

# Eat well.

## NUTRITION FOR SENIORS

**Eating well becomes even more important as we age.** This booklet has ideas to help you make healthy eating choices while meeting some of the special concerns of growing older.



**KAISER PERMANENTE®**



Variety is a key to better health.

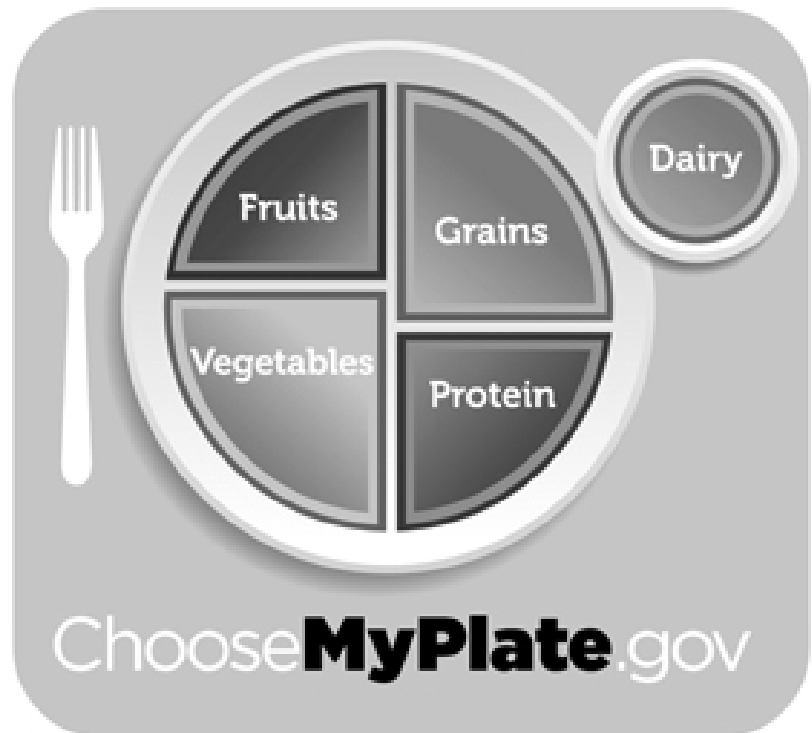
## EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS

### Make sure your diet includes:

- Whole grains
- Fruits and vegetables
- Healthy unsaturated fats
- Dairy products or high-calcium foods
- Lean protein foods (like chicken breast or fish)
- Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, and calcium

### Also important to your health:

- 8–10 glasses of liquids per day
- Staying active



Variety helps you to get the key nutrients you need for good health. For more information, go to [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov) or [nutrition.tufts.edu](http://nutrition.tufts.edu).



Eat high fiber. Hydrate. Get calcium.

## **CHOOSE HIGH FIBER FOODS**

**Fiber is important for good health and it can help relieve constipation.** It softens your stool so you can pass it more easily. Fiber, also called “roughage,” refers to the part of plant foods that you can’t digest.

### **What foods have high fiber?**

- Legumes (like beans and lentils)
- Whole grain breads and cereals
- Raw and cooked fruits and vegetables

**You can also add products like Benefiber® and Metamucil® to your food** to get more fiber. When you add fiber to your diet, it is important to add it slowly over a few weeks and drink more liquids.

## **DRINK PLENTY OF LIQUIDS**

Liquids help your digestion and decrease constipation and dizziness. Liquids also help your kidneys to function better.

**Drink at least 6–8 glasses of fluids every day.** Make sure to include at least 2–3 glasses of water. You can also drink milk, soup and broth, decaffeinated coffee, and tea.

## **SELECT CALCIUM AND VITAMIN D-RICH FOODS**

**Calcium is important for good health and strong bones and helps prevent Osteoporosis.** The best sources of calcium are dairy products. Vitamin D is often added to products with calcium because it helps the body absorb and use the calcium.

### **What foods are high in calcium?**

- Canned fish with soft, edible bones
- Tofu
- Green leafy vegetables like kale, and turnip greens
- Foods that are fortified with calcium and Vitamin D

If you do not digest milk easily or have cramping, bloating or diarrhea when you drink milk, try drinking smaller amounts of milk spaced throughout the day. You may find it easier to digest cultured dairy products such as yogurt, buttermilk, cheese, or lactose reduced milk.



Reduce fat. Eat regularly.  
Soft foods for easy chewing.

## **REDUCE FAT IN YOUR DIET FOR HEART HEALTH**

**Limiting your saturated fat is healthier for your heart, and less fat in your diet can help you control your weight.** Saturated fat is the fat in meat, dairy products, desserts, some snack foods, and foods that have hydrogenated fat.

### **Some ways to limit fat—**

- Eat nonfat or low-fat foods.
- Choose lean meat and trim off visible fat.
- Bake, broil, roast or steam foods rather than fry.
- Remove skin from chicken and turkey before you eat it.
- Use less butter, margarine, cream, sour cream, cream cheese, and high fat salad dressing.
- Try low-fat frozen desserts like sherbet or low-fat frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.

**Other foods:** Some foods, such as cake, cookies, butter, oil, jelly and alcohol are high in calories and contain no nutrients or are low in most nutrients. Eat less of these foods.

## **EAT REGULAR MEALS**

**Skipping meals to save money can hurt your health and nutrition.** It can weaken your body's defenses and increase your chance of illness.

It doesn't matter if you eat two to three large meals or if you eat smaller, more frequent meals, as long as you eat a variety of foods providing the nutrients you need each day.

## **DO YOU HAVE CHEWING PROBLEMS?**

Follow up with your dentist if you have ill-fitting dentures, or sores in your mouth that prevent you from eating certain foods.

### **What can I eat that is easier on my teeth and mouth?**

- Soft, protein-rich foods such as fish, low fat yogurt, cottage cheese, tofu, eggs and baked beans
- Casseroles made with ground or finely chopped meat, poultry, fish, or grated low fat cheese
- Finely chopped or mashed vegetables
- Chopped or pureed vegetables in soups
- Cooked cereals, such as oatmeal
- Canned or cooked fruit, or very ripe fresh fruit, like bananas or peaches



Make meal times special. Eat well on a limited income. Increase activity.

## **DON'T EAT ALONE**

Eating alone may cause you to skip meals, eat the same thing all the time, or not eat enough.

**Try these ideas to make your meal times special—**

- Set an attractive table
- Eat by a window
- Listen to the radio
- Eat outdoors on a nice day
- Dine out every now and then
- Share a meal with a friend, family member, or group
- Go to senior meal programs in your community

## **GROCERY SHOPPING ON A BUDGET**

If stretching the budget is a concern for you, **try one of these recommendations—**

- Plan menus for a week or more. Look for weekly specials in your local newspaper.
- Cut out and save coupons.
- Organize your coupons. Use coupons on food items that are already on sale.
- Make a shopping list and stick to it.
- Shop when your store is least crowded so you have time to look for the best values.
- Buy store brands or generic brands.
- Shop at discount stores and share large purchases with others.
- You may be able to get food stamps. For further information on food stamps, call your local Department of Social Services.
- Senior Resource Line. Learn more about food banks, meals on wheels, and food stamp resources. Call **1-866-279-0736 (TTY 711)**.
- Hunger Free Colorado. Get connected to food stamps, food pantries, and more. Call **720-382-2920** or toll free **1-855-855-4626**.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You may qualify for SNAP benefits, like food stamps. Talk with your care coordinator to learn more.

## **ARE YOU EXERCISING ON MOST DAYS?**

**Exercise plays a role in good health.** Regular exercise helps keep your body working properly. It can also decrease constipation, increase your appetite, improve sleep, help your heart, strengthen your bones, and help with stress.

- Talk to your doctor to see if it's all right for you to exercise.
- Try walking, swimming, dancing or chair exercises. Slow down and rest if you feel tired or short of breath.
- Start with even 10 minutes **a day**. Work up to 30 minutes (or more) on most days.



# Vitamin supplements. Resources.

## CLASSES

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**In Denver/Boulder**, you can attend diabetes, preventing diabetes, cholesterol, and heart health classes. Call **303-338-4545** (TTY **711**) to register.

**In Southern Colorado**, contact Kaiser Permanente Care Connections at **719-282-2560** or toll-free **1-877-870-6735**. For additional community resources, contact:

- Memorial Health System's HealthLink, **719-444-2273**
- Parkview Medical Center, **719-584-4000**
- St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center, **719-560-4000** in Pueblo
- St. Thomas More Hospital, **719-285-2000** in Cañon City

TTY **711**

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## ONLINE CLASSES

Go to [kp.org/classes](http://kp.org/classes) for current schedule and to sign-up.

## HELP AT KP.ORG

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- [kp.org/healthyaging](http://kp.org/healthyaging) has great tips and resources for staying healthy as you get older.
- **HealthMedia® Care™ for Your Health** is an online coaching program that teaches you to effectively manage your existing chronic health condition and achieve your optimal health. Go to [kp.org/healthylifestyles](http://kp.org/healthylifestyles) and pick HealthMedia® Care™.
- [kp.org/watch](http://kp.org/watch) has videos on high blood pressure & other engaging health information.

## SENIOR RESOURCE LINE

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A senior volunteer program providing resources, information and support for senior members of Kaiser Permanente.

Call toll free **1-866-279-0736** (TTY **711**).

