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## Eating Well As You Get Older

### ● Benefits of Eating Well



Eating well is vital for everyone at all ages. Whatever your age, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health and in how you look and feel.



Eating a well-planned, balanced mix of foods every day has many health benefits. For instance, eating well may reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer, and anemia. If you already have one or more of these chronic diseases, eating well and being physically active may help you better manage them. Healthy eating may also help you reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and manage diabetes.

Eating well gives you the nutrients needed to keep your muscles, bones, organs, and other parts of your body healthy throughout your life. These nutrients include vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, fats, and water.

Eating well helps keep up your energy level, too. By consuming enough calories -- a way to measure the energy you get from food -- you give your body the fuel it needs throughout the day. The number of calories needed depends on how old you are, whether you're a man or woman, and how active you are.

Consuming the right number of calories for your level of physical activity helps you control your weight, too. Extra weight is a concern for older adults because it can increase the risk for diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease and can increase joint problems. Eating more calories than your body needs for your activity level will lead to extra pounds.

If you become less physically active as you age, you will probably need fewer calories to stay at the same weight. Choosing mostly nutrient-dense foods -- foods which are high in nutrients but low in calories -- can give you the nutrients you need while keeping down calorie intake.

Your food choices also affect your digestion. For instance, too



**little fiber or fluid may cause constipation. Eating more whole-grain foods, fruits and vegetables or drinking more water may help with constipation.**

**Eating well isn't just a "diet" or "program" that's here today and gone tomorrow. It is part of a healthy lifestyle that you can adopt now and stay with in the years to come.**

**To eat healthier, you can begin by taking small steps, making one change at a time. For instance, you might buy whole-grain bread, leaner meats, or more fruits and vegetables when you shop.**

**These changes may be easier than you think. They're possible even if you need help with shopping or cooking, or if you have a limited budget. If you have a specific medical condition, be sure to check with your doctor or dietitian about foods you should include or avoid.**

**Whatever your age, you can start making positive lifestyle changes today. Eating well can help you stay healthy and independent -- and look and feel good -- in the years to come.**

### **● Quiz**

#### **1. Eating well is important**

- A. only for children.**
- B. only as you get older.**
- C. at any age.**

**C is the correct answer. Eating well is vital for everyone at all ages. Whatever your age, your daily food choices can make an important difference in your health and in how you look and feel.**

#### **2. Eating well may help prevent and manage**

- A. heart disease.**
- B. type 2 diabetes.**
- C. bone loss.**
- D. all of the above**

**D is the correct answer. Eating a mix of healthy foods every day may help prevent heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer, and anemia. Eating well may also help reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and may help manage diabetes.**

**3. If you become less physically active as you age, you will probably need**

- A. fewer calories to stay at the same weight.**
- B. more calories to stay at the same weight.**
- C. the same number of calories to stay at the same weight.**

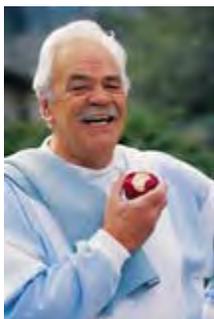
**A is the correct answer. (A) If you become less physically active as you age, you will probably need fewer calories to stay at the same weight. Choosing mostly nutrient-dense foods – foods which are high in nutrients but low in calories -- can give you the nutrients while keeping down calorie intake.**

**4. Which of these may help with constipation?**

- A. Taking a multivitamin.**
- B. Drinking plenty of water.**
- C. Eating less fiber.**

**B is the correct answer. (B) Drinking plenty of water every day may help with constipation. You can increase your intake of water by eating fruits and vegetables, which have a high moisture content. Not getting enough fiber may cause constipation. Eating more whole-grain foods may help.**

### ● **How to Eat Well**



**Eating well means choosing a mix of healthy foods that give your body the nutrients it needs. Eating well also means consuming the right number of calories for your age, gender, and level of physical activity. You also need to know what foods to limit. And of course, it's important to enjoy your meals.**

### ● **How to Eat Well - Choose Nutrient-dense Foods**



**To eat well, it's best to choose a mix of nutrient-dense foods every day. Nutrient-dense foods are foods that are high in nutrients but low in calories. Look for foods that contain vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, lean protein, and healthy fats.**



**Plan your meals and snacks to include**

- plenty of fruits and vegetables
- plenty of grains, especially whole grains
- low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products
- lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- limited amounts of fats (saturated and *trans* fats should be as low as possible), cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Fruits, vegetables, and grains offer important vitamins and minerals to keep your body healthy. Most of these foods have little fat. They also have no cholesterol. Fruits, vegetables and grains are also a source of fiber, and eating more fiber may help with digestion and constipation and may lower cholesterol and blood sugar.

Fruits, vegetables, and grains and beans also give your body phytochemicals. Phytochemicals are natural compounds such as beta-carotene, lutein and lycopene. Like vitamins, minerals, and fiber, phytochemicals may promote good health and reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Research is underway to learn more about these natural compounds.



Eat a variety of fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits every day. To make sure you get the benefit of the natural fiber in fruits, you should eat most of your fruits whole rather than as juices. Fruits may be purchased fresh, canned, frozen, or dried and may be eaten whole, cut-up, or pureed.



Also, eat a variety of colors and types of vegetables every day. Broccoli, spinach, turnip and collard greens, and other dark leafy greens are good choices. You might also choose orange vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, or winter squash. Vegetables may be purchased raw or cooked, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated. They may be eaten whole, cut-up, or mashed.



Foods made from grains are a major source of energy and fiber. Include grains in your diet every day. Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Grains fall into two main categories: whole and refined. When choosing grain foods, try to make half your grains whole. In other words, at least half of the cereals, breads, crackers, and pastas you eat should be made from whole grains.

Whole grains are better sources of fiber and nutrients than refined grains, such as white flour or white rice. Refined grains have had both the bran and germ removed and don't have as much fiber or as many nutrients as whole grains. Most refined grains are enriched, with some B vitamins and iron added back in after processing. However, fiber is not replaced.



Whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, are made with the entire seed of a plant, including the bran, the germ, and the



**endosperm. Together, they provide lots of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, healthy fat, carbohydrates, and fiber.**

**Try whole wheat pasta instead of regular pasta or use brown rice in a casserole in place of white rice. Look for "whole wheat" or "whole oats" rather than just "wheat" or "oats" on the ingredients list of packaged goods to make sure you're getting whole grains.**



**Low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products should be among the foods you choose every day, too. These products provide calcium and vitamin D to help maintain strong bones. They also provide protein, potassium, vitamin A, and magnesium. Low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt are good options.**

**If you don't drink milk, be sure to have other products that contain the nutrients that milk provides. Some cereals and juices are fortified with extra calcium and vitamin D. Salmon, sardines and mackerel are good sources of vitamin D.**



**If you avoid milk because of its lactose (milk sugar) content, you can get needed nutrients from lactose-reduced or low-lactose milk products. You might also drink small amounts of milk several times a day or take tablets with the enzyme lactase (available in most drugstores and grocery stores) before consuming milk products. Other sources of calcium include foods such as hard cheese, yogurt, boney canned fish like salmon or sardines, and calcium-fortified tofu or soy beverages.**

**Protein helps build and maintain muscle, bones, and skin, and you should include some protein in your diet every day. Meats and poultry are sources of protein, B vitamins, iron, and zinc. When buying meats and poultry, choose lean cuts or low-fat products. They provide less total fat, less saturated fat, and fewer calories than products with more fat.**



**For instance, 3 ounces of cooked, regular ground beef (70% lean) has 6.1 grams of saturated fat and 236 calories. Three ounces of cooked, extra-lean ground beef (95% lean) contains 2.6 grams of saturated fat and 148 calories.**



**Consider varying your sources of protein. Try replacing meats and poultry with fish or with bean, tofu, or pea dishes. These foods tend to be low or lower in saturated fats, and beans provide fiber. Pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, split peas, and lentils are all healthy options. Look**



for ways to add nuts and seeds to your meals and snacks too, but keep amounts small since these foods can contain high amounts of fat.

Fats are a source of energy and help maintain healthy organs, skin and hair. Fats also help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K. It's okay to include some oils and fats in the foods you eat, but be aware that fat contains more than twice as many calories as protein or carbohydrates. Try to choose foods that are low in fat or fat free.



Some fats are better for you than others. Choose polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats when possible. Sources of better fats include vegetable oils such as soybean, corn, canola, olive, safflower, and sunflower oils. Polyunsaturated fat is also in nuts, seeds, and fatty fish. Walnuts, flaxseed and salmon are examples of foods with polyunsaturated fat.



Be sure to consume plenty of liquids, especially water. You need to replace the fluids you lose every day. You can increase your intake of water by eating fruits and vegetables, which have a high moisture content. This may help prevent constipation and dehydration. Other good choices are unsweetened tea, low-fat or fat-free milk, and 100 percent fruit juice.



Read the food labels on packaged foods and canned goods to learn what's in the products you buy. All food labels contain a list of ingredients and nutrition information. Ingredients are listed in order by weight, which means that the ingredient present in the largest quantity is listed first and the ingredient present in the smallest quantity appears last. Nutrition information is found on the Nutrition Facts label.



The MyPyramid Plan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA, can help you choose a mix of healthy foods that are right for you. This online tool at [www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov) suggests what and how much to eat from each food group. The amount depends on your age, sex, and activity level.

Another balanced eating plan is the DASH eating plan. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. It is designed to help prevent or manage high blood pressure, or hypertension. The plan suggests which foods to eat and how much to eat. Your doctor may recommend other eating plans to help manage health conditions that occur as you get older. For more information about DASH, contact the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at 1-301-592-8573 or 1- 240-629-3255 (TTY)

Wholesome foods provide a wealth of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients you need to stay healthy. Eating properly is the best way to get these

**nutrients. However, if you have concerns that you are not eating as well as you should, you should talk to your doctor about taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement.**

### ● Quiz

**1. Nutrient-dense foods are foods that are**

- A. low in nutrients and high in calories.**
- B. high in nutrients and low in calories.**
- C. high in nutrients and high in calories.**

**B is the correct answer. Nutrient-dense foods are foods that are HIGH in nutrients and LOW in calories. It is best to eat a mix of nutrient-dense foods every day. Examples of nutrient-dense foods are fruits and vegetables, whole grains, poultry, fish, lean cuts of meat, beans, eggs, nuts, and unsaturated fats like olive or canola oil.**

**2. Grains fall into two main categories:**

- A. whole and refined.**
- B. dark and light.**
- C. rough and smooth.**

**A is the correct answer. Grains fall into two main categories: whole and refined. Whole grains are better sources of fiber and nutrients than refined grains, such as white flour or white rice. Refined grains have had both the bran and germ removed and don't have as much fiber or as many nutrients as whole grains. Most refined grains are enriched, with some B vitamins and iron added back in after processing. However, fiber is not replaced. At least half of the cereals, breads, crackers, and pastas you choose should be made from whole grains.**

**3. Dietary sources of protein include**

- A. meats and poultry.**
- B. fish and eggs.**
- C. beans and tofu.**
- D. all of the above.**

**D is the correct answer. Meats and poultry are dietary sources of protein, but other foods also provide protein. Fish, tofu, pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, split peas, lentils, nuts, seeds, eggs and milk products are all sources of protein in the diet.**

**4. Some fats are better for you than others. When possible, choose**

- A. saturated fat.
- B. *trans* fat.
- C. polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.

C is the correct answer. Choose polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats when possible. Sources of better fats include vegetable oils such as soybean, corn, canola, olive, safflower, and sunflower oils. Polyunsaturated fat is also in nuts, seeds, and fatty fish. Walnuts, flaxseed and salmon are examples of foods with polyunsaturated fat. Your intake of saturated and *trans* fats should be as low as possible.

### ● How to Eat Well - Know How Much to Eat



Eating a mix of healthy foods every day provides the nutrients, fiber, and calories your body needs. The amount you should eat depends on your age and whether you are a man or woman. It also depends on your level of physical activity. The more physically active you are, the more calories you might be able to eat without gaining weight.

Most people in the United States eat more calories than they need.

A woman over age 50 should consume about

- 1,600 calories a day if her level of physical activity is low
- 1,800 calories daily if she is moderately active
- 2,000 to 2,200 calories daily if she has an active lifestyle.

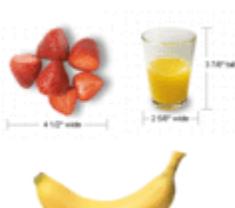
A man over age 50 should consume about

- 2,000 calories a day if his level of physical activity is low
- 2,200 to 2,400 calories daily if he is moderately active
- 2,400 to 2,800 calories daily if he has an active lifestyle.

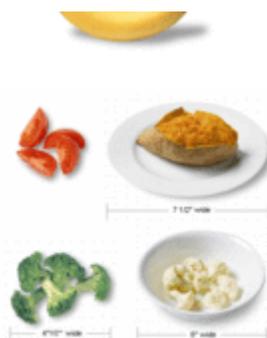
Plan your meals and snacks to include the right number of calories for your activity level. (For information about exercise and older adults, go to

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/toc.html>)

The Dietary Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA, recommend eating the following amounts of food if you are eating 2,000 calories per day. Remember to adjust the amounts depending on your daily calorie level.



A person who consumes about 2,000 calories daily should plan to eat 2 - 2 ½ cups of fruit a day. This might include one large banana, one-half cup of strawberries and a half-cup of orange juice. To help you get enough fiber, most of your daily fruit intake should be in the form of



whole fruits rather than fruit juices.

A person who eats 2,000 calories daily should have 2 - 2 ½ cups of vegetables a day. This might include a half-cup each of broccoli, tomatoes, cauliflower, and a sweet potato. Aim for lots of color on your plate as a way to get a variety of vegetables each day.



A person who eats 2,000 calories per day should eat 7 to 8 ounces of grain foods daily. At least half of the grain foods eaten should be whole grains. Approximately one ounce of grain foods counts as a serving. This is about one slice of bread, one roll, or one small muffin. It is also about one cup of dry flaked cereal or a half-cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cereal.



Milk products are another important part of eating well. A person who consumes 2,000 calories daily should have the equivalent of 2-3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, or other milk products daily. One cup of yogurt contains about the same amount of calcium as 1 cup of milk. Eating 1½ ounces of natural cheese or 2 ounces of processed cheese is the same as drinking 1 cup of milk.



A person who consumes 2,000 calories daily should eat about 5½ ounces of protein each day. You can get protein from meat, poultry, and fish, as well as eggs, dried beans, tofu, nuts, and seeds. One egg or one-fourth cup of cooked dry beans or tofu counts as 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish. One tablespoon of peanut butter or a half-ounce of nuts or seeds also is the same as 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish. Nuts contain no cholesterol.



Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the vegetable oils used in cooking. Use mainly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils like those that come from olive or canola oil. A person who eats 2,000 calories daily should not consume more than the equivalent of 6 teaspoons of oil daily.

When eating out or buying packaged foods, pay attention to portion sizes. Portion sizes are not the same as the serving sizes listed on the Nutrition Facts label. A portion is the amount of food served in one eating occasion. A serving size is a standardized amount of food, such as a cup or an ounce, which is used to provide dietary guidance or to make comparisons among foods. The portions served at fast-food and other restaurants have grown a lot in recent years.

Whether you're eating out or at home, one portion may be much more food -- and many more calories -- than the amounts recommended for a specific daily calorie level. For instance, a bowl of pasta may be larger than the half-cup of cooked pasta recommended for a daily calorie level.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (125g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 200	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	
24%	18%
Saturated Fat 5g	
10%	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	
40%	40%
Sodium 470mg	
94%	94%
Total Carbohydrate 32g	
64%	25%
Dietary Fiber 2g	
4%	4%
Protein 10g	
20%	20%
Vitamin A	
20%	20%
Calcium	
25%	25%

Also, read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged and canned foods. It tells you how many calories and which nutrients the food provides. You can use it to help you keep track of how much fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, cholesterol, sugars, and calories you get from different foods.

The Percent Daily Value (written as "% daily value") on the right of the label tells you what percentage of the recommended daily amount of a nutrient is in one serving of the food. It is based on the nutritional needs of a person who consumes 2,000 calories per day. For example, on this label for macaroni and cheese, the Percent Daily Value for total fat is 18%. This means that one serving of macaroni and cheese (1 cup) will give you 18 percent of the total amount of fat you should allow yourself each day, assuming you eat about 2,000 calories daily.



Pay attention to the serving size and the number of servings in the package. A package might contain two or more servings, so if you eat two servings, you would consume twice the calories, fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, etc., as you would for one serving.

## ● Quiz

1. The amount you should eat depends on

- A. your age.
- B. whether you are a man or a woman.
- C. your physical activity level.
- D. all of the above

D is the correct answer. The amount you should eat depends on your age and whether you are a man or woman. It also depends on your physical activity level. The more physically active you are the more calories you might be able to eat without gaining weight.

2. It is recommended that most older adults consume

- A. no milk or milk products.
- B. about 3 cups of milk or milk products daily.

**C. about 6 cups of milk or milk products daily.**

**B is the correct answer. An older person who consumes 2,000 calories daily should try to have the equivalent of 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk daily. Yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese, or other milk products are also some of the choices. Lactose-free products can often be used in place of milk and milk products. Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products are an important part of eating well.**

**3. In general, the sizes of portions served at fast-food and other restaurants**

- A. are smaller than in the past.**
- B. are about the same as in the past.**
- C. have grown a lot in recent years.**

**C is the correct answer. In general, the portions served at fast-food and other restaurants have grown a lot in recent years. When eating out, pay attention to portion sizes. One portion may be much more food than the amount recommended for a specific daily calorie level.**

**4. The number of calories and nutrient amounts listed on the Nutrition Facts label of packaged foods are for**

- A. the entire package.**
- B. half of the package.**
- C. one serving.**

**C is the correct answer. The number of calories and nutrient amounts listed in the Nutrition Facts are only for one serving. It's important to read the Nutrition Facts label to find out the serving size and number of servings in the package. The package might contain two or more servings. If you eat two servings, you would be consuming twice the calories, fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, etc., as you would for one serving.**

### **● How to Eat Well - Limit Some Foods**



**Choosing foods and beverages that give you the most nutrients for the calories consumed is one way to eat well. At the same time, it's important to avoid "empty calories" -- foods and drinks that are high in calories but low in nutrients. Limit your intake of**

- saturated fats and *trans* fats**
- cholesterol**
- sodium**
- added sugars.**

We often think of fats as unhealthy, but your body needs a limited amount of certain kinds of fats. Fats in your diet give you energy and also help your body absorb vitamins.

On the other hand, fat contains more than twice as many calories as protein or carbohydrates, and eating too many high-fat foods will likely add excess calories and lead to weight gain. Excess weight increases your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, or other health problems. Excess weight can also make it harder to control these diseases if you already have them.

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 20mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 5g	0%
Sugars 5g	

Learn to limit fats to 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories. For instance, if you consume 2,000 calories daily, only 400 to 700 of the calories should be from fats. The number of calories from fat is listed on the Nutrition Facts label on packaged food labels.

Most of the fats you consume should be polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats. These healthy fats come from liquid vegetable oils, nuts, flaxseed, and fatty fish such as salmon, trout, and herring.

Limit the amount of saturated fats and *trans* fats you consume. Saturated fats are found in foods like beef, cheese, milk, butter, oils, and ice cream and other frozen desserts. *Trans* fats are found in foods like margarine, crackers, icings, French fries, and microwave popcorn, as well as in many baked goods. Many sweets such as cakes, cookies, and doughnuts include saturated and/or *trans* fats.



No more than 10 percent of your total daily calories should come from saturated fats. Keep daily intake of *trans* fats as low as possible. Read the Nutrition Facts label to choose products that are low in these fats.

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 20mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 5g	0%
Sugars 5g	

Here are steps you can take to lower the fat in your diet.

- Choose lean cuts of meat, fish, or poultry (with the skin removed).
- Trim off any extra fat before cooking.

- Use low-fat or fat-free milk products and salad dressings.
- Use non-stick pots and pans, and cook without added fat.

Here are steps you can take to lower the fat in your diet.

- If you do use fat, use either an unsaturated vegetable oil or a nonfat cooking spray.
- Broil, roast, bake, stir-fry, steam, microwave, or boil foods. Avoid frying them.
- Season your foods with lemon juice, herbs, or spices instead of butter.

Sample Label for  
Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (226g)	
Servings Per Container 3	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 410mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	

Look for ways to limit the amount of cholesterol you consume, too. People who have a high amount of "bad," or LDL cholesterol in their blood have a high risk for heart disease. They should consume foods with less than a total of 200 mg of cholesterol daily. Read the Nutrition Facts label to see how much cholesterol is in a product serving. Cholesterol is only found in animal products so you don't need to worry about it being in fruits or vegetables unless

butter, cheese, cream, or sauces and gravies made from meat or meat broths are added.

Sodium is consumed in the diet as part of salt. Older adults should limit their sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams daily, or about 2/3 of a teaspoon. This helps to keep your blood pressure under control. Keeping your blood pressure under control can lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

Sodium is natural in some foods, but most of the sodium we eat is added to foods by manufacturers. Restaurant foods also may be high in sodium. Many people add salt to foods at the table or while cooking, too.

Ways to cut back on sodium include

- reading the Nutrition Facts labels to select products with low salt content
- keeping the salt shaker off the table
- replacing salt with herbs, spices, and low-sodium seasonings when you cook
- asking for low-sodium dishes and for sauces on the side when eating out.

Sample Label for  
Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (226g)	
Servings Per Container 3	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	

When you shop, look for foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," "sodium free," or "unsalted." Read the Nutrition Facts label to find out how much sodium a product contains. Different brands of foods that look the same can contain very different amounts of sodium.

A diet rich in potassium can counter the effects of salt on blood pressure. Older adults should consume 4,700 milligrams of potassium daily from food sources. Sources of potassium include fruits and vegetables such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, greens, cooked dried beans, and tomato products. Potassium is also found in low-fat yogurt and milk, and in fish such as halibut, Pacific cod, yellow fin tuna, and rainbow trout.



To help control your calorie intake, limit foods and beverages like soft drinks and fruit drinks that are high in added sugars. Replace sweets and soft drinks with lower-calorie, nutrient-dense alternatives like fruits, vegetables, and 100 % juices. Unsweetened tea, low-fat or fat-free milk, or plain water also are good choices. Be aware that some products are low in fat but high in added sugars.

Sample Label for  
Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 2g	0%
Sugars 5g	

The Nutrition Facts label tells you the total amount of sugars in one serving of a product. However, added sugars are not listed separately on this label. To find out if a product contains added sugars, read the ingredient list on the food package. Added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, honey, molasses, and fruit juice concentrates. They also include dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, and sucrose.

Also, if you drink alcohol, limit the amount to 1 drink daily for women and 2 drinks daily for men. Alcoholic beverages give you calories but few nutrients. A drink is 12 fluid ounces of regular beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1½ fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

For safety reasons, avoid alcohol when you plan to drive a vehicle or use machinery. Also avoid alcohol when doing activities that require attention, skill, or coordination. People taking certain medicines and those with some medical conditions should not drink alcohol at all. Ask your doctor whether you can have an occasional drink if you want to.

### ● Quiz

1. To eat healthy, it is important to limit your intake of

- A. saturated fats and *trans* fats.
- B. cholesterol
- C. sodium and added sugars.
- D. all of the above

D is the correct answer. Limit your intake of foods that contain saturated and *trans* fat, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars. While it's important to choose foods and beverages that give you the most nutrients for the calories consumed, you should also avoid "empty calories" -- foods and drinks that are high in calories but low in nutrients.

## 2. Cholesterol is found

- A. only in animal products.
- B. in fruits and vegetables.
- C. in animal products, fruits and vegetables.

A is the correct answer. Cholesterol is only found in animal products so you don't need to worry about it being in fruits or vegetables unless butter, cheese, cream, or sauces and gravies made from meat or meat broths are added. Look for ways to limit the amount of cholesterol you consume. People who have a high amount of "bad," or LDL cholesterol in their blood have a high risk for heart disease. They should consume foods with less than a total of 200 mg of cholesterol daily. Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged food to see how much cholesterol is in a product serving.

## 3. Older adults should limit their intake of sodium to

- A. 1,500 milligrams daily
- B. 2,000 milligrams daily
- C. 2,500 milligrams daily

A is the correct answer. Older adults should limit their intake of sodium, or salt, to 1,500 milligrams daily. Limiting your salt intake can help keep your blood pressure under control and can lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease. Ways to cut back include keeping the salt shaker off the table and replacing salt with herbs, spices, and low-sodium seasonings when you cook. Also, read the Nutrition Facts label to select products with low salt content, and ask for low-sodium dishes and for sauces on the side when you eat out.

## 4. To find out if a packaged food contains added sugars,

- A. read the Nutrition Facts label on the food package.
- B. read the ingredient list on the food package.
- C. read the "use-by" date.

B is the correct answer. To find out if a product contains added sugars, read the ingredient list on the food package. The Nutrition Facts label tells you the total amount of sugars in one serving of a product. However, added sugars are not listed separately on this label. Added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, honey, molasses, and fruit juice concentrates. They also include dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, and sucrose.

## ● How to Eat Well - Enjoy Your Meals

Eating is one of life's pleasures, but some people lose interest in eating and cooking as they get older. They may find that food no longer tastes good. They may find it harder to shop for food or cook, or they don't enjoy meals because they often eat alone. Others may have problems chewing or digesting the food they eat.

Small changes can often help overcome challenges to eating well. These changes can help you to enjoy meals more. They can also help make sure that you get the nutrients and energy you need for healthy, active living.



One reason people lose interest in eating is that their senses of taste and smell change with age. Foods you once enjoyed might seem to have less flavor when you get older. You can enhance the flavor of food by cooking meals in new ways or adding different herbs and spices.



Some medicines can change your sense of taste or make you feel less hungry. Talk with your doctor if you have no appetite, or if you find that food tastes bad or has no flavor.

If you don't feel like eating because of problems with chewing, digestion, or gas, talk with your doctor or a registered dietitian. Avoiding some foods could mean you miss out on needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, or protein. Not eating enough could mean that you don't consume enough nutrients and calories.

If you have trouble chewing, you might have a problem with your teeth or gums. If you wear dentures, not being able to chew well could also mean that your dentures need to be adjusted. Talk to your doctor or dentist if you're finding it hard to chew food.

Chewing problems can sometimes be resolved by eating softer foods. For instance, you could replace raw vegetables and fresh fruits with cooked vegetables or juices. Also choose foods like applesauce and canned peaches or other fruits.

Meat can also be hard to chew. Instead, try eating ground or shredded meat, eggs, or milk products like fat-free or low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt. You could also replace meat with soft foods like cooked, dry beans, eggs, tofu, tuna fish, etc.

If you experience a lot of digestive problems, such as gas or bloating, try to avoid foods that cause gas or other digestive problems. If you have stomach problems that don't go away, talk with your doctor. If you do not have an appetite or seem to be losing weight without trying, talk to your doctor or ask to see a dietitian.



If you don't feel like eating because food no longer tastes good, you might try cooking meals in new ways or using different herb and spices. Experiment with ethnic foods, regional dishes, or vegetarian recipes. Also try out different kinds of fruits, vegetables, and grains that add color to your meals.

Look for ways to combine foods from the different food groups in creative ways. You can do this while continuing to eat familiar foods that reflect your cultural, ethnic, or family traditions.

Try out new recipes from friends, newspapers, magazines, television cooking shows, or cooking websites. You might also learn new ways to prepare meals and snacks that are good for you by taking a cooking class. Grocery stores, culinary schools, community centers, and adult education programs offer these classes.



Eating with others is another way to enjoy meals more. For instance, you could share meals with neighbors at home or dine out with friends or family members. You could also join or start a breakfast, lunch, or dinner club.



Many senior centers and places of worship host group meals. You might also arrange to have meals brought to your home.



When you eat out, you can still eat well if you choose carefully, know how your food is prepared, and watch portion sizes. Select main dishes that include vegetables such as salads, vegetable stir fries, or kebobs. Order your food baked, broiled, or grilled instead of fried, and make sure it is well done, especially dishes with meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs. Choose dishes without gravies or creamy sauces, and ask for dressing on the side so you can control the amount you eat. Ordering half portions or splitting a dish with a friend can help keep calorie intake down.

Also, don't be afraid to ask for substitutions. Many restaurants and eating establishments not only offer healthful choices but let you substitute healthier foods. For example, you might substitute fat-free yogurt for sour cream on your baked potato. Instead of a side order of onion rings or French fries, you could have the mixed vegetables. Ask for brown rice or rice pilaf instead of white rice. Try having fruit for dessert.

Meals are an important part of our lives. They give us nourishment and a chance to spend time with friends, family members, and others. If physical

problems keep you from eating well or enjoying meals, talk with a health care professional. If you need help shopping or preparing meals or want to find ways to share meals with others, look for services in your community. Your Area Agency on Aging can tell you about these services. To contact your Area Agency on Aging, call the Eldercare Locator toll-free at 1-800-677-1116.

### ● Quiz

1. Older people sometimes lose interest in eating and cooking because

- A. their senses of taste and smell change.
- B. they don't like to eat alone.
- C. they have problems chewing or digesting food.
- D. all of the above

D is the correct answer. Some people lose interest in eating and cooking as they get older. They may find that food no longer tastes good, sometimes because of medicines they are taking. They may find it harder to shop for food or to cook, or they don't enjoy meals because they often eat alone. Others have problems chewing or digesting the food they eat.

2. Older people who have problems chewing food should

- A. do nothing and hope that the problem goes away.
- B. try to eat as little as possible.
- C. talk with a doctor or dentist.

C is the correct answer. Older people who have trouble chewing food should talk with a doctor or dentist. If you have trouble chewing, you might have a problem with your teeth or gums, or your dentures might need to be adjusted. Some chewing problems can be resolved by eating softer foods. Keep in mind that avoiding hard-to-chew foods could mean you miss out on needed nutrients or don't consume enough calories.

3. When looking for ways to enjoy different kinds of foods, it is best to

- A. give up foods that are traditional in your family or culture.
- B. experiment with new recipes and ingredients.
- C. add more salt and sugar when cooking.

B is the correct answer. When looking for ways to enjoy different kinds of foods, experiment with new recipes and ingredients. For instance, you could cook meals in new ways or add different herbs and spices. Experiment with ethnic foods, regional dishes, or vegetarian recipes, and try out different fruits, vegetables, and grains. You can do this while continuing to eat familiar foods that reflect your cultural, ethnic, or family traditions.

#### 4. To eat healthfully when eating out, you should

- A. order your food baked, grilled, or broiled.
- B. order your food fried.
- C. order your meat rare instead of well done.

A is the correct answer. Order your food baked, broiled, or grilled instead of fried. This can help keep down your fat intake. Also, make sure your food is well done -- especially dishes with meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs -- to avoid foodborne illness.

#### ● How to Eat Safely

Whether you cook for yourself at home, eat out, or have ready-to-eat meals brought in, you want the food you eat to be tasty and safe. Eating safely means making sure the food you consume is properly handled, prepared, and stored. It also means knowing when not to eat certain foods. Eating safely is especially important for older adults, who may be less able to fight off foodborne illness. Learning about food safety can help make your meals safe as well as enjoyable.

#### ● How to Eat Safely - Avoid Foodborne Illness

Food safety is a vital part of staying well. Each year, about 76 million people in the United States become ill from eating contaminated foods. Of those, about 5,000 die. These illnesses may come from eating foods contaminated with bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Illnesses you get from contaminated food are called foodborne illnesses, also known as food poisoning.



Foodborne illness can affect anyone, but older adults are at increased risk. As we age, our bodies produce less stomach acid, making it harder to get rid of harmful bacteria that enter our digestive system. Our digestion may slow down, allowing harmful bacteria to stay in our bodies longer. Also, changes in smell and taste can keep us from knowing when food is spoiled.

Foodborne illnesses can cause serious health problems for older adults. An older person who gets a foodborne illness is likely to be sicker longer, and if hospitalized, is likely to have a longer hospital stay.

There are many reasons why foodborne illnesses affect us today. People are eating more meals outside the home and consuming more food that is prepared by others. Much of the food we consume is delivered over longer distances. Also, harmful bacteria that are more resistant to drugs are finding their way onto foods.



Foodborne illnesses can be dangerous. Many are caused



by bacteria such as *E. coli* and *salmonella*, which can cause serious health problems. But if you follow good food safety practices, you can reduce your risk of getting sick from these and other harmful bacteria.

It can be difficult to know when harmful bacteria in food have made you sick. After all, you can't see, smell, or taste the bacteria the food may contain. If you get a foodborne illness, you might have upset stomach, abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea. Or, you could have flu-like symptoms with a fever and headache, and body aches. Sometimes people confuse foodborne illness with other types of illness.

Many times people think their foodborne illness was caused by their last meal, but that may not be true. The time between eating the contaminated food and the onset of illness can vary widely. Usually, foodborne bacteria take 1 to 3 days to cause illness. But you could become sick anytime from 30 minutes to 3 weeks after eating some foods with dangerous bacteria. Whether you actually get sick or not depends on a variety of factors, including the type of bacteria in the food.

If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should take these steps.

1. Contact your doctor or health care provider. Seek medical treatment as necessary.
2. Preserve the food in question. Wrap it securely, label it "Danger", and freeze it. The food may be used to diagnose your illness and prevent others from getting sick.

If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should take these steps

3. Save all packaging materials, such as cans or cartons. Write down the food, the date and time consumed, and save any identical unopened products. Report the contaminated food to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.
4. Call your local health department if you think you became ill from food you ate at a local restaurant or other eating establishment so they can investigate.

Getting ill from eating contaminated food can be very serious. However, the good news is that if you know how to handle, prepare, store, and consume foods safely, you can reduce your risk of getting a foodborne illness.

### ● Quiz

1. Foodborne illness is

- A. common.
- B. rare.

**C. a thing of the past.**

**A is the correct answer. Foodborne illness is quite common today. Each year, about 76 million people in the United States become ill from eating contaminated foods. Of those, about 5,000 die. The illnesses they get may come from eating foods contaminated with bacteria, viruses, or parasites.**

**2. Foodborne illness is**

- A. nothing to be worried about.**
- B. dangerous.**
- C. completely preventable.**

**B is the correct answer. Foodborne illness is dangerous, but if you know how to safely handle, prepare, store, and consume foods, you can reduce your risk of getting foodborne illness.**

**3. As we age, we are at greater risk for foodborne illness because**

- A. our bodies produce less stomach acid.**
- B. our digestion may slow down.**
- C. our sense of taste and smell may change.**
- D. all of the above**

**D is the correct answer. Foodborne illness can affect anyone, but older adults are at increased risk. As we age, our bodies produce less stomach acid, making it harder to get rid of harmful bacteria that may enter our digestive system. Our digestion may also slow down, allowing harmful bacteria to stay in our bodies longer. Also, changes in smell and taste can keep us from knowing when food is spoiled.**

**4. If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should**

- A. immediately throw away the food you think caused the illness.**
- B. contact your doctor or healthcare provider.**
- C. write to the store or restaurant where you got the food.**

**B is the correct answer. If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should contact your doctor or healthcare provider. You may need to seek medical treatment as well. Do not throw away the food you think caused the illness, but wrap it securely, label it "Danger", and freeze it. The food may be used to diagnose your illness and prevent others from getting sick. Save all packaging materials, such as cans or cartons, and report the contaminated food to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854. If you think you got sick from food you ate at a certain eating establishment, notify your local health department so they can investigate.**

## ● How to Eat Safely - Keep Food Safe

Handling foods safely is an important part of staying healthy. If your food is not safely prepared, it can make you or someone else sick. Many older adults are used to cooking for themselves, while others, such as recent widowers, may have little cooking experience. It is important for anyone who handles food or cooks their own meals to know how to keep food safe and avoid foodborne illness.

Take these simple steps to avoid foodborne illnesses when handling and preparing food.

- Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Wash cooking items frequently during food preparation.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Thaw frozen foods properly.
- Cook foods to safe internal temperatures.

Take these simple steps to avoid foodborne illnesses when handling and preparing food.

- Store foods properly.
- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.
- Avoid some foods entirely.
- Pay attention to expiration dates.

Whether at home or away from home, be sure to wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. Hand washing is especially important after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs.



To wash your hands, wet them, apply soap, and rub them together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Rinse your hands under clean, running, warm water. Dry your hands completely with a clean paper towel or cloth towel.



Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food. Also, use hot, soapy water to clean up spills in the refrigerator. Some bacteria can still grow slowly at refrigerator temperatures.

Be sure to rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Do not use detergent or bleach.

Unlike fruits and vegetables, raw meats and poultry do not need to be washed.

**Washing these raw foods might get rid of some bacteria but can increase the chance of spreading bacteria to other foods, surfaces, and utensils. Cooking these foods to a safe internal temperature will destroy any bacteria on the food.**

**If you plan to use frozen foods, thaw them safely. Don't put frozen foods on the counter to thaw at room temperature. Instead, put the food in the refrigerator. Keep the juices from thawing meats and poultry from dripping onto other foods by putting them in containers or on a plate. Raw juices may contain harmful bacteria.**

**For faster thawing, put the frozen food in a leak-proof plastic bag and immerse it in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes, and cook the food immediately after thawing. You can also thaw food in a microwave if you plan to cook it right away.**



**Meat and poultry need to be cooked to certain temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. Cook these foods to the following safe internal temperatures.**

- **Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops should be cooked to 145 °F.**
- **Ground beef, veal, and lamb should be cooked to 160 °F.**
- **Pork should be cooked to 160 °F**
- **All poultry should reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.**

**Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.**

**Fish, seafood, and eggs need to be cooked to certain temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. Cook these foods to the following safe internal temperatures.**

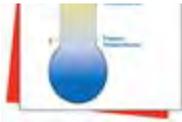
- **Fish and seafood should be cooked to 145 °F.**
- **Eggs should be cooked to 160 °F.**
- **Leftovers should be reheated to 165 °F .**

**Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.**

**It is important to store foods properly. You should refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs. Never let these foods, or cut fresh vegetables or fruit, sit at room temperatures for more than two hours before storing in the refrigerator or freezer. If the temperature in the room is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above, you should put the food away after one hour.**



**Most foods are safe after cooking to a safe internal temperature and refrigerating promptly. Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Bacteria grow quickly in the "danger zone" between 40 degrees and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.**



When keeping food hot for serving, it should be kept at an internal temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Just keeping food warm (40 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) is not safe enough. Use a food thermometer to monitor the internal temperature of the food. If you plan to eat at a later time, you should divide the food into smaller portions or pieces, place it in shallow containers, and refrigerate it.



To keep cold foods cold, set your refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below and your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperatures.

Don't keep refrigerated leftovers more than 3 to 4 days. Even if the food looks and smells fine, it may not be safe to eat after that time. If you question the safety of any food, throw it out without tasting it.



Be sure to separate different types of foods while shopping and when preparing or storing them. When handling raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs, keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Use one cutting board for fresh fruits and vegetables and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs. Don't place cooked food on a plate that held raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs unless you first wash the plate with hot, soapy water.

Avoid these foods to reduce your chance of getting foodborne illness.

- raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood
- unpasteurized (raw) milk, milk products, and juices
- raw or partially cooked eggs and foods made with raw eggs such as raw cookie dough and cake batter, protein milkshakes, and Caesar salad dressing

Avoid these foods to reduce your chance of getting foodborne illness.

- hot dogs and luncheon meats, unless they are reheated until steaming hot or 165 degrees Fahrenheit
- soft cheeses like Brie and Camembert, unless labeled "made with pasteurized milk". Pasteurized food has been heated to high enough temperatures to destroy disease-causing organisms.
- uncooked sprouts, such as bean, alfalfa, clover, or radish sprouts

Pay attention to "sell-by" and "use-by" dates on packages and cartons. The "sell-by" date tells the store how long to offer a product for sale. Don't buy an item after the "sell-by" date. The "use-by" date is the last date that the manufacturer of the product suggests is best for consuming the food. If an item has a "use-by" date, throw it out after the date has passed.

## ● Quiz

**1. To avoid foodborne illnesses when handling and preparing food, you should**

- A. wash your hands before and after handling food.**
- B. wash cooking items frequently during food preparation.**
- C. rinse fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly.**
- D. all of the above.**

**D is the correct answer. Whether at home or away from home, be sure to wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food. Be sure to rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Do not use detergent or bleach.**

**2. To destroy bacteria on raw meat and poultry, you should**

- A. wash the meat and poultry before cooking.**
- B. cook the meat and poultry to safe internal temperatures.**
- C. freeze the meat and poultry.**

**B is the correct answer. Cooking raw meat and poultry to a safe internal temperature will destroy any bacteria on the food. You should not wash raw meat and poultry before cooking them. Washing raw meats and poultry increases the chance of spreading bacteria to other foods, surfaces, and utensils.**

**3. Bacteria grow quickly in the "danger zone"**

- A. between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- B. between 140 and 200 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- C. below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.**

**A is the correct answer. Bacteria grow quickly in the "danger zone" between 40 and 140 °F. To keep food out of this "danger zone," keep cold food cold and hot food hot. When keeping food hot for serving, it should be kept at an internal temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature. To keep cold food cold, set your refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below and your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperatures.**

#### 4. You should thaw frozen foods

- A. in the oven.
- B. on the counter.
- C. in the refrigerator.

C is the correct answer. You should thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator. Don't put frozen foods on the counter to thaw at room temperature. Keep the juices from thawing meats and poultry from dripping onto other foods by putting them in containers or on a plate. Raw juices may contain harmful bacteria.

#### ● How to Eat Safely - Eating Out, Bringing In

In the past, many people grocery shopped nearly every day and cooked their own food at home. Eating in restaurants was saved for special occasions. But times have changed. Today, many older adults find it easier and more convenient to eat out at a restaurant, or get ready-to-eat foods from a deli, take-out counter, or grocery store.

Eating out can be an enjoyable experience, offering a way to socialize with friends or family, eat delicious food, and be free of cooking duties for a while. But wherever you choose to eat out -- at a diner, a restaurant, or a senior center -- there are things you can do to make sure the food you eat is safe.

When you go out to eat, check out the eating establishment to see how clean it is. Are the dishes clean? Are the floors swept? Are the bathrooms sanitary? If not, you may be better off finding somewhere else to eat. If the dining room is dirty, the kitchen may be too. A dirty kitchen may lead to unsafe food.



When you eat out, always order your food well done. If you order food containing meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs, make sure these foods are thoroughly cooked. Don't hesitate to ask your food server how the food is prepared before placing your order. If the server is not sure or does not know, ask to speak with the chef to make sure these foods will be not be served raw or undercooked.

Take a good look at your food when it is served to you. If you ordered a hot meal, make sure it's served to you piping hot. If it's not hot enough, or if it just doesn't look right to you, send it back.

When eating out, you should steer clear of the same foods that you avoid at home. Besides not eating raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs, older adults should also not eat unpasteurized milk and juice products, raw sprouts, and hot dogs and luncheon meats that have not been reheated to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

If you ask for a doggie bag, make sure to refrigerate your leftovers within two hours of receiving the food, and within one hour if air temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above. If you will not be getting home soon enough, put the food in a cooler with ice or freezer gel packs to keep it cold. If this is not possible, it is better to leave the leftovers at the restaurant.



Today, you have lots of choices if you prefer not to cook but still wish to eat at home. There are convenience foods, hot and cold foods available from supermarket delis, and delivered meals from restaurants or from programs like Meals on Wheels. But whether hot or cold, these ready-to-eat meals are perishable and can cause illness if you don't handle them properly. Never let perishable items, prepared foods, or leftovers sit at room temperature more than two hours before putting them in the refrigerator or freezer.



Whether you buy hot food or have it delivered, you should keep it hot and eat it within 2 hours of receiving it. Just keeping it warm is not good enough because harmful bacteria can grow rapidly at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit (the danger zone).



If you don't plan to eat the food within two hours of receiving it, keep it hot, at a temperature of 140 Fahrenheit or above. You may use a preheated oven, chafing dishes, warming trays, or slow cookers. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food. If you are eating the food much later, divide it into small portions, place it in shallow containers, and refrigerate or freeze it.

Cold foods that you buy or have delivered should be kept cold, at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Refrigerate cold food within two hours of receiving it, or within 1 hour if temperatures are 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above.



If you want to reheat your meal -- whether you bought it hot and then refrigerated it or bought it cold -- you should heat it to 165 degrees Fahrenheit until it is hot and steaming. When reheating food in the microwave oven, cover and rotate the food for even heating. Allow the food to stand a short while before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer.

Don't hesitate to get rid of food that is no longer safe. Throw away any perishable food that is left at room temperature for more than two hours. Don't keep refrigerated leftovers more than 3 to 4 days. Even if the food looks and smells fine, it may not be safe to eat after that time.

## ● Quiz

### 1. When you eat out, order your food

- A. well done.
- B. undercooked.
- C. overcooked.

**A is the correct answer. When you eat out, always order your food well done. If you order food containing meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs, make sure these foods are cooked thoroughly. Don't hesitate to ask your food server how the food is prepared before placing your order. If the server is not sure or does not know, ask to speak with the chef to make sure these foods will be not be served raw or undercooked.**

### 2. When you eat out, you should

- A. avoid the same foods you avoid at home.
- B. treat yourself to the foods you avoid at home.
- C. allow yourself to eat just one of the foods you avoid at home.

**A is the correct answer. When eating out, you should steer clear of the same foods that you avoid at home. Besides avoiding raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs, older adults should also not eat unpasteurized milk and juice products, raw sprouts, or hot dogs or luncheon meats that have not been reheated to 165 degrees Fahrenheit.**

### 3. If you get a doggie bag for leftovers, you should refrigerate the food

- A. within 24 hours of receiving it.
- B. within four hours of receiving it.
- C. within two hours of receiving it.

**C is the correct answer. If you ask for a doggie bag, make sure to refrigerate your leftovers within two hours of receiving the food, and within one hour if air temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above. If you will not be getting home soon enough, put the food in a cooler with ice or freezer gel packs. If you cannot do this, it is better to leave the leftovers at the restaurant.**

### 4. Ready-to-eat foods that you buy out and bring home should be refrigerated

- A. within two hours.
- B. within 24 hours.
- C. within four hours.

**A is the correct answer. Refrigerate or freeze perishable items, ready-to-eat**

foods, and leftovers within two hours. Whether hot or cold, these meals are perishable and can cause illness if you don't handle them properly.

### ● How to Shop Wisely

Planning ahead and being creative can help you eat well, even if your budget is limited. In this section, you'll find ideas for buying foods that give you the most nutrition for your food dollars.

### ● How to Shop Wisely - Be a Smart Shopper

Planning ahead can help you choose healthy foods when you shop. It can also help you get the most for your money.



Before going to the grocery store, plan your meals and snacks for the next few days or a week. Make a shopping list of foods you will need and then buy only the items on your list. To avoid impulse buying, try to do your shopping when you're not hungry or rushed.



Plan to buy low-fat, nutrient-dense items like fruits and vegetables, lean meats, fish, and whole-grain cereals and breads. Also put other nutrient-dense items like low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products, eggs, dried beans, and nuts on your shopping list. Many of these items are usually found on the outer ring of the grocery store.



Try not to buy a lot of convenience foods, even if they're on sale. These foods, such as baked goods, candy, crackers, and chips, can be high in sodium, sugar, and fat. Compared to non-convenience foods, they often give you fewer nutrients for the calories you consume. Limit the amount of lunch meat you buy for the same reasons unless you are buying the special lean, low-fat, low-sodium products.

Take time to read the Nutrition Facts label on food packages and cans until you are familiar with them. The Nutrition Facts tell you how many calories and which nutrients the food provides. It also tells you how much fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, and sugars a single serving of the food will give you.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (225g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Check Calories	Calories 210 <span style="float:right">Calories from Fat 110</span>
	% Daily Values*
Limit these Nutrients	Total Fat 12g <span style="float:right">18%</span>
	Saturated Fat 3g <span style="float:right">15%</span>
	Trans Fat 3g <span style="float:right">15%</span>
	Cholesterol 20mg <span style="float:right">15%</span>
	Sodium 420mg <span style="float:right">20%</span>
	Total Carbohydrate 31g <span style="float:right">18%</span>
	Dietary Fiber 8g <span style="float:right">4%</span>
	Sugars 5g <span style="float:right"></span>
	Protein 5g <span style="float:right"></span>
Get Enough of these Nutrients	Vitamin A <span style="float:right">4%</span>
	Vitamin C <span style="float:right">2%</span>
	Calcium <span style="float:right">20%</span>
	Iron <span style="float:right">4%</span>

The Nutrition Facts can help you choose more healthy foods and compare the contents of different brands. When reading the Nutrition Facts, be sure to read the serving size and how many servings the package contains.

Before going to the store, check your stock of staples like flour, sugar, rice, and cereal. Also check your supply of canned and frozen foods, which can be handy when you don't feel like cooking or can't go out. Try to choose canned and frozen products that are low in sodium, saturated and *trans* fats, cholesterol, and added sugars.

Plan to buy enough ingredients to cook more than one meal and then freeze meal-sized portions. These can replace purchased frozen dinners that may have more fat and sodium in them. Many soups, casseroles, fish, and meats freeze well for later use. Also, choose fresh fruits and vegetables when they're in season, and buy frozen produce when fresh items are out of season.

If you find it hard to shop because you don't drive or have trouble walking or carrying groceries, help may be available. Some grocers offer home-delivery services. Some supermarkets and chains let you order groceries and other products on the Internet. For a small fee, the groceries can be delivered to your home.

You might also ask family or friends, your place of worship, or a local volunteer center for help with shopping. Home-delivered meals are also available for people who can't get out. Your Area Agency on Aging might be able to tell you where to get help if you can't shop or make your own meals. To contact your Area Agency on Aging, call the Eldercare Locator toll free at 1-800-677-1116.

## ● Quiz

### 1. Planning ahead before you shop can help you

- A. choose more healthy foods.
- B. buy what you will need for the next few days or a week.
- C. get the most for your food dollars.
- D. all of the above.

D is the correct answer. Planning ahead can help you choose more healthy foods when you shop. It can also help you get the most for your food dollars. Before going to the grocery store, plan your meals and snacks for the next few days or a week. Make a shopping list of foods you will need and then buy only the items on your list.

### 2. The Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods tells you

- A. where to get nutrition advice.
- B. how much exercise you will need to burn off calories consumed.
- C. how many calories and which nutrients are in the food.

C is the correct answer. The Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods tells you how many calories and which nutrients the food provides. It also tells

**you how much fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar are in a serving of the food. You might want to take time to read the Nutrition Facts label on food packages and cans, and compare the contents of different brands.**

### **3. To avoid impulse buying,**

- A. shop without a list.**
- B. shop when you are tired.**
- C. shop when you are not hungry or rushed.**

**C is the correct answer. To avoid impulse buying, try to do your shopping when you are not hungry or rushed. Making a list and referring to it as you shop is another way to help you buy only the items you had planned to buy.**

### **● How to Shop Wisely - Eat Well on Your Budget**



**Eating well doesn't have to mean spending more money or buying costly "health foods." You can eat well on a budget by planning ahead and choosing foods that give you more nutrition for your money. In fact, you might find that you spend less, not more, to eat right.**

**To save money, choose store brands instead of name brands. You can also clip and use coupons, look for items that are on sale, or use supermarket discount cards.**

**Start by planning your meals and snacks in advance. Take a shopping list with you to the grocery store and try to buy only the items on the list. Before you shop, check store flyers to look for nutritious foods and ingredients that are on sale.**



**If you want to save money by buying large sizes of foods, you might plan to share them with a friend or neighbor. Large sizes may cost less per pound or other unit, but they aren't a bargain if you end up throwing out a lot of the food.**

**Get more nutrition for your money by choosing fruits and vegetables, fat-free or low-fat milk products, whole grains, lean meats, and other healthy foods. Avoid convenience foods, sweets, and snack foods that give you fewer nutrients for your food dollars.**

**Before you buy, think about how much of a product you'll really use. Buy only enough fresh fruits and vegetables to eat within a few days. Also, try not to buy more perishable items than you will use before the "use-by" date marked on the package. Meats, poultry, fish, seafood, cooked vegetables, dairy products, and eggs are examples of perishable foods.**

**If you like to eat out, go to restaurants that offer senior discounts. Look for early-bird dinner specials or go out for lunch instead of dinner. Some restaurants offer two-for-one or discount coupons. When eating out, consider ordering low-fat, low-sodium, and other healthy menu items. Ask for sauces or dressings on the side so you can better control how much you eat.**



**Sharing meal preparation and ingredient costs with friends can also save money -- and be fun. For instance, you might plan a potluck dinner with neighbors. You might also buy ingredients and cook with a friend.**

**If you need financial help to buy food, find out about programs for older people with limited budgets. Food stamps from the Federal Government help qualified people to buy groceries. They help people with a low income or salary get enough to eat, and they encourage good nutrition and health.**



**The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program can help, too. This Federal Government program gives coupons to older adults with low incomes that can be used at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and some other places. The coupons can be exchanged for fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs.**



**You might also be able to enjoy free or low-cost meals at places in your community. These meals offer good food and a chance to be with other people. Contact your local senior center or places of worship to find out about these meals. Home-delivered meals may be available for people who can't get out.**

**Contact your Area Agency on Aging to learn more about food stamps, the Senior Farmers' Market Program, home-delivered meals, congregate meals, and other food assistance programs. They can give you more information about how to get these services. To contact your Area Agency on Aging, call the Eldercare Locator toll-free at 1-800-677-1116.**

## ● Quiz

- 1. To save money when shopping for food items, you can**
  - A. choose store brands instead of name brands.**
  - B. clip and use coupons.**
  - C. look for items that are on sale.**
  - D. all of the above**

**D is the correct answer. To save money when food shopping, choose store brands instead of name brands. You can also clip and use coupons, look for items that are on sale, or use supermarket discount cards.**

**2. You can get more nutrition for your money by choosing to buy**

- A. fruits and vegetables.**
- B. convenience foods.**
- C. sweets and snack foods.**

**A is the correct answer. Get more nutrition for your money by choosing fruits and vegetables, fat-free or low-fat milk products, whole grains, lean meats, and other healthy foods. Avoid convenience foods, sweets, and snack foods that give you fewer nutrients for your food dollars.**

**3. When you buy perishable items, use them**

- A. immediately**
- B. by the "use-by" date.**
- C. before your next trip to the supermarket.**

**B is the correct answer. Before you buy, think about how much of a product you'll really use. Try not to buy more perishable items than you will use before the "use-by" date marked on the package. Meats, poultry, fish, seafood, cooked vegetables, dairy products, and eggs are examples of perishable foods.**

**4. Food stamps from the Federal Government help people with low incomes buy**

- A. cars.**
- B. groceries.**
- C. clothes.**

**B is the correct answer. Food stamps from the Federal Government help people with low incomes buy groceries. The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program can help, too. This Federal Government program gives coupons to older adults with low incomes that can be used at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and some other places. If you need financial help with buying food, find out about programs for older people with limited budgets. Contact the Eldercare locator for more information toll-free at 1-800-677-1116.**

**● Frequently Asked Questions**

## 1. How can eating well help me stay healthy?



Good nutrition is one of the best ways to stay healthy. Eating a well-planned, balanced mix of healthy foods every day may help prevent heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, bone loss, some kinds of cancer, and anemia. If you already have one or more of these chronic diseases, eating well may help you better manage them.



Healthy eating may also help you reduce high blood pressure, lower high cholesterol, and manage diabetes. If you have a specific medical condition, be sure to check with your doctor or dietitian about foods you should include or avoid.

Healthy eating also gives you the nutrients needed to keep your muscles, bones, organs, and other parts of your body healthy. These nutrients include vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, some fats, and water.

Eating well helps keep up your energy level, too. By consuming enough calories -- a way to measure the energy you get from food -- you give your body the fuel it needs throughout the day.

## 2. What kinds of foods are the healthiest?



It's best to eat a mix of nutrient-dense foods every day. Nutrient-dense foods are foods that are high in nutrients and low in calories. Choose foods that contain vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, lean protein, and healthy fats. At the same time, try to avoid "empty calories" -- foods and drinks that are high in calories but provide few or no nutrients.



Plan your meals and snacks to include

- plenty of fruits and vegetables
- plenty of grains, especially whole grains
- low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products
- lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- limited amounts of fats (saturated and *trans* fats should be as low as possible), cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

## 3. What are calories and how many should I consume each day?

Calories are a way to measure the energy you get from food. They give your

body the fuel it needs throughout the day. The number of calories you need daily depends on how old you are, whether you're a man or woman, and how active you are.



Consuming the right number of calories for your physical activity level helps you control your weight. The more physically active you are, the more calories you might be able to eat without gaining weight. (For information about exercise and older adults, go to <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/toc.html>).

A woman over age 50 should consume about

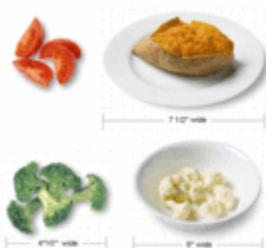
- 1,600 calories a day if her physical activity level is low
- 1,800 calories daily if she is moderately active
- 2,000 to 2,200 calories daily if she has an active lifestyle.

A man over age 50 should consume about

- 2,000 calories a day if his physical activity level is low
- 2,200 to 2,400 calories daily if he is moderately active
- 2,400 to 2,800 calories daily if he has an active lifestyle.

#### 4. What amounts of food should I eat?

The Dietary Guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA, recommend eating the following amounts of food if you are eating 2,000 calories per day. Remember to adjust the amounts depending on your daily calorie level.



A person who consumes 2,000 calories a day should have a daily intake of

- 2-2½ cups of fruits
- 2-2½ cups of vegetables
- 7-8 ounces of grains (one ounce of grain foods is equal to one slice of bread, one cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or a half cup of rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal)
- 2-3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products



A person who eats 2,000 calories a day should have a daily intake of



- 5-7 ounces of lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts (one egg or ¼ cup of cooked dry beans or tofu equals 1 ounce of meat, poultry, or fish)
- limited amounts of fats (saturated and *trans* fats should be as low as possible), cholesterol, sodium (salt), and added sugars.

### 5. What kinds of fruits should I eat?



Eat a variety of fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits every day. Fruits contain lots of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other substances important for good health. Plus, they are low in fat and calories. To make sure you get the benefit of the natural fiber in fruits, you should eat most of your fruits whole rather than as juice. Fruits may be purchased fresh, canned, frozen, or dried and may be eaten whole, cut-up, or pureed.

### 6. What kinds of vegetables should I eat?



Eat a variety of vegetables every day. Vegetables contain lots of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other substances important for good health. Plus, they are low in fat and calories. Aim for lots of color on your plate as a way to get the widest variety possible each day. Broccoli, spinach, turnip and collard greens, and other dark leafy greens are good choices. You might also choose orange vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, or winter squash. Vegetables may be purchased raw or cooked, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated. They may be eaten whole, cut-up, or mashed.

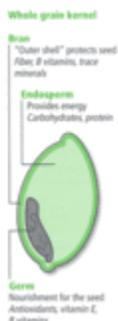
### 7. What kinds of grains should I eat?



Foods made from grains are a major source of energy and fiber. Include grains in your diet every day. Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Grains fall into two main categories: whole and refined. When choosing grain foods, try to make half your grains whole. In other words, at least half of the cereals, breads, crackers, or pastas you eat should be made from whole grains. For example, you might try whole wheat pasta instead of regular pasta or use brown rice in a casserole in place of white rice.

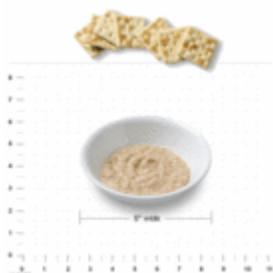
### 8. What are whole-grain foods?

Whole-grain foods, such as whole-wheat bread, are made with the entire seed of a plant, including the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Together, they provide lots of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, healthy fat, carbohydrates, and fiber.



**Whole grains are better sources of fiber and nutrients than refined grains, such as white flour or white rice. Refined grains have had both the bran and germ removed, and don't have as much fiber or as many nutrients. Most refined grains are enriched, with some B vitamins and iron added back in after processing. However, fiber is not replaced.**

### 9. How do I know if a food is whole grain?



**When you buy a grain food such as cereal or bread, check the ingredient list on the package to see that the main ingredients include a whole grain. Look for "whole wheat" or "whole oats" rather than just "wheat" or "oats."**

**Other whole grains include whole rye, whole-grain corn, bulgur wheat, graham flour, oatmeal, brown rice, and wild rice. Products labeled "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," and "bran" are not always whole-grain foods. You can compare the fiber content in the Nutrition Facts label on packages of bread and other grain products to help identify the best choices.**

### 10. What are the benefits of eating fruits, vegetables, and grains?



**Fruits, vegetables, and grains offer important vitamins and minerals to keep your body healthy. Most of these foods have little fat. They also have no cholesterol. Fruits, vegetables, and grains are also a source of fiber, and eating more fiber may help with digestion and constipation and may lower cholesterol and blood sugar.**

**Fruits, vegetables, and grains also give your body phytochemicals. Phytochemicals are natural compounds such as beta-carotene, lutein, and lycopene. Like vitamins, minerals, and fiber, phytochemicals may promote good health and reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Research is underway to learn more about the health benefits of these natural compounds.**

**Fruits, vegetables, and grains also contain antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances that may protect cells in the body from the damage caused by oxidation. They include vitamin C, vitamin E, and other substances. Antioxidants are thought to promote health and to possibly reduce the risk of certain cancers and other diseases.**

**Colorful fruits and vegetables are the best dietary sources of antioxidants. Deeply and brightly colored fruits and vegetables, such as spinach, carrots,**

red bell peppers, and tomatoes, have the highest amounts of these healthy substances. Antioxidant supplements may not provide the same health benefits as foods.

### 11. What are some sources of protein?



Protein helps build and maintain muscle, bones, and skin, and you should include some protein in your diet very day. Meats and poultry are sources of protein as well as B vitamins, iron, and zinc. When buying meats and poultry, choose lean cuts or low-fat products. They provide less total fat, less saturated fat, and fewer calories than products with more fat.

For instance, 3 ounces of cooked, regular ground beef (70% lean) has 6.1 grams of saturated fat and 236 calories. Three ounces of cooked, extra-lean ground beef (95% lean) contains 2.6 grams of saturated fat and 148 calories.



Also consider varying your sources of protein. Try replacing meats and poultry with fish or with bean, tofu, or pea dishes. These foods tend to be low or lower in saturated fats, and beans provide fiber. Pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, split peas, and lentils are all healthy options. Look for ways to add nuts and seeds to your meals and snacks too, but keep the amounts small since these foods can contain high amounts of fat.

### 12. What about milk products?



Low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products should be among the foods you choose every day. These products provide calcium and vitamin D to help maintain strong bones. They also provide protein, potassium, vitamin A, and magnesium. Low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt are good options.

If you don't drink milk, be sure to have other products that contain the nutrients that milk products provide. Some cereals and juices are fortified with extra calcium and vitamin D. Salmon, sardines, and tuna are sources of vitamin D.



If you avoid milk because of its lactose (milk sugar) content, you can get needed nutrients from lactose-reduced or low-lactose milk products. You might also drink small amounts of milk several times a day or take tablets with the enzyme lactase (available in most drugstores and grocery stores) before consuming milk products. Other sources of calcium include foods such as hard cheese, yogurt, boney canned fish such as salmon and sardines, and calcium-fortified tofu or soy beverages.

### 13. What does the Nutrition Facts label on packaged and canned foods tell me?

Nutrition Facts	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 200	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	18%
Saturated Fat	3%
Trans Fat	0%
Total Carbohydrate	32%
Dietary Fiber	3%
Protein	8%
Total Fiber	3%
Calcium	2%
Iron	2%

The Nutrition Facts label on food packages and canned goods tells you how many calories and which nutrients the food provides. You can use it to help you keep track of how much fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, cholesterol, sugars, and calories you are getting from different foods.

The Nutrition Facts label also provides the Percent Daily Value (% Daily Value) for nutrients. It tells you what percentage of the recommended daily amount of a nutrient is in one serving of the food, based on the nutritional needs of a person eating 2,000-calories a day.

Nutrition Facts	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 200	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	18%
Saturated Fat	3%
Trans Fat	0%
Total Carbohydrate	32%
Dietary Fiber	3%
Protein	8%
Total Fiber	3%
Calcium	2%
Iron	2%

For example, on this label for macaroni and cheese, the Percent Daily Value for total fat is 18%. This means that one serving of macaroni and cheese (1 cup) will give you 18 percent of the total amount of fat you should allow yourself each day, assuming you eat about 2,000 calories daily.

Keep in mind that the calories, and nutrient amounts, and percentages listed in the Nutrition Facts are for one serving only. The package might contain two or more servings. If you eat two servings, you would consume twice the calories, fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, etc., as you would for one serving.

### 14. Is it okay to eat some fat?

Yes. It's okay to eat limited amounts of certain kinds of fats. In fact, your body needs some fats for energy and for healthy organs, skin, and hair. Fats also help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K. Fats are also needed to provide essential fatty acids, which your body cannot make on its own.

On the other hand, fat contains more than twice as many calories as protein or carbohydrates, and eating too many high-fat foods will likely add excess calories and lead to weight gain. Excess weight increases your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems.

Learn to limit fats to 20 to 35 percent of your daily calories. For instance, if you eat and drink 2,000 calories daily, only 400 to 700 of the calories should be from fats. The number of calories from fat in a serving of packaged foods is listed on the Nutrition Facts label of the package.

## 15. Are some fats healthier than others?



Yes. Some oils, such as olive oil and canola oil, are better for you than others. Choose polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats when possible. Sources of better fats include vegetable oils such as soybean, corn, canola, olive, safflower, and sunflower oils. Polyunsaturated fat is also in nuts, seeds, and fatty fish. Walnuts, flaxseed and salmon are examples of foods with polyunsaturated fat.

## 16. Which kinds of fat should I limit?

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 17g	34%
Saturated Fat 3g	6%
Trans Fat 3g	6%
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 5g	0%
Sugars 5g	

Limit the amount of saturated fats and *trans* fats you consume. Many convenience foods contain saturated or *trans* fats. Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged goods to choose products that are low in these fats. Consume less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fats. Keep daily intake of *trans* fats as low as possible.



Saturated fats are found in foods such as beef, cheese, milk, butter, oils, and ice cream and other frozen desserts. *Trans* fats are found in foods like margarine, crackers, icings, French fries, and microwave popcorn, as well as in many baked goods. Many sweets such as cakes, cookies, and doughnuts include saturated and/or *trans* fats. Read the Nutrition Facts label to choose products that are low in these fats.

## 17. How can I lower the amount of fat in my diet?

Here are steps you can take to lower the fat in your diet.

- Choose lean cuts of meat, fish, or poultry (with the skin removed).
- Trim off any extra fat before cooking.
- Use low-fat or fat-free milk products and salad dressings.
- Use non-stick pots and pans, and cook without added fat.

Here are steps you can take to lower the fat in your diet.

- If you do use fat, use either an unsaturated vegetable oil or a nonfat cooking spray.
- Broil, roast, bake, stir-fry, steam, microwave, or boil foods. Avoid frying them.
- Season your foods with lemon juice, herbs, or spices instead of butter.

## 18. Should I limit the amount of cholesterol I consume?

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
-----------------	--

Look for ways to limit the amount of cholesterol you

Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 110	
		% Daily Value*	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 110	
Calories 250			
Total Fat 12g	18%		
Saturated Fat 3g	15%		
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol 30mg	10%		
Sodium 470mg	20%		
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%		
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%		
Sugars 5g			

consume. People with high levels of "bad," or LDL cholesterol in their blood are at high risk for heart disease. They should eat foods with less than a total of 200 mg of cholesterol daily. The Nutrition Facts label tells you how much cholesterol is in one serving of packaged foods.

Cholesterol is only found in animal products so you don't need to worry about it being in fruits or vegetables unless butter, cheese, cream, or sauces and gravies made from meat or meat broths are added.

Talk with your doctor or other health care provider about getting your cholesterol checked. Also discuss ways to lower your cholesterol level and limit the cholesterol you consume, if needed.

### 19. Should I limit the amount of sodium I consume?

Sodium is consumed in the diet as part of salt. Older adults should limit their sodium intake to 1,500 milligrams (mg) daily, or about 2/3 of a teaspoon. This helps to keep your blood pressure under control and lowers your risk of heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease.

Ways to cut back on sodium include keeping the salt shaker off the table and replacing salt with herbs, spices, and low-sodium seasonings when you cook. Also, eat fewer convenience foods, and ask for low-sodium dishes and for sauces on the side when you eat out. When you shop, choose foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," "sodium free," or "unsalted."

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	
Calories from Fat 110	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	

Read the Nutrition Facts label on food packages to find out how much sodium a product contains. Different brands of foods that look the same can contain very different amounts of sodium.

A diet rich in potassium can reduce the effects of salt on blood pressure. Older adults should consume 4,700 milligrams of potassium daily from food sources. Sources of potassium include fruits and vegetables such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, greens, cooked dried beans, and tomato products. Potassium is also found in low-fat yogurt and milk, and in fish such as halibut, Pacific cod, yellow fin tuna, and rainbow trout.

### 20. What about added sugars?



To help control your calorie intake, limit foods and beverages like candy and fruit drinks that are high in added sugars. Replace sweets and soft drinks with lower-calorie, nutrient-dense alternatives like fruits, vegetables, and 100 percent juices. Unsweetened tea, low-fat or fat-free milk, or water

are also good choices. Be aware that some products are low in fat but high in added sugars.

Sample Label for  
Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 3	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	24%
Saturated Fat 3g	6%
Trans Fat 3g	6%
Cholesterol 30mg	60%
Sodium 420mg	84%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	62%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	10%

The Nutrition Facts label tells you the total amount of sugars in one serving of a product. However, added sugars are not listed separately on this panel.

To find out if a product contains added sugars, read the ingredient list on the food package. Added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, honey, molasses, and fruit juice concentrates. They also include dextrose, fructose, glucose, lactose, and sucrose.

## 21. Should I limit alcoholic beverages?

If you drink alcohol, limit the amount to 1 drink daily for women and 2 drinks daily for men. Alcoholic beverages give you calories but few nutrients. A drink is 12 fluid ounces of regular beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1½ fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

For safety reasons, avoid alcohol when you plan to drive a vehicle or use machinery. Also avoid alcohol when doing activities that require attention, skill, or coordination. People taking certain medicines and those with some medical conditions should not drink alcohol at all. Ask your doctor whether you can have an occasional drink if you want to.

## 22. What can I do about constipation?

People often worry too much about having a bowel movement every day. There is no right number of daily or weekly bowel movements. Being regular is different for each person. For some people, it can mean bowel movements twice a day. For others, movements just three times a week may be normal.

Constipation is a symptom, not a disease. You may be constipated if you are having fewer bowel movements than usual and your stools are firm and hard to pass. Too little fiber or fluid can cause constipation. Some medicines can cause constipation, too.



If you're often constipated, ask your doctor for advice. Eating more foods that contain fiber like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains might help. Drinking plenty of fluids can also help prevent constipation.

Physical activity can help keep your bowel movements more regular, too. Use of bulk-forming products or occasional use of laxatives can also help. Talk

with your doctor to learn more these products.

### 23. Where can I learn more about eating well?



The MyPyramid Plan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or USDA, can help you choose a mix of healthy foods that are right for you. This useful online tool suggests what and how much to eat from each food group.

The amount depends on your age, sex, and activity level. The MyPyramid.gov website offers information about how to eat healthfully and suggests menu items tailored to your daily needs.

Another balanced eating plan is the DASH eating plan which is designed to help prevent or manage high blood pressure, or hypertension. DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. For more about DASH, contact the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at 1-301-592-8573 or 1-240-629-3255 (TTY). Be sure to check with your doctor about eating plans to help manage health conditions that occur as you get older.

### 24. How can I choose healthier foods when shopping?



or rushed.

Planning ahead can help you choose healthier foods when you shop. It can also help you get the most for your money. Make a shopping list of foods you will need, and then buy only the items on your list. To avoid impulse buying, try to do your shopping when you are not hungry



the outer ring of the grocery store.

Plan to buy low-fat, nutrient-dense foods such as fruits and vegetables, lean meats, fish, and whole-grain cereals and breads. Also put items such as low-fat or fat-free milk and milk products, eggs, dried beans, and nuts on your shopping list. Many of these items are usually found in the

Try not to buy convenience foods, even if they're on sale. These foods, such as baked goods, candies, crackers, and chips can be high in sodium, sugar, and fat. They give you few nutrients for the calories you consume. Limit the amount of lunch meat you buy for the same reasons unless you are buying the special lean, low-fat, low-sodium products.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (230g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	100
Total Fat	10g
Total Sodium	100mg
Total Carbohydrate	10g
Total Protein	10g
Dietary Fiber	10g
Sugars	10g
Cholesterol	10mg
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	10%
Calcium	10%
Iron	10%

You might want to take time to read the Nutrition Facts printed on food packages and cans until you are familiar with them. The Nutrition Facts can help you choose more healthy foods and compare the contents of different brands. When reading the Nutrition Facts, be sure to read the serving size and how many servings the package contains.

## 25. I find it difficult to shop for food. Where can I get help?

If you don't drive or have trouble walking or carrying groceries, help may be available. Many grocers offer home-delivery services. Some supermarkets and chains let you order groceries and other products on the Internet. For a small fee, the groceries can be delivered to your home.



You might ask family or friends, your place of worship, or a local volunteer center for help with shopping.

Home-delivered meals are also available for people who can't get out. Your Area Agency on Aging might be able to tell you where to get help if you can't shop or make your own meals. To contact your Area Agency on Aging for information about programs in your community, call the Eldercare Locator toll free at 1-800-677-1116.

## 26. How can I eat well if I'm on a limited budget?

Eating well doesn't have to mean spending more money or buying costly "health foods." You can eat well on a budget by planning ahead and choosing foods that give you more nutrition for your money. In fact, you might find that you spend less, not more, to eat right.



To get the most for your money, choose nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables, fat-free or low-fat milk products, whole grains, and lean meats. Avoid convenience foods, sweets, and snack foods that give you fewer nutrients for your money.



You can save money by choosing store brands instead of name brands, buying foods on sale, and using coupons or supermarket discount cards. Also, only buy what you can use before the food goes bad or before the "use-by" date on the package.

If you like to eat out, look for restaurants that offer senior discounts, early-bird dinner specials, or two-for-one or discount specials. You can also save money by going out for lunch instead of dinner.

## 27. Which Federal Government programs help low-income older adults buy food?

The U.S. Food Stamp Program helps qualified people buy groceries. This program helps people with low incomes get enough to eat while encouraging good nutrition and health.



The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program can help, too. This Federal Government program gives older adults with low incomes coupons that can be used at farmers'



markets, roadside stands, and some other places. The coupons can be exchanged for fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

Contact your Area Agency on Aging to learn more about food stamps, the Senior Farmers' Market Program, home-delivered meals, and other food assistance programs. They can give you more information about how to get these services. To contact these agencies, call the Eldercare Locator toll free at 1-800-677-1116.

## 28. Why do people lose interest in eating and cooking as they get older?



Some people lose interest in eating and cooking because their senses of taste and smell change with age. Foods a person once enjoyed might seem less flavorful as he or she gets older. Some medicines can change the sense of taste or make a person feel less hungry.

Problems with chewing, digestion, or gas can make an older person lose interest in eating. In addition, some older adults don't eat well because they find it hard to shop for food or cook. Others don't enjoy meals because they often eat alone.

Not eating enough or avoiding some foods could mean that a person misses out on needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, or protein. Not eating enough could also mean that the person doesn't get enough calories.

## 29. What should I do if I don't feel like eating?

If you often don't feel like eating, talk with your health care provider. Simple changes could help you overcome challenges to eating well and help you enjoy meals more. These changes can help make sure that you get the nutrients and calories you need for healthy, active living.



Your doctor or other health care provider might suggest changing your medicines, eating softer foods, or avoiding foods that cause gas or other digestive problems. If you have trouble chewing food, talk with your doctor or dentist about problems with your teeth or gums. Not being able to chew well could also mean that your dentures need to be adjusted.



If you don't feel like eating because food no longer tastes good, you might try cooking meals in new ways or using different herbs and spices. Experiment with ethnic foods, regional dishes, or vegetarian recipes. You might also try new recipes and experiment with different kinds of fruits, vegetables, and grains that add interest to your meals.

### 30. I don't enjoy meals because I often eat alone. Where can I find others to eat with?



Eating with others is one way to enjoy meals more. Contact local senior centers and places of worship to find out if they host group meals. You could also invite neighbors to share meals at home or eat out with friends or family members. Joining or starting a breakfast, lunch, or dinner club is another way to get together with others at mealtime.

### 31. How can I choose healthier foods when I eat out?



When you eat out, you can still eat well if you choose carefully, know how your food is prepared, and watch portion sizes. Select dishes that include fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean cuts of meats and poultry, eggs, fish, beans, and low-fat or fat free milk products.

Order your food baked, broiled, or grilled instead of fried, and make sure it is well done, especially dishes with meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs. Ask for sauces and toppings on the side so you can control the amounts. Ordering half portions or splitting a dish with a friend can help keep calorie intake down.

Also, don't be afraid to ask for substitutions. Many restaurants and eating establishments not only offer healthful choices but will let you substitute healthier foods. For example, you might substitute fat-free yogurt and olive oil for sour cream and butter on your baked potato. Instead of a side order of onion rings or French fries, you could have the mixed vegetables. Ask for brown rice or rice pilaf instead of white rice. Try having fruit for dessert.

### 32. What is foodborne illness?

Illnesses you get from contaminated food are called foodborne illnesses, also known as food poisoning. These illnesses may come from eating foods contaminated with bacteria, viruses, or parasites, also called pathogens. Each year, about 76 million people in the United States become ill from eating contaminated foods. Of those, about 5,000 die.

If you get foodborne illness, you might have upset stomach, abdominal pain, vomiting, or diarrhea. Or, you could have flu-like symptoms with a fever and headache, and body aches. Sometimes people confuse foodborne illness with other types of illness.



Foodborne illnesses can be dangerous. Many are caused by bacteria such as E. coli and salmonella, which can cause serious health problems. But if you follow good food safety practices, you can reduce your risk of getting sick from these and other harmful bacteria.



### 33. How do foodborne illnesses affect older adults?



Foodborne illness can affect anyone, but older adults are at increased risk. As we age, our bodies produce less stomach acid, making it harder to get rid of harmful bacteria that enter our digestive system. Our digestion may also slow down, allowing harmful bacteria to stay in our bodies longer. Also, changes in smell and taste can keep us from knowing when food is spoiled.

Foodborne illnesses can cause serious health problems for older adults. An older person who gets a foodborne illness is likely to be sicker longer, and if hospitalized, is likely to have a longer hospital stay.

### 34. What steps can I take to avoid foodborne illness when handling and preparing food?

You can take these simple steps to avoid foodborne illnesses when handling and preparing food.

- Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Wash cooking items frequently during food preparation.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Cook foods to safe internal temperatures.
- Store foods properly.

Take these simple steps to avoid foodborne illnesses when handling and preparing food.

- Thaw foods properly.
- Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.
- Avoid some foods entirely.
- Pay attention to expiration dates.

### 35. How often should I wash my hands to avoid foodborne illness?

Whether at home or away from home, be sure to wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. Hand washing is especially important after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs.



To wash your hands, wet them, apply soap, and rub them together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Rinse your hands under clean, running, warm water. Dry your hands completely with a clean paper towel or cloth towel.

### 36. How should I wash foods before preparing or eating them?

Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those

with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Do not use detergent or bleach.

Unlike fruits and vegetables, raw meats and poultry do not need to be washed. Washing these raw foods might get rid of some bacteria but can increase the chance of spreading bacteria to other foods, surfaces, and utensils. Cooking these foods to a safe internal temperature will destroy any bacteria on the food.

### 37. What about washing the items I use to prepare foods?



Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food. Also, use hot, soapy water to clean up spills in the refrigerator. Some bacteria can still grow slowly at refrigerator temperatures.

### 38. What foods should older adults avoid to reduce the chance of getting foodborne illness?

To reduce the chance of getting foodborne illness, older adults should avoid certain foods that may carry harmful bacteria, including

- raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish, and seafood.
- unpasteurized (raw) milk, milk products, and juices.
- raw or partially cooked eggs and foods made with raw eggs such as raw cookie dough and cake batter, protein milkshakes, and Caesar salad dressing.

To reduce the chance of getting foodborne illness, older adults should avoid certain foods that may carry harmful bacteria, including

- hot dogs and luncheon meats, unless they are reheated until steaming hot or 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
- soft cheeses like Brie and Camembert, unless labeled "made with pasteurized milk." Pasteurized food has been heated to high enough temperatures to destroy disease-causing organisms.
- uncooked sprouts, such as bean, alfalfa, clover, or radish sprouts.

### 39. What are the recommended cooking temperatures for foods?



Meat and poultry need to be cooked to certain temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. Cook these foods to the following safe internal temperatures. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.

- Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops should be cooked to 145°F.
- Ground beef, veal, and lamb should be cooked to 160°F.
- Pork should be cooked to 160°F
- All poultry should reach a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

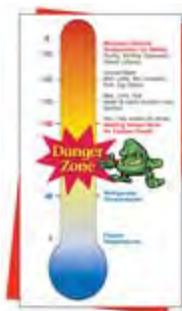
**Fish, seafood, and eggs need to be cooked to certain temperatures to kill harmful bacteria. Cook these foods to the following safe internal temperatures. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.**

- Fish and seafood should be cooked to 145°F.
- Eggs should be cooked to 160°F.
- Leftovers should be reheated to 165°F.

#### 40. What is the proper way to store perishable food?

**You should refrigerate or freeze perishables like meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs. Never let these foods, or cut fresh vegetables or fruit, sit at room temperature for more than two hours before storing them in the refrigerator or freezer. If the temperature in the room is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above, you should put the food away after one hour.**

#### 41. Why is it important to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold?



**It is important to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold because bacteria grow quickly in the "danger zone" between 40 degrees and 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Just keeping food warm (40 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) is not safe. Most foods are safe after cooking to a safe internal temperature and refrigerating promptly.**

#### 42. What are the best temperatures for storing cold food?



**Cold foods that you buy or have delivered should be kept at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Refrigerate cold food within two hours of receiving it or within one hour if the air temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above. To be sure that cold foods are kept cold, set your refrigerator to 40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder, and your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperatures inside your refrigerator.**

#### 43. How should I store leftovers and ready-to-eat meals?



**You should refrigerate or freeze leftovers and ready-to-eat meals within two hours of receiving them. If the air temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above, you should put the food away after one hour. When storing hot foods, divide the food into small portions, place it in shallow containers, and refrigerate or freeze it.**

**If you buy hot food out or have it delivered, keep it hot, at a temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above. You may use a preheated oven, chafing**

dishes, warming trays, or slow cookers. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the food.

If you bring home a doggie bag, make sure to refrigerate your leftovers within two hours of receiving the food, and within one hour if the air temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above. If you will not be getting home soon enough, put the food in a cooler with ice or freezer gel packs to keep it cold. If this is not possible, it is better to leave the leftovers at the restaurant.

Don't keep refrigerated leftovers more than 3 to 4 days. Even if the food looks and smells fine, it may not be safe to eat after that time. Don't hesitate to get rid of food that is no longer safe.

#### 44. What about reheating food?

If you want to reheat food that has been refrigerated, you should heat it to 165 degrees Fahrenheit until it is hot and steaming. When reheating food in the microwave oven, cover and rotate the food for even heating. Allow the food to stand a short while before checking the internal temperature with a food thermometer. Use a food thermometer to check the temperature of the food.

#### 45. What's the best way to thaw frozen food?

If you plan to use frozen foods, thaw them safely. Don't put frozen foods on the counter to thaw at room temperature. Instead, put the food in the refrigerator. Keep the juices from thawing meats and poultry from dripping onto other foods by putting them in containers or on a plate. Raw juices may contain harmful bacteria.

For faster thawing, put the frozen food in a leak-proof plastic bag and immerse it in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes, and cook the food immediately after thawing. You can also thaw food in a microwave if you plan to cook it right away.

#### 46. How can I keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate?



To prevent the transfer of harmful bacteria, separate raw and ready-to-eat foods while shopping and when preparing or storing them. When handling raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs, keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Use one cutting board for fresh fruits and vegetables and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, and eggs. Don't place cooked food on a plate that held raw meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs unless you first wash the plate with hot, soapy water.

#### 47. What do expiration dates on food tell me?

Pay attention to "sell-by" and "use-by" dates on packages and cartons. The "sell-by" date tells the store how long to offer a product for sale. Don't buy an

item after the "sell-by" date. The "use-by" date is the last date that the manufacturer of the product suggests is best for consuming the food. If an item has a "use-by" date, throw it out after the date has passed.

#### **48. How can I avoid foodborne illness when eating out?**

When you go out to eat, check out the eating establishment to see how clean it is. Are the dishes clean? Are the floors swept? Are the bathrooms sanitary? If not, you may be better off finding somewhere else to eat. If the dining room is dirty, the kitchen may be too. A dirty kitchen may lead to unsafe food.



When you eat out, always order your food well done. If you order food containing meat, poultry, fish, seafood, or eggs, make sure these foods are thoroughly cooked. Don't hesitate to ask your food server how the food is prepared before placing your order. If the server is not sure or does not know, ask to speak with the chef to make sure these foods will be not be served raw or undercooked.

Take a good look at your food when it is served to you. If you ordered a hot meal, make sure it's served to you piping hot. If it's not hot enough, or if it just doesn't look right to you, send it back.

#### **49. What should I do if I think I have a foodborne illness?**

If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should take these steps.

1. Contact your doctor or health care provider. Seek medical treatment as necessary.
2. Preserve the food in question. Wrap it securely, label it "Danger," and then freeze it. The food may be used to diagnose your illness and prevent others from getting sick.

If you think you have a foodborne illness, you should take these steps.

3. Save all packaging materials, such as cans or cartons. Write down the food, the date and time consumed, and save any identical unopened products. Report the contaminated food to the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.
4. Call your local health department if you think you became ill from food you ate at a local restaurant or other eating establishment so they can investigate.

#### **50. Where can I get more information about foodborne illness?**

If you have questions and you'd like to talk to an expert, call the following toll-free hotlines. The Food and Drug Administration Hotline can answer questions about safe handling of seafood, fruits, and vegetables as well as rules that govern food safety in restaurants and grocery stores. You can reach

**them by calling 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366). The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline can answer questions about safe handling of meat and poultry as well as many other consumer food issues. Call them at 1-800-674-6854.**

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