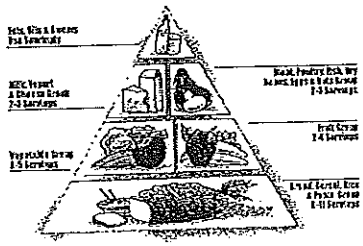
Developed by NC SNAC
March 2003



Portion Sizes and School-Age Children

Food Guide Pyramid Serving Sizes

The USDA Food Guide Pyramid provides serving size recommendations to guide people in selecting their daily intake.

	How many servings do you need each day?		
What counts as a serving?	Children ages 2 to 6, women, some older adults (1600 calories)	Older children, teen girls, active women, most men (2200 calories)	Teen boys and active men (2800 calories)
Grains Group (Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta) - especially whole grain • 1 slice of bread • about 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal • ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta	**6**	**9**	**11**
Vegetable Group • 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables • ½ cup of other vegetables - cooked or raw • ¾ cup of vegetable juice	**3**	**4**	**5**
Fruit Group • 1 medium apple, banana, orange, pear • ½ cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit • ¾ cup of fruit juice	**2**	**3**	**4**
Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group - preferably fat free or low fat • 1 cup of milk** or yogurt • 1½ ounces of natural cheese (such as Cheddar) • 2 ounces of processed cheese (such as American)	**2 or 3***	**2 or 3***	**2 or 3***
Meat and Beans Group (Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts) - preferably lean or low fat • 2-3 ounces of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish These count as 1 ounce of meat: • ½ cup of cooked dry beans or tofu • 2½ ounce soyburger • 1 egg • 2 tablespoons of peanut butter • 1/3 cup of nuts	**2, for a total of 5 ounces**	**2, for a total of 6 ounces**	**3, for a total of 7 ounces**

*Older children and teens ages 9 to 18 years and adults over age 50 need 3 servings daily. Others need 2 servings daily.

** This includes lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk products. Soy-based beverages with added calcium are an option for those who prefer a non-dairy source of calcium.

WebMD
Article Link: http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/17-best-foods-for-dieters

17 Best Foods for Dieters

Diet foods that taste great and can help you lose weight.

By Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD
WebMD Expert Column

Dieting can be downright difficult, especially if your diet includes foods you don't particularly enjoy. After all, how much cabbage soup can a person stand? The good news is that there are thousands of diet foods that are healthy, taste great, and can help you stick to your weight loss plan. Visit any grocery store to witness the explosion of lower-calorie, lower-fat, or portion-controlled options.

Here are just a few of the best foods for dieters:

1. Calorie-Controlled Snacks. Plenty of consumers are buying the 100-calorie (more or less) snack packs of everything from chips to cupcakes, but are they really the answer for weight loss?

Carolyn O'Neil, RD, author of *The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous*, likes calorie-controlled packages because they eliminate the chance for mindless overeating. "Foods packaged in 100-calorie packs do the work and calorie math for you so you can enjoy snacking on foods that need to be enjoyed in limited amounts," she says.

Quaker Mini Delights (90 calories) and Hostess 100-calorie cupcakes are among the more addictive options.

But Lona Sandon, MEd, RD, says that though these snacks can satisfy a sweet tooth, "many of them won't fill you up for very long, and can't replace a more nutritious snack."

Sandon suggests checking the ingredient list and nutrition facts on the package. "Look for products that offer some nutritious benefits, such as ones that contain less than 3 grams fat, less than 140 milligrams sodium, 15 grams or less sugar, and are made from whole grain with about 2 to 3 grams fiber and about 7 grams protein," says Sandon, assistant professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

2. Healthier Fast Food. Fast food restaurants don't have to spell disaster for dieters. Try Quiznos' Flatbread Sammies without cheese or dressing (all less than 250 calories,except the Italiano) or a small Honey Bourbon Chicken sub (275 calories); Taco Bell's Fresco-style items (less than 180 calories); McDonald's Southwest salad with grilled chicken (290 calories without dressing); or any of Subway's subs with 6 grams of fat or less (230-380 calories).

3. Low-Fat and Fat-Free Dairy Products. Milk, yogurt (solid, frozen, and drinkable), cheese, sour cream, and cream cheese are available in lower-fat varieties that offer both healthy nutrients and great taste. Laughing Cow light cheese has only 35 calories per individually wrapped wedge, and Yoplait Fiber One

nonfat yogurt combines yogurt crunchy cereal for a fiber boost and only 50-80 calories per 4 oz. cup.

Fat-free half-and-half is a suitable substitute for heavy cream with a fraction of the calories. And lower-fat and fat-free cream cheese and sour cream can easily pitch-hit for their fattier counterparts, particularly in recipes.

"You can trim calories effortlessly if you use low-fat and lighter products and if the product is mixed in with other ingredients, no one will ever notice," says Elaine Magee, MPH, RD, and the "Recipe Doctor" for WebMD and a WebMD blogger.

continued...

4. **Rotisserie Chicken.** It's no wonder that nearly every grocery store sells rotisserie chickens. You can serve one as is, shred it to use for tacos, pasta dishes, or casseroles, or chop it for an entree salad. You can even have it for dinner one night, then debone it and freeze the leftover meat for a quick meal later in the week.

5. **Diet-Friendly Desserts.** Lower-calorie and portion-controlled sweets mean that desserts can be part of any weight loss diet. Dieters who crave ice cream love Skinny Cow ice cream cones (150 calories), Edy's Slow-Churned ice cream bars (150 calories), and Fudgsicles (100 calories). Cookie lovers can enjoy Hershey's 100-calorie wafer bars, Teddy Grahams, graham crackers, Fig Newtons, vanilla wafers, or gingersnaps. On the road, try chewing on a piece of sugarless gum or suck on a piece of hard candy to satisfy your sweet tooth without sabotaging your diet.

. **Flavored Mustards and Vinegars** add sizzle to foods, with few calories. Try honey, tarragon, ginger, garlic, wasabi, or Dijon mustards, or balsamic, wine, herb, cider, fruit-flavored or, sherry vinegars. Use them in place of oil, mayonnaise, or butter in recipes.

7. **Light Salad Dressings:** Nearly half of the salad dressings you'll see on your grocer's shelves are reduced in calories and/or fat. Use Wish-Bone salad spritzers to lightly mist your salads, or try one of the many light or nonfat salad dressings. Another option is to make your own lower-calorie dressing, using more vinegar than oil, as well as a little water.

8. **Cooking Liquids:** Dieters have discovered that wine adds wonderful, low-calorie flavor to soups, stews, casseroles, and finishing sauces. Beef, fish, vegetable or chicken stocks come in fat-free varieties and add lots of flavor with very few calories. A secret ingredient to add sweetness to dishes is apple, orange,or pineapple juice concentrate.

9. **Frozen Entrees.** This is another grocery category that has grown tremendously, as consumers look for quick and easy meals. Sandon recommends the light varieties of frozen foods, such as Lean Cuisine, Healthy Choice, or Kashi. Read the label, and look for entrees with about 300-400 calories, less than 600 milligrams of sodium, at least 4-5 grams of fiber, and less than 5 gram fat.

10. **Beverages.** Good old-fashioned water still tops the list of healthy drinks, but when you want something more, try these virtually calorie-free options: flavored waters; powdered packets to mix into bottled water, like Crystal Light and Propel; green, herbal, or exotic teas; coffee; sparkling water; or diet soft drinks. Low-cal options include light beer (100 calories/12 oz.); wine spritzers (100 calories/5 oz.); Starbucks' skinny latte or mocha (90 calories/12 oz.); and the new V8 juice with fiber (60 calories and 5 grams fiber/8 oz.).

continued...

11. **Bars.** Whether you eat them as snacks, pre-workout, or as meal replacements, these bars are the

One bars.

12. Dips. Use these nutritious dips for your veggies, pretzels, or baked chips for only 5-50 calories per 2 tablespoons: hummus, salsas; fat-free black bean dip; mustards; and fat-free French onion dip.

13. Breakfast Cereals. Research shows that people who eat breakfast control their weight better than those who skip the morning meal. Start your day the healthy way with a bowl of whole-grain cereal (top it with fruit and low-fat dairy for extra nutrition). Look for cereals with fiber and protein and not too much sugar, like oatmeal (166 calories, 6 grams protein and 4 grams fiber), Kashi Go Lean (140 calories, 10 grams fiber, 13 grams protein), or Shredded Wheat (155 calories, 5.5 grams fiber, 5grams protein).

The Basics for Dieters

Convenience foods are great, but it's hard to beat the nutritional goodness of whole, natural foods. "Eating more natural, less processed foods is usually a more nutritious option, but both can fit into a healthy weight loss diet plan," says Sandon.

Here are the four types of food that are the foundation of any healthy diet:

14. Lean protein: Lean protein is important for dieters because it helps you feel satisfied. Excellent sources of low-fat protein include eggs; skinless poultry, edamame or other beans; nuts; shrimp; crab; fish fillets; lean cuts of beef (like filet mignon); and pork tenderloin. When choosing meat, go for lean cuts, trim off all visible fat, and control your portions.

According to the Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board, you can safely take in 10%-35% of your total calories from protein. So someone on an 1,800-calorie diet could eat up to 157 grams of protein -- the equivalent of 1 cup of skim milk, 1 cup cooked black beans, 2 ounces almonds, 1 cup low-fat yogurt, 2 eggs, 10 ounces of meat or fish, and 1 cup frozen yogurt.

15. Whole Grains. Most whole grains are a good source of fiber, which helps you fill you up. Try the whole-grain pasta blends or Uncle Ben's brown ready rice. Another dieter's favorite is fat-free popcorn -- crunchy, filling, and a whole grain!

16. Fruits. They satisfy your sweet tooth and are loaded with disease-fighting nutrients, yet are low in calories. Keep a stock of fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits on hand, to eat plain or toss into cereal, yogurt, waffles, or batters. Some convenient favorites include frozen berries, dried cranberries, and canned mandarin oranges. Whole fruits are best because of their fiber content, but if you prefer juice, be sure it's 100% juice, and enjoy it in small portions.

17. Veggies. Keep a supply of prewashed mixed greens, shredded carrots, steamed beets, and shredded broccoli slaw on hand for quick and nutritious salads. Roast sweet potatoes for a side dish that needs no topping other than a little salt and pepper. If fresh vegetables tend to become science experiments in your refrigerator, try Birdseye Steamfresh frozen vegetables. Canned vegetables are another option; just rinse thoroughly to reduce sodium. For your lunchbox or a snack, try the convenient packs of assorted veggie sticks with low-fat dip.

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Free Tool to Track Your Weight Loss Progress
Is It OK to Take a Day Off From Dieting?

SOURCES:
Lona Sandon, MEd, RD, assistant professor, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.
Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD, author, *The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous.*
Elaine Magee, MPH, RD, author, Healthy Recipe Doctor, WebMD.

Edited on July 18, 2011

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Healthy Eating

Healthy Eating Help Guide

Easy Tips for Planning a Healthy Diet & Sticking to It

Healthy eating is not about strict nutrition philosophies, staying unrealistically thin, or depriving yourself of the foods you love. Rather, it's about feeling great, having more energy, stabilizing your mood, and keeping yourself as healthy as possible– all of which can be achieved by learning some nutrition basics and using them in a way that works for you. You can expand your range of healthy food choices and learn how to plan ahead to create and maintain a tasty, healthy diet.

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Healthy eating tip 1: Set yourself up for success

To set yourself up for success, think about planning a healthy diet as a number of small, manageable steps rather than one big drastic change. If you approach the changes gradually and with commitment, you will have a healthy diet sooner than you think.

- **Simplify.** Instead of being overly concerned with counting calories or measuring portion sizes, think of your diet in terms of color, variety, and freshness. This way it should be easier to make healthy choices. Focus on finding foods you love and easy recipes that incorporate a few fresh ingredients. Gradually, your diet will become healthier and more delicious.
- **Start slow and make changes to your eating habits over time.** Trying to make your diet healthy overnight isn't realistic or smart. Changing everything at once usually leads to cheating or giving up on your new eating plan. Make small steps, like adding a salad (full of different color vegetables) to your diet once a day or switching from butter to olive oil when cooking. As your small changes become habit, you can continue to add more healthy choices to your diet.
- **Every change you make to improve your diet matters.** You don't have to be perfect and you don't have to completely eliminate foods you enjoy to have a healthy diet. The long term goal is to feel good, have more energy, and reduce the risk of cancer and disease. Don't let your missteps derail you—every healthy food choice you make counts.

Think of water and exercise as food groups in your diet.

Water. Water helps flush our systems of waste products and toxins, yet many people go through life dehydrated—causing tiredness, low energy, and headaches. It's common to mistake thirst for hunger, so staying well hydrated will also help you make healthier food choices.

Exercise. Find something active that you like to do and add it to your day, just like you would add healthy greens, blueberries, or salmon. The benefits of lifelong exercise are abundant and regular exercise may even motivate you to make healthy food choices a habit.

Healthy eating tip 2: Moderation is key

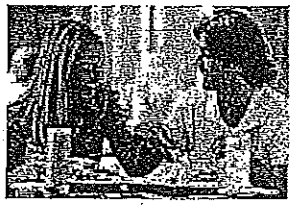
People often think of healthy eating as an all or nothing proposition, but a key foundation for any healthy diet is moderation. But what is moderation? How much is a moderate amount? That really depends on you and your overall eating habits. The goal of healthy eating is to develop a diet that you can maintain for life, not just a few weeks or months, or until you've hit your ideal weight. So try to think of moderation in terms of balance. Despite what certain fad diets would have you believe, we all need a balance of carbohydrates, protein, fat, fiber, vitamins, and minerals to sustain a healthy body.

For most of us, moderation or balance means eating less than we do now. More specifically, it means eating far less of the unhealthy stuff (unrefined sugar, saturated fat, for example) and more of the healthy (such as fresh fruit and vegetables). But it doesn't mean eliminating the foods you love.

Eating bacon for breakfast once a week, for example, could be considered moderation if you follow it with a healthy lunch and dinner–but not if you follow it with a box of donuts and a sausage pizza. If you eat 100 calories of chocolate one afternoon, balance it out by deducting 100 calories from your evening meal. If you're still hungry, fill up with an extra serving of fresh vegetables.

- **Try not to think of certain foods as "off-limits."** When you ban certain foods or food groups, it is natural to want those foods more, and then feel like a failure if you give in to temptation. If you are drawn towards sweet, salty, or unhealthy foods, start by reducing portion sizes and not eating them as often. Later you may find yourself craving them less or thinking of them as only occasional indulgences.
- **Think smaller portions.** Serving sizes have ballooned recently, particularly in restaurants. When dining out, choose a starter instead of an entree, split a dish with a friend, and don't order supersized anything. At home, use smaller plates, think about serving sizes in realistic terms, and start small. If you don't feel satisfied at the end of a meal, try adding more leafy green vegetables or rounding off the meal with fresh fruit. Visual cues can help with portion sizes–your serving of meat, fish, or chicken should be the size of a deck of cards, a slice of bread should be the size of a CD case, and half a cup of mashed potato, rice, or pasta is about the size of a traditional light bulb.

Healthy eating tip 3: It's not just what you eat, it's how you eat



Healthy eating is about more than the food on your plate—it is also about how you *think* about food. Healthy eating habits can be learned and it is important to slow down and think about food as nourishment rather than just something to gulp down in between meetings or on the way to pick up the kids.

- **Eat with others whenever possible.** Eating with other people has numerous social and emotional benefits—particularly for children—and allows you to model healthy eating habits. Eating in front of the TV or computer often leads to mindless overeating.
- **Take time to chew your food and enjoy mealtimes.** Chew your food slowly, savoring every bite. We tend to rush though our meals, forgetting to actually taste the flavors and feel the textures of our food. Reconnect with the joy of eating.
- **Listen to your body.** Ask yourself if you are really hungry, or have a glass of water to see if you are thirsty instead of hungry. During a meal, stop eating before you feel full. It actually takes a few minutes for your brain to tell your body that it has had enough food, so eat slowly.
- **Eat breakfast, and eat smaller meals throughout the day.** A healthy breakfast can jumpstart your metabolism, and eating small, healthy meals throughout the day (rather than the standard three large meals) keeps your energy up and your metabolism going.
- **Avoid eating at night.** Try to eat dinner earlier in the day and then fast for 14-16 hours until breakfast the next morning. Early studies suggest that this simple dietary adjustment—eating only when you're most active and giving your digestive system a long break each day—may help to regulate weight. After-dinner snacks tend to be high in fat and calories so are best avoided, anyway.

Healthy eating tip 4: Fill up on colorful fruits and vegetables

Fruits and vegetables are the foundation of a healthy diet. They are low in calories and nutrient dense, which means they are packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber.

Try to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables every day and with every meal—the brighter the better. Colorful, deeply colored fruits and vegetables contain higher concentrations of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants—and different colors provide different benefits, so eat a variety. Aim for a minimum of five portions each day.

Some great choices include:

- **Greens.** Branch out beyond bright and dark green lettuce. Kale, mustard greens, broccoli, and Chinese cabbage are just a few of the options—all packed with calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, zinc, and vitamins A, C, E, and K.
- **Sweet vegetables.** Naturally sweet vegetables—such as corn, carrots, beets, sweet potatoes, yams, onions, and squash—add healthy sweetness to your meals and reduce your cravings for other sweets.
- **Fruit.** Fruit is a tasty, satisfying way to fill up on fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants. Berries are cancer-fighting, apples provide fiber, oranges and mangos offer vitamin C, and so on.

The importance of getting vitamins from food—not pills

The antioxidants and other nutrients in fruits and vegetables help protect against certain types of cancer and other diseases. And while advertisements abound for supplements promising to deliver the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables in pill or powder form, research suggests that it's just not the same.

A daily regimen of nutritional supplements is not going to have the same impact of eating right. That's because the benefits of fruits and vegetables don't come from a single vitamin or an isolated antioxidant.

The health benefits of fruits and vegetables come from numerous vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals working together synergistically. They can't be broken down into the sum of their parts or replicated in pill form.

Healthy eating tip 5: Eat more healthy carbs and whole grains

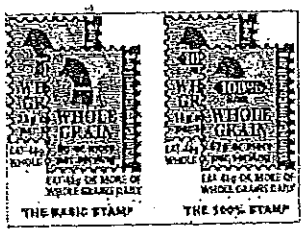
Choose healthy carbohydrates and fiber sources, especially whole grains, for long lasting energy. In addition to being delicious and satisfying, whole grains are rich in phytochemicals and antioxidants, which help to protect against coronary heart disease, certain cancers, and diabetes. Studies have shown people who eat more whole grains tend to have a healthier heart.

A quick definition of healthy carbs and unhealthy carbs

Healthy carbs (sometimes known as good carbs) include whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Healthy carbs are digested slowly, helping you feel full longer and keeping blood sugar and insulin levels stable.

Unhealthy carbs (or bad carbs) are foods such as white flour, refined sugar, and white rice that have been stripped of all bran, fiber, and nutrients. Unhealthy carbs digest quickly and cause spikes in blood sugar levels and energy.

Tips for eating more healthy carbs



- **Include a variety of whole grains in your healthy diet,** including whole wheat, brown rice, millet, quinoa, and barley. Experiment with different grains to find your favorites.
- **Make sure you're really getting whole grains.** Be aware that the words stone-ground, multi-grain, 100% wheat, or bran can be deceptive. Look for the words "whole grain" or "100% whole wheat" at the beginning of the ingredient list. In the U.S., Canada, and some other countries, check for the Whole Grain Stamps that distinguish between partial whole grain and 100% whole grain.
- **Try mixing grains as a first step to switching to whole grains.** If whole grains like brown rice and whole wheat pasta don't sound good at first, start by mixing what you normally use with the whole grains. You can gradually increase the whole grain to 100%.

Avoid: Refined foods such as breads, pastas, and breakfast cereals that are not whole grain.

Healthy eating tip 6: Enjoy healthy fats & avoid unhealthy fats

Good sources of healthy fat are needed to nourish your brain, heart, and cells, as well as your hair, skin, and nails. Foods rich in certain omega-3 fats called EPA and DHA are particularly important and can reduce cardiovascular disease, improve your mood, and help prevent dementia.

Add to your healthy diet:

- **Monounsaturated fats,** from plant oils like canola oil, peanut oil, and olive oil, as well as avocados, nuts (like almonds, hazelnuts, and pecans), and seeds (such as pumpkin, sesame).
- **Polyunsaturated fats, including Omega-3** and **Omega-6** fatty acids, found in fatty fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, sardines, and some cold water fish oil supplements. Other sources of polyunsaturated fats are unheated sunflower, corn, soybean, flaxseed oils, and walnuts.

Reduce or eliminate from your diet:

- **Saturated fats,** found primarily in animal sources including red meat and whole milk dairy products.
- **Trans fats,** found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, and other processed foods made with partially

hydrogenated vegetable oils.

Healthy eating tip 7: Put protein in perspective

Protein gives us the energy to get up and go—and keep going. Protein in food is broken down into the 20 amino acids that are the body's basic building blocks for growth and energy, and essential for maintaining cells, tissues, and organs. A lack of protein in our diet can slow growth, reduce muscle mass, lower immunity, and weaken the heart and respiratory system. Protein is particularly important for children, whose bodies are growing and changing daily.

Here are some guidelines for including protein in your healthy diet:

Try different types of protein. Whether or not you are a vegetarian, trying different protein sources—such as beans, nuts, seeds, peas, tofu, and soy products—will open up new options for healthy mealtimes.

- Beans: Black beans, navy beans, garbanzos, and lentils are good options.
- Nuts: Almonds, walnuts, pistachios, and pecans are great choices.
- Soy products: Try tofu, soy milk, tempeh, and veggie burgers for a change.
- Avoid salted or sugary nuts and refried beans.

Downsize your portions of protein. Many people in the West eat too much protein. Try to move away from protein being the center of your meal. Focus on equal servings of protein, whole grains, and vegetables.

Focus on quality sources of protein, like fresh fish, chicken or turkey, tofu, eggs, beans, or nuts. When you are having meat, chicken, or turkey, buy meat that is free of hormones and antibiotics.

Healthy eating tip 8: Add calcium for strong bones

Calcium is one of the key nutrients that your body needs in order to stay strong and healthy. It is an essential building block for lifelong bone health in both men and women, as well as many other important functions.

You and your bones will benefit from eating plenty of calcium-rich foods, limiting foods that deplete your body's calcium stores, and getting your daily dose of magnesium and vitamins D and K—nutrients that help calcium do its job.

Recommended calcium levels are 1000 mg per day, 1200 mg if you are over 50 years old. Take a vitamin D and calcium supplement if you don't get enough of these nutrients from your diet.

Good sources of calcium include:

- **Dairy:** Dairy products are rich in calcium in a form that is easily digested and absorbed by the body. Sources include milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- **Vegetables and greens:** Many vegetables, especially leafy green ones, are rich sources of calcium. Try turnip greens, mustard greens, collard greens, kale, romaine lettuce, celery, broccoli, fennel, cabbage, summer squash, green beans, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, and crimini mushrooms.
- **Beans:** For another rich source of calcium, try black beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, white beans, black-eyed peas, or baked beans.

Healthy eating tip 9: Limit sugar and salt

If you succeed in planning your diet around fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and good fats, you may find yourself naturally cutting back on foods that can get in the way of your healthy diet—sugar and salt.

Sugar

Sugar causes energy ups and downs and can add to health and weight problems. Unfortunately, reducing the amount of candy, cakes, and desserts we eat is only part of the solution. Often you may not even be aware of the amount of sugar you're consuming each day. Large amounts of added sugar can be hidden in foods such as bread, canned soups and vegetables, pasta sauce, margarine, instant mashed potatoes, frozen dinners, fast food, soy sauce, and ketchup. Here are some tips:

- **Avoid sugary drinks.** One 12-oz soda has about 10 teaspoons of sugar in it, more than the daily recommended limit! Try sparkling water with lemon or a splash of fruit juice.

- **Eat naturally sweet food** such as fruit, peppers, or natural peanut butter to satisfy your sweet tooth.

How sugar is hidden on food labels

Check food labels carefully. Sugar is often disguised using terms such as:

- cane sugar or maple syrup
- corn sweetener or corn syrup
- honey or molasses
- brown rice syrup
- crystallized or evaporated cane juice
- fruit juice concentrates, such as apple or pear
- maltodextrin (or dextrin)
- Dextrose, Fructose, Glucose, Maltose, or Sucrose

Salt

Most of us consume too much salt in our diets. Eating too much salt can cause high blood pressure and lead to other health problems. Try to limit sodium intake to 1,500 to 2,300 mg per day, the equivalent of one teaspoon of salt.

- **Avoid processed or pre-packaged foods.** Processed foods like canned soups or frozen dinners contain hidden sodium that quickly surpasses the recommended limit.
- **Be careful when eating out.** Most restaurant and fast food meals are loaded with sodium.
- **Opt for fresh or frozen vegetables** instead of canned vegetables.
- **Cut back on salty snacks** such as potato chips, nuts, and pretzels.
- **Choose low-salt or reduced-sodium products.**
- **Try slowly reducing the salt in your diet** to give your taste buds time to adjust.

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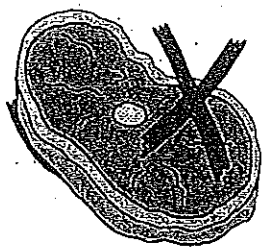
Authors: Maya W. Paul, Melinda Smith, M.A. and Jeanne Segal Ph. D. Last updated: December 2012.

EAT THIS, NOT THAT

Small changes in what you eat can help you control your blood sugar, lose weight, and feel better.

Below is a list of foods many of us eat. The "Eat this..." foods have less sugar, salt, bad fats, or cholesterol. Choosing more "Eat this..." foods when you shop and when you eat can help you control your diabetes.



Instead of this		Eat this
Eggs	→	Egg whites
White bread	→	Wheat, whole-grain or multigrain bread
Whole milk, 2% milk	→	Fat-free milk, 1% milk
Butter, margarine, lard	→	Vegetable, canola, or olive oil; spray oils
Cheese	→	Low-fat or skim cheese
Flour (or fried) tortillas	→	Corn or whole-wheat tortillas
Refried beans	→	Whole beans, natural beans
Canned fruit in heavy/light syrup	→	Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit in its own juice
Canned vegetables	→	Fresh or frozen vegetables with no sauce
Cookies, cake, chips, ice cream	→	Fresh fruit, graham or animal crackers, angel food or sponge cake with fruit, low-fat yogurt
Fast food (hamburgers, fries)	→	Salads at fast-food restaurants are often healthy, good-tasting choices
Soda and other drinks with sugar	→	Water, diet soda, seltzer
Processed meats (hot dogs, Spam, bologna, salami)	→	Low-salt turkey, grilled chicken, low-fat (lean) meat, homemade tuna salad

Read food labels when you shop. Look for foods low in sugar, salt, saturated fat (the bad fat), and cholesterol. And, always remember to watch your portion sizes when you eat.

Eating is a habit, and changing habits takes time. Start by changing one or two foods. Then change another food every week or so. Eating new foods and trying new ways of cooking can be fun. Enjoy!

Low-Calorie, Lower-Fat Alternative Foods

These low-calorie alternatives provide new ideas for old favorites. When making a food choice, remember to consider vitamins and minerals. Some foods provide most of their calories from sugar and fat but give you few, if any, vitamins and minerals.

This guide is not meant to be an exhaustive list. We stress reading labels to find out just how many calories are in the specific products you decide to buy.

Higher-Fat Foods	Lower-Fat Foods
Dairy Products	
☐ Evaporated whole milk	☐ Evaporated fat-free (skim) or reduced-fat (2%) milk
☐ Whole milk	☐ Low-fat (1%), reduced-fat (2%), or fat-free (skim) milk
☐ Ice cream	☐ Sorbet, sherbet, low fat or fat-free frozen yogurt, or ice
☐ Whipping cream	☐ Imitation whipped cream (made with fat-free [skim] milk)
☐ Sour cream	☐ Plain low-fat yogurt
☐ Cream cheese	☐ Neufchatel or "light" cream cheese or fat-free cream cheese
☐ Cheese (cheddar, Swiss, jack)	☐ Reduced-calorie cheese, low-calorie processed cheeses, etc.
	☐ Fat-free cheese
☐ American cheese	☐ Fat-free American cheese or other types of fat-free cheeses
☐ Regular (4%) cottage cheese	☐ Low-fat (1%) or reduced-fat (2%) cottage cheese
☐ Whole milk mozzarella cheese	☐ Part-skim milk, low-moisture mozzarella cheese
☐ Whole milk ricotta cheese	☐ Part-skim milk ricotta cheese
☐ Coffee cream (1/2 and 1/2) or nondairy creamer (liquid, powder)	☐ Low-fat (1%) or reduced-fat (2%) milk or non-fat dry milk powder
Cereals, Grains, and Pastas	
☐ Ramen noodles	☐ Rice or noodles (spaghetti, macaroni, etc.)
☐ Pasta with white sauce (alfredo)	☐ Pasta with red sauce (marinara)
☐ Pasta with cheese sauce	☐ Pasta with vegetables (primavera)
☐ Granola	☐ Bran flakes, crispy rice, etc.
	☐ Cooked grits or oatmeal
	☐ Reduced-fat granola
Meat, Fish and Poultry	
☐ Coldcuts or lunch meats (bologna, salami, liverwurst, etc.)	☐ Low-fat coldcuts (95 to 97% fat-free lunch meats, low-fat pressed meats)
☐ Hot dogs (regular)	☐ Lower-fat hot dogs
☐ Bacon or sausage	☐ Canadian bacon or lean ham
☐ Regular ground beef	☐ Extra lean ground beef such as ground round or ground turkey (read labels)
☐ Chicken or turkey with skin, duck, or goose	☐ Chicken or turkey without skin (white meat)
☐ Oil-packed tuna	☐ Water-packed tuna (rinse to reduce sodium content)
☐ Beef (chuck, rib, brisket)	☐ Beef (round, loin) (trimmed of external fat) (choose select

- ☐ Pork (spareribs, untrimmed loin)
- ☐ Frozen breaded fish or fried fish (homemade or commercial)
- ☐ Whole eggs
- ☐ Frozen TV dinners (containing more than 13 grams of fat per serving)
- ☐ Chorizo sausage
- ☐ Pork tenderloin or trimmed, lean smoked ham
- ☐ Fish or shellfish, unbreaded (fresh, frozen, canned in water)
- ☐ Egg whites or egg substitutes
- ☐ Frozen TV dinners (containing less than 13 grams of fat per serving and lower in sodium)
- ☐ Turkey sausage, drained well (read label)
- ☐ Vegetarian sausage (made with tofu)

Baked Goods

- ☐ Croissants, brioches, etc.
- ☐ Donuts, sweet rolls, muffins, scones, or pastries
- ☐ Party crackers
- ☐ Cake (pound, chocolate, yellow)
- ☐ Cookies
- ☐ Hard french rolls or soft brown 'n serve rolls
- ☐ English muffins, bagels, reduced-fat or fat-free muffins or scones
- ☐ Low-fat crackers (choose lower in sodium)
- ☐ Saltine or soda crackers (choose lower in sodium)
- ☐ Cake (angel food, white, gingerbread)
- ☐ Reduced-fat or fat-free cookies (graham crackers, ginger snaps, fig bars) (compare calorie level)

Snacks and Sweets

- ☐ Nuts
- ☐ Ice cream, e.g., cones or bars
- ☐ Custards or puddings (made with whole milk)
- ☐ Popcorn (air-popped or light microwave), fruits, vegetables
- ☐ Frozen yogurt, frozen fruit or chocolate pudding bars
- ☐ Puddings (made with skim milk)

Fats, Oils, and Salad Dressings

- ☐ Regular margarine or butter
- ☐ Regular mayonnaise
- ☐ Regular salad dressings
- ☐ Butter or margarine on toast or bread
- ☐ Oils, shortening, or lard
- ☐ Light spread margarines, diet margarine, or whipped butter, tub or squeeze bottle
- ☐ Light or diet mayonnaise or mustard
- ☐ Reduced-calorie or fat-free salad dressings, lemon juice, or plain, herb flavored, or wine vinegar
- ☐ Jelly, jam, or honey on bread or toast
- ☐ Nonstick cooking spray for stir-frying or sautéing
- ☐ As a substitute for oil or butter, use applesauce or prune puree in baked goods

Miscellaneous

- ☐ Canned cream soups
- ☐ Canned beans and franks
- ☐ Gravy (homemade with fat and/or milk)
- ☐ Fudge sauce
- ☐ Avocado on sandwiches
- ☐ Guacamole dip or refried beans with lard
- ☐ Canned broth-based soups
- ☐ Canned baked beans in tomato sauce
- ☐ Gravy mixes made with water or homemade with the fat skimmed off and fat-free milk
- ☐ Chocolate syrup
- ☐ Cucumber slices or lettuce leaves
- ☐ Salsa

Back

Sample Grocery List

MEAT/POULTRY
- ☐ 1 large bag of frozen, skinless chicken breasts (found in the freezer section)
- ☐ 1 package low-fat sliced chicken or turkey deli meat
- ☐ 24 ounces eye of round beef steaks
- ☐ 1 package turkey burgers
- ☐ ½ pound turkey sausage
- ☐ 1 package turkey bacon
- ☐ 1 pound ground turkey
- ☐ 1 New York choice lean sirloin steak

GRAINS
- ☐ 1 container old-fashioned oatmeal
- ☐ 1 package of whole-wheat tortillas
- ☐ 1 box low-fat whole-wheat frozen waffles
- ☐ 1 package whole-wheat English muffins
- ☐ 1 package pita bread
- ☐ 1 loaf whole-wheat bread
- ☐ 1 package whole-wheat hamburger buns
- ☐ 1 box whole-wheat spaghetti
- ☐ Whole-wheat flour

VEGETABLES
- ☐ 1 stalk celery
- ☐ 1 portion water chestnuts
- ☐ 1 portion scallions
- ☐ 1 jar dill pickles
- ☐ 2 bags spinach leaves
- ☐ 3 fresh tomatoes
- ☐ 1 cucumber
- ☐ 2 bags frozen carrots
- ☐ 1 bag Romaine lettuce
- ☐ 2 bags frozen broccoli
- ☐ 2 sweet potatoes
- ☐ 1 potato
- ☐ 1 head lettuce
- ☐ 1 onion
- ☐ 1 can whole tomatoes
- ☐ 1 bag fresh mushrooms
- ☐ 2 cans kidney beans

FISH

- ☐ 2 large cans tuna
- ☐ 1 salmon filet

TOPPINGS/CONDIMENTS

- ☐ Sugar-free syrup
- ☐ Fresh lime juice
- ☐ Light teriyaki marinade
- ☐ Almonds/slivered almonds
- ☐ 1 jar all-natural peanut butter
- ☐ Green enchilada sauce
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Soy sauce
- ☐ Lime juice
- ☐ Honey
- ☐ 1 jar applesauce
- ☐ 1 package brown sugar
- ☐ Baking powder
- ☐ Lemon juice
- ☐ 1 jar mixed nuts
- ☐ Ketchup
- ☐ Dijon mustard

SPICES
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ Pepper
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Paprika
- ☐ Garlic powder
- ☐ 6 cloves of fresh garlic
- ☐ Cumin
- ☐ Parsley
- ☐ Dill weed
- ☐ Basil
- ☐ Oregano
- ☐ Cilantro
- ☐ Chili flakes
- ☐ Ginger
- ☐ Chili powder

OILS/DRESSINGS
- ☐ Extra virgin olive oil
- ☐ Low-fat balsamic vinaigrette
- ☐ Low-fat Italian vinaigrette
- ☐ Low-fat mayo
- ☐ Fat-free Caesar dressing
- ☐ Cooking spray

FRUIT
- ☐ Blueberries
- ☐ Raspberries
- ☐ Apples
- ☐ Bananas
- ☐ Peaches
- ☐ Strawberries
- ☐ Pears
- ☐ Grapes

DAIRY
- ☐ 1 container grated Parmesan cheese (reduced-fat)
- ☐ 1 package low-fat or fat-free cheese slices
- ☐ 1 package shredded low-fat or fat-free American cheese
- ☐ 1 package shredded low-fat or fat-free Mozzarella cheese
- ☐ 1 package low-fat or fat-free string cheese
- ☐ 1 container fat-free sour cream
- ☐ 1 gallon skim milk
- ☐ 2 containers low-fat cottage cheese
- ☐ 2 cartons eggs
- ☐ Low-fat yogurt
- ☐ 1 container fat-free onion chive cream cheese

Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition

We Can! Food Comparison Chart

How can you and your family eat healthier? See below for ideas on how healthier choices can save you calories and money.

LUNCH

Typical Fast Food Lunch	Cost*	Calories	Typical Brown Bag Lunch	Cost*	Calories
Combo Meal: ¼ pound hamburger with cheese (with medium French fries and large soda)	$5.39	510	Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread with mustard, lettuce and tomato	$1.09	200
Soda, large (32 ounces)	---	310	Water, small bottle (16.9 ounces)	$0.99	0
French fries, large (super sized from medium size)	$0.40	570	Apple, medium	$0.46	70
Chocolate chip cookies, 1 package	$1.00	270	Graham crackers, 1 large square	$0.28	140
			Low-fat yogurt, 1 cup	$0.79	120
Total:	**$6.79**	**1,660**		**$3.61**	**530**

SNACK

Typical Snack	Cost*	Calories	Healthier Snack	Cost*	Calories
Chips, 3 ounce bag	$0.99	465	Apple, medium	$0.46	70
Soda, regular, 21 ounces	$1.25	250	Water, small bottle (16.9 ounces)	$0.99	0
Total:	**$2.24**	**715**		**$1.45**	**70**

*Costs may vary by region and season.

For more information about *We Can!* visit http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov or call 1-866-35-WECAN

We Can! is an effort of the the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) in collaboration with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI).

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute • Obesity Education Initiative

Healthy Weight Home | BMI Calculator | Menu Planner | Portion Distortion | WeCan!

Tipsheet

Healthy Eating Starts with Healthy Food Shopping

The new National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Obesity Guidelines say that you can reduce the time you spend cooking healthy by using a shopping list and keeping a well-stocked kitchen. Read the labels as you shop and pay attention to serving size and servings per container. Compare the total calories in similar products and choose the lowest calorie ones.

So, shop for quick low fat food items and fill your kitchen cupboards with a supply of lower calorie basics like the following:

- Fat free or low fat milk, yogurt, cheese, and cottage cheese
- Light or diet margarine
- Eggs/Egg substitutes

- Sandwich breads, bagels, pita bread, English muffins
- Soft corn tortillas, low fat flour tortillas
- Low fat, low sodium crackers
- Plain cereal, dry or cooked
- Rice, pasta

- White meat chicken or turkey (remove skin)
- Fish and shellfish (not battered)
- Beef: round, sirloin, chuck arm, loin and extra lean ground beef
- Pork: leg, shoulder, tenderloin
- Dry beans and peas

- Fresh, frozen, canned fruits in light syrup or juice
- Fresh, frozen, or no salt added canned vegetables

- Low fat or nonfat salad dressings
- Mustard and catsup
- Jam, jelly, or honey
- Herbs and spices
- Salsa

Tips for Using the Food Label

Most packaged foods have a Nutrition Facts label. Here are some tips for reading the label and making smart food choices:

Check servings and calories. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually eating.

> **tip: If you eat 2 servings of a food, you will consume double the calories and double the % Daily Value (% DV) of the nutrients listed on the Nutrition Facts label.**

Make your calories count. Look at the calories on the label and compare them with the nutrients they offer.

> **tip: When you look at a food's nutrition label, first check the calories, and then check the nutrients to decide whether the food is worth eating.**

Eat less sugar. Foods with added sugars may provide calories, but few essential nutrients. So, look for foods and beverages low in added sugars. Read the ingredient list, and make sure added sugars are not one of the first few ingredients.

> **tip: Names for added sugars (caloric sweeteners) include sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, and fructose.**

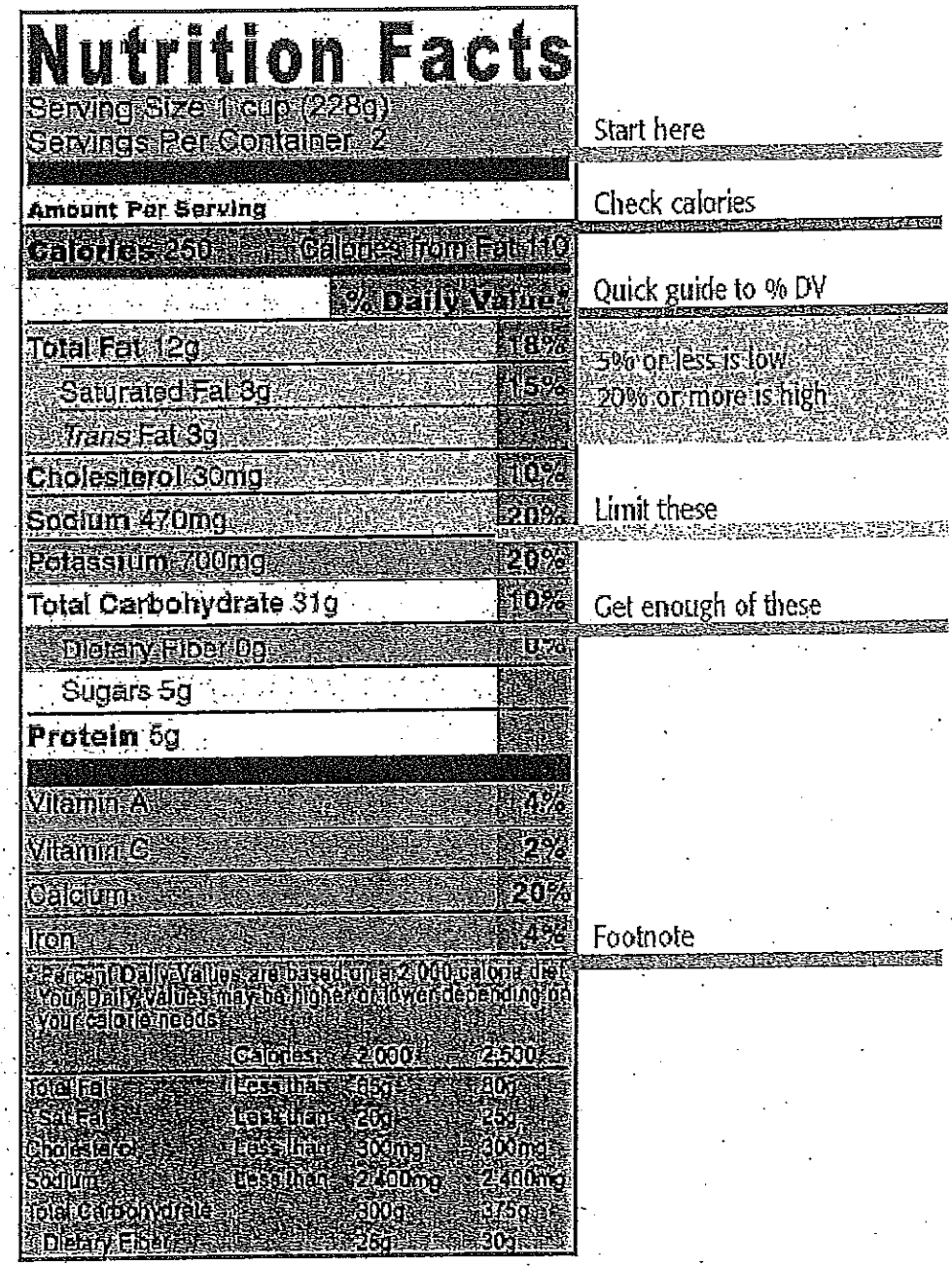
Know your fats. Look for foods low in saturated and *trans* fats, and cholesterol, to help reduce the risk of heart disease. Most of the fats you eat should be polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, such as those in fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.

> **tip: Fat should be in the range of 20% to 35% of the calories you eat.**

Reduce sodium (salt); increase potassium. Research shows that eating less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (about 1 tsp of salt) per day may reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Older adults tend to be salt-sensitive. If you are older adult or salt-sensitive, aim to eat no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day—the equivalent of about 3/4 teaspoon. To meet the daily potassium recommendation of at least 4,700 milligrams, consume fruits and vegetables, and fat-free and low-fat milk products that are sources of potassium including: sweet potatoes, beet greens, white potatoes, white beans, plain yogurt, prune juice, and bananas. These counteract some of sodium's effects on blood pressure.

tip: Most sodium you eat is likely to come from processed foods, not from the salt shaker. Read the Nutrition Facts label, and choose foods lower in sodium and higher in potassium.

Use the % Daily Value (% DV) column: 5% DV or less is low, and 20% DV or more is high.
Keep these low: saturated and *trans* fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
Get enough of these: potassium and fiber, vitamins A, C, and D, calcium, and iron.
Check the calories: 400 or more calories per serving of a single food item is high.



INSTRUCTOR REFERENCE

Shopping for Groceries

GETTING READY TO SHOP

- Plan your meals before heading to the store. Make a shopping list to reduce impulse purchases and to save money and time.
- Avoid shopping if you are hungry.
- Consider using store brands. They are usually less expensive than name brands, and the quality is generally comparable.

AT THE STORE: HEALTHY SHOPPING TIPS

- Read the Nutrition Facts on the food label.

Produce

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables to increase your daily intake of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- You need 2–4 servings of fruit daily and 3–5 servings of vegetables daily.

Meat

- Buy the leanest cuts of meat (extra lean, loin, and round) and trim off any visible fat before cooking.
- Select chicken without the skin.
- Use extra lean ground beef (90%–95% lean), sirloin steak, round steak, lean pork, and boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thighs, or chicken fingers.

Seafood

- Eat fish at least once a week.
- It is best to bake, boil, or broil your fish.
- Flavor your fish with a twist of fresh lemon or lime.

Health Matters: The Exercise and Nutrition Health Education Curriculum for People with Developmental Disabilities
by Beth Marks, Jasmina Sisirak, and Tamar Heller

Shopping for Groceries

Dairy

- Choose low-fat or skim milk, reduced-fat cheeses, and low-fat or nonfat yogurts.
- You need 2–4 servings of dairy products daily.
- Look for soy milk and soy-based alternatives for heart health.

Spices and Seasonings

- Get creative. Use seasonings like fresh or dried herbs, spices, and low-fat condiments that do not add fat or sodium to your foods.
- Use salsa, Dijon mustard, or spices like garlic, basil, thyme, or oregano to marinate your meats.

Salad Dressing

- Look for nonfat or light salad dressings to keep your total fat intake low.
- Dressings made with olive oil and canola oil offer the benefits of monounsaturated fats.
- Balsamic vinegar adds flavor to tossed greens and vegetables without the fat.

Canned Goods

- Avoid buying canned fruits and vegetables that you can buy fresh or frozen. Canned fruits and vegetables have more added sugar or sodium. The process of canning may destroy vitamins and minerals.
- Stock up on canned beans and chickpeas.

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Eating Fruits and Vegetables

BREAKFAST

- Drink a glass of juice.
- Add a banana or strawberries to your cereal.
- Have a bowl of fruit like melon or peaches.
- Top your pancakes with fruit instead of syrup.

LUNCH

- Eat a salad or have vegetable soup.
- Add a carrot or celery to your lunch.
- Eat a piece of fruit (e.g., apple, plum) or have unsweetened applesauce.
- Add lettuce and tomatoes to your sandwich.

SNACK

- Snack on grapes or raisins.
- Have a glass of juice.
- Eat raw vegetables like carrots.

DINNER

- Add vegetables to your main dish.
- Use fruits as a garnish with your main dish.
- Add steamed vegetables as a side dish.

DESSERT

- Add fresh fruit to a dessert.
- Top frozen yogurt with pineapple or papaya.
- Add chopped fruit or berries to cakes or cookies.
- Have a piece of fruit for dessert.

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What Foods Are in the Fruit Group?

Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

Key Consumer Message *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

Commonly eaten fruits

- Apples
- Apricots
- Bananas
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Kiwi fruit
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Papaya
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Prunes
- Raisins
- Tangerines

Berries

- strawberries
- blueberries
- raspberries

Melons

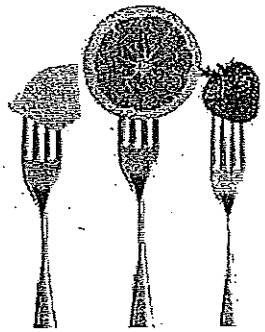
- cantaloupe
- honeydew
- watermelon

Mixed fruits

- fruit cocktail

100% Fruit juice

- orange
- apple
- grape
- grapefruit



Food Groups

How much fruit is needed daily?

The amount of fruit you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the chart.

Recommended amounts are shown in the table below.

		Daily recommendation*
Children	2-3 years old	1 cup**
	4-8 years old	1 to 1 ½ cups**
Girls	9-13 years old	1 ½ cups**
	14-18 years old	1 ½ cups**
Boys	9-13 years old	1 ½ cups**
	14-18 years old	2 cups**
Women	19-30 years old	2 cups**
	31-50 years old	1 ½ cups**
	51+ years old	1 ½ cups**
Men	19-30 years old	2 cups**
	31-50 years old	2 cups**
	51+ years old	2 cups**

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.
** Click here to see what counts as a cup of fruit.

Key Consumer Message: *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

Last Modified: June 04, 2011 11:12 AM

Food Groups

What counts as a cup of fruit?

In general, 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice, or ½ cup of dried fruit can be considered as 1 cup from the Fruit Group. The following specific amounts count as 1 cup of fruit (In some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 cup of fruit	Amount that counts as ½ cup of fruit
Apple	½ large (3.25" diameter)	
	1 small (2.5" diameter)	
	1 cup sliced or chopped, raw or cooked	½ cup sliced or chopped, raw or cooked
Applesauce	1 cup	1 snack container (4 oz)
Banana	1 cup sliced	1 small (less than 6" long)
	1 large (8" to 9" long)	
Cantaloupe	1 cup diced or melon balls	1 medium wedge (1/8 of a med. melon)
Grapes	1 cup whole or cut-up	
	32 seedless grapes	16 seedless grapes
Grapefruit	1 medium (4" diameter)	½ medium (4" diameter)
	1 cup sections	
Mixed fruit (fruit cocktail)	1 cup diced or sliced, raw or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Orange	1 large (3-1/16" diameter)	1 small (2-3/8" diameter)
	1 cup sections	
Orange, mandarin	1 cup canned, drained	
Peach	1 large (2 ¾" diameter)	1 small (2" diameter)
	1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
	2 halves, canned	
Pear	1 medium pear (2.5 per lb)	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
	1 cup sliced or diced, raw, cooked, or canned, drained	
Pineapple	1 cup chunks, sliced or crushed, raw, cooked or canned, drained	1 snack container (4 oz) drained = 3/8 cup
Plum	1 cup sliced raw or cooked	
	3 medium or 2 large plums	1 large plum
Strawberries	About 8 large berries	
	1 cup whole, halved, or sliced, fresh or frozen	½ cup whole, halved, or sliced
Watermelon	1 small wedge (1" thick)	6 melon balls

	1 cup diced or balls	
Dried fruit (raisins, prunes, apricots, etc.)	½ cup dried fruit is equivalent to 1 cup fruit: ½ cup raisins ½ cup prunes ½ cup dried apricots	¼ cup dried fruit is equivalent to ½ cup fruit 1 small box raisins (1.5 oz)
100% fruit juice (orange, apple, grape, grapefruit, etc.)	1 cup	½ cup

Key Consumer Message: *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

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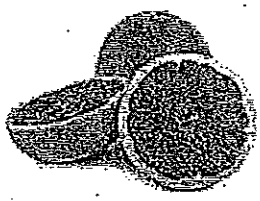
Why is it Important to Eat Fruit?

Eating fruit provides health benefits — people who eat more fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.

Health Benefits

- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- Eating a diet rich in some vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers.
- Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as some vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating vegetables and fruits rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- Eating foods such as fruits that are lower in calories per cup instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie intake.

Nutrients



- Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol.
- Fruits are sources of many essential nutrients that are under consumed, including potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate (folic acid).
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Fruit sources of potassium include bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, and orange juice.
- Dietary fiber from fruits, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as fruits help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. *Whole or cut-up fruits are sources of dietary fiber; fruit juices contain little or no fiber.*
- Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of all body tissues, helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy.

- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.

Key Consumer Message ***Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.***

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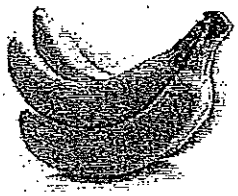
Tips to Help You Eat Fruits

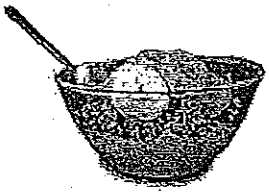
In General:

- Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate cut-up fruit to store for later.
- Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor.
- Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.
- Consider convenience when shopping. Try pre-cut packages of fruit (such as melon or pineapple chunks) for a healthy snack in seconds. Choose packaged fruits that do not have added sugars.



For the Best Nutritional Value:

- Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit rather than juice, for the benefits dietary fiber provides.
- Select fruits with more potassium often, such as bananas, prunes and prune juice, dried peaches and apricots, and orange juice.
- When choosing canned fruits, select fruit canned in 100% fruit juice or water rather than syrup.
- Vary your fruit choices. Fruits differ in nutrient content.



At Meals:

- At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas or peaches; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, mix fresh fruit with plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
- At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat, or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy and convenient.
- At dinner, add crushed pineapple to coleslaw, or include orange sections or grapes in a tossed salad.
- Make a Waldorf salad, with apples, celery, walnuts, and a low-calorie salad dressing.

- Try meat dishes that incorporate fruit, such as chicken with apricots or mangoes.
- Add fruit like pineapple or peaches to kabobs as part of a barbecue meal.
- For dessert, have baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad.

As Snacks:

- Cut-up fruit makes a great snack. Either cut them yourself, or buy pre-cut packages of fruit pieces like pineapples or melons. Or, try whole fresh berries or grapes.
- Dried fruits also make a great snack. They are easy to carry and store well. Because they are dried, ¼ cup is equivalent to ½ cup of other fruits.
- Keep a package of dried fruit in your desk or bag. Some fruits that are available dried include apricots, apples, pineapple, bananas, cherries, figs, dates, cranberries, blueberries, prunes (dried plums), and raisins (dried grapes).
- As a snack, spread peanut butter on apple slices or top plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt with berries or slices of kiwi fruit.
- Frozen juice bars (100% juice) make healthy alternatives to high-fat snacks.

Make Fruit More Appealing:

- Many fruits taste great with a dip or dressing. Try fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a dip for fruits like strawberries or melons.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit. Try bananas, peaches, strawberries, or other berries.
- Try unsweetened applesauce as a lower calorie substitute for some of the oil when baking cakes.
- Try different textures of fruits. For example, apples are crunchy, bananas are smooth and creamy, and oranges are juicy.
- For fresh fruit salads, mix apples, bananas, or pears with acidic fruits like oranges, pineapple, or lemon juice to keep them from turning brown.

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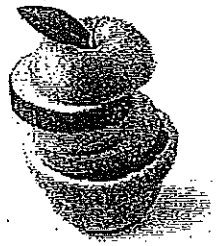
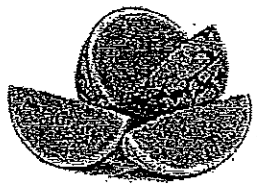
Fruit Tips for Children:



- Set a good example for children by eating fruit every day with meals or as snacks.
- Offer children a choice of fruits for lunch.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up fruits.
- While shopping, allow children to pick out a new fruit to try later at home.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with fruit slices.
- Top off a bowl of cereal with some berries. Or, make a smiley face with sliced bananas for eyes, raisins for a nose, and an orange slice for a mouth.
- Offer raisins or other dried fruits instead of candy.
- Make fruit kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, and berries.
- Pack a juice box (100% juice) in children's lunches instead of soda or other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Look for and choose fruit options, such as sliced apples, mixed fruit cup, or 100% fruit juice in fast food restaurants.
- Offer fruit pieces and 100% fruit juice to children. There is often little fruit in "fruit-flavored" beverages or chewy fruit snacks.

Keep It Safe:



- Rinse fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing.
- Keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

Key Consumer Message ***Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.***

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What Foods Are in the Vegetable Group?

Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a member of the Vegetable Group. Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

Vegetables are organized into 5 subgroups, based on their nutrient content.

Key Consumer Message *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

Commonly eaten vegetables in each subgroup

Dark Green Vegetables

- bok choy
- broccoli
- collard greens
- dark green leafy lettuce
- kale
- mesclun
- mustard greens
- romaine lettuce
- spinach
- turnip greens
- watercress

Starchy vegetables

- cassava
- corn
- fresh cowpeas, field peas, or black-eyed peas (not dry)
- green bananas
- green peas
- green lima beans
- plantains
- potatoes
- taro
- water chestnuts

Red & orange vegetables

- acorn squash
- butternut squash
- carrots
- hubbard squash
- pumpkin
- red peppers
- sweet potatoes
- tomatoes
- tomato juice

Beans and peas*

- black beans
- black-eyed peas (mature, dry)
- garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- kidney beans
- lentils
- navy beans
- pinto beans
- soy beans
- split peas
- white beans

Other vegetables

- artichokes
- asparagus
- avocado
- bean sprouts
- beets
- Brussels sprouts
- cabbage
- cauliflower
- celery
- cucumbers
- eggplant
- green beans
- green peppers
- iceberg (head) lettuce
- mushrooms
- okra
- onions
- turnips
- wax beans
- zucchini

Food Groups

How many vegetables are needed daily or weekly?

Vegetable choices should be selected from among the vegetable subgroups. It is not necessary to eat vegetables from each subgroup daily. However, over a week, try to consume the amounts listed from each subgroup as a way to reach your daily intake recommendation.

The amount of vegetables you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended total daily amounts are shown in the first chart. Recommended weekly amounts from each vegetable subgroup are shown in the second chart.

		Daily recommendation*
Children	2-3 years old	1 cup**
	4-8 years old	1½ cups**
Girls	9-13 years old	2 cups**
	14-18 years old	2½ cups**
Boys	9-13 years old	2½ cups**
	14-18 years old	3 cups**
Women	19-30 years old	2½ cups**
	31-50 years old	2½ cups**
	51+ years old	2 cups**
Men	19-30 years old	3 cups**
	31-50 years old	3 cups**
	51+ years old	2½ cups**

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.
** Click here to see what counts as a cup of vegetables.

Vegetable subgroup recommendations are given as amounts to eat WEEKLY. It is not necessary to eat vegetables from each subgroup daily. However, over a week, try to consume the amounts listed from each subgroup as a way to reach your daily intake recommendation.

		Dark green vegetables	Red and orange vegetables	Beans and peas	Starchy vegetables	Other vegetables
		AMOUNT PER WEEK**				
Children	2–3 yrs old	½ cup	2½ cups	½ cup	2 cups	1½ cups
	4–8 yrs old	1 cup	3 cups	½ cup	3½ cups	2½ cups
Girls	9–13 yrs old	1½ cups	4 cups	1 cup	4 cups	3½ cups
	14–18 yrs old	1½ cups	5½ cups	1½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
Boys	9–13 yrs old	1½ cups	5½ cups	1½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
	14–18 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
Women	19–30 yrs old	1½ cups	5½ cups	1½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
	31–50 yrs old	1½ cups	5½ cups	1½ cups	5 cups	4 cups
	51+ yrs old	1½ cups	4 cups	1 cup	4 cups	3½ cups
Men	19–30 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
	31–50 yrs old	2 cups	6 cups	2 cups	6 cups	5 cups
	51+ yrs old	1½ cups	5½ cups	1½ cups	5 cups	4 cups

** Click here to see what counts as a cup of vegetables.

Food Groups

What counts as a cup of vegetables?

In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 2 cups of raw leafy greens can be considered as 1 cup from the Vegetable Group. The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 cup of vegetables (in some cases equivalents for ½ cup are also shown) towards your recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 cup of vegetables	Amount that counts as ½ cup of vegetables
Dark Green Vegetables		
Broccoli	1 cup chopped or florets	
	3 spears 5" long raw or cooked	
Greens (collards, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale)	1 cup cooked	
Spinach	1 cup, cooked	
	2 cups raw is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw is equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Raw leafy greens: Spinach, romaine, watercress, dark green leafy lettuce, endive, escarole	2 cups raw is equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw is equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Red and Orange Vegetables		
Carrots	1 cup, strips, slices, or chopped, raw or cooked	
	2 medium	1 medium carrot
	1 cup baby carrots (about 12)	About 6 baby carrots
Pumpkin	1 cup mashed, cooked	
Red peppers	1 cup chopped, raw, or cooked	1 small pepper
	1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3¾" long)	
Tomatoes	1 large raw whole (3")	1 small raw whole (2¼" diameter)
	1 cup chopped or sliced, raw, canned, or cooked	1 medium canned
Tomato juice	1 cup	½ cup
Sweet potato	1 large baked (2¼" or more diameter)	
	1 cup sliced or mashed, cooked	
Winter squash (acorn, butternut, hubbard)	1 cup cubed, cooked	½ acorn squash, baked = ¾ cup
Beans and Peas		
Dry beans and peas (such as black, garbanzo, kidney, pinto, or soy beans, or black eyed peas or split peas)	1 cup whole or mashed, cooked	
Starchy Vegetables		

Corn, yellow or white	1 cup	
	1 large ear (8" to 9" long)	1 small ear (about 6" long)
Green peas	1 cup	
White potatoes	1 cup diced, mashed	
	1 medium boiled or baked potato (2½" to 3" diameter)	
	French fried: 20 medium to long strips (2½" to 4" long) (Contains added calories from solid fats.)	
	Amount that counts as 1 cup of vegetables	**Amount that counts as ½ cup of vegetables**
Other Vegetables		
Bean sprouts	1 cup cooked	
Cabbage, green	1 cup, chopped or shredded raw or cooked	
Cauliflower	1 cup pieces or florets raw or cooked	
Celery	1 cup, diced or sliced, raw or cooked	
	2 large stalks (11" to 12" long)	1 large stalk (11" to 12" long)
Cucumbers	1 cup raw, sliced or chopped	
Green or wax beans	1 cup cooked	
Green peppers	1 cup chopped, raw or cooked	
	1 large pepper (3" diameter, 3¾" long)	1 small pepper
Lettuce, iceberg or head	2 cups raw, shredded or chopped = equivalent to 1 cup of vegetables	1 cup raw, shredded or chopped = equivalent to ½ cup of vegetables
Mushrooms	1 cup raw or cooked	
Onions	1 cup chopped, raw or cooked	
Summer squash or zucchini	1 cup cooked, sliced or diced	

Key Consumer Message: *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

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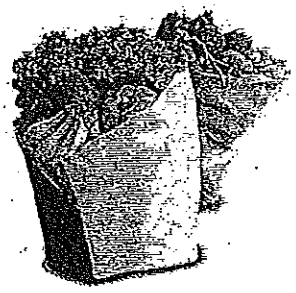
Why Is it Important to Eat Vegetables?

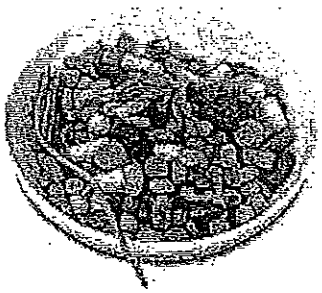
Eating vegetables provides health benefits — people who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Vegetables provide nutrients vital for health and maintenance of your body.

Health Benefits



- Eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for heart disease, including heart attack and stroke.
- Eating a diet rich in some vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet may protect against certain types of cancers.
- Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as some vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- Eating vegetables and fruits rich in potassium as part of an overall healthy diet may lower blood pressure, and may also reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and help to decrease bone loss.
- Eating foods such as vegetables that are lower in calories per cup instead of some other higher-calorie food may be useful in helping to lower calorie intake.

Nutrients



- Most vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. None have cholesterol. (Sauces or seasonings may add fat, calories, or cholesterol.)
- Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamin A, and vitamin C.
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Vegetable sources of potassium include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.

- Dietary fiber from vegetables, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as vegetables help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.
- Folate (folic acid) helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.
- Vitamin A keeps eyes and skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.
- Vitamin C helps heal cuts and wounds and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Vitamin C aids in iron absorption.

Key Consumer Message ***Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.***

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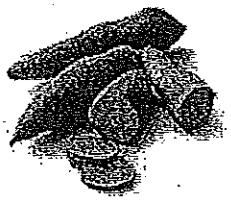
Tips to Help You Eat Vegetables

In General:

- Buy fresh vegetables in season. They cost less and are likely to be at their peak flavor.
- Stock up on frozen vegetables for quick and easy cooking in the microwave.
- Buy vegetables that are easy to prepare. Pick up pre-washed bags of salad greens and add baby carrots or grape tomatoes for a salad in minutes. Buy packages of veggies such as baby carrots or celery sticks for quick snacks.
- Use a microwave to quickly "zap" vegetables. White or sweet potatoes can be baked quickly this way.
- Vary your veggie choices to keep meals interesting.
- Try crunchy vegetables, raw or lightly steamed.

For the Best Nutritional Value:



- Select vegetables with more potassium often, such as sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beet greens, soybeans, lima beans, spinach, lentils, and kidney beans.
- Sauces or seasonings can add calories, saturated fat, and sodium to vegetables. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories and % Daily Value for saturated fat and sodium in plain and seasoned vegetables.
- Prepare more foods from fresh ingredients to lower sodium intake. Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged or processed foods.
- Buy canned vegetables labeled "reduced sodium," "low sodium," or "no salt added." If you want to add a little salt it will likely be less than the amount in the regular canned product.

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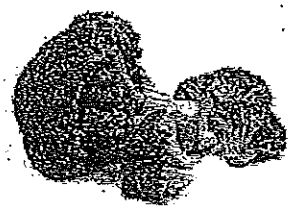
At Meals:

- Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish, such as a vegetable stir-fry or soup. Then add other foods to complement it.
- Try a main dish salad for lunch. Go light on the salad dressing.
- Include a green salad with your dinner every night.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads, and muffins.
- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers, and onions, and ask for extra veggies.
- Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken stews, soups and gravies. These add flavor, nutrients, and texture.
- Grill vegetable kabobs as part of a barbecue meal. Try tomatoes, mushrooms, green peppers, and onions.

Make Vegetables More Appealing:



- Many vegetables taste great with a dip or dressing. Try a low-fat salad dressing with raw broccoli, red and green peppers, celery sticks or cauliflower.
- Add color to salads by adding baby carrots, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves. Include in-season vegetables for variety through the year.
- Include beans or peas in flavorful mixed dishes, such as chili or minestrone soup.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with vegetable slices.
- Keep a bowl of cut-up vegetables in a see-through container in the refrigerator. Carrot and celery sticks are traditional, but consider red or green pepper strips, broccoli florets, or cucumber slices.

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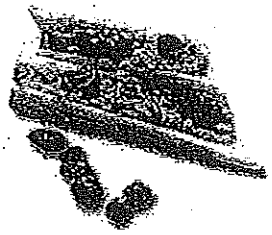
Vegetable Tips for Children:



- Set a good example for children by eating vegetables with meals and as snacks.
- Let children decide on the dinner vegetables or what goes into salads.
- Depending on their age, children can help shop for, clean, peel, or cut up vegetables.
- Allow children to pick a new vegetable to try while shopping.
- Use cut-up vegetables as part of afternoon snacks.
- Children often prefer foods served separately. So, rather than mixed vegetables try serving two vegetables separately.

Keep It Safe:

- Rinse vegetables before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub vegetables briskly with your hands to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after rinsing.
- Keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry and seafood while shopping, preparing, or storing.

Key Consumer Message ***Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.***

Beans and Peas Are Unique Foods

Beans and peas are the mature forms of legumes. They include kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, lima beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas and lentils. They are available in dry, canned, and frozen forms. These foods are excellent sources of plant protein, and also provide other nutrients such as iron and zinc. They are similar to meats, poultry, and fish in their contribution of these nutrients. Therefore, they are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Many people consider beans and peas as vegetarian alternatives for meat. However, they are also considered part of the Vegetable Group because they are excellent sources of dietary fiber and nutrients such as folate and potassium. These nutrients, which are often low in the diet of many Americans, are also found in other vegetables.

Because of their high nutrient content, consuming beans and peas is recommended for everyone, including people who also eat meat, poultry, and fish regularly. The USDA Food Patterns classify beans and peas as a subgroup of the Vegetable Group. The USDA Food Patterns also indicate that beans and peas may be counted as part of the Protein Foods Group. Individuals can count beans and peas as either a vegetable or a protein food.

Green peas, green lima beans, and green (string) beans are not considered to be part of the beans and peas subgroup. Green peas and green lima beans are similar to other starchy vegetables and are grouped with them. Green beans are grouped with other vegetables such as onions, lettuce, celery, and cabbage because their nutrient content is similar to those foods.

How to Count Beans and Peas in the USDA Food Patterns:

Generally, individuals who regularly eat meat, poultry, and fish would count beans and peas in the Vegetable Group. Vegetarians, vegans, and individuals who seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish would count some of the beans and peas they eat in the Protein Foods Group. Here's an example for both ways:

Count the number of ounce-equivalents of all meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and seeds eaten.

1. If the total is equal to or more than the suggested intake from the Protein Foods Group (which ranges from 2 ounce-equivalents at 1000 calories to 7 ounce-equivalents at 2800 calories and above) then count any beans or peas eaten as part of the beans and peas subgroup in the Vegetable Group. **OR**

2. If the total is less than the suggested intake from the Protein Foods Group, then count any beans and peas eaten toward the suggested intake level until it is reached. (One-fourth cup of cooked beans or peas counts as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group.) After the suggested intake level in the Protein Foods Group is reached, count any additional beans or peas eaten as part of the beans and peas subgroup in the Vegetable Group.

Examples

1. Example 1: (For the 2000 Calorie Food Pattern)

Foods eaten (Protein Foods Group only – not a complete daily list)

- 3½ ounces chicken
- 2 ounces tuna fish
- ½ cup refried beans

The 3½ ounces of chicken and 2 ounces of tuna fish equal 5½ ounce-equivalents in the Protein Foods Group, which meets the recommendation at this calorie level. Therefore, the ½ cup of refried beans counts as ½ cup of vegetables towards meeting the 1½ cups per week recommendation for beans and peas in the 2000 calorie pattern.

2. Example 2: (For the 2000 Calorie Food Pattern)

Foods eaten (Protein Foods Group only – not a complete daily list)

- 2 eggs
- 1½ Tbsp. peanut butter
- ½ cup chickpeas

The 2 eggs and 1½ Tbsp. peanut butter equal 3½ ounce-equivalents in the Protein Foods Group. Two more ounces are needed to meet the 5½ ounce recommendation for this group. Since the daily recommendation for the Protein Foods Group has not been met, these remaining 2 ounce-equivalents are provided by the ½ cup of chickpeas. This ½ cup of chickpeas would not count toward meeting the 1½ cups per week recommendation for the beans and peas vegetable subgroup in the 2000 calorie pattern. Instead, it would count as part of the Protein Foods Group.

Key Consumer Message *Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.*

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Commonly eaten grain products

Whole Grains

- amaranth
- brown rice
- buckwheat
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- millet
- oatmeal
- popcorn
- rolled oats
- quinoa
- sorghum
- triticale
- whole grain barley
- whole grain cornmeal
- whole rye
- whole wheat bread
- whole wheat crackers
- whole wheat pasta
- whole wheat sandwich buns and rolls
- whole wheat tortillas
- wild rice

Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals

- whole wheat cereal flakes
- Muesli

Refined Grains

- cornbread*
- corn tortillas*
- couscous*
- crackers*
- flour tortillas*
- grits
- noodles*
- pitas*
- pretzels
- white bread
- white sandwich buns and rolls
- white rice

Pastas

- spaghetti
- macaroni

Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals

- corn flakes

* Most of these products are made from refined grains. Some are made from whole grains. Check the ingredient list for the words "whole grain" or "whole wheat" to decide if they are made from a whole grain. Some foods are made from a mixture of whole and refined grains.

Some grain products contain significant amounts of bran. Bran provides fiber, which is important for health. However, products with added bran or bran alone (e.g., oat bran) are not necessarily whole grain products.

Food Groups

How many grain foods are needed daily?

The amount of grains you need to eat depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. Recommended daily amounts are listed in the chart. Most Americans consume enough grains, but few are whole grains. **At least half of all the grains eaten should be whole grains.**

		Daily recommendation*	Daily minimum amount of whole grains
Children	2-3 years old	3 ounce equivalents**	1 ½ ounce equivalents**
	4-8 years old	5 ounce equivalents**	2 ½ ounce equivalents**
Girls	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	14-18 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
Boys	9-13 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	14-18 years old	8 ounce equivalents**	4 ounce equivalents**
Women	19-30 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	31-50 years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**
Men	19-30 years old	8 ounce equivalents**	4 ounce equivalents**
	31-50 years old	7 ounce equivalents**	3 ½ ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	6 ounce equivalents**	3 ounce equivalents**

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

**Click here to see what counts as an ounce-equivalent of grains.

Key Consumer Message: *Make at least half your grains whole grains.*

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Food Groups

What counts as an ounce equivalent of grains?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the Grains Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent of grains towards your daily recommended intake. In some cases the number of ounce-equivalents for common portions are also shown.

		Amount that counts as 1 ounce equivalent of grains	Common portions and ounce equivalents
Bagels	WG*: whole wheat RG*: plain, egg	1 "mini" bagel	1 large bagel = 4 ounce equivalents
Biscuits	(baking powder/ buttermilk—RG*)	1 small (2" diameter)	1 large (3" diameter) = 2 ounce equivalents
Breads	WG*: 100% Whole wheat RG*: white, wheat, French, sourdough	1 regular slice 1 small slice French 4 snack-size slices rye bread	2 regular slices = 2 ounce equivalents
Bulgur	cracked wheat (WG*)	½ cup cooked	
Cornbread	(RG*)	1 small piece (2 ½" x 1 ¼" x 1 ¼")	1 medium piece (2 ½" x 2 ½" x 1 ¼") = 2 ounce equivalents
Crackers	WG*: 100% whole wheat, rye	5 whole wheat crackers 2 rye crispbreads	
	RG*: saltines, snack crackers	7 square or round crackers	
English muffins	WG*: whole wheat RG*: plain, raisin	½ muffin	1 muffin = 2 ounce equivalents
Muffins	WG*: whole wheat RG*: bran, corn, plain	1 small (2 ½" diameter)	1 large (3 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce equivalents
Oatmeal	(WG)	½ cup cooked 1 packet instant 1 ounce (1/3 cup) dry (regular or quick)	
Pancakes	WG*: Whole wheat, buckwheat RG*: buttermilk, plain	1 pancake (4 ½" diameter) 2 small pancakes (3" diameter)	3 pancakes (4 ½" diameter) = 3 ounce equivalents
Popcorn	(WG*)	3 cups, popped	1 mini microwave bag or 100-calorie bag, popped = 2 ounce equivalents
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal	WG*: toasted oat, whole wheat flakes RG*: corn flakes, puffed rice	1 cup flakes or rounds 1 ¼ cup puffed	
Rice	WG*: brown, wild RG*: enriched, white, polished	½ cup cooked 1 ounce dry	1 cup cooked = 2 ounce equivalents
Pasta--spaghetti, macaroni, noodles	WG*: whole wheat RG*: enriched, durum	½ cup cooked 1 ounce dry	1 cup cooked = 2 ounce equivalents

Tortillas	WG*: whole wheat, whole grain corn RG*: Flour, corn	1 small flour tortilla (6" diameter) 1 corn tortilla (6" diameter)	1 large tortilla (12" diameter) = 4 ounce equivalents

*WG = whole grains, RG = refined grains. This is shown when products are available both in whole grain and refined grain forms.

Key Consumer Message: *Make at least half your grains whole grains.*

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Why Is it Important to Eat Grains, Especially Whole Grains?

Eating grains, especially whole grains, provides health benefits. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Grains provide many nutrients that are vital for the health and maintenance of our bodies.

Health Benefits

- Consuming whole grains as part of a healthy diet may reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Consuming foods containing fiber, such as whole grains, as part of a healthy diet, may reduce constipation.
- Eating whole grains may help with weight management.
- Eating grain products fortified with folate before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects during fetal development.

Nutrients

- Grains are important sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).
- Dietary fiber from whole grains or other foods, may help reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber is important for proper bowel function. It helps reduce constipation and diverticulosis. Fiber-containing foods such as whole grains help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories.
- The B vitamins thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin play a key role in metabolism – they help the body release energy from protein, fat, and carbohydrates. B vitamins are also essential for a healthy nervous system. Many refined grains are enriched with these B vitamins.
- Folate (folic acid), another B vitamin, helps the body form red blood cells. Women of childbearing age who may become pregnant should consume adequate folate from foods, and in addition 400 mcg of synthetic folic acid from fortified foods or supplements. This reduces the risk of neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly during fetal development.

- Iron is used to carry oxygen in the blood. Many teenage girls and women in their childbearing years have iron-deficiency anemia. They should eat foods high in heme-iron (meats) or eat other iron containing foods along with foods rich in vitamin C, which can improve absorption of non-heme iron. Whole and enriched refined grain products are major sources of non-heme iron in American diets.
- Whole grains are sources of magnesium and selenium. Magnesium is a mineral used in building bones and releasing energy from muscles. Selenium protects cells from oxidation. It is also important for a healthy immune system.

Key Consumer Message ***Make at least half of your grains whole grains.***

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Tips to Help You Eat Whole Grains

At Meals:

- To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product – such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to substitute the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than adding the whole-grain product.
- For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casserole or stir-fries.
- Create a whole grain pilaf with a mixture of barley, wild rice, brown rice, broth and spices. For a special touch, stir in toasted nuts or chopped dried fruit.
- Experiment by substituting whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.
- Use whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs in meatloaf.
- Try rolled oats or a crushed, unsweetened whole grain cereal as breading for baked chicken, fish, veal cutlets, or eggplant parmesan.
- Try an unsweetened, whole grain ready-to-eat cereal as croutons in salad or in place of crackers with soup.
- Freeze leftover cooked brown rice, bulgur, or barley. Heat and serve it later as a quick side dish.

As Snacks:

- Snack on ready-to-eat, whole grain cereals such as toasted oat cereal.
- Add whole-grain flour or oatmeal when making cookies or other baked treats.
- Try 100% whole-grain snack crackers.
- Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack if made with little or no added salt and butter.

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What to Look for on the Food Label:

- Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the label's ingredient list:

Whole Grain Ingredients

- brown rice
- buckwheat
- bulgur
- millet
- oatmeal
- quinoa
- rolled oats
- whole-grain barley
- whole-grain corn
- whole-grain sorghum
- whole-grain triticale
- whole oats
- whole rye
- whole wheat
- wild rice

- Foods labeled with the words "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually not whole-grain products.
- Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label and choose whole grain products with a higher % Daily Value (% DV) for fiber. Many, but not all, whole grain products are good or excellent sources of fiber.
- Read the food label's ingredient list. Look for terms that indicate added sugars (such as sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, malt syrup, maple syrup, molasses, or raw sugar) that add extra calories. Choose foods with fewer added sugars.
- Most sodium in the food supply comes from packaged foods. Similar packaged foods can vary widely in sodium content, including breads. Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods with a lower % DV for sodium. Foods with less than 140 mg sodium per serving can be labeled as low sodium foods. Claims such as "low in sodium" or "very low in sodium" on the front of the food label can help you identify foods that contain less salt (or sodium).

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Whole Grain Tips for Children

- Set a good example for children by eating whole grains with meals or as snacks.
- Let children select and help prepare a whole grain side dish.
- Teach older children to read the ingredient list on cereals or snack food packages and choose those with whole grains at the top of the list.

Key Consumer Message ***Make at least half of your grains whole grains.***

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What Foods Are in the Protein Foods Group?

All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, nuts, and seeds are considered part of the Protein Foods Group. Beans and peas are also part of the Vegetable Group.

Select a variety of protein foods to improve nutrient intake and health benefits, including at least 8 ounces of cooked seafood per week. Young children need less, depending on their age and calorie needs. The advice to consume seafood does not apply to vegetarians. Vegetarian options in the Protein Foods Group include beans and peas, processed soy products, and nuts and seeds. Meat and poultry choices should be lean or low-fat.

Commonly eaten protein foods

Meats*

Lean cuts of:

- beef
- ham
- lamb
- pork
- veal

Game Meats

- bison
- rabbit
- venison

Lean Ground Meats

- beef
- pork
- lamb

Lean luncheon or deli meats

Organ Meats

- liver
- giblets

Poultry*

- chicken
- duck
- goose
- turkey
- ground chicken and turkey

Eggs*

- chicken eggs
- duck eggs

Beans and Peas

- bean burgers
- black beans
- black-eyed peas
- chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- falafel
- kidney beans
- lentils
- lima beans (mature)
- navy beans
- pinto beans
- soy beans
- split peas
- white beans

Processed Soy Products

- tofu (bean curd made from soybeans)
- veggie burgers
- tempeh
- texturized vegetable protein (TVP)

Nuts and Seeds*

- almonds
- cashews
- hazelnuts (filberts)
- mixed nuts
- peanuts
- peanut butter
- pecans
- pistachios
- pumpkin seeds
- sesame seeds
- sunflower seeds
- walnuts

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Seafood*

Finfish such as:

- catfish
- cod
- flounder
- haddock
- halibut
- herring
- mackerel
- pollock
- porgy
- salmon
- sea bass
- snapper
- swordfish
- trout
- tuna

Shellfish such as:

- clams
- crab
- crayfish
- lobster
- mussels
- octopus
- oysters
- scallops
- squid (calamari)
- shrimp

Canned fish such as:

- anchovies
- clams
- tuna
- sardines

*Selection Tips

- Choose lean or low-fat meat and poultry. If higher fat choices are made, such as regular ground beef (75 to 80% lean) or chicken with skin, the fat counts against your maximum limit for empty calories (calories from solid fats or added sugars).
- If solid fat is added in cooking, such as frying chicken in shortening or frying eggs in butter or stick margarine, this also counts against your maximum limit for empty calories (calories from solid fats and added sugars).
- Select some seafood that is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, sardines, anchovies, herring, Pacific oysters, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel.
- Processed meats such as ham, sausage, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the Nutrition Facts label to help limit sodium intake. Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as "self-basting" or "contains up to __% of __", which mean that a sodium-containing solution has been added to the product.
- Choose unsalted nuts and seeds to keep sodium intake low.

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How Much Food from the Protein Foods Group is Needed Daily?

The amount of food from the Protein Foods Group you need to eat depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. Most Americans eat enough food from this group, but need to make leaner and more varied selections of these foods.

Recommended daily amounts are shown in the chart.

	Daily recommendation*	
Children	2-3 years old	2 ounce equivalents**
	4-8 years old	4 ounce equivalents**
Girls	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents**
	14-18 years old	5 ounce equivalents**
Boys	9-13 years old	5 ounce equivalents**
	14-18 years old	6 ½ ounce equivalents**
Women	19-30 years old	5 ½ ounce equivalents**
	31-50 years old	5 ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	5 ounce equivalents**
Men	19-30 years old	6 ½ ounce equivalents**
	31-50 years old	6 ounce equivalents**
	51+ years old	5 ½ ounce equivalents**

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

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What Counts as an Ounce Equivalent in the Protein Foods Group?

In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the Protein Foods Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount that counts as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group	Common portions and ounce equivalents
Meats	1 ounce cooked lean beef 1 ounce cooked lean pork or ham	1 small steak (eye of round, filet) = 3½ to 4 ounce equivalents 1 small lean hamburger = 2 to 3 ounce equivalents
Poultry	1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey without skin 1 sandwich slice of turkey (4 ½ x 2 ½ x 1/8 in)	1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounce equivalents ½ Cornish game hen = 4 ounce equivalents
Seafood	1 ounce cooked fish or shell fish	1 can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4 ounce equivalents 1 salmon steak = 4 to 6 ounce equivalents 1 small trout = 3 ounce equivalents
Eggs	1 egg	3 egg whites = 2 ounce equivalents 3 egg yolks = 1 ounce equivalent
Nuts and seeds	½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) ½ ounce of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower or squash seeds, hulled, roasted) 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter	1 ounce of nuts or seeds = 2 ounce equivalents
Beans and peas	¼ cup of cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans) ¼ cup of cooked peas (such as chickpeas, cowpeas, lentils, or split peas) ¼ cup of baked beans, refried beans ¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 oz tempeh, cooked ¼ cup roasted soybeans, a falafel patty (2 ¼" - 4 oz) 2 tablespoons hummus	1 cup split pea soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup lentil soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup bean soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 soy or bean burger patty = 2 ounce equivalents

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Why Is It Important to Make Lean or Low-Fat Choices from the Protein Foods Group?

Foods in the meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and seed group provide nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your body. However, choosing foods from this group that are high in saturated fat and cholesterol may have health implications.

	Amount that counts as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group	Common portions and ounce equivalents
Meats	1 ounce cooked lean beef 1 ounce cooked lean pork or ham	1 small steak (eye of round, filet) = 3½ to 4 ounce equivalents 1 small lean hamburger = 2 to 3 ounce equivalents
Poultry	1 ounce cooked chicken or turkey, without skin 1 sandwich slice of turkey (4½ x 2½ x 1/8")	1 small chicken breast half = 3 ounce equivalents Cornish game hen = 4 ounce equivalents
Seafood	1 ounce cooked fish or shell fish	1 can of tuna, drained = 3 to 4 ounce equivalents 1 salmon steak = 4 to 6 ounce equivalents 1 small trout = 3 ounce equivalents
Eggs	1 egg	3 egg whites = 2 ounce equivalents 3 egg yolks = 1 ounce equivalent
Nuts and seeds	½ ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnut halves) ½ ounce of seeds (pumpkin, sunflower or squash seeds, hulled, roasted) 1 Tablespoon of peanut butter or almond butter	1 ounce of nuts or seeds = 2 ounce equivalents
Beans and peas	¼ cup of cooked beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or white beans) ¼ cup of cooked peas (such as chickpeas, cowpeas, lentils, or split peas) ¼ cup of baked beans, refried beans ¼ cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu 1 oz. tempeh, cooked ¼ cup roasted soybeans, falafel patty (2 ¼" diameter) 2 Tablespoons hummus	1 cup split pea soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup lentil soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 cup bean soup = 2 ounce equivalents 1 soy or bean burger patty = 2 ounce equivalents

http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/protein-foods-why.html

In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or ½ ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the Protein Foods Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 ounce equivalent in the Protein Foods Group towards your daily recommended intake.

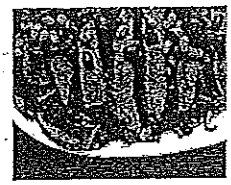
Health Benefits

- Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds supply many nutrients. These include protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium.
- Proteins function as building blocks for bones, muscles, cartilage, skin, and blood. They are also building blocks for enzymes, hormones, and vitamins. Proteins are one of three nutrients that provide calories (the others are fat and carbohydrates).

- B vitamins found in this food group serve a variety of functions in the body. They help the body release energy, play a vital role in the function of the nervous system, aid in the formation of red blood cells, and help build tissues.
- Iron is used to carry oxygen in the blood. Many teenage girls and women in their child-bearing years have iron-deficiency anemia. They should eat foods high in heme-iron (meats) or eat other non-heme iron containing foods along with a food rich in vitamin C, which can improve absorption of non-heme iron.
- Magnesium is used in building bones and in releasing energy from muscles.
- Zinc is necessary for biochemical reactions and helps the immune system function properly.
- EPA and DHA are omega-3 fatty acids found in varying amounts in seafood. Eating 8 ounces per week of seafood may help reduce the risk for heart disease.

Nutrients

- Diets that are high in saturated fats raise "bad" cholesterol levels in the blood. The "bad" cholesterol is called LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. High LDL cholesterol, in turn, increases the risk for coronary heart disease. Some food choices in this group are high in saturated fat. These include fatty cuts of beef, pork, and lamb; regular (75% to 85% lean) ground beef; regular sausages, hot dogs, and bacon; some luncheon meats such as regular bologna and salami; and some poultry such as duck. To help keep blood cholesterol levels healthy, limit the amount of these foods you eat.



- Diets that are high in cholesterol can raise LDL cholesterol levels in the blood. Cholesterol is only found in foods from animal sources. Some foods from this group are high in cholesterol. These include egg yolks (egg whites are cholesterol-free) and organ meats such as liver and giblets. To help keep blood cholesterol levels healthy, limit the amount of these foods you eat.
- A high intake of fats makes it difficult to avoid consuming more calories than are needed.

Why Is It Important to Eat 8 Ounces of Seafood per Week?

- Seafood contains a range of nutrients, notably the omega-3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA. Eating about 8 ounces per week of a variety of seafood contributes to the prevention of heart disease. Smaller amounts of seafood are recommended for young children.

- Seafood varieties that are commonly consumed in the United States that are higher in EPA and DHA and lower in mercury include salmon, anchovies, herring, sardines, Pacific oysters, trout, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel (not king mackerel, which is high in mercury). The health benefits from consuming seafood outweigh the health risk associated with mercury, a heavy metal found in seafood in varying levels.

What Are the Benefits of Eating Nuts and Seeds?

- Eating peanuts and certain tree nuts (i.e., walnuts, almonds, and pistachios) may reduce the risk of heart disease when consumed as part of a diet that is nutritionally adequate and within calorie needs. Because nuts and seeds are high in calories, eat them in small portions and use them to replace other protein foods, like some meat or poultry, rather than adding them to what you already eat. In addition, choose unsalted nuts and seeds to help reduce sodium intakes.

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Tips to Help You Make Wise Choices from the Protein Foods Group

Go Lean with Protein:

- Start with a lean choice:
  - The leanest beef cuts include round steaks and roasts (eye of round, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
  - The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, and ham.
  - Choose extra lean ground beef. The label should say at least "90% lean." You may be able to find ground beef that is 93% or 95% lean.
  - Buy skinless chicken parts, or take off the skin before cooking.
  - Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
  - Choose lean turkey, roast beef, ham, or low-fat luncheon meats for sandwiches instead of luncheon/deli meats with more fat, such as regular bologna or salami.
- Keep it lean:

  - Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.
  - Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying.
  - Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
  - Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish. Breading adds calories. It will also cause the food to soak up more fat during frying.
  - Prepare beans and peas without added fats.
  - Choose and prepare foods without high fat sauces or gravies.

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Vary Your Protein Choices:

- Choose seafood at least twice a week as the main protein food. Look for seafood rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring. Some ideas are:

  - Salmon steak or filet
  - Salmon loaf
  - Grilled or baked trout

- Choose beans, peas, or soy products as a main dish or part of a meal often. Some choices are:

  - Chili with kidney or pinto beans
  - Stir- fried tofu
  - Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups
  - Baked beans
  - Black bean enchiladas
  - Garbanzo or kidney beans on a chef's salad
  - Rice and beans
  - Veggie burgers
  - Hummus (chickpeas) spread on pita bread

- Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Use nuts to replace meat or poultry, not in addition to these items:

  - Use pine nuts in pesto sauce for pasta.
  - Add slivered almonds to steamed vegetables.
  - Add toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir fry instead of meat.
  - Sprinkle a few nuts on top of low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt.
  - Add walnuts or pecans to a green salad instead of cheese or meat.

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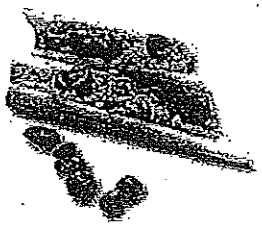
What to Look for on the Food Label:

- Check the Nutrition Facts label for the saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of packaged foods.



  - Processed meats such as hams, sausages, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the ingredient and Nutrition Facts label to help limit sodium intake.
  - Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as "self-basting" or "contains up to __% of __."
  - Lower fat versions of many processed meats are available. Look on the Nutrition Facts label to choose products with less fat and saturated fat.

Keep It Safe to Eat:

- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not wash or rinse meat or poultry.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next one.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms. Use a meat thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry, to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through.
- Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours.
- Plan ahead to defrost foods. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter at room temperature. Thaw food by placing it in the refrigerator, submerging air-tight packaged food in cold tap water (change water every 30 minutes), or defrosting on a plate in the microwave.
- Avoid raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs and raw or undercooked meat and poultry.
- Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children should avoid some types of fish and eat types lower in mercury. Call 1-888-SAFEFOOD for more information.

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Vegetarian Choices in the Protein Foods Group

- Vegetarians get enough protein from this group as long as the variety and amounts of foods selected are adequate.
- Protein sources from the Protein Foods Group for vegetarians include eggs (for ovo-vegetarians), beans and peas, nuts, nut butters, and soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers).

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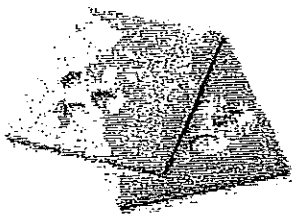
What Foods Are Included in the Dairy Group?

All fluid milk products and many foods made from milk are considered part of this food group. Most Dairy Group choices should be fat-free or low-fat. Foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not. Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) is also part of the Dairy Group.



Key Consumer Message *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

Commonly eaten dairy products

- **Milk***
  all fluid milk:
  - fat-free (skim)
  - low fat (1%)
  - reduced fat (2%)
  - whole milk
  - **flavored milks:**
    - chocolate
    - strawberry
  - lactose-reduced milks
  - lactose-free milks
- **Milk-based desserts***
  - puddings
  - ice milk
  - frozen yogurt
  - ice cream
- **Calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage)**

- **Cheese***
  - **hard natural cheeses:**
    - cheddar
    - mozzarella
    - Swiss
    - Parmesan
  - **soft cheeses:**
    - ricotta
    - cottage cheese
  - **processed cheeses:**
    - American
- **Yogurt***
  all yogurt:
  - fat-free
  - low fat
  - reduced fat
  - whole milk yogurt

*Selection Tips

- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. If you choose milk or yogurt that is not fat-free, or cheese that is not low-fat, the fat in the product counts against your maximum limit for "empty calories" (calories from solid fats and added sugars).

- If sweetened milk products are chosen (flavored milk, yogurt, drinkable yogurt, desserts), the added sugars also count against your maximum limit for "empty calories" (calories from solid fats and added sugars).

- For those who are lactose intolerant, smaller portions (such as 4 fluid ounces of milk) may be well tolerated. Lactose-free and lower-lactose products are available. These include lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk, yogurt, and cheese, and calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage). Also, enzyme preparations can be added to milk to lower the lactose content. Calcium-fortified foods and beverages such as cereals, orange juice, or rice or almond beverages may provide calcium, but may not provide the other nutrients found in dairy products.

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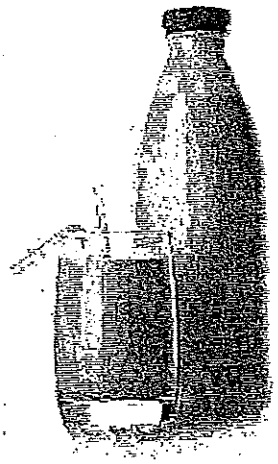
How Much Food from the Dairy Group Is Needed Daily?

The amount of food from the Dairy Group you need to eat depends on age. Recommended daily amounts are shown in the chart below.

Daily recommendation		
Children	2-3 years old	2 cups
	4-8 years old	2 ½ cups
Girls	9-13 years old	3 cups
	14-18 years old	3 cups
Boys	9-13 years old	3 cups
	14-18 years old	3 cups
Women	19-30 years old	3 cups
	31-50 years old	3 cups
	51+ years old	3 cups
Men	19-30 years old	3 cups
	31-50 years old	3 cups
	51+ years old	3 cups



Key Consumer Message *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

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What Counts as a Cup in the Dairy Group?

In general, 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soymilk (soy beverage), 1 ½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese can be considered as 1 cup from the Dairy Group.

The chart lists specific amounts that count as 1 cup in the Dairy Group towards your daily recommended intake:

	Amount That Counts as a Cup in the Dairy Group	Common Portions and Cup Equivalents
Milk (choose fat-free or low-fat milk)	1 cup milk	
	1 half-pint container milk	
	½ cup evaporated milk	
Yogurt (choose fat-free or low-fat yogurt)	1 regular container (8 fluid ounces)	1 small container (6 ounces) = ¾ cup
	1 cup yogurt	1 snack size container (4 ounces) = ½ cup
Cheese (choose reduced-fat or low-fat cheeses)	1 ½ ounces hard cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan)	1 slice of hard cheese is equivalent to ½ cup milk
	⅓ cup shredded cheese	
	2 ounces processed cheese (American)	1 slice of processed cheese is equivalent to ½ cup milk
	½ cup ricotta cheese	
	2 cups cottage cheese	½ cup cottage cheese is equivalent to ¼ cup milk
Milk-based desserts (choose fat-free or low-fat types)	1 cup pudding made with milk	
	1 cup frozen yogurt	
	1 ½ cups ice cream	1 scoop ice cream is equivalent to ⅓ cup milk
Soymilk (soy beverage)	1 cup calcium-fortified soymilk	
	1 half-pint container calcium-fortified soymilk	

Key Consumer Message *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

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Health Benefits and Nutrients

Consuming dairy products provides health benefits — especially improved bone health. Foods in the Dairy Group provide nutrients that are vital for health and maintenance of your body. These nutrients include calcium, potassium, vitamin D, and protein.

Health Benefits

- Intake of dairy products is linked to improved bone health, and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- The intake of dairy products is especially important to bone health during childhood and adolescence, when bone mass is being built.
- Intake of dairy products is also associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, and with lower blood pressure in adults.

Nutrients

- Calcium is used for building bones and teeth and in maintaining bone mass. Dairy products are the primary source of calcium in American diets. Diets that provide 3 cups or the equivalent of dairy products per day can improve bone mass.
- Diets rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Dairy products, especially yogurt, fluid milk, and soymilk (soy beverage), provide potassium.
- Vitamin D functions in the body to maintain proper levels of calcium and phosphorous, thereby helping to build and maintain bones. Milk and soymilk (soy beverage) that are fortified with vitamin D are good sources of this nutrient. Other sources include vitamin D-fortified yogurt and vitamin D-fortified ready-to-eat breakfast cereals.
- Milk products that are consumed in their low-fat or fat-free forms provide little or no solid fat.

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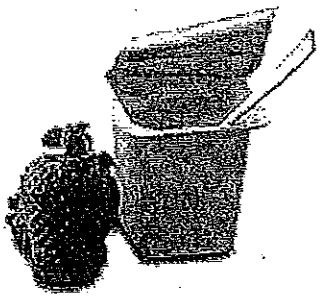
Why is it important to make fat-free or low-fat choices from the Dairy Group?



Choosing foods from the Dairy Group that are high in saturated fats and cholesterol can have health implications. Diets high in saturated fats raise "bad" cholesterol levels in the blood. The "bad" cholesterol is called LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. High LDL cholesterol, in turn, increases the risk for coronary heart disease. Many cheeses, whole milk, and products made from them are high in saturated fat. To help keep blood cholesterol levels healthy, limit the amount of these foods you eat. In addition, a high intake of fats makes it difficult to avoid consuming more calories than are needed.

Key Consumer Message *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

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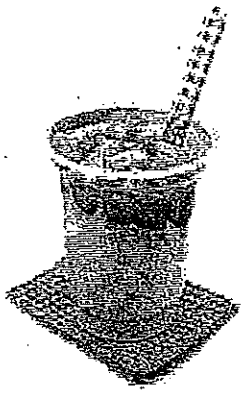
Tips for Making Wise Choices in the Dairy Group

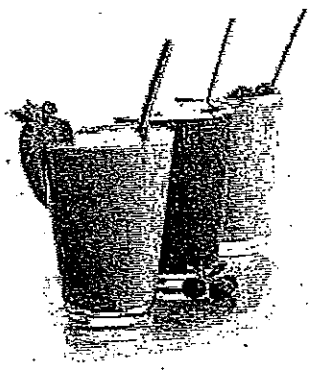
- Include milk or calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) as a beverage at meals. Choose fat-free or low-fat milk.
- If you usually drink whole milk, switch gradually to fat-free milk, to lower saturated fat and calories. Try reduced fat (2%), then low-fat (1%), and finally fat-free (skim).
- If you drink cappuccinos or lattes — ask for them with fat-free (skim) milk.
- Add fat-free or low-fat milk instead of water to oatmeal and hot cereals.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk when making condensed cream soups (such as cream of tomato).



- Have fat-free or low-fat yogurt as a snack.
- Make a dip for fruits or vegetables from yogurt.
- Make fruit-yogurt smoothies in the blender.
- For dessert, make chocolate or butterscotch pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Top cut-up fruit with flavored yogurt for a quick dessert.
- Top casseroles, soups, stews, or vegetables with shredded reduced-fat or low-fat cheese.
- Top a baked potato with fat-free or low-fat yogurt.

Keep It Safe

- Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk.
- Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers as soon as possible. If food has been left at temperatures between 40° and 140° F for more than two hours, discard it, even though it may look and smell good.
- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.



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For Those Who Choose Not to Consume Milk Products

- If you avoid milk because of lactose intolerance, the most reliable way to get the health benefits of dairy products is to choose lactose-free alternatives within the Dairy Group, such as cheese, yogurt, lactose-free milk, or calcium-fortified soymilk (soy beverage) or to consume the enzyme lactase before consuming milk.
- Calcium choices for those who do not consume dairy products include:
  - Calcium fortified juices, cereals, breads, rice milk, or almond milk.
  - Canned fish (sardines, salmon with bones) soybeans and other soy products (tofu made with calcium sulfate, soy yogurt, tempeh), some other beans, and some leafy greens (collard and turnip greens, kale, bok choy). The amount of calcium that can be absorbed from these foods varies.

Key Consumer Message *Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.*

What Are "Oils"?

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the vegetable oils used in cooking. Oils come from many different plants and from fish. Oils are NOT a food group, but they provide essential nutrients. Therefore, oils are included in USDA food patterns.

Some commonly eaten oils include:

- canola oil
- corn oil
- cottonseed oil
- olive oil
- safflower oil
- soybean oil
- sunflower oil

Some oils are used mainly as flavorings, such as walnut oil and sesame oil. A number of foods are naturally high in oils, like:

- nuts
- olives
- some fish
- avocados

Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no *trans* fats. Check the Nutrition Facts label to find margarines with 0 grams of *trans* fat. Amounts of *trans* fat are required to be listed on labels.

Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. Oils from plant sources (vegetable and nut oils) do not contain any cholesterol. In fact, no plant foods contain cholesterol.

A few plant oils, however, including coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil, are high in saturated fats and for nutritional purposes should be considered to be solid fats.

Solid fats are fats that are solid at room temperature, like butter and shortening. Solid fats come from many animal foods and can be made from vegetable oils through a process called hydrogenation. Some common fats are:

- butter
- milk fat
- beef fat (tallow, suet)
- chicken fat
- pork fat (lard)
- stick margarine
- shortening
- partially hydrogenated oil

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How Are Oils Different from Solid Fats?

All fats and oils are a mixture of saturated fatty acids and unsaturated fatty acids. Solid fats contain more **saturated fats** and/or ***trans* fats** than oils. Oils contain more monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated (PUFA) fats. Saturated fats, *trans* fats, and cholesterol tend to raise "bad" (LDL) cholesterol levels in the blood, which in turn increases the risk for heart disease. To lower risk for heart disease, cut back on foods containing saturated fats, *trans* fats, and cholesterol.

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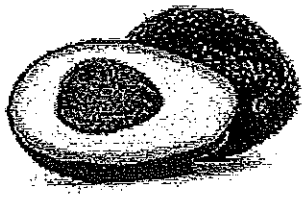
Why Is It Important to Consume Oils?



Oils are not a food group, but they do provide essential nutrients and are therefore included in USDA recommendations for what to eat. Note that only small amounts of oils are recommended.

Most of the fats you eat should be polyunsaturated (PUFA) or monounsaturated (MUFA) fats. Oils are the major source of MUFAs and PUFAs in the diet. PUFAs contain some fatty acids that are necessary for health—called "essential fatty acids."

Because oils contain these essential fatty acids, there is an allowance for oils in the food guide.

The MUFAs and PUFAs found in fish, nuts, and vegetable oils do not raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels in the blood. In addition to the essential fatty acids they contain, oils are the major source of vitamin E in typical American diets.

While consuming some oil is needed for health, oils still contain calories. In fact, oils and solid fats both contain about 120 calories per tablespoon. Therefore, the amount of oil consumed needs to be limited to balance total calorie intake. The Nutrition Facts label provides information to help you make smart choices.

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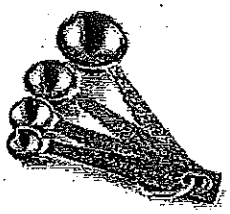
How Much Is My Allowance for Oils?



Some Americans consume enough oil in the foods they eat, such as:

- nuts
- fish
- cooking oil
- salad dressings

Others could easily consume the recommended allowance by substituting oils for some solid fats they eat. A person's allowance for oils depends on age, sex, and level of physical activity. Daily allowances are shown in the chart.

	Amount of food	Amount of oil	Calories from oil	Total calories
		Teaspoons /grams	Approximate calories	Approximate calories
Oils:				
Vegetable oils (such as canola, corn, cottonseed, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower)	1 Tbsp	3 tsp/14 g	120	120
Foods rich in oils:				
Margarine, soft (*trans* fat free)	1 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	100
Mayonnaise	1 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	100
Mayonnaise-type salad dressing	1 Tbsp	1 tsp/5 g	45	55
Italian dressing	2 Tbsp	2 tsp/8 g	75	85
Thousand Island dressing	2 Tbsp	2 ½ tsp/11 g	100	120
Olives, ripe, canned	4 large	½ tsp/2 g	15	20
Avocado*	½ med	3 tsp/15 g	130	160
Peanut butter*	2 T	4 tsp/16 g	140	190
Peanuts, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/14 g	120	165
Mixed nuts, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/15 g	130	170
Cashews, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/13 g	115	165
Almonds, dry roasted*	1 oz	3 tsp/15 g	130	170
Hazelnuts*	1 oz	4 tsp/18 g	160	185
Sunflower seeds*	1 oz	3 tsp/14 g	120	165

*Avocados and olives are part of the Vegetable Group; nuts and seeds are part of the Protein Foods Group. These foods are also high in oils. Soft margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressings are mainly oil and are not considered to be part of any food group.

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How Do I Count the Oils I Eat?

The chart gives a quick guide to the amount of oils in some common foods:

	Amount of food	Amount of oil	Calories from oil	Total calories
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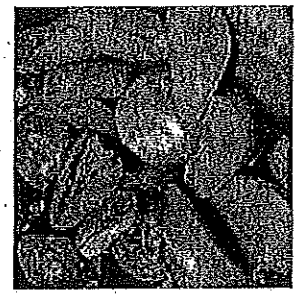
Easy Baked Apples

allrecipes.com



Rated: ★★★½☆

Submitted By: Candy
Photo By: Michele

Prep Time: 5 Minutes
Cook Time: 1 Hour
Ready In: 1 Hour 5 Minutes
Servings: 6

"This easy baked apple recipe makes a great dessert or snack. Use whatever fruit-flavored diet soda catches your fancy."

INGREDIENTS:

6 small apples, cored and halved
2 cups sugar-free diet orange-flavored carbonated beverage

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat an oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Arrange the apples into a baking dish with the cut sides facing down. Pour the orange beverage over the apples.
3. Bake in the preheated oven until the apples are tender, about 1 hour.

EatingWell

Watermelon-Yogurt Ice

http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/watermelon_yogurt_ice.html

From EatingWell: August/September 2005

Inspired by creamy watermelon sherbet, our light and refreshing dessert captures the essence of summer.

8 servings, 1/2 cup each | Active Time: 20 minutes **| Total Time:** 1 hour (using an ice cream maker)

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 4 cups diced seedless watermelon, (about 3 pounds with the rind)
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

Preparation

1. Combine water and sugar in a small saucepan. Cook, stirring, over high heat until the sugar is dissolved. Transfer to a glass measuring cup and let cool slightly.
2. Puree watermelon in a food processor or blender, in 2 batches, pulsing until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl. Whisk in the cooled sugar syrup, yogurt and lime juice until combined. Pour the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into another large bowl, whisking to release all juice. Discard pulp. Pour the extracted juices into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's directions. (Alternatively, pour into a shallow metal pan and freeze until solid, about 6 hours or overnight. Remove from freezer to defrost slightly, 5 minutes. Break into small chunks and process in a food processor, in batches, until smooth and creamy.) Serve immediately or transfer to a storage container and freeze for up to 2 hours.

Nutrition

Per serving : 74 Calories; 1 g Fat; 0 g Sat; 0 g Mono; 2 mg Cholesterol; 16 g Carbohydrates; 2 g Protein; 0 g Fiber; 21 mg Sodium; 155 mg Potassium

1 Carbohydrate Serving

Exchanges: 1 fruit

Tips & Notes

- **Make Ahead Tip:** If frozen longer than 2 hours, break into chunks and puree in a food processor until smooth before serving.

Print Close

Melon Cooler

Total Time: 15 mins

Ingredients

2 cup(s) watermelon, seedless
1 tablespoon lime juice
ice cubes
melon or lime wedges

Preparation

1. In a food processor or blender, combine melon cubes and lime juice. Cover and process or blend until smooth. Press mixture through a fine-mesh sieve; discard pulp. (You should have about 1 cup juice.) Serve over ice or chill mixture and serve in chilled martini or wine glasses. If desired, garnish with melon or lime wedges.

Quick Info:
2 Servings
Vegetarian
Diabetes-Friendly

Nutritional Info (Per serving):
Calories: 48, Saturated Fat: 0g, Sodium: 2mg, Dietary Fiber: 1g, Total Fat: 0g, Carbs: 12g, Cholesterol: 0mg, Protein: 1g

Exchanges: Fruit: 1

Carb Choices: 1

Recipe Source:

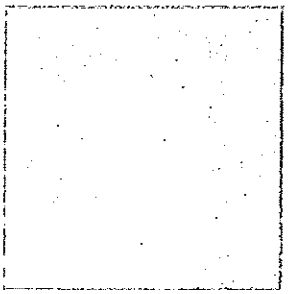
diabetic LIVING

More Diabetic Recipes

Tested in the Better Homes and Gardens Test Kitchen

Peach Salsa

allrecipes.com



Rated: ★★★★★

Submitted By: AUNTYLENE

Prep Time: 30 Minutes
Cook Time: 1 Hour 30 Minutes
Ready In: 2 Hours
Servings: 128

"This sweet but zippy salsa is a great way to use summer fruits and vegetables. Try it on pork or chicken at your next cookout."

INGREDIENTS:

- 20 tomatoes, chopped
- 6 onions, finely chopped
- 5 fresh peaches - peeled, pitted and chopped
- 5 pears - peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 4 cups white sugar
- 1 cup distilled white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 4 tablespoons pickling spice, wrapped in cheesecloth

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large saucepan, bring to a boil the tomatoes, onions, peaches, pears, green bell pepper, red bell pepper, sugar, vinegar and salt. Reduce heat. Place the pickling spice into the mixture. Stirring frequently, simmer 1 1/2 hours, or until volume is reduced by half.
2. Discard spice bag. Transfer the mixture to sterile containers. Store in the refrigerator until use.

5 Easy-to-Make and Healthful Meals

As the American healthy consumer guides evolve, so has the food guide pyramid. This one triangular building block of choices has been altered to appear in the form of a plate. The plate is a more visual way to associate portion size and helps children and adults alike maintain a healthy balance. The new food guide also includes healthy habits such as:

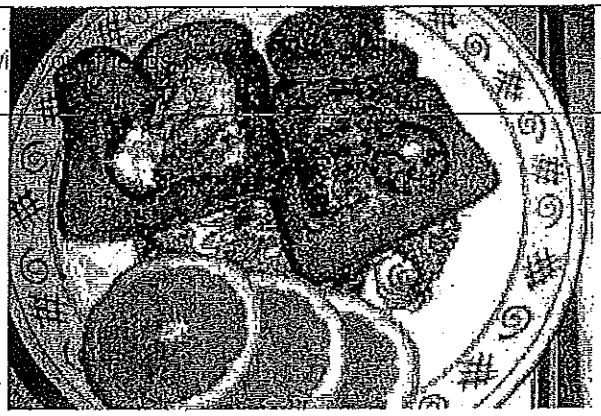
- Taking smaller portions
- Making half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Switching to fat-free or low-fat milk
- Choosing whole grains
- Watching your sodium intake
- Drinking water instead of sugar-filled beverages

But even healthy choices are hard to make when you don't have a healthy go-to meal plan on hand. Here are five easy-to-make recipes to get your weekday meal planning off on the right foot.

1. Toad in a Hole

This family-friendly breakfast is fun for all ages. With a good mix of all the food groups, this quick and easy recipe can help jumpstart anyone's mornings.

Share this wi



Ingredients:

- Eggs
- 100% whole wheat Bread
- Fruit (such as an apple or a banana)
- Low- or non-fat milk
- Baking sheet

Instructions:

- Preheat your oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
- Cut out small circles big enough to hold a cracked egg in a few pieces of 100% whole wheat bread (enough to feed your family)
- Grease a baking sheet and lay out pieces of bread
- Crack whole eggs into the circles
- Bake for 8-12 minutes.

Put these tasty pieces of bread on plates and add a piece of fruit and a glass of milk to round out this quick and easy morning meal.

2. Apple or Pineapple Chicken Quesadillas

Having a hard time getting your family fond of fruit? Try mixing it with a little Mexican flair to get this food group on your family's good side.

Share this with your friends!

Ingredients:

- 4 whole wheat tortillas (8-inch wide)
- 1 cup cooked shredded or diced chicken breast
- ¼ lb. low fat shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 apple, sliced or 1 cup pineapple chunks
- ¼ cup mild salsa (make from scratch for less sodium!)

Instructions:

1. Heat a large skillet on medium heat
2. Add a tortilla to the skillet
3. Add shredded mozzarella cheese, chicken, and choice of fruit
4. Place another tortilla on top and wait for the cheese to melt
5. Let the cheese melt a bit and then flip the quesadilla over to brown the top tortilla
6. When the cheese has melted and the tortillas are crisp, remove the quesadilla and let sit
7. Cut the tortilla into triangular slices

Serve this recipe with a salad to sneak some fruits and vegetables into dinnertime for compliments instead of complaints.

3. Beef Barley Stew

Stew is a great meal to make ahead, and provides leftovers that are often even better than the first meal. Stew is a great family favorite that can also be packed for lunches, allowing you to get the most bang for your buck.

Ingredients:

- 6 ounces lean stew beef in bite-size chunks
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 3 large cloves of garlic, minced
- 3 -4 large carrots, sliced
- 1 pint sliced mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 4 cups low sodium beef broth

- 2 bay leaves

- 1/4 cup barley

Instructions:

1. Lightly coat beef in flour and brown in a saucepan
2. In a large saucepan or stock pot, heat oil
3. Sauté garlic, onion, celery, mushrooms and carrots for 8-10 minutes
4. Add broth, barley, bay leaves and beef
5. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 45 minutes or until barley is tender, stirring occasionally

Serve with whole grain bread. Add a small fruit and yogurt parfait for dessert to round out the meal. You can pack this lunch for the kids by throwing soup, a small carton of milk, and an apple together for a quick and healthy solution.

4. Sloppy Joes and Fruity Jell-O

This family favorite is quick, easy, and fun. And with the right ingredients, it can be healthy too! Use 90% lean ground turkey in place of ground beef to lighten up your lean protein.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Half a small onion, diced
- 1¼ pounds lean ground turkey
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- Whole wheat hamburger buns
- 2 cups baby carrots
- 1 package Jell-O
- Cubed fruit (apples, nectarines, pineapple, and tangerines)

Instructions:

1. Mix Jell-O per package instructions, and add fruit.
2. Cook beef and celery over medium heat until meat is brown. Strain any fat.
3. Add remaining ingredients and cook over low heat for 15 minutes or until thick
4. Over medium heat, cook beef and celery until meat is browned and celery is tender. Pour off fat, if any. Add remaining ingredients and cook over low heat, uncovered. Wait for flavors to blend and until slightly thickened.
5. Steam baby carrots until still slightly crisp.

5. Tacos and Baked Apples

Ingredients:

- Shredded lettuce (use romaine for vitamins and minerals)
- Chopped tomatoes and olives

- Diced onions

- Shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Corn or wheat tortillas
- Canned low-sodium black beans
- 90% lean ground beef
- Salsa
- 1 apple per person

Instructions:

1. Sauté onions in a large skillet
2. Cook ground beef in a large skillet and drain any fat
3. Rinse black beans and warm in a small sauce pot
4. Warm corn tortillas in the oven

For dessert:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Scoop out the core from top of the apple
3. Stuff each apple with 1 tablespoon light brown sugar and 1 tsp. butter or margarine.
4. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
5. Place apples in a baking dish.
6. Bake in a preheated oven for 15 minutes, until sugar begins to caramelize and apples are tender.

This is a quick and easy dinner, offering a self-serve option with a built-in mix of grains, vegetables and black beans. Serve with a glass of low fat milk and follow it up with an easy apple dessert.

Use these quick and easy recipes to keep your family healthy and happy while whipping up dinner with less stress.

photo courtesy of satanoid and David Berkowitz

You might also like: