

Food First

For maximum health through nutrition, consider the following:

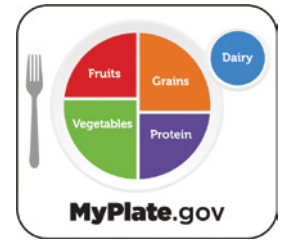
- Are you eating at least five servings a day of a colorful variety of fruits and non-starchy vegetables? One serving size equals ½ cup of those or 1 cup of fresh leafy greens. The USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 2-2½ cups of vegetables (including starchy vegetables) and 1½-2 cups of fruit as part of a 1,600-2,000 calorie adult diet.
- Are you eating at least 3 servings of whole grains every day? Look for 100% whole-grain products, including whole wheat, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, etc.
- Are you eating beans and legumes 4-5 times weekly? Try adding kidney, navy, soy, and pinto beans, chickpeas, lentils, and more.
- Are you eating a colorful variety of minimally processed plant foods? Expand your diet to include dark-green, leafy vegetables (kale, chard, mustard/collard greens) and berries (blueberries, blackberries, etc.). The richer the colors, the better!
- Are you eating healthy fats such as those contained in nuts and nut butters, seeds, avocados, olive and canola oils, and fish?
- Are you limiting processed foods that are high in salt or added sugars, or that contain unhealthy trans or saturated fats? Processed foods can contain ingredients causing chronic inflammation in the body, which research shows may promote cancer cell growth.
- Are you avoiding processed meats such as ham, bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and luncheon meats? Limit red meats such as beef, pork, and lamb to no more than 12-18 ounces per week to further reduce cancer risk.
- Are you cooking with a wide variety of spices and herbs? Spices and herbs (curry, garlic, oregano, sage, thyme, etc.) have many cancer-fighting properties. Remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Are you drinking enough water? If your urine is darker than a pale straw color or has a strong odor, you probably need to drink more water.
- Are you limiting alcoholic drinks to two per day if you're a man and one per day if you're a woman? All alcoholic drinks raise cancer risk, so if you don't drink, don't start. Ask your doctor about any drinking during treatment.
- Are you getting adequate exercise? Exercise has been shown to decrease the risk of developing cancer. Those who have cancer do better through treatment and recovery if they exercise as tolerated. Exercise can help regulate appetite, increase energy levels, lower stress, and improve bowel function. Shoot for 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.
- Are you getting enough rest? Inadequate rest can lead to overeating or taking in too much caffeine, which can further interfere with rest and appetite.



If you said “no” to any of these, start working on meeting these nutrition goals one by one. Nutrients work best in your body when they come the way nature packaged them – in whole foods rather than in pills. If a nutrient is lacking in your diet, such as calcium if you don't eat dairy products, taking a supplement may be beneficial. Ask your dietitian for advice.

Build a Healthy Meal

Each meal is a building block in your healthy eating style. Make sure to include all the food groups throughout the day. Make fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods part of your daily meals and snacks. Also, limit added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Use the MyPlate Daily Checklist and the tips below to meet your needs throughout the day.



1 Make half your plate veggies and fruits.

Vegetables and fruits are full of nutrients that support good health. Choose fruits and red, orange, and dark-green vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli.



2 Include whole grains.

Aim to make at least half your grains whole grains. Look for the words “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat” on the food label. Whole grains provide more nutrients, like fiber, than refined grains.

3 Don't forget the dairy.

Complete your meal with a cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. You will get the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk but fewer calories. Don't drink milk? Try a soy beverage (e.g., soy milk) as your drink or include low-fat yogurt in your meal or snack.



4 Add lean protein.

Choose protein foods such as lean beef, pork, chicken, or turkey, and eggs, nuts, beans, or tofu. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.

5 Avoid extra fat.

Using heavy gravies or sauces will add fat and calories to otherwise healthy choices. Try steamed broccoli with a sprinkling of low-fat parmesan cheese or a squeeze of lemon.

6 Get creative in the kitchen.

Whether you are making a sandwich, a stir-fry, or

a casserole, find ways to make them healthier. Try using less meat and cheese, which can be higher in saturated fat and sodium, and adding in more veggies that add new flavors and textures to your meals.

7 Take control of your food.

Eat at home more often so you know exactly what you are eating. If you eat out, check and compare the nutrition information. Choose options that are lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium.



8 Try new foods.

Keep it interesting by picking out new foods you've never tried before, such as mango, lentils, quinoa, kale, or sardines. You may find a new favorite! Trade fun and tasty recipes with friends or find them online.

9 Satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way.

Indulge in a naturally sweet dessert dish – fruit! Serve a fresh fruit salad or a fruit parfait made with yogurt. For a hot dessert, bake apples and top with cinnamon.

10 Everything you eat and drink matters.

The right mix of foods in your meals and snacks can help you be healthier now and into the future. Turn small changes in how you eat into your *MyPlate*, *MyWins*.

Go to MyPlate.gov for more information.

All images and content are taken from MyPlate.gov.