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Smart Choices for **SENIORS**

December
A Newsletter from the EFNEP/SCNEP Programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension

Is there anything I can eat to boost my immune system this winter?

The winter can be a difficult time to get all of the nutrients you need. You may not be able to get to the grocery store because of the weather, and there are not as many fresh fruits and vegetables to pick from during the winter months. But you can still stay healthy and keep yourself from getting sick by eating right. Eat a well-balanced diet with a variety of food each day. Try to include foods from all the food groups. Eat whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and meat or meat alternatives like lentils and beans! Eating a well-balanced diet each day will help reduce the risk of catching the common cold. Eating properly will also play a big part in keeping you warm and well this winter.

Keep a good supply of simple, nutritious foods in your cupboards, fridge, and freezer this winter. Stock up on foods that you will need to make a quick and hot meal.



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Make a food pantry with some of the following items:

- **Canned beans and lentils:** baked beans, black beans, chickpeas
- **Bread:** whole-grain breads, rolls, pita bread (keep in the refrigerator or freezer to last longer)
- **Cereals:** bran, whole-grain, quick rolled oats
- **Fish, canned:** tuna, salmon, clams
- **Fruit, canned** (packed in “own” juice or light syrup): peaches, pears, pineapple, mandarin orange segments, applesauce
- **Fruit, dried:** raisins, cranberries, apricots, dates
- **Herbs and spices:** pepper, basil, garlic, ginger, oregano, thyme, tarragon, coriander, cumin
- **Milk:** canned evaporated, skim powdered
- **Nuts and seeds:** almonds, walnuts, peanuts
- **Oil:** olive oil, vegetable oil
- **Pasta:** fusilli, rotini, spaghetti, penne, bow ties, couscous, ready-to-bake lasagna noodles
- **Pasta sauces:** prepared tomato, vegetable
- **Rice:** white or brown quick-cooking rice
- **Sweeteners:** sugar, honey, syrup, jam
- **Vegetables, canned:** stewed or diced tomatoes, corn kernels, pumpkin
- **Vegetables, fresh:** potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions

In the Freezer

- **Frozen seafood or meat:** shrimp, chicken, hamburger
- **Fruit:** strawberries, raspberries, blueberries
- **Fruit juice concentrate:** orange juice, apple juice
- **Vegetables, plain or mixed:** peas, corn, broccoli and cauliflower, oriental mix

Personalize this list by adding the ingredients for your favorite recipes.

Sources: An ounce of prevention keeps the germs away, www.cdc.gov/ounceofprevention/docs/oop_brochure_12-20-05.pdf;

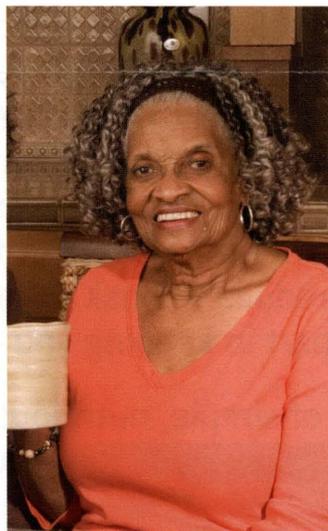
Great food fast pantry list, www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/menuplanner/AppendixB.asp;

Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living for Older Adults, www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/pdf/guide_handbook_older.pdf

University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension:
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Meet Elsa

Elsa is 75. She had always loved the water, but she didn’t have the energy to go swimming as she had done when she was younger. She missed her activities and was beginning to spend a lot of time watching TV. The more she sat around, the more tired she got. She was beginning to find that even simple chores around the house were becoming difficult. She was having trouble washing and combing her own hair. She was worried. She did not want to end up dependent on her family – she enjoyed her independence, but her physical limitations were beginning to scare her.



Family helps to get Elsa moving. When Elsa’s daughter tried to find out what was bothering her mother, all she heard was, “I’m just getting too old.” Elsa’s daughter went to the Y and looked for some literature about helping older adults cope and then talked to a professional. She offered to take Elsa to the Y and help her try some things.

Her love of the water got her active again. At the pool, Elsa saw a class of older women just like her in the water. They were joking and laughing and seemed to be having such a good time. They were doing water aerobics in a heated pool. Maybe I could do that, she thought. She found out that the Y offered classes at a lower price for people over 60 years of age. The instructor suggested that Elsa come and try a couple of classes before she signed up. After a few weeks, she found herself actually enjoying it and making some new friends as well. The instructor was helping her build up the strength in her arms as well with small weights before the water program.

She now feels stronger and more able to cope and is not as fearful about losing her independence and quality of life. She now has no trouble washing and combing her hair. Her new friends asked her to join them for a mall walking program in the winter, and in the summer they walk in the neighborhood park.

Hot Tips to Stay Warm and Stay Moving

Exercise is part of aging well and should not be interrupted by these winter months. Stay active in the winter to keep your circulation moving and to help ward off the common cold. Plan your physical activity ahead to help prevent injuries and keep you safe.

- Wear several layers of thin clothes rather than wearing one thick layer.
- Wear materials like wool and fleece that will keep you warm even if you get wet.
- Wear “special” shoes or shoe attachments that “grip” the ground and prevent slipping.
- Use ski poles or put a special gripper or pick at the end of a cane to prevent slipping.
- Watch for a change in the weather or road conditions before you go outside.
- Get an exercise video to do indoors when you can't get outside. Check your rugs. Make sure they are not wrinkled or torn in a way that can trip as you walk or exercise. Use padding or special tape underneath them to prevent them from sliding. Make sure all cords are neatly tucked away from your exercise space.
- Don't shovel heavy snow. Get someone to help you instead.
- Drink plenty of water before, during, and after an activity. Even though it is cold out and you may not feel thirsty, you still to make sure that you stay hydrated.
- Look for programs offered indoors like an exercise class or water aerobics for when you can't get outside to exercise.

5 Key Things You Can Do to Keep a Safer, Healthier Home

1. Wash your hands often.
 - Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading illnesses.

When to Wash

- Before eating,
 - Before, during, and after handling or preparing food,
 - After contact with blood or body fluids (like vomit, nasal secretions, or saliva),
 - After changing a diaper,
 - After you use the bathroom, and
 - After handling animals, their toys, leashes, or waste.
2. Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces in the kitchen and in the bathroom.
 - Use clean cloths or paper towels.
 - If you use cloths, wash in hot and soapy water between uses.
 - Try using disposable cleaning wipes that both clean and disinfect.

3. Handle and prepare food safely.
 - Clean hands, surfaces, and cooking utensils often; before, during, and after food preparation.
 - Separate and don't cross-contaminate ready-to-eat foods with raw poultry, meat, or eggs.

4. Cook food properly.
 - Use a food thermometer to make sure that you cook your food to a safe temperature.

5. Store food properly.
 - Keep a thermometer in your refrigerator and freezer.
 - Make sure that your refrigerator is 40°F or cooler and that your freezer is at least 0°F.

Pumpkin Pancakes • Makes 8 pancakes • Preparation and cooking time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 1/2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1 cup whole-wheat flour
- 3/4 cup skim milk
- 3/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 cup ground cloves
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients except nuts in a bowl and mix well.
2. Drop batter 1/3 cup at a time onto a greased hot pan.
3. Flip pancakes when bubbles appear and edges look firm.
4. Top pancakes with nuts and maple syrup.

Note: Cook all the pancakes. Refrigerate the leftover pancakes if you will eat them in a day or two or freeze them in small portions for another time.

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If you have access to the Internet, go to these sites:

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<http://www.ext.vt.edu/healthyfutures>

MyPyramid Food Guide:

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>

Food Stamps in Virginia:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/foodstamp.html>

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