



Healthy Pantry Toolkit

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INTRODUCTION

Food pantries and meal sites are vital in feeding our community and reducing food waste. While in many cases food is food, a significant link between food insecurity and obesity and chronic disease has been identified. Households with an income below 130% are susceptible to reduced intakes of nutritious foods, including grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables (Bowman, 2007). As significant providers of food for many of these households, it is an important undertaking for us to promote and protect the health of our community members while continuing to address hunger needs.

This toolkit offers various strategies for promoting healthier foods and “making the healthy choice the easy choice”. Though you will inevitably find some that do not work for your organization at this time, any efforts to encourage and provide nutritious foods to our neighbors is worthwhile. Studies have shown that simple acts, such as placing healthy foods at the forefront or labeling or displaying foods in certain ways, result in more occurrences of people choosing healthier foods. Many of these strategies can be easily done without investing time or money, which tend to be very limited resources in the food banking world.

We encourage you to read through this toolkit and use the included checklists to assess your organization’s current state and readiness to adopt these strategies. The toolkit includes ideas for encouraging healthier choices in the pantry and a library of resources to support these changes.

If you have questions or need further support, contact us at HealthyPantry@careandshare.org.

CREATING A HEALTHY NUDGE

What is a Nudge?

Feeding America defines a “healthy nudge” as a subtle environment change in a food distribution setting, designed to make a healthy choice the easy choice. Nudges, or environmental cues such as signage, varieties of colors, packaging and product placement, have been identified as factors that influence customer choice.

The Research

In 2015, Feeding America partnered with Cornell University researchers to evaluate the effect of nudges at ten food pantry sites affiliated with three Feeding America food banks, including the Food Bank for Larimer County, The Community Food Bank of New Jersey, and the North Texas Food Bank. Using online survey data and perspectives from individual staff interviews, the goal of this cross-site summary is to describe commonalities and unique experiences at food banks and agency pantries when implementing nutrition-based policies and practices, including nudges. These findings highlight considerations for implementing nudges that can inform the success of future nudge interventions at food banks across the broader network.

Nudge Readiness Factors Checklist

- Does the food pantry have a client choice distribution style?
- Is there a reliable supply of the food item to be nudged?
- Is there sufficient client demand for healthier foods?
- Is there an opportunity to nudge perishable healthy foods?
- Is the cultural appropriateness of the food or the nudge being taken into account?
- Is there interest in nutrition education but limited funding available?
- Are different staff or volunteers within the organization aligned on nudges?
- Are the organization’s policies supportive of using nudges to move healthy foods?

CLIENT CHOICE

What is Client Choice?

“Client Choice” is a food distribution method much like a grocery store, allowing clients to select their own food.

Why Client Choice?

Many pantries provide clients with fixed boxes or bags of food without the option to select which items are included. Client choice pantries allow clients to better support their families’ dietary needs by enabling clients to choose from a variety of foods and helps eliminate the risk of providing food that clients don’t want, like, or need.

Client Choice Models

Supermarket Model

- Food in the pantry is shelved by food group. Clients can handle food items the same way they would in a grocery store and can check the items’ food labels. Workers may help guide as necessary.

Table Model

- Food is displayed on tables by food group. Like the supermarket model, clients can handle food and read labels as in a grocery store.

Window Model

- Food is kept in an enclosed pantry. Clients view food options and tell a worker behind the window which items they’d like. Workers place food in client’s bags.

Inventory List Model

- Client receives a list of foods available and choose from the list. Workers assemble bags without the clients having to move around.

Foods to Encourage (F2E)

“Foods to Encourage” are foods emphasized based on the food groups the U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommend as most health-promoting, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and whole grains.

Fruits & Vegetables

- Fresh with nothing added
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Canned, dried, frozen, with no partially hydrogenated oil, that meet the criteria below: **Sodium:** ≤230mg / **Total Sugar:** fruit in lite syrup or 100% juice or ≤12 g / **Saturated Fat:** ≤2g / **Trans Fat:** 0g

Low-Fat Dairy

- Unflavored/ unsweetened milk substitutes and non-fat or 1% milk or yogurt
- Flavored non-fat or 1% milk or yogurt, milk substitutes that meet the following criteria: **Sodium:** ≤480mg / **Total Sugar:** ≤22g (milk) ≤30g (yogurt) / **Saturated Fat:** 3g / **Trans Fat:** 0g
- Cheese that meets the following criteria: **Sodium:** ≤480mg / **Saturated Fat:** ≤2g / **Trans Fat:** 0g

Whole Grains

- 100% whole grain and whole grain listed as the first ingredient
- Bread and pasta with >10% DV or ≥2.5g dietary fiber, Cereal with >3g fiber
- Bread, pasta and cereal that meet the following criteria: **Sodium:** ≤230mg / **Total Sugar:** ≤10g (bread/pasta) ≤12g (cereal) / **Saturated Fat:** ≤2g / **Trans Fat:** 0g

Lean Protein

- Eggs, nuts, nut butters, seeds, beans and lentils with nothing added
- Beans, Meat, Poultry, and Seafood that meet the following criteria: **Sodium:** ≤480mg / **Saturated Fat:** 2g / **Trans Fat:** 0g
- Nuts, nut butters and seeds that meet the following criteria: **Sodium:** ≤230mg / **Total Sugar:** <4g per 2T or 1 oz / **Trans Fat:** 0g

Other

- Shelf-stable healthy fats that are liquid at room temperature
- Dry, ground herbs and spices with no added salt

F2E Shelf Survey Form

Grains

- Barley
- Brown or wild rice
- Hot cereal
- Lowfat/ low-sugar granola bars
- Quinoa
- Rolled oats/ oatmeal
- Whole grain breads and tortillas
- Whole grain crackers
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain, low-sugar cereals
- Other _____

Fruits & Vegetables

- Canned fruit & fruit cups in water or natural juices
- Dried fruit and vegetables
- Low or no sodium canned vegetables
- Low sodium 100% vegetable juice
- Low sodium shelf stable pasta sauces
- No sugar added 100% fruit juice
- No sugar added applesauce
- Other _____

Meats & Proteins

- Canned seafood in water
- Dried beans / peas
- Low or no sodium canned beans
- Low sodium beef stew, chili or bean
- Low sodium chicken and beef broth
- Low sodium soup
- Low sugar and sodium nut butters
- Low sodium canned chicken
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Other _____

Dairy

- Powdered milk
- Shelf-stable lowfat milk or calcium-fortified dairy alternatives (unsweetened)
- Other _____

Refrigerator*

- 1% or skim milk
- Eggs
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Lean meats
- Lowfat cheese
- Lowfat yogurt
- Other _____

Freezer*

- Lean meats
- No salt added frozen vegetables
- No sugar added frozen fruit
- Other _____

Fats and Oils

- Canola oil
- Olive oil
- Vegetable oil
- Other _____

*If safe storage is available

| |
|----------------------------|
| Notes: |
|----------------------------|

Incorporating Nudges

The following are the different types of nudge interventions and some tips on how you can incorporate them into your pantry.

Convenience

Lowering the effort required to select an item. The idea is to minimize the distance between an item and the hands of clients who could select it.

Examples:

- Bundle F2E foods to conveniently create a packaged meal idea, with preparation instructions included (Recipes should include no more than 9 ingredients and be easy to read)
- Place F2E foods that go together on the same shelf

Display Change

Changing the display, packaging, or storage of the food item offered. The containers in which items are displayed can convey useful product information to the consumer.

Examples:

- Display suggested amount to help minimize/normalize a behavior of taking more of the particular F2E

Multiple Exposures

Increasing the number of times and locations that a food item is offered throughout the pantry, thereby increasing the likelihood of item selection.

Examples:

- Offer samples of F2E upon entry to pantry, before clients see it again in the pantry location
- Train workers to promote healthy foods while shopping

Order

Giving F2E food items preferential placement in the food pantry.

Examples:

- Display produce near the front door
- List F2E items first in a list of options, or first in a row of choices
- Keep unhealthy foods like pastries and highly processed items on the lowest shelves

Priming

Exposing clients to environmental cues that encourage specific food items, often at a very subtle or subconscious level, prior to the client's moment of choice. The longer the exposure, the more an individual has an opportunity to perceive the benefits of selecting the items.

Examples:

- Place recipe cards near F2E items
- Arrows on the floor towards F2E
- Display decorative photographs of F2E items (e.g. apples, oranges, carrots) in pantry waiting area

Signage

Marketing materials such as posters or shelf tags with text used to promote items, ideally displayed in prominent locations.

Examples:

- Place a healthier choice sign near F2E at eye level and near the entrance
- Create recipe cards for F2E items. Recipes should include no more than 9 ingredients and be easy to read
- Make MyPlate materials highly visible to anyone visiting the pantry
- Offer suggestion sizes (e.g. "A family of 4 usually takes 8 tomatoes")

COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS

Why?

Cooking demos have been shown to increase acceptability of foods that may otherwise be unfamiliar or intimidating. Unlike sampling, demonstrations are interactive, engaging, and can help meet a wider range of learning styles. Demos can help reduce food waste and increase consumption of healthful foods in food pantry clients.

What?

In addition to choosing a recipe that features a food that you would like to promote in your pantry, choose a message to focus on. This message can be nutritional (ex. Beans are a great source of fiber and plant-based protein), related to food safety (ex. Wipe off the tops of cans before using), or culinary (ex. Pureed beans can replace flour in brownies). Ideas for these messages can be found by ingredient from many of the websites linked in the Resources section of this toolkit. Additionally, when considering what food or recipe to highlight, consider the demographics of your pantry's clients including age, cultural backgrounds, and economic status.

When?

Best utilize your time and resources by choosing a time that is high-volume for your pantry. Plan your demonstration based on volunteer or staff availability and the amount of time available for exposure to those visiting your pantry or distribution.

Where?

Setting your demonstration up in a location that has high visibility and accessibility for those waiting or visiting your pantry can lead to the most success. Additionally, consider logistical aspects such as:

- Is there a sink nearby for washing hands and food? When this cannot be obtained, such as at mobile food distributions, wash food in advance and bring hand sanitizer and gloves.
- If using any kitchen equipment, is there an outlet/extension cord available nearby?
- Is there adequate space for those leading or assisting the demo to do so comfortably? Is there space for participants to interact, if applicable?

How?

Resources for leading your demo including a list of food and equipment to have on hand can be found in the “Cooking Matters For Your Pantry” linked in the [Resources](#) section at the end of this toolkit. Additionally, consider using the following questions to engage participants of your demo:

- Discuss substituting different forms of fruit or vegetable in the recipe, i.e. fresh, frozen, or canned produce.
- Discuss the different colors of the fruits and vegetables in the recipe - how color adds to the recipe’s appeal, the health benefits of the different colors, etc.
- Ask participants if or how they might change this recipe at home to best suite their families’ or personal preferences.
- Ask participants if they already have any of the recipe ingredients on-hand at home. Suggest and/or ask for substitutions.
- Recommend wiping the tops of canned fruits and vegetables before opening and explain why.
- Mention that all cut fruits and vegetables need to be refrigerated.
- Review cooling and refrigerating leftover cooked fruits and vegetables.
- Discuss the fiber content of the recipe and what ingredients contain the most fiber.
- Discuss equivalent amount of dried beans, frozen cooked beans, or cans of beans that should be used in the recipe.
- Ask what other fruits/vegetables could be used in the recipe.



Cooking demonstration example.

HEALTHY NUDGE TOOLS

How to Use

The following resources may be used by pantries to help clients make healthier choices. Below is a brief description and suggestions for usage of each of the included resources. Be sure to read the [References and Resources](#) section at the end of this toolkit for links to more of these helpful signs, handouts and recipes.

Healthier Choice Signs: Signage to post beside healthier choices to help clients recognize healthy food options. Using the information in this toolkit, decide which of your pantry items is the healthier choice (F2E). Separate the healthier choice from the unhealthier choice, and place next to the F2E. For example, place the no sugar added/100% juice canned fruit on the eye-level shelf with a healthier choice sign, and place the canned fruit in heavy syrup on the bottom shelf.

The Traffic Light System for Healthy Eating: This food and drink classification guide uses a traffic light system to classify foods and drinks as GREEN (best choices), YELLOW (choose carefully) or RED (limit). Pantries can use colored labels, food placement similar to the example above, and handouts or signs to help make F2Es an easier choice.

MyPlate Food Signs: Signage to post near corresponding healthier choice F2Es to help clients make the connection between the food items and how they fit into MyPlate food groups.

Handouts: Informative flyers to hand out or post around the pantry to educate clients on making healthier choices, cooking and creating meals.

- [MyPlate, MyWins Tips Sheets](#)
- [Seasonal Produce and their Benefits](#)
- [Vary Your Fruits and Veggies](#)
- [Storing and Freezing Fruits and Veggies](#)
- [Sub It In](#)
- [Packaged Food Makeover](#)
- [Cooking Produce and Whole Grains](#)
- [Bean Basics](#)
- [Get to Know Nutrition Facts Labels](#)

Recipes and Recipe Frameworks: Healthy, affordable and quick recipes to provide as handouts or post in the pantry near recipe ingredients, providing examples to clients of how to incorporate F2Es. Consider creating food bundles with available recipe ingredients to give clients meal ideas and provide a convenient option. Many of these recipes include colored dots to correspond with MyPlate food groups.

Healthier Choice Signs

Healthier Choice



Healthier Choice



Healthier Choice





The Traffic Light System for Healthy Eating



The Green Category – Eat Often

Green light foods are the healthiest, so choose foods from this category as much as possible.

Green light foods are:

- High in the important nutrients that our bodies need
- Low in added sugar, sodium, trans fat and saturated fat
- High in fiber

Examples of green light foods:

Whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables (or low-sodium/low-sugar canned and frozen), beans and legumes, lean meat (chicken, fish, turkey), tofu, nuts and seeds, eggs, and lowfat dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese).



The Yellow Category – Eat Sometimes

Yellow light foods still provide key nutrients but are not as healthy as green light foods, so choose carefully.

Yellow light foods typically:

- Have more calories
- Contain some saturated fat, added sugar and/or sodium
- Contain less fiber than green light foods

Examples of yellow light foods:

Canned or dried fruit with added sugar, canned or frozen vegetables or beans high in sodium and/or added sugar, whole grain cereals or breakfast foods with added sugar, and meats higher in fat (red meats including beef and pork).



The Red Category – Limit

Red light foods are not required and do not support our health. These foods should be limited whenever possible and consumed only in small amounts.

Red light foods are:

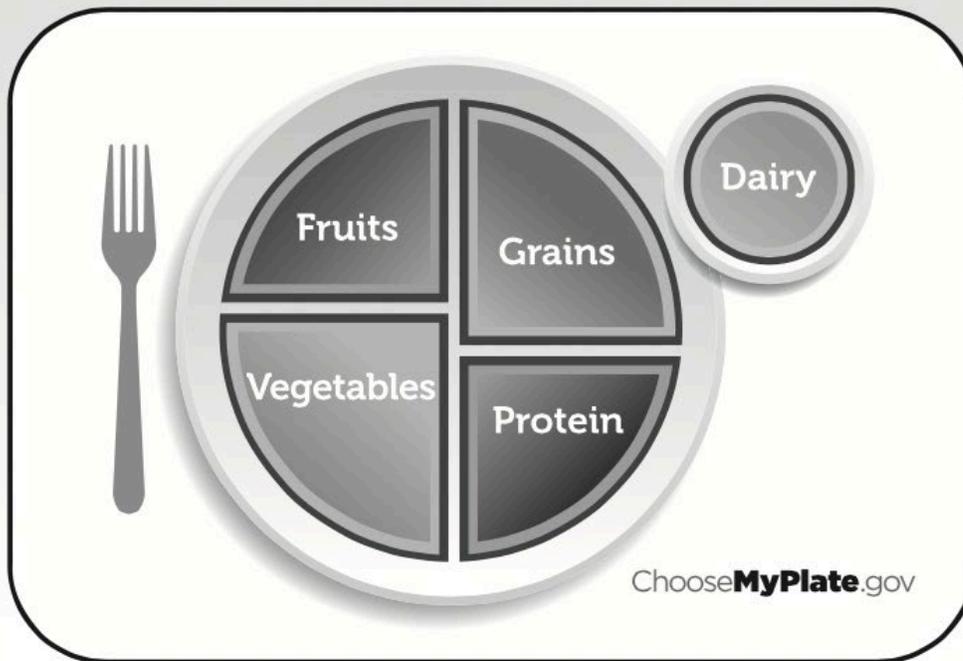
- High in calories
- High in saturated and/or trans fat, added sugar and/or sodium
- Low in important vitamins, nutrients, and fiber

Examples of red light foods:

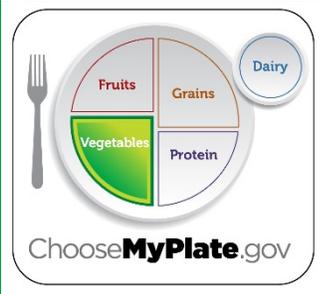
Fried and deep-fried foods, some convenience foods and pre-packaged meals, processed meats (bacon and sausage), pastries and cakes, fruits in heavy syrup, full-fat dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese), many desserts, sugary drinks and sodas.

MyPlate

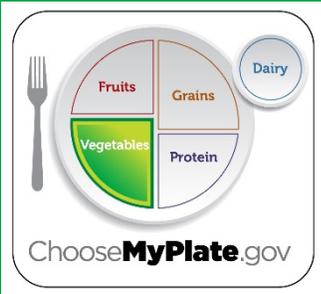
Eat right. Have fun.



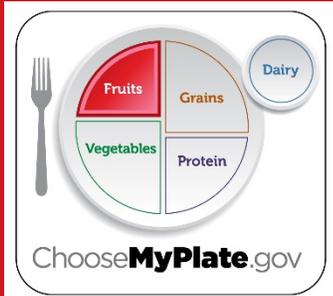
| Vegetables Vary your veggies. | Fruits Focus on fruits. | Grains Make at least half your grains whole. | Protein Go lean with protein. | Dairy Get your calcium-rich foods. |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make half your plate fruits and veggies. • Color your plate! Fill it with dark green (like broccoli or spinach), orange (like carrots or sweet potatoes), and other colorful veggies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make half your plate fruits and veggies. • Color your plate! Fill it with red, yellow, orange, blue, and purple fruits. • Whole fruits are a better choice than juice. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start smart with breakfast. Look for whole grain cereals. • Just because bread is brown doesn't mean it's whole grain. Check the ingredients list to be sure the first word is "whole." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat lean or low-fat meat, chicken, turkey, and fish. Ask for it baked, broiled, or grilled — not fried. • Mix it up! Beans, peas, nuts, seeds, and eggs are all great sources of protein, too. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at the carton or package to make sure your milk, yogurt, or cheese is fat-free or low-fat (1%). • Calcium builds strong bones. If you can't have milk products, choose other calcium sources like fortified soy milk. |
| | | | | |



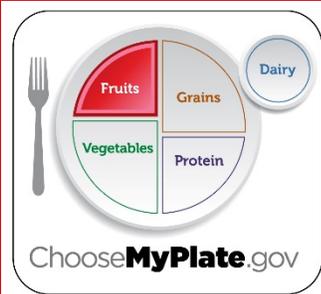
SPAGHETTI SAUCE



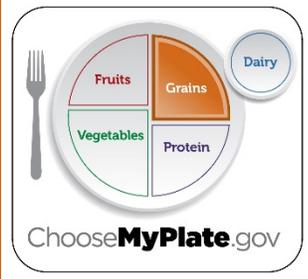
100% FRUIT or VEGETABLE JUICE



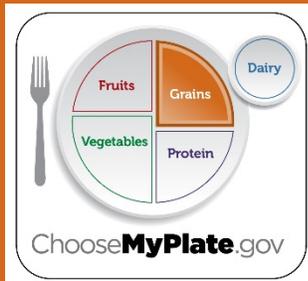
APPLESAUCE



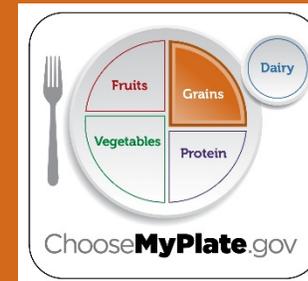
DRIED FRUIT



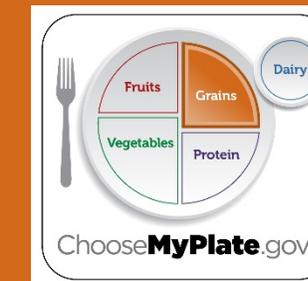
WHOLE WHEAT PASTA



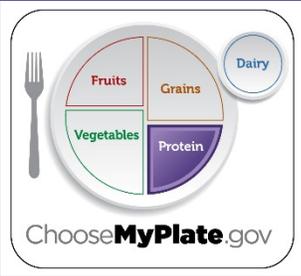
WHOLE GRAIN BREAD



BROWN RICE



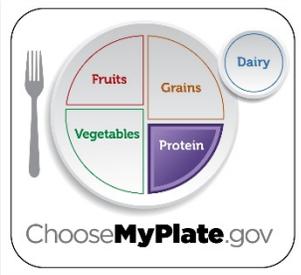
OATS



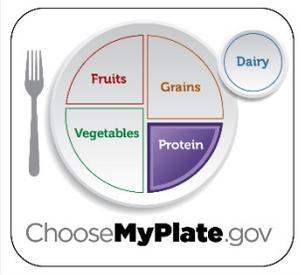
EGGS



BEANS



NUTS & SEEDS



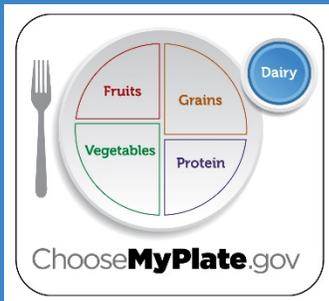
FISH



POWDERED MILK



YOGURT



SOY/ALMOND MILK



CHEESE



10 tips
Nutrition
Education Series



MyPlate
MyWins

Based on the
Dietary Guidelines
for Americans

Choose MyPlate

Use MyPlate to build your healthy eating style and maintain it for a lifetime. Choose foods and beverages from each MyPlate food group. Make sure your choices are limited in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Start with small changes to make healthier choices you can enjoy.

1 Find your healthy eating style
Creating a healthy style means regularly eating a variety of foods to get the nutrients and calories you need. MyPlate's tips help you create your own healthy eating solutions—"MyWins."

2 Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
Eating colorful fruits and vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories.

3 Focus on whole fruits
Choose whole fruits—fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in 100% juice. Enjoy fruit with meals, as snacks, or as a dessert.



4 Vary your veggies
Try adding fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables to salads, sides, and main dishes. Choose a variety of colorful vegetables prepared in healthful ways: steamed, sauteed, roasted, or raw.



5 Make half your grains whole grains
Look for whole grains listed first or second on the ingredients list—try oatmeal, popcorn, whole-grain bread, and brown rice. Limit grain-based desserts and snacks, such as cakes, cookies, and pastries.



6 Move to low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt
Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and soy beverages (soymilk) to cut back on saturated fat. Replace sour cream, cream, and regular cheese with low-fat yogurt, milk, and cheese.



7 Vary your protein routine
Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, soy products, eggs, and lean meats and poultry. Try main dishes made with beans or seafood like tuna salad or bean chili.



8 Drink and eat beverages and food with less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars
Use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list to limit items high in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars. Choose vegetable oils instead of butter, and oil-based sauces and dips instead of ones with butter, cream, or cheese.



9 Drink water instead of sugary drinks
Water is calorie-free. Non-diet soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of calories from added sugars and have few nutrients.

10 Everything you eat and drink matters
The right mix of foods can help you be healthier now and into the future. Turn small changes into your "MyPlate, MyWins."



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 (soymilk) 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, like 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.

10 tips
Nutrition
Education Series



make better food choices



10 tips for women's health

Make yourself a priority and take time to care for yourself. ChooseMyPlate.gov helps you choose the types and amounts of food and beverages you need. And, make time to be physically active, so you can do the things you want to do.

1 find out what you need

Get personalized nutrition information based on your age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level.

SuperTracker provides your calorie level, shows foods and beverages you need, and tracks progress toward your goals. Learn more at www.SuperTracker.usda.gov.



2 enjoy your food but eat less

Use a smaller plate at meals to help control the amount of food and calories you eat. Take time to enjoy smaller amounts of food.

3 strengthen your bones

Choose foods like fat-free and low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, and fortified soymilk to help strengthen bones. Be sure your morning coffee includes fat-free or low-fat milk.



4 make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes. Choose red, orange, or dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for meals.



5 drink water

Sip water or other drinks with few or no calories to help maintain a healthy weight. Keep a water bottle in your bag or at your desk to satisfy your thirst throughout the day.

6 eat whole grains more often

Choose whole grains like brown rice and whole-grain pastas and breads more often. Foods with a high-fiber content can help give you a feeling of fullness and also provide key nutrients.



7 learn what is in foods

Use both ingredient and Nutrition Facts labels to discover what various foods contain. SuperTracker's **Food-A-Pedia** makes it easy to compare nutrition information for more than 8,000 foods.

8 cut back on some foods

Cut calories by cutting out foods high in solid fats and added sugar. Limit fatty meats like ribs, bacon, and hot dogs. Choose cakes, cookies, candies, and ice cream as just occasional treats.

9 be a better cook

Try out healthier recipes that use less solid fat, salt, and sugar. Eat at home more often so you can control what you are eating. If you eat out, check and compare nutrition information. Choose healthier options such as baked chicken instead of fried chicken.

10 be active whenever you can

Set a goal to fit in at least 2½ hours of moderate physical activity in your week. Being active 10 minutes at a time also adds to your weekly total. Ask your friends or family to keep you company as you bike, jog, walk, or dance. Don't forget to do some muscle strengthening activities twice a week.





Eating better on a budget

Get the most for your budget! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three main steps are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars.

1 Plan, plan, plan!

Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or soups, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.



2 Get the best price

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.

3 Compare and contrast

Locate the “Unit Price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is the best buy.

4 Buy in bulk

It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are large containers of low-fat yogurt and large bags of frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.



5 Buy in season

Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

6 Convenience costs... go back to the basics

Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut fruits and vegetables, and take-out meals can often cost more than if you were to make them at home. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

7 Easy on your wallet

Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy cabbage, sweet potatoes, or low-sodium canned tomatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.



8 Cook once...eat all week!

Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.

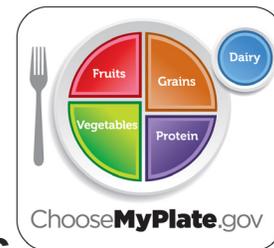
9 Get creative with leftovers

Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry, over a garden salad, or in chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

10 Eating out

Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Ask for water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

smart shopping for veggies and fruits



10 tips for affordable vegetables and fruits

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1 celebrate the season

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.



2 why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3 stick to your list

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4 try canned or frozen

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.



5 buy small amounts frequently

Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6 buy in bulk when items are on sale

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

7 store brands = savings

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

8 keep it simple

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.



9 plant your own

Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.



10 plan and cook smart

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.



Add more vegetables to your day

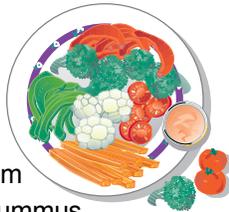
It's easy to eat more vegetables! Eating vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories. To fit more vegetables in your day, try them as snacks and add them to your meals.

1 Discover fast ways to cook

Cook fresh or frozen vegetables in the microwave for a quick-and-easy dish to add to any meal. Steam green beans, carrots, or bok choy in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave for a quick side dish.

2 Be ahead of the game

Cut up a batch of bell peppers, cauliflower, or broccoli. Pre-package them to use when time is limited. Enjoy them in a casserole, stir-fry, or as a snack with hummus.



3 Choose vegetables rich in color

Brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange, or dark green. They are full of vitamins and minerals. Try acorn squash, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, or collard greens. They not only taste great but are good for you, too.

4 Check the freezer aisle

Frozen vegetables are quick and easy to use and are just as nutritious as fresh veggies. Try adding frozen vegetables, such as corn, peas, edamame, or spinach, to your favorite dish. Look for frozen vegetables without added sauces, gravies, butter, or cream.



5 Stock up on veggies

Canned vegetables are a great addition to any meal, so keep on hand canned tomatoes, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, mushrooms, and beets. Select those labeled as “reduced sodium,” “low sodium,” or “no salt added.”

6 Make your garden salad glow with color

Brighten your salad by using colorful vegetables such as black beans or avocados, sliced red bell peppers or onions, shredded radishes or carrots, and chopped red cabbage or watercress. Your salad will not only look good but taste good, too.

7 Sip on some vegetable soup

Heat it and eat it. Try tomato, butternut squash, or garden vegetable soup. Look for reduced- or low-sodium soups. Make your own soups with a low-sodium broth and your favorite vegetables.

8 While you're out

If dinner is away from home, no need to worry. When ordering, ask for an extra side of vegetables or a side salad instead of the typical fried side dish. Ask for toppings and dressings on the side.

9 Savor the flavor of seasonal vegetables

Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor at a lower cost. Check your local supermarket specials for the best in-season buys. Or visit your local farmers market.



10 Vary your veggies

Choose a new vegetable that you've never tried before. Find recipes online at WhatsCooking.fns.usda.gov.



10 tips
Nutrition
Education Series



MyPlate
MyWins

Based on the
**Dietary
Guidelines
for Americans**

Focus on fruits

Eating fruit provides health benefits. People who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy eating style are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health, such as potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate. Focus on whole fruits—fresh, canned, frozen, or dried—instead of juice. The sugar naturally found in fruit does not count as added sugar.

1 **Keep visible reminders**
Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.



2 **Experiment with flavor**
Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor. Use fruits to sweeten a recipe instead of adding sugar.

3 **Think about variety**
Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.



4 **Don't forget the fiber**
Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit, rather than juice, for the benefits that dietary fiber provides.

5 **Include fruit at breakfast**
At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas, peaches, or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, try a fruit mixed with fat-free or low-fat yogurt.

6 **Try fruit at lunch**
At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy to carry and convenient for lunch.



7 **Enjoy fruit at dinner, too**
At dinner, add crushed pineapple to coleslaw or include orange sections, dried cranberries, or grapes in a tossed salad. Try fruit salsa on top of fish.

8 **Snack on fruits**
Fruits make great snacks. Try dried fruits mixed with nuts or whole fruits like apples. They are easy to carry and store well.

9 **Be a good role model**
Set a good example for children by eating fruit every day with meals or as snacks.

10 **Keep fruits safe**
Rinse fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. After rinsing, dry with a clean towel.





Choosing whole-grain foods

Whole grains are important sources of nutrients such as zinc, magnesium, B vitamins, and fiber. There are many choices available to make half your grains whole grains. But whole-grain foods should be handled with care. Over time and if not properly stored, oils in whole grains can cause spoilage. Consider these tips to select whole-grain products and keep them fresh to eat.

1 Search the label

Whole grains can be an easy choice when preparing meals. Choose whole-grain breads, breakfast cereals, and pastas. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients lists to find choices lower in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|--|--|
| Serving Size 2/3 cup (54g) Servings Per Container About 6 | |
| Amount Per Serving | |
| Calories 240 | |
| Total Fat 12g | |
| Sodium 250mg | |
| Total Carbohydrate 45g | |
| Dietary Fiber 3g | |
| Sugars 15g | |
| Protein 8g | |
| Vitamin A 10% | |
| Vitamin C 5% | |
| Calcium 2% | |
| Iron 10% | |

2 Look for the word “whole” at the beginning of the ingredients list

Some whole-grain ingredients include whole oats, whole-wheat flour, whole-grain corn, whole-grain brown rice, and whole rye. Foods that say “multi-grain,” “100% wheat,” “high fiber,” or are brown in color may not be a whole-grain product.

3 Choose whole grains at school

Prepare meals and snacks with whole grains at home so your kids are more likely to choose whole-grain foods at school.



4 Find the fiber on label

If the product provides at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, it is a good source of fiber. If it contains 5 or more grams of fiber per serving, it is an excellent source of fiber.

5 Is gluten in whole grains?

People who can't eat wheat gluten can eat whole grains if they choose carefully. There are many whole-grain products, such as buckwheat, certified gluten-free oats or oatmeal, popcorn, brown rice, wild rice, and quinoa that fit gluten-free diet needs.

6 Check for freshness

Buy whole-grain products that are tightly packaged and well sealed. Grains should always look and smell fresh. Also, check the expiration date and storage guidelines on the package.

7 Keep a lid on it

When storing whole grains from bulk bins, use containers with tight-fitting lids and keep in a cool, dry location. A sealed container is important for maintaining freshness and reducing bug infestations.



8 Buy what you need

Purchase smaller quantities of whole-grain products to reduce spoilage. Most grains in sealed packaging can be kept in the freezer.

9 Wrap it up

Whole-grain bread is best stored at room temperature in its original packaging, tightly closed with a quick-lock or twist tie. The refrigerator will cause bread to lose moisture quickly and become stale. Properly wrapped bread will store well in the freezer.



10 What's the shelf life?

Since the oil in various whole-grain flours differs, the shelf life varies too. Most whole-grain flours keep well in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 months and in the freezer for 6 to 8 months. Cooked brown rice can be refrigerated 3 to 5 days and can be frozen up to 6 months.



Make half your grains whole grains

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy eating style have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

1 Make simple shifts
To make half your grains whole grains, choose 100% whole-wheat bread, bagels, pasta, or tortillas; brown rice; oatmeal; or grits.

2 Whole grains can be healthy snacks
Popcorn is a whole grain. Make it with little or no added salt or butter. Also, try 100% whole-wheat or rye crackers.



3 Save some time
Cook extra brown rice or oatmeal when you have time. Refrigerate half of what you cook to heat and serve later in the week.

4 Mix it up with whole grains
Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Try a quinoa salad or pilaf.



5 Try whole-wheat versions
Change up your favorite meal with whole grains. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat noodles in lasagna.

6 Bake up some whole-grain goodness
Experiment by substituting buckwheat, millet, or oat flour for up to half of the flour in your favorite pancake or waffle recipes. To limit saturated fat and added sugars, top with fruit instead of butter and syrup.

7 Be a good role model for children
Set a good example for children by serving and eating whole grains every day with meals or as snacks.



8 Check the label
Most refined grains are enriched. This means that certain B vitamins and iron are added back after processing. Check the ingredients list to make sure the word “enriched” is included in the grain name.

9 Know what to look for on the ingredients list
Read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient **first** on the list. Look for “whole wheat,” “brown rice,” “bulgur,” “buckwheat,” “oatmeal,” “whole-grain cornmeal,” “whole oats,” or “whole rye.”

10 Be a smart shopper
The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain,” or “bran” are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain **any** whole grain.





Vary your protein routine

Protein foods include both animal (meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts, and seeds) sources. We all need protein—but most Americans eat enough, and some eat more than they need. How much is enough? Most people, ages 9 and older, should eat 5 to 7 ounces* of protein foods each day depending on overall calorie needs.

1 Vary your protein food choices
Eat a variety of foods from the Protein Foods Group each week. Experiment with beans or peas, nuts, soy, and seafood as main dishes.

2 Choose seafood twice a week
Eat seafood in place of meat or poultry twice a week. Select a variety of seafood, including those that are higher in oils and low in mercury, such as salmon, trout, and herring.



3 Select lean meat and poultry
Choose lean cuts of meat like round or sirloin and ground beef that is at least 93% lean. Trim or drain fat from meat and remove poultry skin.

4 Save with eggs
Eggs can be an inexpensive protein option and part of a healthy eating style. Make eggs part of your weekly choices.

5 Eat plant protein foods more often
Try beans and peas (kidney, pinto, black, or white beans; split peas; chickpeas; hummus), soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers), nuts, and seeds. They are lower in saturated fat and some are higher in fiber.



6 Consider nuts and seeds
Choose unsalted nuts or seeds as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Nuts and seeds are a concentrated source of calories, so eat small portions to keep calories in check.

7 Keep it tasty and healthy
Try grilling, broiling, roasting, or baking—they don't add extra fat. Some lean meats need slow, moist cooking to be tender—try a slow cooker for them. Avoid breading meat or poultry, which adds calories.

8 Make a healthy sandwich
Choose turkey, roast beef, canned tuna or salmon, or peanut butter for sandwiches. Many deli meats, such as regular bologna or salami, are high in fat and sodium—make them occasional treats only.



9 Think small when it comes to meat portions
Get the flavor you crave but in a smaller portion. Make or order a small turkey burger or a “petite” size steak.

10 Check the sodium
Check the Nutrition Facts label to limit sodium. Salt is added to many canned foods—including soups, vegetables, beans, and meats. Many processed meats—such as ham, sausage, and hot dogs—are high in sodium. Some fresh chicken, turkey, and pork are brined in a salt solution for flavor and tenderness.

* What counts as an ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ¼ cup cooked beans or peas; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; or 1 tablespoon peanut butter.



Got your dairy today?

The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk. They provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. Choices should be low-fat or fat-free—to cut calories and saturated fat. How much is needed? Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups* a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

1 “Skim” the fat

Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. If you currently drink whole milk, gradually switch to lower fat versions. This change cuts saturated fat and calories but doesn't reduce calcium or other essential nutrients.



2 Boost potassium and vitamin D, and cut sodium

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese. Milk and yogurt have more potassium and less sodium than most cheeses. Also, almost all milk and many yogurts are fortified with vitamin D.

3 Top off your meals

Use fat-free or low-fat milk on cereal and oatmeal. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt instead of higher fat toppings such as sour cream.



4 Choose cheeses with less fat

Many cheeses are high in saturated fat. Look for “reduced-fat” or “low-fat” on the label. Try different brands or types to find the one that you like.

5 What about cream cheese?

Cream cheese, cream, and butter are not part of the dairy food group. They are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium.

6 Switch ingredients

When recipes such as dips call for sour cream, substitute plain yogurt. Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream, and try low-fat or fat-free ricotta cheese as a substitute for cream cheese.



7 Limit added sugars

Flavored milks and yogurts, frozen yogurt, and puddings can contain a lot of added sugars. Get your nutrients from dairy foods with fewer or no added sugars.

8 Caffeinating?

If so, get your calcium along with your morning caffeine boost. Make or order coffee, a latte, or cappuccino with fat-free or low-fat milk.

9 Can't drink milk?

If you are lactose intolerant, try yogurt, lactose-free milk, or soymilk (soy beverage) to get your calcium. Calcium in some leafy greens is well absorbed, but eating several cups each day to meet calcium needs may be unrealistic.



10 Take care of yourself and your family

Parents who drink milk and eat dairy foods show their kids that it is important for their health. Dairy foods are important to build the growing bones of kids and teens and to maintain bone health in adulthood.

* What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group? 1 cup of milk, yogurt, or soy beverage; 1½ ounces of natural cheese; or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables and their Benefits

Fruits and vegetables are full of nutrients that our bodies need to stay healthy. Eating fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors is a good way to benefit from the most nutrients. Produce is least expensive when it's in season, so use this guide* to save money and buy them when they are freshest.

| COLORS | SPRING | SUMMER | AUTUMN | WINTER | BENEFITS |
|------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Red |  <p>Pear Radish Strawberry</p> |  <p>Tomato Watermelon Cherry</p> |  <p>Beet Apple Bell pepper</p> |  <p>Potato Pomegranate Grapefruit</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a healthy heart and memory Lower the risk of getting certain types of cancer |
| Orange |  <p>Apricot Carrot Pineapple</p> |  <p>Mango Cantaloupe Yellow squash</p> |  <p>Yellow corn Papaya Sweet potato</p> |  <p>Lemon Orange Butternut squash</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a healthy vision, immune system, strong bones and teeth Lower the risk of getting certain types of cancer |
| Yellow |  <p>Nopal (Cactus leaf) Asparagus Broccoli</p> |  <p>Cucumber Zucchini Spinach</p> |  <p>Lime Lettuce Avocado</p> |  <p>Cabbage Celery Kiwi</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a healthy heart, eyes, and skin, and support strong bones, teeth, immune and digestive functions Lower the risk of getting certain types of cancer |
| Green |  <p>potato cabbage</p> |  <p>Plum Blackberry Blueberry</p> |  <p>Fig Grape Eggplant</p> |  <p>Passion fruit Onion</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a healthy memory, aging process, immune and digestive function Lower the risk of stroke |
| Dark Blue/Purple |  <p>Mushroom Banana Cassava</p> |  <p>White Nectarine Garlic</p> |  <p>Onion Cauliflower</p> |  <p>Pear Coconut Jicama</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a healthy heart and immune system Lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels |
| Brown | | | | | |

*This guide does not include all fruits and vegetables, nor all benefits. Seasonal fruits and vegetables may vary by region.

Vary Your Fruits and Veggies

Choose fresh, frozen, and canned produce to meet your daily goals.

Choose from all the color groups. Check out what each color can do for you.

Red

- Improved memory
- A healthy heart
- Lower risk for some cancers



White

- A healthy heart



Green

- Sharp vision
- Strong bones and teeth
- Lower risk for some cancers



Orange/Yellow

- Sharp vision
- A healthy heart
- Strength to fight off colds and illness
- Lower risk for some cancers



Blue/Purple

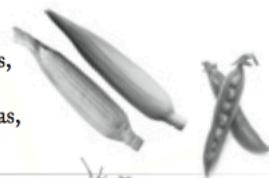
- Good memory
- Healthy aging
- Lower risk for some cancers



Eat different parts of the plant that appeal to your tastes.

Seeds

Lima beans, pinto beans, pumpkin seeds, black beans, peas, dry split peas, corn



Leaves

Brussels sprouts, parsley, cabbage, spinach, collards, turnip greens, kale, chard, lettuce, endive, watercress



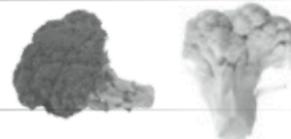
Roots

Beets, onions, carrots, parsnips, potatoes, radishes, rutabaga, sweet potatoes, jicama



Flowers

Broccoli, cauliflower



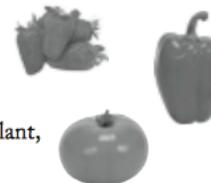
Stems

Asparagus, bamboo shoots, bok choy, broccoli, celery, rhubarb



Fruit

Apples, avocados, grapes, cucumbers, bananas, pumpkins, bell peppers, dates, grapefruit, berries, eggplant, plums, melons, oranges, strawberries, tomatoes



Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Don't let produce go bad. Keep it fresh longer using these tips.



| Fresh Fruit or Vegetable | How to Purchase | How to Store |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Apples | Buy firm apples without any bruises or soft spots. | Store at room temperature for 3–5 days. Or, refrigerate for up to 3 months. |
| Bananas | If you will not eat right away, buy bananas when they are green so they will last longer. Allow them to ripen (lose any green color) before eating. Only buy bananas with many brown spots when you need overripe bananas for baking. | Ripen at room temperature. To prevent over-ripening, store in refrigerator up to 1 week. The skin will turn black, but the fruit will still be good. Peel and freeze overripe bananas to use in smoothies and muffins. |
| Beets | Buy brightly colored, firm beets. If greens are still attached, they should look fresh and not wilted. | If greens are still attached, remove and store separately (see Cooking Greens below). Refrigerate beets for 2–3 weeks. |
| Berries | Buy firm, plump berries with no mold spots. | Refrigerate unwashed, in a single layer if you can. Will last 3–5 days. |
| Broccoli | Buy sturdy, dark green spears without yellow spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Carrots | Buy brightly colored, firm carrots without shriveled or soft spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Cabbage | Buy fresh-looking heads without yellowing or brown spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 1–2 weeks. |
| Cauliflower | Buy heads with bright white florets without any browning. The attached greens should look fresh and not wilted. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Celery | Buy crisp stalks without any blemishes. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 1–2 weeks. |

When purchasing fresh bananas, mangoes, pears, plums, peaches, or nectarines: If you will eat right away, buy ripe. If you won't, buy before they are ripe and let ripen at home. Or, buy a mix — a few that are ripe to eat right away and a few that aren't for later in the week.



Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables continued >

| Fresh Fruit or Vegetable | How to Purchase | How to Store |
|---|---|--|
| Citrus fruits (e.g., oranges, limes, lemons) | Buy fruit that feels heavy for its size without any specific soft spots. Juicier citrus fruit will yield slightly when squeezed. | Store at room temperature up to 1 week. Or, refrigerate up to 1–2 months. |
| Cooking greens (e.g., kale, collards) — except spinach | Buy fresh, crisp, brightly colored greens. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 5–10 days. |
| Corn | Buy in husks that are moist and green. The silk attached at the tip should be golden brown. Instead of peeling back the husks, which can dry out the corn, feel through the husks for plump kernels underneath. | Refrigerate, with husks still on, in a plastic bag for up to 2 days. |
| Cucumber | Buy firm without any soft spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Eggplant | Buy with smooth skin without any soft spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Garlic | Buy with papery skin without any green sprouts. | Store in a cool, dark place (away from potatoes) for 2–3 weeks. |
| Grapes | Buy firm grapes still attached to the stem and free from mold. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag, up to 1 week. |
| Green onions | Buy when greens are brightly colored and white parts are firm. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Lettuce or salad greens | Buy crisp-looking greens without signs of mold or browning. | If damp when purchased, dry first. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. Place a dry paper towel in the bag to absorb any extra moisture. |
| Mangoes | When ripe, mangoes will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed. | Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe mangoes for up to 3 days. |
| Melons | Buy melons that yield slightly when you press on the end opposite the stem. Watermelons should have a yellow spot on the bottom. | Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe melon for up to 3 days. |
| Mushrooms | Buy firm and fresh looking. They should look dry but not dried out. | Refrigerate for up to 1 week. If you buy loose, place in a paper bag first. |

If refrigeration is not available, some fruits and veggies can be stored in a cool room or basement instead. Try potatoes, beets, carrots, other root veggies, apples, and pears.



Continued >

Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables continued >

| Fresh Fruit or Vegetable | How to Purchase | How to Store |
|---|--|--|
| Onions | Buy firm and heavy without cuts, bruises, or green sprouts. | Store in a cool, dark place (away from potatoes) for 2–3 weeks. |
| Parsnips | Buy firm without any soft spots. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. |
| Pears | Buy pears without any soft spots or bruising. Press at the top of the “neck” (near the stem) to judge ripeness. When ripe, pears will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed. | Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe pears up to 3 days. |
| Potatoes | Buy firm and free from soft spots and sprouts. | Store in a cool, dark place (away from onions) for 10–12 weeks. |
| Spinach | Buy crisp-looking without signs of mold or browning. | If damp when purchased, dry first. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. Place a dry paper towel in the bag to absorb any extra moisture. |
| Stone fruit (e.g., peaches, plums, nectarines) | Buy when brightly colored and free from bruises or soft spots. When ripe, fruit will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed. | Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe stone fruit up to 3 days. |
| Summer squash (e.g., yellow squash, zucchini) | Buy with firm, smooth skin without any gashes. | Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 4–5 days. |
| Sweet potatoes | Buy with papery skin without blemishes. | Store in a cool, dark place (away from onions) for 10–12 weeks. |
| Tomatoes | Should yield to gentle pressure but not be soft. Take a whiff — if it doesn’t smell like a tomato, it won’t taste like one. | Store at room temperature for 2–3 days. |
| Turnips | Buy when firm. It should not feel soft or look shriveled. | Refrigerate for 2–3 weeks. |
| Winter squash | Buy hard squash that still has some of the dried-out stem attached. | Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month. |



Freezing Fruits and Veggies

Buy fruits and veggies in bulk when they are in season and the price is good. Freeze the extras to use another time.

To freeze fruits and veggies, follow these simple steps:

1. Rinse produce. Pat dry.
2. Prep as directed in the chart on page 46.
3. If freezing vegetables, blanch (briefly cook in boiling water) for the amount of time shown in the chart. Using a slotted spoon, immediately transfer boiled veggies to a bowl of ice water. Drain well and pat dry.
4. Place produce in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze.
5. Transfer frozen produce to a large freezer-safe bag or other airtight container.



Most produce maintains its quality when frozen up to about 6 months (for fruits) or 12 months (for veggies).

Blanching slows the loss of flavor, color, texture, and nutrients during freezing. Veggies frozen without blanching are safe to eat, but may not maintain their quality for as long. If you're pressed for time, hearty veggies like broccoli, carrots, corn, and summer or winter squash can be frozen without blanching. But you may want to use them up more quickly than blanched frozen veggies.

Continued >

Feezing Fruits and Veggies continued >

| Fruit or Vegetable | Prep Steps | Blanching Time |
|---|---|---|
| Bell peppers | Cut out stem and remove seeds. Cut into ½-inch pieces. | 2–3 minutes |
| Blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries | Remove any stems. | Not needed |
| Broccoli and cauliflower | Cut into 1- to 1½-inch florets | 3 minutes |
| Carrots | Peel and cut into ¼-inch slices | 2 minutes |
| Cherries | Remove stems and pit. | Not needed |
| Cooking greens (e.g., spinach, collards, kale, Swiss chard) | Remove any tough stems and ribs. Chop. | 2–3 minutes |
| Corn | Remove husks and cut corn off the cob. | 2 minutes |
| Green beans | Trim stem ends. | 3 minutes |
| Mangoes | Cut off skin. Cut fruit off of pit. Cut into 1-inch pieces. | Not needed |
| Nectarines, peaches, and plums | Remove pit and cut into sixths. | Not needed |
| Peas | For edible pods, remove tough stems. If using shelling peas, remove from pod. | 1–2 minutes |
| Strawberries | Remove stem and hull. Cut large berries in half. | Not needed |
| Summer squash | Cut into ½-inch slices. | 2–3 minutes |
| Tomatoes | Remove core. | Not needed |
| Winter squash | Cut in half. Remove seeds and stringy membrane. | Instead of blanching, place cut-side down on a baking sheet coated with non-stick cooking spray. Bake at 400°F until tender, 35–50 minutes. Let cool. Scoop squash into a bowl, removing skin. Mash with a fork. Cool completely before freezing. |

Sub It In

Tempted to skip over a recipe because of one ingredient? Just use something else!

If your recipe calls for a food that is too pricey, hard to find, or that you simply don't care for, try subbing in another. Substitutions may be different for raw or cooked foods, so figure out how it's used in your recipe. Then try the tips in the charts below.

Foods within a category can be used in place of each other. For instance, a dark leafy green such as kale can be replaced with any other dark leafy green like chard or collards, whether raw or cooked.

| Instead of... | If using raw, sub in... | If using cooked, sub in... |
|---|---|--|
| Fruit | | |
| Berries (blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries) | Cherries, bananas, grapes, stone fruit | Cherries, grapes, stone fruit |
| Grapes | Cherries, berries, bananas | Cherries, berries |
| Stone fruit (peaches, plums, nectarines, and apricots) | Bananas, berries | Grapes, apples, pears |
| Veggies | | |
| Broccoli | Cauliflower | Cauliflower, spinach, dark leafy greens |
| Carrots | Beets, celery root, summer squash, celery | Root vegetables, summer squash, celery |
| Dark leafy greens (kale, chard, collards, turnip, beet, and mustard greens) | Spinach, lettuce, cabbage | Spinach, broccoli, cabbage |
| Eggplant | — | Zucchini, yellow squash, sweet peppers |
| Mushrooms | Summer squash | Snow peas, sugar snap peas, summer squash |
| Potatoes | — | Sweet potato, root vegetables, carrots |
| Root vegetables (turnips, beets, rutabaga, celery root) | Sweet potatoes, carrots | Sweet potatoes, winter squash, carrots, parsnips |
| Spinach | Lettuce | Dark leafy greens, broccoli, cabbage |
| Summer squash (zucchini, yellow squash) | Sweet peppers, carrots | Eggplant, sweet peppers |
| Sweet potatoes | Cabbage, root vegetables, carrots | Root vegetables, carrots, winter squash, parsnips |
| Winter squash | — | Sweet potatoes, root vegetables, parsnips, carrots |

Continued >



Sub It In continued >

The following substitutions will work whether using raw or cooked foods.

| Instead of... | Try this instead! |
|----------------------|---|
| Fruit | |
| Apples | Stone fruit, pears |
| Bananas | Berries |
| Grapefruit | Oranges |
| Lemons | Limes, oranges, grapefruit |
| Limes | Lemons, oranges, grapefruit |
| Oranges | Grapefruit |
| Pears | Stone fruit, apples |
| Veggies | |
| Celery | Carrots, celery root |
| Edamame (soy beans) | Peas, cooked beans |
| Green Onions | Onions, sweet peppers |
| Hot peppers | Sweet peppers, crushed red chili peppers (to taste) |
| Onions | Sweet peppers, green onions |
| Sweet peppers | Tomatoes |
| Tomatoes | Sweet peppers |

Packaged Food Makeover

Love the convenience of packaged foods? Try these tips for making them healthier — or making them yourself!



| Packaged Food | Make It Healthier | Make It Yourself |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Ramen noodles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for brands that bake the noodles instead of frying them. • Stir in fresh or frozen veggies. Try broccoli, peas, edamame (soy beans), or spinach. • Add protein if you like. Try leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef. Or, add cubes of tofu. • Use only half of the seasoning packet. | <p>Cook whole grain angel hair pasta and your favorite chopped veggies in low-sodium broth until tender. Add leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef, cubed tofu, or thawed edamame. Cook until heated through. Season with low-sodium soy sauce.</p> |
| “Just add meat” boxed meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey. • Drain fat from cooked meat. • Add whatever veggies you have on hand. Try broccoli, carrots, or spinach. | <p>Try these recipes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheesy Hamburger Skillet* • Barley Jambalaya* • Tex-Mex Skillet* |
| Boxed macaroni and cheese | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add fresh or frozen broccoli or spinach to the pasta during the last few minutes of cooking. | <p>Homemade mac and cheese is easier to make than you may think! Try our stovetop version.*</p> |
| Frozen pizza | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy a plain cheese pizza. Add your own toppings. • Top with your favorite cooked veggies. Try broccoli, peppers, onions, and olives. • If you want meat, add low-fat turkey pepperoni. Or, use cooked chicken or turkey sausage. • Look for whole grain crusts if you can find them. If not, look for thin crusts. | <p>Making your own pizza is fun for the whole family. Try The Works Pizza.* If you have time, make your own whole grain crust using our dough recipe.*</p> |

* Recipes are available at CookingMatters.org

Continued >

Packaged Food Makeover continued >

| Packaged Food | Make It Healthier | Make It Yourself |
|--|---|--|
| Taco dinner kits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for taco kits with whole wheat or corn tortillas. Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey. Cook half the amount of ground meat called for. Drain fat. Stir a can of rinsed and drained black beans or pinto beans into the cooked meat. Add cooked veggies like chopped tomatoes or shredded zucchini. Top with low-fat cheese or sour cream. | Set up a taco buffet! Start with our Turkey Tacos recipe.* Let each family member add toppings to suit his or her taste. |
| Frozen or prepackaged Chinese food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If veggies aren't included, stir them in! Try bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and edamame. | Try our Chinese Veggies and Rice* or Asian Noodles with Peanut Butter Sauce.* Or, make your own stir-fry (page 77). |
| Canned ravioli or pasta dishes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for products made with whole grain pasta. Add your favorite cooked veggies. Try zucchini, yellow squash, or spinach. Or, serve with a veggie-filled side salad (see page 79). | Make your own pasta dinner using the options on page 75! Or, try some of our tasty pasta recipes like Spaghetti and Meatballs* or Pasta with Beans and Greens.* |
| Frozen chicken nuggets or fish sticks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare labels. Choose a brand with less saturated fat and sodium. Look for chicken nuggets made with white meat instead of dark. Serve with a hearty salad (page 79) or a colorful vegetable side dish (page 88 or 90). If fries on the side are a must, make your own Sweet Potato Fries.* | It's easy to make your own chicken fingers or fish sticks! Try our Baked Flaked Chicken* or Baked Flaked Fish With Tartar Sauce* for healthy, baked versions. Serve with colorful side dishes. |
| Frozen waffles or pancakes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for whole grain pancakes or waffles. Top with fresh fruit and yogurt instead of syrup. | Make a batch of our Orange Oatmeal Pancakes* on a day you have extra time. Freeze them in single servings. Pull them out when you're in a hurry. |

* Recipes are available at CookingMatters.org

Cooking Produce and Whole Grains

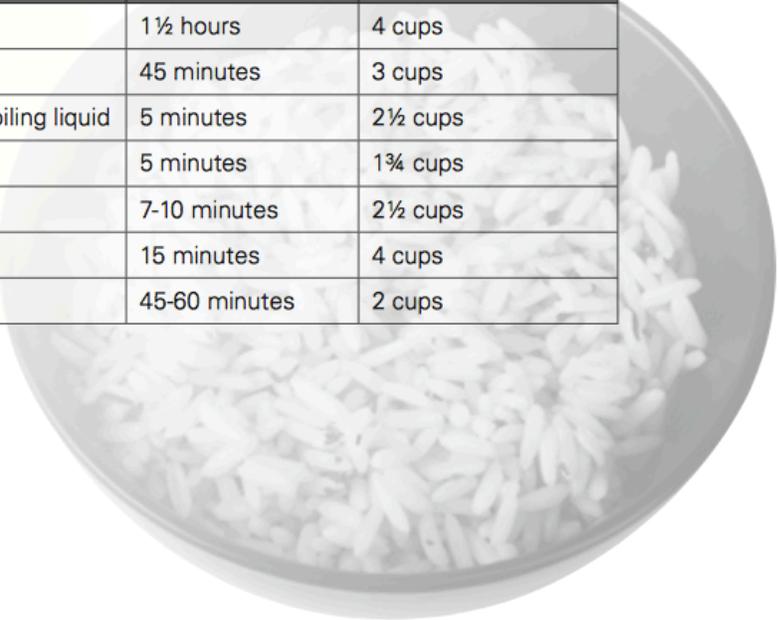
It's easy to eat more veggies and whole grains when you know how to cook them.

Try out different ways to cook veggies. Decide which work best for you!

| Microwave | Stove Top | Oven |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut food into pieces that are about the same size. • Place in a microwave-safe dish with a lid. Or, cover with plastic wrap and vent. • Add a small amount of water before covering. • Cook until tender, about 4-6 minutes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut food into pieces that are about the same size. Add to pot. • Fill pot with 1½ inches of water. • Simmer until tender. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preheat the oven to 350°F. • Cut food into pieces that are about the same size. • Coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Spread out veggies in a single layer. • Bake for 20 minutes, or until food begins to brown at the edges. |

Whole grains cook differently than refined grains. Use this chart as a guide.

| To cook 1 cup of a whole grain ... | Use this much broth or water | Cook for this amount of time | To make |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Whole barley | 3 cups | 1½ hours | 4 cups |
| Brown rice | 2 cups | 45 minutes | 3 cups |
| Whole wheat couscous | 1½ cups boiling liquid | 5 minutes | 2½ cups |
| Quick oats | 3 cups | 5 minutes | 1¾ cups |
| Whole wheat pasta | 4 cups | 7-10 minutes | 2½ cups |
| Quinoa (rinse well) | 2 cups | 15 minutes | 4 cups |
| Wild rice | 3 cups | 45-60 minutes | 2 cups |



Bean Basics

Dried beans are packed with nutrients, low cost, and easy to prepare.

1. Clean

- Before soaking, sort through dried beans or lentils.
- Throw out any that are discolored or shriveled.

2. Soak

To soak quickly:

- Fill a pot with water. Add beans. Bring to a boil.
- Boil beans for 5 minutes. Turn the heat off. Cover, and let sit for one hour.
- Drain the soaking water. Rinse the beans.

To soak overnight:

- Fill a bowl with 3 cups cold water per 1 cup beans.
- Soak beans for 8 to 12 hours at room temperature.
- Drain the soaking water. Rinse the beans.

3. Cook

- Add enough water to cover dry beans or lentils by two inches.
- Simmer the beans for 30 minutes to 2 hours, until cooked. You may need to add water to keep beans from drying out.
- Beans and lentils are done when they are easy to break open with a fork.

4. Store

- Use right away. Or, store in refrigerator or freezer.
- When you are ready to use frozen beans, defrost and prepare like canned beans.

Bean Cooking Times

| Use 1 cup of dried beans to make about 3 cups cooked. | Use this much water.* | Cook for this amount of time. |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Black beans | 3 cups | About 2 hours |
| Blackeyed peas, cowpeas | 2½ cups | ½ hour |
| Great northern beans | 2½ cups | 1 to 1½ hours |
| Kidney beans | 3 cups | About 2 hours |
| Lentils (do not soak) | 2½ cups | ½ hour |
| Lima beans | 2½ cups | 45 minutes to 1 hour |
| Navy or pea beans | 3 cups | 1½ to 2 hours |
| Pink or pinto beans | 3 cups | 2 hours |

*At high altitudes (above 3,500 feet), dried beans take more time to rehydrate and cook.



Get to Know Nutrition Facts Labels.

Form a healthy habit by reading food labels to determine what's inside and make informed food choices

LOOK

at Serving Sizes

The information listed on the Nutrition Facts label is based on a typical serving size in common measurements like cups, ounces, or pieces.

A package may contain more than one serving, so if you're eating more or less than the serving listed, you'll need to multiply or divide the numbers listed.

GET MORE

of These

- Dietary Fiber
- Vitamin D
- Calcium
- Iron
- Potassium

These nutrients improve your health, yet most Americans don't get enough of them in their diets. Look for foods with 10% or more of these nutrients in the % Daily Value column.

| 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.

CHECK

Calories

The portion size or amount you eat as a serving determines the number of calories you consume.

The number of calories you need daily depends on your age, gender, and level of physical activity. Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie needs.

LIMIT

These

- Fat
- Sodium
- Cholesterol
- Added Sugars

Eating too much of these nutrients increases your risk of diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and some cancers.

Added Sugars should be limited to 10% of your daily calories.



% DAILY VALUE (DV)

These percentages show whether the nutrients in a serving contribute a little or a lot to your total daily intake. Percent Daily Values on the Nutrition Facts label are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your % Daily Value may be higher or lower depending on your daily calorie needs.

Super Salads

Load up on veggies with a tasty salad.

Serve a small salad before dinner. Or, add protein to make a quick and tasty weeknight meal. Add ingredients from each column to make a salad for four.

| Greens (4 cups) | Veggies (1–2 cups total, any combo) | Optional Protein (2 cups) | Optional Add-Ins (½ cup) | Salad Dressing (¼ cup, recipes on page 80) |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Leaf lettuce | Raw beets or carrots, peeled and shredded | Canned beans, rinsed and drained | Toasted nuts or seeds, chopped or sliced | Oil and vinegar |
| Spinach | Broccoli or cauliflower, chopped | Hard-boiled eggs, chopped | Cheese, shredded or crumbled | Honey mustard |
| Romaine lettuce | Cucumber, chopped or sliced | Roasted chicken, turkey, beef, or pork, shredded or sliced | Cooked barley, brown rice, or whole grain pasta | Citrus dressing |
| Mixed salad greens | Tomatoes, diced (canned or fresh) | Extra-firm tofu, crumbled and drained | Olives, sliced | Balsamic vinaigrette |
| | Corn kernels or peas (fresh or frozen, thawed) | Frozen peas or edamame (soy beans), thawed and drained | Orange or grapefruit, cut into segments | Low-fat ranch |
| | Radishes, sliced | | Whole grain croutons | |
| | Bell pepper, chopped | | Dried fruit | |

Try these combos!

Simple Spinach Salad

Spinach + shredded carrots + hard-boiled eggs + honey mustard dressing

Winter Salad

Mixed salad greens + shredded beets + grapefruit or orange segments + citrus dressing

Fast Southwestern Dinner Salad

Romaine lettuce + corn + diced tomatoes + black beans + cooked and chilled brown rice + shredded cheddar + sliced olives + citrus dressing with a pinch of chili powder



Continued >

Super Salads continued >

Dress foods up with homemade salad dressing.

Make salad dressing just the way you like it with a few basic items.

Follow this ratio:

- 2 parts olive or canola oil
- 1 part acid, such as vinegar, lemon or lime juice, or Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper

Chef's Notes:

- For a thinner Ranch dressing, use more vinegar. For a thicker Ranch, good for cut-up veggies, use less.
- You can use milk instead of vinegar in the Ranch if you prefer.

| Simple Salad Dressing | Honey Mustard | Citrus Dressing | Balsamic Vinaigrette | Creamy Low-Fat Ranch Dressing |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 3 Tablespoons olive oil | 6 Tablespoons mustard | 2 Tablespoons lime, lemon, or orange juice | 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar | 1 (6-ounce) container plain nonfat or low-fat yogurt |
| 2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar | ½ Tablespoon fresh lemon juice or cider vinegar | 3-4 Tablespoons oil | 1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard | ⅓ cup low-fat mayonnaise |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 1½ Tablespoons honey | Salt and pepper to taste | 3-4 Tablespoons oil | 2 Tablespoons white vinegar |
| ¼ teaspoon pepper | 1 teaspoon oil | | Salt and pepper to taste | 1 Tablespoon dried dill |
| | Salt and pepper to taste | | | ¼ teaspoon garlic powder |
| | | | | ⅛ teaspoon salt |

Step-by-Step Stir-Fry

Want a quick and healthy weeknight meal?
Try a stir-fry!

Stir-fries are a great way to use up veggies that may soon go bad. Choose ingredients and follow the directions below to make a tasty meal for four.

| Veggies (2-3 cups total, any combo) | + | Protein | + | Optional Flavoring (1 Tablespoon) | + | Sauce (1 recipe batch, see page 78) | + | Grain (1 cup dry) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Bell pepper, sliced | | Boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, trimmed and cut into bite-size pieces (1 pound) | | Minced garlic | | Peanut Sauce | | Brown rice |
| Carrots or celery, sliced | | Sirloin or flank steak, trimmed and cut into bite-size pieces (1 pound) | | Minced ginger (or ½ teaspoon ground ginger) | | Spicy Soy Sauce | | Whole grain cous-cous |
| Snow peas, sugar snap peas, or green beans, trimmed | | Pork tenderloin or boneless loin chops, trimmed and cut into bite-size pieces (1 pound) | | | | Lemon Stir-Fry Sauce | | Instant barley |
| Broccoli or cauliflower florets | | Extra-firm tofu, drained and cut into 1-inch cubes (14-ounce package) | | | | | | Rice noodles or whole grain pasta |
| Mushrooms or onion, sliced | | Frozen edamame (soy beans), thawed and drained (2 cups) | | | | | | |
| Zucchini or yellow squash, sliced | | | | | | | | |
| Cabbage, thinly sliced | | | | | | | | |
| Canned water chestnuts, rinsed and drained | | | | | | | | |



Continued >

Step-by-Step Stir-Fry continued >

Try these sauces!

Peanut Sauce

In a small bowl, stir together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup peanut butter, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup warm water, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-sodium soy sauce, 2 Tablespoons cider vinegar, and 4 teaspoons sugar.

Spicy Soy Sauce

In a small bowl, stir together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup low-sodium soy sauce, 1 Tablespoon brown sugar, 1 Tablespoon cornstarch, 1 teaspoon minced jalapeno, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger.

Lemon Stir-Fry Sauce

In a small bowl, stir together 3 Tablespoons lemon juice, 3 Tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce, and 2 teaspoons cornstarch.

Directions

If using meat or poultry as your protein:

1. Cook grains following package directions. While grains cook, make stir-fry.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 1 Tablespoon canola oil. Add meat or poultry. Stir occasionally until just cooked through, about 4–6 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
3. Add veggies to skillet. Start with harder veggies first (e.g., green beans, onion, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower). As they begin to soften, add softer veggies (e.g., zucchini, yellow squash) and keep cooking. Total cooking time may be about 10 minutes.
4. If using garlic and/or ginger, add to skillet when all veggies are soft. Stir until fragrant, about 15 seconds.
5. If using peanut sauce or other thick sauce, remove pan from heat and stir in sauce. If using Spicy Soy Sauce, Lemon Stir-Fry Sauce, or other thin sauce, add to pan and bring to a boil. Cook until thickened, about 1–2 minutes.
6. Stir cooked meat or poultry into veggie mixture. Serve stir-fry over cooked grains.

If using tofu or edamame as your protein:

- Follow directions above, omitting step 2. Add tofu or edamame in step 3, during the last 3–5 minutes of vegetable cooking time. Heat through.



Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner

Pinching pennies? Make it a pasta night!

Pasta is a budget-friendly whole grain. Choose ingredients from the chart below to make a meal for four. Then, follow the step-by-step directions and review the chef's notes.

| Pasta (½ pound) | + | Protein | + | Veggies (2 cups total, any combo) | + | Sauce (1–2 cups) | + | Seasonings (Optional, to taste) |
|--------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Whole grain pasta | | Lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken, cooked and drained (1 pound) | | Spinach, chard, or kale | | Marinara | | Dried basil |
| Brown rice pasta | | Extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled (14-ounce package) | | Broccoli | | Peanut Sauce | | Dried oregano |
| | | Beans, rinsed and drained (1 can or 2 cups cooked) | | Carrots | | Canned diced or crushed tomatoes | | Garlic powder or minced fresh garlic |
| | | Frozen peas or edamame (soy beans), thawed and drained (2 cups) | | Sugar snap or snow peas | | Quick Cheese Sauce (recipe on page 76) | | |
| | | Chicken or turkey sausage, cooked and sliced (1 pound) | | Zucchini or yellow squash | | Simple White Sauce (recipe on page 76) | | |

Directions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. In a colander, drain pasta.
2. Cook protein as needed. If using, add optional fresh garlic during the last minute of cooking time.
3. Cook veggies by steaming, grilling, roasting, sauteing, or adding to boiling pasta water during the last few minutes of cooking. See *Cooking Produce and Whole Grains* (page 55) for other tips.
4. In a large pot over medium heat, heat sauce. If using, add optional spices now. Add protein and veggies to heat through. Toss with hot cooked pasta and serve.

Chef's Notes

- New to whole grain pasta? Start with a whole grain blend. Once you are used to the taste, switch to 100% whole wheat pasta.
- Use ground meat that is 90% lean or leaner. Drain excess fat from meat after cooking.



Continued >

Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner continued >

Try these combos!

Asian Noodles

Whole grain spaghetti + tofu + sugar snap peas + carrots + peanut sauce

Summer Pasta Primavera

Whole grain pasta + diced tomatoes + cannellini beans + zucchini + garlic

Spaghetti and Meat Sauce

Whole grain pasta + lean ground beef + broccoli + marinara sauce + dried basil + dried oregano + garlic



Sauce Recipes

Simple White Sauce

1. In a small bowl, use a fork to whisk together 2 Tablespoons cornstarch and 1 cup nonfat or low-fat milk until smooth.
2. In a large saucepan over medium heat, add milk mixture. Cook until thickened, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in 2 teaspoons mustard. Season with dried or fresh herbs as you like, such as basil, parsley, or dill. Start with ¼ teaspoon and add to your taste.
4. Remove from heat. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Quick Cheese Sauce

1. Grate 2 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese.
2. Follow instructions for Simple White Sauce above. In step 3, stir in cheese along with the mustard and seasonings, until melted.



Make Your Own Muffins

Muffins make a great grab-and-go breakfast or snack.

Make a large batch on a day you have some extra time. Then pull one out to take on the go! Follow these steps to make 12 muffins.

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray. Or, use muffin tin liner cups.
3. Make muffin dry mix: In a large bowl, whisk together 1½ cups whole wheat flour, 1 cup all-purpose flour, 1½ teaspoons baking powder, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Add **Optional Dry Flavorings**.
4. Make muffin wet mix: In a medium bowl, whisk together 2 large eggs, 1 cup nonfat or low-fat milk, ⅔ cup brown or granulated sugar, 2 Tablespoons melted unsalted butter, 2 Tablespoons canola oil, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Add **Optional Wet Flavorings**.
5. Add wet mix to dry mix. Stir until just combined. Fold in **Fruits and Veggies** and **Optional Add-Ins**.
6. Bake muffins until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with just a couple of moist crumbs attached, 20–25 minutes.
7. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan and let cool completely.



| Optional Dry Flavorings (1–1½ teaspoons total) | + | Optional Wet Flavorings | + | Fruits and Veggies (2 cups total) | + | Optional Add-Ins (up to ½ cup total) |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| Ground cinnamon | | ½ teaspoon coconut or almond extract | | Fresh or frozen (not thawed) berries | | Dried fruit, such as raisins, cherries, currants, or cranberries |
| Ground nutmeg | | 1 Tablespoon lemon, lime, or orange zest | | Diced or mashed bananas | | Toasted chopped or slivered nuts |
| Ground allspice | | | | Diced mango or pineapple | | Mini chocolate chips |
| Ground ginger | | | | Shredded apples or pears | | Shredded unsweetened coconut |
| Pumpkin pie spice | | | | Shredded carrots, zucchini, or parsnips | | |



Try these combos!

Spiced Banana-Nut Muffins

Add ½ teaspoon each ground cinnamon, nutmeg, and allspice to the dry mix. Combine wet and dry mixes. Stir in diced bananas and chopped pecans.

Zucchini-Raisin Muffins

Add 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon to the dry mix. Combine wet and dry mixes. Stir in zucchini and raisins.

Blueberry-Ginger Muffins

Add 1½ teaspoons ground ginger to the dry mix. Combine wet and dry mixes. Stir in blueberries.

Chef's Notes:

- To freeze leftover muffins, wrap each one in plastic wrap. Place in an airtight container. Freeze up to 1 month.
- Use up fruits and veggies that are starting to get too ripe.
- To make bread instead of muffins, coat a loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray. Bake at 375°F for 50–60 minutes.

Apple Wraps

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Serves 4, ½ wrap per serving

Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

- 1 large apple
- 2 medium, ripe bananas
- 2 Tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 (8-inch) whole wheat tortillas

Materials

- Cutting board • Measuring spoons
- Medium bowl • Sharp knife

Directions

1. Rinse and cut apple in half, lengthwise. Remove any stems. Cut out center core that contains the seeds. Do not peel.
2. Lay apple halves flat side down. Cut into ¼-inch thick slices. Cut slices into small cubes.
3. Peel bananas. In a medium bowl, use your fingers to break bananas into pieces. Use your fingers or a fork to mash pieces until creamy and smooth.
4. Add peanut butter to mashed banana. Stir well to blend.
5. Spread peanut butter mixture over one side of each tortilla.
6. Sprinkle diced apple over peanut butter. Tightly roll each tortilla. Cut each wrap in half.
7. Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve, up to 24 hours.



Banana Pudding in a Bag

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Serves 4, ½ cup per serving

Prep time: 10 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

½ cup low-fat granola
3 medium bananas
½ cup applesauce, unsweetened
½ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt

Materials

Large zip-top plastic bag •
Measuring cups

Directions

1. In a large zip-top plastic bag, add granola. Squeeze any air out of bag and seal. Lightly crush granola using a can or the bottom of a measuring cup.
2. Peel bananas. Use your fingers to break them up into the bag of crushed granola.
3. Add applesauce and yogurt to banana mixture in bag.
4. Press out any extra air before sealing bag again.
5. Use your fingers to squish and mash ingredients together until well blended.
6. Chill pudding inside sealed bag in the refrigerator until ready to serve.



Fruit Smoothies

Chef Susan Goss • Chicago, Ill.

Serves 2, 1 cup per serving

Prep time: 10 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

1 medium banana
½ cup ice cubes
1 cup low-fat plain yogurt
½ cup 100% orange juice
4 frozen strawberries

Optional Ingredients

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Materials

Measuring cups

Special Materials

Blender

Directions

1. Peel banana. Place in blender.
2. Add remaining ingredients to the blender. If using cinnamon, add now.
3. Cover and blend until smooth.

Chef's Notes

- Use any fresh or frozen fruit, such as peaches, blueberries, raspberries, or mangoes. Use fruits in season when you can.
- For a creamier smoothie, use nonfat, soy, or 1% milk instead of orange juice.
- Freeze slices of fruits that are about to go bad. Use these in your smoothies.
- If smoothie is too thick, add water or ice. If smoothie is too thin, add more fruit.
- If you don't have a blender, use a fork to mash the fruit. Whisk in the other ingredients. Serve over ice.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

Homemade Granola

Chef Joyce Roland • Seattle, Wash.

Serves 9, 1/3 cup per serving

Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: 10–15 minutes

Ingredients

4 Tablespoons honey
2 Tablespoons canola oil
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
4 Tablespoons sliced or chopped almonds
Non-stick cooking spray
1/2 cup dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, apricots, dates, or prunes)

Materials

Baking sheet • Fork • Large bowl •
Measuring cups • Measuring
spoons • Medium bowl

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, add honey, oil, and cinnamon. Whisk with a fork.
3. Add oats and almonds. Stir until well-coated with honey mixture.
4. Coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Spread oat mixture evenly onto sheet.
5. Bake until lightly browned, about 10–15 minutes. Stir every 5 minutes to cook evenly. Watch closely to be sure granola does not burn. Remove from oven. Let cool completely.
6. Transfer cooled granola to a medium bowl. Stir in dried fruit.

Chef's Notes

- Make large batches. Granola can be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.
- Add milk to granola and eat like cereal. Use it to top a fruit salad or nonfat plain yogurt. Or, pack single servings in a zip-top plastic bag. Eat on its own for a tasty afternoon snack.
- Use homemade granola in the Yogurt Parfait (page 104) recipe.
- Use leftover rolled oats to make oatmeal for breakfast.



Moroccan Carrot Salad

Chef Nadine Nelson • Boston, Mass.

Serves 6, ¾ cup per serving

Prep time: 20 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

6 medium carrots
½ small onion
1 large lemon
3 Tablespoons canola oil
1 teaspoon curry powder
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
¼ cup dark or golden raisins

Materials

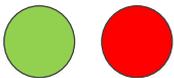
2 small bowls • Box grater •
Cutting board • Measuring cups •
Measuring spoons • Medium bowl
• Sharp knife • Vegetable peeler

Directions

1. Rinse and peel carrots and onion.
2. Shred carrots with a grater. Dice onion.
3. Rinse lemon and cut in half. In a small bowl, squeeze juice. Discard seeds.
4. In a medium bowl, combine carrots and onions.
5. In a second small bowl, combine oil, curry powder, salt, pepper, and 2 Tablespoons of the lemon juice. Mix well. Let marinate 5 minutes.
6. Pour liquid mixture over carrots and onions. Stir in raisins. Mix well.

Chef's Notes

- Replace half of the carrot with grated jicama or apples.
- For best taste, allow flavors to blend before serving. Let sit 15–20 minutes after you have mixed in the sauce in step 6.
- Serve as a colorful side dish for fish, poached chicken, or baked or broiled chicken legs.
- Layer onto a sandwich with lean turkey and fresh veggies like cucumber.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

Northwest Apple Salad

Chef Linette True • Portland, Ore.

Serves 4, ¾ cup per serving

Prep time: 10 minutes • Cook time: 5 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 medium Granny Smith apples
- 2 Tablespoons dried fruit, such as raisins, dried cranberries, or dried currants
- 3 Tablespoons plain low-fat yogurt
- 1 Tablespoon whole, shelled walnuts

Optional Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon honey

Materials

Cutting board • Measuring spoons • Medium bowl • Sharp knife • Small skillet

Directions

1. Rinse and remove cores from apples. Do not peel. Cut into 1-inch pieces. Place in medium bowl.
2. Add dried fruit and yogurt to bowl. Mix well.
3. In a small skillet over medium heat, toast nuts until golden brown and fragrant. Watch closely so they do not burn. Remove from pan and let cool.
4. Chop cooled nuts with a knife. Or, put in a plastic bag and crush with a can.
5. Add crushed nuts to bowl. If using, add honey. Toss and serve.

Chef's Notes

- Use any kind of apple in this recipe.
- Use any kind of nuts in place of walnuts. Or, omit nuts if someone has an allergy.



Pumpkin Chili

Serves 6, 1 cup per serving

Prep time: 5 min • Cook time: 40 min

Ingredients

2 medium zucchini
1 small yellow onion
2 cloves garlic
1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans
2 Tablespoons canola oil
1 (14½-ounce) can diced tomatoes, no salt added
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin puree
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Materials

Can opener • Colander • Cutting board • Large pot with lid • Measuring cups • Measuring spoons • Mixing spoon • Sharp knife

Directions

1. Rinse zucchini. Peel onion and garlic.
2. Chop zucchini and onion. Mince garlic.
3. In a colander, rinse and drain beans.
4. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat.
5. Add onions. Cook, stirring frequently, until tender, about 5 minutes.
6. Add zucchini. Cook for 3 minutes.
7. Add garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.
8. Add tomatoes and their juices, pumpkin, water, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil.
9. Reduce heat to low. Add beans.
10. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Serve hot.

Chef's Notes

- Try serving with brown rice or whole grain cornbread.
- Use whatever kind of veggies you like or have on hand. Try carrots, celery, spinach, or kale.
- Consider doubling the recipe and freezing some for later.



Raspberry-Lime Fizz

Serves 5, 1 cup per serving

Prep time: 10 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

1 cup cranberry-raspberry juice
4 cups seltzer water
1 large lime

Materials

Cutting board • Measuring cups •
Mixing spoon • Sharp knife

Special Materials

Large pitcher

Directions

1. In a large pitcher, mix cranberry-raspberry juice with seltzer water.
2. Rinse lime and cut in half. Remove seeds. Squeeze juice from each half into the pitcher.
3. Mix well before serving.

Chef's Notes

- Pour over ice and garnish with a lime wedge.
- Replace cranberry-raspberry juice with any 100% juice you prefer.
- For more fruit flavor, increase juice or decrease seltzer water.
- Add thin slices of lemon, lime, or orange for more flavor.
- If you do not have a large pitcher, prepare in a large bowl. Use a measuring cup or ladle to serve.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

Southwestern Black-eyed Pea and Corn Salad

Chef Roland Ulber • Denver, Colo.

Serves 10, ¾ cup per serving

Prep time: 20 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

1 medium bell pepper
1 small red onion
2 (15½ ounce) cans black-eyed peas
1 (15¼ ounce) can corn kernels, no salt added
3 Tablespoons canola oil
2 Tablespoons vinegar
1 teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Optional Ingredients

¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves

Materials

Can opener • Colander • Cutting board • Large bowl • Measuring spoons • Mixing spoon • Sharp knife

Directions

1. Rinse and dice bell pepper, removing core and seeds. Peel, rinse, and dice onion.
2. If using, rinse and chop cilantro leaves.
3. In a colander, drain and rinse black-eyed peas and corn.
4. In a large bowl, add pepper, onion, peas, corn, cilantro if using, and remaining ingredients. Mix well.

Chef's Notes

- Dried black-eyed peas may be cheaper than canned. If using dried, cook according to package directions until peas are soft but not mushy. Drain, rinse, and add 3 cups cooked peas to salad. Use leftovers in other recipes later in the week.
- Try chilling the salad. Serve it over cooked spinach or kale.
- Use any type of vinegar you have on hand. Try balsamic, cider, or red or white wine vinegar.
- Use black beans in place of black-eyed peas if you like.
- When corn is in season, use fresh in place of canned. Cook 4 medium ears corn. Remove kernels from cob with a knife. Add to salad.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

Trail Mix

Serves 8, ½ cup per serving

Prep time: 5 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

¾ cup unsalted roasted peanuts
⅓ cup raisins
1¼ cup crispy whole wheat cereal squares
1 cup mini pretzels
⅓ cup chocolate chips

Materials

Large bowl • Measuring cups •
Zip-top plastic bag

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine peanuts, raisins, cereal, pretzels, and chocolate chips.
2. Place in an air-tight container or zip-top plastic bag. Store in a cool, dry place.

Chef's Notes

- Use any of your favorite nuts or dried fruit in place of the peanuts and raisins.
- If peanut allergies are a concern, use almonds or sunflower seeds instead.
- Use any whole grain, low-sugar cereal instead of the crispy whole wheat cereal squares.
- This snack is a great way to add fruit, nuts, and whole grains to your day. However, it can also be high in calories. Pack ½-cup portions.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

Turkey Tacos

Chef John Haddock • Baltimore, Md.

Serves 8, 2 tacos per serving

Prep time: 20 minutes • Cook time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

1 medium carrot, small sweet potato, or small zucchini
 ¼ medium head lettuce
 2 large tomatoes
 7 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese
 1 (15½-ounce) can low-sodium pinto beans
 Non-stick cooking spray
 1 pound lean ground turkey
 1 (15½-ounce) can chopped or crushed tomatoes, no salt added
 1 Tablespoon chili powder
 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
 16 taco shells

Materials

Box grater • Can opener • Colander • Cutting board • Large skillet • Measuring spoons • Sharp knife • Vegetable peeler

Directions

1. Rinse, peel, and grate carrot, sweet potato, or zucchini (if using zucchini, grate but do not peel). Squeeze dry with paper towels.
2. Rinse and shred lettuce. Rinse, core, and chop tomatoes.
3. Grate cheese.
4. In a colander, drain and rinse beans.
5. Coat a large skillet with non-stick cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat. Add turkey and brown.
6. Add grated veggies, beans, canned tomatoes, chili powder, garlic powder, oregano, salt, and black pepper. Stir well.
7. Reduce heat to medium. Cook until thickened, about 20 minutes.
8. Add 2 Tablespoons cooked meat mixture to each taco shell. Top each with 1 Tablespoon grated cheese, 1 Tablespoon shredded lettuce, and 1 Tablespoon fresh tomatoes.

Chef's Notes

- Top tacos with any of your favorite veggies, hot sauce, salsa, low-fat sour cream, or low-fat plain yogurt.
- Use any type of cooked beans you like.
- Make soft tacos using corn or whole wheat tortillas. Or, serve over brown rice or cornbread.
- For more heat, add minced hot peppers to sauce in step 6.



Yogurt Parfait

Chef Joyce Roland • Seattle, Wash.

Serves 6, 1 parfait per serving

Prep time: 10 minutes • Cook time: None

Ingredients

4 cups fresh or thawed frozen fruit, such as bananas, strawberries, peaches, or mango

3 cups nonfat plain yogurt

1½ cups granola

Optional Ingredients

2 Tablespoons sliced almonds

Materials

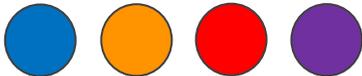
6 cups or bowls • Cutting board • Measuring cups • Measuring spoons • Sharp knife

Directions

1. If using fresh fruit, rinse, peel, and/or trim as needed. If using thawed frozen fruit, drain any excess juices. Cut fruit into ¼-inch thick slices. There should be about 3 cups total.
2. Layer ¼ cup yogurt into each of 6 cups or bowls. Top with ¼ cup sliced fruit and 2 Tablespoons granola.
3. Repeat layers one more time, ending with a layer of granola.
4. If using, top with sliced almonds.

Chef's Notes

- Layer parfait just before serving to keep granola crunchy.
- Use any high-fiber cereal you like instead of granola.
- Try topping with rinsed, chopped fresh mint leaves for extra flavor and color.
- To save money, use fresh fruits that are in season. When seasonal fruits are hard to find, use thawed frozen fruit.



Fruit



Protein



Grains



Vegetable



Dairy

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

The content of this toolkit has been adapted from the following references:

<https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/explore-our-work/nutrition-education-initiatives/strategies/nudges/>

<http://tchd.org/DocumentCenter/View/4173>

<https://secondharvestkitchen.org/healthy-nudges/>

<https://secondharvestkitchen.org/recipes/>

<https://secondharvestkitchen.org/client-choice-shopping-models/>

<https://secondharvestkitchen.org/printables-signage/>

<https://cookingmatters.org/sites/cookingmatters.org/files/CMYFP.pdf>

<https://blog.unidosus.org/2016/07/06/benefits-eating-seasonal-fruits-vegetables/>

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Choice Pantry Handbook

Oregon Food Bank; Environmental Strategies for Encouraging Healthy Choices Healthy Pantry Initiative: Model Healthy Pantry Cohort Fall Meeting, October 8, 2014

Feeding America; The Power of Nudges Peer Insights And Perspectives, June 2016

Feeding America; The Power of Nudges: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice in Food Pantries

Feeding America; Nudges: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

Vermont Food Bank; VT Fresh Goals and Strategies

Additional Healthy Nudge Resources

[Choose MyPlate](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) - <https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

ChooseMyPlate.gov provides practical information for individuals, health professionals, nutrition educators, and the food industry, including online tools, infographics, signs and handouts, videos and recipes available in multiple languages and for various audiences.

[Cooking Matters Colorado](http://co.cookingmatters.org) - <http://co.cookingmatters.org>

Cooking Matters, a national campaign of Share Our Strength, helps parents and caregivers struggling with limited food budgets learn how to shop for and cook healthy, affordable meals. This website includes a bilingual recipe database, tips and videos, and contact information to connect with your local Colorado Cooking Matters representative.

[Cooking Matters in Your Community](http://cookingmatters.org/sites/default/files/CMYC.pdf) - <http://cookingmatters.org/sites/default/files/CMYC.pdf>

This guide has additional resources for leading a cooking demonstration in your community (some overlaps with the information in the resource above).

[Cooking Matters in Your Food Pantry](https://cookingmatters.org/sites/cookingmatters.org/files/CMYFP.pdf) - <https://cookingmatters.org/sites/cookingmatters.org/files/CMYFP.pdf>

This guide provides tools for food pantries to secure healthy foods and offer food-based nutrition education to their clients, including cooking demonstrations.

[Food Hero](http://foodhero.org/) - <http://foodhero.org/>

This website developed by Oregon State University Extension offers healthy recipes and handouts categorized by ingredient. These recipes can be used in cooking demonstrations or promoted with items in your pantry to encourage clients to take them.

[Fruits and Veggies More Matters](https://www.fruitsandveggies.org/) - <https://www.fruitsandveggies.org/>

This website features information on selection, storage, and use of fruits and vegetables.

[Half Cup Habit](https://pulses.org/nap/half-cup-habit/) - <https://pulses.org/nap/half-cup-habit/>

This website created by the American Pulse Association and USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council provides recipes and tips on cooking with beans, dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas.

[Healthy Food Bank Hub](https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/resources/) - <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/resources/>

This page from Feeding America offers research, articles, courses, handouts, and more to support encouraging healthy choices in food banks.

[Healthy Eating Advisory Service Traffic Light System](http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/guidelines/traffic-light-system) - <http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/guidelines/traffic-light-system>

This website further explains the use of the Traffic Light System for Healthier Eating.

[Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables](http://jsyfruitveggies.org/recipes-all/) - <http://jsyfruitveggies.org/recipes-all/>

This website offers recipes developed with SNAP-Ed to encourage increased fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as articles and videos.

[Kansas SNAP-Ed EZ does it](https://vimeo.com/album/4192370) - <https://vimeo.com/album/4192370>

These are short recipe and food safety videos adapted from USDA Mixing Bowl recipes.

[Rural Access Toolkit](https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/food-access) - <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/food-access>

This toolkit compiles evidence-based and promising models and resources to support organizations implementing food access programs in rural communities across the US.