



Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

20 Health Tips for 2020

1. Eat Breakfast

Start your morning with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit and whole grain cereal.

2. Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and veggies add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen and canned.

3. Watch Portion Sizes

Get out the measuring cups and see how close your portions are to the recommended serving size. Use half your plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. To complete the meal, add a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.

4. Be Active

Regular physical activity has many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults at least two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym—take a walk after dinner or play a game of catch or basketball.

5. Get to Know Food Labels

Reading the Nutrition Facts panel can help you shop and eat or drink smarter.

6. Fix Healthy Snacks

Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more of the MyPlate food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese, or a tablespoon of peanut butter with an apple or banana.

7. Consult an RDN

Whether you want to lose weight, lower your health-risks or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.

8. Follow Food Safety Guidelines

Reduce your chances of getting sick with proper food safety. This includes: regular hand washing, separating raw foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate internal temperature, and refrigerating food promptly. Learn more about home food safety at www.homefoodsafety.org.

9. Drink More Water

Quench your thirst with water instead of drinks with added sugars. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water, especially if you are active, an older adult or live or work in hot conditions.

10. Get Cooking

Preparing foods at home can be healthy, rewarding and cost-effective. Master some kitchen basics, like dicing onions or cooking dried beans.

11. Dine Out without Ditching Goals

You can eat out and stick to your healthy eating plan! The key is to plan ahead, ask questions and choose foods carefully. Compare nutrition information, if available, and look for healthier options that are grilled, baked, broiled or steamed.

12. Enact Family Meal Time

Plan to eat as a family at least a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices to encourage mealtime talk. Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking and use this time to teach them about good nutrition.

13. Banish Brown Bag Boredom

Whether it's for work or school, prevent brown bag boredom with easy-to-make, healthy lunch ideas. Try a whole-wheat pita pocket with veggies and hummus or a low sodium vegetable soup with whole grain crackers or a salad of mixed greens with low-fat dressing and a hard boiled egg.

14. Reduce Added Sugars

Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutrition. Review the new and improved Nutrition Facts labels or ingredients list to identify sources of added sugars.

15. Eat Seafood Twice a Week

Seafood—fish and shellfish—contains a range of nutrients including healthy omega-3 fats. Salmon, trout, oysters and sardines are higher in omega-3s and lower in mercury.

16. Explore New Foods and Flavors

Add more nutrition and eating pleasure by expanding your range of food choices. When shopping, make a point of selecting a fruit, vegetable or whole grain that's new to you or your family.

17. Experiment with Plant-Based Meals

Expand variety in your menus with budget-friendly meatless meals. Many recipes that use meat and poultry can be made without.

Eating a variety of plant foods can help. Vegetables, beans, and lentils are all great substitutes. Try including one meatless meal per week to start.

18. Make an Effort to Reduce Food Waste

Check out what foods you have on hand before stocking up at the grocery store. Plan meals based on leftovers and only buy what you will use or freeze within a couple of days. Managing these food resources at home can help save nutrients and money.

19. Slow Down at Mealtime

Instead of eating on the run, try sitting down and focusing on the food you're about to eat. Dedicating time to enjoy the taste and textures of foods can have a positive effect on your food intake.

20. Supplement with Caution

Choose foods first for your nutrition needs. A dietary supplement may be necessary when nutrient requirements can't be met or there is a confirmed deficiency. If you're considering a vitamin, mineral or herbal supplement, be sure to discuss safe and appropriate options with an RDN or another healthcare provider before taking.

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20 Ways to Enjoy More Fruits and Vegetables

Building a healthy plate is easy when you make half your plate fruits and vegetables. It's also a great way to add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Try the following tips to enjoy more fruits and vegetables every day.

1. Variety abounds when using vegetables as pizza topping. Try broccoli, spinach, green peppers, tomatoes, mushrooms and zucchini.
2. Mix up a breakfast smoothie made with low-fat milk, frozen strawberries and a banana.
3. Make a veggie wrap with roasted vegetables and low-fat cheese rolled in a whole-wheat tortilla.
4. Try crunchy vegetables instead of chips with your favorite low-fat salad dressing for dipping.
5. Grill colorful vegetable kabobs packed with tomatoes, green and red peppers, mushrooms and onions.
6. Add color to salads with baby carrots, grape tomatoes, spinach leaves or mandarin oranges.*
7. Keep cut vegetables handy for mid-afternoon snacks, side dishes, lunch box additions or a quick nibble while waiting for dinner. Ready-to-eat favorites: red, green or yellow peppers, broccoli or cauliflower florets, carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers, snap peas or whole radishes.



8. Place colorful fruit where everyone can easily grab something for a snack-on-the-run. Keep a bowl of fresh, just ripe whole fruit in the center of your kitchen or dining table.
9. Get saucy with fruit. Puree apples, berries, peaches or pears in a blender for a thick, sweet sauce on grilled or broiled seafood or poultry, or on pancakes, French toast or waffles.
10. Stuff an omelet with vegetables. Turn any omelet into a hearty meal with broccoli, squash, carrots, peppers, tomatoes or onions with low-fat sharp cheddar cheese.
11. “Sandwich” in fruits and vegetables. Add pizzazz to sandwiches with sliced pineapple, apple, peppers, cucumber and tomato as fillings.
12. Wake up to fruit. Make a habit of adding fruit to your morning oatmeal, ready-to-eat cereal, yogurt or toaster waffle.
13. Top a baked potato with beans and salsa or broccoli and low-fat cheese.
14. Microwave a cup of vegetable soup as a snack or with a sandwich for lunch.
15. Add grated, shredded or chopped vegetables such as zucchini, spinach and carrots to lasagna, meat loaf, mashed potatoes, pasta sauce and rice dishes.
16. Make fruit your dessert: Slice a banana lengthwise and top with a scoop of low-fat frozen yogurt. Sprinkle with a tablespoon of chopped nuts.
17. Stock your freezer with frozen vegetables to steam or stir-fry for a quick side dish.
18. Make your main dish a salad of dark, leafy greens and other colorful vegetables. Add chickpeas or edamame (fresh soybeans). Top with low-fat dressing.*
19. Fruit on the grill: Make kabobs with pineapple, peaches and banana. Grill on low heat until fruit is hot and slightly golden.
20. Dip: Whole wheat pita wedges in hummus, baked tortilla chips in salsa, strawberries or apple slices in low-fat yogurt, or graham crackers in applesauce.

**See “Smart Tips to Build a Healthy Salad” at www.eatright.org/nutritiontipsheets for more tips on creating healthy salads.*

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Eat Right and Reduce Food Waste

GO FURTHER with FOOD by incorporating these food, nutrition and physical activity tips.



People rarely talk about the foods they toss out, yet the topic of food waste is getting a lot more attention these days.

It's been estimated that Americans throw away 90 billion pounds of food each year either at home or when eating out. And that amount doesn't even include the food that goes uneaten at the grocery store or the crops that are left in farmers' fields.

Not all food that is wasted can be saved and eaten, but it's been proven that a lot of food waste could be prevented, especially at home.

A good place to start is right in your own kitchen. Here are a few tips that will help.

Plan Meals Based on the Foods You Already Have on Hand.

- Look in the refrigerator, freezer and pantry for foods that need to be used up.
- Write a list of the ingredients you still need.
- Buy only the amount that can be eaten or frozen within a few days. This is especially important for perishable foods, like fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy products and seafood.

Get Creative with Leftovers

Transform meals into soups, salads or sandwiches by cutting up leftover meats and veggies.

- Use as a topping for salads or cooked grains like rice or pasta.

- Wrap in a tortilla or stuff into a pita for a satisfying sandwich.
- Combine to make soup, then enjoy or freeze for future use.
- Eat as a leftover meal later in the week.
- Or simply brown bag the leftovers for lunch.

Master the Shelf Life of Foods

Many foods and drinks purchased at the grocery store include a date, which indicates when it should be used or sold by. Because these dates refer to the product's quality, it doesn't necessarily mean they should be thrown out.

- "Use by", "Best by" and "Best Before" dates are found on foods, such as mustard, salad dressing and ketchup. These products usually don't need to be refrigerated until opened. In many cases, they are safe to eat beyond the date as long as they have been stored properly.
- "Sell by" dates are displayed on perishable foods, such as meats and dairy products. It's possible these foods may be used a few days after that date, as long as they were stored at a safe temperature.

Practice Good Food Safety

- Don't risk eating or drinking anything that you suspect has spoiled.
- Eat leftovers within 3 to 4 days (or freeze for up to 3 to 4 months).
- Test your food safety knowledge or find out if it's time to toss those foods by downloading the "[Is My Food Safe](#)" app or accessing the [FoodKeeper App](#) online.
- Create ideal storage conditions
- Store foods in the pantry so that products with closer dates are up front.
- Place foods that could spoil quickly within sight, such as in the front of the refrigerator

or on the counter (if they're not perishable).

- Wait to wash produce until right before serving.
- Learn which fruits and vegetables to store in the refrigerator. Some produce will cause other fruits and vegetables to ripen quickly, so they need to be separated. And others should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place. Check out the "[How to Keep Produce Fresh Longer – Infographic](#)" for more information.

Other Ways to Go Further with Food

- Be mindful of portion sizes. Choose smaller portions to stay within your calorie needs, as MyPlate recommends.
- Order smaller sizes of foods and drinks when eating away from home. Or ask for a to-go container at the start of a meal.
- Learn how to properly can or dehydrate foods at home.
- Donate extra foods that are still safe to eat to a local food pantry or shelter.
- Consider composting.

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Sources: Let's Talk Trash, USDA ChooseMyPlate.gov; The State of America's Wasted Food & Opportunities to Make a Difference. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation, 2016; Leftovers and Food Safety, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.



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Eat Right with MyPlate

Find your healthy eating style using these recommendations from the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Simply start with small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy.



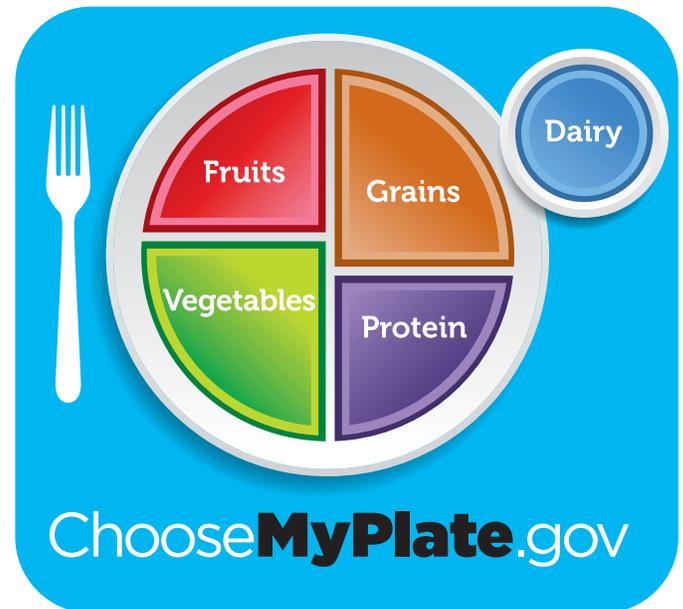
**Make half your plate fruits and vegetables:
Focus on whole fruits.**

- Choose whole, cut or pureed fruits – fresh, frozen, dried or canned in 100% juice.
- Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks or as a dessert.



**Make half your plate fruits and vegetables:
Vary your veggies.**

- Try adding fresh, frozen or canned vegetables to salads, sides and main dishes.



- Choose a variety of colorful veggies prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sautéed, roasted or raw.



Make half your grains whole grains.

- Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list - try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread and brown rice.
- Limit grain desserts and snacks such as cakes, cookies and pastries.



Vary your protein routine.

- Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry.
- Try main dishes made with beans and seafood, like tuna salad or a bean chili.



Drink and eat less sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.

- Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to limit items high in sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.
- Choose vegetable oils instead of butter and oil-based sauces and dips instead of ones with butter, cream or cheese.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Find more healthy eating tips at:

- www.eatright.org
- www.kidseatright.org
- www.ChooseMyPlate.gov



Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt.

- Choose fat-free milk, yogurt and calcium-fortified soymilk to cut back on saturated fat.
- Replace sour cream, cream and regular cheese with low-fat or fat-free yogurt, milk and cheese.



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Eating Right for Older Adults

Eating right doesn't have to be complicated. Before a meal, think about what foods you are going to eat. Choose foods that provide the nutrients you need without too many calories. Build a healthy plate with foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean protein foods.

Consider the following tips to help you get started on your way to eating right.



Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark-green, red and orange vegetables plus beans and peas. Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables all count. Choose "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added" canned vegetables.

Add fruit to meals and snacks. Choose fruits that are dried, frozen or canned in water or 100% juice, as well as fresh fruits.

Make at least half your grains whole.

Choose 100% whole-grain breads, cereals, crackers, pasta and brown rice. Also, look for fiber-rich cereals to help stay regular.

Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

Older adults need more calcium and vitamin D to help keep bones healthy. Include three servings of fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese each day. If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or a calcium-fortified soy beverage.

Vary your protein choices.

Eat a variety of foods from the protein food group each week, such as seafood, nuts, beans and peas, as well as lean meat, poultry and eggs.

Limit sodium, solid fats and added sugars.

Look out for salt, or sodium, in foods you eat. Compare sodium in the foods you buy and choose those with lower numbers. Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt.

Limit major sources of saturated fats, such as pizza, baked goods, full-fat cheese, sausage and hot dogs.

Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing foods.

Drink water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. Select fruit for dessert more often in place of desserts with added sugars.

Enjoy your food but be mindful of portion sizes.

Most older adults need fewer calories than in younger years. Avoid oversized portions. Try using smaller plates, bowls and glasses.

Write down what you eat to keep track of how much you eat.

Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what's in your food.

When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options. Choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits and whole grains. When portions are large, share a meal or take half home for later.

Be physically active your way.

Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can. Every bit adds up and health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

If you are currently inactive, check with your doctor concerning increased physical activity.

Consult a registered dietitian

nutritionist if you have special dietary needs. A registered dietitian nutritionist can create a customized eating plan for you.

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Eating Right for a Healthy Weight

Reaching and maintaining a healthier weight contributes to your overall health and well being. Losing even a few pounds or preventing further weight gain has health benefits.

Are you ready to make changes in your lifestyle and move toward a healthier weight? Here are some tips to get you started.

Start with a plan for lifelong health. Focus on the big picture achieving overall good health—not just short-term weight loss.

Set healthy, realistic goals. You are more likely to succeed in reaching realistic goals when you make changes step-by-step. Start with one or two specific, small changes at a time. Track your progress by keeping a food and activity log.

Get a personalized eating plan. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for a plan that will give you the amounts of each food group you need daily. If you have special nutrition needs, consult a registered dietitian nutritionist for a customized plan.

Eat at least three meals a day and plan your meals ahead of time. Whether you're eating at home, packing a lunch or eating out, an overall eating plan for the day will help keep you on track.

Balance your plate with a variety of foods. Half your plate should be filled with fruits and vegetables, about one fourth with lean meat, poultry or fish, and one fourth with grains. To round out your meal, add fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese.

Start your meal with lower calorie foods like fruits, vegetables and salads. These foods are packed with nutrients your body needs.

Focus on your food. Pick one place to sit down and eat at home. Eating while doing other things may lead to eating more than you think. Also, switching from a large plate to a smaller one may help you feel satisfied with reduced portions.



Know when you've had enough to eat. Quit before you feel full or stuffed. It takes about 20 minutes for your brain to get the message that your body is getting food. When your brain gets this message, you stop feeling hungry. So, fast eaters—slow down and give your brain a chance to get the word.

Get plenty of dietary fiber from fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains. Dietary fiber can help you feel full longer and may lower your risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Watch portion sizes to manage your calorie intake. This is the key to an effective weight management plan. To make sure your portion sizes are “just right,” visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for healthy eating guidelines in household measures and refer to the Nutrition Facts label for serving size information.

Snack smart. Include snacks as part of your daily calorie allowance and limit portions to one serving. Plan for nutritious snacks to prevent between-meal hunger. Keep portable, healthy snacks in your desk, backpack or car.

Find your balance between food and physical activity. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness—plus, it helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.

Find ways to be active throughout the day. Aim for 2 hours and 30 minutes, or more, each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, such as brisk walking. Muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week are also recommended. If you are currently inactive, check with your doctor about increasing physical activity first.

Is it right for you?

Make sure your weight management plan is right for you. Does it include:

- Foods from all five food groups?
- The right number of servings from each group?
- Food you will enjoy eating for the rest of your life?
- Foods you can buy at the supermarket?
- Some of your favorite foods?
- Foods that fit your budget and lifestyle?
- Regular physical activity or exercise?

You're more likely to have success and stick with your weight management plan with every question you answer "yes" to above.

A registered dietitian nutritionist can work with you to develop a personalized weight management plan that meets your individual needs.

For more information about healthy eating, visit www.eatright.org and www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

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Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and Complete Food and Nutrition Guide, 5th edition



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Eating Right on a Budget

Getting the most nutrition for your food budget starts with a little extra planning before you shop. There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. Here are some budget-friendly tips for eating right.

Cook more, eat out less

Eating out can be expensive, and many foods can be prepared for a lot less money (and healthier) at home. Pre-packaged foods, like frozen dinners and packaged pasta or rice mixes can also add up when you calculate the cost per serving. It's better to find a few simple and healthy recipes that your family enjoys and save convenience items and eating out for special occasions.

Plan what you're going to eat

Deciding on meals and snacks before you shop can save both time and money. Review recipes and make a grocery list of what ingredients are needed, then check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you still need to buy. Plus, when shopping with a list you will be less likely to buy things that are not on it. To "Create a Grocery Game Plan", visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Decide how much to make or buy

Making a large batch by doubling a recipe will save time in the kitchen later on. Extra portions can be used for lunches or meals later in the week, or frozen as leftovers in individual containers for future use. Plus, purchasing ingredients in bulk is almost always cheaper.



Determine where to shop

Check the local newspaper, online and at the store for sales and coupons, especially when it comes to more expensive ingredients, such as meat and seafood. While at the store, compare prices of different brands and different sizes of the same brand to see which has a lower unit price. The unit price is usually located on the shelf directly below the product.

Shop for foods that are in season

Fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season are usually easier to get and may be a lot less expensive. Frozen and

canned produce are also good options and may be more affordable at certain times of the year. Look for fruit that is canned in 100% juice or water and canned vegetables that are labeled "low in sodium" or "no salt added".

Watch portion sizes

Eating too much of even lower cost foods and beverages can add up to extra dollars and calories. Use smaller plates, bowls and glasses to help keep portions under control. Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables and the other half with grains and lean meat, poultry, seafood or beans. This is an easy way to eat a balanced meal while controlling portions and cost. To complete the meal, add a glass of fat-free or low-fat milk or a serving of fat-free yogurt for dessert.

Focus on nutritious, low-cost foods

Certain foods tend to be less expensive, so you can make the most of your food dollars by finding recipes that use the following ingredients: beans, peas, and lentils; sweet or white potatoes; eggs; peanut butter; canned salmon, tuna or crabmeat; grains such as oats, brown rice, barley or quinoa; and frozen or canned fruits and vegetables.

Make your own healthy snacks

Convenience costs money, so many snacks, even healthy ones, usually cost more when sold individually. Make your own snacks by purchasing large tubs of low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese and dividing them into smaller containers. For trail mix, combine unsalted nuts, dried fruit and whole grain pretzels or cereal; store small portions in airtight containers. Air-popped popcorn and whole fresh fruits in season also tend to cost less compared to pre-packaged items.

Start a garden or visit a Farmer's Market

A garden can be a lot of fun, especially for kids, and an affordable way to eat more fruits and vegetables. Plants can be started from seed or purchased at a low price.

Another way to increase your family's variety of produce is to visit a farmer's market. Many communities offer the opportunity to buy locally grown fruits and vegetables that are in season for less money than you would pay at the store. Check and see where the closest farmer's market is in your area.

Quench your thirst with water

Water from the tap is a low cost way to stay hydrated. Substituting plain water in place of sweetened beverages can not only save you money but also help you reduce extra calories from added sugars.

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Eating Right with Less Added Sugars



Sugar is found naturally in some foods and drinks, like fruit and milk, but it is also added to many of them. Added sugars give these items a sweet taste. Most Americans get too many calories from added sugars and over time this may affect their weight and health.

Many people think of desserts as the main source of added sugars, but many foods and drinks may contain added sugars. For example, sweetened drinks like regular soft drinks, some fruit drinks and energy drinks are all sources of added sugars. Snack foods, like crackers, and even ready-to-eat foods, like pizza and pasta sauces, can be made with added sugars. Some people may also add sugar to what they eat and drink, like sprinkling sugar over cereal or pouring flavored creamer in coffee.

How to Identify Sources of Added Sugars

The new and improved Nutrition Facts labels can help you identify sources of added sugars. You can also review the ingredients list. The ingredients that appear first are in the largest amount. Be sure to look for foods and drinks that don't have sugar (or some other sweetener)

listed as the first ingredient. Other examples of sweeteners and sources of added sugars include: brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup, molasses, sucrose, white granulated sugar.

Sources of added sugars often lack nutrients needed for good health, while foods and drinks that contain natural sources of sugar provide nutrients, like vitamins and minerals. For example, fruits like strawberries are a great source of vitamin C, and milk provides vitamins A and D and calcium.

It's not necessary to avoid all sources of added sugars. The problem is that many of us include too many sources of added sugars or eat and drink larger amounts than is recommended. When this happens there is less room for more nutritious foods and drinks.

If you have a taste for something sweet, try eating some fruit first. When you're thirsty reach for milk or water. Other ways to reduce sources of added sugars include: making or buying healthier versions of baked goods; including foods and drinks with added sugars less often; and eating or drinking smaller amounts.

Tips on How to Reduce Sources of Added Sugars

- Sweeten low-fat plain yogurt with fresh, frozen or canned (in its own juice) fruit in place of fruit-flavored yogurt.
- Add cinnamon and dried fruit to plain cooked oats instead of using instant flavored oatmeal.

- Encourage healthier drinks like plain milk and water for young children.
- Substitute 100% fruit juice for fruit punch and other fruit-flavored drinks for older children.
- Switch from sweetened to unsweetened applesauce.
- Drink plain low-fat milk instead of chocolate milk.
- Use jams and jellies with no sugar added.
- Enjoy a homemade smoothie with frozen fruit, low-fat milk and yogurt in place of ice cream.
- Quench your thirst with water or plain low-fat milk instead of sweetened beverages, like energy, soft and sports drinks.

Include healthier choices from the MyPlate food groups in place of foods and drinks with added sugars to better meet your nutrient needs.

Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

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Sources: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, health.gov and USDA's ChooseMyPlate.gov



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Healthy Eating Tips for Vegetarians

While there are many reasons people choose a vegetarian eating style, a well-planned vegetarian diet can be healthy, taste great and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases.

What is a vegetarian diet?

There are many types of vegetarians, but most follow a vegetarian diet that excludes meat, poultry and seafood. Some may choose a plant-based diet that also excludes eggs and dairy, such as milk, yogurt and cheese.

Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals of all ages including infants, children, teens and pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as adults.

Are there health benefits?

Vegetarians often have lower cholesterol levels, blood pressure and rates of hypertension and Type 2 diabetes than non-vegetarians.

Vegetarians also tend to have a healthier weight and lower overall cancer rates. These health benefits may result from higher intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and fiber along with lower intakes of saturated fats.

Food Groups for Vegetarians

These food groups may look familiar. They are the same food groups featured in USDA's MyPlate.

- **Fruits:** Eat a wide variety of colorful fruits, including fresh, frozen and canned



with no added sugar. Fruit supplies dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals.

- **Vegetables:** Choose vegetables in a variety of colors, especially orange, red and dark-green for their vitamins, minerals and fiber. Vegetables such as broccoli, bok choy and collard greens provide calcium. Vegetables can be fresh, frozen or canned without salt.
- **Grains:** Eat more whole grains in place of refined ones. Some grains, such as quinoa and millet are higher in protein. Many ready-to-eat cereals are fortified with iron and even vitamin B12. Replace white rice, pasta and breads with whole-grain options.
- **Proteins:** Variety, again, is important in this food group. Beans, peas and lentils are packed with iron, zinc, dietary fiber and protein. Nuts, seeds and soy products are also great choices.
- **Dairy:** Milk, yogurt and cheese are rich in calcium and most are fortified with vitamin D. Choose low-fat or fat-free options. Non-dairy alternatives are also available such as calcium-fortified soymilk.

Healthful Vegetarian Meal and Snack Ideas

As you can see, a healthy vegetarian eating style depends on variety and thoughtful planning. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Breakfast

- Spread almond butter on a whole-grain toasted bagel and top with apple slices.
- Instant oatmeal made with low-fat or fat-free milk or soymilk with nuts and dried cranberries.
- Whole-grain toaster waffle topped with blueberries and low-fat yogurt.

Lunch

- Vegetable burger or falafel with low-fat cheese, mushrooms and tomato on a whole-grain bun.
- Main dish salad with your choice of leafy greens, cut-up vegetables, beans or tofu, fruit and nuts.
- Peanut butter and banana sandwich on whole-wheat bread with carrot and celery sticks.
- Chili made with beans and textured vegetable protein plus shredded low-fat cheese and cornbread.

Dinner

- Whole-grain pasta with tomato sauce plus vegetables (mushrooms, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and onions).
- Pizza with or without cheese and topped with vegetables and tofu or meat substitute.

- Tacos or burritos filled with beans, textured vegetable protein, tofu or tempeh.
- Tofu and vegetable stir-fry with brown rice.
- Baked potato topped with broccoli and low-fat cheese.

Snacks

- Hummus and pita wedges.
- Bagel with nut butter.
- Yogurt layered with crunchy whole-grain-cereal and sliced fruit.
- A cup of vegetable soup and whole grain crackers.

For additional help in planning your or your child's vegetarian eating plan, go to www.eatright.org to find a registered dietitian nutritionist in your area. Additional information is also available on www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.



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This tip sheet is provided by:

Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.



Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Healthy Eating on the Run: A Month of Tips

You probably eat out a lot—most Americans do. People are looking for fast, easy and good-tasting foods to fit a busy lifestyle. Whether it's carry-out, food court, office cafeteria or sit-down restaurant, there are smart choices everywhere. Here are 30 tips to help you eat healthy when eating out.

1. Think ahead and plan where you will eat. Consider what meal options are available. Look for restaurants or carry-out with a wide range of menu items.
2. Take time to look over the menu and make careful selections. Some restaurant menus may have a special section for “healthier” choices.
3. Review nutrition information and compare calories. Menu terms that can mean healthier choices include: baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, and steamed.
4. Menu terms that can mean more saturated fat and calories: batter-fried, pan-fried, buttered, creamed, crispy, breaded. Choose these foods only occasionally and in small portions.
5. Order the regular or child-size portion. Mega-sized servings are probably more than you need. For a lighter meal, order an appetizer in place of a main course.
6. It's OK to make special requests, just keep them simple. For example, ask for a baked potato or side salad in place of French fries; no mayonnaise or bacon on your sandwich; sauces served on the side.
7. Hunger can drive you to eat too much bread before your meal arrives. Hold the bread or chips until your meal is served. Out of sight, out of mind.
8. Think about your food choices for the entire day. If you're planning a special restaurant meal in the evening, have a light breakfast and lunch.
9. Limit the amount of alcohol you drink. No more than one drink for women and two for men. Alcohol tends to increase your appetite and provides calories without any nutrients.
10. Tempted by sweet, creamy desserts? Order one dessert with enough forks for everyone at the table to have a bite.
11. Split your order. Share an extra large sandwich or main course with a friend or take half home for another meal.
12. Boost the nutrition in all types of sandwiches by adding tomato, lettuce, peppers or other vegetables.



13. A baked potato offers more dietary fiber, fewer calories and less saturated fat than fries if you skip the sour cream and butter. Top your potato with broccoli and a sprinkle of cheese or salsa.
14. At the sandwich shop, choose lean beef, ham, turkey or chicken on whole grain bread. Ask for mustard, ketchup, salsa or low-fat spreads. And, don't forget the veggies.
15. In place of fries or chips, choose a side salad, fruit or baked potato. Or, share a regular order of fries with a friend.
16. Enjoy ethnic foods such as Chinese stir-fry, vegetable-stuffed pita or Mexican fajitas. Go easy on the sour cream, cheese and guacamole.
17. At the salad bar, pile on the dark leafy greens, carrots, peppers and other fresh vegetables. Lighten up on mayonnaise-based salads and high-fat toppings. Enjoy fresh fruit as your dessert.
18. Eat your lower-calorie food first. Soup or salad is a good choice. Follow up with a light main course.
19. Ask for sauces, dressings and toppings to be served "on the side." Then you control how much you eat.
20. Pass up all-you-can-eat specials, buffets and unlimited salad bars if you tend to eat too much.
21. If you do choose the buffet, fill up on salads and vegetables first. Take no more than two trips and use the small plate that holds less food.
22. Load up your pizza with vegetable toppings. If you add meat, make it lean ham, Canadian bacon, chicken or shrimp.
23. Look for a sandwich wrap in a soft tortilla. Fillings such as rice mixed with seafood, chicken, or grilled vegetables are usually lower in calories.
24. Build a better breakfast sandwich: replace bacon or sausage with Canadian bacon or ham and order your sandwich on a whole grain English muffin or bagel.
25. Be size-wise about muffins, bagels, croissants and biscuits. A jumbo muffin has more than twice the calories of the regular size.
26. Try a smoothie made with 100% juice, fruit and low-fat yogurt for a light lunch or snack.
27. Refrigerate carry-out or leftovers if the food won't be eaten right away. Toss foods kept at room temperature for more than two hours.
28. Grabbing dinner at the supermarket deli? Select rotisserie chicken, salad-in-a-bag and freshly baked bread. Or, try sliced lean roast beef, onion rolls, salad and fresh fruit.
29. Always eating on the go? Tuck portable, nonperishable foods in your purse, tote, briefcase or backpack for an on-the-run meal. Some suggestions are peanut butter and crackers, granola bars, a piece of fresh fruit, trail mix, single serve packages of whole grain cereal or crackers.
30. For desk-top dining, keep single-serve packages of whole grain crackers, fruit, peanut butter, soup, or tuna in your desk for a quick lunch.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information visit www.eatright.org.



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Source: *Finding Your Way to a Healthier You*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U. S. Department of Agriculture.



Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Smart Snacking Tips for Kids

Snacks can play an important role in meeting kids' nutrient needs. Choosing foods from all of the food groups will give them the energy they need between meals.

It helps to plan and portion out snacks in advance. Kids will usually only need 2 or 3 snacks daily, and these should be provided at least one hour before meals.

It is recommended that snacks (and meals) be eaten in an area without distractions. So avoid snacking while watching TV or when using other electronic devices.

Better yet, let the kids help prepare the healthy snacks.



Here are a few easy, tasty (and healthy) snacks to help get you started. Adults may need to help with some of these.

- 1. Parfait:** Layer vanilla or plain low-fat yogurt with fruit and dried cereal.
- 2. Toast a whole grain waffle** and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced fruit or smooth nut butter.
- 3. Blend low-fat milk,** frozen strawberries and a banana for thirty seconds for a delicious smoothie.
- 4. Sandwich cut-outs:** Make a sandwich on whole grain bread. Cut out your favorite shape using a big cookie cutter. Eat the fun shape and the edges, too!
- 5. Mini-pizza:** Toast a whole wheat English muffin, drizzle with pizza sauce and sprinkle with low-fat mozzarella cheese.
- 6. Frozen treats:** Mix equal amounts of fat-free plain or flavored yogurt with 100% fruit juice, then pour into paper cups and freeze for a tasty treat.
- 7. Quesadilla:** Sprinkle shredded cheese over a corn or whole wheat tortilla; fold in half and microwave for twenty seconds. Top with salsa.
- 8. Spread hummus** on a tortilla. Top with a slice of turkey or ham, low-fat cheese and lettuce. Then roll it up.
- 9. Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket** with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.

10. **Microwave a cup** of tomato or vegetable soup and enjoy with whole grain crackers.
11. **Make a mini-sandwich** with tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll.
12. **Microwave a small baked potato.** Top with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.
13. **Spread celery sticks** with smooth nut butter or low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins. Enjoy your “ants on a log.”
14. **Dip slices of fruit** or whole-grain graham crackers into low-fat vanilla pudding or yogurt.
15. **Inside-out sandwich:** Spread mustard on a slice of deli turkey. Wrap around a sesame breadstick.
16. **Rocky road:** Smear low-fat chocolate pudding on a whole grain graham cracker, then top with a marshmallow.
17. **Sprinkle cinnamon** on unsweetened applesauce and enjoy with a whole grain graham cracker for a taste similar to apple pie.
18. **Make your own fruit roll-up** by pureeing fruit and either baking it in the oven or by using a dehydrator.
19. **Bake homemade chewy granola bars** using whole-grain oats and dried fruit.
20. **Whip up mini-muffins** using healthy ingredients, like whole grain flours and pureed fruit.

Find more healthy eating tips at:

www.kidseatright.org
www.eatright.org/nutritiontipsheets

Portion sizes for kids are smaller than adults. However, certain foods due to their size pose a choking risk, especially for young children.

See below for a list of foods that may cause choking:

- Hot dogs and sausage links
- Meat chunks, unless finely chopped and combined
- Nuts, seeds and peanut butter
- Raw apple and pear slices
- Whole grapes
- Dried fruit
- Raw vegetables
- Whole kernels of corn
- Popcorn and chips
- Small candies and chewing gum

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