

# The Benefits of Eating With Others:

## Connecting Nutrition and Socialization for Better Health

### THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF EATING TOGETHER

Studies show that people who dine with others regularly eat healthier and report a better quality of life. It provides a sense of structure and belonging while offering greater opportunities for improved nutrition. Coming together over a meal can also provide meaningful ways to connect with others over shared beliefs and cultural interests. Benefits may include:

#### Physical Health

- Improved nutrition
- Reduced risk of chronic conditions
- Better mobility



#### Mental Health

- Increased self-care
- Sense of well-being
- Reduced anxiety and depression



#### Social Health

- Opportunities to connect
- Stronger relationships
- Reduced loneliness



### REDUCED HUNGER IS MORE COMMON AS WE AGE

As a result, some older adults skip meals or eat in an unbalanced manner when eating alone. When we eat with others, our nutrition intake improves. Examples may include:

**Eating better overall** or certain food groups like protein and vegetables.



**Consuming more calories** to provide needed energy.



**Taking in more nutrients** like iron, calcium, and folate.



#### Sources cited

- Gender differences in longevity in free-living older adults who eat-with-others: A prospective study in Taiwan. 2017.
- A systematic review and meta-analysis of the social facilitation of eating. 2019.
- Social influences and eating behavior in later life: a review. 2011.
- "You've got to be old to go there:" psychosocial barriers and facilitators to social eating in older adults. 2020.
- Living alone but eating together: exploring lunch clubs as a dining out experience. 2017.
- Eating alone or together among community-living older people - a scoping review. 2021.

# What Should Your Emergency Pantry Look Like?

*Suggested by the Canned Food Alliance*



The last thing people probably think about in an emergency situation is consuming the proper quantities and varieties of food to meet the daily recommended amounts. The Canned Food Alliance suggests stocking your emergency pantry with a variety of nutrient-rich foods and recommends keeping the following amounts of food and water per person, per day.

Food Group	What Counts	Recommended Amounts (Per person for 2,000 calories a day)	Pantry Options (Per person, per day)
<b>Meats &amp; Beans</b>	Canned meat, chicken, turkey, seafood and other protein-rich foods, such as beans (legumes), nuts and peanut butter	Enough to provide 5 1/2 ounces per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (5 ounces) meat, fish, chicken or turkey</li> <li>1 can (15 ounces) beans (provides about 1 3/4 cups beans to equal about 7 ounces meat)</li> <li>Keep peanut butter and nuts on hand: 1 Tbsp. peanut butter or 1/2 ounce nuts is equivalent to 1 ounce meat</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	Canned vegetables and vegetable juices	Enough to provide about 2 1/2 cups per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (14 1/2 ounces) (provides about 1 1/3 cups)</li> <li>1 can (8 ounces) (provides about 1 cup)</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits</b>	Canned fruits and fruit juices	Enough to provide about 2 cups per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (8 ounces) (provides about 1 cup)</li> <li>Keep dried fruit on hand: 1/4 cup dried fruit is the equivalent of 1/2 cup canned fruit</li> </ul>
<b>Milk</b>	Canned, boxed or dried milk and shelf-stable, processed cheese	Enough to provide 3 cups of fluid milk equivalent per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 can (12 ounces) evaporated milk (provides about 3 cups fluid milk)</li> <li>1 box (1 quart) shelf-stable milk</li> <li>Keep dry milk and shelf-stable, processed cheese on hand: 2 ounces processed cheese or 1/3 cup dry milk is equivalent to 8 ounces of milk</li> </ul>
<b>Grains</b>	Ready-to-eat cereal, crackers, pretzels, instant oatmeal or other non-perishable grain products (granola, granola bars) that don't require cooking	Enough to provide 6 ounces of grain equivalent per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 ounce is 1 cup ready-to-eat breakfast flakes or 5 whole-wheat crackers or 7 saltines</li> </ul>
<b>Water</b>		Enough for 1 gallon per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In hot weather or when vigorous activity is required (perhaps during storm clean up), people may perspire more and may need to plan to have additional fluids on hand.</li> </ul>

Remember to have other non-perishable items on hand such as canned chili, soup and spaghetti, trail mix, instant pudding, mustard, catsup, vinaigrette-type salad dressing, cookies and perhaps candy. Plan ahead to keep any unused canned products in a well-chilled cooler. Plan for food and water for infants, those with special health needs and don't forget your pets.

*NOTE: Suggested amounts reflect the amount of food in common sizes of canned products, and help people consume amounts close to the USDA's MyPyramid recommendations.*

