

RELISH

First
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Easy Recipes for cooking in the comfort of your own home

A publication of Meals on Wheels NSW Ltd



..... New recipes and helpful hints inside

More
than just
a meal

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**More
than just
a meal**

Cooking for one or two

Preparing food in small amounts can be challenging. If you are cooking just for yourself you could be tempted to skip meals or resort to just having 'tea and toast'. Don't give in! To be well nourished it is important not to skip meals.

Some tips that may help include

- Make extra and freeze in meal size amounts. Soups freeze well and are a good standby. Stews and casseroles are also good candidates for freezing
- Frozen vegetables are an excellent alternative to fresh. The flavour may not be quite the same as fresh but, in saying that, the taste of frozen peas and corn is almost the same as the fresh version. As they are snap frozen as soon as harvested, the food value of frozen vegetables is fine. As freezing softens vegetables, they cook quickly. A couple of minutes in the microwave is usually enough
- Convenience foods such as baked beans, canned soup, stews and desserts eg. creamed rice, are a good stand - by for those times when you don't feel like cooking
- Frozen meals from the supermarket are fine. Avoid the low calorie meals if you have lost or are losing weight
- If you require Meals on Wheels contact MY AGED CARE on 1800 200 422 or www.myagedcare.gov.au

Nutrition Services, Gosford Hospital, CCLHD



Meals on Wheels
New South Wales



Health
Central Coast
Local Health District

Losing weight as you grow older is not a desirable part of ageing

It is better for older people to carry a little extra weight rather than being underweight.

Some signs that mean you may not be eating enough to prevent weight loss and muscle loss

1. Obvious weight loss

- Clothing has become very loose
- Belts have to be tightened one or more notches
- Rings or watches have become loose
- Dentures have become loose

2. Muscle loss

- Collar bones stick out
- Knee and fingers look bony
- Calf and thigh muscles have wasted away
- Temple areas (on both sides of forehead) have become hollow

3. Eating and drinking less than you used to

- Poor appetite, never hungry
- Don't really enjoy food (even the old favourites)
- Miss meals or eat less than the equivalent of three meals a day
- Don't feel thirsty and urine is a dark colour

4. Function loss

- Difficulty doing things you once did eg. hanging out washing, vacuuming, opening jars
- It is difficult to get up out of a chair
- Difficulty standing for a long time or walking without support
- Unable to hurry, walk slowly
- Cuts, sores and wounds take a long time to heal.

It would be a good idea to talk to your doctor if any of these things are happening to you.

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Encouraging frail older people to eat

A good body weight is protective for older people..

If already underweight, even one or two days of poor food intake can lead to severe weight loss. Unintentional weight loss of 3 – 5 kg in 6 months is a concern. If this happens, discuss with a doctor. Try to include high calorie food every meal and snack time.

If you are caring for someone who is frail and has a poor appetite, the following ideas may help.

- Put cream, butter or margarine in and over anything you can
 - Serve small meals. Large meals are can be overwhelming and be pushed away uneaten
 - Make porridge on full cream milk (not water) and serve with sugar or honey and cream. Extra powdered milk could be added. Porridge is good for mid meals as well as breakfast
 - Scrambled egg is easy to make and eat. For extra calories use cream instead of milk. Grated cheese and/or chopped ham could be added
 - Offer milk instead of juice. Milk provides fluid and calories, protein, vitamins and minerals. One small cup of juice a day should be enough for vitamin C
 - Milk based desserts are a good standby and can be eaten any time of the day. Milk based desserts include creamed rice, creamed sago, creamed tapioca, baked custard, bread and butter pudding. All could have extra milk powder added. Powdered milk may also be added to canned creamed rice
 - Soups are often popular especially for the evening meal. A thick 'hearty' soup made with plenty of vegetables can be both tasty and nutritious especially if there is meat in the recipe. Try chopped up ham, easy and adds flavour. Mince is also suitable. Enrich soups by adding powdered milk once soup is cooked. About 2 tablespoons for every cup of soup
- If wanting a cream style soup, blend (puree) then add a can of evaporated milk for every 4 cups of soup (approximately)
- Canned soup is fine. Enrich by adding add left- over cooked vegetables or chopped up cooked meat. You could also stir in some powdered milk
- Drinks can be a meal in themselves. Try fruit smoothies made on milk with extra milk powder added. Why not top with whipped cream
 - Sweetened condensed milk is great for extra energy. The original milk goodness is there plus extra sugar. Add to hot and cold drinks, squeeze on desserts or just have by the spoonful!
 - Don't worry too much about serving 'a wide variety of foods' when the person you care for will only eat their 'favourites'. If adequate nutrition is thought to be a problem it is advisable to talk to a doctor or dietitian
 - Vegetables are good but don't come with many calories and can be filling. Add butter, margarine, sour cream, white sauce (with added cheese) or gravy

For someone who has a very poor appetite don't worry too much about the vegetables but try to encourage the eating of energy dense high protein foods

Meals and meal times should be as enjoyable as possible

Nutrition Services, Gosford Hospital, CCLHD

Shopping list for nutritious, high calorie food

The following shopping list provides a selection of high calorie nourishing products that could be used to prepare a quick meal.

- Full cream milk: fresh (plain and flavoured), long life(UHT), powdered milk, evaporated
- Full cream custard (any type including long life)
- Full cream yoghurt (flavoured or plain)
- Ice-cream
- Canned dessert such as creamed rice
- Full fat cheese
- Cream, butter and margarine
- Peanut butter
- Eggs
- Ham or other cold meat
- Canned salmon, tuna and/or sardines
- Baked beans
- Canned spaghetti (add grated cheese when serving)
- Canned soup (choose thick, hearty) .Dilute condensed canned soup with milk or cream
- Frozen vegetables
- Breakfast cereal and breakfast drinks
- Fresh fruit
- Frozen party pies, sausage rolls and quiche
- Bread

This shopping list has been adapted from “National Meal Guidelines” compiled by Smart Food Centre, University of Wollongong and “Eating Well” written by Nutrition Services CCLHD.

Frozen meals from MOW are a good option as most follow the National Meal Guidelines



Food fact or fiction

It can be hard to separate fact from fiction In a time when we hear so much food and nutrition information from all sorts of people and different organisations. The following information may help to sort some of it out. It has been adapted from 'Nutrition News', a news-letter written by Northern Sydney dietitians.

Some common food myths include –

- Milk makes mucus:

Despite investigation, there is NO evidence that milk causes mucus to be produced. The 'coating' that milk can leave in the mouth and throat, is not mucus

- Drinking tea and coffee cause dehydration:

Unless large amounts of these are consumed, there will not be enough caffeine to cause dehydration. Both tea and coffee contribute to daily fluid intake

- Sea salt is healthier than table salt:

Because they come from different places, these salts may taste different however the sodium content of both is basically the same

- Frozen meals have little or no nutritional value:

Although the taste may not be quite the same as fresh cooked, frozen meals are as nutritious. If you have lost weight, or you are trying to gain weight or have a small appetite it is best to avoid the low fat, low calorie ('lite') frozen meals

- Frozen vegetables are not as nutritious as fresh vegetables

As vegetables are frozen soon after harvesting there is not much time for nutrients to be lost. The flavour of frozen vegetables may not be the same as fresh vegetables but the vitamin and mineral content is the same. Frozen vegetables take less time to cook as the freezing process has already begun the softening process

- It is better for older people to be thin?:

Malnutrition in older people can be a big problem. Research shows that with increasing age, extra kilos of body weight are protective and reduce the risk of illness and death

- A gluten free diet is a healthier option?

Products labelled as gluten free does not mean they are a healthier or more nutritious option. Gluten free diets are required only by people who have medically confirmed coeliac disease or gluten intolerance. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye.

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Try not to miss meals

Preparing meals can be challenging especially if time is limited or other tasks have taken priority. Perhaps you just don't feel like cooking. Knowing how to prepare quick and easy meals may be a 'life saver'. Nutritious and tasty meals don't have to be complicated, you don't have to spend a long time in the kitchen and you don't have to be an expert cook.

Quick and easy meal ideas include

- Barbeque chicken with vegetables or salad plus with bread and butter. Frozen vegetables are fine and need only a few minutes in the microwave. You could heat (or have cold) canned vegetables eg. peas, corn, mixed vegetables or legumes such as butter beans. For dessert, canned fruit with custard or cream (both if weight loss is an issue)
- Baked beans on wholemeal toast followed by a milk drink and some fruit. Why not sprinkle some grated cheese over the baked beans
- Scrambled egg on toast. Using 2 eggs per person would be good. Chopped up cooked vegetables or cooked meat could be added to egg before cooking. Once served why not sprinkle with grated cheese. Fruit and ice-cream make an easy dessert
- Sausage roll or meat pie with fresh, frozen or canned vegetables. For dessert, fruit with custard or yoghurt
- Toasted sandwich with filling such as cold meat, egg, salmon, tuna, sardines, cheese and peanut butter. Finish with some fruit and a milk drink
- Frozen meals from the supermarket are fine. If you have a poor appetite or if you are losing weight, avoid the low calorie options.

Don't feel bad about using convenience foods. There are lots of good choices available. In the refrigerator you will find ready to eat custard, rice dessert, milk puddings and yoghurt. In the freezer there is frozen fish, frozen vegetables, rissoles, meat pies and a variety of meals. On the shelves you will find canned soup, stew, meat balls well as canned fruit, creamed rice, and long life custard. Cut up fresh vegetables and prepared meat are also available in the supermarket.

Importantly, don't forget Meals on Wheels. They can home-deliver a variety of frozen meals and also ask whether they can supply a hot meal.

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Sweet banana dessert

Served with ice-cream, custard, yoghurt or thick cream, this is an easy dessert

Ingredients – to make 2 serves

1 tablespoon butter or margarine

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 tablespoons orange juice

2 bananas, cut into thick chunks (about 2 centimetres or 1/2 inch long)

Method

1. Melt butter in a small frying pan or saucepan
2. Add sugar and juice then heat until sugar is dissolved. Stir from time to time
3. Add banana chunks and cook for 3 – 4 minutes using moderate heat. Stir occasionally making sure banana chunks are coated with the 'glaze'
4. Serve with ice cream, custard or cream

Tips

- Bananas are best if just ripe
- Honey, golden syrup or raw sugar could replace brown sugar
- Serve while still warm but can be served cold
- If storing until next day, place in container with lid and refrigerate
- Juice from canned fruit could be used instead of orange juice.

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Chewing and swallowing problems

Chewing and swallowing problems make eating difficult and could result in poor nutrition and weight loss.

Causes of chewing problems include

- Poorly fitting dentures, tooth decay or missing teeth
- Sore gums or mouth ulcers
- Cracked or sore lips
- Reduced saliva production
- Poor control of facial muscles

Signs of swallowing problems include

- Taking a long time to chew and swallow food
- Choking or coughing
- Aspiration (food or fluid entering the airways i.e. 'going down the wrong way')
- Wet gurgly voice after swallowing
- Drooling
- Dehydration

If any of the above signs are present, a doctor or speech pathologist should be consulted.

Some suggestions to make eating more enjoyable and safe include

- Serve soft foods that are easy to chew e.g. soft fruit, fresh and canned fish, vegetables that are cooked until they are soft and easily mashed or cut with the side of a fork
- Don't serve food that are difficult to chew e.g. fruit with tough skin, celery, chewy doughy bread, lettuce, meat with gristle or skin. Whole grapes and cherry tomatoes can easily cause choking
- Texture modify food by mashing, mincing or pureeing
- Attend to mouth hygiene. Teeth, dentures, gums and tongue need to be carefully cleaned. Make sure that correct toothbrush, toothpaste and denture care products are used. Talk to a dentist or dental hygienist for best advice and have regular dental check-ups.

Important: The above information does not negate the need to talk to a speech pathologist if you have trouble chewing or swallowing

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Hawaiian chicken and pasta

This is an easy dish to make. The recipe will make 4 serves. It can be frozen so, you could freeze in serve size amounts for those times when you can't be bothered cooking.

Ingredients

1 small cooked chicken

2 cups macaroni or shell pasta

420g can of concentrated tomato soup (not 'heat and eat' type)

450g can pineapple pieces (drain but keep the juice)

1 cup frozen peas

Method

1. Place macaroni in large saucepan of boiling water to cook
2. While macaroni is cooking, remove the skin and any visible fat from the chicken then cut chicken meat into bite sized chunks
3. Drain cooked macaroni, then place back into saucepan with the soup, vegetable, pineapple pieces and the chicken. Add half a cup of the canned pineapple juice
4. Gently bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for 5 minutes then serve.

Tips

- Extra vegetables can be added. You could add frozen corn, finely chopped celery, canned legumes (butter beans, kidney beans, chick peas etc.) Drain before adding
- Any cooked meat could be used instead of chicken (about 2 cups as this recipe is to serve 4)
- Canned tuna or salmon could be used instead of chicken
- Using wholemeal macaroni will add extra iron and fibre.

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Lemon delicious pudding

This recipe is suitable for people who have medically confirmed coeliac disease or gluten intolerance

Ingredients: to make 4 serves

1/4 cup rice flour

1/4 teaspoon baking powder (gluten free)

2 teaspoons rice bran

1/2 cup castor sugar

60g margarine or butter

3 eggs (separate yolks from whites)

grated zest of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 cup milk (250 ml)

Method

1. Cream the butter and sugar then mix in lemon zest
2. Fold the flour mix through the creamed butter and sugar
3. Beat together the milk, juice and egg yolks then gently stir this into the flour mix
4. Beat egg whites until they hold a soft peak then fold through the other ingredients
5. Pour into a greased baking dish, stand in a 'water bath'
6. Bake in a moderate oven (180) until firm to touch (about 40 minutes)
7. Remove from oven and water bath as soon as cooked

Tips

- A 'water bath' is a dish of water. It helps to prevent the custard part of the pudding from curdling. Water can be cold or warm. Warm water should mean the pudding will cook a little faster
- The rice bran could be left out
- This dessert will keep in the refrigerator for 2 or 3 days.



Coconut Pastry

Coconut pastry is not hard to make with next to no skill required

Ingredients

1 cup plain flour (7 -8 tablespoons)

¼ cup caster sugar (3 tablespoons)

1 cup desiccated coconut (6 tablespoons)

125grams margarine or butter (5 tablespoons), melted

Method

1. Combine all the dry ingredients
2. Add the melted margarine and mix well
3. Press into an 8 inch baking dish or onto a baking tray
4. Bake in a moderate oven (180) 30 minutes or until golden brown

Tips

Coconut pastry can

- Be used to make biscuits
- Spread with jam before or after cooking, to make jam tart
- Served with canned fruit for dessert



Creamed rice

Although ready to eat 'creamed rice' can be purchased, making your own is not that hard.

The following recipe makes 4 generous serves. Creamed rice is a nutritious dessert especially if served with fruit. It is also great to eat at snack time (or anytime you feel hungry).

When cooking the rice, increase the calories by using half cream and half milk.

The nutritive value can be increased by adding 4 tablespoons of powdered milk once the rice is cooked.

Ingredients

½ cup rice (medium grain rice or Arborio rice)

3 cups milk

¼ cup sugar (2 tablespoons)

Method

1. Place rice, sugar and milk into saucepan and stir over medium heat until it comes to the boil
2. Turn the heat down, simmer gently, lid off until rice is soft (about 30 minutes). Stir from time to time

Tips

- Any full cream milk is suitable – fresh, UHT(long life) evaporated milk or powdered milk
- For a different flavour use brown sugar instead of white sugar
- Sweetened condensed milk is also suitable. Make up according to instructions. If using sweetened condensed milk, leave out the ¼ cup sugar

If you prefer to buy ready to eat 'creamed rice' you can still add extra powdered milk. About 1 – 2 tablespoons for each serve.



Corn, ham and noodle omelette

This recipe makes 1 large serve or 2 smaller serves

Ingredient

- 1 packet of 2 minute noodles
- 125g can corn kernels, drained well
- 50g ham (2 slices), chopped finely
- 1 small zucchini, grated
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 2 teaspoons oil (just enough to cover base of the frying pan)

Method

1. Place noodles in a bowl, cover with boiling water and stand for 5 minutes or until noodles are tender
2. Using a fork, separate noodles and drain well. Return noodles to the bowl
3. Mix corn, ham, grated zucchini and beaten eggs in with noodles
4. Heat oil in a small frying pan then add the noodle/omelette mix. Cook over low to moderate heat until set. Covering with a lid will help cook top of omelette
5. Place under a moderately hot grill to completely cook top of the omelette

or

when the top needs to be cooked, using a spatula turn sections of the omelette over

6. Serve with toast

Tips

- 1 cup of frozen corn could be instead of canned corn
- A small can of well drained salmon or tuna could replace ham.
- 1 cup of chopped cooked chicken could replace ham
- 2 tablespoons of grated cheese could be sprinkled over omelette just before serving
- Use a non-stick frying pan if you have one. It will make washing up much easier

