

# Eating for Health and Independence



*Whether you cook for yourself or have meals delivered the information, ideas and recipes in this booklet will help you to eat well and avoid losing weight*



**Health**  
Central Coast  
Local Health District

## Eating for Health and Independence.

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# Eating for Health and Independence

If you are finding preparing and cooking your own meals difficult, having meals provided is a really good idea as it will help to keep you well-nourished and independent.

There are a number of organisations providing home delivered meals.

'Meals on Wheels' is one such organisation and is well known. Clients can choose what they want from the comprehensive menu offers a wide selection of frozen main meals, desserts and soups. Special dietary needs can be catered for although the range may be a limited. Meals are delivered to your door.

A number of 'Community Restaurants' are conducted by Central Coast 'Meals in Wheels'. These provide an opportunity for 'Meals on Wheels' clients to socialise. Transport can be arranged.

If buying frozen meals from other organisations or the supermarket, avoid the low calorie variety if you are trying to gain weight or avoid weight loss.

**To avoid weight loss, it is important to have extra food with the meal or snack throughout the day if you:**

- have a small appetite
- eat only half of the main meal
- only eat the dessert or have only the soup

**So, what should you do?**

If you only eat the main course, especially if it is a small meal, try to have a milky dessert such as canned creamed rice or instant pudding. If you can't manage a dessert, a milk drink would be good especially if made on full cream milk and enriched with 2 tablespoons of powdered milk

If soup is all you want, make sure it is 'hearty' (lots of vegetables) and even then, try complete the meal with a milky dessert or a milk drink. If you can manage, as well as soup, you could have baked beans, peanut butter, cheese or perhaps an egg on toast

If you only feel like dessert, a milk based dessert is recommended. Banana custard is easy, just cut up a banana in custard (bought or homemade). Try to include a sandwich or toast as well as a milk drink such as hot (or cold) chocolate.

If you are hardly ever hungry especially at meal time, keep some nourishing food in the fridge for snacks throughout the day. Suitable foods include, milk based desserts, milk drinks, cheese, cold meat including a BBQ chicken from the supermarket.

As time goes on you may like to do prepare a few meals for yourself. Keeping up some cooking skills or developing new ones could be good for you.

When you feel like it, why not try some of the recipes in this booklet. There are ideas for main meals, nourishing soups and desserts. Most could also be eaten throughout the day whenever you feel hungry.

**This recipe book, will provide you with a few ideas for nourishing soups, desserts, snack items and milk drinks. They are all relatively simple to prepare.**

If you don't eat enough you will lose weight. The following information shows that you are losing or have lost weight.

## 1. Obvious weight loss

- Trousers have become very loose or are falling down
- Clothes are much looser (going down one dress or pants size indicates a weight loss of about 1 stone or 6 kilograms)
- Belts have to be tightened an extra notch or more
- Rings or watches are now loose
- Dentures no longer fit properly, they become loose

## 2. Muscle loss

- Collar bones stick out
- Finger and hand muscles are wasting away and fingers appear bony
- Temple areas on the head are hollow
- Knee joints are becoming prominent
- Calf and thigh muscles have wasted

## 3. Unable to do things you could before

- Loss of muscle strength. Weak muscles make it difficult to do things you once did e.g. hanging out the washing, opening screw top jars, vacuuming, etc.
- Difficult to get out of a chair
- Difficult to stand for a long time without support of walker, bench or rail
- Less mobile, Walking slowly and unable to hurry

## 4. You may have a fear of falling

- Feel weak and not having much energy
- Feel cold even when it is not cold
- Be frequently sick
- Notice cuts, wounds or sores take a long time to heal

You will lose weight if the amount of food you eat each day is not enough to nourish your body. If the following applies to you, then you are likely to lose weight and you should make an effort to apply the information and recipes found in this booklet. You will likely lose weight when:

- You don't feel like eating or drinking
- Your appetite is poor or you never feel hungry
- Your food tastes average or bad (don't really enjoy eating)
- You feel full after eating only half a meal
- You miss meals
- You eat less than three meals and three snacks a day
- You have little or no food in the fridge or cupboard
- Your fridge is full of uneaten food that has gone 'off' or is rotten

Eating well is important. Not eating enough is one of the main reasons older people become frail and eventually lose their independence. It is often thought that people over 65 need fewer vitamins, minerals and protein than younger people, but this is not the case. Requirements are actually much the same and can even be more, especially in times of illness. Protein, calcium and Vitamin D requirements are greater in old age than for young people.

## Eating well helps to:

- ✓ Maintain and improve your strength
- ✓ Give you the energy to do your exercises
- ✓ Prevent falls and prevent bone fractures
- ✓ Prevent illnesses and infections
- ✓ Heal cuts, wounds or sores
- ✓ Improve your appetite
- ✓ Retain your independence



If you have someone do the shopping for you, or even if you can get to the shops, the following shopping list includes many easy to prepare meal and snack ideas.

## Shopping list for nutritious and high calorie food

Encouraging frail older people to eat enough nourishing food can be challenging. The following shopping list will help to make sure that there is always some high protein and high calorie foods in the pantry, fridge or freezer.

### SHOPPING LIST

- full cream milk
- full cream long life milk
- full cream flavoured milk
- full cream powdered milk
- cream, sour cream
- pre-whipped cream
- ice cream
- cheese slices
- full cream custard
- full cream flavoured yoghurt
- dairy desserts ( E.g. crème caramel)
- mousse, rice pudding
- eggs
- apple pies, custard tarts
- cake, fruit cake
- scones , muffins, donuts
- crumpets, pikelets
- peanut butter & other nut spreads
- chocolate
- biscuits
- nuts/potato chips
- BBQ chicken
- quiche
- canned baked beans
- canned spaghetti (add grated cheese)
- canned soup (thick and hearty type)
- frozen meals
- frozen meat pies
- frozen sausage rolls
- frozen fish fingers
- frozen chicken nuggets
- frozen mixed veg
- Milo™
- Protein supplement drinks such as; Sustagen™ / Ensure™ / Resource™
- Breakfast drinks such as; Up and Go™ / Up and Go Energise™
- commercial high protein bars
- protein meal replacements
- bananas
- tuna, salmon, sardines
- pork rind snacks/beef jerky
- canned fruit
- dried fruit
- dips

# Nutrition Hints for Older People

- Eat a variety of food to help you get all the vitamins and minerals your body needs
  - Try to eat at least three meals a day
  - Try to have nourishing snacks throughout the day especially if your appetite is poor or you are losing weight.
- Include protein rich foods at each meal to help to maintain muscle and strength. Protein rich foods include meat, fish, egg, cheese, milk and legumes. Red meat also provides iron and zinc
- Include calcium rich foods every day. These include milk, cheese, yoghurt as well as calcium fortified soy milk and soy milk products
  - Fats and oils are also important. They provide energy (calories or kilojoules), vitamins A and D as well as essential fatty acids. Use poly-unsaturated and mono-unsaturated oils and margarines such as canola, olive and sunflower. Low fat diets are not suitable for frail older adults or those who are unwell or losing weight
  - Adequate fibre in the diet will help prevent constipation. High fibre foods include wholegrain and wholemeal breads and cereals, fruit, vegetables and legumes.
- Keeping well hydrated is important and this means having plenty of fluid. Fluid is essential for the body to function properly and fluid requirements do not decrease with age. Sources of fluid include water, cordial, tea, coffee, milk, juice, custard and soup. Thirst sensation can decrease with age and by the time a person realises they are thirsty they may already be at risk of dehydration.
- Dehydration can happen in hot weather but serious cases of dehydration can also occur in winter as a result of household heating and illnesses such as colds and flu. Having a 'cuppa' or a milk drink at each meal and snack time (thirsty or not) will go a long way toward meeting fluid needs.





# Ooodles of Noodles with Ham and Cheese

This recipe will make 4 serves and doesn't take long to make.

It can be kept in the fridge for two days but is not suitable for freezing.

This recipe is a good source of protein and calcium. It can be served hot or cold with vegetables or salad. It could be served as a healthy 'snack' throughout the day.

## Ingredients

- ½ of a 200g packet of egg noodles
- 200g ham (about 4 slices)
- 1 cup grated tasty cheese
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons of plain yoghurt (if you have it)
- 1 small onion chopped finely



## Method

1. Cook then drain noodles. Instructions should be on the packet
2. Mix cooked noodles with all the other ingredients
3. Pour mixture into a greased baking dish. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C degrees Celsius) for 30 minutes (until firm to touch)

## Tips

- Any pasta could be used instead of egg noodles e.g. spaghetti, macaroni
- Cooked chicken could be used instead of ham
- You can buy grated cheese. Keep left over grated cheese in the fridge or freezer
- Smooth ricotta cheese could be used instead of yoghurt
- The onion can be left out completely or replaced with 1 chopped shallot
- You could add 1 cup of frozen corn or 1 cup of frozen peas to the recipe

# Porridge (With a Difference)

## A recipe for one

This porridge is almost a meal in itself

## Ingredients

- ¼ cup rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon sultanas
- 1 tablespoon full cream powdered milk
- 1 egg (well beaten)
- ½ cup full cream milk
- Sustagen™ or equivalent

## Method

1. Mix all the above ingredients together in a microwave safe bowl
2. Microwave on high for 1 minute and 20 seconds (stir about half way through the cooking time)
3. Stir through 1 tablespoon of Sustagen™ powder and about ½ cup chopped up banana or other fruit. Sprinkle with brown sugar or a drizzle of honey



## Tips

- Use traditional rolled oats, not the quick cooking or instant type
- If you don't have any Sustagen™, add an extra tablespoon of powdered milk.
- Make sure that the egg is beaten well before adding to other ingredients
- Any soft fruit could be chopped up and served with this porridge, pear, ripe strawberries or canned fruit
- Serve with cream for extra calories
- Although porridge is traditionally served at breakfast time, it can be eaten at other meal and snack times.

# Fruit and Bran Loaf

This tasty, high fibre loaf is very easy to make. Once cooked and cooled it can be cut into pieces or slices. It can be frozen. Serve 'as is' or with a little butter or margarine. Mashed banana goes well as a spread and makes a tasty snack to go with that cup of tea or coffee. Cream cheese would also be a suitable spread.

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups All Bran™ or All Bran buds™
- ¼ cup raw sugar
- 1 cup sultanas
- 1 ½ cups of milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 cups wholemeal self-raising flour

## Method

1. Mix together the All-Bran, sugar, sultanas. Add milk and soak for 1 hour
2. Add beaten egg to the soaking ingredients
3. Fold in the flour
4. Place mixture into a greased, baking tin (approximately 20x20 cm.) or loaf tin. Probably a good idea to line base of baking tin
5. Bake in moderate oven (160°C- 180°C) until firm to touch or skewer placed in centre comes out clean. Baking time is approximately 30 minutes (Note that loaf doesn't rise very much)
6. Once cooked, turn out onto a cake cooler. Cut when cool

## Tips

- Chopped dates could replace sultanas
- Brown sugar could replace raw sugar
- Milk can be skim, fat reduced or full cream
- Wholemeal flour will provide more fibre but could be replaced with 'white' flour
- Chopped walnuts could be added to the mix (about ½ cup)
- The dough could be cooked in muffin tins or patty papers and then would only need about 15 minutes baking time



# Tomato and Bean Soup

This recipe makes 4 serves. It is quick and easy to make.

It can be served hot or cold

## Ingredients

- 440g can tomato soup (ready to heat and eat type)
- 440g can crushed or chopped tomatoes
- 440g can baked- beans
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon mixed herbs (if you have them)



## Method

1. Mix all ingredients together in a saucepan
2. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently until heated through (about 2 minutes). Add a little water if the soup seems to be too thick
3. Serve with a bread roll or toast

## Tips

- A shallot could replace onion or, leave out all together
- Add chopped fresh parsley instead of dried mixed herbs
- Add a 400g can of legumes such as butter beans or soy beans. No need to drain
- If you have to watch your salt intake choose 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' canned foods (if they are available)
- This soup can be frozen but will keep in the fridge for 3 days

# Milk Drink

If you are losing weight, have no appetite or need to put on weight, milk drinks are an easy way of getting nourishment and kilojoules (calories). Why not try the following milk drink recipes. Any type of milk can be used - fresh, UHT, powdered or evaporated milk.

## Thick shake

This recipe makes 1 serve and provides 12 grams of protein and 280 calories



## Ingredients

- 1 cup full cream milk
- 1 tablespoon full cream milk powder
- 1 scoop of ice-cream (about 4 dessertspoons)
- 2 teaspoons flavouring (e.g. Milo™, chocolate or strawberry topping)

## Method

Mix all ingredients together

## Tips

- If you don't have any ice-cream, add ¼ cup cream or ¼ cup undiluted canned evaporated milk. Any left- over evaporated milk is good in coffee or on cereal.
- 1 tablespoon of protein powder could be added to the above recipe
- Milk drinks must be refrigerated if not drinking straight away
- Do not keep longer than 24 hours

# Golden Syrup Pudding in a Mug

## Ingredients to make 2 puddings

- ½ cup self-raising flour (wholemeal flour is a good choice)
- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons sugar (white or brown)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 - 3 tablespoons milk
- ¼ cup chopped dates
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup

## Method

1. Grease two microwave safe mugs with margarine. Put 1 tablespoon of golden syrup into each mug
2. Cream the margarine and sugar together then beat in the egg
3. Add the dates
4. Add the milk and flour. Mix gently to make a soft batter
5. Divide mixture evenly into cups
6. Place into microwave oven (no need to cover) Cook for 90 seconds on high
7. Test by inserting a skewer in the centre. If there is uncooked batter on the skewer, microwave for a further 5 seconds

## Tips

- 2 tablespoons of butter or oil can be used instead of margarine
- Sultanas, raisins or chopped dried apricots could be used instead of dates. Dried fruit could be left out completely
- Jam or honey could replace golden syrup



# Spicy Chicken Drumsticks

Easy to make, the number of drumsticks can vary according to how many people are being served.

## Ingredients to serve 2

- 4 small chicken drumsticks or 2 large drumsticks
- ½ cup Hoi Sin or Teriyaki sauce
- ¼ cup tomato sauce

## Method

1. Mix sauces together
2. Place drumsticks into a baking dish and pour the sauces over
3. Place in a moderate oven (180°C) and bake for 20 minutes
4. Turn drumsticks over and cook for a further 15 - 20 minutes or until cooked

## Tips

- As the oven is on, why not bake vegetables to serve with the drumsticks
- This recipe could be cooked using a slow cooker
- You don't have to take the skin off the chicken, but be careful when eating as chicken skin can be difficult to chew and could cause you to choke
- There is a variety of ready to use sauces available from the supermarket that could be used instead of the teriyaki and tomato sauce mix
- You don't have to turn the drumsticks over if it is difficult for you to do. Cook for a total of about 40 minutes or until cooked.
- Chicken should always be well cooked (no pink meat or blood near the bone)



# Pumpkin Soup

The recipe makes 4 serves and will keep up to 3 days in the fridge. It can be frozen.

## Ingredients

- ½ small butternut pumpkin
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 medium potato
- 2 chicken stock cubes
- 2 cup water



## Method

1. Remove skin from pumpkin and cut into pieces
2. Peel potato then cut into pieces
3. Place all ingredients into a saucepan, bring to the boil
4. Boil gently until pumpkin and potato are soft
5. Puree or mash
6. Reheat and serve

## Tips

- Already peeled and cut up pumpkin is available at greengrocers and supermarkets
- Sweet potato could replace pumpkin. Also any type of pumpkin can be used
- Leek or shallots could replace onion
- Chicken stock powder can be used instead of stock cubes
- For extra food value a 400g can of legumes could be added near the end of cooking. Butter beans are a good choice as they will puree easily along with the potato and pumpkin. There is no need to drain the legumes before adding
- When cooking the soup, add more water if it is getting too thick.
- To make a cream soup, add a can of evaporated milk to soup after it has been pureed (or mashed). If you are going to do this, don't add extra water during the cooking time or the soup may be too thin



# Hawaiian Chicken with Pasta

## Using already cooked chicken (eg. BBQ chicken from the supermarket)

This recipe makes two serves and takes about 20 minutes to make.

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ - 2 cups chopped up cooked chicken
- 1 ½ cups macaroni (or other pasta)
- Small can tomato soup concentrate (not the ready to heat and serve type)
- ¾ cup pineapple pieces plus ½ cup of the juice
- ½ small capsicum, chopped



## Method

1. Cook macaroni in boiling water until just tender, drain
2. Remove any skin from the chicken and chop into chunks
3. Place all the ingredients into a saucepan and heat through using moderate heat
4. Serve with salad

## Tips

- Use chopped carrot or celery (or both), instead of capsicum
- Any cooked meat or cooked fish or canned fish could be used instead of chicken
- Extra vegetables could be added. Try frozen peas and corn or frozen mixed vegetables Add about one cup of extra vegetables
- Using wholemeal macaroni will add extra iron and fibre to this dish

# Savoury Mince and Rice

**Recipe serves 4-6 | Preparation time: 40 minutes**

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups rice
- 500g mince
- 1 large onion, chopped or 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 clove crushed garlic (Optional)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 large carrots, grated

## Method:

1. Cook and drain rice
2. While rice is cooking, gently simmer all other ingredients together for about 20 minutes
3. Mix cooked rice with the meat (or serve rice separately)

## Tips

- Add extra vegetables if you like e.g. peas, corn, grated zucchini, grated sweet potato, grated pumpkin and legumes such as canned chick peas and butter beans
- You could use half the amount of mince and replace with about two cups of legumes such as red kidney beans, chick peas, soya beans or butter beans (2 x 400 g cans)
- If you use brown rice allow about 30 minutes for it to cook properly
- Savoury mince can be served with pasta or barley instead of rice. Wholemeal pasta will increase the fibre and iron content of the meal. Small wholemeal pasta shapes cook in 10 minutes. Wholemeal spaghetti may take up to 20 minutes. Cooked wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as white pasta



# Easy Creamy Potato Soup for Two

## Ingredients

- 2 medium potatoes
- 375ml can evaporated milk
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 teaspoons of chicken stock powdered
- ½ cup milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Method

1. Wash and peel potatoes. No need to peel smooth skin potatoes just wash thoroughly
2. Cut potato into chunks and cook until soft (boil, steam or microwave)
3. Drain potatoes, add butter and mash well
4. Add the ½ cup milk and evaporated milk
5. Reheat stirring from time to time



## Tips

- 2 crushed stock cubes can be used instead of stock powder (1 tsp. Vegemite will also do the job)
- Sweet potato or pumpkin could be used instead of potato (or a combination)
- For extra protein, calcium and calories add 2 tablespoons of powdered milk
- This soup can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 days. To keep for longer, freeze. Defrost in fridge
- You can add undiluted evaporated milk and/or powdered milk to any thick soup to make a cream soup

# Pumpkin Pie

**Serves 6-8. It is easy to make and can be frozen**

## Ingredients

- 2 cups well mashed pumpkin – suggest butternut pumpkin, but other types are OK
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- ½ teaspoon of each of the following: cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg (optional). If you don't have these, just leave them out
- A cooked pie shell from the supermarket, about 23 cm or 10 inches across



## Method

1. Mix all ingredients together really well. Use blender or rotary beater for best results.
2. Pour into pie shell
3. Bake in moderate oven (170°C – 180°C) until just firm to touch. This will take about 30-40 mins
4. Serve with cream, custard or ice cream

## Tips

- If the pie shell (bought or homemade) is uncooked, bake for about 5 minutes before pouring in the pumpkin mix.
- Pumpkin pie filling can be cooked without pastry. Grease a pie dish. Pour the filling in and bake in moderate oven until just firm to touch (about 30- 40 minutes)
- Pumpkin pie can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 days. If keeping for longer, freeze

# Fish Cakes (Salmon Rissoles)

## Ingredients for 4 serves Fish cakes

- 2 medium potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 2 x 95g cans salmon, well drained.
- 1 large egg beaten
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- ½ cup dry breadcrumbs (to coat fish cakes)

## Method

1. Mix together the mashed potato, beaten egg, chopped onion and salmon
2. Place breadcrumbs onto a flat dinner plate
3. Divide mixture into 4 rissoles and roll each one in breadcrumbs before placing in the frying pan, flatten slightly
4. Using moderate temperature, heat oil in a frying pan
5. Cook fish cakes for 5 - 8 minutes then turn over. Cook for a further 5 minutes, or until golden brown

## Tips

- Tuna could be used instead of salmon
- Canned salmon in oil, spring water or other flavourings could be used
- Breadcrumbs could be replaced with crushed Weetbix™ or Bran flakes™
- Serve with salad, or vegetables or on a bread roll



# Noodle Omelette

**Recipe makes 2 generous serves**

**Preparation time: 30 minutes**

## Ingredients

- 1 packet of 2 minute noodles
- 1½ - 2 cups of cooked or soft vegetables (see Tips)
- 95g can of salmon or tuna or 2 slices of ham chopped
- 1 - 2 tablespoons of oil



## Method

1. Place noodles in a bowl, cover with boiling water stand 5 minutes
2. Drain and separate noodles, mix with all other ingredients
3. Heat oil in frying pan, pour in the omelette mix and cook using low temperature heat, lid on, until set (about 15 minutes)

## Tips

- Suitable vegetables include cut up cooked vegetables, canned vegetables, canned legumes e.g. butter bean, soy beans, grated zucchini, frozen corn and peas, sliced mushrooms
- If using canned vegetables, drain well before adding
- Thaw and drain frozen vegetables before adding
- For a flavour change, add 1 - 2 teaspoons of curry powder or 1 tablespoon of parmesan cheese

# Having enough fluid

Fluid is essential for the body to function properly. The importance of having enough fluid does not decrease with age. Most older people need a total of 6 - 8 cups of fluid each day. Fluids are more than just water.

## Fluids Include:

- water
- milk
- fruit juice
- cordial
- soft drink
- vegetable juice
- coffee
- tea
- hot chocolate
- custard
- jelly
- soup
- ice cream

## Having enough fluid:

- Keeps the kidneys working
- Helps prevent constipation
- Decreases likelihood of urinary tract infections
- Quenches thirst
- Prevents dehydration which can worsen or cause confusion

People are usually aware of the need for fluid in the summer months but serious cases of dehydration can occur in winter as a result of household heating and illnesses such as colds and flu.

Because older people may have a reduced sense of thirst regular fluid intake should be encouraged. Having a 'cuppa' or milk drink at each meal and snack time (thirsty or not) will go a long way towards meeting daily fluid needs. Why not leave a glass of water where it can be easily seen? E.g. near the phone or on a coffee table. Have a large glass of water with medicines.

People who are incontinent sometimes want to limit their fluid intake. This is not a good idea as concentrated urine actually increases the desire to go to the toilet. Talk to a doctor or continence advisor for more information





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