

# Nutrition and Seniors

**Remember to Stay Hydrated**— As we get older, we lose some of our sense of thirst. It's important to remind yourself to drink water often through out the day. We want to limit drinks with extra added sugar and salt like soda and alcoholic beverages. Through water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or low to no calorie beverages like seltzer we can stay hydrated without unnecessary added calories.

**Plan Healthy Meals**— The USDA MyPlate is a helpful tool to help guide us on what to eat, how much to eat, and the best options to choose. MyPlate emphasizes a diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and reduced fat dairy. Color and variety are also important to make sure that we are getting all the different nutrients our bodies' need.

**Food Safety**— As we get older, our immune systems start to slow down and we are more susceptible to getting sick. Paying attention to certain risky foods like unpasteurized dairy products and making sure to fully cook eggs, sprouts, fish, shellfish, meat and poultry is important in protecting against food borne illness.

**Reading Nutrition Labels**— Nutrition labels are very helpful to use if you need to watch certain nutrients in your diet. It's important to look at the serving sizes as well as calories, fat, sugar and sodium content. The more processed the food, the more added sugar and sodium the product will have. By looking at nutrition labels you can make smarter and healthier choices between the food products you buy.

**Eating as a Social Event**— Meals are more enjoyable when you eat with others. Invite a friend or group of people over for a meal to make a dinner a social event. There are many group centers that hold potlucks and dinner events that are great for enjoying time with others as well as getting a nutritious meal.

Source: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/choosing-healthy-meals-you-get-older>

## Practice healthy aging:



Be physically active



Make smart food choices



Get regular health screenings



Participate in activities you enjoy

## What to Focus on

*Our daily eating habits change as we grow and age. It's beneficial to make small adjustments and healthier choices to keep our bodies feeling their best. These are some nutrients to focus on and stay aware of.*

**Sodium:** Add flavor to foods with spices and herbs instead of salt and look for low-sodium packaged foods. Canned vegetables, soups, and breads tend to be higher in sodium than fresh or homemade versions. It's important to rinse canned vegetables before using them can reduce the sodium by up to 40%.

**Fruits and Vegetables:** Finding a way to add fruits and vegetables to your meals and snacks can help get an extra serving in your diet. Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals that we need, so focusing on getting those servings in are essential.

**Medication Reactions:** Talk to your doctor to understand how the medications you take affect your appetite or change your desire to eat, as well as foods that can interact with the medication's effectiveness.

**Dairy:** Vitamin D and calcium are crucial for our bone health. Drinking 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk throughout the day can give you the daily recommended amount of calcium. If you do not eat or drink any dairy products, there are fortified sources as well as milk alternatives that have calcium and vitamin D added to it.

# Recipes

## Pumpkin and White Bean Soup

Serves 6

Source: [whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups apple juice
- 1 can small white beans (15 oz)
- 1 small onion (finely chopped)
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 can pumpkin (15 oz)
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg, allspice, or ginger (if you like)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

### Directions:

Mash white beans, onion, and water with a fork or blender until smooth. Set aside. In a large pot, add the pumpkin, juice, cinnamon, black pepper, and salt. If using nutmeg, allspice, or ginger, add that too and stir. Add the bean mix to the pot. Cook over low heat for 15-20 minutes, until warmed through.

**Nutrition:** Calories: 140, Fat: 1 gm, Carbohydrate: 28 gm, Sodium: 420 mg, Fiber: 7 gm, Sugars: 10 gm, Protein: 7 gm.

## Squash and Apple Bake

Serves 6

Source: [allrecipes.com](https://allrecipes.com)

### Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp packed light brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, chopped
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
- 2 pounds butternut squash-peeled seeded, and cut into 1/2 inch slices
- 2 large apples- cored, and cut into 1/2 inch slices

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl combine butternut squash, apples, cinnamon, vanilla and brown sugar. Mix well. In a baking dish that has a lid pour the butternut squash mixture and spread evenly. Place chopped butter throughout the butternut squash mixture. Cover and bake for 30 minutes, until the butternut squash is tender and lightly browned. Remove from oven and stir. Serve warm.

**Nutrition:** 1 Serving: 1/2C: Calories 168, Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 4g, Sodium 395mg, Carbs 35, Fiber 5g, Sugar 15g, Protein 2g.

## Creamy Blueberry Chicken Salad

Serves 6

Source: [myrecipes.com](https://myrecipes.com)

### Ingredients

- 1/2 C thinly sliced red onion
- 1/4 C torn fresh basil
- 12 oz. shredded skinless boneless chicken (about 3 Cups)
- 2 1/2 Tbsp lemon juice, divided
- 2 C blueberries fresh or thawed (if frozen)
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1/3 C diced celery
- 1/2 C plain 2% reduced-fat Greek yogurt
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 5 oz. salad mix

**Directions:** Combine onion, basil, chicken, and celery in a medium-sized bowl. Sprinkle 1/4 tsp of salt. Combine yogurt, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and honey in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Add yogurt mixture to chicken mixture; toss to coat. Gently stir in blueberries. Place salad mix, remaining 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice and oil in a bowl; toss to coat. Divide salad mixture evenly among 6 plates; top each serving with about 3/4 chicken mixture.

**Nutrition:** 1 serving= 3/4 chicken mixture: Calories 188, Fat 8.5g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 369mg, Carbs 13g, Fiber 2g, Sugar 9g, Protein 16g.

## Sweet Potato Toast with an Egg

Serves 1

Source: [EatingWell](https://eatingwell.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 large slice sweet potato ( 1/4 inch thick)
- 1 large egg, fried or poached
- 1/2 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1/3 cup cooked spinach
- 1/2 teaspoon sliced fresh chives

**Directions:** Toast sweet potato in a toaster oven until just cooked through and starting to brown, 12 to 15 minutes. Top with spinach, egg, chives and hot sauce.

**Nutrition:** Calories 124, Total Fat 5g, Saturated Fat 2g, Sodium 190mg, Carbs 11g, Fiber 3g, Protein 9g, Sugar 3g.