



EAT HEALTHY

The food and physical activity choices you make every day affect your health—how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future. You may be eating plenty of food, but not eating the right foods that give your body the nutrients you need to be healthy. The best way to give your body the balanced nutrition it needs is by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day. Just be sure to stay within your daily calorie needs.

A healthy eating plan is one that:

- Emphasizes nutrient-dense foods and beverages, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds.
- Limits sodium, solid fats, added sugars, and refined grains.
- Maintains calorie balance over time to achieve and sustain a healthy weight. Calorie balance occurs when you decrease calories you consume and increase your physical activity.

Focus on fruits and vegetables. Aim for 2 ½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit (9 servings) every day (for a reference 2,000 calorie diet). Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and fat and provide fiber and nutrients that are valuable to maintaining health. For example of one serving: one medium-size fruit (about the size of a baseball); 1/2 cup raw, cooked, frozen or canned fruits or vegetables; 3/4 cup (6 oz.) 100% fruit or vegetable juice; 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables; or 1/4 cup dried fruit.

Variety is important. Eat more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, spinach, romaine, collard greens, and other dark leafy greens; orange and red veggies, such as tomatoes, red peppers, 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 at least half of all 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 1/2 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. Increase whole grain intake by replacing refined grains with whole grains.

Go lean with protein. Choose a variety of seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds. Increase your seafood intake by choosing seafood instead of another meat or poultry. Bake, broil, or grill your seafood, meats, and poultry.

Get plenty of 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 (1 1/2 ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk)—every day. For kids aged 2 to 8, it’s 2 cups of milk. If you don’t or can’t consume milk, choose lactose- free milk products and/or calcium rich or calcium- fortified foods and beverages.