



Healthy Eating: What You Need to Know

Your Logo Here

This brochure can help you learn more about healthy eating. It doesn't replace regular medical check-ups or your health care provider's advice. Talk with your health care provider about what healthy eating goals are right for you.

Healthy Eating

INTRODUCTION

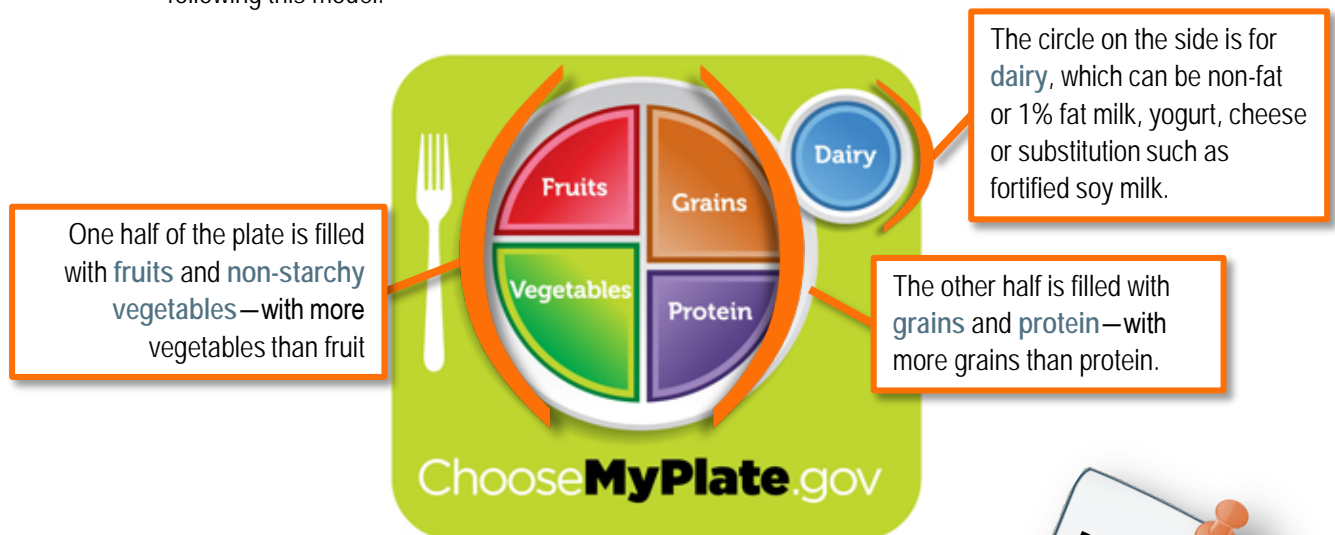
Healthy eating is good for your overall health. It can help you reach a healthy weight and stay there. Being overweight can increase your chances of getting high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, high blood sugar and other illnesses. Being too thin can cause osteoporosis, menstrual irregularities, and other health problems. Eating healthy can decrease your risk of illness. It can give you more energy. It can also improve how you feel about yourself.

WHAT IS HEALTHY EATING?

Experts agree that eating healthy is about balance, variety, and moderation. In other words, you should eat a wide variety of foods that are rich in nutrition. Try not to eat too many calories or too much of one kind of nutrient. Avoid fad diets or extreme weight loss plans. The goal of healthy eating is to create a healthy meal plan that you can keep for life.

WHAT IS THE MyPlate METHOD?

The MyPlate method helps you choose healthy portions of the right foods. You can start by following this model:



Tips for Healthy Eating

- ✓ Eat a variety of healthy foods
- ✓ Balance your calorie intake over time to stay at a healthy weight
- ✓ Have smaller portions
- ✓ Try not to think of certain foods as “off-limits”—moderation is key
- ✓ Always eat breakfast, and eat smaller meals throughout the day
- ✓ Avoid eating at night
- ✓ Avoid sugary drinks
- ✓ Avoid processed or pre-packaged foods

Put large dishes and bowls out of sight and use a 9” plate

About the Food Groups

Healthy eating means eating from all food groups. The food groups are foods that have similar nutrients. The amount of food you need to eat from each group can vary. It depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. For more information about what amount is best for you, talk to your health care provider or dietician.

Vegetables

This includes any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice. You can eat vegetables in a lot of different ways: raw, cooked, fresh, frozen, canned, dried/dehydrated, whole, cut-up, or mashed. Eating a variety of vegetables will increase your intake of fiber, vitamins and minerals. Vegetables will help you feel full. They fill you up without filling you out!

Common vegetables are: Broccoli, spinach, carrots, lettuce, and collard greens.

Some vegetables are higher in starch and carbohydrates and should be considered part of the grains/breads/starch group. Some examples are peas, yams, potatoes, and winter squash.



Grains/Breads/Starch

Foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain belong to this food group. Healthier foods in this group include those that provide dietary fiber and whole grains as well as those without added sugars. Some vegetables are higher in starch/carbohydrates and they can also be in this group. Choose 100% whole grains when possible.

Some examples of whole grain foods are whole wheat breads, brown rice, oatmeal, and whole cornmeal.

Examples of starchy vegetables are: corn, yams, peas, beans, and winter squash.



Fruits

This includes any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits can be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried. You can eat them whole, cut-up, or pureed. Eating fruits of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

Common fruits are strawberries, watermelon, oranges, apples, and peaches.



Meat/Protein

All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of this food group. Vegetarians can eat beans, peas, soy products, nuts and seeds for this food group. Choose lean or low-fat meat and poultry. Try to vary your protein to include seafood at least twice a week. Remember low fat foods are better for your heart and waistline. Healthier cooking choices include baking, broiling, and boiling items with little fat added.



Suggested amount per day: 5 ½ ounces

Milk/Dairy

All milk and most foods made from milk are a part of this food group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium do not belong to this group. These include cream cheese, butter, or cream. Soy milk that has calcium is also a part of the dairy food group.

Common milk/dairy foods are: all fluid milk—1%, no-fat, skim milk—milk-based desserts, yogurt, cheese, and soy milk. Try to have around 1 cup of dairy with each meal.



How Can You Choose Healthier Foods?

When you are choosing healthy foods, it is important to look at food labels. Food labels can give you important facts about nutrition. This information will help you choose the right foods for planning your meals.

- ▶ **SERVING SIZE**—It is essential to identify the portion size, since most packages have more than one serving.
- ▶ **SERVING PER CONTAINER**—The number of servings the product contains.
- ▶ **% (PERCENT) DAILY VALUE**—The % daily value is based on a reference intake level that should be consumed or should not be exceeded. The higher the % Daily Value, the more that serving of food adds to a person's intake of a specific nutrient.
- ▶ **CALORIES**—The amount of energy that each food serving provides. You can often read the number of calories from fat on the same line. It is important to pay attention to this number because very often most of the calories come from fat.
- ▶ **TOTAL FAT**—The total amounts of fat grams that one serving of the product provides. This amount is the sum of the saturated fat, unsaturated fat and, cholesterol.
- ▶ **SATURATED FAT**—The amount of saturated fat found in the product. This type of fat is found in meats, butter, lard, pork fat, and other foods that come from animals. Eat less than 10% of your daily calories from saturated fatty acids by replacing them with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids.
- ▶ **TRANS FAT**—Trans fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. Eating trans fat increases your risk of getting heart disease. Eat a very limited amount of foods that contain trans fats.
- ▶ **CHOLESTEROL**—A type of fat that foods contain. To control high blood cholesterol, you should consume foods low in saturated fat and high in fiber. Eat less than 300 mg per day of dietary cholesterol.
- ▶ **SODIUM**—In general, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends eating less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day, or about one teaspoon of salt (5 gm). People who are 51 and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, high blood sugar, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce sodium intake to 1,500 mg.
- ▶ **TOTAL CARBOHYDRATES**—The total amount of carbohydrates, fiber, and other added sugars. This information is especially important if you are counting the amount of carbohydrates that you are eating.
- ▶ **DIETARY FIBER**—Fiber is found in foods that come from plants. Some fiber helps in the digestive process, and others are thought to lower cholesterol and help control blood sugar.
- ▶ **SUGARS**—Sugar is a simple carbohydrate that your body uses for fuel. It has no other nutritional value. Reading the ingredient label on processed foods can help to identify added sugars. Names for added sugars on food labels include *anhydrous dextrose*, *high-fructose corn syrup*, *dextrose*, and *sucrose*.
- ▶ **VITAMINS & MINERALS**—Vitamins are organic substances found plentifully in less processed foods. These are essential to normal metabolism and growth. Eating low amounts in the diet can cause deficiency and result in illness.
- ▶ **INGREDIENTS LISTS**—This list can be used to find items that are not listed on the nutrition label. The food ingredients are listed in order by weight. So the heaviest or most prevalent ingredient will be listed first. The ingredients list can tell you if a food has trans fats, solid fats, added sugars, whole grains, and refined grains.





... To Eat Healthy

- **Remember that what you eat and drink can affect your health.**

Eating healthy can help you:

- ✓ Control your weight
- ✓ Feel better
- ✓ Lower your cholesterol
- ✓ Lower your blood pressure
- ✓ Prevent high blood sugar

- **Be aware of how you eat, then be creative.**

You can still enjoy food when you watch what you eat. Your health care provider or dietician can help you set up a meal plan that is just right for you. It will have meals and snacks that you like and that are healthy. It will also include foods that fit into your budget. Your meal plan will show you:

- ✓ When to eat
- ✓ What to eat
- ✓ How much to eat



- **Choose healthier foods when you go out to eat or buy food from the grocery store.**

Look at the nutrition labels on grocery store foods. Sometimes nutrition labels are posted in restaurants or on menus. When looking at the nutrition labels, try to choose foods that are low in:

- ✓ Total and trans fat
- ✓ Cholesterol
- ✓ Salt (sodium)
- ✓ Added sugar
- ✓ Calories

- **Set a date.**

Choose a date that you will start your meal plan. Make it soon! That way, you will get the benefits sooner. Don't wait for the "perfect" time.

- ✓ Tell other people. Tell your family, friends, and co-workers about your new meal plan.
- ✓ Don't keep unhealthy foods in your home. Instead, have foods around that are part of your plan.
- ✓ Think about why you want to change your eating habits. Tell this to a friend, or write it down.
- ✓ Take a look at the amount of food you eat. You may need to eat smaller portions at each meal.
- ✓ Find recipes that are easy. Use healthy foods that you like.
- ✓ Have a plan of what to do if you forget to follow your meal plan. Be patient with yourself. Keep up the effort.

Action Plan for Healthy Eating



Check off items from the list below that you will be able to change or improve. Or you can write in your own action items.

Eat a variety of foods each day.

- Eat whole grains such as brown rice and whole wheat bread.
- Add fresh vegetables to your meals such as carrot sticks or steamed broccoli.
- Instead of cakes and cookies, reach for fresh fruits as dessert.
- Eat different protein foods. Enjoy red beans, black beans, fish, and chicken with no skin.
- Try nonfat dairy foods such as: nonfat yogurt and skim milk.
- Try a new vegetable or one you haven't tasted recently.

Eat less fat.

- Broil, steam, or bake your foods instead of frying.
- Cut the fat off of meats.
- Take the skin off of chicken before cooking.
- Eat fewer fatty foods like butter, egg yolks, high-fat cheeses, and creamy sauces.
- When you do eat fat, choose healthier fats in small amounts (such as olives, olive oil, and nuts).



Cut down on salt.

- Take the salt shaker off the table.
- To add flavor, season food with spices, herbs, and lemon juice.
- Rinse off canned foods before you eat them to wash away the salt.

Eat more foods with fiber.

- Pick fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks.
- Choose foods like oatmeal, oranges, pears, carrots, kidney beans, lentils, and whole wheat bread.
- Eat garden salads, but go easy on the salad dressing.

Other

The good news is that:

You don't need to change all at once. Start out by creating a meal plan with your health care provider.

Little by little, you'll notice how you adapt to a new way of eating.

1. Are the items that you have chosen achievable? Yes No

2. What will you do to make these changes? _____

3. When will you make these changes? _____

