

## Healthy Eating for a Healthy Life

A nutritious, well-balanced diet – along with physical activity and refraining from smoking – is the foundation of good health. Healthy eating includes consuming high-quality proteins, carbohydrates, heart-healthy fats, vitamins, minerals and water in the foods you take in while minimizing processed foods, saturated fats and alcohol. Eating in this manner helps you maintain your body's everyday functions, promotes optimal body weight and can assist in disease prevention.



## What is a Healthy Eating Plan?

A healthy lifestyle involves many choices - among them is choosing a balanced diet or healthy eating plan. So how do you choose a healthy eating plan? Let's first begin by defining a healthy eating plan. According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020*, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs



## Eat Healthfully and Enjoy It!

A healthy eating plan that helps you manage your weight includes a variety of foods you may not have considered. If “healthy eating” makes you think about the foods you **can't** have, try refocusing on all the new foods you **CAN** eat—

- **Fresh, Frozen, or Canned Fruits** - Don't think just apples or bananas. All fresh, frozen, or canned fruits are great choices. Be sure to try some “exotic” fruits, too. How about a mango? Or a juicy pineapple or kiwi fruit! When your favorite fresh fruits are not in season, try a frozen, canned, or dried variety of a fresh fruit you enjoy. One caution about canned fruits is that they may contain added sugars or syrups. Be sure to choose canned varieties of fruit packed in water or in their own juice.

- **Fresh, Frozen, or Canned Vegetables** - Try something new. You may find that you love grilled vegetables or steamed vegetables with an herb you haven't tried like rosemary. You can sauté (panfry) vegetables in a non-stick pan with a small amount of cooking spray. Or try frozen or canned vegetables for a quick side dish — just microwave and serve. When trying canned vegetables, look for vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces. Commit to going to the produce department and trying a new vegetable each week.
- **Calcium-rich foods** - You may automatically think of a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk when someone says “eat more dairy products.” But what about low-fat and fat-free yogurts without added sugars? These come in a wide variety of flavors and can be a great dessert substitute for those with a sweet tooth.
- **A new twist on an old favorite** – If your favorite recipe calls for fried fish or breaded chicken, try healthier variations using baking or grilling. Maybe even try a recipe that uses dry beans in place of higher-fat meats. Ask around or search the Internet and magazines for recipes with fewer calories. You might be surprised to find you have a new favorite dish!

### Do I have to give up my favorite comfort food?

**NO!** Healthy eating is all about balance. You can enjoy your favorite foods even if they are high in calories, fat or added sugars. The key is eating them only once in a while, and balancing them out with healthier foods and more physical activity.

Some general tips for comfort foods:

- Eat them less often. If you normally eat these foods every day, cut back to once a week or once a month. You'll be cutting your calories because you're not having the food as often.
- Eat smaller amounts. If your favorite higher-calorie food is a chocolate bar, have a smaller size or only half a bar.
- Try a lower-calorie version. Use lower-calorie ingredients or prepare food differently. For example, if your macaroni and cheese recipe uses whole milk, butter, and full-fat cheese, try remaking it with non-fat milk, less butter, light cream cheese, fresh spinach and tomatoes. Just remember not to increase your portion size.

It is important to keep a well-balanced diet and incorporate a variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Keep your plate colorful and don't be afraid to try new healthy foods!



## Tips for Healthy Grocery Shopping

Eating can be challenging when your pantry and fridge are full of junk food. The first step to healthy eating is making smart choices in the grocery store! Here are some tips to keep in mind the next time you visit the grocery store.

- **Make a grocery list and stick to it!**
- **Grab the smallest cart or basket-** this forces you to think about your purchasing decisions
- **Avoid “rush hour”** – less time to look at the candy and chips while you wait to check out
- **Don’t go shopping when you’re hungry**
- **Buy healthy foods in bulk to save money**
- **Choose lean cuts of meat and opt for skinless poultry**
- **Avoid the center aisles where junk food lurks**
- **Purchase foods that don’t have a nutrition facts label-** “whole foods” spend the most time in the produce section
- **Check fiber content-** 5grams of fiber or higher
- **Choose whole-wheat bread and pastas, brown rice and quinoa**
- **Choose low-fat or non-fat dairy products**
- **The fewer ingredients, the better-** avoid foods that contain ingredients you can't read and contain more than five ingredients
- **Read Food labels-** the key is to look for foods that are low in calorie, sugar, sodium, cholesterol, saturated fats, and trans fats



Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, your diet can help you to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce your risk of chronic diseases (like heart disease and cancer), and promote your overall health.