

Healthy Eating for Busy Caregivers




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Why must I eat well?

A balanced and nutritious diet is not only for people whom we care for – it is equally important for us caregivers too. To sustain yourself as a caregiver, one of the important areas is to have balanced and nutritious food to give us the energy, boost our immune system and improve our mental health.

Are you having a nutritious and balanced diet?

How does a balanced and nutritious diet look like ?	Are you having a balanced and nutrition diet ? Take the chance to identify which aspect of your diet you need increase or limit. This can help you in targeting specific area to work on.		
	Put a V on areas that you are having for your meals regularly	Put a V on area(s) you are willing to improve on	
	Important food groups to be taken daily		
	😊	<input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrates e.g rice, noodles, bread, biscuits	
	😊	<input type="checkbox"/> Protein e.g fish, chicken, eggs, tofu,	
	😊	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables e.g green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, bean sprouts	
	😊	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruits e.g bananas, grapes	
😊	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluid At least 1L/day which is low calorie e.g water,		
Food / fluid preparation to take in limitation			
😞	<input type="checkbox"/> Fats <input type="checkbox"/> Fried food		
😞	<input type="checkbox"/> Fluid <input type="checkbox"/> Soft drinks/ few cups of caffeinated drink a day <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1L of water/day (<i>you are not drinking enough</i>)		

Explore the possibility of adding something you enjoy and you will like to be part of your meal. Set small intentional goals e.g having steamed fish for dinner on Tuesday and Thursday.

**But... it can get really busy and tiring as a caregiver.
How to have a balanced diet despite a busy schedule?**



Invest in food that fills your tummy! It doesn't feel nice to be hungry frequently!

- Limit sugary food as it does not stay in your tummy long enough
- Whole grains food e.g. whole meal bread and protein food such as eggs and milk helps your tummy stay full for a longer period

Healthy snacks and fluids on the go!

- Go for finger food e.g. nuts, dried fruits, fruits like grapes and bananas and hard boiled eggs. Put them in small containers to help you control the portion at the same time.
- Fill up 1 litre of plain water in a bottle which you can access easily and as a way to track if you have adequate fluid intake for the day. You can squeeze some lemon juice to freshen up the taste.

Prepare meals ahead

- Write the menu for the week and the groceries accordingly
- Allocate once a week to pre-cut all food and store them in air-tight containers/ dry ziplock bags. E.g. broccoli, you can just take it out to wash before you cook and meat items to portion out to defrost easily.

Save time on cooking

- Marinate food in advance.
- Cook food in batches and freeze them. You can thaw and heat them up when you want to eat. E.g pre-prepare soup base and keep them in individual packets which you can defrost to cook with noodles etc later on.
- Purchase pre-cut food such as garlic, onions
- Make use of leftovers (*if any*) e.g. rice, soup broth to be used next day
- Explore some cooking equipment e.g. pressure cooker, slow cooker etc, so you can multitask.



What if there is unexpected situation? Have a back-up plan whenever possible:

1) Food on standby at home to help settle fast

- Canned sardines, tunas and salmon provide rich source of omega-3, calcium and protein
- Frozen vegetables such as edamame, green peas and corns to replace fresh vegetables
- Whole grains food e.g. instant oats, cornflakes, bread

2) Know the area where you stay

- Identify and get the number of the food stall which serves healthy food near your place
- Have a list of food delivery services that you prefer. You can refer to it easily.



What if I like to take a break but still have healthy meals?

- Consider tingkat services e.g. twice a week to free your mind from thinking what to eat next.
- No doubt balanced healthy diet is important, but do allow some space for imperfection at times.

