

PART 3

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Make a Plan

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You have learned how to make healthy choices within each food group. Now it's time to form your personal plan of action. This section will help you:

- Strengthen your reasons for managing your weight.
- Plan your snacks and meals for a day.
- Design a week-long meal plan and grocery list.
- Modify recipes to match what you like and have available.
- Choose healthy foods at the grocery store, buffet, restaurant, and other places you eat.

Change Is Your Choice

The decision to make changes is up to you. You can decide which changes you want to make, how long it takes you to make them, and who you tell.

Check in with yourself daily. Pick one of your action steps from Part 2 or a new one. Answer the following:

What do I want to do? Am I willing to do this?

If there is something I am unable to do, what do I need to do to get there?

What am I going to do right now?

Check in with Your Values

Remember those values you identified in Part 1?

How will continuing this journey help me live another one of my values?

How have I cared for myself today?

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Set Goals

Think of the actions you take on a daily basis as small steps toward your bigger goal. This guide has already given you many ideas for small steps, such as making half of your plate fruits and vegetables and choosing fewer sugar-sweetened drinks. Identify your next step and use the S.M.A.R.T. tool to improve the chances of reaching your goal.

S Specific	M Measurable	A Attainable	R Relevant	T Time-Based
What is my goal? Define the goal. Use as much detail as possible.	How will I know when my goal is accomplished? How will I measure my progress?	Is the goal reasonable? Is achieving my goal within my reach?	Is this goal worthwhile? Does this goal meet my needs?	When will I complete this goal? How will I manage my time?
Not specific: <i>I will eat more vegetables.</i> Specific: <i>I will eat 2 cups of vegetables a day.</i>	Not measurable: <i>I will add fruit to my diet.</i> Measurable: <i>I will add a piece of fruit to my lunch five times this week.</i>	Not attainable: <i>I will not eat sugary desserts anymore.</i> Attainable: <i>This week, I will limit dessert to one day on the weekend.</i>	Not relevant: <i>I will count milligrams of calcium in my diet.</i> Relevant: <i>I will get enough servings of dairy each day, using MyPlate guidelines.</i>	Not time-based: <i>I will start a walking routine soon.</i> Time-based: <i>I will go for my first walk today. I will schedule time for a walk every other day.</i>

Stay motivated with the small successes you achieve along the way. Use your *Eating & Exercise Tracker*™ every day for feedback on the effort your actions have on your energy level, mood, and weight.

Practice Goal-Setting

Strengthen your goal using the S.M.A.R.T. tool. Start with a simple statement about what you want to do. Next, write how your goal will be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based.

My healthy lifestyle goal:

S Specific	M Measurable	A Attainable	R Relevant	T Time-Based

Meal Planning Basics

This guide uses the terms breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks.

- **Breakfast:** The first time you eat upon waking
- **Lunch:** 3–4 hours later
- **Dinner:** 4–5 hours later
- **Snacks:** Small meals between breakfast, lunch, and dinner. These are optional, but snacks may help you manage hunger.

Your work schedule, culture, travel, dietary restrictions, or preferences may mean you have a different meal schedule. Label each meal or snack in a way that makes sense to you.

Goals for all meals and snacks:

- Get enough energy and nutrients.
- Choose foods from the main food groups.
- Meet, but try not to go over, your daily goals for all food groups.
- Avoid spikes or drops in blood sugar that can trigger overeating, sugar cravings, mood swings, and tiredness.
- Include tasty foods.
- Build time management into the meal plan.

Do I have to eat breakfast?

Breakfast is an important meal that you shouldn't skip. Eating breakfast:

- Gives your body energy after a long break in eating.
- Kick-starts your metabolism and helps you burn energy during the day.
- May help with memory, concentration, and focus.
- May lower your risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

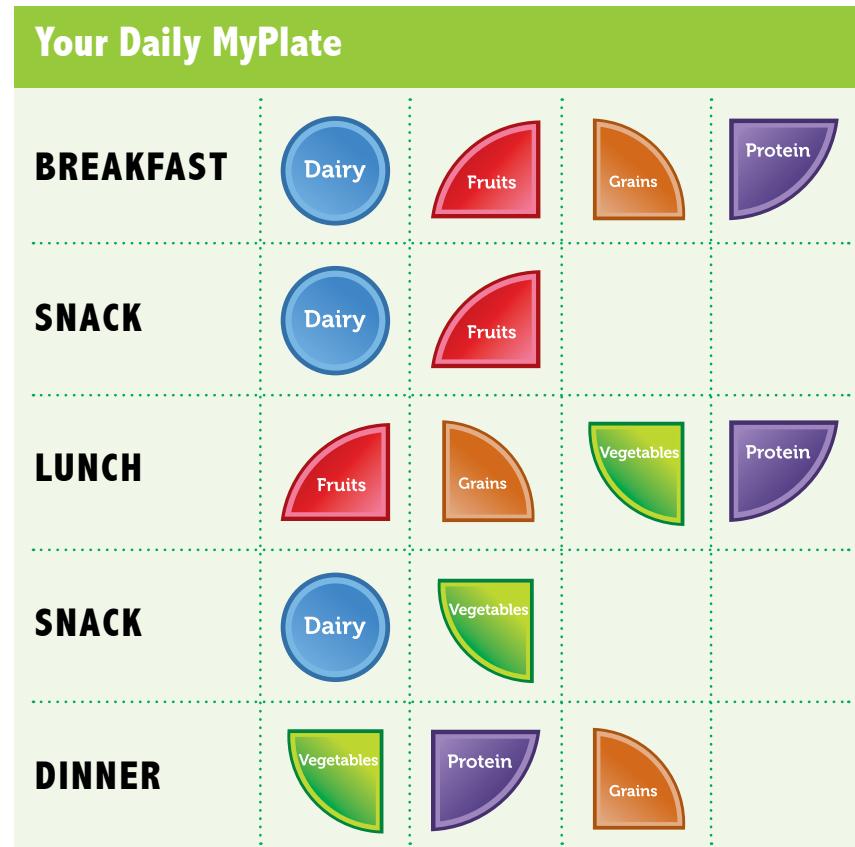
You don't have to eat traditional breakfast foods to get the benefits of eating breakfast. Choose foods high in protein and nutrient-dense carbohydrates. Try whole grain pancakes with yogurt and fruit. Or, re-heat leftovers from the night before.

MyPlate Choices for One Day

Every meal does not have to include every food group.

Combine at least two food groups at every meal or snack. For example, combine an apple and peanut butter to get one serving of protein and one serving of fruit. This will help you feel full and give you long-lasting energy.

Here is an example that includes three meals and two snacks.



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Plan MyPlate

1. Write your daily goals for each food group.

Vegetables (cups):	
Fruits (cups):	
Grains/Starches (ounces):	
Protein (ounces):	
Dairy (cups):	

2. Plan how much of each food group you want to have at a meal. Make sure the total for each group meets, but doesn't go over, your daily goal.

EXAMPLE	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains & Starches	Protein	Dairy
Breakfast		½ cup	2 ounces	2 ounces	1 cup
Lunch	1 cup	½ cup	2 ounces	1 ounce	1 cup
Dinner	1 cup		1 ounce	2 ounces	
Snack 1 (optional)		½ cup			1 cup
Totals	2 cups	1 ½ cups	5 ounces	5 ounces	3 cups

	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains & Starches	Protein	Dairy
Breakfast					
Lunch					
Dinner					
Snack 1 (optional)					
Snack 2 (optional)					
Totals					

3. Select foods for each meal or snack. Refer to what counts as an ounce or a cup for each food group. Choose foods that you like to eat and that are convenient for you.

EXAMPLE	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains & Starches	Protein	Dairy
Breakfast		½ large banana	½ cup cooked oatmeal		1 cup low-fat milk
Lunch	1 cup lettuce, 1 cup chopped veggies	½ cup berries	2 slices whole grain bread	1 ounce tuna fish	6-ounce cup plain yogurt
Dinner	1 cup carrots, onions, & peppers		1 ounce brown rice	2 ounces chicken	1 cup low-fat milk
Snack 1 (optional)		1 small apple		2 Tbsp. peanut butter	
Totals	2 ½ cups	2 cups	4 ounces	5 ounces	3 cups

	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains & Starches	Protein	Dairy
Breakfast					
Lunch					
Dinner					
Snack 1 (optional)					
Snack 2 (optional)					
Totals					

Plan Time to Plan Meals

Make planning your food part of your weekly routine, like going to work or doing laundry. Planning meals helps you select and eat foods in your MyPlate plan, as well as save time and money.

Having variety is important over time, but it can help to have the same breakfast each day, plan a similar snack, or prepare a dish that covers several meals. You will need time to:

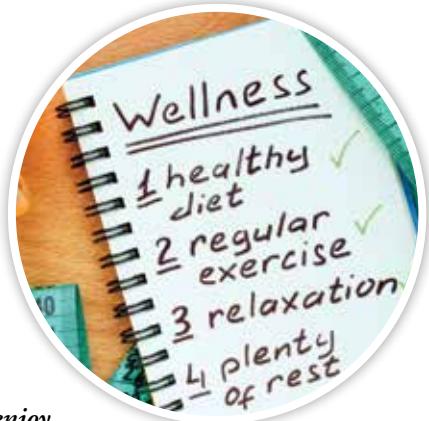
Sample:

Task:	Time it will take me (estimate):	When I will do this task:
Write a meal plan for the week.	15 minutes	Sunday afternoon
Write a grocery list for items I need.	15 minutes	Sunday afternoon
Shop for needed items.	1 hour	Sunday afternoon
Prepare some meals & snacks ahead of time.	1 hour, 2 times a week	1 hour on Sunday, 1 hour on Wednesday

Task:	Time it will take me (estimate):	When I will do this task:
Write a meal plan for the week.		
Write a grocery list for items I need.		
Shop for needed items.		
Prepare some meals & snacks ahead of time.		

Look at the Big Picture

As you get ready to plan your meals, look at the big picture of your wellness goals. Your lifestyle change is about more than just food! Set a non-food goal that will help you take another step toward living a healthy lifestyle. Use this page to pick an idea for the week or write a new idea.



Make healthy living something you enjoy.

- Walk a new trail or part of my neighborhood.
- Volunteer at a local food bank to give back and help others eat well.
- Find a positive person to follow on social media.
- Give a friend or family member a call.

My idea:

Plan Your Week

Plan about a half hour for writing your weekly meal plan and grocery list the first time. The more you plan, the easier it will become and the less time it will take.

1. *Check what you have at home.* See what needs to be used up in your pantry, refrigerator, or freezer.

Items I have on hand that need to be used:



2. *Write down ideas, rather than specific recipes.* (For example, “chicken and vegetables” or “broccoli soup.”) Find recipes after you have finished your plan. Some meals, like breakfast, may be easier to keep the same every day.

3. *Plan for meals to have leftovers.* Plan to make extra food items that can be used for another meal. For example, make a double batch of quinoa to use in a casserole one day and a soup two days later.

- Have dinner leftovers at lunch the next day to further save on time.
- Freeze extra dinner servings in individual-serving freezer bags. Thaw and cook or microwave for a quick meal.

Modify Ingredients in Recipes

Recipes offer guidelines, not rules. You may want to modify them if you:

- Don’t like an ingredient.
- Don’t have an ingredient.
- Want to include something different.
- Need to fulfill a need on MyPlate, like getting another serving of vegetables or whole grains.
- Want to reduce sodium, saturated fat, or added sugars.
- Are allergic or sensitive to an ingredient.

3 Ways to Modify a Recipe:

1. *Use less of ingredients that have added sugar, sodium, or saturated fat.*

Use less of this:	I already do this!	When I will try this:
Solid fats, like butter or stick margarine		
Meat (e.g., use half the ground meat called for in spaghetti sauce, lasagna, etc.)		
Cheese (e.g., put half of the amount called for on pizza)		
Creamy salad dressings		
Sugar (e.g., use up to half the amount called for in a recipe or use half regular sugar and half sugar substitute.)		
Salt and other seasonings with salt, such as garlic salt and soy sauce		

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2. Substitute ingredients

Recipe calls for:	Substitute with:	Why this is healthier
1 cup butter or oil	1 cup canned pumpkin purée	Adds fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants; eliminates saturated fat; lowers calories
	1 cup unsweetened applesauce ½ cup ripe banana	Eliminates saturated fat, adds healthy fats; lowers calories
1 cup all-purpose flour	1 cup whole-wheat flour, or part whole-wheat flour plus oat bran cereal, oatmeal, wheat bran, or wheat germ	Contains more vitamins and fiber
1 cup sugar	1 cup canned pumpkin purée 1 cup unsweetened applesauce ½ cup ripe banana	Adds fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants; eliminates saturated fat; lowers calories
1 cup chocolate chips	1 cup dried fruit, nuts, seeds, or dried unsweetened coconut	Lowers added sugar, adds fiber, healthy fats (nuts, seeds and coconut)
Frosting	Powdered sugar	It's still sugar, but you are using less!
1 cup whole milk	1 cup skim milk or 1% milk	Lowers saturated fat and calories
1 cup sour cream	1 cup non-fat yogurt (like Greek yogurt)	Reduces saturated fat and calories
Regular pie crust	Crusts made with graham cracker crumbs, gingersnaps, grapenuts cereal, etc.	May lower saturated fat and calories; adds fiber

Trial and error may be needed before you arrive at the recipe that works best.

One healthy swap I want to try this week:

3. Add new ingredients

Ingredient	Meal I already do this with:	Meal I want to try this with:
Vanilla and other flavor extracts. These can make foods taste sweeter.		
Vegetables to casseroles, stews, soups, etc. that are not in the original recipe. For example, add mushrooms and green peppers to lasagna and pizza and cut down on meat.		
Spices and herbs to add or enhance flavor. For example:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle dill weed or tarragon on baked or broiled fish along with the lemon juice the recipe may call for. • Put pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon on cooked winter squash or baked sweet potatoes. • Add fresh ripe fruit or shredded vegetables, such as zucchini, to muffins and quick breads for added flavor, moisture, and nutrients. 		
Garnish dishes with fresh fruit slices or cut-up vegetables.		
Add whole grains and pastas, starchy vegetables (e.g., potatoes), and legumes (beans, peas, lentils) to thicken soups.		



Meal and Snack Ideas



The next few pages provide ideas for basic meals and snacks. Use these ideas to start building your meal plan. Get recipes that are low in saturated and *trans* fat, added sugar, and salt from these websites:

American Heart Association

www.americanheart.org

Search for “Heart healthy recipes”

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Search for “Stay young at heart recipe cards”

Nutrition.gov

www.nutrition.gov

Search for “Healthy eating”

Meal Idea: Pasta or Rice Dinner

Choose ingredients from the chart below. This recipe makes four servings.

Pasta or Rice ($\frac{1}{2}$ pound)	Whole grain pasta Brown rice +
Protein	Lean ground turkey, chicken, or beef (1 pound) Extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled (14-ounce package) Beans, rinsed and drained (1 can or 2 cups cooked) Frozen peas or edamame, thawed and drained (2 cups) Canned tuna, salmon, or chicken (2, 5-ounce cans) +
Vegetables	Spinach, chard, kale (4 cups) One or more of the following to total 2 cups: • Broccoli • Carrots • Zucchini • Yellow squash +
Sauce	Marinara (2 cups) Canned diced or crushed tomatoes (2 cups) Olive oil (2 Tbsp.) +
Seasonings (optional)	See “Limit Sodium” for suggestions.

Directions:

1. Cook pasta or rice according to package directions and drain.
2. Cook protein choice as needed.
3. Cook veggies by steaming, grilling, roasting, sautéing, or adding to boiling pasta water in the last few minutes of cooking.
4. In a large pot, heat sauce over medium heat. If using spices, add them now. Add protein and veggies to heat through. Toss with hot cooked pasta or rice and serve.

For a casserole, follow the directions above. Then, pour into a 9 x 13-inch baking pan and bake for 40-60 minutes until the top is golden brown.

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Meal Idea: Salad

Choose ingredients from the chart below. This salad recipe serves one person.

Greens (2 cups)	Leaf lettuce	Romaine lettuce
	Spinach	Mixed salad greens
	Kale	
	+	
Veggies (1 cup, any combo)	Beets	Radishes
	Carrots	Bell pepper
	Broccoli	Mushrooms
	Cauliflower	Red cabbage
	Tomatoes	Corn kernels (fresh or frozen, thawed)
	+	
Optional Protein (2 oz.)	Chicken or turkey breast (cooked or sliced low-sodium deli meat)	
	Extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled	
	Beans, rinsed and drained	Green peas
	Canned tuna, salmon or chicken	Edamame
	+	
Optional Add-Ins (1/4 cup)	Toasted nuts or seeds, no salt added	
	Cooked barley, brown rice, or whole grain pasta	
	Low-fat shredded cheese	Fresh berries
	Orange or grapefruit slices	Olives, sliced
	Dried fruit (e.g., raisins or cranberries)	Whole grain croutons
	+	
Salad Dressing (1 Tbsp.)	Oil and vinegar	
	Honey mustard	
	Citrus dressing	
	Low-fat yogurt ranch dressing	

Directions:

Toss ingredients together when ready to eat. Or, prepare a salad ahead of time in a container, keeping very moist ingredients (like tomatoes and dressing) separate. When you are ready to eat, toss and empty onto a plate or in a large bowl.

Salad Dressing

Salad dressing can be a healthy choice for your salad. Use healthy, unsaturated fats in salad dressing to:

- Help you feel full and more satisfied.
- Help your body get the benefits of other vitamins in your salad, like fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.
- Add flavor. Dressings are a great place for herbs, spices, and other powerful flavors to make your salad POP!
- Help you eat vegetables that you don't like plain.

Tips for Selecting a Dressing at a Restaurant:

- Ask for oil-based dressings, such as olive oil and balsamic vinegar.
- Ask for dressing on the side. Toss your salad with half the dressing provided and put the rest to the side. Most restaurants offer much more dressing than you need for your salad.
- If you are worried you may use too much dressing, ask for a half-size salad or order another vegetable as a side dish.
- On bottled dressings, look for ones made without added sugars.

Make Your Own Salad Dressing

Use 1 Tbsp. of the dressing on your salad. Store leftovers in a sealed jar.

Oil and vinegar dressing: 3 Tbsp. olive oil, 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt (a dash), $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. black pepper

Honey mustard dressing: 6 Tbsp. mustard, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. fresh lemon juice or cider vinegar, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. honey, 1 tsp. olive or canola oil, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt (a dash), $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. black pepper

Citrus dressing: 2 Tbsp. lime, lemon, or orange juice; 3-4 Tbsp. canola or olive oil, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt (a dash), $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. black pepper

Creamy low-fat ranch dressing: 1 (6-ounce) container plain nonfat or low-fat yogurt, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup low-fat mayonnaise, 2 Tbsp. white vinegar, 1 Tbsp. dried dill, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. garlic powder, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt (a dash)

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Meal Ideas: Stir-Fry

Choose ingredients from the chart below. This recipe makes four servings.

Veggies (2-3 cups total, any combo)	Bell pepper	Onions	Zucchini
	Carrots	Green beans	Yellow squash
	Celery	Mushrooms	Cabbage
	+		
Protein			
	Chicken breast or pork tenderloin, cut into bite-sized pieces (1 pound)		
	Extra-firm tofu, cut into 1-inch pieces (14-ounce package)		
	Frozen peas or edamame, thawed and drained (2 cups)		
	Sirloin or flank steak, cut into pieces (1 pound)		
	+		
Flavoring (1-2 Tbsp.)	Minced garlic	Minced ginger	Green onions
	+		
Sauce	Low-sodium soy sauce	Lemon juice	
	Peanut sauce (see recipe below)		
	+		
Grain (1 cup dry)	Brown rice	Brown rice noodles	
	Whole grain couscous	Whole grain pasta	
	Instant barley		

Peanut Sauce: In a small bowl, stir together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanut butter, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-sodium soy sauce, 2 Tbsp. cider vinegar, and 4 tsp. sugar.

Directions

1. Cook grains. Follow package directions and set aside.
2. If using meat: In a large skillet over medium heat, cook meat or poultry in 1 tablespoon canola or olive oil. Set aside.
3. Add veggies to skillet, starting with harder veggies (these take longer to cook). Cook to desired softness. Add flavoring (garlic, ginger, or green onions). If adding tofu, peas, or edamame, add that now.
4. Add sauce and cook for 1-2 more minutes. Stir in cooked meat.
5. Serve over cooked grains.

Meal Ideas: Soup

Choose ingredients from the chart below. This recipe makes four servings.

Protein (1 pound, diced)	<i>Choose these more often:</i> Chicken or turkey Beans or lentils (cooked, or drained and rinsed from a can)		
<i>Choose these less often:</i> Pork (shoulder, butt) Beef (shoulder, round, or brisket) +			
Vegetables (2-4 cups total, any combo)	Broccoli	Zucchini	Onions
	Celery	Tomatoes	Mushrooms
	Cauliflower	Greens (spinach, kale, collards, chard, etc.)	
	+		
Liquid	Water	Low-sodium stock or broth	
	+		
Whole Grains (1 ½ cups, cooked)	Brown rice	Barley	
	Whole grain pasta	Quinoa	

Directions

1. If using meat: Heat 1 Tbsp. of canola or olive oil in a soup pot. Add meat and cook for 5 minutes. If not using meat, skip this step.
2. Add chosen vegetables and sauté for 5 minutes. If using frozen vegetables, thaw in the microwave first.
3. Add liquid and beans or lentils (if using) and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes. Stir occasionally.
4. Add grains and seasonings. Cook for an additional 5 minutes.

Plan a Combo:

Circle ingredients from the categories above. Add additional veggies and spices that you like. Write what you will need for this meal here:

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Snack Ideas: Trail Mix

Choose ingredients from the chart below. This recipe makes four servings.

Dried Fruit ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup, choose no-sugar- added)	Cranberries Banana chips Mango slices Raisins +	Pineapple Apple Papaya
Nuts & Seeds ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup, choose unsalted)	Peanuts Cashews Sunflower seeds Pumpkin seeds (pepitas) +	Almonds Soy nuts Walnuts
Crunchy Grains (1 cup)	Crispy whole grain cereal Low-sodium pretzels Low-sodium sesame sticks +	
Other ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)	Chocolate or carob chips Yogurt-covered raisins Chocolate-covered nuts or fruit Shredded unsweetened coconut	

Plan a Combo:

Circle ingredients from the categories above.

Write what you will need to make this snack here:

Picky Eaters

Perhaps you buy food or cook for a picky eater. Perhaps that picky eater is you! Vegetables tend to be one of the biggest sticking points with picky eaters, though picky eating can apply to all food groups. Don't give up!

Here are some tips for managing picky eating:

- Set an example by trying it yourself and using positive language. Even if you don't like the taste, you can express gratitude or pat yourself on the back for trying a new food.
- Add the new food to a food you already like. For example, if peanut butter and jelly is a favorite, swap white bread for whole grain bread. This will add extra nutrients while keeping the preferred peanut butter & jelly filling!
- Stock up on healthy choices. Limit junk food and unhealthy options.
- Try new foods. Serve a variety of foods at meals to provide a choice. Encourage kids to pick out a new vegetable when grocery shopping. To make it fun, have a child pick a color first. Then, have the child pick out a vegetable that matches that color.
- Don't force a food that is disliked. Part of managing weight is developing a healthy relationship with food.
- If it has been more than 6 months since you tried it, try it again! Tastes can change.



Appreciate your own willingness and effort to try something new! If you have children, they are watching and learning the value of openness.

List two strategies for managing a picky eater:

1.

2.

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Map Your Meal Plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast Pick at least 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Grains <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Protein							
Lunch Pick at least 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Grains <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Protein							
Dinner Pick at least 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Grains <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Protein							
Snacks Pick at least 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input type="checkbox"/> Grains <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Protein							
EXAMPLE: Lunch Pick at least 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fruits <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grains <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protein	2 oz. tuna on 1 slice of whole grain toast	Green salad with 1 cup chopped veggies	Plain yogurt with 1/4 cup berries				

Write a Grocery List

1. Look at your weekly menu. Make a list of all of the ingredients you will need. Calculate how much you will need for the week. Example:

2 oz. chicken breast x 5 meals = 10 oz. chicken breast

2 cups greens x 3 meals = 6 cups greens

2. What do you already have? Cross off what you don't need to buy.
3. On a fresh piece of paper, make a list of the ingredients you need to buy. Organize by section of the store to save time shopping.

Fresh Fruits & Veggies	Whole Grains (e.g., bread, pasta, rice, cereals), Beans & Lentils
Meat/Poultry/Seafood	Misc. Aisles: Canned vegetables and fruits, nuts & seeds, dried fruit, oils
Frozen Fruits & Veggies	Dairy/Eggs

Family Fun: Have your children help you write the grocery list each week. Practice math skills by adding the amounts you need for each item. Invite children to add a fruit or vegetable of their choice to the list. Have older children select a recipe and add ingredients to your list.

Grocery Shop with Confidence



Grocery stores can be wonderful places to explore new foods. The average grocery store has over 10,000 different items. Some of these foods are healthy “everyday” food choices. Add these more often to your cart. Others are “sometimes” or “once in a while” foods. Add these foods less often.

Tips for Healthy Grocery Shopping:

1. *Choose a low-stress time to grocery shop, if possible.* Make sure you have enough time to do your shopping. Stressed grocery shopping can make it harder to stick to your healthy list.
2. *Have a healthy snack before going to the grocery store.* This will help you avoid buying less healthy foods on impulse.
3. *Shop the outer edges of the grocery store.* This is where you will find fresh produce, dairy, eggs, meats/poultry/seafood, and frozen fruits and vegetables. Go into inner aisles for specific items on your list, but not to browse.
4. *Look for recipes or tips in the produce department.* Stores often provide tips for cooking vegetables or a chart showing which fruits and vegetables are in season.

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5. *Look for products locally grown or raised.* Locally grown produce and livestock can be more nutritious and tasty. Nutrients and flavor can break down during storage and transport. Locally grown food may also be grown more sustainably and buying it supports the community.



6. *Sample healthy foods.* Samples, such as cheese cubes or crackers with dip, can take the edge off in a portion-controlled serving. A bite-sized sweet treat can satisfy a craving and help you avoid picking up a larger version of that treat.
7. *Avoid your weak areas.* Avoid an aisle that has many unhealthy foods that you have difficulty resisting. Or, keep your eyes forward when walking by these foods.

Foods & beverages I have difficulty walking by without picking up:

8. *Buy treats in small portions.* Avoid the super-size trap of large portions of unhealthy food. Rather than buying a full tub of ice cream or a boxed brownie mix that will yield a full pan of brownies, get small-sized versions. Choose a single-serving ice cream or an individual brownie at the bakery.
9. *Read labels.* Many of the healthiest foods, such as fruits and vegetables, won't have food labels at all. If they do, they only give a snapshot of the true value of the food.

Grocery Shopping with Kids

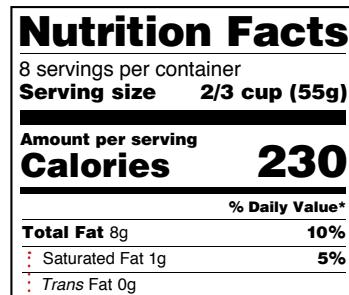
Grocery stores can be full of education and adventure for kids. Including kids in grocery shopping—and every part of meal prep—helps set up kids to make healthier choices later in life.



- Show the variety of different foods, especially in the produce section and grain aisle.
- Let kids pick out something colorful from the produce section. You can look up online what to do with it later!
- Ask kids to help you decide between healthy options (apple vs. orange). This encourages kids to make healthy choices.
- Discuss why certain foods are stored in the freezer or on the shelf.
- Ask younger kids to describe the foods you pick out. Use shapes, colors, and counting to identify foods on the shelf or in your cart.
- Ask older kids to help you read labels and signs in the store. Explain what these labels mean.

Use Food Labels

Information on food labels can help you choose healthy foods and drinks and avoid less healthy options. Some of the healthiest foods, like fruits and vegetables, don't have a label at all! Practice reading food labels with the foods you have at home or the next time you grocery shop.



Total Fat: This is the amount of fat per serving.

When comparing foods, look for choices with less saturated fat and no *trans* fats. There is no safe level of *trans* fats.

Healthy, unsaturated fats may not be listed separately on the label. Unsaturated fats (like mono-unsaturated and poly-unsaturated fats) are included in the total fat number.

Serving Size: The nutrient values on the label are based on this number.

Choose an amount to eat or drink that fits your MyPlate goals. This may be more or less than the serving size on the label.

Servings Per Container tells you how many servings you get from one package.



Choose options lower in sodium. Be sure to stay under your daily goal.

If you are choosing a food to count as a good protein source, look for a higher value here.

The % Daily Values on the food label are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your needs may be different. Follow the recommendations in this guide.

Choose foods higher in fiber and low in sugar.

If you are choosing a food to count as a grain/starch, aim for at least 5g of fiber per serving. This makes it a "good source" of fiber.

Choose foods that give you more nutrients. The % Daily Value tells you if a food is high or low in a nutrient.

20% or more is high
5% or less is low.

Eating enough of these nutrients can improve your health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions. For example, getting enough calcium can reduce the risk of osteoporosis, which can cause your bones to become brittle and break as you age.

What seems "normal" as a portion is influenced by what you have eaten in the past, what you see others eat, what you have been served at a restaurant, and what is on a food label. Part of adopting a balanced diet may be creating a new "normal" for yourself that is pleasing, filling, AND the right amount for your body.

Prepare for the New Food Label

In 2016, the FDA approved a new food label. By July 2018, most foods will be required to use this new label. The new label will help you make more informed choices about what you eat. The changes are shown in the graphic below.

Old Label	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 12g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 10%	
Vitamin C 8%	
Calcium 20%	
Iron 45%	
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Calories:	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

New Label	
Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg 10%	
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Ingredients List: What's in This?

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. The most common ingredient is listed first, down to the least common ingredient.

Follow these easy steps to compare foods:

1. *Look for a short list of ingredients.* In general, better choices have fewer ingredients listed. Products with many ingredients often have more forms of sugar (including artificial sweeteners), artificial colors and dyes, and artificial starches/thickeners. These ingredients can add sugar and calories without adding nutrients. Learn more about these ingredients in Part 7 of this guide.
2. *Avoid ingredients that your body can't tolerate.* Food allergies are serious. Talk to your doctor if you suspect you have a food allergy. You may also have an intolerance, such as to lactose in milk. Or, you may have a sensitivity, such as getting headaches after consuming artificial sweeteners.
3. *Choose real foods.* The first item listed should be a food you recognize. If you are buying pre-made turkey burgers, the first ingredient should be turkey. If you are buying a whole grain cereal, the first ingredient should be a whole grain, such as whole wheat or oats. The second ingredient may also be a large part of the food. This should also be a food you recognize.
4. *Avoid added sugars.* Avoid foods and drinks with sugar listed as one of the first 5 ingredients. Sugar can be listed in many forms. Be extra careful with ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, tomato sauce, salad dressings, and other foods you may not think of as "sweets." Look for clues that sugar has been added.



Look Past Advertising

Advertising can help point out healthy qualities in a food or drink. Advertising can also distract you from less healthy ingredients and nutrition facts. Check the nutrition facts and ingredients list to get the real scoop on what's in the product. The drawbacks may outweigh the benefits advertised on the package.

“Made With...” Example: Whole Grains, Real Fruit

What it Means: At one point, the real ingredient (e.g., whole grain, fruit) was part of the product. That ingredient may have been processed further, causing it to lose nutrients. This claim does not tell you anything about how much of the whole food is in the end product.

“Sugar Free”

What it Means: A sugar free food has less than 0.5 grams of sugar per serving. What is in the food is more important than what the food is claiming to be free from. Check to see if extra saturated fat or artificial sweeteners have been added to make up for taste. Avoid foods high in saturated fat or foods containing artificial sweeteners.

“Fat Free”

What it Means: This food contains less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving (of any kind). If a food is fat free, make sure sugars or starches haven't been added to replace the flavor and structure that fat gives food. Remember, unsaturated fat is an important part of a healthy diet and helps keep you feeling full.



“Contains...” Example: Whole Grains, Real Fruit

What it Means: This product contains some amount of this ingredient, but that amount may be very small. For example, a fruit drink that “contains real fruit” may be 10% real fruit juice and 90% added water and sugar. If you want more of the ingredient, like a whole grain or fruit, look for it to appear high on the list of ingredients.

“Contains Zero Trans Fat”

What it Means: There is no safe amount of *trans* fats, but a food label can say it contains zero *trans* fats if the *trans* fat content is below 0.5 grams per serving. To find *trans* fats, you will need to look at the ingredients. Avoid ingredients that are “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated.”

Organic, Grass-Fed, Cage-Free, Free-Range, Non-GMO

Learn more about these marketing claims and labeling standards in Part 7 of this guide.

Circle or highlight which of the marketing slogans listed above tend to catch your eye. The next time you see one of these labels, practice looking for the hidden traps. It still may be a healthy choice, but be a cautious consumer.

Sodium in Packaged Foods

Many packaged foods have sodium added. Use the food label to compare sodium content between products. Choose options lower in sodium. This chart shows what different sodium-related marketing claims mean.

Marketing Claim	What this Means
Sodium free	Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per serving
Very low sodium	35 milligrams or less per serving
Low in sodium or Light in sodium	140 milligrams or less per serving
Reduced (or less) sodium	At least 25 percent less sodium per serving than the usual sodium level
No salt added	Unsalted or no salt added during processing

The Salty 6

These are the top 6 most salted foods, according to the American Heart Association:



For restaurant items, check the posted nutrition facts or go to the restaurant's website. Learn more about making healthy choices while eating out and on the go in Part 4 of this book.

Limit Artificial Sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners give a sweet taste without adding the calories you get with sugar. They don't contribute to tooth decay and don't raise blood sugar levels. However, consuming these sugar substitutes can have significant drawbacks. They may:

1. *Raise your sweetness threshold.* This can make it harder to break a sugar "addiction." Artificial sweeteners are hundreds of times sweeter than regular sugar. This may cause you to crave sweeter foods.

Artificial	Sweetener Brand Names	Sweetness (as compared to sugar)
Aspartame	Equal®, NutraSweet®	180 times sweeter
Acesulfame-K	Sunett®, Sweet One®	200 times sweeter
Saccharin	Sweet'N Low®, Necta Sweet®, Sugar Twin®	300 times sweeter
Sucratose	Splenda®	600 times sweeter

2. *Cause you to eat more.* Eating and drinking sweet things signals the brain to want more. Even if the artificial sweetener doesn't have any calories, it can lead to overeating and consuming extra foods that do.
3. *Cause discomfort.* This can be headaches, exhaustion, and digestive discomfort, including gas, bloating, and constipation.
4. *Harm your gut bacteria.* Artificial sweeteners may promote the growth of gut bacteria that store energy as fat. Gut bacteria that is not working properly also contributes to high blood sugar.

STEVIA (Truvia®, Pure Via®) is a non-caloric sweetener made from an herb. It has not been studied as much as artificial sweeteners, but it is still super sweet (300 times sweeter than sugar) and may cause digestive discomfort for some people.

SUGAR ALCOHOLS (e.g., xylitol, sorbitol) are not sweeter than sugar and contain fewer calories than sugar. However, they may also cause digestive discomfort and headaches for some people.

Sweet Sips, a Healthier Way!

Sugar-sweetened beverages can be a major source of added sugar. Cut back or eliminate these beverages from your everyday lifestyle. Save pop or soda for a once-in-a-while treat. As you reduce sugar in your diet, especially artificial sweeteners, you may find these drinks are too sweet for your new tastes!

Make your own flavored water

You can consume flavored beverages without added sugars AND get a few extra nutrients along the way! You will need:

- 1-quart jars or a large pitcher
- Water
- Wooden spoon (or another long, sturdy spoon)

Fruit and/or Fresh Herbs:

You can start with just one cut-up fruit, but for a flavored water that will really pop, try combining at least two fruits or a fruit and an herb. Here are a few suggestions, but don't be afraid to try your own combinations! For a single-serving, use less. For a whole pitcher, use more!



Pineapple, Orange, & Ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cubed pineapple
 $\frac{1}{2}$ an orange, sliced
1 Tbsp. freshly-grated ginger



Minty Cucumber Lime
 $\frac{1}{2}$ a cucumber, sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ a lime, sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh mint leaves



Orange and Blueberry
1 Mandarin orange, broken into wedges
Small handful of blueberries



Strawberry, Lemon, & Basil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced strawberries
 $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon, sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil leaves



Watermelon Mint
1 cup cubed watermelon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh mint leaves



Rosemary & Grapefruit
 $\frac{1}{2}$ grapefruit (or $\frac{1}{4}$ grapefruit & $\frac{1}{4}$ orange)
A few sprigs of rosemary

What combination would you like to try?



Citrus with Cilantro or Mint
2 large oranges, sliced
1 lemon, sliced
 $\frac{1}{2}$ large cucumber, sliced
1 handful of fresh mint or cilantro

Time to Build!

1. Place the fruit, herbs, and any other ingredients in the bottom of a glass jar or pitcher. Or, using a wooden spoon, mash the ingredients to bring out the flavor. You can also scrunch the herbs in your hands before adding them to the jar. This helps bring out the flavor.
2. Fill the jars with water and ice as desired. You can also add unsweetened carbonated/seltzer water if you are craving fizzy bubbles!
3. The flavor will be more enhanced after the water sits for an hour. Or, refrigerate the water overnight. If you want to drink it right away, squeeze the fruit a little before you drop it in to help bring out the flavors faster.

PART 3: Make a Plan



Other Sweet Beverage Ideas:

Freeze ice cubes with fruit. Drop a few cubes of different colored fruits into a tall glass of cold water.

Blend whole fruits in a smoothie with spinach, kale or other de-stemmed, leafy green vegetables.

Diet or regular soda? Limit both.

Most diet sodas contain artificial sweeteners. Studies have shown drinking diet soda is not any better at helping you manage your weight. Gradually cut back on soda.

Even if you add a teaspoon of sugar to your coffee, this 4g of sugar is far less than the sugar found in the average soda. The average soda contains 39g of sugar in a 12-ounce can. In a 16-ounce bottle, a soda may contain 52g of sugar.

Master Food Prep

Food preparation does not need to take a lot of time. The more you prepare food, the better you will get at being efficient in the kitchen!

1. Make double batches of dinner meals. Freeze individual portions in airtight containers. Label with the date and what it is.
2. Buy pre-cut vegetables, either fresh or frozen.
3. Keep a supply of foods on hand that can be stored for weeks or months, such as brown rice, quinoa, whole grain pasta, frozen and canned vegetables, beans, tuna, oils, and spices.
4. Cut up fruits and vegetables and store them in individual bags or containers for easy, grab-and-go snacks. Dry anything you have washed by laying it on a towel. This will help prevent mold.
5. Freeze berries or sliced and peeled bananas. They can be easily added to smoothies or pancakes.

What else do you do to save time preparing meals?

Tips for Nibbling Cooks

Be aware of how much you eat while cooking. A taste here and there can help you check for flavor, such as when seasoning a soup. Too many nibbles can add up to a lot of extra eating in your diet.

- Have a small snack before you start cooking, like a piece of fruit or raw veggies and hummus.
- Chew sugar-free gum with xylitol, which does not cause tooth decay.
- Brush and floss your teeth before you cook.
- Sip water every time you are tempted to snack on the meal you are preparing.
- Sit down when you eat. Use utensils for all items you eat.

Keep Food Safe

- Freezing:** Keep freezer temperature at or below 0°F. Keep frozen foods in airtight containers.
- Refrigerator:** Keep refrigerator temperature at or below 40°F. Store foods made from animal products in a drawer or in the back of the refrigerator, where it is cooler.
- Thawing:** Thaw food on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. Or, submerge the sealed container in cold water. Or, use the defrost settings on your microwave. Never thaw food on the counter.

Heat to Safe Temperatures		
Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are safe to eat.		
145°F	160°F	165°F
Fish, roasts, steaks, chops (beef, pork, veal, and lamb)	Egg dishes and ground meats (beef, veal, and lamb)	Stuffing, all poultry, casseroles, reheated leftovers

Simple Cooking Methods

When you cook vegetables, do so quickly and in little water. Some vitamins, like vitamin C, are lost when soaked in water or overcooked.

Microwave: Place chopped vegetables in a microwave-safe dish with a lid. Or, use plastic wrap with a few holes poked for venting. Add 2 Tbsp. of water, or enough to cover the bottom of the dish. Microwave on high for 5 minutes. Check firmness. Add time to reach desired softness.

Stove Top: Add 1 to 2 inches of water to a pot. Add vegetables. Simmer until tender, checking vegetables often after the first 5 minutes. Greens will cook faster, so check these after 2 minutes.

Oven: Preheat oven to 450°F. Coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray or use a sheet of parchment paper. Toss vegetables with 1 Tbsp. of canola or coconut oil. Spread vegetables evenly and bake for at least 15 minutes. Check for desired softness. Add cooking time, if needed. Experiment with spices to flavor vegetables to your liking.

Improve a Packaged Meal

Cooking from scratch is a great way to know what is in your food and to prepare it how you like it. You can also start with a pre-made, packaged food and make a healthy meal from it! The chart below gives examples of ways to add nutrients to packaged foods. Add your own ideas.

Packaged Food	Add Healthy Foods
Canned low-sodium soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more of the veggies listed on the can • Add an extra cup of water, a cup of whole grains, and/or frozen mixed veggies <p><i>My idea:</i></p>
Boxed macaroni & cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add broccoli, spinach, bell peppers, carrots, or other veggies • Add tuna or chicken breast for protein • Serve with a side salad or cooked, mixed veggies <p><i>My idea:</i></p>
Frozen chicken nuggets or fish sticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to a salad • Serve with a baked sweet potato • Top with tomato sauce and mozzarella, serve with cooked spaghetti squash or whole grain pasta <p><i>My idea:</i></p>
Frozen waffles or pancakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top with fresh fruit and plain, low-fat yogurt. Sprinkle cinnamon on top. <p><i>My idea:</i></p>
Frozen pizza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add extra veggie toppings or sliced chicken breast • Serve with a side salad <p><i>My idea:</i></p>
Frozen meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 1 cup of frozen veggies to the meal • Add lean ground turkey or chicken breast to pasta dishes <p><i>My idea:</i></p>

A Case for MORE Time in the Kitchen

While this section gives lots of tips for saving time, you may not want to speed through food preparation! Here are some reasons to allow extra time in your day or week for food preparation:

- Making more recipes from scratch will give you more control over what is in your food. You can also experiment with more flavors.
- Time in the kitchen can be a special time to connect with family and friends after a busy day or week. Turn the TV off and share tasks, like tossing a salad or setting the table.
- Many traditions are based around food. Cook old recipes or prepare a meal with an older family member. Sharing stories around food preparation can help you feel connected to your heritage. You may even create new traditions for the next generation of cooks!
- Cooking can be an enjoyable hobby. Searching for new recipes, getting creative with modifications, and sharing with others can help you manage stress and bring joy to your day.

What do you enjoy about preparing food?

What are some of your favorite food-related traditions?

How could you make a family favorite a little healthier?

Eating at a Restaurant

Use the same guidelines for choosing food at the grocery store to help you make healthy choices at a restaurant. Compared to preparing food at home, you have less control over what is in your food, how it is prepared, and how much you are served. However, you DO have some control. Here are a few tips to help you follow your eating goals when you eat out:

1. Choose a restaurant that offers healthy options.
 - If you are dining with a group, offer to make the reservation.
 - Read reviews to learn about experiences other people have had at the restaurant.
 - Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets or anything that is offered in an “endless” supply.
2. Look up menus ahead of time. Many restaurants, especially fast-food restaurants and other chain restaurants, offer nutrition information online for items on their menu.
3. Look for clues in the menu. Menus can offer information about what is in the food and how it is made.
 - Look for meat, poultry, and seafood that has been baked, broiled, steamed, poached, or grilled. Avoid fried choices. Or, ask if a fried food can be prepared with one of these healthier cooking methods.
 - Pictures, if on the menu, can show you the size of the food groups on the plate. If you need more vegetables to meet your daily needs, ask for an extra serving or order a side salad.
 - Choose from the “heart healthy” section of the menu, if available. These choices are usually lower in saturated fat and sodium.
4. Ask for changes to an item, if needed. Menu items can usually be modified by the restaurant. Use the menu to learn what the restaurant has in the kitchen. Mix and match to create a meal that fits your goals.
*Be kind and tip your wait staff generously if you are asking for a lot of changes to your order!



PART 3: Make a Plan

5. Follow your healthy eating plan during the day. Skipping meals or ignoring hunger earlier in the day can lead to overeating or choosing foods higher in sugar, saturated fat, and salt at the restaurant.
6. Choose your portion. Order your meal as a half-size order or split a meal with a friend. Take some of your food home for another meal.
7. Set yourself up to be successful. Decline the bread basket, politely. If you are with a group that wants the basket on the table, keep it at the other end to avoid grabbing a piece out of habit. Or, share a piece.
8. Limit alcohol. This can be a big source of added calories. Stick with one glass of wine or one beer. Or, avoid alcohol altogether.

Most importantly, enjoy yourself!

Restaurants can be places to try new foods and flavors and make wonderful memories with family and friends. Take your time. Use your napkin between bites and sip your water often. Engage in conversation. Appreciate the restaurant's décor and the courtesy of the staff.

What restaurant do you eat at often?

What is something you like to order?

How could you change your usual order to fit your MyPlate healthy eating goals?

What do you enjoy most about going out to eat?

Fast-Food Restaurants

Fast-food restaurants can be very convenient, especially if they have a drive-thru window. Look for the healthier choices on the menu, though they may not be the biggest or most colorfully advertised.

If you are getting a meal, use the MyPlate guidelines. Choose from at least two food groups, like protein + fruit or protein + vegetable + dairy. Count these toward your goals for the day.

Tips	Healthier Choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose grilled options over fried. This reduces saturated fat.• Look for lower-sodium options.• Order the smaller portions on the menu.• Order water instead of 100% fruit juice. Order 100% fruit juice instead of soda.• If you are treating yourself, choose a small portion, like a small ice cream.• Eat half a portion and save the other half for later. Or, split a meal or menu item with a friend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regular burger, skip the fries and add a side salad with a vinaigrette dressing• Grilled chicken wrap with apple slices and a side salad• 4-piece chicken nuggets, small fries, apples, yogurt• Salad with chicken and a clementine• Chili with a small salad• Baked potato with plain yogurt

A menu item may be prepared differently at a specific location, which affects nutrition. For example, an extra scoop of cheese or dash of salt can add extra saturated fat or a lot of sodium to a food. Take posted nutrition information with a grain of salt!

What is your go-to choice at a fast-food restaurant?

How could you change your order to meet your MyPlate healthy eating goals?

Pack Travel Snacks

Pack these items ahead of time. Take them with you when you drive, fly, or take a bus or train. Be sure to pack snacks for kids traveling with you as well. This can help kids get in the habit of packing their own travel snacks. It can also take away your excuse to stop for fast food and buy candy or salty snacks. Use these ideas for a healthy work snack as well. Keep a healthy snack in your desk drawer or locker. Place a check (✓) next to your favorite ones.

- Homemade granola bars. Look for recipes with nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and dried fruit to help keep you full and give you lasting energy.
- Homemade trail mix.
- Peanut butter + apple slices, celery sticks, or whole grain crackers
- Hummus + sliced veggies (celery, carrots, cucumber slices)
- Apple slices with cinnamon
- Almonds, peanuts, walnuts, cashews
- Dried fruit
- String cheese
- Whole fruit, like apples and bananas
- Edamame
- Protein bar
- Small, single-serving boxes of whole grain cereal
- Small square of dark chocolate

Write your own ideas here:

Respect Food Allergies

If traveling in a public place (e.g., train, bus, airplane), avoid snacks that contain peanuts. If someone has a severe peanut allergy, you may be putting their life in danger.

Air Travel

Air travel can be time consuming because of the time it takes to get to the airport, get through security, wait for a flight, fly, and get to your final destination. Avoid going more than 3 to 4 hours without having something to eat. Plan to have a meal, a snack, or both!

- Bring one or more travel snacks with you.
- Look for these healthy snack options from to-go vendors. Read the Nutrition Facts on food labels, when available.
 - Fresh fruit
 - Low-sodium soup
 - Wraps and small sandwiches
 - Yogurt with cut-up fruit
 - Cottage cheese with fruit
- If you have time, choose a restaurant with healthy options on the menu. Sit and eat slowly to help digestion.
- Drink water. Bring an empty water bottle to the airport and re-fill it at a drinking fountain after going through security. Or, buy a water bottle once inside the airport terminal. Water is usually offered on the plane. Altitude and dry air can cause dehydration.
- Move around, both at the airport and while on the plane, if you can. Go for walks at the airport if you have a lot of waiting time. Stretch in your seat on the plane or walk to the restroom.

My plan for eating while traveling:

If you won't be traveling for a while, come back to this page for tips when it applies in the future. Or, share these tips with a spouse or friend who is traveling soon!

Avoid Drowsy Driving

Driving while sleepy can severely impair your driving and cause an accident. Studies have linked sleepiness and fatigue to decreases in reaction time, decision-making, and mind and body coordination. All of these factors are very important for safe driving.

According to estimates from the American Automobile Association (AAA) in 2014, one out of every five deadly traffic accidents is due to drowsy driving. More than one-quarter of drivers admitted to driving in the past month while having trouble keeping their eyes open.

Drive when you feel alert. On long drives, plan 15-minute breaks to get out and stretch your legs every 2 hours. Avoid using food to stay alert. Closing your eyes for even a second (called microsleep) can be enough to travel blindly down the road (or off the road). If you drive while you are fatigued, you and anyone around you is at serious risk.

Signs of Fatigue	What to do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can't stop yawning. You have trouble keeping your head up. Your eyes close for a moment or go out of focus. You have wandering, disconnected thoughts. You have no memory of driving the last few miles. You miss seeing a sign or your exit. You slow down when you don't mean to or brake suddenly or too late. You drift across the road or veer off onto rumble strips. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pull to the side of the road or go to a rest stop. Take a 15-20-minute nap. If you can, have 250-300 mg of caffeine (about 2 cups of coffee) before the nap. Get a non-drowsy person to drive or find some way of getting to your destination without driving yourself. Drive to a motel or place where you can sleep.

Coffee and Tea

Coffee and tea drinks made with added ingredients can be a major source of sugar and saturated fat in your diet. The calories can also add up, pushing you over what your body needs for the day and not leaving enough room for nutrient-dense foods. Without anything added, coffee and tea drinks have fewer than 5 calories.

Choose These More Often	Choose These Less Often
Low-fat and non-fat milk (and milk alternatives, like almond, soy, and coconut milk)	Whole milk Cream Half & half Artificial creamers Whipped cream
1 teaspoon or less of honey or regular sugar	Flavored syrups, both regular and sugar-free Artificial sweeteners
Unsweetened tea	Sweet tea
Cinnamon, ginger, lemon, vanilla, unsweetened cocoa powder, and other natural flavors	Sugar

If your favorite coffee or tea drink has more add-ins from the column on the right, save this drink for a special treat. Or, start to gradually cut back on how much of these you add to your drink. You can get used to new tastes. You may even like the new version better!

Different teas can have a lot of natural flavor and sweetness. Experiment with lemon, chai, chamomile, fruit, and herbal teas.

What is your favorite way to drink coffee or tea?

What step would you like to take to make your drink healthier?

You don't have to drink coffee black or tea plain, unless you like it that way!

Sporting Events and Concerts

Food courts and concession stands usually have very limited menus. Stadiums or arenas may not allow you to bring your own food or drink into the venue. Here are some tips to help you stick to your healthy goals:

- Eat before you go.
- Order water.
- Follow the fast food guidelines.
- Split a meal or snack with a friend.
- Choose treats wisely.
- Limit alcohol.

What to do when no healthy choices are available:

1. If you are hungry, eat something small. It may not be the healthiest choice, but it is important to listen to your body's physical hunger cues.
2. Drink water.
3. Chew on sugar-free gum with xylitol.
4. Make your next meal or snack a healthy one.
5. Plan ways to make healthy choices for future events. If possible, eat a meal or have a healthy snack before the event. Plan to limit how much you will eat of items sold at the event.



Drink Water

Water does many important jobs for your body:

- Transports nutrients
- Helps you digest food
- Carries waste from the body
- Regulates body temperature
- Gives a feeling of fullness
- Helps break down fat for energy
- Lubricates joints
- Helps prevent muscle cramps



Action Steps:

- Drink a glass of water before meals and snacks. This may help you manage your appetite.
- Replace a sugar-sweetened drink with water.
- Eat foods that are high in water, like cucumbers, leafy greens, and watermelon.
- Drink water regularly throughout the day.
- Keep a water bottle handy that you can refill when needed.
- If you are increasing your fiber intake, also increase your water intake to reduce the risk of constipation.

How much should I drink?

Your water needs depend on your activity level and weight. A general rule of thumb is to drink 8 cups of water per day. You may need more if you are very active or sweat a lot.

How do I know if I've had enough?

Check your urine. When you are properly hydrated, your urine should be light yellow or clear. If it is a darker yellow, you need to drink more water.

Limit Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages provide calories with little or no nutrients. Alcohol can damage your heart, liver, brain, and other body systems. It can cause high blood pressure and increases your risk for some cancers. Drinking can also decrease your immunity, making it harder for your body to fight disease.

Drink	Amount	Calories
Gin, rum, tequila, vodka, whiskey	1½ oz.	100
Cocktails listed above with fruit juice or tonic	6 oz.	175-180
Wine cooler	12 oz.	225-230
Beer	12 oz.	150
Light beer	12 oz.	75-120
Wine, dry	4 oz.	90
Wine, dessert, dry	4 oz.	175
Liqueur	1½ oz.	175

Effects of Alcohol on Weight Management

- It stimulates the appetite.
- It can make it harder to keep track of how much you've eaten.
- It can cause a drop in blood sugar. This can make you tired and less able to concentrate. It can also cause you to crave something sweet.

If you drink alcohol, do so wisely.

- Don't drink and drive. Designate a driver who will not be drinking. Volunteer to stay sober.
- Drink slowly. You will probably drink less.
- Drink alcohol with a meal. Food slows alcohol absorption.
- Drink a full glass of water between each alcoholic drink.



Quit Smoking



Smoking and the use of other tobacco products causes serious harm to the body, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, and emphysema. Smoking can also complicate diabetes and other health conditions.

If you are smoking, try to quit. Talk to your doctor about tools to help you quit. Call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) to talk to someone who can help you quit.

Quitting smoking may cause some weight gain as your body learns to regulate blood sugar and appetite normally again. Smoking can also be a coping strategy for stress, so you will need to learn new ways to manage stress. It is worth it to quit smoking.

Get Enough Sleep

Not getting enough sleep can affect your appetite and make it harder to manage your blood sugar. A shortage of sleep also:

- Triggers ghrelin, a hunger hormone. Ghrelin increases appetite, especially for sweets, salty foods, and starches.
- Decreases another hormone, leptin. Leptin helps your body know when you are full.
- Increases anxiety and negative feelings, which can lead you to eat unhealthy snacks and overeat “comfort foods.”
- Decreases energy to exercise.

Tips for Improving Sleep	I do this now!	When I will try this:
Create a comfortable place to sleep. Make sure your bed, pillows, and bedding are comfortable.		
Maintain a slightly cool temperature in the bedroom.		
Avoid looking at a screen (TV, laptop, smartphone, tablet, etc.) 30 minutes before bed.		
Create a bedtime and waking routine.		
Reserve the bed for sleep and sex. Avoid doing other activities in bed, like work or having an argument.		
Have a small snack before bed if you are hungry.		
Avoid foods high in sugar or refined carbohydrates just before bed. The rise in blood sugar can provide a burst of energy that keeps you alert and makes it difficult to go to sleep.		
Avoid foods that are likely to cause acid reflux (heartburn), gas, cramping, or indigestion if you are prone to these problems. Fatty or spicy foods, beans, garlic, peanuts, and dairy foods may cause discomfort for some people.		

Review and Prepare

This section covered a lot of tips for planning healthy eating. It also covered how to make healthy choices in different environments. Answer the following:

Name a new idea from this section that you have recently tried or are planning to try soon.

What do you like about this idea? What would you change?

What do you feel makes it hard for you to stick with new habits?

The next section will talk about setting yourself up to succeed. Knowing what to eat is important, but training your mind to make healthy choices automatically can help make changes stick.