

## Eat Well Your Guide to a Healthy Eating Plan

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), 2005, gives science-based advice on food and physical activity choices for health.

### What is a "Healthy Diet"?

The Dietary Guidelines describe a **healthy diet** as one that

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

**You Are What You Eat.** The food you choose will affect your sense of wellbeing throughout the day and will influence your health and performance in the long run. The best choices are foods that are rich in nutrients and low in saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar.

### Your Daily Nutrition Plan:

- **Focus on fruits.** Eat a variety of fruits—whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried. Aim for at least 2 cups of fruit each day (for example, 1 small banana, 1 large orange, and 1/4 cup of dried apricots or peaches).
- **Vary your veggies.** Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.
- **Make half your grains whole.** Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. One ounce is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as "whole" in the list of ingredients.
- **Go lean with protein.** Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it. And vary your protein choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- **Get your calcium-rich foods.** Get 3 cups of low-fat or fat-free milk—or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese (1½ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk)—every day. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.

**Know the limits on fats, salt, and sugars.** Read the Nutrition Facts label on foods. Look for foods low in saturated fats and *trans* fats. Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little salt (sodium) and/or added sugars (caloric sweeteners).

### Things to Avoid When Meal Planning:

- Control your intake of **cholesterol-rich foods** such as animal fats, organ meats (e.g., liver), and high-fat meats (e.g., hot dogs, bologna, salami).
- Avoid **saturated fats in butter and trans fats** hidden in solid margarine, and processed foods such as cookies and crackers.

### Choose wisely:

- Not all fats are bad. Choose **heart healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats** such as olive and canola oils.
- Opt for **low-fat cooking methods**—broiling, baking, and steaming.
- Eat one to two servings per week of **fish** (e.g., salmon, tilefish, tuna).
- **Limit salt cured, smoked, and nitrite-cured foods**, and sodium-laden processed foods and snacks.

### Dining Out

It's important to make smart food choices and watch portion sizes wherever you are—at the grocery store, at work, in your favorite restaurant, or running errands. Try these tips:

- At the store, plan ahead by buying a variety of nutrient-rich foods for meals and snacks throughout the week.
- When grabbing lunch, have a sandwich on whole-grain bread and choose low-fat/fat-free milk, water, or other drinks without added sugars.
- In a restaurant, opt for steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed.
- On a long commute or shopping trip, pack some fresh fruit, cut-up vegetables, string cheese sticks, or a handful of unsalted nuts—to help you avoid impulsive, less healthful snack choices.

### More Health Eating Tips:

- **Eat more fiber.** Choose whole wheat grains, brown rice, cereals  $\geq 5$  grams of fiber per serving, breads  $> 4$  grams per slice, beans, and the peels of fruits and veggies.
- **Drink more water.** Try to drink at least 2 liters (8-10 cups) per day. If you are trying to lose weight, avoid drinking fluids with calories such as sodas, coffee drinks, juices (eat the fruit instead), and alcohol. *The exception to this rule is nonfat or low fat milk.* It is very easy to drink an extra 500-1000 calories per day.
- **Get enough Calcium.** Women need 1000-1200 mg of calcium per day and men need around 800 mg per day. That's around 2-3 cups of dairy plus beans, dark green veggies, fortified soy products, and fish.
- **A multivitamin supplement** can be a safety net to provide nutrients that you may be missing

For more information or a wellness consultation, contact Julie Chobdee, MPH, Wellness Program Coordinator at [julie.chobdee@ucr.edu](mailto:julie.chobdee@ucr.edu) or x2-1488.

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