# Maintaining Your Independence

**October 2019**

## How Does Nutrition Help?

- Healthy eating increases your quality of life.
- Eating enough protein helps you stay active, maintain functional status and independence.
- As part of normal aging, there is a loss of muscle mass and strength. A combination of inadequate protein intake and loss of muscle mass can increase the risk of:
  - Weakness
  - Fatigue
  - Changes in thinking
  - Infection
  - Pressure ulcers
  - Falls and hip fractures
- These conditions may limit your independence. Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet will help reduce your risk.

## Increase Your Protein

Seniors should include at least 60 grams of protein in their meals throughout the day. There are many different types of protein sources including:

- **Meat, Poultry & Eggs**: i.e. chicken & lean cuts of beef
- **Seafood**: i.e. salmon, tuna & scallops
- **Legumes**: i.e. pinto beans, lentils, black beans, green peas & chickpeas
- **Grains**: i.e. oats, quinoa & wheat berries
- **Vegetables**: i.e. spinach & collard greens
- **Nuts**: i.e. peanut butter & almonds
- **Seeds**: i.e. flax & pumpkin seeds
- **Dairy Products**: i.e. low-fat milk, cottage cheese, plain & Greek yogurt

## Is Exercise Important?

- Yes! Daily physical activity and proper nutrition are critical at all stages of life!
- Exercise helps you live longer, increases quality of life, and helps you maintain your independence.

## What to Know

- It is never too late to add exercise into your routine.
- Exercise can be demanding. It is important to consume both adequate calories and protein to sustain the activities.
- Exercise is not meant to be painful, and you only need basic household items to have a good workout.

## Where Do I Start?

- There are four different ways to be active
- It is important to try out all four to reap the benefits of exercise

  1. Strength
  2. Endurance
  3. Balance
  4. Flexibility

  --- Flip over to find out more!
LETS GET MOVING!

How long you exercise for depends on the type of activity:

Strength exercises:
- Perform at least 2 times a week
- 1 to 2 sets of 8 to 15 repetitions per exercise

Endurance exercises:
- Moderate-intensity: 150 minutes a week
- Vigorous-intensity: 75 minutes a week

Balance exercises:
- Daily to maintain balance

Flexibility exercises:
- Daily to increase range of motion
- Hold each stretch for 10 to 30 seconds
- Start off slowly and increase intensity and duration a little bit each day.
- Consume protein after exercising, such as peanut butter or hard-boiled eggs, to repair and build muscles

This picture depicts proper lifting form. This is important to follow when exercising and performing daily activities.

FOUR DIFFERENT WAYS TO BE ACTIVE

1. **Strength Exercises**: Builds muscle to help with everyday activities, such as getting out of a chair, picking up your grandchildren or bowling with friends
   - Upper Body: Side Arm Raise and Hand Grip
   - Lower Body: Chair Stand and Leg Straightening

2. **Endurance Exercises**: Also known as aerobic activities, these work your heart and lungs
   - Walking, Swimming, Working around the house, Dancing and any activity that makes you breath hard

3. **Balance**: Important for everyday activities, like going up and down the stairs, and helps prevent falls
   - Heel-to-Toe Walk and Standing on One Foot

4. **Flexibility**: Increases freedom of movement, which will make daily activities like tying your shoes and driving easier
   - Upper Body: Shoulder and Upper Arm stretches
   - Lower Body: Thigh (Standing), Calf, and Ankle Stretches

Warm-up before engaging in any type of exercise.
A good warm-up can be a five-minute walk.

ADDITIONAL EXERCISE RESOURCES

For more information, local fitness centers, civic groups, YMCAs, or YWCAs can help you find an exercise program that works for you!

Additional resources:
- [https://go4life.nia.nih.gov](https://go4life.nia.nih.gov)
- [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)
- [https://www.silversneakers.com](https://www.silversneakers.com)
### PROTEIN-PACKED DAY

Simple ways to increase your protein intake at every meal:

**Breakfast:**
- Switch from plain yogurt to Greek Yogurt
- Use peanut butter instead of butter
- Add a handful of nuts and/or a couple tablespoons of seeds to your breakfast cereal, salad, oatmeal, smoothies or yogurt
- Add hard-boiled eggs or cottage cheese to your breakfast

**Lunch:**
- Add beans as a main or side dish
- Eat a tablespoon of peanut butter or hummus with your favorite fruit or vegetable
- Eat more whole-grain foods
- Choose quinoa over rice or pasta

**Dinner:**
- Prepare extra chicken and fish ahead of time to give your meals a protein boost throughout the week
- Add edamame, or soybeans, as a side. A 1/2 cup has 9 g. of protein.

### PROTEIN PICKS

#### Protein Smoothie
**Yield:** 1 serving  
**Protein/serving:** 28 g.

**Ingredients:**
- 1 frozen peeled banana
- 1/2 c. frozen strawberries
- 1/4 c. plain or Greek low-fat yogurt
- 1 tbsp. of almond or peanut butter
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 1 c. water

**Directions:**
Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth.

#### Yummy Veggie Omelet
**Yield:** 2 servings  
**Protein/serving:** 13 g.

**Ingredients:**
- 4 eggs
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 2 tbsp. skim or low-fat milk
- Pinch of salt and pepper
- Non-fat cooking spray

**Directions:**
Spray a skilled with the cooking spray and set over medium heat. Place onion and green pepper in skillet and cook for 4 to 5 minutes until tender. While vegetables are cooking, beat eggs with milk, salt and pepper. Remove vegetables from heat and transfer to another bowl. Spray the same skillet again. Add egg mixture and cook for 2 minutes until the eggs begin set on bottom of pan. Gently lift edges of omelet with a spatula to let uncooked part of eggs cook. Continue cooking for 2 to 3 minutes until center of omelet starts to look dry. Spoon vegetable mixture into center of omelet. Using a spatula, fold one edge of omelet over vegetables and let omelet cook for another 2 minutes. Slide omelet out of skillet onto plate, cut in half and serve.

#### 'Choose-your-Protein' Salad
**Serving Size:** 1/2 cup  
**Yield:** 2 servings  
**Protein/serving:** 11 g.

**Ingredients:**
- Choose your protein
  - 1, 6 oz. can tuna, in water
  - 3 boiled eggs, peeled and chopped
  - 5 oz. can chicken
- 1 tbsp. minced celery
- 1 tbsp. minced red onion
- 1/2 tsp. minced parsley
- 2-1/2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 1-1/2 tsp. whole-grain mustard
- Ground pepper (optional)
- Freshly squeezed lemon juice (optional)

**Directions:**
In a small mixing bowl, break up the protein with a fork. Toss with the celery, onion and parsley. Add the mayonnaise, mustard and season with pepper, to taste. Stir to combine. Add lemon juice, if desired.
REFERENCES

https://go4life.nia.nih.gov
https://ce.todaysdietitian.com/ProteinWebinar
https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw206944
https://www.thehealthy.com/nutrition/how-to-eat-more-protein/


QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT TO EAT?

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County’s Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible to have a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at (518) 372-1622, ext. 269.

Leave a message, if necessary, for the dietitian to call you back.

Check our website for nutrition resources:
http://ccceschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors

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