



WELL MY  
WEIGH

Nutrition  
Guidebook



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# INTRODUCTION

Having a healthy diet and lifestyle may have many positive impacts on our lives. On the flip side, not nourishing our bodies well can take a toll on our physical and mental well-being. Luckily, small, simple changes do add up, and may help us become healthier, more energetic and perhaps even happier individuals. One step towards taking control of your health is to focus on proper nutrition. This nutrition guide is a great place to start. It is based on the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and geared towards healthy individuals who do not have any dietary restrictions. If you have any medical conditions, please discuss with your doctor a nutrition and exercise plan that is right for you. We hope that the variety of information and tips included here helps you make smarter food choices. Remember: you are worth it!

Food is an integral part of everyone's daily life, and, in many cultures, food is the center of social events, gatherings and celebrations. It is associated with many aspects of our lives, including our physical health, energy levels and emotional responses.

## Health

The way we fuel our bodies can negatively or positively impact our health. Eating a healthy diet and reaching or maintaining a healthy weight may help reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

## Energy

Food drives our energy levels, and what we consume can impact whether we feel tired or energized. Making small, simple changes towards smarter food choices may improve energy levels.

## Emotions

Sometimes our emotions, such as stress, may influence our food choices, and result in our indulging in high-calorie, high-fat foods even when we may not actually be hungry. Responding to our emotions in a healthy way (i.e., through physical activity, a healthy diet, adequate sleep and social connections) and leading a healthy lifestyle may have a positive impact on our overall mood and sense of well-being.

Exercise is also an important component of a healthy lifestyle. Paired with proper nutrition, physical activity may optimize health. Always consult your physician before starting or increasing your exercise regimen. Being physically active (as appropriate for you) may result in:

- Restful sleep
- Increased energy levels
- Weight loss or maintenance of a healthy weight
- Reduced cholesterol levels
- Decreased blood pressure
- Improved blood sugar control
- Improved mood and mental health
- Lower risk of declined cognitive function with age
- Reduced risk of developing certain chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, heart disease and some cancers)



## FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES

### as recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020

You may be asking yourself how you can make smarter food choices and reap the resulting health benefits. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide us with guidance on nutritionally adequate eating patterns. These guidelines are evidence-based recommendations jointly published by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) every five years. They contain five core principles:

#### 1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across your lifespan.

- Everything you eat and drink over time matters.
- A lifetime of healthy eating can help prevent chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating patterns are adaptable to each person's taste preferences, traditions, culture and budget.

#### 2. Focus on variety, amount and nutrient density.

Nutrient-dense foods contain essential vitamins and minerals and other naturally occurring substances (ideally including dietary fiber) that may have positive health effects. They have little or no added sugars, refined starches or sodium, and are naturally lean or low in solid fats. To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of foods from the five food groups:

- Vegetables
- Dairy
- Fruits
- Protein
- Grains

#### 3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats, and reduce sodium intake.

Consume:

- < 10% of calories/day from added sugars
- < 10% of calories/day from saturated fats
- < 2,300 mg/day of sodium

#### 4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.

You don't need to make changes overnight. It is recommended that you make gradual shifts toward a healthy eating pattern by substituting less healthy choices with nutrient-dense foods and drinks from the recommended food groups. This can make a difference over time as you try to find a pattern that is right for you, and may help you achieve and maintain a healthier overall lifestyle.

- Small shifts — over the course of a week, a day or even a meal — may make a difference.
- Shift towards an eating pattern based on an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

*continued >>*



## FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES

### as recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020

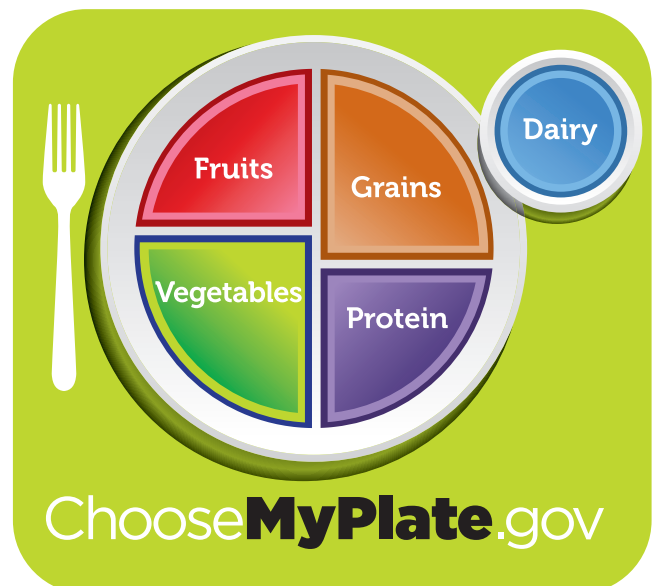
#### 5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.

Everyone plays a part in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in many settings, such as home, school, work, community and business.

- Although, as individuals, you will ultimately decide what and how much you eat and drink, your personal relationships, the settings in which you live, work and shop and other factors strongly influence your choices.
- You need support not only from your family, friends and coworkers, but also from the community at large, including health professionals, the government and the food industry.
- Concerted efforts are needed to support individuals and families in making healthy dietary and physical activity choices, and everyone plays a role. These efforts, in combination and over time, have the potential to meaningfully improve the health of current and future generations.

#### An overall healthy eating pattern includes:

- Fruits, especially whole fruits
- Vegetables, including dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, legumes and starches
- Whole grains, with at least half of your grain servings being whole grain items
- Dairy, particularly fat-free or low-fat (1%), including milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified alternatives
- Protein, especially lean and low-sodium options
- Healthy fats, including nuts, avocados and olive oil





# FIVE TIPS TOWARDS A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

1. Keep an Eye on Portions
2. Focus on Fiber
3. Plan Healthy Meals and Snacks
4. Monitor Hunger and Fullness Cues
5. Incorporate Physical Activity into Your Daily Lifestyle

## 1. Keep an Eye on Portions

It is important to be mindful of portion sizes, whether you are dining out, eating packaged foods or preparing food at home. Larger portion sizes can make it easier to overeat. Aim for your plate to be consistent with MyPlate ([www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)): make  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your plate fruits and vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  whole grains and  $\frac{1}{4}$  lean protein, then add one serving of low-fat dairy.

### Pro-Tips:

- Challenge yourself to use smaller cups, bowls and plates for meals and snacks if you are using oversized dishware.
- When dining out, share your meal with a friend or family member, or ask for half of it packaged to go. Many meals consumed while dining out provide enough calories to feed more than one person. One entrée can often contain more than 1,000 calories.
- Slow down and savor every bite.

**Did you know?:** A serving size for nut butter is two tablespoons. That's about the size of a ping pong ball. Keep an eye on how much you're scooping out the next time you reach for a jar.

## 2. Focus on Fiber

Fiber not only supports a healthy digestive system, but also plays a key role in maintaining stable blood sugar levels, decreasing LDL cholesterol and aiding in weight loss. Dietary fiber may be found in many fruits and vegetables, whole grains (e.g., brown rice, whole wheat, quinoa, barley and oats), beans, legumes, unsalted nuts and seeds. The average adult should aim for 25-38 grams of fiber per day. Unfortunately, most of us consume only about half of that recommendation.

### Pro-Tips:

- Using the MyPlate method noted above will not only help you meet your fiber needs but also ensure that you have a well-balanced meal.
- Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/> for tips, tools and resources for improving your plate.
- Choose a piece of fruit for a snack.

**Did you know?:** Fiber is found only in plants.

## 3. Plan Healthy Meals and Snacks

Planning your meals and snacks in advance is an important component to success. We all know that waiting until you are hungry to decide what you are going to eat can lead to poor decision-making and reliance on convenience foods. Having a list when you go to the grocery store and keeping your pantry and refrigerator stocked with healthy meals and snacks for the week can help you make smart decisions and eat better throughout the week.

*continued >>*



# FIVE TIPS TOWARDS A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

## Pro-Tips:

- Plan ahead and use meal planning resources like <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes-cookbooks-and-menus>.
- Take advantage of healthy convenience foods like pre-cut and washed fruits and vegetables, frozen, unseasoned vegetables, fruit in its own juice, individually portioned frozen chicken, fish or lean beef, no-salt-added canned beans, low-sodium spaghetti sauces and marinades and whole grains such as one-minute brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta and quinoa. You may be surprised at how easy it can be to prepare a quick, healthy meal.

**Did you know?:** In 2018, the average household spent \$4,464 of their food spending on food at home and \$3,459 of it on food away from home.

## 4. Monitor Hunger and Fullness Cues

We often eat for reasons other than hunger. We eat in response to our emotions, because “it’s there” or simply because “it’s time.” Monitoring hunger and fullness cues can help you better understand when and why you are eating.

## Pro-Tips:

- Use this hunger and fullness scale for any eating occasion, planned or unplanned: [https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Nutrition/N04\\_HungerAndFullness.pdf](https://www.move.va.gov/docs/NewHandouts/Nutrition/N04_HungerAndFullness.pdf).
- If you find that you eat more when you are stressed, make a list of stress-relieving activities you can do instead. This may include taking a walk, listening to your favorite music or calling a friend. Every person is different, so choose the activities that best suit you.

**Did you know?:** 27 percent of adults say that they eat to manage stress, and 34 percent of those who report overeating or eating unhealthy foods because of stress say that this behavior is a habit.

## 5. Incorporate Activity into Your Daily Lifestyle\*\*

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things individuals can do to improve their health. It is recommended that most people get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity weekly, or a combination of the two, as well as weight-bearing exercise on at least two days a week. Participating in regular activity is strongly recommended for your overall health and longevity.

## Pro-Tips:

- Park your car in a parking spot a little farther away, take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk at lunch or hit the gym.
- Find a workout buddy to create mutual accountability.
- Start a stair or walking challenge at work.

**Did you know?:** Making dietary changes and incorporating regular physical activity into your routine are both major components to success in losing weight and keeping it off.

\*\*Talk with your doctor before significantly increasing your activity level. Ask about the amounts and types of activities that may be best for you. \*\*



# TEN TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER YOU

## 1. Variety

Choose a variety of foods from each food group throughout each week, and, specifically, aim for a variety of different-colored fruits and vegetables. For example, include dark green, red and yellow vegetables in your diet, as well as legumes (e.g., beans and peas) and starches (e.g., potato).

## 2. Sleep

Healthy adults should get seven or more hours of sleep each night. Inadequate sleep can contribute to weight gain.

## 3. Sugar

Limit your intake of added sugar and opt for naturally occurring sources of sugar from fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.

## 4. Fruits and Vegetables

Aim to have half of your plate consist of fruits and vegetables at each meal.

## 5. Whole Grains

Make at least half, if not more, of the grains you eat at your meals and snacks whole grains (e.g., brown rice, 100% whole wheat bread, quinoa, barley and whole wheat pasta).

## 6. Physical Activity

Key recommendations for specific health benefits include at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise weekly, which can be broken up into 10- to 30-minute intervals over five days, with weight-bearing exercise on at least two days a week. Another option is to exercise 75 minutes per week at a vigorous activity level, or to get an equivalent combination of

moderate and vigorous activity. So whether you park your car in a parking spot a little farther away, take the stairs instead of the elevator, walk at lunch or hit the gym, increasing your weekly activity level is strongly recommended for your overall health and longevity. Speak with your physician before starting or increasing physical activity, however.

## 7. Snacks

Eat regular meals and snacks throughout the day to keep your blood sugar levels stable. Try planning your snacks ahead of time by bringing healthy snacks to work with you. Some healthy suggestions include an apple with a small amount of nut butter, raw veggies with hummus or low-fat yogurt with fresh berries.

## 8. Hydration

Limit calories and added sugars consumed from beverages. Be sure to consume adequate water; try adding fresh fruit slices, herbs or cucumber to add flavor.

## 9. Accountability

Work with a friend, coworker or spouse to make positive changes to your diet and exercise routine. Hold each other accountable — for instance, by keeping track of your food intake and physical activity.

## 10. Eat What You Love

Don't forget to include foods that you love in your diet. Allow yourself to indulge now and then, while keeping portion sizes small to prevent overconsumption. Eat slowly and savor the taste and texture of these "sometimes foods."





# READING A FOOD LABEL

**Start Here** →

**Check Calories** →

**Limit these Nutrients** →

**Get Enough of these Nutrients** →

**Footnote** →

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Bar (85g)  
Servings Per Container 4

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**Amount Per Serving**

**Calories** 170      Calories from Fat 50

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	% Daily Value *				
<b>Total Fat</b> 6g	<b>9%</b>				
Saturated Fat 4g	<b>19%</b>				
Trans Fat 0g					
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g					
Monounsaturated Fat 1g					
<b>Cholesterol</b> 13mg	<b>4%</b>				
<b>Sodium</b> 83mg	<b>3%</b>				
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 33g	<b>11%</b>				
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>16%</b>				
Sugar 25g					
<b>Protein</b> 3g					
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Vitamin A 110%</td> <td style="width: 50%;">• Vitamin C 2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Calcium 10%</td> <td>• Iron 3%</td> </tr> </table>		Vitamin A 110%	• Vitamin C 2%	Calcium 10%	• Iron 3%
Vitamin A 110%	• Vitamin C 2%				
Calcium 10%	• Iron 3%				

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

		Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g	
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g	
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg	
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg	
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g	
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g	

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9      •      Carbohydrate 4      •      Protein 4

**← Quick Guide to % DV:**

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

**When using the Nutrition Facts label as a guide, consider these tips:**

- Keep these low: saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol and sodium

- Get enough of these: potassium, fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron
- Read the Percent Daily Value (% DV) column: 5% DV or less is low, 20% DV or more is high



## PORTION SIZES

Here is an example of the recommended daily amount from each food group for a 2,000-calorie plan:

Daily Food Plan	Total Consumption
Grain Group	6 ounces
Vegetable Group	2 ½ cups
Fruit Group	2 cups
Dairy Group	3 cups
Protein Group	5 ½ ounces
Oils	6 teaspoons

### Grain Group

bread, cereal, muffins, crackers, pancakes, popcorn, rice, pasta, tortillas

### Vegetable Group

dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans, peas, starchy vegetables, onion, cucumber, celery, cabbage, bean sprouts, mushrooms, cauliflower, zucchini

### Fruit Group

apple, applesauce, banana, cantaloupe, grapes, orange, peach, plum, pear, berries, pineapples, dried fruit, 100% fruit juice

### Dairy Group

milk, yogurt, cheese, milk-based desserts, fat-free or low-fat soy milk



### Protein Group

meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, nut butter, beans, peas

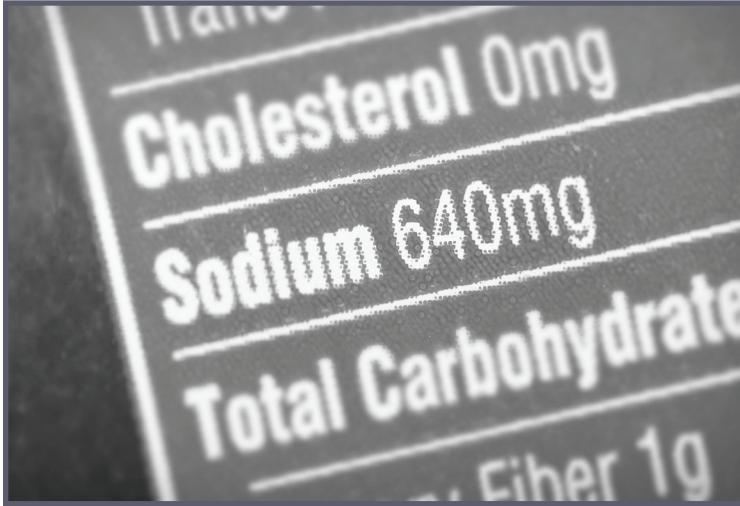
### Fats and Oils

cooking oil, salad dressing, avocado, mayonnaise, olives, trans fat-free margarine

### Limit

sodium, saturated fat, added sugars

## WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH SODIUM?



A healthy eating pattern limits sodium. It is recommended that most healthy people over the age of 14 limit sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day, based on evidence showing a relationship between increased sodium intake and increased blood pressure in adults. Adults with prehypertension and hypertension would particularly benefit from lowered blood pressure. For these individuals, further reduction to 1,500 mg of sodium per day can result in even greater blood pressure reduction.

To reduce sodium intake:

- Eat at home more often, and cook foods from scratch to control their sodium content.
- Limit sauces, mixes and “instant” products such as flavored rice, instant noodles and ready-made pasta.

- Shift food choices to incorporate fresh, frozen (with no sauce or seasoning) and no-salt-added canned vegetables.
- Flavor foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- Choose fresh rather than highly processed meat and poultry.
- Opt for whole foods and limit processed foods; most sodium consumed in the United States comes from salt added during commercial food processing and preparation.
- Pay attention to the sodium content listed on food labels; aim to choose products containing no more than about 300 mg of sodium per serving.



# ALL ABOUT HYDRATION

## Why is staying hydrated so important?

- About 60% of your body consists of water.
- Metabolism requires water. Additionally, water helps to:
  - Dissolve nutrients and minerals, making them more readily available to the body
  - Maintain normal or stable body temperature
  - Lubricate your joints and protect the spinal cord
  - Dispose of waste
  - Keep skin hydrated and healthy
  - Keep you feeling less tired
  - Keep body weight under control, or even reduce it

## How much do I need to drink in order to stay well-hydrated?

Generally, let your thirst be your guide, as everyone's needs are different. As you get older, you may feel less thirsty even though you are behind in your fluid intake.

Your needs vary based on:

- Climate and altitude
- Physical activity levels
- Illness (e.g., fever)
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding



## Tips for Staying Hydrated

- **Be prepared:** It's helpful to keep a water bottle with you wherever you go — including at your desk, so you can easily take it with you to meetings.
- **Stay on task:** Set reminders on your phone or computer, or make a point to drink a cup of water each time you get up from your desk.
- **Add flavor:** Add cucumber slices, berries, fresh herbs or a spritz of citrus to your water.
- **Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables:** Overall, vegetables and fruit have a high moisture content, and can contribute to your daily fluid intake.

\*\*Consult your doctor if you are living with certain health conditions such as kidney disease and heart failure, as you may have restrictions on how much fluid to consume each day. Your hydration needs may be different based on health conditions you have and medications you're taking. \*\*



# BE MINDFUL OF ADDED SUGARS

Sugars are found naturally in certain healthy foods and beverages, but are also added to many foods. Sugars added to foods are not considered naturally occurring sugars. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that you get no more than 10 percent of your daily caloric intake from added sugars. Identifying added sugars on food labels may not always be straightforward, though. Here is a chart to demonstrate examples of natural versus added sugar:

Food and Beverages with Natural Sugars	Food and Beverages with Added Sugars
Dairy products	Dairy desserts (ice cream, pudding)
Fruit (fresh, frozen, dried, canned in 100% fruit juice) – though be sure to check labels to ensure that there isn't any added sugar	Grain-based desserts (cookies, cakes, brownies, pies, pastries)
100% fruit and vegetable juice	Sugar-sweetened beverages (soft drinks, sports drinks, sweetened coffee and tea, energy drinks, fruit drinks)
Vegetables without sauces or seasonings	Sweets (candies, syrups, jams)

It is important to read the ingredient list on a food label and look for added sugars to get a sense of what you are eating. Some examples of added sugars in an ingredient list are brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose sweetener, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, maple syrup, molasses, pancake syrup, raw sugar, sucrose, trehalose and turbinado sugar. Keep in mind that the closer an ingredient is to the beginning of the list, the more of that ingredient is in the food.

Individuals have many options for reducing their intake of added sugars:

- Choose beverages with no added sugars, such as water, 100% fruit\* or vegetable juices or low-fat milk, in place of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Limit or decrease portion sizes of sweet snacks and grain-based and dairy desserts with added sugar
- Opt for fruit as a snack
- Limit the amount of sugar you add to foods and drinks when cooking, baking, eating and drinking
- Choose unsweetened or no-sugar-added versions of canned fruit, fruit sauces (e.g., applesauce) and yogurt

\*Keep in mind that fruit juice can contribute to excess calories and should be consumed within calorie limits.

## Sugary Beverages

Interestingly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, beverages account for almost half (47%) of all added sugars consumed in the United States.

Instead of...	...try
Sweetened tea or coffee	Unsweetened tea with fresh squeezed lemon
Flavored waters	Unsweetened coffee
Fruit drinks	Water (try adding fresh fruit or herbs for flavoring)
Soft drinks	100% fruit or vegetable juice
Energy drinks	Skim or low-fat milk
Sports drinks	



# FUELING UP FOR EXERCISE

It's important to fuel up prior to any workout — ideally two hours before.

## Pre-workout

Hydrate with water throughout the day, and eat healthy carbohydrates to give yourself energy.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Small banana
- Fruit with whole grain crackers
- Oatmeal with low-fat milk
- Applesauce (unsweetened)
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwich on 100% whole wheat bread

## During workout

Drink water as needed.

## Post-workout

Hydrate with water, and refuel within 20 to 60 minutes. Carbohydrates and lean protein aid in muscle recovery.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Low-fat plain Greek yogurt and fruit
- Tuna or turkey with spinach and shredded carrots in a 100% whole grain wrap
- Peanut butter sandwich on 100% whole wheat bread
- Whole grain crackers with almond butter
- Low-fat chocolate milk

## Try Making Your Own Smoothie

### Get some greens

- Smoothies are a great way to sneak in leafy greens like spinach or kale
- Try other vegetables like carrots and beets, which add a touch of sweetness

### Pack in protein

- Adding nuts or natural nut butters (i.e., no-sugar- or salt-added varieties), seeds, Greek yogurt or protein powder will help keep you fuller longer

### Sweeten the deal

- Choose your fruit wisely to control the sugar content
- Try ½ cup frozen berries or a banana for added creaminess

### Blend it up

- Choose a liquid that won't add unwanted sugar
- Low-fat dairy and unsweetened milk alternatives are a great choice
- Limit fruit juices

\*\* Consult your doctor if you are living with diabetes or other health conditions that may be affected by exercise. For people with diabetes, ask your doctor if there are any special exercise recommendations for calorie intake or blood sugar management.\*\*



## ASK THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

**Q: I hear so many different things about the proper way to eat, and am confused about what I should and shouldn't be eating. What should I eat?**

**Optum RDN says:** It's easy to get caught up with the latest health trends and what we should or should not be eating. It's important to note that no single food will make us healthy or unhealthy, meaning that no single food needs to be forbidden. The goal is for the majority of your food intake to come from healthful and nutritious sources. With that said, [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) is a helpful resource on how to structure your meals; it suggests that  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your plate contain fruits and vegetables,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lean protein and  $\frac{1}{4}$  whole grains, along with a side of low-fat dairy. Some good rules of thumb include:

- Avoid fad diets
- Eat an abundance of produce in a variety of colors
- Make sure that at least half of your grains are whole grains (e.g., brown rice, whole wheat pasta, 100% whole grain bread, quinoa)
- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy
- Opt for lean sources of protein (e.g., skinless chicken breast, lean ground beef, pork loin, fish)
- Choose healthy fats and oils for a source of fat (e.g., olive oil, canola oil, avocados, nuts)
- Limit saturated fats, trans fats and added sugar.

**Q: Should I be eating differently when starting an exercise program?**

**Optum RDN says:** It is always important to eat prior to exercise, whether you're a competitive athlete or a novice exerciser. Exercising on an empty stomach reduces your ability to perform at your best. How much you eat before a workout depends on the type of workout you are about to do. A quick 30-minute cardio session in the gym requires much less than a four-hour run. In general, eating healthy, easily digestible carbs one to three hours prior to a workout is recommended. Try to avoid fats and too much protein as they are harder to digest and likely to make you feel sluggish. Also, if you work out first thing in the morning, you should eat prior. It is always important to eat breakfast – your body has been in a fasting state for the last 6+ hours, and it is key that you “break the fast.” If you are a competitive athlete, be sure to experiment with food choices on your training days, not your race days.

**Q: What are some good vegetarian sources of protein?**

**Optum RDN says:** Foods such as beans, peas, nuts, seeds and soy products (e.g., tofu) are healthy sources of protein for a vegetarian diet. Some vegetarians may also include eggs, which are also a great source of protein.

*continued >>*



## ASK THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

### Q: The grocery stores are filled with so many different products. How do I know what is good for me?

**Optum RDN says:** First and foremost, make a list and stick to it! It's important to make a healthy grocery list and plan healthy menus before you go to the store. Take an inventory of what you already have at home, and only include items on the list that are necessary. Once at the grocery store, you will notice that most of the healthier items on your list tend to be located on the periphery of the store, including fresh produce, meats, dairy and whole grain breads. The inner aisles typically include less-healthy choices (e.g., highly processed snack foods, sugary drinks) that can lead to impulse buys. Additionally, learn how to read food labels for healthy choices, and start making it a habit to be a food detective by keeping an eye on the ingredient list and nutrition facts. In summary:

- ✓ Create a healthy list and stick to it
- ✓ When possible, shop seasonally for fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Opt for lean protein sources
- ✓ Look for low-fat dairy options over whole-fat ones
- ✓ Make half your grains whole
- ✓ When in doubt, read labels, especially for breads, snacks and cereals, to help you make healthy choices

### Q: I really want to change my diet for the better, but there are some things I don't want to give up, like Friday pizza night with my family. What should I do?

**Optum RDN says:** You should be mindful of what you eat and portion sizes, but you don't need to give up all of your favorite things. Consider having salad and water

with your pizza, and consider going for a family walk before or after dinner. Aim to consume foods with lower nutrient density less frequently, and don't get down on yourself if you do eat them from time to time.

### Q: I frequently eat out for work and social gatherings. What tips do you have to help keep me on track while eating out?

**Optum RDN says:** Eating out can be stressful when you're trying to make healthy choices, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some tips:

- **Know before you go:** Look up the menu at home and decide on a balanced plate before you go. Also, choose your restaurants wisely.
- **Show up hungry, but not starving:** Arriving to a restaurant when you're very hungry is an easy way to get off track and make less-healthy choices.
- **Start smart:** Start with filling, low-calorie options, such as broth-based soups and simple salads with dressing on the side.
- **Choose your words wisely:** Look for words like grilled, baked, braised, broiled, poached or steamed instead of scalloped, fried, buttered, crispy, breaded, cream of or sautéed.
- **Sharing is caring:** Split large portions with a friend, or eat until you're comfortably satisfied and take the rest home.
- **Change your mindset:** Focus on what healthy options you can have instead of what to avoid, and don't forget to enjoy the social aspect of being out, not just the food.





# CREATE YOUR OWN HEALTHY MEAL

Grain/Starchy Vegetable	Protein	Vegetable/ Fruit	Sauce/ Seasoning
Pick one	Pick one	Pick two or more	Pick one
Brown rice Whole wheat tortilla Whole grain bread or pita Whole wheat pasta Couscous Quinoa	Chicken Lean beef strips Beans Tofu or edamame Eggs Ground turkey Lean ground beef Shrimp Pork tenderloin Shellfish Salmon	Broccoli Cauliflower Bell peppers Asparagus Orange or peach Mushroom Bok choy Kale Carrots Berries Tomatoes Mixed lettuce	Curry powder and low-fat milk  Low sodium broth and minced garlic with fresh chopped herbs  Cumin, chili powder, garlic powder or onion powder with diced tomatoes in juice  Small amount of oil  Teriyaki or soy sauce (low-sodium)



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