

Healthy snacks for older adults

If you are an older adult who is self-isolating at home, or someone who is caring for older relatives, friends or neighbours during the pandemic, then sticking to a healthy diet can be a challenge. Your sense of taste and smell can change with age, and this can affect your appetite and enjoyment of food.

Snacks can be a good way to eat 'little and often' between meals, and can provide energy, protein, vitamins and minerals, which may be particularly important if you, or the person you care for, has a poor appetite. Below is some general advice on choosing healthier snacks.



- **Oily fish** such as salmon, mackerel, herring, tinned sardines or pilchards are a good source of protein and contain healthy omega 3 fats. They can also provide vitamin D and calcium (for fish eaten with the soft bones), both of which are essential for keeping bones and muscles healthy.
- **Calcium-rich foods** – these can help you to get enough calcium in the diet, which is important to help minimise the amount of bone loss as we age. Foods containing calcium include milk, cheese and yogurt, fish with edible bones, white bread and fortified breakfast cereals.
- **High energy and protein foods** – these can be important for older adults with a reduced appetite, who might be at risk of losing weight. Examples include cheese and crackers, rice pudding, thick and creamy yogurt, flapjack or chocolate.

Healthy hydration



- It's important to try and drink regularly throughout the day (ideally about 6-8 glasses of fluid per day), or to make drinks readily available if you are caring for someone.
- Good hydration can help prevent constipation, urine infections, confusion and falls in adults with a poorer appetite.
- Milk, or drinks such as malted milk drinks or milky coffee, can be a good source of important nutrients, including protein, calcium, iodine and B vitamins.
- A 150 ml glass of fruit or vegetable juices can provide 1 of your 5 A DAY.