



1/3 Calorie Intake Requirement During COVID-19

As of April 29, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused nutritional standards (i.e. DRIs and DGAs) to be waived for emergency meals. COVID-19 has made these provisions applicable for funds awarded under Supplemental #3, Supplemental #2 and the regular Older Americans Act during the period of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Although not required, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) encourages the use of these nutritional standards to help older adults maintain their health and manage chronic conditions.

Attention to nutrient content (ex. protein, added sugar, sodium) is important for immune function and to manage underlying conditions (ex. diabetes, hypertension, heart disease). Nutritional requirements are important to ensure that older adults are receiving the nutrients they need, particularly since for many older adults, this may be their only nutritious meal.

Ideally, programs should make every attempt to deliver the most nutritious meals meeting the minimum daily caloric intake and DRIs/DGAs (when possible). If unable to meet the DRIs and DGAs requirements, ACL recommends meals meet a minimum of no less than [1/3 of the recommended daily caloric intake](#) for an older individual.

The chart below details age ranges for males and females with three levels of lifestyle. The low end of the range is for sedentary individuals and the high end of the range is for active individuals. Due to reductions in basal metabolic rate that occur with aging, calorie needs generally decrease for adults as they age. For example, the recommended daily caloric intake for a 70-year old female is 1600 calories per day with a sedentary lifestyle. This number can be adjusted based on activity level.

Under no circumstances should any meal be lower than 534 calories. The 534 minimum was based on pre-COVID-19 demographics (combining both home delivered and congregate data), the average participant is 80 years old and 68% percent are female. We assume more participants are sedentary in their behavior given COVID-19 guidelines.

Your demographics may now have changed slightly with COVID-19, so a review of your clients by program may be warranted to ensure the appropriate caloric levels are being met. A good rule of thumb would be to serve meals that deliver approximately 600 calories to both males and females for ease of production and delivery process. See table below for more detail on caloric requirements.



MALES				FEMALES ^[d]			
AGE	Sedentary ^[a]	Moderately active ^[b]	Active ^[c]	AGE	Sedentary ^[a]	Moderately active ^[b]	Active ^[c]
56-60	2,200	2,400	2,600	56-60	1,600	1,800	2,200
61-65	2,000	2,400	2,600	61-65	1,600	1,800	2,000
66-70	2,000	2,200	2,600	66-70	1,600	1,800	2,000
71-75	2,000	2,200	2,600	71-75	1,600	1,800	2,000
76 and up	2,000	2,200	2,400	76 and up	1,600	1,800	2,000

[a] Sedentary means a lifestyle that includes only the physical activity of independent living.

[b] Moderately Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking about 1.5 to 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the activities of independent living.

[c] Active means a lifestyle that includes physical activity equivalent to walking more than 3 miles per day at 3 to 4 miles per hour, in addition to the activities of independent living.

The [Red Cross guidance](#) recommends that a two-week food supply be kept in homes during emergencies. Strategies to supply seniors with meals to stay in place should include a combination of hot, frozen, fresh and shelf stable meals. State/local nutrition providers can produce meals themselves or meals can be sourced through local foodservice companies. Examples of foodservice companies include: restaurants, grocery stores, hospitals, senior living facilities (i.e. assisted living or independent living) facilities and contract foodservice companies, just to name a few. If sourcing meals through a third-party, request the nutritional information as part of your agreement. Refer to *Contracting Tips for Purchasing Meals/Food During COVID-19* for insights on purchasing and contracting and the *Guide for Senior Nutrition Programs Seeking to Work with Food Retailers During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency* for tips on working with restaurants and grocery stores.

Pre-packaged meals should already have calorie intake on the meal. However, if self-producing meals or working with a restaurant or other food service company and unable to meet DRIs and DGAs, program providers must take steps to ensure each meal delivers 1/3 of the suggested caloric intake.

This guide can help you calculate total calories per meal when calorie intake is unknown. Please note this guide is referring to a meal served to seniors. Offering groceries to seniors may be part of the program providers plan to ensure seniors have an adequate supply of food on hand. Providers may also suggest with the grocery delivery, a sample meal pattern that seniors may want to use as they make their own meals from the groceries provided to them. The sample menu pattern provided can be used as nutrition education. Groceries are foods that may be used to develop meals by seniors; they are



not individual meals for reporting purposes. Please refer to ACL guidance: <https://acl.gov/COVID-19> for more information on how to report groceries.

There are two options available to calculate the caloric level of each meal served: nutritional software/apps or manual calculations using food exchanges.

Understanding portion sizes and calorie levels of foods is a critical step in determining total calories of a meal. There are many tools in the marketplace to help. Consider the following when looking for a software solution or app. These apps are simple and easy to use.

- Calorie King <https://www.calorieking.com/us/en/>
- My Fitness Pal <https://www.myfitnesspal.com>
- My Plate (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>)

Calories can also be calculated manually using exchange lists (see appendix) and the menu pattern below. Below are two examples of restaurant meals built to deliver the appropriate number of calories. Use this meal planner as a guide and exchanges to calculate the calorie contributions per meal. See Food Exchange List in Appendix.

Food Group	Portion Size	Calories	Meal Example	Meal Example
Protein	3-4 oz meat, poultry, fish, 1 cup beans or 1 egg	45 lean 75 med fat 100 high fat	Hamburger Patty (3 oz med fat) (225 cal)	Baked Salmon (4 oz) (180 cal)
Grain #1	1 slice bread; 1-6" tortilla; ½ cup rice/pasta; 5 crackers	80	Hamburger bun (1/2) (80 cal)	Wild Rice (1 cup) (160 cal)
Grain #2	1 slice bread; 1-6" tortilla; ½ cup rice/pasta; 5 crackers	80	Hamburger bun (1/2) (80 cal)	
Vegetable #1	½ cooked; 1 cup leafy greens; 1 small whole vegetable	25	Carrot Sticks (1 cup raw) (25 cal)	Steamed Broccoli (1/2 cup) (25 cal)
Vegetable #2	½ cooked; 1 cup leafy greens; 1 small whole vegetable	25		Leafy Greens Salad (1 cup) (25 cal)
Fruit	½ cup canned/frozen; 1 small raw; ¼ dried	60	Fresh Berries (1/2 cup) (60 cal)	Banana (1 small). (60 cal)



Dairy/Alternate	1 cup low-fat fluid (reconstituted dry or evaporated milk); 1.5 oz to 2 oz. cheese	100	1% milk (8 oz) (100 cal)	1% milk (8 oz) (100 cal)
Dessert (optional)	½ cup dessert option; 2 small cookies	Per food		
Oil/Margarine	1 tsp oil; 1 tsp soft margarine; 2 tsp salad dressing	45	Ranch Dressing (1 TBSP) (68 cal)	French Dressing (1 TBSP) (68 cal)
Beverages (no sugary drinks)	8 oz.	0	Iced Tea (unsweetened)	Iced Tea (unsweetened)
Calories		~665 cal*	~638 cal*	~618 cal*

***Approximate total calories per meal. Meeting the exact number of 600 is difficult so it is recommended to exceed the 600 calories target caloric level.**

Appendix

If foods recommended in the sample menu patterns are not available, use this Appendix to help you calculate the calories of meals served. Serving sizes are provided for commonly consumed food from the fruit, vegetable, grain, dairy and protein foods.



Fruits



Vegetables



Grains



Dairy



Protein Foods

Fruits

One fruit choice has 15 grams of carbohydrate and 60 calories.

Food	Serving Size
Apple, unpeeled	1 small apple (4 ounces)
Apples, dried	4 rings
Applesauce, unsweetened	½ cup
Apricots, canned	½ cup
Apricots, dried	8 apricot halves
Apricots, fresh	4 apricots (5 ½ ounces total)
Banana	1 extra-small banana, about 4 inches long (4 ounces)
Blackberries	1 cup
Blueberries	¾ cup
Cantaloupe	1 cup, diced
Cherries, sweet, canned	½ cup
Cherries, sweet, fresh	12 cherries (3 ½ ounces)
Dates	3 small (deglet noor) dates or 1 large (medjool) date
Dried fruit (blueberries, cherries, cranberries, mixed fruit, raisins)	2 Tablespoons



Figs, dried	3 small
Figs, fresh	1 ½ large or 2 medium figs (3 ½ ounces)
Fruit cocktail, canned	½ cup
Grapefruit, fresh	½ large grapefruit (5 ½ ounces)
Grapefruit, sections, canned	¾ cup
Grapes	17 small grapes (3 ounces)
Guava	2 small guava (2 ½ ounces)
Honeydew melon	1 cup dice
Kiwi	½ cup sliced
Loquat	¾ cup cubed
Mandarin oranges, canned	¾ cup
Mango	½ small (5 ½ ounces)
Nectarine	1 medium
Orange	1 medium
Papaya	½ papaya or 1 cup cubed
Peaches, canned	½ cup
Peaches, fresh	1 medium
Pears, canned	½ cup
Pears, fresh	½ large pear (4 ounces)
Pineapple, canned	½ cup
Pineapple, fresh	¾ cup
Plums, canned	½ cup
Plums, fresh	2 small plums (5 ounces total)
Plums, dried (prunes)	3 prunes
Raspberries	1 cup
Strawberries	1 ¼ cup whole berries
Tangerine	1 large tangerine
Watermelon	1 ¼ cups diced
<u>Fruit Juice</u>	
Apple juice/cider	½ cup
Fruit juice blends, 100% juice	1/3 cup
Grape juice	1/3 cup
Grapefruit juice	½ cup
Orange juice	½ cup
Pineapple juice	½ cup
Pomegranate juice	½ cup
Prune juice	1/3 cup



Vegetables

One non-starchy vegetable choice (1/2 cup cooked or 1 cup raw) has 5 grams of carbohydrate, 2 grams of protein, 0 grams of fat and 25 calories.

Non-Starchy Vegetables

Serving Size (see above)

Artichoke, artichoke hearts (no oil)
Asparagus
Baby corn
Bamboo shoots
Bean sprouts
Beans (green, wax, Italian, yard-long beans)
Beets
Broccoli
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Coleslaw, packaged, no dressing
Cucumber
Fennel
Eggplant
Green onions or scallions
Hearts of palm, jicama
Kale
Mixed vegetables (without starchy vegetables, legumes or pasta)
Mushrooms
Okra, fresh
Onions
Pea pods
Peppers (all varieties)
Radishes
Rutabaga
Squash, summer varieties (yellow, pattypan, crookneck, zucchini)
Sugar snap peas
Swiss chard
Tomatoes, canned
Tomato sauce (unsweetened)
Tomato/vegetable juice
Turnips



Water chestnuts

*Note: Salad greens (such as arugula, chicory, endive, escarole, lettuce, radicchio, romaine and watercress) are on the Free Foods list

Grains

One starch choice has 15 grams of carbohydrate, 3 grams of protein, 1 gram of fat and 80 calories.

Bread

Bagel	¼ large bagel
Biscuit	1 biscuit (2 ½ inches across)
Breads, loaf type:	1 slice (1 ounce)
White, whole-grain, French, Italian, pumpnickel, rye, sourdough, unfrosted raisin or cinnamon	
Bread, reduced calorie, light	2 slices (1 ½ ounces)
Breads, flat type (flatbreads)	
Chapatti	1 ounce
Ciabatta	1 ounce
Naan	3-1/4-inch square (1 ounce)
Pita (6 inches across)	½ pita
Roti	1 ounce
Sandwich flat buns, whole wheat	1 bun, including top and bottom (1 ½ ounces)
Taco shell	2 taco shells (each 5 inches across)
Tortilla, corn	1 small tortilla (6 inches across)
Tortilla, flour (white or whole-wheat)	1 small tortilla (6 inches across)
Cornbread	1-3/4-inch cube (1 ½ ounces)
English muffin	½ muffin
Hot dog bun or hamburger bun	½ bun (¾ ounce)
Pancake	1 pancake (4 inches across, ¼ inch thick)
Roll, plain	1 small roll (1 ounce)
Stuffing, bread	1/3 cup
Waffle	1 waffle (4-inch square or 4 inches across)

Cereals

Bran cereal (twigs, buds, or flakes)	<u>Serving Size</u> ½ cup
Oats (Oats, oatmeal)	1/2 cup dry



Granola cereal	¼ cup
Grits, dry	½ cup
Muesli	¼ cup
Puffed cereal	1 ½ cups
Shredded wheat, plain	½ cup
Unsweetened, ready-to-eat cereal	¾ cup

Grains

Unless otherwise indicated, serving sizes listed are for cooked grains.

Barley	1/3 cup
Bran, dry	
Oat	¼ cup
Wheat	½ cup
Bulgur	½ cup
Couscous	1/3 cup
Kasha	½ cup
Millet	1/3 cup
Pasta, white or whole wheat	1/3 cup
Polenta	½ cup
Quinoa, all colors	1/3 cup
Rice, white, brown and all colors and type	1/3 cup
Tabbouleh (tabouli), prepared	½ cup
Wheat germ, dry	3 Tablespoons
Wild rice	½ cup

Crackers

Animal crackers	2 to 5 pieces (¾ ounce)
Crackers	8 crackers
Crispbread	3 squares
Graham, 2 ½-inch square	3 squares
Oyster	20 crackers
Round, butter type	6 crackers
Saltine-type	6 crackers
Whole-wheat, baked	5 regular 1 1/2 -inch squares or 10 thins (¾ ounce)
Granola or snack bar	1 bar (¾ ounce)
Matzo, all shapes and sizes	¾ ounce
Melba toast	4 pieces (each about 2 by 4 inches)
Rice cakes	2 cakes (4 inches across)
Snack chips	
Baked (potato, pita)	About 8 chips (¾ ounce)
Regular (tortilla, potato)	About 13 chips (1 ounce)



Starchy Vegetables

One starchy vegetable choice (cooked) has 15 grams of carbohydrate, 3 grams of protein and 80 calories.

<u>Food</u>	<u>Serving Size</u>
Corn	½ cup
On cob	4 inch to 4 ½ inch piece (1/2 large cob)
Hominy	¾ cup
Mixed vegetables with corn and peas	1 cup
Marinara, pasta or spaghetti sauce	½ cup
Parsnips	½ cup
Peas, green	½ cup
Potato	
Baked with skin	¼ large potato (3 ounces)
Boiled, all kinds	½ cup or ½ medium potato
Mashed, with milk and fat	½ cup
French fries (oven baked)*	1 cup (2 ounces)
French fries	1 small order (about 3 ½ ounces) (2 ½ carbs + 2 fats)
Pumpkin puree, canned, no sugar added	¾ cup
Squash, winter (acorn, butternut)	1 cup
Succotash	½ cup
Yam or sweet potato, plain	½ cup (3 ½ ounces)
Baked beans, canned	1/3 cup
Beans (black, garbanzo, kidney, lima, navy, Pinto, white), cooked or canned, drained and rinsed	½ cup
Lentils (any color), cooked	½ cup
Peas (black-eyed and split), cooked or canned, drained and rinsed	½ cup
Refried beans, canned	½ cup

Note: Beans, lentils and peas are also found on the Protein list.

*Note: Beans, Peas, Lentils count as 1 starch choice + 1 lean protein choice

Dairy



One milk choice has 12 grams of carbohydrate and 8 grams of protein and:

- One fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk choice has 0 to 3 grams of fat and 100 calories per serving.
- One reduced-fat (2%) milk choice has 5 grams of fat and 120 calories per serving.
- One whole milk choice has 8 grams of fat and 160 calories per serving.

Food	Serving Size	Choices per Serving
Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%)		
Milk, buttermilk acidophilus milk or lactose-free milk	1 cup	1 fat-free milk
Evaporated milk	½ cup	1 fat-free milk
Yogurt, plain or Greek; may be flavored with an artificial sweetener	2/3 cup (6 ounces)	1 fat-free milk
Chocolate milk, reduced fat (2%) milk, Acidophilus milk, kefir, lactose free milk	1 cup	1 fat-free milk+1 carbohydrate
Reduced fat (2%)		
Milk, acidophilus milk, Keir, lactose free milk	1 cup	1 reduced fat milk
Yogurt, plain	2/3 cup (6 ounces)	1 reduced fat milk
Whole		
Milk, buttermilk, goat's milk	1 cup	1 whole milk
Evaporated milk	½ cup	1 whole milk
Yogurt, plain	1 cup	1 whole milk
Chocolate milk	1 cup	1 whole milk+1 carbohydrate

Proteins

Lean Protein

One lean protein choice has 0 grams of carbohydrate, 7 grams of protein, 2 grams of fat and 45 calories. Note: 1 ounce is usually the serving size for meat, fish, poultry or hard cheese.



<u>Food</u>	<u>Serving Size</u>
Beef, ground (90% or higher lean /10% or lower fat	1 ounce
Beef, select or choice grades, fat trimmed	1 ounce
Roast (chuck, round, rump, sirloin), steak (cubed, flank, Porterhouse, T-bone), tenderloin	
Beef, steak	1 ounce
Beef jerky	1/2 ounce
Cheeses with 3 grams of fat or less/ounce	1 ounce
Curd-style cheeses: cottage -type (all kinds); ricotta (fat-free or light)	¼ cup (2 ounces)
Egg substitutes, plain	¼ cup
Egg whites	2
Fish, fresh (catfish, cod, flounder, Haddock, halibut, orange roughly, Tilapia, trout	1 ounce
Salmon, fresh or canned	1 ounce
Sardines, canned	2 small sardines
Tuna, fresh or canned in water	1 ounce
Smoked: herring or salmon (lox)	1 ounce
Game, buffalo, ostrich, rabbit, venison	1 ounce
Pork, lean	
Canadian bacon	1 ounce
Ham	1 ounce
Poultry, without skin: chicken, Cornish	1 ounce
Hen, turkey, lean ground turkey or chicken	
Rib or loin chop/roast, tenderloin	1 ounce
Sausage, 3 grams of fat or less/ounce	1 ounce
Shellfish, clams, crab, shrimp, scallops	1 ounce
Veal, cutlet, loin chop, roast	1 ounce

Medium-Fat Protein

One medium-fat protein choice has 0 grams of carbohydrate, 7 grams of protein, 5 grams of fat and 75 calories. Note: 1 ounce is usually the serving size for meat, fish, poultry or hard cheese.

<u>Food</u>	<u>Serving Size</u>
Beef, ground (85% or lower lean/15% Or higher fat)	1 ounce



Beef, corned beef, meatloaf, prime cuts of beef, short ribs	1 ounce
Cheeses with 4 to 7 grams of fat/ounce	1 ounce
Cheese, ricotta	¼ cup (2 ounces)
Egg	1 egg
Fish: any kind	1 ounce
Lamb, ground, rib roast	1 ounce
Pork, cutlet, ground, shoulder roast	1 ounce
Poultry with skin, chicken, turkey, fried chicken	1 ounce
Sausage, 4 to 7 grams of fat/ounce	1 ounce

High-Fat Protein

One high-fat protein choice has 0 grams of carbohydrate, 7 grams of protein, 8 grams of fat and 100 calories. Note: 1 ounce is usually the serving size for meat, fish, poultry or hard cheese.

These foods are high in saturated fat, cholesterol and calories and may raise blood cholesterol levels if eaten on a regular basis. Limit consumption to 3 or fewer choices from this group each week.

Food

Serving Size

Bacon, pork	2 slices (1 ounce each before cooking)
Bacon, turkey	3 slices (1/2 ounce each before cooking)
Cheese, regular, American, blue-veined, Brie, cheddar, hard goat	1 ounce

Plant-Based Protein

Food

Serving Size

Choices per Serving*

Baked beans, canned	1/3 cup	1 starch + 1 lean protein
Beans (black, garbanzo, kidney, lima Navy, pinto, white), canned, drained and rinsed	½ cup	1 starch + 1 lean protein
Lentils, any color, canned, drained and rinsed	½ cup	1 starch + 1 lean protein
Nut spreads: almond butter, cashew Butter, peanut butter, soy nut butter	1 TBSP	1 high fat protein
Peas (black-eyed and split peas), canned Drained and rinsed	½ cup	1 starch + 1 lean protein
Refried beans, canned	½ cup	1 starch + 1 lean protein
Soy nuts, unsalted	¾ ounce	½ carbohydrate + 1 med. fat protein