

# Nutrition and Health Info Sheet

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## General Nutrition Guidelines

The following recommendations are adapted from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* (1).

### Balancing calories to manage weight

Having a healthy body weight is important for good health. Balancing the calories that a person eats with the calories they burn is key in having a healthy body weight.

- If someone eats more calories than he or she uses, that person will gain weight.
- If someone eats less calories than he or she uses, that person will lose weight.

Some ways to help balance calories are:

- Focus on the number of calories;
- Keep track of what you eat. When people are more aware of what they are eating, they tend to eat less;
- Eat smaller portions. A portion is different from a serving. A serving is a measured amount of food, while a portion is the amount that you actually eat in one sitting. A portion can be big or small, and can have more than one serving;



- Eat a healthy breakfast. People who eat a healthy breakfast on a regular basis tend to weigh less than people who don't;
- Limit screen time. This includes time spent watching TV, sitting at the computer, and playing video games.

Physical activity is also important to balancing calories.

- Kids and teens should get a least an hour of physical activity each day;
- Adults should get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of physical activity each week.



### Foods and food components to reduce

There are some foods and ingredients that don't really do much other than raise the number of calories we eat, and make it more likely that a person will develop heart disease or type 2 diabetes. These kinds of foods and ingredients are ones that we should eat less of.

#### Sodium

Most of the sodium people eat is from salt, and most people eat a lot more than they need. It's important to not eat too much sodium because it can raise blood pressure, which can make it more likely a person will develop heart disease or kidney disease (see table 1 for recommendations on sodium).

Salt is used to help give foods flavor and help preserve them. Most of the salt people eat is from processed foods, but it also comes from things with salt that people eat frequently, like bread.

Some ways to eat less sodium are:



less salt.

- Read the nutrition fact label to find out how much sodium a food has. Buy foods that are low in sodium;
- Eat more fresh food and less processed food. Processed foods can have a lot of sodium;
- Eat more home-cooked food, and when cooking, use

### Saturated Fat and Trans Fat

Eating too much saturated fat can raise the chance that a person will develop heart disease.

Most of the saturated fat people eat comes from cheese, pizza, dessert, chicken dishes, and sausage, franks, bacon, and ribs. By eating less than 10% of calories from saturated fat, and using polyunsaturated and monounsaturated instead, you can lower your risk for heart disease. For a person who needs 2,000 calories a day, this means eating less than 22 grams of saturated fat.

*Trans* fat are similar to saturated fats, in that they are usually solid at room temperature. They've been found to raise low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, otherwise known as "bad" cholesterol, and lower "good" cholesterol, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol.

Some ways to eat less saturated and *trans* fat are:

- Replace butter and other solid fats (like shortening) with vegetable oils;
- Switch to low-fat and non-fat milk;
- Eat leaner meat, take the skin off of chicken, and trim the fat away the fat on meat;
- Eat less crackers, cookies, cakes, and other processed foods that contain *trans* fat.



### Cholesterol

The body is capable of making its own cholesterol, so we don't need to get any from food. Cholesterol is found in meat and animal products. A lot of foods that are high in cholesterol are also high in saturated fat. Aiming for less than 300 mg a day is a good idea, and for those at risk for heart disease, 200 mg a day is the limit.

### Added Sugars

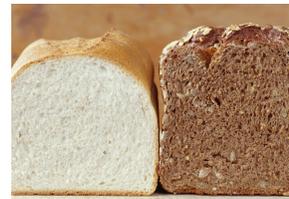


These do nothing but provide extra calories. A major source of added sugars are sugary drinks, like soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, and juice drinks, as well as dessert and candy. By eating less of these things, people can reduce the amount of calories that people eat in a day while not impacting the amount of important nutrients they get.

For people who are African Americans, older than 50, and/or have high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease	Less than 1,500 mg a day
For people who don't fall into the above groups	Less than 2,300 mg a day

## Refined Grains

When grains are refined, the bran and germ are removed. Since the bran and germ contain a lot of the minerals, vitamins, and fiber, this makes refined grains less nutritious than whole grain. A lot of refined grains have some of the vitamins and minerals added back in (these are called enriched grains), but they still don't have the fiber the whole grains do. Enriched grains can provide vitamins and minerals, but people tend to eat more than should. Only about half the grains we eat should be from enriched grains, but for many people, they make up almost all. A lot of refined grain products have added sugars and solid fats, like saturated fat and *trans* fat, like donuts, cakes and cookies, and other desserts. Eating less of these can help reduce the amount of calories eaten without impacting nutrient intake.



## Alcohol

While alcohol can be a part of a healthy diet, drinking too much can be a problem. Certain groups should stay away from alcohol. These include: those below the legal drinking age, alcoholics, women who are pregnant or may be pregnant.

## Foods and nutrients to increase

Eating a healthy diet can make it less likely a person will develop a chronic disease like heart disease or diabetes. Certain foods are an important part of a healthy diet, and most Americans don't eat enough of them.

## Vegetables and Fruit

Vegetables and fruits contain a lot of nutrients that many people don't get enough of, such as fiber, folate, potassium, and magnesium. They also don't have very many calories, which means they can help in getting all the necessary nutrients without eating more calories than are needed. Eating at least 2 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables a day may make it less likely that a person will develop heart disease. Many people get most of their fruit servings from fruit juice. While juice can be part of a healthy diet, it doesn't have the fiber that whole fruit has, and can be an easy way to get too many calories. The majority of fruit eaten should be whole fruit, either fresh, canned, or dried, rather than juice. When drinking juice, 100% juice is the best option.



## Whole Grains

Whole grains are a good source of B-vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Half the grains that we eat each day should be whole grains. While most Americans eat enough grains, most of it is from refined grains, rather than whole grains. Most don't eat enough whole grains, which have been linked to lower risk of heart disease, and may help maintain a healthy weight.

## Low-Fat and Fat-Free Milk and Milk Products

Calcium is a very important nutrient. Milk and milk products are an important source of calcium. Most of what Americans eat comes from whole milk and reduced-fat (also called 2% milk), which have more saturated fat and more calories than low-fat and fat-free milk.

For those that can't or choose not to consume milk or milk products, eating foods that can provide calcium, vitamin D, and other nutrients in milk is very important. Soy milk fortified with calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin A is one option.

## Protein Foods

Protein foods include meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, beans and peas, soy products, nuts and seeds. When eating meat and poultry, use lean cuts and trim off fat, and remove the skin from poultry. This helps keep saturated fat low. Beans, peas, soy, nuts, and seeds are good sources of protein, but also of other nutrients, such as fiber, minerals, and healthy fats. Eating seafood, nuts, seeds, beans, and peas, can help lower risk of heart disease. Nuts and seeds are high in calories, though, so when eating them, don't eat too many.



## Oils



While solid fats are bad, oils are good for you. Oils are high in mono- and polyunsaturated fats, and are usually liquid at room temperature. They are a good source of vitamin E. Oils are found in olives, nuts and seeds, avocados, and fish, as well as cooking oil, like olive oil and canola oil.

## Building Healthy Eating Patterns

Healthy eating patterns can be very diverse, but they all follow the same general principles.

- Fruits and vegetables
- Emphasis on whole grains
- Moderate amount of protein, not just from meat and poultry, but also seeds, nuts, beans, peas, and seafood.
- Low amounts of solid fats and added sugars
- Many contain low-fat milk and milk products



Some ways to help build a healthier diet include:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less
- Stay away from large portions
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Switch to low-fat and fat-free milk
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks
- Eat foods that are low in salt

## REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.

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