

MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES FOR SENIORS: WEEK 7

More than meat

Protein is an important nutrient that helps build bones, muscles, cartilage, skin and blood. While animal sources of protein are often the first to come to mind, many plant-based sources can provide your body with not only protein but also a range of other nutrients.

Power up with plant protein

Beans are one of the most popular sources of plant-based protein. There are many different types of beans, and they can be used in a variety of ways. When trying new types of beans, remember that it can take up to 15 tastes of a new food to start liking it.

Other types of plant-based protein include nuts such as almonds, walnuts and cashews; seeds such as pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds; and soybean products such as tofu. Nuts and seeds can be a great snack to have on the go since they come ready to eat and don't need to be kept cold.

Don't forget, not only is it important to make sure you are eating from each of the food groups, but it is also important to eat a variety of foods within each group. Including different types of plant-based protein in your weekly meals is a great way to do this.

You can start by choosing one day a week to swap animal protein for plant protein. Think of it as an easy way to try new recipes, taste new food and eat a variety of protein sources.

The recommendations for this food group are in ounce-equivalents. Think of an ounce-equivalent as one serving. Serving sizes are not the same for all types of foods because different foods contain different amounts of nutrients. (For more information, visit www.choosemyplate.gov.) For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked beans counts as one serving, but 12 almonds (or $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of almonds by weight) also counts as one serving. Meeting a daily recommendation of five servings could look like this:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked black beans, 12 almonds, 2 tablespoons peanut butter OR

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked kidney beans, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tofu, 2 tablespoons hummus, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of sunflower seeds



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Did you know?

Dried beans are often less expensive than canned beans and don't have any added salt. You can choose the exact amount you want to cook when using dried beans. Soaking dried beans overnight will save cooking time the next day. Prefer canned beans? Rinse canned beans before using to reduce salt.



WEEKLY RECIPE

Remember to wash your hands and prepare food safely.

Crockpot Vegetable and Lentil Soup

1. Gently wash and then chop **1/2 cup carrots, 1 cup kale** and **1 cup swiss chard**.
2. To medium skillet over medium-high heat, add **1 tablespoon vegetable oil**. Add **1 clove of minced garlic**, and **1/2 chopped onion**, and sauté until tender.
3. In a large slow cooker, combine garlic and onion mixture with chopped carrots, kale, swiss chard, **1 cup dried lentils, 4 cups vegetable broth and 1 bay leaf**.
4. Cook in slow cooker for 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high.
5. Remove bay leaf and serve.

Recipe adapted from “Crockpot Vegetable Lentil Stew” by the USDA as cited by the University of Illinois Extension. <https://eat-move-save.extension.illinois.edu/eat/recipes/crockpot-vegetable-and-lentil-stew>

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