

# Stay Strong with Nutrition: Seniors and COVID-19

The best ways to protect against COVID-19 are proper hand hygiene and physical distancing. It is also important to make sure you get enough nutrition and live a healthy lifestyle to maintain your health and immune system.

This handout has tips to help you stay healthy and strong.

## Weight and health

- Maintaining your weight can be a sign of good nutrition.
- Tell your doctor or caregiver if:
  - your clothes are getting looser
  - you aren't buying as much food as you used to, or
  - you don't feel like eating

## Plan grocery shopping

- Plan ahead for groceries and buy enough food to limit trips to the store.
- Order groceries online if possible with curbside pick-up or delivery to prevent community exposure.
- If grocery shopping in store, sanitize/wash your hands as soon as you leave the grocery store.
- Put away all groceries at home, then wash your hands again.
- If you have low immunity, ask others to go grocery shopping for you.

## Eat regularly

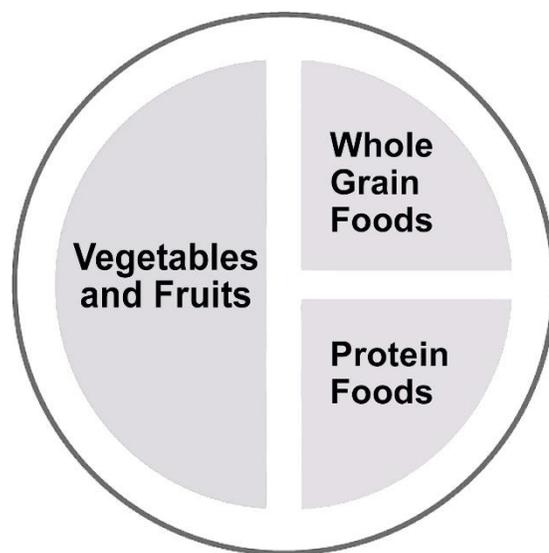
- Aim to eat 3 times per day and add snacks.
- If your appetite is poor, you may choose to eat 6 smaller meals during the day. This may help you get enough nutrition.

## Eat enough protein

- Protein helps your body function and maintains muscle which is needed to keep active.
- Older adults who eat more protein have more muscle.
- Include a protein food at each meal. If you do not eat a protein food at each meal, include one with your snacks.
- Examples of protein foods include: milk, eggs, meat, beans, cheese, yogurt, tofu, fish, and nuts.

## Choose healthy meals

- Use the Eat Well Plate from Canada's Food Guide:  $\frac{1}{2}$  plate vegetables and fruits,  $\frac{1}{4}$  whole grain foods, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  protein foods.



- Choose a variety of vegetables and fruits. Fresh, frozen, or canned are all good choices.
- If you are looking for quick and easy meal ideas visit [healthyeatingstartshere.ca](https://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search *Quick and Easy Meals*.
- If you are wanting to make healthy choices at restaurants, visit [healthyeatingstartshere.ca](https://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search *Eating Out the Healthy Way*.

## Drink enough fluids

- With age, you may not feel as thirsty. Some medicines may make you lose more water.
- Drinking enough fluids can help you avoid dehydration and constipation.
- Drink at least 6 cups (1.5 L) of fluid a day. Examples: water, milk, soup, broth, coffee, and tea.
- Check with your health provider if alcohol is a beverage that is okay for you to drink. [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#) suggest the following:
  - Females: Limit to 2 drinks per day (maximum 10 drinks per week).
  - Males: Limit to 3 drinks per day (maximum 15 drinks per week).

## Take a Vitamin D supplement

- Vitamin D is important for a healthy immune system as well as bones and muscle.
- Adults over 50 years are recommended to take a Vitamin D supplement of 1000 IU per day unless otherwise directed by their doctor.

## Keep active

- Regular physical activity helps you to stay strong. It helps maintain muscle, and your immune system.
- Physical activity can prevent health conditions from becoming worse.

## Other resources

- Health Link has dietitians available to answer general nutrition questions. If you have a nutrition question, call 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a dietitian.
- For information about where to find free food in Alberta visit [healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://healthyeatingstartshere.ca) and search *Free Food in Alberta*.
- For healthy eating tips and recipes visit [healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://healthyeatingstartshere.ca).
- For information about [Food Safety](#) visit [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) and search *COVID-19 and Food Safety*.
- **211 Alberta** is a free, confidential service that provides information and referral to a wide range of community services. It includes information about food services in the community like food hampers, free/low cost meals and school meal programs.  
Call, text, or phone 211 Alberta:
  - dial 2-1-1
  - text INFO to 211
  - visit [www.ab.211.ca](http://www.ab.211.ca) and click “live chat.”
- For updated health information about COVID-19, testing, and other resources, visit [ahs.ca/covid](http://ahs.ca/covid).

