

Planning Meals using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide



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

Aging itself affects nutrition. As you get older, you need to eat less food (fewer calories) but you need the same amount or even more of certain vitamins and minerals. The key to healthy eating is planning your food choices and meals using *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

Planning Meals

- ✓ Plan for 3 meals and 1-3 small snacks each day. Skipping any meal, but especially skipping breakfast, will make it difficult to get all the nutrients you need each day.
- ✓ Choose foods from at least three of the four food groups (listed below) at each meal.
- ✓ Plan your meals around vegetables, fruit and grain products. These foods should cover about 2/3 of your plate. The remaining 1/3 of the plate should be

filled with protein rich foods such as dairy products, chicken, fish, meat, tofu, eggs or beans.

Vegetables and Fruit

7 servings per day

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

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Examples of one serving

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

Grain Products

6-7 servings per day

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

Examples of one serving

- 1 slice bread, ½ bun or bagel.
- 30 grams cold cereal (about 1 cup depending on type of cereal - see label).
- 175 mL (¾ cup) cup hot cereal.
- 125 mL (½ cup) pasta or rice.
- 35 grams of bannock, naan, pita, or tortilla.

Milk and Alternatives

3 servings per day

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

Examples of one serving

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

Meat and Alternatives

2 to 3 servings per day

Meat and Alternatives are important sources of protein, iron and B vitamins and are key for good muscle tone and immunity. Choose lean meats, fish and poultry, and alternatives such as beans, lentils and peas more often.

Examples of one serving

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

Oils and Fats

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

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

Other foods

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

Fluids

Fluids are essential to life, yet many seniors do not drink enough. As we age, our sense of thirst declines so we need to drink regularly whether we feel thirsty or not. Aim for at least eight glasses of fluids each day. Satisfy your thirst with water first, but remember that juice, milk, soup, tea and coffee also count towards your total fluid intake. There is also fluid in the foods we eat.

Canada's Food Guide suggests adults age 50+ take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 µg (400 IU). Talk to your doctor, registered dietitian or pharmacist before taking any other supplements since they may interfere with some medications.



Planning Meals: Variety and Balance

A healthy diet is essential to feeling well and enjoying life to the fullest. Recent surveys show that most seniors do not eat enough grain products, milk products, vegetables and fruits. Eating too little of those foods can leave you tired, more prone to illness and perhaps even at increased risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. Healthy eating starts with following Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1-800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Enjoy a variety of nutritious foods

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

Eat more grain products to provide energy and fibre

- Have a bowl of cooked cereal (like oatmeal) or high fibre ready-to-eat cereal for a meal or snack.
- Enjoy a small whole grain or bran muffin for a snack, or with cheese and fruit as a mini-meal.
- Try brown rice in casseroles and soups.
- Eat whole grain bread/buns/bagels/muffins, whole wheat pastas and brown or wild rice.
- Try other grains such as bulgur, barley, quinoa or couscous.

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Eat more vegetables and fruits for a powerful punch of nutrients

- Keep a package of frozen berries in your freezer to sprinkle on your cereal.
- Start lunch off with a bowl of low sodium tomato or vegetable soup, a salad or some raw vegetables.
- Make a vegetable stir-fry. Add some grated cheese and black beans, and you have an instant supper.
- Toss a handful of frozen vegetables (or leftovers) into soups and casseroles.
- Craving candy? Try some healthy dried fruit instead. Enjoy 60 mL (1/4 cup) of raisins, dates, dried apricots, prunes or dried apples.
- Enjoy a baked apple or fruit crisp.
- Take advantage of seasonal specials. Buy strawberries, peaches, pears and asparagus when they are in season.
- Enjoy 125 mL (1/2 cup) real fruit juice every day.

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

- Use grated cheese on salads, casseroles or soups.
- Add milk instead of water to canned soup.
- Drink a glass of skim or one per cent milk as a bedtime snack.
- Add skim milk powder to sauces, soups, casseroles and omelettes.
- Melt cheese on toast for a change from butter and jam.
- Enjoy low-fat pudding (make with skim or 1% milk) or yogurt for dessert.
- Make a “latte” by mixing half a cup of coffee with half a cup of warmed milk.
- Have a salmon or sardine sandwich, or add fish to salads.
- Sprinkle almonds on salads, casseroles and puddings.

Choose leaner meats and lower fat products

- Choose lean cuts of meat, such as round, flank and loin. Enjoy poultry, fish and seafood more often.
- Trim all visible fat from meats before cooking. Remove skin from poultry.
- Enjoy meatless meals more often. Try eggs, tofu, peanut butter, beans or lentils.

Oils and fats

Choose lower fat foods more often, but remember that some fat is essential in the diet. Choose unsaturated fats like oil, non-hydrogenated margarine or mayonnaise instead of saturated fats like butter and lard. Avoid trans fats from hydrogenated oil, hard margarine and shortening.

Use salt, caffeine and alcohol in moderation

- Try using pepper and other herbs rather than salt.
- Cook without adding salt.
- Choose “lower in salt” products.
- Eat fewer canned foods, crackers, processed meats and other packaged products.
- Drink no more than 2 cups of drip coffee or no more than 4 cups of instant coffee per day.
- Alternate cups of coffee with cups of hot water or milk. Perhaps what you really like is something hot to drink.
- Try decaffeinated teas and coffees or, better yet, fruit juice or cold water.
- Limit your alcohol to no more than one drink a day.

For more nutrition information contact your local health unit, health centre or hospital. Or visit www.dietitians.ca



Planning Meals: Fibre Facts

Fibre is found in foods such as vegetables, fruit, whole grain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds and legumes (dried peas, beans, soy and lentils). A diet high in fibre, along with exercise and healthy eating, can help you maintain normal bowel habits. Fibre helps prevent constipation by adding bulk and absorbing water, thus softening the stool. High fibre diets may also help prevent and treat a variety of diseases and conditions, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. A healthy diet for seniors should include 20-30 grams of fibre per day.

Use Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide to help you choose foods that are higher in fibre. Small changes can add up to a big difference in your fibre intake. You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Best sources of fibre:

Vegetables and Fruit

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

Grain products

- Whole grain breads, e.g. 100 per cent whole wheat, cracked wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.
- Whole grain cereals, e.g. oatmeal, cracked wheat, shredded wheat, oat bran, granola, or any cereal containing bran.

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- Whole grain crackers, muffins and cookies, e.g. whole wheat, rye or graham crackers, bran muffins, cornmeal muffins, oatmeal cookies, date squares.
- Brown or wild rice, barley, bulgur, wheat germ, whole grain wheat, buckwheat, millet.
- Whole grain pasta, such as spaghetti or macaroni.

Milk and Alternatives

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

Meat and Alternatives

- Cooked dried peas, beans and lentils, e.g. kidney beans, soybeans, black beans, chick peas, yellow or split peas.
- Nuts and seeds, e.g. almonds, cashews, flax.
- Peanuts and peanut butter.

High fibre menu ideas

Breakfast

- High fibre cereals such as bran cereals, shredded wheat, cooked oatmeal, etc. or a scoop of high fibre cereal mixed with one of your favourites. Also look for cereals with psyllium fibre.
- Cereals topped with raisins, flax seeds, sliced banana or a handful of frozen or fresh blueberries.
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter.
- Whole fruit instead of juice.
- Stewed prunes.
- Pancakes made with whole wheat flour and added flax seed.

Lunch

- Soups made with dried peas, beans, lentils or barley (e.g. split pea, minestrone).
- Sandwiches made with whole wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.

- Green salad sprinkled with sunflower seeds, almonds or additional fruits or vegetables

such as shredded carrot, sliced cucumber, oranges or strawberries.
- Marinated bean, spinach or carrot and raisin salad.
- Muffins made with whole wheat flour and added raisins, figs or dates.

Supper

- Baked beans or chili.
- Casseroles with added beans, lentils, barley and vegetables and a handful of raw bran.
- Baked potato in skin, or brown or wild rice.
- Meat loaf or meatballs with added raw bran.

Tips for Staying Regular

- Eat regular meals and snacks.
- To minimize stomach bloating and gas, increase your fibre gradually. Your body will adapt to a higher fibre diet and any bloating or gas that you experience will disappear.
- Drink at least eight glasses of fluids each day. Fluids include water, juice, milk, soup, herbal teas, decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- Exercise regularly. Even a short, daily walk is a good idea.
- Avoid laxatives unless your doctor has prescribed them. Laxative overdose may cause a lazy bowel that worsens constipation.

Adapted from Calgary Regional Health Authority, Mistahia Health Region, Edmonton Board of Health.

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Shopping for One or Two: Planning



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

At home

- Make a shopping list and keep it handy so you can add to it as supplies run low.
- Plan what you will be eating for the week, using Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.
- Look for food bargains in newspapers and flyers.
- Keep a list of prices for foods you usually buy and check it against advertised specials. The price in the flyer may not really be a sale price.
- Organize your shopping list in the same way that the store is laid out, to save time and energy while shopping.
- Find any coupons that match your shopping list. Use coupons to buy only the foods that you want and need.
- If you can't get to the store yourself, check whether your grocer offers a delivery service. Or contact a local senior centre, which may know volunteer drivers. Grocery shopping online is another option if you have Internet access.
- Arrange to shop with a friend. You can share the taxi fare and some of the larger grocery items.

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- Take your list, your coupons and glasses or magnifying glasses to read labels and prices. You might also want a calculator for figuring out which items are better buys.
 - Buy canned or frozen vegetables and fruits. You don't need to clean or chop them, you save money, and they won't rot in your crisper! You get the same health benefits whether your vegetables and fruits are fresh, frozen or canned. Frozen and canned produce is packaged when it is fresh and it has no time to lose precious nutrients. Ensure that your canned goods are packed in water or juice, not in syrup, and have no added sugar or salt.
- ### At the store
- Shop when the store is not as busy, so employees will have time to help with items that are hard to reach or lift.
 - Take advantage of discount days for seniors offered by some grocery stores.
 - Compare prices between brands. Store brands are often cheaper.
 - Check the "unit price" such as the price per ounce (gram) or per pound (kilogram). Most grocery stores display unit prices on shelf labels above or below the item. Bigger sizes are not always the best buy.
 - Buy the size that is the most economical and convenient for you. Smaller portions are available for a variety of foods (soup, fruits, vegetables, baked beans, stews, pudding, yogurt, cheese) and may be worth the extra cost if you can avoid throwing any away.
 - If the larger size is less expensive but more than you can use, share the extra with a friend.

- Bulk bins allow you to buy exactly as much as you want of many staples. Bulk items are usually cheaper, but not always. Check unit prices to be sure.
- The grade or quality of a product is determined by looks, not by nutritional value. If appearance doesn't matter to you, save money by buying lower grade, such as Utility Grade or Grade B chickens and Canada Choice fruits and vegetables.
- Read labels to be sure you are getting what you want. Check the ingredients, listed in descending order by quantity, with the main ingredient listed first. Look at the Nutrition Facts table and choose foods that are lower in salt, sugar and saturated/trans fat.
- Check the "best before" date to make sure the food won't spoil before you can eat it.
- When the store is not busy, ask cashiers to ring your groceries through more slowly so that you can check for correct pricing.

Cooking for One or Two People: Easy Meals to Make



Can't think of anything to eat? The following easy meals use ingredients you likely have on hand. When looking for quick ideas, don't limit your choices by thinking that certain foods can be enjoyed only at certain mealtimes. For example, breakfast foods work for lunch or supper, too.

Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs, toast, orange juice.
- Pancakes, applesauce, milk.
- Waffles, yogurt, fruit.
- Oatmeal, milk, fruit.
- Whole grain or bran cereal, milk, fruit.
- French toast, fruit salad, milk.

Lunch

- Peanut butter and banana sandwich, milk.
- Beans on toast, tomato slices, milk.
- Macaroni and cheese dinner (add tuna and frozen or leftover peas).
- Tuna melt: mix tuna, celery, mayonnaise and shredded

cheese, spread on buns and melt in oven.

- Canned low-sodium bean soup, whole wheat roll, yogurt.
- Yogurt, cantaloupe slice, muffin.
- Bananas and milk in bowl, bran muffin.
- Cheese omelette, whole wheat toast, tossed salad.
- Low sodium vegetable soup, whole grain crackers with cheese, apple.
- Chicken or turkey slices, tomato slices and lettuce on whole wheat bread, milk.
- Cottage cheese, fruit salad, small bran muffin.
- Broiled open face cheese and tomato sandwich, baked apple.

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- Salad with chopped egg, cold meat or grated cheese, bun, yogurt.
- Egg salad sandwich, carrot sticks, milk.

Supper

- One-pot casserole. Put these together, and bake:
 - ✓ One part meat, poultry or beans
 - ✓ Two parts vegetables (e.g. peas, carrots, tomatoes or celery)
 - ✓ Two parts rice, macaroni or noodles
 - ✓ Sauce to moisten (e.g., low sodium canned cream soup, tomato sauce).
- Salmon, rainbow trout, halibut or other baked fish with side-dishes of broccoli and whole wheat pasta.
- Beef stew (stewing beef, broth, potatoes, carrots), whole wheat bread or roll, milk.
- Chicken breast, sweet potatoes, cauliflower, milk.
- Pasta, tomato or meat sauce, green salad, milk.
- Meat loaf baked in muffin tins (ground beef, chopped onion, spices) baked potato, mixed vegetables, pudding.
- Chicken or tuna casserole (cooked chicken, broccoli, sodium reduced mushroom soup), milk.
- Salmon chowder (salmon, creamed corn and evaporated milk), whole grain toast.
- Meatless chili (kidney beans, tomato sauce, chili powder) on rice, banana.
- Chili, whole-wheat bun, carrot sticks, yogurt.
- Stir-fries (any fresh or frozen vegetables with small pieces of chicken, beef, pork or peanuts, soy sauce) on rice or noodles, milk.
- Lentil soup, mixed green salad, toast and cheese.
- Flatbread pizza – tomato sauce, vegetables and mozzarella cheese baked on pita, tortilla or naan.

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

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Vegetable Chowder with Cheddar

Makes 6 1-cup (250 mL) servings

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

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

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

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Cooking for One or Two People: Creative Use of Leftovers



Planning for leftovers can make meal preparation easier, reduce food waste and form the basis of many economical, time saving meals.

Leftovers can spoil quickly, so take care to preserve nutrients and keep the food safe to eat. Immediately place leftovers in covered containers in the refrigerator and use within two or three days. Leftovers can also be frozen and used within two or three months. Be sure to label and date all packages, and use the oldest ones first.

Some ideas to get you started

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

Vegetables and Fruit

- Cook a bunch of broccoli, a head of cauliflower or larger amounts of other vegetables. Eat one serving hot; marinate some in vegetable oil, vinegar and spices and add to a salad

use the rest in an omelette, pasta dish, soup or casserole.

- Top casseroles with slices of left-over cooked potatoes.
- Use cut-up fruit on cereal, to top pancakes or waffles, in fruit salad, mixed with yogurt or cottage cheese, or add it to baked goods such as muffins or sweet loafs.
- Freeze overripe bananas and use in loafs and muffins.
- If you bought too much fruit, use the leftovers to make jam, compote, chutney or fruit sauces (like apple sauce).

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- Puree cooked vegetables with broth and/or milk for a quick soup.
- Add any combination of vegetables into a pasta dish, gratin, salad, lasagna or quiche.
- Place leftover tomato paste in a plastic bag, squeeze it flat and freeze. Break off the paste a bit at a time to enrich sauces.
- Use leftover stir-fried vegetables on a sandwich or in an omelette.
- Blend leftover fruit into a smoothie (blend milk and fruit).

Grain Products

- Chill leftover pasta for pasta salad, soups or casseroles.
- Use rice in rice pudding, soups, casseroles.
- Make individual sized pizza crusts from tortillas, English muffins or pita breads.

- Crumble dried bread to crumbs to coat chicken or fish, or as casserole topping.
- Use dried bread in bread pudding or cube as croutons (sprinkle with spices and toast in oven) for salads or soups.

Meat and Alternatives

- Serve tomato or meat sauce over noodles one day, then add beans, chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen or leftover) and chili seasoning for another meal.
- Sauté ground beef, use in a casserole and freeze the rest for chili or stuffed peppers.
- Bake larger pieces of meat such as whole chicken, ham or beef, serve hot and use the leftovers in stir-fries, hearty soups, casseroles, sandwiches or salads.
- Use chicken, tuna or egg salad in sandwich one day and stuff the extra into a tomato or a green, yellow or red pepper the next.

- Turn leftover roast and potatoes into tomorrow's shepherd's pie.
- Turn leftover salmon into salmon cakes or use as a filling for pita with sliced tomatoes, lettuce, red peppers and cucumber.
- Roasts can be minced and used as fillings for ravioli, burritos, crepes, stuffed vegetables, cannelloni and more.
Add extra liquid and sautéed onions when making pot roast for tomorrow's French onion soup.
- Use leftover chicken or turkey in tomorrow's sandwich. Use whole slices or make chunky chicken salad by adding mayonnaise, celery, onion and other vegetables you enjoy.

A note on food safety:

To ensure your food remains safe to eat, only reheat leftovers one time. Heat food thoroughly to at least 140°F (60°C). Ensure soups are brought up to a boil before you eat them.

Cooking for One or Two People: Your Emergency Food Shelf



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

Suggested items to have on hand

Vegetables and Fruit

- Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Canned, boxed or frozen juice.
- Dried fruit (raisins, dates, apricots).
- Sodium-reduced canned soup (mushroom, vegetable, tomato).
- Canned or bottled pasta sauces.

Grain Products

- Frozen whole grain bread, rolls, muffins.
- Crackers, melba toast, breadsticks.
- Enriched or whole grain pasta.
- Enriched or brown rice.
- Biscuit mix.
- Hot cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat).
- Ready-to-eat cereals.
- Flour.

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Milk and Alternatives

- Canned evaporated milk.
- Dried skim milk powder.
- Instant pudding mix or ready-made puddings.

Other

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

Meat and Alternatives

- Canned salmon, tuna, chicken, sardines, ham.
- Canned beans, stew, chili.
- Dried or canned lentils and beans.
- Peanut butter.
- Nuts.
- Frozen meat, poultry, fish.
- Frozen dinners.

Cooking for One or Two People: Eating Alone



Eating alone can be difficult for people of any age. It may not seem worth the effort to cook just for you. But there are ways to put the fun back into eating. Start with keeping your cupboards well stocked with nutritious foods that you enjoy. Studies show that when you eat with others, you tend to have an improved nutrient intake. So, sit down with some friends, family members or neighbours and enjoy their company while you dine. Treat yourself well; you deserve it!

Make it a pleasure

- Create a pleasant place to eat. Set a table with flowers, place mat and napkin, even candles. Listen to music.
- Sometimes moving to a different location or doing something else while eating is helpful. Take your meal out on the porch, sit near a window, go to the park for a picnic, watch TV or read a book.
- Enjoy a dinner out in a restaurant occasionally. Ask for a “doggie bag” to take leftovers home.
- Want a break from cooking? Try a no-cook meal, ready-made meals or other convenience foods.
- Consider taking Meals on Wheels a few times a week or more.

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Find companions

- Share a potluck dinner with a friend, or form a regular lunch group.
- Start an eating club, such as a SOUPer Supper Club: The host makes soup and others bring bread, salad or fruit.
- Join a collective kitchen or share cooking with friends. Find a place where a few of you can meet to plan, shop and prepare several meals together. Take those meals home, freeze them and pull them out when you don't feel like shopping or cooking.
- Ask other seniors who are alone for ideas and suggestions, and share yours.
- Exchange recipes.
- Teach your grandchildren how to cook or bake.
- Check your local senior or community centres; many serve weekly meals.
- Beyond the nutritional benefits of eating with others, starting a super club or joining an eating group can also help you meet new people and forge new friendships. If you have lost your appetite for more than a day or two, talk with your doctor.