D. All of the above.

**Answer:** D. All of the above.

**2. Increasing the fibre you eat by adding more fruits, vegetables and grain products can:**

- A. Help lower blood cholesterol levels.
- B. Control blood sugar levels.
- C. Help with weight control.
- D. All of the above.

**Answer:** D. All of the above.

**3. According to Canada's Food Guide, one serving of steak is:**

- A. A 10-ounce steak.
- B. An eight-ounce steak.
- C. A six-ounce steak.
- D. A 2.5-ounce steak.

**Answer:** D. One serving of cooked meat, fish, shellfish and poultry is two-and-a-half ounces (75 g) or half a cup (125 mL).

# Chapter 6

## NO BODY'S PERFECT

What should I eat if I am ...

Overweight, underweight, constipated, depressed, anemic, or allergic to certain foods.





## CHAPTER 6

### NO BODY'S PERFECT

Your body changes as you age. These changes can affect your mental and physical health, as well as your weight, in ways you never expected.

Canada's Food Guide (Appendix B) is a solid basis for eating well as you age. It is also the foundation for preventing or dealing with some of the problems associated with age, such as putting on weight, losing weight and dealing with constipation, depression and anemia.

This chapter provides general guidelines only. For more detailed information, talk to your doctor and a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

### **What should I eat if I am overweight?**

A healthy weight is key to healthy aging. Yet research shows that seniors are more likely to be overweight or obese than younger adults, for a variety of reasons.

You might put on weight because:

- You consume too many calories. You may be eating out a lot, eating servings that are too large, snacking too often on high-fat foods or consuming drinks that contain a lot of sugar.
- You are not active enough and inactive people are more likely to carry more body fat. You may be inactive because you have a chronic illness or because your medications make you feel tired, or because you simply feel that now is your time to relax.
- You are losing muscle and gaining fat as your metabolism slows down. As you move toward 60, the amount of muscle in your body will naturally drop. By age 70, a typical woman has lost about 11 pounds of muscle and a typical man has lost about 26 pounds. Because muscle helps burn calories, you will find that it's harder to burn off what you eat. At the same

time, your body needs fewer calories the older you get, even if you are active. (Strength training is key to preventing further muscle loss.)

- You eat to help cope with your emotions or problems in your day-to-day life, or because you're sad or lonely, angry or bored. As a senior, you may have lost some of the people you love and, if you have a medical problem as well, life can get very difficult. As a result, you may turn to your comfort foods, which tend to be higher in fat and sugar, instead of talking to a friend or going for a walk.

See Appendix C for two easy methods to tell if your weight is healthy: the body mass index and the waist circumference test.

If these tests indicate that you are overweight, talk to your doctor and a dietitian. Your doctor can help assess whether your weight gain is due to factors other than eating too much, such as your medications or fluid retention. A dietitian can help you develop a plan for eating that is tailored to you – to what you like to eat, your age and activity level. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

If you decide you need to change your weight, keep the following in mind:

### **Be realistic**

Losing weight is not easy and it takes time, so don't expect miracles. A crash diet may work for the short term, but the weight will come back almost immediately. A weight loss of about half-a-pound a week or two pounds a month is healthy and realistic.

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

A realistic goal for you may be to simply hold the line and maintain your weight where it is now, rather than to lose weight.

Try to make just one simple but healthy change at a time, like switching to one percent milk or walking to the corner store instead of driving.



## CHAPTER 6

### NO BODY'S PERFECT

#### **Variety is key**

If you eat a variety of different foods, you won't feel bored or deprived and you are more likely to get all the nutrients you need.

Try to include at least three of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (vegetables and fruit, grains, milk and milk alternatives, meat and meat alternatives) at every meal. Your snacks should be healthy, too.

#### **Eat breakfast**

Eating breakfast is one of the most important things you can do to lose weight.

During the night, your metabolism slows down. Eating a balanced breakfast – such as high-fibre cereal, fruit and milk – helps to kick-start your body in the morning and it will burn fuel more efficiently throughout the day.

#### **Plan your meals around high-fibre foods**

You will feel less hungry if you eat more vegetables, fruit, legumes (such as beans, lentils and chickpeas), and whole grains. Always eat three meals a day. When you skip meals, you tend to eat more at the next meal or snack too often.

#### **Watch your fats**

Because you need some fat to stay healthy, make sure you choose healthy fats instead of unhealthy fats.

#### **Just a few calories less a day ...**

To maintain your weight, you need to burn up as many calories as you take in. Just a few extra calories a day can tip the balance.

For example, an extra 100 calories a day adds up to 10 pounds of extra weight by the end of a year. That's a slice of bread and margarine, one scoop of ice cream or one can of pop a day.

But if you can cut out those extra calories, or do more to burn them up, there's no reason you can't maintain your weight or even lose a few pounds.



Unhealthy fats are saturated and trans fats. Healthy fats include monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. They can actually reduce your cholesterol levels and your risk for heart disease and stroke. Healthy fats are found in vegetable oils, fish, nuts and seeds; however, because nuts and seeds are also high in calories, eat them in small amounts.

(See Chapter 3 for more about healthy and unhealthy fats and tips on reducing fat.)

### **Clear out your cupboards**

Make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Make sure you only have healthy food choices in your cupboards and your fridge. If it's not there, you won't eat it.

Fresh fruit, hard-boiled eggs, cut-up veggies and canned tuna are all great foods to keep around. So are dried fruits, such as raisins or cranberries, but eat them in small amounts.

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 low-fat, great taste recipes we've included in Chapter 11.

### **Control 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 Food Guide serving for each of the four major food groups.

For example, one serving of fresh vegetables equals a half a cup (125 mL) of broccoli, one serving of grains equals a half a cup (125 mL) of brown rice or pasta, one serving of meat is two-and-a-half ounces (75 g) of lean beef, and so on.

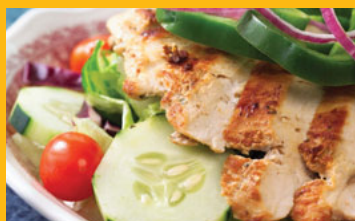
### **Choose your fluids wisely**

What you drink can be just as important as what you eat. Just one soft drink a day can add up to 10 pounds a year.

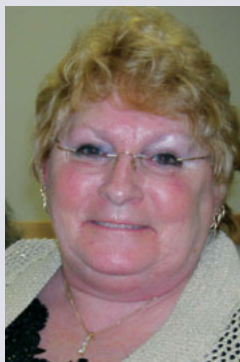
Regular soft drinks, fruit juice and alcohol are all high in calories (soft drinks, especially, can also contribute to tooth decay). Even coffee and tea can be full of calories if you add sugar, cream or whole milk. And fancy coffees, such as flavoured lattes and cappuccinos, can be as calorie-rich as a slice of cake.

## CHAPTER 6

### NO BODY'S PERFECT



#### All of a sudden



A couple of years ago, Beth Descoteux of Penticton, B.C., was working 60 to 80 hours a week, with no time to cook or eat properly – until she got one of the biggest shocks of her life.

“All of a sudden, you’re 270 pounds,” she says, “and you don’t even know how it happened.”

Now 59, Beth realized that something had to change. She cut back on her hours – she works only 40 hours a week today – and she completely changed her lifestyle. “I had to learn to make the time to eat properly and to exercise, and it’s the best thing I’ve ever done,” says Beth.

Now 220 pounds, Beth “does nothing to excess. I wanted a way of eating that I could follow for years, not a fad diet,” she says. “No quick meals, unless it’s veggies, less meat, lots of fruit, small portions. The result is that I’ve lost weight without being conscious I’m dieting – and it’s made a tremendous difference. I feel better all the time. Even my fibromyalgia is better.”

#### Watch out!

If you have lost a significant amount of weight in the last three to six months, see your doctor right away.

Remember: experts now recommend that women drink about nine 8-ounce glasses (2.2 litres) of fluids and men about 12 8-ounce glasses (three litres) of fluid a day. (See Chapter 3 for more about fluids and their role in your good health.)

### **Move your body**

Eating is pleasurable, but other things can be just as fun, like walking around the neighbourhood after dinner or playing a game with your grandchildren.

If you plan to change your weight, how you do it is important. You do not want to lose muscle or bone mass, because these are vital for all your daily activities – like carrying in the groceries or picking up a grandchild.

Follow a weight-loss program that includes 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 3, *Where does exercise fit?*, for more information.)

### **Be of good cheer**

Losing just a little weight can make a huge difference. For example, just losing five to 10 percent of your body weight – that's just 10 to 20 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds – can significantly reduce your risk of diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure. Weight loss can also help you manage these diseases better and make you feel more energetic.

### **What should I eat if I am underweight?**

Being underweight can be just as dangerous as being overweight. Being underweight can cause:

- poor memory and confusion
- a decrease in the body's ability to resist food-borne illnesses (see Chapter 9), colds, the flu and pneumonia
- osteoporosis (bone loss)
- decreased muscle strength and the ability to do simple things like walk or sit up straight, and
- hypothermia (low body temperature)



## CHAPTER 6

### NO BODY'S PERFECT

You, like many people, may lose weight as you age. This happens for a variety of reasons. You may simply not want to cook any more, or you may feel too tired to shop or prepare food, or you may be on a restricted income that does not allow for enough healthy food. You may also be depressed or lonely, which can lead to poor appetite, or you may be finding it difficult to chew or swallow. 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 help you determine whether you weigh less than you should, see Appendix C for the body mass index chart. If you are underweight, talk to your doctor and dietitian about healthy ways to gain weight. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

To gain weight, try also to:

#### **Consume more calories**

You need to eat more, but make sure the extra calories you add come from healthy foods.

Add high-calorie snacks between meals. For example, spread peanut butter on whole wheat toast or crackers or on sliced apple or banana. Try mixing milk, low-fat milk powder, frozen yogurt and bananas or strawberries in a blender for a high-protein, high-carbohydrate drink. Or have a bowl of cereal with milk and raisins.

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!

To add calories to meals, sprinkle nuts or wheat germ on yogurt, fruit or cereal; add extra egg whites to scrambled eggs and omelettes; and 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.

Eat as much meat, fish, chicken, turkey, milk and milk alternatives, nuts and nut butters, legumes (such as beans and lentils) and soy foods (such as tofu) as you can.

### **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, dill seeds, basil, ginger, coriander and onion, to make your food more interesting.

### **Drink fluids between meals, rather than with them**

Fluids such as water, tea, coffee or juice can make you feel full faster if you drink them with your meals. 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.

### **Get out and move**

Physical activity stimulates the appetite, lessens depression and strengthens bones and muscles.

### **Check into Meals on Wheels**

Most communities have a Meals on Wheels or other meal delivery service. If you just cannot prepare healthy meals for yourself any more, call them. Your doctor will have the number, or look in your local telephone book for the number of your local health authority. They can tell you about local services.

There are also a number of healthy frozen meals available at your local grocery store. (See Chapter 7 for information on convenience foods and reading labels to make sure you make healthy choices.)



## CHAPTER 6 NO BODY'S PERFECT

### What should I eat if I am constipated?

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

Constipation takes different forms with different people. You may experience it as having no bowel movement for several days, or having stools that are hard to pass, or not feeling like you are able 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 or hemorrhoids.

### If you have diverticulosis

Sometimes, especially in seniors, constipation can lead to diverticulosis. 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, and
- enjoy nuts or seeds as part of a healthy diet according to Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.

Also talk to your doctor or a dietitian. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.) Diverticulosis can become diverticulitis, and you may need a special diet.

If you are constipated:

- Eat more fibre. Eat at least six (for women) or seven (for men) servings of whole grain breads, cereals and other grain products a day. Vegetables, fruit, beans, lentils and chickpeas are also great sources of fibre. Just remember to add fibre slowly, to avoid any problems with gas or cramps. (See Chapter 3 for more fibre tips.)
- Drink more fluids. If you are a woman, try to drink about nine 8-ounce glasses (2.2 litres) of fluids each day; if you are a man, aim for about 12 8-ounce glasses (3 litres) of fluids a day. Sources include water, vegetable and fruit juices, milk, yogurt drinks, soups and coffee and tea (a maximum of three 8-ounce cups of caffeinated coffee a day).
- If eating more fibre and drinking more fluids does not 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 11.
- Do not use a fibre supplement or store-bought laxative right away. First, try changing your diet. If that does not work, talk to your doctor about whether a laxative would be a good idea and which laxative is best for you (always choose a bulk-forming laxative containing psyllium).

### **Watch out!**

See your doctor if you:

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

## **What should I eat if I am depressed?**

Depression is a serious illness that affects as many as 15 of every 100 adults over age 65. It can be triggered by a number of factors, including having an illness such as heart disease, cancer, stroke or arthritis, or grief at the loss of a spouse or a friend. The most important thing to remember, though, is that depression is treatable.

The 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. They may also include loss of appetite and weight loss.



## CHAPTER 6 NO BODY'S PERFECT

If you are feeling depressed, or you think someone else is, get yourself or your friend to a doctor as soon as possible.

Your doctor may prescribe treatment with drugs or therapy. If your depression is causing you to lose weight, your doctor 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.)

### **What should I eat if I am anemic?**

Anemia is a blood condition caused by not having enough red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen in the blood to the body's tissues. People who are anemic do not get enough oxygen delivered to their body tissues and they tend to feel tired, dizzy or short of breath.

Anemia is caused most often 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 these conditions, talk to your doctor about how these drugs may be affecting the way your body absorbs key nutrients.

It is also important to talk to your doctor if you think you are anemic. Your doctor will be able to determine why you are anemic and the best way to treat your particular type of anemia.

If, after a blood test, your doctor says you are anemic, what you eat can make a big difference. Try to:

### **Add more B vitamins if you are low in folate or vitamin B12**

Eat lots of foods fortified with vitamin B12, such as some veggie



meats or fortified soy beverages, or take a multivitamin/mineral for age 50 plus that includes B12.

Also increase the amount of folate (another type of B vitamin) in your diet by eating more beans, lentils, dark green leafy vegetables, fruit and fruit juices, nuts and seeds. And take a multivitamin/mineral with folic acid.

### **Take an iron supplement**

Take an iron supplement if your doctor recommends it, but otherwise concentrate on healthy eating. (See Chapter 4 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 next page), rather than true food allergies. Only about two percent of adults have true food allergies.

An allergy is a hypersensitive reaction to something in the environment.

People with food allergies develop a chain reaction of chemical changes that cause swelling and irritation in certain parts of the body and can even be fatal.

True food allergies are very serious; most are to nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, soy, wheat or milk.

If you are truly allergic to food, you've probably known about it since you were a child. That's when you discovered you couldn't eat certain foods and most likely you have been avoiding these foods all of your life. You will usually not become allergic to foods later in life. However, if you do develop what you think is an allergy to food later in life, talk to your doctor. Your doctor may refer you to a dietitian. It is important to find out what foods, if any, are causing your problems and how to avoid them if necessary.

### **Watch out!**

Call 911 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.



## CHAPTER 6

### NO BODY'S PERFECT

#### **Food intolerance**

Many people have lactose intolerance, which causes gas, bloating, cramps and diarrhea after drinking milk or eating milk products. People who have lactose intolerance produce too little lactase (the enzyme that digests lactose, the sugar in milk).

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 foods.

There are no simple tests to determine most food intolerances. If you suspect that you have a food intolerance, consult with your doctor or a dietitian before you stop eating certain foods for good. (Try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC. See the back cover for contact information.)

If it turns out that you do have a food intolerance, you may not have to stop eating the foods that bother you entirely. You may just have to change or cut down on how much of them you eat. For example, if you have a mild lactose intolerance:

- eat small amounts of milk products, or try them with snacks or meals
- eat yogurts made with active cultures (enzymes that digest the lactose in milk)
- drink milk with reduced lactose, or
- try enzyme tablets (such as Lactaid®) that will digest the lactose for you.

If you have a severe lactose intolerance, read food labels carefully and look for non-dairy sources of calcium. You may also need to talk to your doctor or a dietitian about calcium and vitamin D supplements. (See Chapter 4 for more information on supplements.)

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #5

### True or False?

**1. I'm too old to lose weight.**

**False.** You are never too old to lose weight through healthy eating and regular physical activity.

**2. It's okay to skip breakfast if I'm trying to lose weight.**

**False.** Eating breakfast is one of the most important things you can do to lose weight. Eating a healthy, balanced breakfast helps your body burn fuel more efficiently throughout the day.

**3. Skipping lunch or dinner will help me lose weight.**

**False.** When you skip meals, you tend to eat more at the next meal or snack too often.

**4. Being underweight is healthier than being overweight.**

**False.** Being underweight can cause a variety of health problems, including confusion, low resistance to colds and influenzas, and osteoporosis (bone loss).

# Chapter 7

## FROM SOUP TO NUTS

Is there an easy way to plan, shop for and cook healthy meals?

What about convenience foods like frozen dinners and canned soups – are they healthy?

Do I really need to read food labels?

How can I eat healthy meals when I'm on a tight budget?





## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

Many seniors find that they simply do not want to cook anymore, especially if they are living and eating alone. Others find it difficult to get out to shop for food, while still others would rather just skip eating than take the time to prepare a healthy meal.

This chapter is devoted to the idea that making and eating healthy food does not have to be difficult, time consuming or expensive.

### **Is there an easy way to plan, shop for and cook healthy meals?**

Preparing good food will always take some time, but here are a few tips to make planning and cooking healthy meals a bit easier:

#### **Plan ahead**

- Start by deciding on the essential supplies that you should always have in your kitchen. Take a look at What things should I always have in my kitchen? in Chapter 8. This is a list of basic, healthy foods we recommend you have in your kitchen all the time. (You will also need these items to prepare the recipes in Chapter 11.)
- Try to build your meals with food from all four food groups recommended in Canada's Food Guide (Appendix B). Vegetables and fruit should always make up at least half your meal, but also include grains for energy and fibre, a small amount of meat or meat alternatives and low-fat dairy products for protein. And check out our one-week meal plan (Appendix A). Based on Canada's Food Guide, this plan lays out menus for one week's worth of healthy meals and snacks.



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

- Take a little time to think about what you want to eat for the next week and make a list of possible meals. Don't forget to take a look at what's in your fridge and freezer and try to use up what you have first, before buying fresh. Also check the weekly food specials at your local grocery store for good buys. Add what you really need to your grocery list.
- Consider making at least one meal a week that you can break into smaller portions and freeze for another day, such as a casserole, soup, chili or stew.

### **Make it easy on yourself**

- Buy and use canned or frozen vegetables and fruit (you don't have to clean or chop them). You receive the same health benefits from canned, frozen or dried 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. Just make sure that your canned fruit is packed in water or juice, rather than in syrup.
- Use bagged, pre-washed greens and pre-cut vegetables. Always remember though: you should still wash the greens again at home, even if they are pre-washed.
- Visit the deli for items like lean turkey and lean roast beef or barbecue chicken. Remember to trim off the fat and skin from chicken.
- Many grocery stores offer free delivery for seniors if you have a reasonably large order, 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.

## Leftover tips

- Add leftover cooked vegetables to a pasta sauce, tossed salad, casserole, soup, omelette or stir fry.
- Use leftover fruit as a tasty topping for your breakfast cereal, whole grain pancakes or waffles, yogurt or tossed salad. Or blend your leftover fruit with some milk and yogurt for a healthy fruit smoothie.
- Add leftover meat to a casserole, salad, pasta sauce or soup or use it in a sandwich.
- If you've got extra cooked ground beef, freeze it to use another day for chili or stuffed peppers.
- Add leftover pasta to a salad, soup or casserole.
- Use leftover rice for rice pudding or throw it into soups or casseroles.
- Leftover bread makes great croutons for salads or grind it up to coat chicken or fish.
- Leftover spaghetti and meat sauce easily becomes a great chili if you add kidney beans, chopped vegetables and chili seasoning.
- To ensure your food remains safe to eat, reheat leftovers once only.



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

### 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."



## When it's time to cook

- Try cooking with a friend for company, but remember that eating alone can be just as enjoyable as eating with others. You can cook what you want to eat and eat where and when you want. Sit near a window where you can watch the birds or perhaps 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.
- Prepare complete meals when you have the most energy. This may mean having your main meal at noon, with just a bowl of soup and whole grain crackers and cheese for dinner.
- Use a blender, chopper or food processor to make chopping your vegetables fast and easy.
- Prepare a little bit extra every time. The next day, you can add your leftover vegetables to your salad or leftover chicken to your sandwich. (See Chapter 9 for information about handling leftovers.)
- Clean up and put things away while your food cooks, so you won't have as much to do later.

## Cook the easy way

It does not have to take a lot of time or a lot of work to make a healthy meal. For example:

- Add a hard-boiled egg or tin of tuna, plus leftover or frozen vegetables, to macaroni and cheese. Complete your meal with a glass of milk.
- Add tofu cubes to cooked noodles, stir in leftover or frozen vegetables and bake. Serve with low-fat yogurt for dessert.

## Two cooking ideas

Consider starting up a community kitchen with a group of friends or neighbours. You meet to plan, shop and prepare several meals together at one time. Then everyone gets to take home an equal share of the meals to freeze for another day.

Or how about a healthy eating club, where once a week one member hosts the club and makes the soup or an entrée? The others bring a salad, bread or fruit.



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

### Shopping and cooking for one or two

It's hard to 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 you are freezing too many portions of the same thing and it's boring to keep eating it! Some ideas:

- Look for recipes intended for one or two (like the ones in Chapter 11), or revise larger recipes for four or six by cutting them in half.
- Keep bread in the freezer, well wrapped. Take out one or two slices at a time. It will last up to three months in the freezer.
- 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 wheat pasta, dried fruit and nuts. Store bulk foods in sealed plastic or glass containers.
- Buy three pieces of fruit at a time, so you don't waste any. One ripe, one medium ripe and one unripe. Eat the ripe one right away.
- Replace your big, family-style cooking utensils with smaller pots, ovenproof dishes and baking pans. Your food will cook more quickly and the clean up will be easier.
- 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.

- Mix an egg into lean ground beef and form into a burger, pan fry and serve with a cheese slice in a whole wheat bun. Have fruit for dessert.
- Scramble two eggs with a little low fat milk, add some chopped up vegetables, top with grated, low-fat cheese and serve with whole wheat toast.
- Stir fry some vegetables and black beans in a pan, add a little grated cheese, then serve with a whole wheat bun.
- Sauté onions and garlic with a tin of beans. Add your favourite Indian spices and serve over brown rice.
- Add a can of beans to a canned low-fat, low-salt vegetable soup and serve with brown rice and fruit.
- Buy pre-made hamburger or veggie burger patties and serve on a whole wheat bun with a salad and a glass of milk.
- Buy or make hummus (a chickpea dip), spread it on whole wheat pitas and serve with a salad and fruit.
- Take leftover dahl (lentils) or sabji (a vegetable dish) and spread them on a whole wheat tortilla or wrap, instead of a traditional roti or chapatti.

### **Skip the cooking occasionally**

Not all meals require cooking.

Why not try:

- Peanut butter on whole wheat bread, with a glass of milk.
- Cottage cheese and fruit, with a whole grain muffin or toast and margarine.
- Canned low-fat, low-salt vegetable soup, with whole wheat crackers and yogurt for dessert.

### **If pain or stiffness makes it hard for you to cook**

Ask your doctor to refer you to an occupational therapist who can help you make adjustments and suggest special cooking utensils.

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



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

- Yogurt mixed with granola and fruit.
- Green salad and a whole wheat bun, with cheese slices or canned tuna and an apple.
- Canned baked beans, with whole wheat bread, fruit and a glass of milk.

### **What about convenience foods like frozen dinners and canned soups – are they healthy?**

Everyone resorts to convenience foods every once in a while. The key is to make sure it really is only every once in a while.

Manufacturers of convenience foods have traditionally filled their products with fats, salt, sugars and additives to make them taste good and to make them last longer on the shelf or in your freezer. However, manufacturers are now paying attention to increasing consumer concerns about food and its effect on health.

There has been a big improvement in the nutritional quality of some convenience foods. For example, some canned fish now contains much less salt, and you can now buy low-salt tomato juice, soy sauce and bouillon cubes. In addition, many baked goods, such as crackers and cookies, are now made without trans fats, and you can now find low-fat all-in-one frozen dinners, as well as healthy canned soups.

In addition, new food labeling regulations require manufacturers to show the ingredients and selected food values of their products. But you have to read the labels and you have to keep in mind your special health concerns.

Just remember, too: convenience foods are usually more expensive than making your own meals. And by making your own meals, you control what goes into them.

If you do decide to have a convenience food for lunch or dinner, make sure the rest of your food for the day is truly healthy – low in fat, sugar and salt and high in fibre.

## **Do I really need to read food labels?**

Yes, you really do need to read food labels. You need to know what you are eating, especially if you have an illness such as heart disease or diabetes, or you simply want to eat healthier.

Packaged food – food that comes in a box, can, bag, plastic container or heat-sealed wrap – has a lot of important information printed on the label. But you might want to take a pocket magnifier with you to the store: the labels are small!

## **Nutrition claims**

Many packaged foods will have nutrition claims on the label, such as “low in fat,” “salt-free,” “high in fibre,” “no sugar added” or “an excellent source of vitamin C and E.”

These claims tell you about the nutrients inside the package and must, by Canadian law, meet strict standards. For example, for something to be labeled “low in fat,” it must contain no more than three grams of fat per serving. To be “high in fibre,” the product must contain at least four grams of dietary fibre per serving.

You should watch out, however, for claims that say things like “less salt” or “lower in salt or sodium than our regular product.” The product will, indeed, have less salt than the regular product, but if the regular product was very high in salt to begin with, the salt content may not be low enough for someone on a reduced salt diet.

## **For more on food labels**

The Canadian Diabetes Association and Dietitians of Canada have joined together to help consumers learn how to use the nutrition information on the labels of packaged foods to make healthy choices. Call 1 800 665-6526 or visit [www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca](http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca) and click on Virtual Grocery Store.



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

### **Ingredient list**

The ingredient list tells you what ingredients are in a packaged food. The first ingredient on the list is what the package contains the most of. The rest of the list goes in descending order, to what the package contains the least of.

For example, on a loaf of bread, you might see whole wheat flour followed by enriched white flour, rye flour and yeast. That means there is more whole wheat flour than white flour (which is good, although all whole wheat flour would be even better) and more white flour than rye flour or yeast.

### **Nutrition Facts label**

The Nutrition Facts label tells you:

1. The amount of food analyzed here. If you eat the amount listed here (in this example, 125 mL or half a cup), you will eat the amount of calories and receive the amount of nutrients listed on the label. If you eat double that amount (250 mL or one cup), you will eat double the calories and so on.
2. The number of calories in this amount of food. The label tells you how many calories (80 in this example) are in the amount analyzed. If you eat twice as much as the amount analyzed, you will eat 160 calories.
3. Percent daily value of each nutrient. The percent daily value tells you how much of a nutrient is in the amount analyzed, as a percentage of how much of this nutrient you should get in one day. It tells you whether you are getting a little or a lot of a nutrient.

That sounds complicated, but it really isn't. For example, this label tells you that the product contains 1% daily value of fat. That's one percent of all the fat you should eat in a day – so

that's not very much. It also says the product contains 0% saturated and trans fats and that's even better. That means whatever fat is in this product comes from monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fat, the healthy fats. (See Chapter 3 for more about healthy and unhealthy fats.)

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Per 125 mL (87 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 80	
<b>Fat</b> 0.5 g	1 %
Saturates 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 0 mg	0 %
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 18 g	6 %
Fibre 2 g	8 %
Sugars 2 g	
<b>Protein</b> 3 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

This label also says that the product has 10% daily value of vitamin C, so if you are looking for something to boost your vitamin C consumption, this is good for you. (See Chapter 4 for more about essential vitamins.)



## CHAPTER 7 FROM SOUP TO NUTS

### **How can I eat healthy meals when I'm on a tight budget?**

If you are on a tight budget, you may want to stay away from convenience foods. They can cost more than cooking from scratch. Here are some other tips:

#### **Shopping**

- Some grocery stores offer discount days for seniors.
- Store brands are often cheaper than major brands, but always check the stickers. Also check the unit price of each item (the price per gram or kilogram, for example). You may find that the bigger sizes are not always the best buy.
- Buy from the bulk food bins. These bins let you choose exactly how much you want, so you won't waste food. Bulk items are also usually cheaper, but check the unit price to be sure.
- Top grade items may look better, but they have no more nutritional value than lower grade ones.
- 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.
- Buy smaller portions so that food will not go bad before you eat it. If you can't find them, ask the store manager to bring them in.
- Check grocery store flyers and newspaper ads and plan your meals around the items that are on sale.

#### **Grains**

- Buy grains, such as brown rice, in bulk or on sale.
- Buy dry whole grain pasta on sale – it will store well for a long time. Plain pasta shapes like macaroni and spaghetti are cheaper than fancy shapes.
- Many bakeries and grocery stores discount their breads and rolls at the end of the day. Buy a couple of loaves or a dozen



rolls then, and freeze. Bread freezes up to three months. Remember that whole grain breads, such as 100 percent whole wheat, stone-ground whole wheat, cracked wheat or oatmeal, are healthier than white bread.

- Whole grain cereal, such as rolled oats, is cheaper and better for you than sugary, refined cereals.

### **Vegetables and fruit**

- Buying local vegetables and fruit that are in season is much less expensive than buying imported vegetables and fruit. Or pick your own fruits and berries in season and freeze.
- Canned and frozen vegetables and fruit are just as healthy as fresh and they are cheaper than out-of-season fresh vegetables and fruit. Buy canned fruit packed in water or juice. Remember that sliced canned fruit is a better buy than whole or halves.
- Buy fresh fruit and vegetables in amounts you can use before they go bad. Buy five carrots or three apples if that is all you need.
- Grow your own vegetables in a container garden.
- Plain, bagged frozen vegetables are half the cost – and lower in fat and salt – than vegetables that are boxed and packaged with added sauces.
- Frozen orange juice concentrate is a better buy than juice in a carton. Be sure to buy the unsweetened kind.

### **Milk products**

- Buy milk in large (4 L) recyclable plastic jugs – it's cheaper than buying it in smaller jugs. If you can't drink that much before its "best before" date, however, smaller cartons (one or two litres) are cheaper than the smaller plastic jugs.
- Buy cheese in blocks that you can slice or grate as you need it.
- Buy plain, no-name, low-fat yogurt and add fruit yourself. Larger containers are cheaper than single serving sizes.



## CHAPTER 7

### FROM SOUP TO NUTS

#### **Meat and alternatives**

- Buy cheaper and leaner cuts of meat, such as blade, chuck, flank, or rump roast. Marinate or slow cook these in broth or tomato juice to make them tender.
- Cook with dried or canned beans and lentils more often than meat. They are not only cheaper than meat, but also lower in fat and are a good source of fibre.
- Buy a whole chicken instead of individually wrapped pieces. It's cheaper and you can cut it up the way you like it.
- Plain frozen fish and canned tuna and salmon are inexpensive alternatives to fresh fish and just as healthy.
- Cold cuts from the deli counter are cheaper than pre-packaged brand-name products. Choose those that are less salty, such as plain roast beef or turkey, rather than processed ham or bologna.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #6

### True or False?

- 1. Nutrition Facts boxes on packaged food are too complicated to understand and I don't really need to read them.**

**False.** Nutrition Facts boxes are really quite simple if you take a little time. They also provide you with very important information. See this chapter for more information.

- 2. I should never eat frozen dinners or canned soup.**

**False.** Everyone deserves a night off from cooking now and then. Just make sure you read the labels carefully and pick frozen dinners or canned soups that are low in salt and low in fat.

- 3. I always have to cook an elaborate meal to make sure it's healthy.**

**False.** There are many ways to eat a healthy meal with little or no cooking. See our "skip the cooking occasionally" tips in this chapter.

- 4. Fresh vegetables and fruit are expensive.**

**False.** Vegetables and fruit can be expensive if you are buying them out of season, when they have to be imported from elsewhere. Vegetables and fruit in season are much less expensive, especially if they come from local farms.

# Chapter 8

## IN THE KITCHEN

Is one method of cooking better than another?

What things should I always have in my kitchen?

What utensils do I need?

How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?

Can I eat out and still eat healthy food?





## CHAPTER 8 IN THE KITCHEN

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.

In this chapter, we provide advice on how to cook healthy food as well as what to keep in your kitchen cupboards, fridge and drawers at all times to make sure you continue to eat well. Because we know everyone needs a break from the kitchen now and then, we've also included a section on healthy eating at restaurants.

### **Is one method of cooking better than another?**

Frying food is really the only cooking method that is unhealthy.

Grilling, steaming, stir frying, baking, microwaving, broiling and roasting are all healthy ways to cook both meat and vegetables. Barbecuing is also a good way to maintain both flavour and nutrients.

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. Cooking with little or no fat is always the healthiest way to cook.

### **What things should I always have in my kitchen?**

Every now and then, you may not feel well or the weather may be bad and you just cannot get out to the grocery store. It is a good idea to have some staples on hand, so you can always eat good, nutritious food.

To make sure you are able to cook healthy, tasty and simple meals and snacks at any time (including the recipes in Chapter 11), keep your cupboards, fridge and freezer stocked with healthy options.

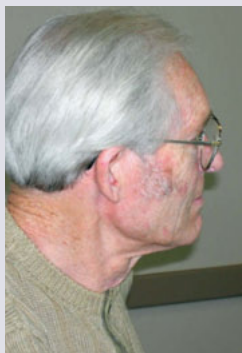


## CHAPTER 8 IN THE KITCHEN

### In your cupboards, keep:

- canned tuna and salmon, packed in water
- canned or dried kidney and black beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas
- peanut butter (buy a brand that has 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 grain cereals, including rolled oats and barley
- whole wheat 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, low-salt tomato or V8® juice
- 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 (enriched white, whole wheat, besan, soy or millet)
- brown sugar
- honey
- condiments, such as salsa, mustard, low-sodium soy sauce
- herbs and spices, such as basil, chili powder, cinnamon, cloves, curry powder, dill, garlic powder, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, red pepper flakes, thyme
- tea and coffee.

## More salmon, less meat



Abe Koop now lives in Abbotsford, B.C., but he was brought up on a farm. “My folks liked their meat and potatoes,” he says, “which was no problem for them, because they worked really hard. But I became a teacher, which just isn’t the same.”

Abe thought he was eating pretty well, though, and even getting enough exercise, until one day in May 2002. He went out to mow the lawn for the first time since winter ended and found that he had to sit down after just two turns.

“I discovered that even with low cholesterol, you could have a heart condition,” says Abe, now 73. “One artery was 90 percent clogged and one was 50 percent clogged. They did an angioplasty, put me on some medications, I changed my diet, increased my exercise – and I haven’t had a symptom since.”

Today, Abe’s job is to grill salmon at least once a week. “My wife is a wonderful cook, so I don’t get into the kitchen much except to clean up. But I do use the barbecue all year round. In the winter, I just haul it out to the edge of the garage. We had fish very seldom before, but now we’ve gotten into the habit – and we love it.”



## CHAPTER 8 IN THE KITCHEN

### **In your freezer, keep:**

- frozen vegetables
- frozen fruit, including blueberries and mixed berries
- frozen fish, turkey or chicken, and
- whole grain sliced bread, buns, bagels, flatbread, roti and pitas.

### **In your fridge, keep:**

- low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt
- eggs
- ready-to-eat vegetables
- ready-to-eat salad greens
- low-fat, low-salt salad dressing, and
- tofu.

### **What utensils do I need?**

It doesn't take a lot of fancy equipment to cook healthy meals, including all the recipes in Chapter 11. You just need:

- two cutting boards (see Chapter 9 on food safety for why you should have two boards)
- three pots: one 1/2-quart (or litre), one 1-quart (or litre) and one 3-quart (or litre)
- two non-stick frying pans: one small and one large
- a blender
- two mixing bowls: one small and one large
- two casserole dishes, oven proof and microwave proof: one small and one medium
- assorted containers that can go from fridge to freezer to microwave
- a 12-cup muffin tin
- a loaf pan
- a baking sheet or large metal cake tin



- a two-cup measuring container
- a strainer
- a vegetable peeler
- one set of small measuring cups
- one set of measuring spoons
- a whisk
- a grater
- a steamer that fits inside saucepans
- two spatulas: one rubber to clean out bowls, one egg turner
- a paring knife
- a small chopping knife
- a large cook's knife
- a can opener (an electric can opener can be easier on arthritic hands)
- a slotted spoon
- a mixing spoon
- a potato masher
- a pair of tongs, and
- two pot holders or oven gloves.

## **How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?**

There are many easy ways to modify your favourite recipes to be lower in fat, salt and sugar. You can also easily increase the fibre. Experiment a bit to find what tastes best to you.

### **To reduce fat**

- For baking, use about one-quarter less 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 vegetable oil instead. (However, do not substitute oil for margarine or shortening when



## CHAPTER 8 IN THE KITCHEN

making cookies. Oil will make the cookies feel and taste greasy and is likely to change both texture and volume.) If your recipe tastes really flat, use a very small amount of butter for a flavour boost.

- 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 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 low-fat sour cream, cheese, mayonnaise and yogurt instead of regular products. Or, instead of sour cream, substitute buttermilk or low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt.
- Make yogurt cheese by draining fat-free plain yogurt overnight. Use it in recipes calling for cream cheese.
- Replace the fat in your baking recipes with an equal amount of applesauce, mashed bananas, pureed prunes, pureed pumpkin or grated zucchini. (You may need to add a little water or skim milk to all of these but the applesauce.)
- Use two egg whites for one egg to reduce both saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Always choose lean red meats and trim off the excess fat. Trim the fat and skin from chicken and turkey.

### **Save 44 grams of fat!**

1 cup sour cream = 495 calories = 48 grams total fat.

But:

1 cup low-fat yogurt = 145 calories = 4 grams total fat.

### **To reduce salt**

- 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. Also try the recipe for Universal Seasoning in Chapter 11.
- Choose fresh or frozen food to use in your recipes.
- Avoid using processed cheese and processed, cured or smoked meats, such as sausage, hot dogs, ham, bacon, pepperoni and smoked fish.
- Avoid using pickles, pickled foods, relishes, dips and olives and prepared salad dressings. Use salsa and oyster or soy sauce, even low-sodium soy sauce, in small amounts.

### **To reduce sugar**

- Cut the sugar in your baked goods by one-quarter to one-third and replace the sugar with flour. Your cookies and muffins will still taste the same. However, 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 make them taste sweeter.
- Avoid using sweet sauces in your recipes, such as sweet plum 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, oatmeal and whole cornmeal in your recipes. You can substitute whole wheat flour for up to one-half of all-purpose flour without changing the taste.



## CHAPTER 8 IN THE KITCHEN

### **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 to ask your server about how the food is prepared. Also:

- To start your meal, choose vegetable soup or salad. Have the dressing on the side, so that you can add just a little bit.
- Instead of fries, ask for steamed rice, baked potato with sour cream on the side or extra vegetables.
- Look for entrées that are steamed, baked, broiled, braised, poached or grilled. Avoid anything 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 tomorrow.
- Choose tomato instead of cream sauce for your pasta and sauces without cream for your curry. If you're choosing pizza, avoid pepperoni, sausage and bacon. Consider asking for half the normal cheese, and extra vegetable toppings. Try a whole wheat crust.
- When at a salad bar, choose lots of vegetables and top with low-fat or non-fat dressing.
- Order fresh fruit, sorbet or frozen yogurt for dessert. Avoid ice cream, sherbet pie and dessert soups such as red bean. South Asian sweets, such as barfi, gulab jaman and jalabi are high calorie choices that you should avoid. Order your chai made with low-fat milk.
- Consider having your coffee or tea and dessert at home, where you know you have healthy choices available.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ #7

### True or False?

**1. Eating out is impossible if I'm watching fat and calories.**

**False.** You can eat out and still eat a healthy meal, if you just follow a few simple rules: no fried foods, lots of vegetables, skip the butter and sauce, opt for small portions and take the extra home for another day.

**2. My favourite recipes won't taste the same if I reduce the fat, salt and sugar.**

**False.** We bet you will not even be able to taste the difference if you follow the tips in this chapter, or that you will come to like your recipes even more, because you know they are better for you.

**3. I need lots and lots of equipment to make healthy meals, like a food processor and a juicer and all those other things they advertise on TV.**

**False.** You can make great tasting, very healthy food with regular kitchen appliances and utensils and a few pots and pans. The only real "extra" we recommend here is a blender to make fruit smoothies. You may also want to consider a small countertop grill or a toaster oven to make cooking small items quick and easy.

# Chapter 9

## FOOD SAFETY

What is a food-borne illness?

How can I help prevent food-borne illness?

How do I keep food safe in a power failure?





## CHAPTER 9 FOOD SAFETY

Health Canada estimates that there are 11 to 13 million cases of food-borne illness in Canada every year.

You may 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.

Everyone is different, but if you are like most people, your immune system will grow weaker with age and you will not be as good at fighting illnesses as you used to be. You may have less stomach acid, which helps to keep the bacteria in your intestines under control. You may also already have a chronic illness, such as diabetes, cancer or kidney disease, which makes you even more vulnerable 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 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, chicken and turkey, seafood, eggs, vegetables and fruit, milk and milk products may all carry the germs responsible for food-borne illnesses. When you handle these foods, you may also transfer the germs to other foods, as well as to your kitchen counters, cutting boards or utensils.



## CHAPTER 9 FOOD SAFETY

### **How can I prevent food-borne illness?**

As you age, your immune system weakens, which means you should avoid foods that carry a higher risk of contamination. These include:

- unpasteurized cheeses (feta, Brie and Camembert)
- raw or unpasteurized cow or goat milk or foods made from unpasteurized milk
- 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, and
- raw or lightly cooked eggs, including uncooked cake or cookie batter (no licking the spoon!), salad dressings and sauces made with eggs.

#### **At the grocery store:**

Pick up all foods that must be refrigerated or frozen 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 will have enough time to eat what you buy. For example, do not buy a big container of yogurt that expires in two days, if you don’t think you will be able to eat it all in that time. And remember: throw out all food items after they expire, even canned and packaged food.



## As soon as you get home

Refrigerate or freeze:

- perishable foods (foods with a limited shelf life, such as milk and other dairy products, vegetables, meat and poultry)
- prepared foods that say “keep refrigerated” or “keep frozen” on the package, and
- restaurant leftovers.

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 or paper towel.

### After handling food

Wash everything – your hands, your 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, once you cut the skin off the raw chicken, wash everything before you chop the broccoli.

## Food safety tips

- Keep two cutting boards (wood or plastic). 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 one tsp (5 mL) of household bleach to three cups (750 mL) 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.



## CHAPTER 9

### FOOD SAFETY

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 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 fruit and vegetables. 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 two hours.

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 about 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

#### **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).

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!

Throw out any perishable or leftover food that has been sitting at room temperature for longer than two hours. If your hard cheese becomes mouldy on the outside, carefully cut off the mould and 1 inch (2.5 cm) away from the mould. Cutting off just the mould is not enough! And, use the cheese as soon as possible.

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.

### **Thawing food from the freezer**

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

### **Watch out!**

Do not put plastic containers, such as margarine tubs, in the microwave. As the container heats, some unhealthy chemicals can transfer into your food. Use containers labeled "microwave safe" only.



## CHAPTER 9

### FOOD SAFETY

- In the refrigerator. It will usually take about five hours to thaw one pound (500 grams) of meat or poultry.
- In a microwave. Follow your microwave's directions for thawing food and cook the food immediately after you have thawed it. Never microwave plastic wrap or foam containers.
- Under cold water. Keep the food in its original wrapping or container and change the water every half hour to make sure it stays cold.

#### **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 three days.

Reheat leftovers once only. Throw out what's left.

#### **Cooking food**

Heat food thoroughly to at least 140°F (60°C). Leftovers should be heated to an even higher temperature, at least 165°F (74°C).

Use a food thermometer – available at any grocery or hardware store – to make sure your cooked food really is 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?**

Two hours is the safety margin. If your power is out for less than two hours, the food in your refrigerator or freezer will be fine, provided your refrigerator and freezer are set properly. Make sure your refrigerator is set at 40°F (4°C) or colder and your freezer at 0°F (-18°C). Appliance thermometers are available at all grocery and hardware stores.

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.

Once the power goes out, open your fridge and freezer doors as seldom as possible. If the power stays out more than two hours or the temperature in your fridge is higher than 40°F (4°C), throw out all perishable food, such as meat, fish, poultry, milk, eggs and leftovers. If you are in the middle of cooking at the time of the power failure, throw out all the partially cooked food.

# Healthy Eating

## QUIZ # 8

### Short Answer

**1. How many cutting boards should you have?**

**TWO:** one for raw meat, poultry and seafood, and the other for everything else.

**2. How long should you wash your hands in warm soapy water before and after handling food?**

**20 SECONDS.**

**3. Do you need to use detergent or bleach to clean fresh vegetables and fruit?**

**NO.** Plain water is all you need.

**4. How soon should you put leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer?**

**WITHIN TWO HOURS.** After more than two hours, throw it out!

# Chapter 10

## INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST

How do I know I'm getting reliable information?

Where can I find reliable information?

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





## CHAPTER 10 INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST

**You see them everywhere:** ads for this miracle diet – “You can lose 10 pounds in 10 days!” – or that complete cure – “No more arthritis pain, ever!” But how do you know these products will really work? Whose advice should you take?

On questions of health or physical activity, always see your doctor first. On questions of nutrition and healthy eating, talk to a dietitian – see the back cover for contact information.

For tried, tested and true advice on healthy eating and creating a healthy lifestyle, you can also rely on Canada’s Food Guide (Appendix B) and the organizations listed in this chapter.

### **How do I know I am getting reliable information?**

Unproven remedies give people false hope and may even be dangerous, either because they 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 or not 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 you have to start them as soon as possible.



## CHAPTER 10 INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST

- Drinking a particular type of juice, eating a low-protein diet or embarking on treatments that claim to “cure” cancer may be harmful, especially if you delay starting on treatments that are proven to work.
- There is no cure for most types of arthritis. However, 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 doctor about what is proven to work.
- Losing weight takes work and it takes time. It is not safe to lose more than about half a pound a week, and it will be harder to keep the weight off if you lose it too quickly without also making changes in your lifestyle, such as adding regular physical activity. It’s also not safe to follow a low-carbohydrate or a 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 doctor, a registered dietitian, 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 be made up.

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

### Check it out

Before you try a health-related product, talk to your doctor, dietitian or pharmacist for a medical opinion or contact Health Canada’s Natural Health Products Directorate at 1 888 774-5555.



## **Where can I find reliable information?**

### **All health issues**

The HealthLink BC provides reliable health information and advice you can trust. The service includes:

- The BC HealthGuide handbook provides information on how to recognize and cope with common health concerns, including tips on home treatment, care options and when to see a health professional. You can find topics relevant to older adults throughout this book, including information on healthy aging and tips for caregivers. Sections of particular interest to seniors are marked with an icon. To get a free copy of the BC HealthGuide handbook, visit your local pharmacy or Government Agents Office or call Nursing Services at HealthLink BC.
- BC HealthFiles are fact sheets with BC-specific information on a wide range of public and environmental health and safety issues. Copies are available at [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) or at public health units. Some BC HealthFiles have been translated into other languages including Chinese, Punjabi and French.
- Nursing Services at HealthLink BC provides confidential health information and advice. You can speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and a pharmacist from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. every day. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

**Call Nursing Services at HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1.  
For deaf or hearing-impaired assistance (TTY), call 7-1-1.  
Or visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian).**



## CHAPTER 10 INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST

- Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC specializes in easy-to-use nutrition information for self-care, based on current scientific sources. Registered dietitians can provide brief nutrition consultation by phone. If you need more in-depth counselling, they will guide you to hospital outpatient dietitians, community nutritionists or other nutrition services in your community. This service does not replace the medical counsel of your doctor. Translation services are available in 130 languages.

**Call Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1.  
For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY), call 7-1-1.  
Or visit [www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca/dietitian).**

In addition:

- The Alzheimer Society of B.C. can answer your questions about Alzheimer's disease. Call 1 800 667-3742 or visit [www.alzheimerbc.org](http://www.alzheimerbc.org).
- For information about arthritis, call the Arthritis Society of Canada's Arthritis Answer Line at 1 800 321-1433 or visit [www.arthritis.ca/bc](http://www.arthritis.ca/bc).
- For information about preventing or living with cancer, call the Canadian Cancer Society at 1 888 939-3333 or visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).
- For help with alcohol or drug use, try 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.

- If you're ready to quit smoking, call QuitNow at 1 877 455-2233 or visit [www.quitnow.ca](http://www.quitnow.ca).
- *Living a Healthy Life With Chronic Conditions* is a free six-week course offered in a variety of locations throughout British Columbia. Call 1 866 902-3767 or visit [www.coag.uvic.ca/cdsmp](http://www.coag.uvic.ca/cdsmp) and click on your area of the province for the course nearest you.

## Healthy eating

Canada's Food Guide is a great source of information on healthy eating (see Appendix B). You might also want to try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (see previous page). In addition:

- Dietitians of Canada offers reliable advice and terrific recipes. Visit [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca).
- The Canadian Cancer Society publishes an easy-to-read booklet called *Good Nutrition: A guide for people with cancer*. They also publish *Eat Well, Be Active*, a guide to preventing cancer through healthy eating and exercise, along with a variety of other publications. Call 1 888 939-3333 or visit [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca).
- The Canadian Diabetes Association has lots of good information on nutrition and diabetes. Call 1 800 226-8464 or visit [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca). Many communities also have excellent local diabetes education programs. Ask your doctor for a referral.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon can help with any 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. Call 1 888 473-4636 or visit [www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca).
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada operates Health Check™, the national not-for-profit food information program. Health Check provides consumers with a quick visual reference (a logo) on restaurant menus and food packaging. The logo guarantees the food has met specific nutrition criteria based on Canada's Food Guide. Visit [www.healthcheck.org](http://www.healthcheck.org).



HEART &  
STROKE  
FOUNDATION  
FONDATION  
DES MALADIES  
DU CŒUR



## CHAPTER 10 INFORMATION YOU CAN TRUST

- The Osteoporosis Society of Canada has a number of easy-to-use resources that will help you figure out how much calcium you are receiving from your current diet. Call 1 800 463-6842 or go to [www.osteoporosis.ca](http://www.osteoporosis.ca).
- The B.C. Aboriginal Network on Disability Society publishes guides to healthy eating with traditional Aboriginal foods. To order, call 1 888 815-5511 or visit [www.bcands.bc.ca](http://www.bcands.bc.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. Visit [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

### **Exercise**

Before starting any physical activity program, consult your doctor. If your doctor says you are ready, 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:

- Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology at 1 877 651-3755 or visit [www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca)
- B.C. Recreation and Parks Association at 1 866 929-0965 or visit [www.bcrpa.bc.ca](http://www.bcrpa.bc.ca), or
- B.C. Association of Kinesiologists at 1 604 601-5100 or visit [www.bcak.bc.ca](http://www.bcak.bc.ca).

Also read the Public Health Agency of Canada's free guide, *Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults*. To order your copy, call 1 888 334-9769 or visit [www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com).

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

The titles “registered dietitian,” “professional dietitian” and “dietitian” are protected by law in all Canadian provinces. Only people who have met national standards for education and training can use these titles. A dietitian will have at least a bachelor's degree (and many will have a master's or a doctorate) with a specialty in foods and nutrition. All dietitians in British Columbia are registered with the College of Dietitians of BC and listed in the college's public registry at [www.collegeofdietitiansbc.org](http://www.collegeofdietitiansbc.org).

The title “nutritionist” is not protected by law in all provinces, which means anybody could use the title even if they are not formally trained in foods and nutrition. However, many dietitians also call themselves nutritionists. Ask if your nutritionist is a registered dietitian.

A dietitian can:

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

To find a dietitian:

- try Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (see back cover)
- visit the Dietitians of Canada website at [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
- ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian
- call your local public health department, or
- look in the Yellow Pages under dietitians.

# Chapter 11

## FAST AND EASY RECIPES

### **Breakfast**

- Sunny Orange Shake
- Pumpkin Raisin Muffins
- Fruit Lax

### **Lunch or dinner**

- Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup
- Spinach Salad with Orange Sesame Dressing
- Broccoli Salad
- Tuna Garden
- 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
- Indian Curry Sauté
- Spinach Frittata
- Sweet and Sour Chicken and Vegetable Casserole
- Beef, Vegetable and Pasta Casserole

### **Desserts**

- Quick Fruit Compote
- Berry Cobbler
- Fresh Fruit and Nut Desserts

### **Extras**

- Universal Seasoning
- Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing





## CHAPTER 11

### FAST AND EASY RECIPES

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

These recipes feature lots of vegetables and fruit, as well as whole grains for fibre. They are also low in fat, salt and sugar – which means they are good for anyone, but especially those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Some recipes are also high in milk and milk alternatives for a calcium boost.

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

Most are also 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.

We have calculated the nutrients in each recipe using Health Canada's *Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods*. All ingredients are easy to find at your local grocery store. 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 the B.C. seniors who helped us plan this handbook. Others we have adapted for smaller quantities or simpler cooking from cookbooks written by dietitians.

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 8 for ideas.

## BREAKFAST AND SNACKS





## RECIPES **SUNNY ORANGE SHAKE**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 278

PROTEIN: 11 G

FAT: 2 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 51 G

FIBRE: 0.4 G

SODIUM: 151 MGS

CALCIUM: 355 MGS

**MAKES: 1¼ CUPS (300 mL)**

**SERVES: 1**

**PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 10 MINUTES**

**THIS IS A SMOOTH**, calcium-rich shake that tastes wonderfully fresh. Enjoy it by itself or with a whole grain bagel or a Pumpkin Raisin Muffin (see recipe next page) for breakfast. It also makes a good snack or you could have it instead of fruit and milk to complete a meal.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

¾ cup (175 mL) low-fat vanilla yogurt

2 tbsp (25 mL) skim milk powder

½ cup (125 mL) orange juice

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

Combine ingredients together in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve right away.

***Thanks to Dietitians of Canada, Cook Great Food, 2001, published by Robert Rose.***

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### **VARIATIONS**

Use milk instead of orange juice and add ½ cup (125 mL) frozen blueberries. Or try with blended juices, such as orange/pineapple or orange/apricot.

## RECIPES PUMPKIN RAISIN MUFFINS

### PER MUFFIN:

CALORIES: 195

PROTEIN: 4 G

FAT: 6 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 33 G

FIBRE: 2.3 G

SODIUM: 132 MGS

CALCIUM: 65 MGS

**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

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) sugar

2 tsp (10 mL) baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp (2 mL) baking soda

$1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp (7 mL) cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp (2 mL) nutmeg

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp (2 mL) powdered ginger

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) raisins

$\frac{1}{2}$  14 oz (200 mL) can pumpkin puree (not pie filling)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 mL) vegetable oil

1 cup (250 mL) buttermilk or sour milk

2 eggs



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a large bowl, combine flours, sugar, spices, baking powder, baking soda 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.

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

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### **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: 75

PROTEIN: 0.6 G

FAT: 0

CARBOHYDRATE: 20 G

FIBRE: 1.7 G

SODIUM: 2 MGS

CALCIUM: 12 MGS

**MAKES: 2½ CUPS (625 ML)**

**SERVES: 25 PORTIONS OF 2 TBSP (25 ML) EACH**

**PREPARATION TIME: 10 MINUTES**

**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 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

½ 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.

***Thanks to Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.***

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**VARIATION**

For even more fibre, add

1 cup of natural wheat bran to the fruit mixture.

## LUNCH AND DINNER



## RECIPES HERBED LENTIL AND BARLEY SOUP

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 202

PROTEIN: 8 G

FAT: 7 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 25 G

FIBRE: 5.2 G

SODIUM: 287 MGS

CALCIUM: 78 MGS

**SERVES: 4**

**PREPARATION TIME: 30 MINUTES**

**COOKING TIME: 1½ HOURS**

**THIS SOUP IS EASY**, healthy, colourful, delicious, and almost as thick as a stew. It's a great source of fibre and protein, which makes it especially good for vegetarians. It is also inexpensive and freezes well. You can serve it with a slice of whole wheat bread, a small green salad and low-fat yogurt or fruit for dessert.

### INGREDIENTS:

2 tbsp (25 mL) vegetable oil (canola)

½ medium onion, chopped

1 clove garlic

½ medium carrot, finely chopped

1 tbsp (15 mL) parsley flakes (or 2 tbsp fresh)

½ cup (125 mL) green or brown lentils

2½ cups (625 mL) water

1 tsp (5 mL) dried oregano

1 tsp (5 mL) dried thyme

½ tsp (2 mL) dried sage

¼ cup (60 mL) pearl barley

14 oz (398 mL) tin chopped tomatoes, with juice

Lemon slices (optional)

Universal Seasoning (see page 183) to taste



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat.
2. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and lightly browned.
3. Add garlic, carrots and parsley.
4. Cover and cook over low heat until carrots are tender.
5. Add lentils, water, oregano, thyme, sage, barley and tomatoes.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook (partially covered) until the lentils are tender, about 1½ hours. If the soup is too thick, add more water.
7. Season and garnish with lemon slices.

***Thanks to Mohinder Sidhu of Vancouver, B.C.***

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### **OUR RECOMMENDATION**

Lentils come in three colours: red, green and brown. All are very high in fibre and folic acid (also called folate, a B vitamin).

We recommend green or brown lentils for this recipe because they hold their shape better when cooked.

## RECIPES **SPINACH SALAD WITH ORANGE SESAME DRESSING**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 82

PROTEIN: 2 G

FAT: 5 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 7 G

FIBRE: 2 G

SODIUM: 36 MGS

CALCIUM: 62 MGS

### **SERVES: 2**

### **PREPARATION TIME: 20 TO 30 MINUTES**

**THIS SALAD** is a nice change from lettuce and tomatoes and much less expensive in the winter months. Spinach and oranges are both rich in fibre and folate, as well as vitamins A and C. Serve this salad with a piece of baked fish, a side dish of brown rice and a glass of low-fat milk for a complete meal. Have a piece of fruit for dessert. If you are saving a portion for the next day, save the dressing separately.

### **SALAD INGREDIENTS:**

2 cups (500 mL) chopped fresh spinach

1 orange

1 tbsp (15 mL) chopped red or green onion

### **DRESSING INGREDIENTS:**

1½ tsp (7 mL) olive oil or canola oil

½ tsp (2 mL) sesame oil (optional)

¼ tsp (1 mL) honey or sugar

1 pinch powdered ginger

1 pinch pepper

½ tsp (2 mL) orange rind

1 tbsp (15 mL) orange juice

1 tsp (5 mL) sesame seeds, toasted





### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Wash and dry spinach. Tear or chop it into bite-sized pieces and place in a serving bowl.
2. Finely grate a small amount of peel from the orange and put it in a small jar or cup.
3. Peel the orange, slice it into bite-sized pieces and add it to the spinach. Add chopped onion.
4. Make the dressing by adding all remaining ingredients to the orange rind in jar or cup. Shake or whisk together.
5. When ready to serve, pour dressing on top of the spinach and orange slices and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

***Thanks to Trudi Stevenson of Courtenay, B.C.***

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### **VARIATION**

In strawberry season, use 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries instead of the orange and do not use the orange rind. Substitute 1 tbsp red wine vinegar for the orange juice and 1 tsp poppy seeds for the sesame seeds.

## RECIPES **BROCCOLI SALAD**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 115

PROTEIN: 4 G

FAT: 5 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 14 G

FIBRE: 2.5 G

SODIUM: 192 MGS

CALCIUM: 47 MGS

**SERVES: 2, APPROXIMATELY 1 CUP (250 ML) EACH**

**PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**EASY, DELICIOUS** and so nutritious! Any leftovers will keep well in the refrigerator for one day.

### **SALAD INGREDIENTS:**

1 cup (250 mL) finely chopped broccoli

¼ cup (60 mL) finely chopped red or yellow pepper

1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped green or red onion

2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped dried apricots (or raisins)

2 tbsp (25 mL) sunflower seeds, unsalted, plain

1 tbsp (15 mL) bacon bits (optional)

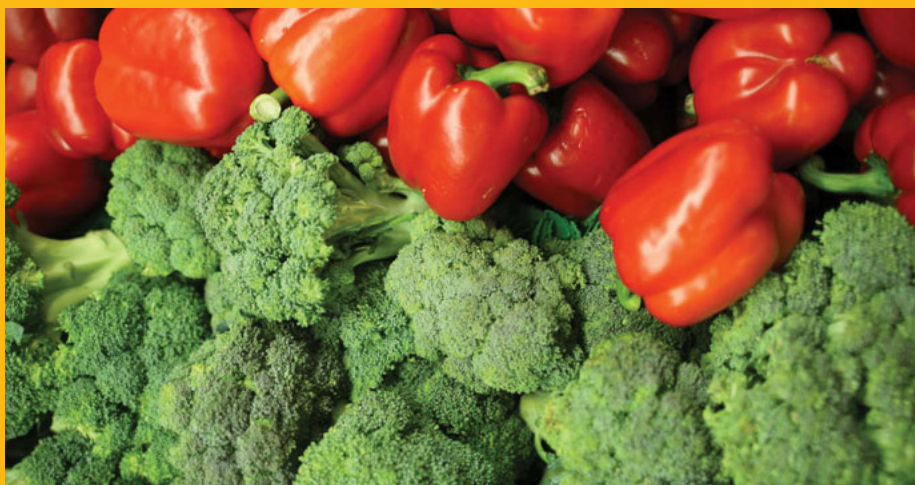
### **DRESSING INGREDIENTS:**

1 tbsp (15 mL) light miracle whip or mayonnaise

1 tbsp (15 mL) plain low fat yogurt

1½ tsp (7 mL) vinegar

1 tsp (5 mL) sugar



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Mix all salad ingredients together in a small bowl.
2. Mix ingredients for dressing in a jar or cup.
3. Pour dressing over top of broccoli mixture and toss lightly.

***Thanks to Trudi Stevenson of Courtenay, B.C.***

(We made Trudi's original recipe a little leaner and simpler by using bacon bits instead of real chopped bacon.)

**PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 330

PROTEIN: 25 G

FAT: 6 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 33 G

FIBRE: 4.3 G

SODIUM: 266 MGS

CALCIUM: 86 MGS

**SERVES: 2**

**PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 30 MINUTES**

**THIS IS A HEALTHIER VERSION** of the old standby, tuna noodle casserole. It's high in protein and fibre and low in salt and fat. Serve the casserole with a salad, a small dish of fruit and a glass of milk. You can't freeze this dish, but it will keep well in the refrigerator for one day.

**INGREDIENTS:**

2 large sliced mushrooms

1/3 cup (75 mL) sliced onion

2 tsp (10 mL) vegetable oil

1 - 6½ oz (170 g) tin canned tuna, chunk, water packed

2/3 cup (150 mL) water

¼ cube (3 g) low-sodium bouillon cube

2 tsp (10 mL) flour

2 tsp (10 mL) lemon juice

2 tsp (10 mL) chopped pimento (optional)

½ tsp (2 mL) grated lemon rind (optional)

½ tsp (2 mL) thyme

1 pinch garlic powder

1 pinch pepper

1 pinch Universal Seasoning (see page 183)

1 medium sliced carrot

1 stalk chopped broccoli

2/3 cup (150 mL) macaroni or other pasta



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Cook macaroni or pasta following the directions on the package, while preparing sauce and vegetables.
2. Cook onions and mushrooms in oil in a medium non-stick frying pan on medium heat for about five minutes or until tender.
3. Stir in drained tuna.
4. In a small bowl, combine water, bouillon cube, lemon juice, flour, pimento, lemon rind and seasonings.
5. Stir into tuna mixture and cook for about five minutes until slightly thickened.
6. Steam carrots and broccoli until tender-crisp. Drain and add to tuna mixture.
7. Add previously cooked macaroni or pasta to tuna and vegetable mixture.
8. Stir everything together and heat.

***Thanks to The Canadian Dietetic Association,  
Eat Well, Live Well, 1990, published by MacMillan of Canada.***

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### **VARIATIONS**

For a different taste, try canned salmon or clams instead of tuna. Substitute 1½ cups (375 mL) of cooked mixed frozen vegetables for fresh vegetables.

**PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 252

PROTEIN: 12 G

FAT: 7 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 33 G

FIBRE: 3.4 G

SODIUM: 308 MGS

CALCIUM: 236 MGS

**SERVES: 1**

**PREPARATION AND COOKING**

**TIME: 25 MINUTES**

**QUESADILLA** 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)

¼ cup (60 mL) shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese

¾ cup (175 mL) cooked vegetables (use leftovers if you have them)

Cooked meat (optional)

Sliced olives or sun dried tomatoes (optional)

**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.



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

***Thanks to Georgina Lawlor of Penticton, B.C.***

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### **SUGGESTED VEGETABLES**

Asparagus, broccoli, yams, red peppers, carrots, mushrooms and/or onions.

## RECIPES TOFU STIR FRY

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 291

PROTEIN: 21 G

FAT: 13 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 25 G

FIBRE: 5.2 G

SODIUM: 406 MGS

CALCIUM: 274 MGS

### 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  $\frac{3}{4}$  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) ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cake) 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

1 tsp (5 mL) grated fresh ginger (optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$  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 ½ inch (1 cm) cubes and toss in a bowl with soy sauce and brown sugar.
2. Chop vegetables.
3. Heat oil in heavy skillet or frying pan, add onion, garlic and ginger and stir fry. Toss gently for about four minutes.
4. Add chopped vegetables and stir fry another four to five minutes until almost cooked. Turn heat down.
5. Dissolve cornstarch in cold water, then add to stir fry.
6. Add the tofu cubes and heat through, approximately three to four more minutes.

***Adapted from*** The Senior Chef ***and Dietitians of***  
***Canada cookbooks.***

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## **VEGETABLE SUGGESTIONS**

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 Tabasco sauce
  - ½ tsp sesame oil
  - ½ tsp Universal Seasoning (see page 183)
  - toasted sesame seeds
  - a squeeze of fresh lemon
- and toss.
- 

## **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.

## RECIPES **QUICK STEAMED FISH FILLETS WITH POTATOES AND ASPARAGUS**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 183

PROTEIN: 25 G

FAT: 3 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 15 G

FIBRE: 2.5 G

SODIUM: 110 MGS

CALCIUM: 78 MGS

### **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:**

½ cup (125 mL) small new potatoes, quartered

½ cup (125 mL) asparagus or green beans, cut into two-inch pieces

1- 4 oz (125 g) fish fillet

2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh tomatoes

¼ tsp (1 mL) dried basil

black pepper to taste

½ tsp (2 mL) non-hydrogenated soft-tub margarine or butter

½ tsp (2 mL) lemon juice

Universal Seasoning (see page 183) 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.
3. Place fish fillet on top of asparagus.
4. Top with chopped tomatoes and sprinkle with basil and pepper.
5. Cover and steam for five to six minutes until fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
6. Dot with margarine, cover and steam for 30 seconds more.
7. Sprinkle with lemon juice and a dash of Universal Seasoning.

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

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### **SUGGESTION**

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.

## RECIPES SKILLET PORK CHOPS WITH SWEET POTATOES AND COUSCOUS

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 389

PROTEIN: 22 G

FAT: 13 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 44 G

FIBRE: 3.5 G

SODIUM: 154 MGS

CALCIUM: 49 MGS

### 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 our Spinach and Orange Salad) and a glass of milk. This meal tastes great the next day, too.

### INGREDIENTS:

2 boneless pork loin chops

1 tsp (5 mL) vegetable oil

1 cube (11 g) low-sodium vegetable bouillon base

½ cup (125 mL) water

¼ cup (60 mL) chopped onion

¼ cup (60 mL) chopped celery

1 cup (250 mL) diced sweet potato, yam or carrots

½ tsp (2 mL) dried rosemary or dried sage

½ cup (125 mL) orange juice or apple juice

2 tbsp (25 mL) dried cranberries or raisins or chopped apple

½ 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  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of boiling water. Set aside.
3. Put chopped onions and celery in skillet and cook for three minutes.
4. Add chopped 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.

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

## RECIPES **MEATLOAF AT ITS VERY BEST**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 255

PROTEIN: 20 G

FAT: 11 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 15 G

FIBRE: 1.4 G

SODIUM: 225 MGS

CALCIUM: 143 MGS

**SERVES: 3**

**PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**COOKING TIME: 30 TO 40 MINUTES**

**THIS OLD-FASHIONED MEATLOAF** is delicious – and even tastier if you add shredded cheese. Serve it with a baked potato and our broccoli 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.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

½ pound (220 g) lean ground beef

½ cup (125 mL) low-fat milk (skim or 1%)

1 egg

¼ cup (60 mL) rolled oats (regular or quick cooking)

2 tbsp (30 mL) chopped onion

¼ cup (60 mL) grated carrot

¼ cup (60 mL) low-fat shredded cheddar cheese

### **TOPPING:**

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),

***Thanks to Linda Quilty of Vancouver, B.C.***

(We cut this recipe down and revised it slightly to make it even healthier.)

## RECIPES **INDIAN CURRY SAUTÉ**

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 271

PROTEIN: 7 G

FAT: 9 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 42 G

FIBRE: APPROX. 8 G

SODIUM: 336 MGS

CALCIUM: 85 MGS

### SERVES: 1

**PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 40 MINUTES – 30 MINUTES TO GET EVERYTHING CHOPPED AND IN THE POT, AND ANOTHER 10 MINUTES TO FINISH COOKING.**

**THIS IS A VERY LIGHT CURRY**, full of healthy vegetables, fruit and fibre. Serve it with brown rice or couscous. The recipe can be doubled, but we do not recommend freezing it. Instead, save it in the fridge for the next day.

### INGREDIENTS:

2/3 cup (150 mL) finely diced carrots

1/3 cup (75 mL) finely diced celery

1/3 cup (75 mL) finely diced apples

1/3 cup (75 mL) finely diced onions

1 tsp (5 mL) curry powder

1 tsp (5 mL) canola oil

¼ cup (60 mL) water

¼ low-sodium bouillon cube

1/3 cup (75 mL) chickpeas

2 tsp (10 mL) toasted sliced almonds

---

### VARIATION

Use black beans, pinto beans, diced cooked chicken or diced cooked beef instead of chickpeas.





### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Dice vegetables.
2. In heavy skillet (fry pan), heat oil, add vegetables and cook over medium high heat for two to three minutes.
3. Dissolve the  $\frac{1}{4}$  bouillon cube in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water, and add to the vegetables with the chickpeas. Cook to desired tenderness.
4. Top with toasted almonds.

***Adapted from Eileen Faughey's***

Quick Flip to Delicious Dinners, **1999**.

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### **HELPFUL HINTS**

If you use canned chickpeas, drain off the liquid in the can and rinse beans well under cold water to remove some of the salt.

You can save canned chickpeas in the refrigerator and add them to a salad for extra protein and fibre. Or you could use them to make hummus in your blender – or, for a quick lunch, combine them with cooked vegetables and wrap the whole mixture in a soft whole wheat tortilla.

## RECIPES **SPINACH FRITTATA**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 362

PROTEIN: 23 G

FAT: 14 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 19 G

FIBRE: 3.8 G

SODIUM: 562 MGS

CALCIUM: 316 MGS

### **SERVES: 1**

### **PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**SERVE THIS FRITTATA** with a slice of whole wheat toast, a glass of milk and fruit for dessert.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

2 eggs

1½ tsp (7 mL) water

½ tsp (2 mL) olive oil

2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped onion

¼ tsp (1 mL) minced garlic

1 cup (250 mL) chopped spinach or Swiss chard, packed

¼ 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.

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

## RECIPES **SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE CASSEROLE**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 235

PROTEIN: 23 G

FAT: 6 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 23 G

FIBRE: 2.9 G

SODIUM: 467 MGS

CALCIUM: 77 MGS

**SERVES: 3**

**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:**

2 halves boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1 cup (250 mL) water

1 tbsp (15 mL) vegetable oil

½ cup (125 mL) chopped carrots

½ cup (125 mL) chopped celery

½ 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. Cut chicken into cubes. Place 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. While chicken is cooking, use a fresh cutting board to chop vegetables.
4. In a heavy skillet (fry pan) or heavy large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add chopped vegetables and garlic and cook with lid on for five minutes or until vegetables are tender.
5. Add tomatoes, brown sugar, vinegar, cinnamon and liquid saved from cooking chicken. Cover and cook for 10 minutes.
6. Place chicken pieces into a baking casserole. Cover with tomato and vegetable sauce.
7. Cover with foil or casserole lid and bake for 15 minutes.

***Adapted from ActNow BC cookbook, 2006, and with permission from John Bishop.***

## RECIPES **BEEF, VEGETABLE AND PASTA CASSEROLE**

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 326

PROTEIN: 27 G

FAT: 12 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 32 G

FIBRE: 2.3 G

SODIUM: 786 MGS

CALCIUM: 274 MGS

**SERVES: 3**

**PREPARATION TIME: 40 MINUTES**

**COOKING TIME: 40 MINUTES**

**THIS RECIPE IS A COMPLETE MEAL**, with something from all the food groups. It reheats well, which makes the extra preparation time worthwhile. Serve it with a green salad and a fruit dessert.

### INGREDIENTS:

½ lb (250 g) extra-lean ground beef

½ cup (125 mL) sliced onions

½ cup (125 mL) diced zucchini or celery

1 tsp (5 mL) minced garlic

1 14 oz (398 mL) canned diced tomatoes, with juice

1 tbsp (15 mL) low-sodium soy sauce

¼ tsp (1 mL) crushed red pepper flakes\* (optional)

1 cup (250 mL) rotini or fusili pasta (uncooked)

¾ cup (175 mL) shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese

\*The pepper flakes are what give this recipe its wonderful warm flavour. You may wish to use less or substitute with some milder Italian herbs if you cannot eat spicy things.



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a large non-stick skillet (fry pan) or pot, over medium heat, combine ground beef, onions, zucchini and garlic, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes until beef is no longer pink and vegetables are soft.
3. Drain fat and pour beef mixture into a greased casserole or baking dish big enough to hold 6 cups (1½ L).
4. Using a paper towel, wipe fat out of skillet or pot. Put tomatoes, soy sauce and pepper flakes in pot and heat to boiling point.
5. Add uncooked rotini or fusili to tomato mixture.
6. Pour tomato and pasta mixture over the meat and vegetable mixture in the casserole and combine. Press down pasta to make sure it is submerged in the liquid.
7. Bake covered for 20 minutes.
8. Remove cover and stir gently. Sprinkle with cheese.
9. Bake uncovered for another 15 to 20 minutes until pasta is tender.

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

# DESSERTS





## RECIPES QUICK FRUIT COMPOTE

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 61

PROTEIN: 0.5 G

FAT: 0

CARBOHYDRATE: 16 G

FIBRE: 1.8 G

SODIUM: 2 MGS

CALCIUM: 12 MGS

**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 or enjoy it as a healthy dessert with a scoop of plain, low-fat yogurt on top.

### INGREDIENTS:

½ cup (125 mL) pitted prunes

¼ cup (60 mL) dried apricots

¼ 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.

**Thanks to** The Senior Chef, **BC Ministry of Health, 1992.**

## RECIPES **BERRY COBLER**

### PER SERVING:

CALORIES: 189

PROTEIN: 5 G

FAT: 6 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 27 G

FIBRE: 2.8 G

SODIUM: 211 MGS

CALCIUM: 94 MGS

**SERVES: 3**

**PREPARATION TIME: 20 MINUTES**

**BAKING TIME: 30 MINUTES**

**THIS LOW-FAT COBLER** is moist and full of nutrition. Enjoy it warm with a small scoop of vanilla ice cream or a spoon of yogurt. Keeps in the refrigerator for the next day.

### INGREDIENTS:

1 cup (250 mL) frozen berries (any kind you like)

1½ tsp (7 mL) flour

1½ tsp (7 mL) sugar

3/8 cup (90 mL) flour

1½ tsp (7 mL) baking powder

1 tbsp (15 mL) non-hydrogenated soft-tub margarine or butter

1 tbsp (15 mL) sugar

1 egg

2 tbsp (25 mL) milk

---

### VARIATION

Substitute 1 cup of canned fruit (such as peaches), including juice, for the berries. **DO NOT** add sugar to this fruit. Mix flour into the juice to thicken.



### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (190°C).
2. Place berries in small casserole or baking dish.
3. Combine 1½ tsp flour and 1½ tsp sugar in a cup and sprinkle over the berries.
4. Place berry mixture in oven to warm while you mix the topping.
5. Measure the remaining flour, baking powder and sugar into small bowl.
6. Rub margarine or butter into the flour using a fork or your fingers.
7. In another small bowl or cup, beat egg and add milk.
8. Pour egg and milk mixture into flour mixture and combine with a fork until just barely mixed. Do not beat.
9. Remove warmed berries from oven.
10. Spoon dough by the tablespoon over berries. Not all of the filling will be covered. As it cooks, the berry juice will bubble up between the lumps of dough.
11. Return to oven and bake for approximately 30 minutes until the dough is nicely browned.

**PER SERVING: (BASED ON BANANA/PINEAPPLE COMBINATION)**

CALORIES: 111

PROTEIN: 2 G

FAT: 2 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 22 G

FIBRE: 1.8 G

SODIUM: 2 MGS

CALCIUM: 12 MGS

**SERVES: 2**

**PREPARATION TIME: 10 TO 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

¼ 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

¼ 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.

***Adapted from Eileen Faughey's***  
Quick Flip to Delicious Dinners, **1999.**

---

### **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.

## EXTRA RECIPES





**HERE'S ONE VERSION** of a great salt-free seasoning. Notice that we have used 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
- 1½ tsp (7 mL) black pepper
- 1 tsp (5 mL) basil
- 1 tsp (5 mL) 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.***

## RECIPES **SALT-FREE VINAIGRETTE SALAD DRESSING**

### **PER SERVING:**

CALORIES: 45

PROTEIN: 0

FAT: 5 G

CARBOHYDRATE: 0

FIBRE: 0

SODIUM: 0

CALCIUM: 0

**MAKES: 6 PORTIONS OF 2 TSPS 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)

¼ tsp (1 mL) dry or hot mustard

1 tsp (5 mL) dried herbs (your choice)

1 clove garlic, finely chopped, or ½ 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.







## 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 Food Guide Serving of grain products a day. (For example, a senior man could add a second slice of whole wheat 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.

We suggest that you 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 orange

$\frac{3}{4}$  (175 mL) cup rolled oats

2 tbsp (30 g) chopped nuts or seeds on cereal

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

1 slice (35 g) whole wheat toast

##### Lunch

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) cottage cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) fruit salad

1 \**Pumpkin Raisin Muffin*

1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

##### Dinner

$\frac{1}{2}$  (90 g) breast roast chicken, no skin

1 small baked potato with 3 tbsp (45 mL) low-fat yogurt,  
bacon bits

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) carrots

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) broccoli

1 cup (250 mL) tossed salad with 1 tbsp (15 mL)  
Salt-free vinaigrette salad dressing



## APPENDIX A

### ONE-WEEK MEAL PLAN

#### **Snacks**

- 1 oz (30 g) dry cereal
- ½ cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage
- 3 graham wafers
- 1½ oz (50 g) low-fat cheese

#### **DAY 2**

##### **Breakfast**

- 1 banana
- 1 oz (30 g) cold cereal
- ½ cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage
- 1 slice (35 g) whole wheat toast
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) peanut butter

##### **Lunch**

###### *\*Spinach Frittata*

- 1 (70 g) whole wheat pita or 2 slices (2 x 35 g) whole wheat toast
- 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

##### **Dinner**

###### *\*Quick Steamed Fish Fillets with Potatoes and Asparagus*

- 1 cup (250 mL) tossed salad with 1 tbsp (15 mL) *\*Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing*
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) *\*Berry Cobbler* with 3 tbsp (45 mL) low-fat yogurt

##### **Snacks**

- 1/2 cup tomato juice
- 2 rye crackers
- 1½ oz (50 g) low-fat cheese

#### **DAY 3**

##### **Breakfast**

- 1¼ cup (300 mL) *\*Sunny Orange Shake*
- 1 *\*Pumpkin Raisin Muffin*

## **Lunch**

- 1½ cup (375 mL) \*Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup
- 1 small (35 g) whole wheat roll or ¼ (35 g) naan
- 1 kiwifruit
- 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

## **Dinner**

- 2 slices (100 g) \*Meatloaf at Its Very Best
- ½ sweet potato
- 1 cup (250 mL) \*Spinach Salad with Orange Sesame Dressing
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) \*Berry Cobbler (leftover) with 3 tbsp (45mL) low-fat yogurt

## **Snacks**

- 1 oz (30 g) cold cereal
- ½ cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

## **DAY 4**

### **Breakfast**

- ½ cup (125 mL) orange juice
- 1½ oz (50 g) cheese
- 2 slices (2 x 35 g) whole wheat toast

### **Lunch**

- ½ (45 g) whole wheat bagel or 1 slice (35 g) whole wheat bread
- 1 cup (250 mL) \*Spinach Salad with Orange Sesame Dressing (leftover from previous night)
- 1-2 sliced hard cooked eggs or ½ cup (125 mL) garbanzo beans
- 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

### **Dinner**

- 1 serving (1/2 recipe) \*Tuna Garden
- ½ cup (125 mL) peaches

### **Snacks**

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) berries
- 1 oz (30 g) cold cereal
- ¾ cup (175 mL) low-fat yogurt



## APPENDIX A

### ONE-WEEK MEAL PLAN

#### DAY 5

##### Breakfast

3 stewed prunes

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) rolled oats

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

1 slice (35 g) whole wheat toast

##### Lunch

1 serving (1/2 recipe) \**Tuna Garden*  
(leftover from previous night)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) fresh grapes

1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

##### Dinner

1 serving (1/3 recipe) \**Sweet and Sour Chicken and Vegetable Casserole* on  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) whole wheat couscous or brown rice

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) steamed beans or asparagus

##### Snacks

2 rye crisps or whole wheat crackers

1½ oz (50 g) low-fat cheese

1 apple, sliced, dipped in 3 tbsp (50 mL) low-fat yogurt spiced with cinnamon

#### DAY 6

##### Breakfast

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) blueberries

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL) low-fat yogurt

1 small bran and raisin muffin

##### Lunch

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) baked beans (canned or homemade)

1 slice (35 g) whole wheat bread

1 cup (250 mL) tossed salad with 1 tbsp (15 mL)

\**Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing*

1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

## **Dinner**

½ recipe \**Tofu Stir Fry*

on 1 cup (250 mL) brown rice or

1½ cups (375 mL) beef and vegetable stew with biscuit

½ cup (125 mL) custard

## **Snacks**

3 graham wafers

1¼ cup (300 mL) \*Sunny Orange Shake

## **DAY 7**

### **Breakfast**

½ cup (125 mL) orange juice

¾ cup (175 mL) cooked cereal

½ cup (125 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

1 slice (35 g) whole wheat toast

1 poached egg

### **Lunch**

Salmon sandwich: 2 slices (2 x 35 g) whole wheat bread with  
2½ oz (75 g) canned salmon, lettuce and tomato and light  
dressing

½ recipe \**Fresh Fruit and Nut Dessert*

1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage

### **Dinner**

1 cup (250 mL) \**Herbed Lentil and Barley Soup* (from freezer)

1 (35 g) whole wheat roll

1 cup (250 mL) \**Broccoli Salad*

½ cup (125 mL) milk pudding or low-fat yogurt

### **Snacks**

½ cup vegetable juice

2 rye crisps

1½ oz (50 g) low-fat cheese

\* *Recipe is in this guide – see Chapter 11.*

## 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](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide) or

call 1 800 0-Canada (1 800 622-6232). TTY: 1 800 926-9105



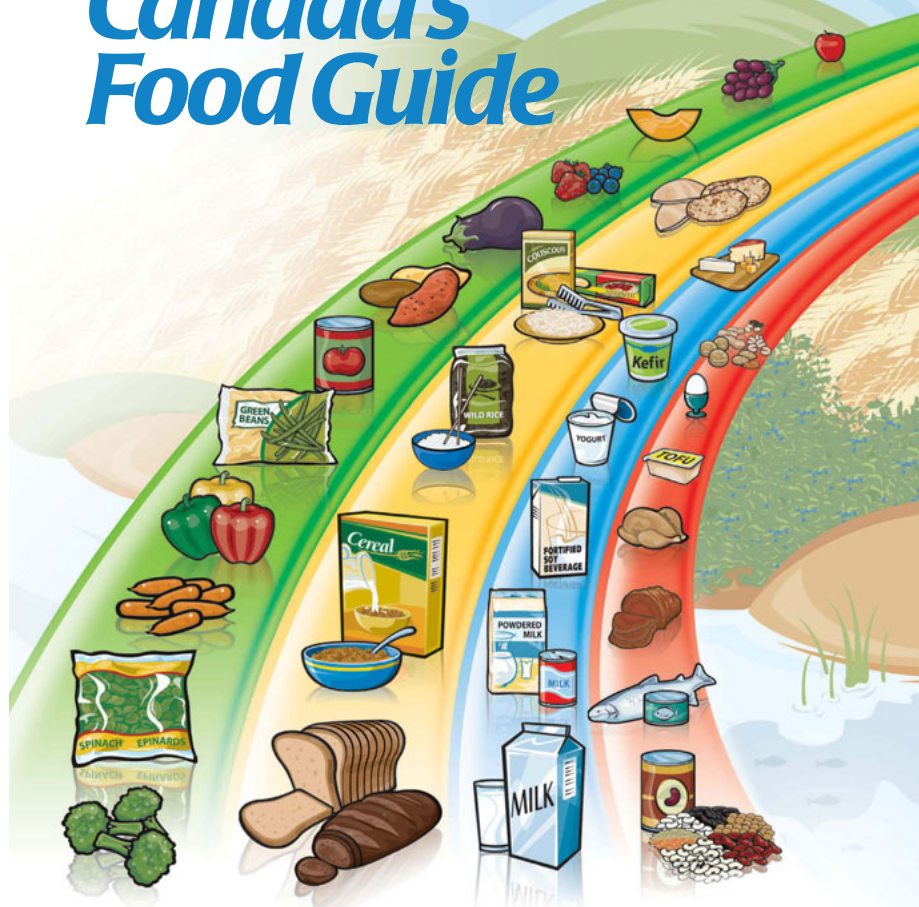
Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

Your health and  
safety... our priority.

Votre santé et votre  
sécurité... notre priorité.

# Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide



Canada 

Also, visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://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 following the tips in *Canada's Food Guide* will help:**

- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and 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 margarines 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](http://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).



## APPENDIX C IS YOUR WEIGHT HEALTHY?

There are two easy ways to tell if your weight is in the healthy range: by using the body mass index and/or the waist circumference test. These two measurements can help you determine your risk for chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes.

### **Body mass index**

Your body mass index (BMI) is based on your height and weight. Because most people lose some height over time, it is a good idea to ask your doctor to re-measure you every couple of years to determine your current height.

A healthy BMI for an adult is between 18.5 and 24.9. The risk of developing health problems increases both above and below this BMI range. A person is said to be obese when his or her BMI is 30 or higher.

No matter what your BMI is, you should still check your waist circumference (see next page). If your weight is healthy, but you carry fat around your stomach, you should try to lose that excess fat.

Use the following table to look up the upper and lower limits of weight for your height. The height is given in centimeters (and inches) and the weight in kilograms (and pounds).

## Height

## Healthy weight

based on a BMI range from 18.5 to 24.9

### cm (inches)

### kg (lb)

147.3 (58)	40-54 (88-119)
149.9 (59)	42-56 (92-123)
152.4 (60)	43-58 (95-128)
154.9 (61)	44-59 (97-130)
157.5 (62)	46-61 (101-134)
160.0 (63)	48-63 (106-139)
162.6 (64)	49-65 (108-143)
165.1 (65)	50-68 (110-150)
167.6 (66)	52-70 (114-154)
170.2 (67)	54-72 (119-158)
172.7 (68)	55-74 (121-163)
175.3 (69)	57-77 (125-169)
177.8 (70)	58-79 (128-174)
180.3 (71)	60-81 (132-178)
182.9 (72)	62-83 (136-183)
185.4 (73)	64-86 (141-189)
188.0 (74)	65-88 (143-194)
190.5 (75)	67-90 (147-198)
193.0 (76)	69-93 (152-205)

Research suggests that a healthy weight range for seniors age 65 and older may be slightly different than the range in this table.

Talk to your doctor if you are near the bottom of the range – you may be at an increased health risk.

Talk to your doctor if you are above the healthy range in the table – you may be overweight and at an increased health risk or you may, in fact, be at a healthy weight.

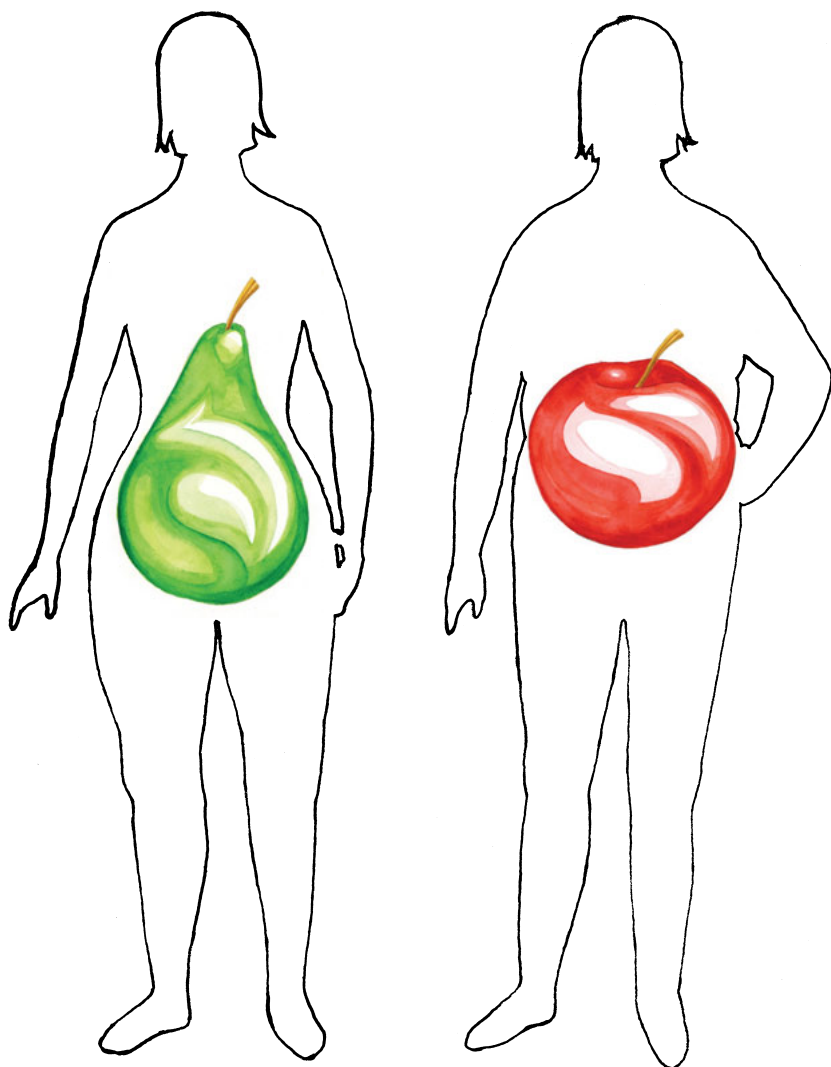
See Chapter 6 for general information about what you should eat if you are overweight or underweight – but check with your doctor before you make any major changes to the way you eat.

## Waist circumference test

Recent studies show that where you carry your weight is as important as how much of it you are carrying.

Most people are shaped either like an apple or like a pear. You're an apple if you carry your weight around your middle and a pear if you carry it around your hips and thighs.

Apples have a higher risk of developing health problems – including heart disease, stroke and Type 2 diabetes – than pears.



To determine if your shape is putting you at risk of health problems:

- Get a tape measure.
- Stand with your feet together.
- Measure the narrowest part of your torso. If you are a man, that is at your navel. If you are a woman, it's about half-way between the bottom of your ribs and the top of your hipbones.
- Don't pull the tape too tight. Take a breath in, then exhale as you normally would and fit the tape snugly around your middle.
- Write down the number.

If you are a man and have a waist measurement of 40 inches (102 cm) or less, you are doing well. If your waist measurement is more than 40 inches (102 cm), your weight distribution puts you at risk of health problems. You should talk to your doctor. You may need to lose weight.

If you are a woman and have a waist measurement of 35 inches (88 cm) or less, you are doing well. If your waist measurement is more than 35 inches (88 cm), your weight distribution puts you at risk of health problems. You should talk to your doctor. You may need to lose weight.

(Please also see Chapter 6 for general information about what you should eat if you are overweight, but check with your doctor before you make any major changes to your diet.)



## APPENDIX D

### GLOSSARY

**Antioxidants:** Antioxidants are 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.

**Body Mass Index:** Measures body size using a ratio of height to weight (see Appendix C). If you have either a low or a high BMI, you may be at risk for health problems.

**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 amount of calories you take in should be balanced by the amount of calories 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.

**Dairy products:** See Milk and alternatives.

**Daily Value:** A phrase that appears on all Nutrition Facts labels. The Daily Value is the average amount of the vitamin or mineral that is needed to meet the nutritional requirements of a person who is at least two years old. The number shown will be the percent of the daily value that one serving of the food provides.

**Diabetes:** A condition where the body has trouble maintaining normal blood sugar levels.

**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 food originally had iron in it, but the iron was lost when the food was manufactured, the food will be enriched to add the iron back.

**Fats:** Dietary fat is 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. (See Healthy and unhealthy fats.)

**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.





## APPENDIX D

### GLOSSARY

**Grains/whole grain/multigrain:** Grains are edible plant products and include 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 they are not necessarily whole grains.

**Healthy and unhealthy fats:** Unhealthy fats are saturated and trans fats. Healthy fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Omega 3 fatty acids are a polyunsaturated fat.

**High blood pressure:** When the force of blood moving through your body is too strong. Also called hypertension.

**Hypertension:** High blood pressure.

**International units (IU):** Vitamins A, D and E are measured in international units (IUs). There is no fixed definition for IU, as there is for milligrams (mgs) or micrograms (mcgs). It is based on the potency of the substance, so the IU will be different for 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/mgs:** Common units of measurement for minerals and some vitamins, such as vitamin C. Mgs 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.

**mL:** mL means millilitres. It is a metric unit of volume equal to one thousandth of a litre. A common measurement: 1 ounce 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), fluids, as well as certain vitamins and minerals.



## APPENDIX D GLOSSARY

**Nutrition Label:** 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 or fertilizers, hormones or antibiotics.

**Osteoporosis:** A thinning of the bones that makes them more likely to break.

**Pasteurization/pasteurized:** “Pasteurization” is 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 both essential vitamins and minerals and disease-fighting phytochemicals.

**Phytosterols:** Natural substances found in plants that can help to reduce cholesterol. Phytosterols can be found in vegetable oils, tofu and soy products, legumes, seeds and most vegetables and fruit.

**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.

**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, palm and coconut oils.

**Soy/soy products:** Vegetarian source 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.

**Tempeh:** A fermented soybean cake similar to tofu.

**Tofu:** A firm, custard-like soybean cake.

**Trans fat:** An unhealthy fat that is created when hydrogen is added to liquid fat to make it solid.

**Triglycerides:** Essentially fat in food, triglycerides provide the body with calories to burn for energy. They are also a type of fat found in your blood.



## APPENDIX D

### GLOSSARY

**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 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.

**Waist circumference measurement:** Measurement used to indicate the amount of body fat around the abdomen. Excess weight around the abdomen (also described as an apple shape) is associated with greater health risk.



## APPENDIX E INDEX

### A

#### Aging

- eating better as you age, 17
- facts about, 14

#### Alcohol, 34

- cancer and, 35, 70, 72
- cholesterol and, 62
- diabetes and, 35, 68
- healthy amount of, 59
- heart disease and, 59
- osteoporosis and, 74
- support resources for, 35

#### Alzheimer's disease

- nutrition and, 81

#### Anemia, 96

- B vitamins and, 96
- iron and, 97

#### Antioxidants, 49, 199

- cancer and, 49, 69, 199
- heart disease and, 49, 199

#### Arthritis, 79

- fibre and, 80
- nutrition and, 79
- Omega 3 fatty acids and, 80
- physical activity and, 39
- saturated fats and, 80
- types of, 79

### B

#### Body mass index, 195

#### Bone density

- when to have a test, 72

#### Breakfast

- importance of, 88
- recipes, 142

### C

#### Caffeine

- coffee, tea and, 34
- heart disease and, 59
- osteoporosis and, 74

#### Calcium, 47

- osteoporosis and, 73

#### Canada's Food Guide, 17, 69, 78, 191

- Food Guide Servings, 17
- four food groups, 17, 32
- servings, men, 32

- servings, women, 32

- one-week meal plan based on, 186
- servings, 32

#### Cancer, 68

- alcohol and, 35, 72
- antioxidants and, 49, 69, 199
- charred meat and, 70
- fats and, 70
- fluids and, 72
- food safety and, 70, 72
- loss of appetite, 71
- nutrition and, 68
- nutrition and chemotherapy and radiation, 71
- obesity and, 68
- phytochemicals and, 34, 69
- preserved meats and, 70
- salt and, 70

#### Carbohydrates, 24

- diabetes and, 67

#### Cataracts

- nutrition and, 77

#### Chemotherapy and radiation

- nutrition and, 71

#### Cholesterol. See

- alcohol and, 62
- eggs and, 60
- fibre and, 60
- good and bad, 60
- healthy recipes, 143
- heart disease and, 56, 57, 60
- nuts and, 62
- organ meats and, 60
- phytosterols and, 62
- reducing your cholesterol, 60

#### Coffee, 34

#### Constipation, 94

- causes of, 94
- fibre and, 95
- fluids and, 30, 95

#### Convenience foods

- frozen dinners and canned soups, 108

#### Cooking

- cooking for one or two, 106
- cooking supplies, 117
- easy ways to plan,

- shop and cook, 101
- easy-cook meals, 105
- healthy cooking methods, 117
- no-cook meals, 107

## **D**

Depression

- nutrition and, 95

Diabetes, 64

- alcohol and, 35, 68
- carbohydrates and, 67
- healthy recipes, 142
- heart disease and, 56, 59, 65
- herbal/botanical supplements and, 52
- high blood pressure and, 36
- kidney disease and, 65
- periodontal (gum) disease and, 65
- physical activity and, 38
- risk factors, 65
- sugar replacements, 67
- weight loss and, 91

Dietitian, 141

Dinner

- recipes, 149

Diverticulosis, 94

## **E**

Eating out, 124

Exercise. See physical activity

Eye disease

- cataracts, 77
- glaucoma, 77
- macular degeneration, 78
- nutrition and, 78
- phytochemicals and, 34

## **F**

Fats, 27

- arthritis and, 80
- cholesterol and, 60
- healthy, 28, 57
- heart disease and, 57
- monounsaturated, 28, 57
- overweight and, 88
- polyunsaturated, 28, 57
- reducing in recipes, 121
- saturated, 27
- trans fats, 27
- unhealthy, 27, 57

Fibre, 24, 53

- arthritis and, 80
- cholesterol and, 60
- constipation and, 53
- heart disease and, 58

- increasing in recipes, 123

Fluids, 30

- amount required per day, 31
- constipation and, 30
- sources, 31

Food allergies. See food intolerance

Food intolerance, 98

- lactose intolerance, 98

Food labels

- how to read, 109
- ingredient list, 110

Food safety, 127

- at the grocery store, 128
- causes of food-borne illness, 127
- during a power failure, 132
- handling food, 130
- preventing food-borne illness, 128
- storing food, 130
- thawing food, 131
- washing food, 130

Food-borne illness

- prevention of, 128

Four food groups, 17, 32

## **G**

*Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)*

- nutrition and, 75

Glaucoma

- nutrition and, 78

Gum disease. See periodontal (gum) disease

## **H**

Health information

- where to find reliable information, 135

Health issues

- information about, 137

Healthy eating, 22

- benefits of, 13
- challenges, 18
- eating out and, 124
- finding more information about, 139
- on a budget, 112
- setting goals, 19

Healthy living

- benefits of, 13

Heart disease, 56

- alcohol and, 59
- antioxidants and, 49, 199
- caffeine and, 59
- cholesterol and, 56, 57, 60

- diabetes and, 65
- fats and, 57
- fibre and, 58
- high blood pressure and, 56
- nutrition and, 56
- obesity and, 56
- periodontal (gum) disease and, 56
- risk factors, 56
- salt and, 59
- sugar and, 59
- weight loss and, 91

Heartburn. See gastroesophageal reflux disease

Herbal and botanical supplements, 52

- prescription drugs and, 52

High blood pressure, 63

- fruit and, 64
- healthy recipes, 143
- heart disease and, 56
- nutrition and, 64
- reading the numbers, 63
- salt and, 64
- weight loss and, 91

High cholesterol. See cholesterol

Hypertension. See high blood pressure

## I

Iron, 51

## K

Kidney disease

- diabetes and, 65
- high blood pressure and, 36

## L

Lactose intolerance, 98

Leftovers, 132

Lipoproteins, 60

Liquid nutritional supplements, 53

Lunch

- recipes, 149

## M

Macular degeneration

- nutrition and, 78

Magnesium, 51

Meal plan (one week), 186

Meal replacement drinks, 53

## N

Nutrients

- aging and, 22
- importance of, 17

Nutrition claims, 109

Nutrition Facts label

- how to read, 110

Nutritional supplements

- herbal and botanical supplements, 52
- liquid nutritional supplements, 53
- vitamins and minerals, 45

Nutritionist. See dietitian

Nuts

- cholesterol and, 62

## O

Obesity

- cancer and, 68
- heart disease and, 56

Omega 3 fatty acids

- arthritis and, 80
- benefits of, 28
- triglycerides and, 28

Organic food, 38

Osteoporosis, 72

- alcohol and, 74
- caffeine and, 74
- calcium and, 47, 73
- high blood pressure and, 36
- nutrition and, 73
- physical activity and, 39
- phytochemicals and, 34
- potassium and, 74
- protein and, 74
- salt and, 74
- soft drinks and, 74
- vitamin D and, 73
- when to have a bone density test, 72

Overweight. See obesity

- causes and symptoms, 86
- changing your weight, 87
- fluids and, 89
- physical activity and, 91

## P

Parkinson's disease

- nutrition and, 82

Periodontal (gum) disease

- diabetes and, 65
- heart disease and, 56
- nutrition and, 76

Physical activity, 38

- aerobic activities, 40
- aging and, 38
- amount of, 41
- arthritis and, 39
- diabetes and, 39





## APPENDIX E

### INDEX

- finding an exercise professional, 39, 140
- flexibility activities, 41
- osteoporosis and, 39
- overcoming barriers to, 42
- strength activities, 40
- Phytochemicals, 34
  - cancer and, 69
- Phytosterols, 62
- Potassium
  - osteoporosis and, 74
- Prescription drugs
  - herbal/botanical supplements and, 52
  - losing nutrients, 56
- Professional dietitian. See dietitian
- Protein, 22
  - osteoporosis and, 74
- R**
- Recipes
  - breakfast, 144
  - desserts, 176
  - fast and easy recipes, 143
  - lunch or dinner, 149
  - making your recipes healthier, 121
  - Salt-Free Vinaigrette Salad Dressing, 184
  - snacks, 144
  - Universal Seasoning, 183
- Registered dietitian. See dietitian
- S**
- Salt, 35
  - cancer and, 70
  - healthy amount of, 36
  - heart disease and, 59
  - high blood pressure and, 36, 64
  - in common foods, 37
  - labels, 37
  - osteoporosis and, 74
  - reducing in recipes, 123
- Smoking
  - vitamin C and, 49
- Snacks
  - recipes, 144
- Sodium. See salt
- Soft drinks
  - osteoporosis and, 74
- Sugar
  - heart disease and, 59
  - reducing in recipes, 123
- Surgery
  - eating after, 22
- Swallowing
  - difficulty with, 83
- T**
- Tea, 34
- Triglycerides, 28, 59
- U**
- Underweight
  - how to gain weight, 92
  - symptoms and causes, 91
- Utensils, 120
- V**
- Vegetables and fruit
  - importance of, 34
- Vegetarians
  - iron and, 51
- Vitamins and minerals, 45
  - calcium, 47
  - folate/folic acid, 46
  - vitamin B12, 45
  - vitamin B6, 46
  - vitamin C, 49
  - vitamin D, 47
  - vitamin E, 49
- W**
- Waist circumference test, 197
- Weight
  - body mass index, 195
  - healthy weight, 195
  - overweight, 86
  - underweight, 91
- Weight loss programs, 91



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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](http://www.SeniorsBC.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](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca).

### **To order additional copies of Healthy Eating for Seniors:**

HealthLink BC:

Call 8-1-1.

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