

Healthy Eating for Older Adults



Healthy eating is important for everyone. Our appetites sometimes decrease as we age, and many older adults do not get enough of the vitamins and minerals they need to stay healthy. It is especially important for seniors to make sure they are eating nutritious foods. A healthy diet can also be an important part of managing existing chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and some types of cancer. Here are a few tips to help you maintain a healthy diet.

Healthy Eating Tips

- **Eat small, frequent meals.** Sometimes you may not feel like eating a big meal, but your body still needs energy and nutrients. Try eating several small meals at regular times throughout the day.
- **Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.** Even if you do not feel thirsty, drinking water throughout the day is very important.
- **Eat fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grain foods.** These foods contain many important vitamins and minerals and are good sources of potassium and fiber. Fresh, frozen, and low-sodium canned vegetables are all good options. The recipe on the back of this page can help you eat more of these foods.
- Many older adults do not get enough vitamin B12. Eating foods like fortified cereals can provide this important nutrient.
- Bone health is especially important for older adults. **Make foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D part of your daily diet.** These include low-fat dairy products, leafy green vegetables, canned fish like salmon and sardines, and calcium-fortified cereals and juices.
- **Choose foods that are low in saturated fat.** Instead, eat foods that contain healthy fats like fish, nuts, olive oil and canola oil.



Simple Minestrone Soup Recipe

Adapted from USDA's SNAP-Ed Connection Recipe Finder

Ingredients

- 16 ounces frozen vegetables, any type
- 30 ounces stewed tomatoes, canned, low-sodium
- 28 ounces broth, any flavor, canned, low sodium
- 15 ounces beans, canned, any type, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup pasta, dry, any type



Instructions

- In a large pot, combine frozen vegetables, tomatoes, broth, and beans.
- Bring the soup to a boil and add the pasta.
- Reduce to low heat. Let simmer for 6-8 minutes or until the pasta and vegetables are tender.
- This recipe makes six 1 cup servings.

Tips and Suggestions



- Soups are wonderful because you can easily adapt them depending on which ingredients you have!
 - The recipe above could also be made with fresh vegetables, like carrots, onions, green beans, and broccoli. Let the soup simmer a little longer though – about 20 minutes or until vegetables are soft and tender.
- You could use brown rice instead of pasta for another version of this healthy soup.
 - Leafy green vegetables like spinach and kale are also great in soup.
 - Rinse canned beans before adding them to your soup to reduce the amount of salt.
 - Freeze leftover soup in shallow, single-serving containers to heat up again another day.