



Healthy eating tips

Learn how to get the right balance



Our eating habits, along with activity levels, affect our health more than anything besides smoking.¹ When life gets busy, though, nutrition is often the first thing we let slip. It takes some extra time, but planning ahead and making healthy meals and snacks can add years to your life.¹

Here are a few tips to make healthy choices and get the right balance in your diet²

- **Carbs** give your body the fuel it needs for physical activity. Whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans are good choices. They'll give you vitamins, minerals, fiber and other important nutrients. Skip things like white bread, white rice, pastries, soda and highly processed foods, like packaged snacks. Those carbs come from refined grains and won't keep you satisfied for long.
- **Protein** from plant-based foods like beans and nuts is the healthiest. Fish and poultry are also good sources. If you want to eat red meat, pick the leanest cuts and only eat it once in a while.
- **Fiber** can help protect you against certain health problems. A diet with a lot of whole grains, beans, vegetables and fruits will help you get the fiber your body needs.
- **Vegetables and fruits** can also help protect your health. Go for color and variety: dark green, yellow, orange and red.
- **Fats** are part of a healthy diet, if they come from sources like plant oils, nuts and fish. Try to limit the amount of foods you eat that have saturated fats — like cheeses and meats — and avoid trans fats. Read the labels on packaged foods to make sure they don't have any trans fat.

Find out more

Visit [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) to find healthy food ideas, exercise tips and learn more about portion sizes.



Sources

¹ American Cancer Society website: *Diet and Physical Activity: What's the Cancer Connection?* (accessed November 2017): [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Healthy Weight* (accessed November 2017): [cdc.gov/healthyweight](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight).

³ United States Department of Agriculture website: *Tips for Eating Healthy when Eating Out* (accessed November 2017): [choosemyplate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov).

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- **Calcium** is important for healthy bones. Milk and other dairy products are good sources for calcium, but they're not the only ones. Nondairy sources of calcium include collards, bok choy, fortified soy milk and baked beans.
- **Salt** can cause health problems if your diet includes too much of it. Cut down on processed foods, which are usually high in salt. And read the labels of the foods you buy to check how much salt — listed as sodium — is in them.
- **Alcohol** can be healthy in moderation, but not for everyone. Moderate drinking for women is up to one drink a day; for men, it's up to two drinks a day. There are benefits, such as improved heart health, but also risks, like increased risks for certain health problems like breast and colon cancer.
- **Daily multivitamins**, especially one with vitamin D, can help your health. But don't take more than what's recommended, and make sure your doctor knows about any vitamins you take.
- **Portion size matters**, so find out what a serving of a particular food looks like on a plate so you'll know if you're eating too much or too little. Try using smaller plates for your meals. And serve plates at the stove instead of at the table, so you think twice before having seconds.²

Keeping calories low when you're on the go

When eating out, it can be hard to keep track of how many calories you're actually consuming. Here are some tips for healthy eating away from home.³

- Order water or unsweetened tea instead of drinks with added sugar.
- Start your meal with a salad (with dressing on the side). This may keep you from overindulging.
- Choose dishes that include vegetables, even if it's only pasta with tomato sauce.
- Order steamed, grilled or broiled foods instead of ones that are fried or sautéed.
- For car trips, pack snacks such as fresh fruits or vegetables, low-fat string cheese or a handful of unsalted nuts.
- Skip the buffets. Order small or half-sized portions, when you can. Or, ask for half of your food to be packaged to go when you order.
- Order fruit for dessert.

Remember, making smart food choices has health benefits that support your overall well-being.

