Nutrition News for Seniors

EAT WELL

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



National Nutrition Month Whole-Food Nutrition for Healthy Aging

March is National Nutrition Month—a perfect time to talk about how food supports healthy aging. As we get older, what we eat can make a real difference in how we feel day to day. Good nutrition helps support **energy and strength** to stay active, **brain health and memory**, **heart health and** of course helps maintain **independence and quality of life.** The good news? You don't need a complete diet overhaul. Small changes can make a big difference at any age.

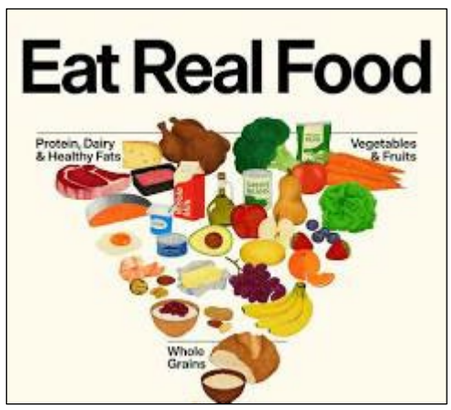
NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES

The newest Dietary Guidelines encourage focusing on overall eating patterns—choosing more whole, minimally processed, real foods and enjoying balanced meals that support health at any age.

What Does "Whole, Real Foods" Mean?

Whole foods are foods that are **close to how they come from nature**. Think:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Eggs, fish, poultry, and lean meats
- Milk, yogurt, and cheese (low-fat or full-fat, depending on your needs)



Smart Swaps that Add Up

You don't have to give up your favorite foods. Progress matters more than perfection. Try small, realistic swaps:

- White bread → **whole-grain bread**
- Sugary cereal → **steel cut oatmeal with fresh or frozen fruit**
- Processed meats → **baked chicken, fish, lean meat or beans**
- Chips → **nuts, whole grain crackers with hummus, air popped-popcorn**
- Sweet desserts → **plain Greek yogurt with honey and berries**

Key Nutrition Priorities for Older Adults

As we age, a few nutrients become especially important:

- **Protein** for strength. Helps maintain muscle and reduce fall risk. The goal is to include protein at every meal. Good sources of whole food protein include: chicken, fish, lean meats, tofu, beans, eggs, cheese, Greek plain yogurt, nuts and nut butters.
- **Fiber** supports healthy digestion, helps prevent constipation, and promotes heart health and steady blood sugar levels. Good whole-food sources include fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, whole grains like oats, brown rice, and nuts and seeds.

- **Calcium & Vitamin D** are essential for older adults because they help maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of fractures. Good whole-food sources include milk, yogurt, and cheese, as well as fortified plant milks, fatty fish like salmon, and egg yolks. Sunlight also helps the body make vitamin D.
- **Healthy fats** support heart health, brain function, and absorption of fat-soluble vitamins for heart and brain health. Good whole-food sources include olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds, and fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, or sardines. Small amounts of butter are acceptable as well.
- **Hydration** is vital for older adults because it helps maintain energy, supports digestion, regulates body temperature, and keeps joints and organs working well. Good sources include water, herbal teas, soups, and water-rich fruits and vegetables like cucumbers, watermelon, and oranges. Hydration is especially important if you take medications.

Try the One-Week Whole Food Challenge

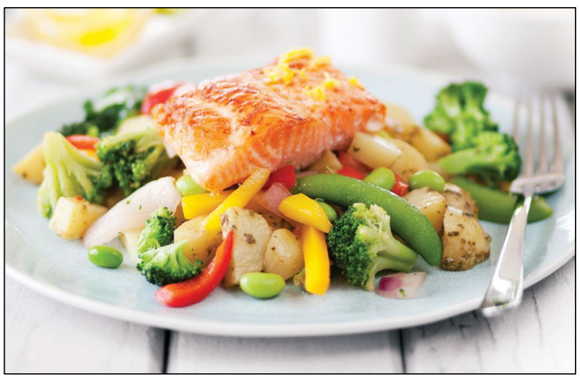
One-Week Whole Food Challenge – Checklist

Goal: Add more whole, minimally processed foods to your meals. Tick each day you complete the task!

Day	Add a Vegetable	Swap to Whole Grain	Include Protein	Add Healthy Fat	Drink Extra Water / Eat Water-Rich Food
Mon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Thu	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fri	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sun	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

RECIPE CORNER Easy Baked Salmon & Veggies (One-Pan Meal)

This quick and healthy recipe checks off many boxes! ✔ High in protein ✔ Heart-healthy fats ✔ Low in added sodium ✔ Easy to prepare and clean up
Serves: 1–2 Prep time: 5 minutes | Cook time: 15–20 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 salmon fillet (about 4–6 oz)
- 1 cup mixed vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned—drained)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Lemon juice (or lemon slice)
- Garlic powder or dried herbs (optional)
- Black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. 2. Place salmon on a foil-lined baking sheet. 3. Add vegetables next to the salmon. 4. Drizzle olive oil over salmon and vegetables. 5. Sprinkle with garlic powder or herbs and black pepper. 6. Add a squeeze of lemon juice. 7. Bake for 15–20 minutes, until salmon flakes easily with a fork and reaches an internal temperature of 145°F.
8. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Note: This recipe is versatile! Use any type of fish fillet – just adjust the cooking time as needed (thinner filets of fish will cook more quickly).

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