

Eating and Exercising for **Better Health**





You may find it helpful to keep important names and phone numbers handy.

Write them below.

My health-care provider: _____

Phone number: _____

Address: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Phone number: _____

Pharmacy phone number: _____

Health insurance company: _____

Phone number: _____

Other people I may need to reach: Phone numbers:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please read:

Talk to your health-care provider! This handbook is not a substitute for the advice of a qualified health-care provider.



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Note: Sources of information used in the creation of this handbook include www.ChooseMyPlate.gov, the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, 2nd Edition* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

If you would like to improve your eating habits and get more physically active,

this handbook is for you. It will help you:

Think about the benefits

of eating healthier and being more active. They include:

- reducing the risk for—or managing—a health problem (such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, arthritis and certain types of cancer)
- having more energy and managing stress better
- losing weight to feel and look better.

Chart your course

for making healthy changes. To help you stay motivated:

- Keep reminding yourself of the benefits.
- Make a plan that helps these changes become a normal part of your day.
- Set realistic goals and track your progress.

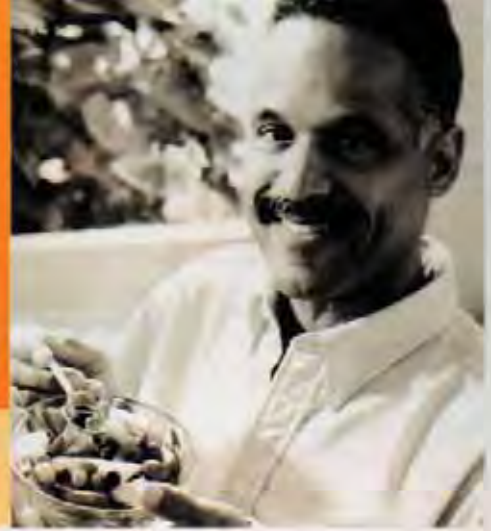
Work with your health-care provider

to make a plan that's right for you. You may also want to ask about working with a dietitian or nutritionist, or a personal trainer.

Eating healthier and being more active are keys to feeling your best—physically and mentally!

Eating better for better health

Start by knowing what's part of a healthy eating pattern. In general, healthy eating involves:



Matching portion sizes to calorie needs

You'll gain weight if you take in more calories than you use each day. Being overweight puts you at risk for health problems.

Check the calories and ingredients in foods **and** drinks. Track your daily intake. Make adjustments to stay within your calorie needs. (See pages 5 and 8 for more on determining these.)

Eating the right amounts of different foods

- Eat more vegetables and fruits at each meal.
- Choose a variety of protein foods, including seafood, and cut back on high-fat meats.
- Choose fewer items high in calories, saturated or trans fats, sodium and added sugars.

Taking other healthy steps

- Make smart choices from each food group every day. Think variety.
- Limit alcohol—or don't drink at all. People who should not drink at all include women who are pregnant or may be pregnant, and people recovering from alcoholism. Ask your health-care provider what's best for you.

Nutrient	Good sources include:
carbohydrates	whole grains, potatoes, fruits, vegetables and whole-grain cereal and pasta
protein	lean meats and poultry, seafood, eggs, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, beans, soybeans and nuts
vitamins	vegetables, fruits, low-fat or fat-free dairy products, beans and whole grains
minerals (such as calcium and iron)	low-fat or fat-free dairy products, green vegetables, lean meats and poultry, beans and dried fruits
fats	most liquid vegetable oils, nuts and some seafood
water	water, low-fat or fat-free milk, 100% fruit juice, and nonalcoholic and caffeine-free beverages.

Ask yourself:

How happy am I with my eating habits? What do I do well? What would I like to change? Would tracking what I eat for a few days help me see what I need to change?

See pages 8-13 for more on making healthy food choices.

Different people have different nutrition needs.

Know about any special needs you may have.



Your daily calories

The right number of calories for you depends on different factors. These include your age, gender and level of activity. (See page 8.)

Ask your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist how many calories are right for you.

Also ask about any other special nutrition needs (such as for supplements).

Recommended calories per day: _____

Other recommendations:

Women

Ask your health-care provider about folate and folic acid.

In general:

- Women who are capable of becoming pregnant need 400 mcg (micrograms) of folic acid daily by taking a supplement or eating foods fortified with 100% of the daily value of folic acid.
- Pregnant women need 600 micrograms of folic acid daily. To reach this, most experts recommend taking a daily supplement with 400-800 mcg of folic acid and eating foods rich in folate every day.

Getting enough folate and folic acid can help lower the risk of certain birth defects, especially in the first few weeks of pregnancy. Good sources include:

- leafy green vegetables
- beans
- citrus fruits
- foods fortified with folic acid (such as whole-grain breads and cereals) and/or folic acid supplements.

Iron supplements are also often recommended during pregnancy. Ask your health-care provider.

Older adults

Older adults generally need fewer calories than when they were younger. But nutrient needs stay the same—or may increase in some cases, such as for vitamin D. So it's important for older adults to:

- choose foods that are low in calories and high in nutrients
- ask a health-care provider about the need for any supplements
- ask how to get the right amount of calories and nutrients if a health condition or medication affects your appetite.

Feelings of thirst may decline with age. But getting enough water is still important for good health. Older adults should ask their health-care providers about how much water they should drink.

See pages 8-9 for more information on the food groups.





People with certain health conditions

may also have special nutrition needs. Talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist about your needs.

People who have high blood pressure

need to:

- lose weight, if they are overweight
- get less sodium per day (see page 11)
- follow other dietary advice from their health-care provider, such as cutting back on saturated fat.

Some people may also need medication.

People who have diabetes

need to:

- lose weight, if they are overweight
- follow the meal plan they develop with their health-care provider (including when to eat).

Some people may also need insulin or other medication.

People who have high cholesterol

need to:

- lose weight, if they are overweight
- limit saturated fat to the same general amounts recommended for everyone (see page 11), or to lower amounts in some cases (for example, to help manage heart disease)
- limit trans fat—found in baked goods, margarine, fried foods, snack foods and other processed foods that contain “partially hydrogenated” oils
- work with a dietitian or nutritionist, in some cases.

Some people may also need medication.

If you have another health condition, be sure to talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist about any special nutrition needs.

Having a healthy weight is a key to your good health.

It can help reduce your risk for future health problems. Talk with your health-care provider about what's a healthy weight for you. He or she may:



Figure out your body mass index (BMI)

BMI is figured by a special formula that relates weight and height. For most adults, a BMI of:

- less than 18.5 means underweight
- 18.5–24.9 means healthy weight
- 25.0–29.9 means overweight
- 30.0 and up means obese.

You can also calculate your BMI by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi.

Note: The BMI figures above don't fit everyone, especially children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, and very muscular people.

Measure your waist

- This can help tell how much fat is around your abdomen—too much is a health risk.
- Health risks increase if a man's waist is over 40 inches or a woman's waist is over 35 inches.

Recommend steps for losing weight, if you are overweight

Keep in mind:

- Making permanent, healthy changes in your eating and exercise habits helps you lose fat, not needed muscle. Having healthy muscles helps your body be leaner and burn more calories—and be healthier overall.
- Losing weight slowly (about 1-2 pounds a week) is generally best. Avoid crash or fad diets (for example, high-protein diets). These can be dangerous to your health. And any weight lost is usually regained.

Focus on having good health—not on having an “ideal” body size or shape.

That size or shape may be unrealistic or unhealthy for you. Ask yourself:

How happy am I with my weight, and my body size and shape? _____

What changes, if any, would I like to see? _____

Does my health-care provider see these changes as realistic? _____

What weight, and ways to reach or maintain it, does my health-care provider recommend for me?

Eat for good health.

What you choose to eat over time creates a pattern. Make it a healthy one by:



Making healthy choices consistently

No single meal will make or break your health. But when you make mostly healthy food and beverage choices, it helps you:

- achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- get the nutrients your body needs
- lower your risk of chronic disease.

It's important to stay within your calorie needs. Calorie needs change with age and activity levels. To find out what's right for you, visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Starting with small shifts

For example:

- shift to fat-free or low-fat dairy
- choose whole fruits over juice
- make at least half of your grains whole grains
- choose seafood, lean meats, lean poultry, nuts, seeds and soy products over high-fat or processed meats and poultry.

Focusing on nutrients, variety and amount

- **Nutrients**—Look for foods and beverages that are high in vitamins and minerals and low in solid fats, added sugars, refined starches and sodium.
- **Variety**—Have meals that include various food groups (see the next page). Vary choices within each food group, too. (For example, get a range of red, dark-green, orange and starchy vegetables, plus beans and peas, throughout the week.)
- **Amount**—Balance portion sizes with physical activity to manage your weight.

Limiting saturated fat, added sugars and sodium

- Limit saturated fat to no more than 10% of your daily calories.
- Limit added sugars to no more than 10% of your daily calories.
- Get less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. (Avoiding processed foods helps.)

Write down any special needs you may have

for how much of a food to eat. Ask your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist for help.

NOTE: These guidelines are for adults and for children age 2 and older. Ask a health-care provider about nutrition for younger children.



Make healthy choices from each food group every day. Vary your choices within each group over the week. Here are some examples of healthy eating patterns for 2,000 daily calories:

U.S.-style

- Vegetables*—2½ cups
- Fruits—2 cups
- Grains—6 ounces
- Dairy—3 cups
- Protein foods*—5½ ounces (aim for at least 8 ounces of seafood each week)

Vegetarian

(more plant proteins and whole grains; no meat, poultry or seafood)

- Vegetables*—2½ cups
- Fruits—2 cups
- Grains—6½ ounces
- Dairy—3 cups
- Protein foods*—3½ ounces

Mediterranean

(more seafood and fruit, less dairy)

- Vegetables*—2½ cups
- Fruits—2½ cups
- Grains—6 ounces
- Dairy—2 cups
- Protein foods*—6½ ounces (aim for 15 ounces of seafood each week)

*Most beans and peas can count as either a vegetable or a protein. Green peas and green beans count only as vegetables.

A note about measuring amounts of food

In some cases, different amounts of food count as 1 cup or 1 ounce. For example:

- 2 cups of leafy greens count as 1 cup of vegetables
- 1 egg, ¼ cup of cooked beans and ½ ounce of nuts each count as 1 ounce of protein.



Use your personal and cultural tastes to help build a healthy pattern. Learn more at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.



Use the Nutrition Facts label

to help make healthy choices. It can help you quickly compare different foods before buying them. The format of labels may vary somewhat. Check labels for:

Serving size

This is the amount people tend to eat or drink. A healthy amount for you may be different.

What to limit

For example, choose foods that have less saturated fat, sodium and added sugars.

What to get

In general, choose foods that are high in vitamins and minerals (lower part of label) and dietary fiber.

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.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

The number of calories in a serving

Ask your health-care provider how many daily calories you need.

Adjust how much you eat and drink throughout the day to stay within your calorie needs.

% Daily Value

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

Amounts of key nutrients in a serving

Use these to track how much you're getting. For example, in a day you should get about:

- 20 mcg of vitamin D
- 1,300 mg of calcium
- 4,700 mg of potassium.

Ask yourself:

Do I usually read nutrition labels? _____

If yes, how do they help me? _____

If no, what's stopping me? _____

Reading the Nutrition Facts label may be new to you. If it is, practice by comparing labels on some foods you have at home.

You can use the Nutrition Facts label to keep track of items you should limit.

You can also use it to help track any items you may need to eat more of (vitamins or minerals, for example).



Recommended limits for most people

are:

- 20-35% or less of daily calories from total fat
- less than 10% of daily calories from saturated fat
- less than 10% of daily calories from added sugars
- no more than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. People who can't lower their intake to 2,300 mg should try to reduce it by at least 1,000 mg. Getting only 1,500 mg per day can have even greater health benefits.

(No daily limit has been established for trans fat, but you should avoid it, when possible.)

Remember, these guidelines apply to foods eaten over the course of a day—not to a single food or meal.

Every so often, check to see if you are eating the right amounts.

To do this, compare your recommended amounts with the amounts you actually eat. (Use the Nutrition Facts label to help add up the amounts you eat.)

Use the chart below to learn how many grams of fat you need each day. If the number of calories you need (from page 5) is not listed, ask your health-care provider to help you figure out your fat needs.

	Total calorie level		
	1,600	2,200	2,800
Total grams of fat	36-62	49-86	62-109
Total grams of saturated fat	18	24	31

Ask your health-care provider if you need any special limits

—or if there are any items you need to eat more of than you do now. Write them here:



Know how to make healthy food choices in every situation.

Follow the tips below. And ask your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist for other tips. Write them in the spaces below.

Shopping

Healthy choices for meals and snacks include:

- fruits and vegetables—fresh, frozen or canned (no added salt, sauce or syrup)
- whole-grain bread, oatmeal, pasta and brown rice
- fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk and other fat-free or low-fat dairy products
- meats labeled “lean” or “extra lean,” fresh fish, skinless poultry, light tuna packed in water, soy products (such as tofu), beans and nuts.

Eating fast food

- Order a salad (with dressing on the side) or a baked potato (plain, or with low-fat toppings).
- Choose a small, plain burger or order skinless chicken (grilled, roasted or baked).
- Avoid added cheese or bacon, fried sandwiches, French fries, mayonnaise and high-fat sauces.

Eating out

- Avoid high-fat foods (those that are crispy, fried, creamed or “au gratin”).
- Ask how food is prepared. Request a healthier cooking method (such as steaming vegetables or leaving out salt). Choose restaurants that prepare food to order.
- Skip dessert or order a low-fat treat, such as fresh fruit or sherbet, or fat-free frozen yogurt.
- Share a meal or take some home.

Cooking

- Trim fat from meat and remove skin from poultry. Eat less meat, and more grains and vegetables.
- Cook with vegetable oil spray. Use oils high in unsaturated fat (such as olive, canola, corn or soybean).
- Flavor with parsley or other herbs instead of butter, sauces or salt.
- Poach, steam, roast, broil or grill instead of frying.





Eating Chinese food

- Choose steamed foods (such as vegetables or rice) and stir-fried dishes cooked in a small amount of oil.
- Avoid fried foods (such as egg rolls and fried rice), sweet-and-sour dishes, duck and foods with monosodium glutamate (MSG) added.

Eating Italian food

- Choose whole-wheat pasta with marinara (tomato) sauce or pizza with vegetables and low-fat cheese.
- Avoid dishes made with cream sauces, high-fat meats (such as sausage) or cheeses (such as Parmesan dishes).

Eating Mexican food

- Choose rice and beans, gazpacho, salsa and soft tacos or tortillas.
- Avoid refried beans cooked in lard, fried tortilla or nacho chips, sour cream and cheese dishes.

If you eat a vegetarian diet,

follow the tips on these pages for the foods you eat. Ask your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist for other advice to ensure that all your nutrition needs are met.

Eating your favorite foods

Talk with your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist about ways to make your favorite food choices healthier—for meals and snacks. (You may want to keep a food diary for several days to help you do this. Write down what and how much you eat.)



Some questions and answers

Shouldn't I take vitamin and mineral supplements even if I have no special needs?

Most people should aim to meet their nutritional needs by eating a variety of healthy foods. Certain people (pregnant women, for example) may be exceptions. Be sure to always consult your health-care provider for advice before taking any supplement. Tell all of your health-care providers about any supplements you take.

I keep hearing about antioxidants. What should I know about them?

Antioxidants are nutrients that may play a special role in reducing the risk of cancer, heart disease and other chronic health conditions. Research is being done to learn exactly how they work.

- Antioxidants include vitamin C, beta-carotene (which forms vitamin A), vitamin E and some minerals.
- They are found in plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, grains and some nuts. Seafood and black or green tea are also good sources.

As with other vitamins and minerals, it's best for most people to get needed antioxidants by eating a variety of healthy foods.

You may have other questions.

Write them here and talk about them with your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist.



What's keeping you from eating healthier?

Write down what you want to gain from eating healthier. Then think about what may be keeping you from doing it. Read some of the common barriers listed, and write your own. Talk with your health-care provider about ideas for change. Use these to help make your plan (see page 16).

Benefits

I would like to eat healthier, to help me...

Barrier

Possible change

I don't have time to sit down and eat a meal.

Pack easy-to-carry foods, such as fruit, carrot sticks and crackers with low-fat cheese.

I live alone—preparing a healthy meal isn't worth it.

Prepare extra to freeze for other meals.

I eat to relieve stress.

Take a walk or talk to a friend instead.

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Set your personal goals

for healthier eating. Ask your health-care provider or a dietitian or nutritionist to help you plan 1 or 2 changes to try each week. Use your notes from pages 13 and 15.

Example:	Instead of... Drinking whole milk	Try... Low-fat or fat-free milk	Notes I got used to the new taste.
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			

Track your progress

toward healthier eating. Especially in the first month or so, recording your successes and any benefits you notice can help you stay motivated. You may also find it helpful to note any problems reaching a goal, and other ideas to try.

	I succeeded in	I had trouble with	Notes
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			



Being more active— another key to better health

In general, a healthy physical activity plan involves:

Keeping the benefits in mind

People of all ages can benefit from regular physical activity. Some benefits are immediate. For example, a single session of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity can:

- give you more energy
- improve your mood
- help you sleep better.

Over time, regular physical activity can:

- reduce the risk of certain health conditions (such as heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes)
- help you reach and maintain a healthy weight
- keep your mind sharper and help you stay independent as you get older.

Moving more and sitting less every day

Even small amounts of activity can add up. Every week, aim for:

- at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity **aerobic** activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity)—anything that gets your heart beating faster counts
- **muscle-strengthening** exercises on at least 2 days—anything that makes your muscles push against extra weight or force counts.

If that's too much, do what you can. Even 5 minutes is a good start!

Try to get a mix of activities—see pages 22-23 for examples.

Making physical activity a part of daily life

This doesn't have to mean making major changes. Keep in mind that there are many ways to fit physical activity into your day. And every little bit counts. Say your goal is 150 minutes of physical activity in a week. If you did yardwork for 30 minutes on 2 days, took a 15-minute walk to the post office on 4 days and rode your bike for 30 minutes on 1 day, you've reached your goal!

Also, substitute physical activity for some TV or other "screen time."

Making an exercise plan that works for you

To help make a plan that you're likely to stick with, try to:



Include a variety of activities that you enjoy.

This can help keep you interested. Consider these examples:

- walking
- swimming
- bicycling
- dancing
- yardwork or gardening
- a group sport, such as soccer or basketball.

Think about how you can fit some physical activity in every day.

For example:

- Could you set aside a regular time, such as when you get up in the morning or get home from work?
- Could you do smaller amounts of activity throughout the day? For example, walk to work or take a walk at lunchtime? Or make a habit of using stairs instead of elevators, or parking at the far end of the parking lot when shopping?

(Be sure to keep personal safety in mind at all times.)

Set realistic goals.

This can help you:

- prevent injury
- avoid becoming discouraged.

Especially if you have not been very active, it's important to start slowly (exercising for short amounts of time, for example). It's also important to build up gradually, at a rate that's right for you. (See pages 24-25 for ways to monitor the intensity of your activity.)



Knowing your target heart rate

This is how fast your heart needs to beat each minute during physical activity for you to get the most benefit. Many beginners may want to aim for a target heart rate that is 50-60% of their maximum heart rate. (Your maximum heart rate is the fastest your heart can beat. Never exercise at this rate.)

Ask your health-care provider to help you figure out your target heart rate.

Use these steps:

1. Subtract your age from 220 to find your maximum heart rate.

$$220 - \frac{\text{age}}{\text{(age)}} = \frac{\text{max. heart rate}}{\text{(max. heart rate)}}$$

2. Multiply your maximum heart rate by the correct percentage to find your target heart rate. (Your health-care provider can tell you what percentage is right for you.)

$$\frac{\text{max.}}{\text{(max.)}} \times \frac{\text{percentage}}{\text{(percentage)}} = \frac{\text{target}}{\text{(target)}}$$

Example for a 40-year-old with a recommended target heart rate of 60%:

1. $220 - 40 = 180$.
2. $180 \times .60 = 108$ beats per minute.

Taking your pulse

This is a way to monitor your target heart rate during activity. You may also want to take your pulse before and after you're active. Here's one method for taking your pulse:

1. Lightly place your index and middle fingers on the underside of your wrist, below the base of your thumb.
2. When you feel a steady beat, count the number of beats in 15 seconds.
3. Multiply the number of beats by 4 to get the number of beats per minute.

Ask your health-care provider for help taking your pulse if you need it.

It may also help to practice when you're not exercising. And ask what your pulse should be at other times, such as during rest (about 60-100 beats per minute is usually considered normal).

Notes:

Being active for more time at a lower level of intensity is just as helpful as being active for less time at a higher level.

What's keeping you from being more active?

Write down the benefits you want from being more active. Then think about what may be keeping you from doing it. Read some of the common barriers listed, and write your own (if time is a barrier, see page 20 for some ideas). Talk with your health-care provider about ideas for change. Use these to help make your plan (see page 28).

Benefits

I would like to be more active, to help me...

Barrier

Possible change

Exercising costs too much.

Focus on activities with little or no cost, such as walking or gardening.

I get bored when I exercise.

Make exercise a social time, by including my family or friends.

I might get hurt.

Try an easier activity, such as walking, and build up gradually.

I'm too tired most of the time.

Try a small amount when I wake up or during lunch. Track my energy level, to see if I notice an improvement.













Set your personal goals

for being more active. Use this chart to map out the first 4 weeks of your plan.
(Make copies first.)

Week of _____	Activity	When	How long	Notes
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

Track your progress

toward being more active. Help yourself stay motivated during your first month. Record successes and any benefits you notice, any problems reaching a goal and other ideas to try.

	I succeeded in	I had trouble with	Notes
Week 1			
Week 2			
Week 3			
Week 4			



You can make healthy changes for a healthier life!

Work with your health-care provider

to help make an eating plan that works for you.

Build healthier eating habits

by making changes a little at a time.

Increase your physical activity

at a rate that's right for you, doing activities you enjoy.

Track your progress

to help you stay motivated and make any needed changes.

**Enjoy your efforts—
and your results!**

