

# SENIOR SNACK FOOD SUPPORT

Changing nutritional needs in old age can reduce appetite, leaving many older adults at risk of developing malnutrition and chronic disease. A key area to keeping older people interested in food is through snacking.

Making sure snacks are both appetising and nutritious can encourage your loved one's appetite and improve their well-being.

## AVOID:

Some food and drinks are high in calories but lack the essential nutrients our loved one's need. The three main areas to watch out for when preparing snacks include:

### Cut back on sugars

Too much added sugar can increase the risk for type 2 diabetes. Limit sugar-sweetened drinks and foods, including soft drinks, cordials, juices, pastries, cakes, chocolate, and lollies. Choosing instead fresh, frozen or canned fruits as snacks or to sweeten foods.



### Use less salt

Adding salt to food can increase risks for high blood pressure and heart disease. Limit or avoid snacks with cured meats, savoury pastries, potato chips, and sauces, choosing reduced salt varieties where possible, and flavouring foods with herbs and spices.



### Know your fats

Too much dietary fat can cause weight gain, increasing risks for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Limit or avoid foods containing saturated and trans fats, including butter, lard, margarine, shortening, fried foods, whole fat dairy, and chocolate. Include healthy fats, found in fish, avocados, nuts & seeds, and vegetable oils.



## Tips to Encouraging Eating

- Be aware of any medical or physical conditions and tailor snacks to their needs.
- Sit with your loved one while they eat, socializing may encourage them to eat.
- Ensure any perishable foods are eaten during your visit and ensure any snacks left behind will not spoil.
- Observe eating habits, are there any new problems such as difficulty chewing or swallowing that may require you to prepare foods differently.
- Are they drinking enough fluid? Every time you visit offer them a glass of water, or suitable beverage.

## INCLUDE:

When preparing snacks, ensure you select ingredients from the following categories.

### Fruit & vegetables

They are an important source of several essential vitamins and minerals critical for healthy aging. Include fruit and vegetables in smoothies, juices, soups, parboiled with dip, or on their own.



### Fibre-rich foods

Help to prevent constipation, as well as reduce risks for type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Include wholegrain cereals and breads, beans, nuts and seeds, vegetables and fruits.



### Calcium

Is important in maintaining bone health to prevent osteoporosis, protecting against falls & fractures. Include low-fat calcium-rich foods, canned fish, dark green leafy vegetables, and fortified cereals & plant-based drinks.



### Protein

Is crucial in old age to maintain bone health, muscle mass and strength. Include fish, lean meats, poultry, nuts & seeds, eggs, beans, and legumes in snacks.



### Add in fluids

Staying hydrated helps to prevent constipation and supports digestion. Combine fruits and vegetables to make healthy juices, smoothies, or soups. Offer water, tea, coffee, and reduced fat milk beverages when you visit.



## Snack Suggestions for Seniors

- Greek yoghurt with fruit
  - Hard boiled eggs
  - Cheese on crackers
  - Sardines & crackers
- Chicken, cheese & salad sandwich
- Real fruit and vegetable blend juices
  - Nuts & seed mix
  - Parboiled vegetables and dip
  - Fresh fruit
- Smoothies or milkshake with fruit/vegetables
- Fruit cups packed in their own juice
  - Oatmeal cookies
  - Banana rice pudding
  - Stewed or dried fruits
  - Custard and fruit
  - Wheat or fruit muffins