

Action plan for healthy eating



How to reach your goal of healthy eating

Every day:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- Slow down and enjoy your food. Pay attention to when you feel hungry or full
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks
- Eat mostly whole grains instead of white flour, white rice or other refined grains
- Avoid large portions
- Compare salt (sodium) on food labels and choose the foods with lower numbers
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk

What are the benefits?

Healthy eating is good for everybody—not just people trying to lose weight. It is not always easy, but even small changes, over time, can add up and improve your health. Eating healthier can help you:

- Feel less tired and have more energy
- Keep a healthy weight or lose weight
- Prevent or control on-going diseases, such as:

— High blood pressure	— Diabetes
— Heart disease	— Cancer
— Stroke	— Osteoporosis (bone thinning)

Did you know?

- Frozen fruits and vegetables usually have as many nutrients as fresh
- Brown rice has more fiber than white rice
- Most fruit drinks, iced teas and vitamin waters have large amounts of added sugars

What's stopping you from eating healthier?

Does this sound like you?	Tips to help you succeed
"Healthy food will not taste good."	Try different fruits and vegetables to find the ones you like.
"I don't have enough time to make—or money to buy—healthy foods."	Save time and money by planning ahead. On the weekends, fix food for the week. Look for healthy foods that are on sale.
"I don't like making changes."	If you cannot give up an unhealthy food item, limit how much and how often you eat it.

Take the first steps to eating healthy.

Choose one or two of the steps below or write in one of your own.

- Snack on fruit instead of candy bars or cookies
- Have at least one cup of vegetables (cooked or raw) at dinner
- Choose 100% whole-wheat bread instead of white bread
- Instead of soda or juice drinks, drink water or tea without sugar
- When eating out, eat only half of the food on your plate. Bring the rest home for another meal
- Pack your lunch one day a week instead of eating out
- Take at least 20 minutes to eat every meal
- _____

My first healthy eating step: _____

My start date: _____

Track your progress on the healthy eating calendar.

Compliments of the
Texas Medical Association



Physicians Caring for Texans



Notes:

Next steps

1. Add one new step to your plan each week or month, such as:
 - I will eat two more servings of vegetables each day
 - I will eat 100% whole-wheat bread instead of white
 - I will not add salt to my food
2. Over time, you'll find yourself eating healthy foods more often and eating less healthy foods less often.

Choose these more often	Choose these less often
Fruits (fresh, frozen, canned or dried)	High-calorie or sugary snacks and fried foods
Vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned or dried)	Fatty meat and processed meat (deli ham, sausage, bacon, hot dogs, etc.)
Whole grains (100% whole wheat, brown rice, oatmeal, etc.)	Salt (sodium) and salty foods
Water or low-calorie beverages	Sugary drinks

3. Try new foods and recipes that will help you eat healthier.
4. Learn to read “Nutrition Facts” labels like this one. They list the calories and unhealthy saturated fat, trans fat and salt (sodium) in food products. How do those compare to how much you eat or drink now?

Did you know?

You may be surprised by how many servings are in a container. Be sure to read the "servings per container" number on the label so you know exactly how many calories and nutrients you're eating.

Check calories ...

Check calories

Limit these
nutrients

Get enough of these nutrients, as well as potassium and fiber

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)

Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving		Calories from Fat 110
Calories	250	
Total Fat	12g	18%
Saturated Fat	3g	15%
Trans Fat	3g	
Cholesterol	30mg	10%
Sodium	460mg	20%
Potassium	700mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate	31g	10%
Dietary Fiber	0g	0%
Sugars	5g	
Protein	5g	
Vitamin A		4%
Vitamin C		2%
Calcium		20%
Iron		4%

Source: fda.gov

- Quick guide to % daily value
 - 5% or less is low
 - 20% or more is high

- How many calories and nutrients are right for you?
Find out at choosemyplate.gov

Tips for success

- Plan ahead to be ready for times when it may be harder to follow your healthy eating steps (illness, busy at work, vacations, etc.)
- Choose the healthiest foods and drinks you can (like grilled instead of fried foods)
- Eat slowly and enjoy your food—give your body time to realize you're full
- If you eat unhealthy foods one day, try to do better the next day
- Stick with it. If what you are doing is not working, try something else
- Talk with your doctor if you think you need extra help in reaching your goal(s)

Remember, you're not going on a diet. You are creating healthier eating habits to last a lifetime.