

NUTRIGRAM

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Community Dining
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Barriers to Healthy Eating as We Age

As we get older it can become more difficult to make healthier choices when it comes to eating. These factors can be both physical and environmental in nature. We will discuss suggestions that may make it easier to combat these roadblocks and select healthier choices for our food.

Eating Alone?

Planning and cooking dinners every night can get mundane and tiresome. Try getting together with friends for a potluck dinner, everyone can bring their own dish, cooking is a lot easier. Or, instead of getting together in a group setting, you can cook with a friend in your home. Cooking with company is less work and much more fun.

Look into enjoying meals at a local community or senior center throughout Niagara County. There are over 15 sites in the county serving healthy and nutritious meals during the week for the Niagara County Office For the Aging. The **suggested contribution** is \$3.25 per meal, however our program would never turn anyone away who could not afford a meal. Call the number listed above in the header and get signed up for our community dining meals today!

Food Not Tasting the Same?

Now do not be so quick to blame the chef. As we age our sense of smell and taste change. This can also be intensified from side effects of medications and dental problems. Taste and smell play a large role in deciding between what foods to eat; with these sense lacking it can make it harder to make healthier decisions. Try cooking with more fresh herbs and spices to add flavor and mouth-watering aromas. Use salt-free herbs blends, like Mrs. Dash seasonings. Cutting back or quitting smoking and drinking alcohol can also improve your sense of taste and smell.

Just Not Hungry?

If you are not hungry because food is not appealing to you as it used to be, there are things you can do to improve this. As we just mentioned above, taste and smell play a large role in food choices. So start by making sure your food is well seasoned, without much salt. Although, appetizing food has much more to it than flavor: color, texture and shape should also be considered when making food choices.

When you go shopping try new fruits and vegetables you have not tried or have not had in some time. Vary the way you prepare your vegetables as well, overcooking can make them mushy and bland. Steam your veggies or cook for a shorter time to leave a nice crunch to them. Adding different fruits and berries to your morning cereal can brighten up your usual breakfast!

Buy different cuts of meat or seafood when you go shopping! If you are unsure how to prepare them, you can always a staff member or someone behind the butcher's counter.

Incorporate fish into your diet at least twice a week. Fatty fish like mackerel, herring, salmon, and cod are a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, which some studies have shown to lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Exercising and being physically active can also help to increase your appetite. Go for a walk once a day or join a local gym for resistance training to increase muscle mass and strength.

Feeling Sad and Do Not Want to Eat?

Feeling down and sad are normal feelings, but if your sadness persists you should see your doctor and ask for help. You may be experiencing depression, which can also cause a lack of appetite. Seeking help for depression does not mean you will go on medication. Finding a trained professional to talk with may help you deal with your blue feelings.

Physical Limitations Affecting Your Eating?

Have you been diagnosed with arthritis, or Parkinson's? Have you had a stroke that has left you with limited movement? These illnesses can make it more difficult to cook at home and feed yourself. Speak to your doctor about an occupational therapist. They may help you be suggesting exercises that can increase strength in specific muscles, suggest different layouts for your kitchen, or create special utensils to make it easier to for food prep and eating.

Tropical Fruit Yogurt Smoothie Recipe

Whether made with mango, guava, passion fruit, star fruit or other fruit from the tropics, smoothies are easy ways to enjoy the flavors of vitamin C-rich fruit and the calcium-rich goodness of yogurt. Adding quick oats not only adds thickness, but helps you feel full a bit longer.

Ingredients:

6 ounces passion fruit, guava or other fruit-flavored fat-free yogurt
1 medium chopped mango
1 small banana
1/3 cup uncooked, rolled oats
2 teaspoons fresh ginger, grated
1/2 cup 100% pineapple or orange juice
1/2 cup fat-free milk



Directions:

1. Put yogurt, mango, banana, oats and ginger in a blender. Add juice and milk.
2. Whirl in the blender for about 30 seconds, or until mixture is smooth.
3. If the smoothie is too thick, add juice or milk to desired consistency.

Source: <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep/recipes/tropical-fruit-yogurt-smoothie-recipe>
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/overcoming-roadblocks-healthy-eating>