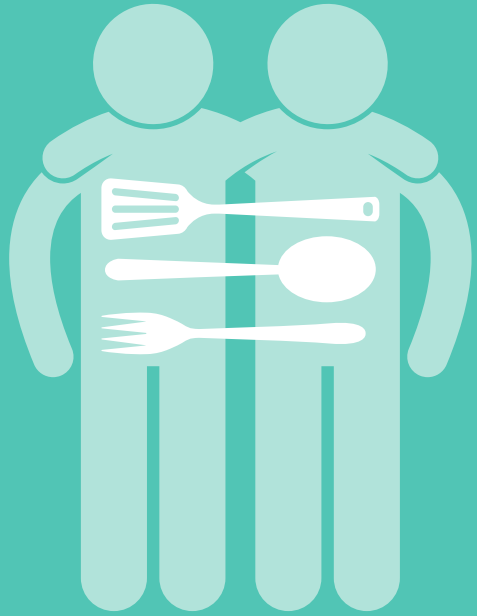


Quick Tips



Getting the motivation to cook

Most people sometimes feel that we can't be bothered cooking, and we can feel this way more often as we get older. Or sometimes we just get out of the habit of cooking. But cooking our own food is part of being well and having choices in our day-to-day life. So here are some ideas that have helped other people.

“Some days I just run out of energy by the middle of the afternoon. It feels too much effort to cook an evening meal.”

“It's nice to have something that is exactly what I like and know I made it, even when it is just for me.”

Have your cooked meal whenever you feel like cooking

- If you are a morning person and you have the most energy soon after getting up, why not have a cooked breakfast?
- You can prepare your dinner in the morning so you just need to reheat it in the evening.
- If it takes you time to get going and you are at your best later in the day, leave the food preparation until then.
- It is ok to have your main meal at lunchtime and a snack in the evening.

“I use a slow cooker – you put in all your ingredients in the morning and it will be ready in a few hours. That way you won’t need to do anything later, you just eat it when you are ready.”

“My arthritis means it takes me a couple of hours after I get up to loosen up enough to do stuff. I start making a nice lunch then.”

“I put porridge in my slow cooker at night and then I have a good start to my day, even though I would find it hard to cook that in the morning.”

Cook small things

Eating 5 or 6 small meals is as good as 3 main meals – and sometimes better.

- Try eating something every 2-3 hours – think of about a handful as the right portion size.
- Each small meal or snack could be one course of a traditional meal – a bowl of soup or a pudding.
- Cooking for one or 2 small meals may feel more manageable.

“Make something that you really enjoy cooking - the smells or the feel of the ingredients. That way it is a pleasure, not a chore.”

For further information about Food Buddies, more tips and other useful sources of information, visit our website: www.otbds.org/projects/food-buddies

Keep food in the cupboard or freezer for when you don't fancy cooking

We all have days when we don't feel like cooking. Preparing in advance for these days can help make life easier.

- Try keeping ready meals, left overs or soup in the freezer (or tins in the cupboard) which can easily be defrosted and heated up.
- Also think about how to add to easy food, so it has enough goodness to be your meal. Examples are porridge and full fat milk, or adding some sweetcorn to tinned soup.
- You can freeze portions of something like chilli which will go with rice, or a baked potato, or pasta, or bread.
- There are meals and snacks that don't need any cooking at all. That way, you are still getting good nutrition without any bother. Examples are cheese with oatcakes or bread and tomatoes or salad, and hummus with carrot and celery sticks.

“Try not to use food like ready meals all the time. Mixing that with cooking some food yourself keeps your cooking skills alive.”

“Lentil soup with a roll one day, and then with crispy bacon and croutons the next day.”

Eat and cook with a friend

Eating with other people can help boost appetite and make meal times more enjoyable. It often feels easier to cook for someone else and cooking together can be enjoyable too.

- You can invite a friend over for lunch or dinner - maybe take turns to cook for each other
- You can meet each other at a lunch club or café
- Get together and cook a bigger pot of soup or stew. Enjoy it that day and then each have a portion for next day or the freezer

Have a list of some quick meals you enjoy

In order for this to work it has to either be something that's really easy to make one portion of, or something

that you can use over a couple of days and it doesn't feel like you're eating the same stuff.

For example: you could make a chilli, with or without meat. It will last a few days in the fridge and will get tastier every day. You could have it with rice one day, as a baked potato topping the next day and with some pasta on day three.

Have fun with your food

Food doesn't have to be serious and you can come up with your own recipes. Our taste buds change as we get older, so it can be a good idea to try new flavour combinations or ways of cooking things. Experimenting with food can be fun and you might just discover your new favourite thing!



Food Buddies Quick Tips

Food Buddies develops practical help for older people, people living with dementia and other people who sometimes have problems around food. We are trying to make life easier for people, staying safe and continuing to shop, cook and enjoy food.

This guide has been brought together with older people and their friends and families who are sharing their experience to help other people. We hope it is also useful for volunteers and staff who support people.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us develop our Quick Tips.

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