

# Healthy Living for Seniors

## Tips to live long & feel great

Lexington-Fayette County Health Department



There are many ingredients to a healthy life. They all work together to keep your mind and body healthy and feeling good. Some of these “ingredients” are:

- **Daily physical activity.** Ask your health care provider about types of physical activity that are safe for you and how to increase this gradually. You do not have to have a formal exercise program to improve your health and stay active. Taking short walks throughout your day is a great place to start.
- **Get enough sleep.** Sleep affects your whole body. Aim for eight hours of sleep at night to give your body a chance to rest and be ready for a new day.
- **Stay connected** with family, friends, and community. Volunteering is a great way to keep your body and brain active. Call your local senior citizen center or church for organizations in need of volunteers.
- **Eat right.** It’s important to eat right, so you can keep your body healthy and lower your risk of chronic disease.

### Healthy Eating for Life

To help you stay on track with your healthy eating plan, follow these recommendations:

- **Eat breakfast every day.**
- **Select high-fiber foods** like whole grain breads and cereals, beans, vegetables, and fruits. They can help keep you regular and lower your risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- **Choose lean meats** like beef, turkey breast, fish, or chicken with the skin removed to lower the amount of fat and calories in your meals. Bake, broil or grill meats/poultry/fish instead of frying. As you age, your body needs fewer calories, especially if you are not very active.
- **Have three servings of low-fat dairy a day** (1% or skim milk, yogurt, or cheese). These are high in calcium and vitamin D and help keep your bones strong as you age. If you have trouble digesting or do not like dairy products, try reduced-lactose milk products, or calcium-fortified orange juice, soy-based beverages, or tofu. You can also talk to your health care provider about taking a calcium and vitamin D supplement.
- **Keep nutrient-rich snacks** like dried apricots, whole wheat crackers, peanut butter, low-fat cheese, and low-sodium soup on hand. Limit how often you have high-fat and high-sugar snacks like cake, candy, chips, and soda.



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- **Drink plenty of water.** You may notice that you feel less thirsty as you get older, but your body still needs the same amount of water. Aim for eight to ten 8-ounce glasses of water, unless your health care provider tells you to drink less because you have heart or kidney problems. Water-based beverages like milk or juice count towards your daily amount of water.

- Try new recipes or different herbs and spices to spark your interest in food.
- Set the table with a nice cloth and even a flower in a vase to make mealtime special.
- Eat regularly with someone whose company you enjoy.

## Planning Ahead

Has it ever been dinner time, your starving, and have no idea what to make? It happens to all of us sometimes...or a lot of the time. It is easier to eat well when you plan ahead.

Try these tips:

- Set a time once a week to make menus. First, look through your cupboards and see what is available. Then, write down meals that sound good to you based on some of the ingredients you have already. Lastly, make a grocery list for ingredients you still need.
- Grocery shop with a friend. It's more fun this way and can help save you money if you share items that you can only use half of, such as a bag of potatoes or head of cabbage.
- Cook ahead and freeze portions to have healthy and easy meals on hand for days when you do not feel like cooking.
- Keep frozen or canned vegetables, beans, and fruits on hand for quick and healthy additions to meals. Rinse canned veggies and beans under cold running water to lower their salt content. Select "no salt added" canned foods.
- Look for fruit canned in juice or light syrup.

## Meals on Wheels

If you are unable to cook for yourself, find out about a community program in your area that serves meals or delivers "Meals on Wheels." Call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 for information on the program nearest you.

