

Nutrition News for Seniors


EAT WELL

Provided by the Nutrition Division of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

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Spring into a Healthier Lifestyle



Spring time is a great time to clean house. It's also a great time to clean out our pantries and take a good look at our daily diets. Every spring the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (formerly the American Dietetic Association) encourages the public to take steps to improve their health through diet and exercise.

Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your bowl. Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need without too many calories. To "Get Your Plate in Shape" use the checklist below to start making some healthy changes. Post it on your refrigerator and perhaps consider making one new change per week.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

-  Eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red and orange vegetables plus beans and peas. Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables all count. Choose "reduced sodium" or "no-salt added" canned vegetables.
-  Add fruit to meals and snacks. Buy fruits that are dried, frozen or canned in water or 100% juice as well as fresh fruits.



Eat whole grains at least half of the time

-  Choose 100% whole-grain breads, cereals, crackers, pasta and brown rice. Also, look for fiber-rich cereals to help stay regular.
-  Check the ingredients list on food packages to see if the first ingredient is "whole" grain.




Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.

Older adults need more calcium and vitamin D to help keep bones healthy.



-  Include three servings of fat-free and low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese each day. The low-fat varieties have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.
-  If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or a calcium-fortified soy beverage.

Vary your protein choices.

-  Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, nuts and beans, as well as lean meat, poultry and eggs.
-  Make seafood the protein on your plate twice a week.
-  Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.

Cut back on sodium and empty calories from solid fats and added sugars.

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks, and 100% fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored beverages. Select fruit for dessert; choose sugary desserts less often.
- Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy. Compare the amount of sodium in foods and buy those with less. Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt.
- Make major sources of saturated fats such as desserts, pizza, cheese, sausages and hot dogs occasional choices, not everyday foods.
- Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing food.

Enjoy your food but eat less.

- Get your personal daily calorie limit at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov. Keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.
- Avoid oversized portions. Use a smaller plate, bowl and glass.
- Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what's in your food.
- Write down what you eat to keep track of how much you consume.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so sensibly. Limit to one drink a day for women, two drinks a day for men.



Be physically active your way.

Exercise is also part of a healthy lifestyle. Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can. Every bit adds up and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active. If you are currently inactive, start with a few minutes of activity such as walking. Gradually increase the minutes as you become stronger. However, always check with your medical doctor before starting any form of exercise.

Recipe: Muffin Frittatas (Makes 6 servings)

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 to 22 minutes

Ingredients:

6 eggs	3/4c. chopped zucchini
1/2c. milk	1/4c. chopped red bell pepper
1/4 tsp. salt	2 Tbsp. chopped red onion
1/8 tsp. pepper	
1c. shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese (4 oz.)	

Directions:

HEAT oven to 350°F. BEAT eggs, milk, salt and pepper in medium bowl until blended. ADD cheese, zucchini, bell pepper and onion; mix well. SPOON evenly into 12 greased muffin cups, about 1/4 cup each.

BAKE in 350°F oven until just set, 20 to 22 minutes. COOL on rack 5 minutes.

REMOVE from cups; serve warm.

Muffin frittatas are great as an appetizer as well as for breakfast.

Quick breakfast solution: Bake muffin frittatas the night before and refrigerate them.

Quickly rewarm in the microwave in the morning.

Nutrition Facts: (for 2 frittatas) Calories 140, Fat 9gms, Saturated Fat 4 gms, Cholesterol 200mg, Sodium 330mg, Protein 12gms, Vitamin C 20% and Calcium 30%