

Is mealtime just not the same anymore?

by *Rita Barbieri, BASc., RD & Tracy Morris BA, BASc.*

As we age, it is important to maintain a healthy weight. If an older person lives alone, eating enough can sometimes be a challenge. Cooking for one or two can be tough. Food may not be as interesting and may not even taste as good because we lose our ability to fully taste food as we get older. This can make it hard to maintain your weight if you don't feel like eating.

Lack of proper nutrition affects how well we fight disease. It also limits our energy levels, preventing us from enjoying our everyday activities.

But there is good news. By simply making some wise food choices and watching portion sizes you can be on your way to a healthy weight and feeling great!

Eat from all of the food groups

Follow Canada's Food Guide. Eating from all food groups ensures that you make wise food choices. Enjoy a variety of foods from each of the four food groups:

- 7 servings of vegetables and fruit
- 6 - 7 servings of grain products, such as cereal, rice, pasta, and bread
- 3 servings of milk or milk alternatives
- 2 - 3 servings of meat or meat alternatives

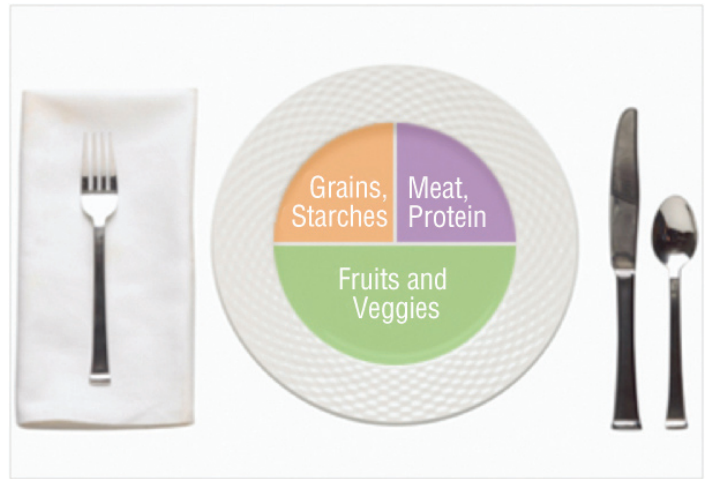
If you are trying to gain weight, try these tips:

- Eat 3 meals a day. Include 1-2 snacks between meals.
- Add sliced fruit to yogurt or cereal.
- Add skim milk powder to prepared cream soups, hot cereals, or stews.

Healthy weight and your plate

The 'plate method' is a way to help you plan your meals and balance your portion sizes.

Choose an 8-inch dinner plate.



Designing your plate:

- Half of the plate should be vegetables. Aim for 2 types if you can.
- One quarter of the plate should be grain products. Include whole grains like brown rice or a whole-wheat dinner roll.
- One quarter of the plate is for lean meat or alternatives like fish or tofu.
- Enjoy with a cup of low fat milk or yogurt that is less than 2% milk fat.
- Add a piece of fruit for dessert.

Tasty snack ideas

Hungry between meals? Try these tasty snacks!

- Unsweetened apple sauce
- Low fat popcorn
- Frozen yogurt with berries
- Toast and peanut butter
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Veggies and a low fat dip

Tips for more enjoyable meals

Relax and enjoy each meal. Find a comfortable place to eat. Invite family or friends over. Try a new recipe, or new spices and herbs that add a little kick of flavor. Join a cooking club and learn more!



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For more cooking tips, check out the Silver Times article *“Cooking for One or Two?”*

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