



## How are Meals on Wheels different from supermarket frozen meals?

Meals on Wheels main meals that meet the National Meals Guidelines (NMG's) are prepared with the over 65's in mind. Most supermarket frozen meals are smaller overall, contain much less meat and vegetables, and are lower in protein and energy in comparison.

	MOW NMG compliant main meal (meat or salad dish)	Supermarket frozen meal*
2-3 serves vegetables	Yes	No
At least 100g meat/protein equivalent	Yes	No
Excellent source of protein (>30g/serve)	Yes	No
Excellent source of energy	Yes	Not usually

\* Results obtained from an assortment of supermarket frozen meals representing a range of brands.

Remember that you still need to eat well throughout the rest of the day too!

## Eat well – don't restrict yourself

Since older adults often have smaller appetites sometimes it can be difficult to eat enough food to meet your energy (calorie) needs. It's OK (and encouraged if you're on the thin side) to make dessert a regular habit. Try adding yoghurt, custard, cream or ice cream to your fruit for added flavour, or enjoy a piece of cake or a few biscuits with your cuppa at morning and afternoon tea. If you're not overly hungry at a meal time then have a chunky, nourishing soup, but make sure that you have some bread and butter with it and a dessert as well if you can fit it in!

In general, older people do not need to be on a low-fat diet. Fats and oils are a very important part of our diet – they provide essential energy and vitamins. Splash tasty extra virgin olive oil onto your salads, melt butter or margarine onto your vegies or mash avocado onto your toast!



## Sample meal plan (to meet the dietary requirements of an average 71 year old person)

This sample meal plan gives you an idea of what eating well looks like...

### BREAKFAST

- Porridge with milk and sugar or two eggs on wholemeal toast
- A few prunes

### MORNING TEA

- Raisin toast with margarine or a muffin or some biscuits

### LUNCH\*

- A sandwich on wholemeal bread with cold meat and cheese (or egg, or tinned fish e.g. salmon or tuna)
  - Add salad such as lettuce, tomato, cucumber and grated carrot (or whatever you have in the fridge)
  - Use mayonnaise, mustard, chutney or pickles to add extra flavour
- A piece of fruit or some yoghurt



### AFTERNOON TEA

A hot or cold milk drink such as Milo® or Aktavite®

### DINNER\*

- A hot meal with meat, fish or chicken, some carbohydrates such as potato, rice or pasta and 2-3 different types of vegetables. If you're a vegetarian then you need to make sure that lunch and dinner include good quality protein such as eggs, cheese, legumes, nuts or tofu.

### DESSERT

- Banana and custard or chocolate pudding and ice cream

### DRINKS DURING THE DAY

- Make sure you have a drink at every meal and snack

\* You can swap lunch and dinner around if you prefer a bigger meal in the middle of the day and a lighter meal at night time.

## What about other health conditions?

In the past, you may have followed a special diet for health reasons, but as you get older you may be able to relax dietary restrictions, especially for conditions like diabetes and high cholesterol. The foods that are recommended for diabetics have changed a lot in recent times –

you no longer need to avoid anything sweet or with sugar in it, and you don't need special desserts with artificial sweetener anymore either. If you do follow a special diet of some sort check with your Doctor or Dietitian to see if it's still necessary.

## Be active, stay strong!

Exercise can help to improve strength, balance and mobility, so be as active as you can be! Aim for 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every day. This will be different for everyone – it could be walking, swimming, gardening, dancing, climbing stairs or lifting weights (a simple weight can be made from a can of baked beans or a milk container filled with water for something heavier).



Protein from foods we eat, as well as using your muscles by being active helps to build and maintain healthy muscles. Losing muscles means losing strength, and increases the risk of falls. Meat, fish, chicken, eggs, nuts and dairy foods are all good protein sources.

## Get some time in the sun

Did you know that exposing skin to the sun for around 15 minutes a day is essential for our bodies to produce Vitamin D? Vitamin D helps the absorption of calcium into bones – not having enough Vitamin D can lead to brittle, weak bones and a high risk of breaks or fractures. Avoid the sun during the hottest part of the day so you don't get burnt though!

## Easy snack ideas

- Yoghurt
- Custard
- Raisin toast
- A handful of nuts
- Avocado on toast
- Fruit cake with butter
- Fruit with yoghurt or custard
- Cheese or dip and biscuits
- Peanut butter sandwich or toast
- Pikelets or pancakes from the supermarket with butter and jam
- Eggs on toast, poached, fried or scrambled
- Toasted sandwich with ham, cheese and tomato
- Baked beans on toast
- Tinned tuna, sardines or salmon on toast
- Left-over cooked rice with a tin of tuna or salmon
- A glass of milk with a few sweet biscuits



## Drink plenty of fluids

Your fluid requirements don't change as you get older – you still need to drink about 1.5-2L fluids each day to prevent dehydration and urinary tract infections (UTI's). In hot weather you need to drink even more than this.

