

great living starts here™

daily food choices

To promote health and prevent disease, adjust your daily food habits to meet the DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS listed below.

Consume a variety of foods within and among the basic food groups while staying within your energy needs. Choose foods that are high in nutrients and low-to-moderate in calories to make sure you get everything you need without overeating. Eat a variety of foods within each basic food group, which includes fruits, vegetables, grains, milk, and meat and beans, to ensure you consume good sources of all nutrients. Limit calories from foods high in added sugars or solid fats, since they provide few nutrients.



Be physically active every day.

Be ready to get moving, especially if you have just dropped some pounds. To prevent weight gain, adults need 30-60 minutes a day of moderate physical activity. If you have lost weight and want to keep it off, you need 60-90 minutes daily. For children, 60 minutes a day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity is recommended.

Control calorie intake to manage body weight.

It is the calories, not the carbs, protein or fat that matter for weight loss. Most people simply eat too much. Just by cutting back by 50-100 calories a day, you can avoid weight gain. The healthiest way to reduce your calorie intake is to cut back on added sugar, solid fat and alcohol.

Choose fats wisely for good health.

- Fats and oils are important to a healthy diet, but the type of fat and amount makes a difference for heart health. Keep saturated fat to less than 10 percent of calories, trans fats below 1 percent and cholesterol less than 300 mg. This means, limit your intake of ice cream, bacon, chicken skin, fatty meats, whole milk and other full-fat dairy foods, such as cheese and hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- To lower cholesterol intake, limit eggs and organ meats, shellfish, poultry and dairy products that contain fat.
- To reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease, eat two 4-ounce servings of salmon, trout, light tuna or mackerel a week.



Increase daily intake of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and nonfat or low fat milk and milk products.

- Nutrients found in fruits and vegetables help guard against stroke, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. You should eat 2 ½ to 6 ½ cups daily depending on your calorie needs (4 cups for a 1,800 diet, for example).
- Eat at least 3 servings of whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread, brown rice or oatmeal in place of white bread and white rice.
- Drink 3 cups daily of nonfat or low fat milk or milk products, such as yogurt, to get adequate calcium.



Choose and prepare foods with little salt.

Eat fewer processed and ready-to-eat foods, which are high in salt.

Check nutrition information before buying or eating foods. Aim for less than 2,300 mg sodium daily. Season foods with herbs and spices instead of high-sodium items like salt, soy sauce, or steak sauce. Choose fresh rather than canned vegetables, fish or meats. Eat more foods high in potassium, such as greens, tomatoes, oranges, melons, and bananas, to reduce the effects of salt.



Choose carbohydrates wisely for good health.

Pick carbohydrates that are fiber-rich and healthy choices, such as fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat milk. Choose whole fruit over juices, whole grains (wheat, oatmeal) over refined grains (white flour, white rice). Watch out for added sugars and pre-sweetened beverages and cereals that will add unwanted calories.

If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation.

If you choose to drink, limit to one drink daily for women and two drinks daily for men. One drink is defined as 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof alcohol.

Keep food safe to eat.

Wash hands, fruits, vegetables and contact surfaces. Do NOT wash meat and poultry, as this can spread bacteria. Cook foods to a safe temperature. Promptly chill perishable food. Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.

| food group | recommended daily | serving size |
|--|---|--|
| Fruits | 3 servings Consume citrus fruits, melons, berries, and other fruits regularly | Medium-size orange, apple, or banana ½ cup of chopped, cooked, or canned fruit (no sugar added) ½ cup of 100% fruit juice ¼ cup dried fruit |
| Vegetables | 4-5 servings Dark-green leafy vegetables: 3 cups/week Orange vegetables: 2 cups/week Legumes: 3 cups/week Starchy vegetables: 3 cups/week Other vegetables: 6-½ cups/week | 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables: spinach, lettuce ½ cup of other vegetables, cooked or chopped raw ½ cup of vegetable juice |
| Grains | 5-6 servings Whole-grain products: 3 daily Other grains: 3 daily | 1 slice of bread 2 large or 4 small crackers ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal 1 small roll or muffin ½ English muffin, bagel, hamburger bun, or large roll |
| Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts | 5 ½ ounces daily Choose fish, dry beans, peas, poultry without skin, and lean meat | 1 ounce of cooked fish, poultry, or lean meat ¼ cup cooked dry beans or tofu 1 egg 1 Tbsp peanut butter ½ ounce nuts or seeds |
| Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese | 3 servings Choose skim milk and nonfat yogurt Choose part-skim and low fat cheeses | 1 cup of milk or yogurt 1 ½-ounces of natural cheese (Mozzarella, Swiss, Cheddar) 2 ounces of processed cheese (American) |
| Oils | 5 tsp daily Oils and soft margarines include vegetable oils and soft vegetable oil table spreads that are free of trans-fat | |