



## **Overcoming Roadblocks to Healthy Eating**

Healthy eating can help you lose or maintain weight, feel better overall, and possibly decrease your chances of getting certain diseases. Making smart food choices is important at any age. But healthy eating can be difficult even if you know which foods you should buy and prepare. Your budget, physical issues, mood changes, and dietary restrictions can be roadblocks to eating food that's best for you. Here are suggestions for dealing with common problems that can make it harder for older adults to follow through on smart food choices.

### **Tired of cooking or eating alone?**

Maybe you are tired of planning and cooking dinners every night. Have you considered potluck meals? If everyone brings one part of the meal, cooking is a lot easier, and there might be leftovers to share. Or try cooking with a friend to make a meal you can enjoy together. Food delivery services are also an option. You could also consider having some meals at a nearby senior center, community center, or religious facility. Not only will you enjoy a free or low-cost meal, but you will also have some company while you eat. Visit the Eldercare Locator to search for centers in your area.

### **Just not hungry?**

Changes to your body as you age can cause some people to feel full sooner than they did when they were younger. Lack of appetite can also be a side effect of a medicine you are taking. Talk with your doctor about any side effects you may be experiencing. Your doctor may be able to suggest a different drug.

Try to be more active. In addition to all the other benefits of exercise and physical activity, these may make you hungrier. If you aren't hungry because food just isn't appealing, there are ways to make it more interesting. Make sure your food is seasoned well, but not by adding extra salt. Try using lemon juice, vinegar, or herbs to boost the flavor.

Vary the shape, color, and texture of foods you eat. When you go shopping, look for a new vegetable, fruit, or seafood you haven't tried before or one you haven't eaten in a while. Some grocery stores have recipe cards near items, or you can ask the staff for suggestions about preparing the new food or find recipes online. Foods that are overcooked tend to have less flavor. Try cooking or steaming your vegetables for a shorter time and see if that gives them a crunch that will help spark your interest.

Some older adults have allergies to certain foods, such as wheat, nuts, or dairy. Others may have dietary restrictions for religious, ethical, or personal reasons. Whatever your dietary needs are, it is still possible to choose healthy foods.