

Eating Healthy Food Guide

A Quick Reference Guide
for Promoting a Healthy Mobile



A Project of Mobile United Health Services Task Force, University of South Alabama, Mobile County Health Department, and Medical Society of Mobile County

If you want to be healthy and control your weight or calorie intake, this guide should help you make smart choices when shopping and eating. If your goal is only to lose a few pounds, the easiest way is to eat less fattening foods, reduce the portion size of the foods you eat and exercise more as suggested here.

Healthy diets emphasize eating:

2 or 3 servings daily of fruits such as an apple, orange, pear, peach, or a “bunch” of grapes, strawberries, cherries, blueberries, red or blackberries, etc.

3 or 4 servings daily of vegetables and a serving of nuts, whole grains, low or fat-free milk and milk products, fish, and lean meats. A serving size of meat should fit in the palm of your hand and weigh no more than 3 to 5 ounces. Meat lovers should cut meat into smaller pieces or cubes.

Research shows that such foods help to fight some cancers, high blood pressure, obesity, osteoporosis, and add important nutrients to your diet. Fruits and vegetables help people control their weight by filling them up and to avoid eating unhealthy snacks such as potato chips, pastries, cookies, and candy. Healthy diets also do NOT include carbonated and high sugar drinks, fried foods, regular milk, candy, and more than 5 ounces of red meat per serving.

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Shopping Guide—It's About Choices

Choose fresh vegetables and fruits in season or frozen and keep them on hand. Include them in meals and snacks because most of them are low-fat, high fiber, vitamin rich, very low or no cholesterol, and nutritious. A serving is the equivalent of a one-half to one cup quantity.

Buy and eat dark green and deep yellow vegetables because they are high in nutrients and vitamins; fresh is usually best.

Fruits are high in antioxidants, vitamins A & C, and other nutrients and help to prevent heart disease and some cancers.

Read food packaging labels

such as the list of ingredients and Nutrition Facts to avoid buying or consuming products with high sugar, saturated and trans fat, and salt content, as well as snack foods such as potato chips, cheese puffs or chips, cookies, and pastries. They will result in weight gain or high and unhealthy cholesterol counts. Avoid buying regular carbonated soft drinks. Even consumption of diet soft drinks should be limited.

Avoid buying and eating foods with the fat from animal based food products, including egg yolks and whole milk. The fat from nuts, vegetables, and fish is healthier.

Look for other names of sugars on labels such as fructose, glucose, sucrose, corn syrup, and maple syrup so you choose foods with less sugar.

Buy nuts, seeds, dry beans, peas, or legumes and include these sources of protein in your daily diet as snacks, additions to salads, soups, etc. Walnuts, almonds, pecans, and peanuts are recommended. Macadamias are high in fat and should be avoided.

Fruit juice is better than a fruit drink which does not include the word "fruit" but limit servings of fruit juices because they contain too much sugar.

Choose whole-grain bread, oatmeal, brown or wild rice products.

Select low-fat versions of cheeses, milk, yogurt, ice cream and snacks instead of regular or high-fat versions.

Avoid processed and packaged meats of any kind for sandwiches or meals.

Sample Label for
Macaroni and Cheese

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Start Here

Limit these Nutrients

Get Enough of these Nutrients

Quick Guide to % DV

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

Footnote

Source: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/ConsumerInformation/ucm109832.htm>

Choose cereals with high calcium needed to keep bones and teeth healthy; avoid sugar-coated cereals and snacks because they contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients.

Choose tub, reduced-fat margarines. Avoid stick butter and margarine.

Other food items to consider having on-hand include peanut butter, preserves (not jelly), tuna or chicken packed in water, wheat or all-purpose flour, raisins, carrots, celery, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, regular baked potatoes, low-fat or non-fat sour cream, whole-grain barley; brown sugar, non-stick cooking spray, low-sodium soy sauce or tamari, low-fat crackers, powdered milk, canola oil, baking powder, baking soda, and seasonings like garlic powder, chili powder, cinnamon, pepper, ketchup, mustard.

Other Tips for Saving Money when Shopping

Study the unit price of similar products and sizes of the same product to avoid buying costlier products.

Make a shopping list. Include standard food items, staples, healthy foods, foods in season, and useful sale items—then stick to it, avoiding fattening snacks, sodas, pastries, etc.

Examine unit prices, usually located on a sticker below the shelf, and compare the cost per ounce, etc.

Look for the “sell by” date on food products. Do not buy products past their due date.

Buy store specials that will save you money but only if you will use them.

Look for coupons that will reduce the cost of frequently used products.

Warning

Poor food selection can cause obesity and disease. Think twice before you consume foods which are bad for your health.

Tips for Eating Healthier

Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner (don't skip a meal) with healthy snacks in between. Limit serving sizes as recommended above--no seconds!

At a minimum, eat two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables a day. A serving is a peach, pear, orange, or apple, a dozen or 1/2 cup of grapes or berries, 1/2 grapefruit, 1/4 cantaloupe, 6 3-inch long carrot sticks, a medium sweet potato, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, or 1/3 cup of nuts.

Add berries and other fruits to your cereal or yogurt for breakfast.

Serve a vegetable tray and fruit tray with a low-fat yogurt dip for family and social gatherings.

Count the calories in all the food you eat and try not to exceed 2,000 calories per day or what your doctor recommends.

When eating out or at home, try a vegetable-based main dish such as steamed, stir-fry, or grilled (BBQ) vegetables.

Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets!

Prepare a small (not large) plate with sensible portions of meat, vegetables, etc.

Eat slowly. Pause halfway through your meal to let your food digest. Do NOT go back for seconds.

Eat fruit for dessert instead of ice cream, pie, cake or pastries.

The biggest calorie contributor to adults and children is also one of the easiest to eliminate: drink water, and forego the sugary soft drinks.

Avoid eating potato chips, french fries, buttered popcorn, cookies, and pastries for snacks and desserts. If you MUST have potato chips, choose baked.

Choose rice, baked or boiled potatoes with entrees instead of fried potatoes or macaroni & cheese.

Use canola oil or low-saturated-fat equivalents in cooking rather than lard.

Cook your own meals. Avoid fast foods with high caloric counts (check at store or online).

Build dinner around rice, noodles or other grains. Add small amounts of beef, chicken, turkey, or pork.



Avoid Health Hazards

Wash cutting boards, knives, etc., with hot water and soap before using them for other foods.

Clean up food preparation areas with paper towels and dispose of them immediately instead of dish cloths.

Wash dish cloths and kitchen towels after use in the washing machine using hot water and bleach.

Never put food on a plate that you used for raw meat or seafood.

Cooking Tips

Remove the skin from poultry and the fat from meats before cooking to lower fat content.

Broil or grill meats. Avoid battering and deep frying which can triple the calories you eat.

Flavor foods with herbs, spices, and low-fat seasonings instead of cream sauces and gravy.

Remove skin and fat from all meats prior to cooking, serving, or eating.

Use half the oil most recipes recommend. Sometimes a spray does just as well.

Bake or broil instead of frying which absorbs the oil.

Season vegetables with herbs and spices instead of butter or margarine.

Limit your salt intake.

Use a slow cooker and recipes....

Healthy Snacks (Count as a Meal)

Raw vegetables

Cheese (in limited quantities)

An orange, apple, pear, peach,
prune or other fruit; fig and
almond treat

Whole-wheat toast or bagel,
or graham crackers

Hardboiled egg

Peanut butter on whole-grain
toasted bread

Crackers

Yogurt, 1 cup

Ready to eat cereal with fruit

Pudding, 1 cup

Leftovers from dinner

Muffin

Healthy Breakfast Ideas

- Day 1 Cereal** (whole-grain) with berries or sliced banana/peaches and low-fat milk
- Day 2 Dry whole-grain toast or bagel** with peanut butter and jam; two slices turkey bacon, whole fruit
- Day 3 Yogurt** with a banana or other piece of fruit, granola
- Day 4 Egg** (scrambled, hardboiled, egg substitute), lean ham, whole-grain toast or bagel. Egg whites are great and contain necessary amino acids for the body.
- Day 5 Cottage cheese** (fat-free or low-fat) and fruit with applesauce muffin
- Day 6 Trail mix** made with dried fruit, nuts, and cereal
- Day 7 Cooked oatmeal** with raisins and brown sugar or low-fat milk to taste
- Water, coffee, unsweetened tea, juice, or 1% milk*

Other Breakfast Ideas

- Poached egg** over spinach and mushrooms plus whole-wheat toast.
Sandwich from leftover meatloaf, chicken, etc., with lettuce and tomato.
Granola bar. Lean ham or Canadian bacon slice.

Healthy Lunch Ideas

- Day 1 Leftovers** from previous dinner
- Day 2 Deli (non-processed meat) sandwich**
- Day 3 BLT sandwich** (turkey bacon, lettuce, tomato)
- Day 4 Mixed green salad** with tomato or slice of pizza
- Day 5 Grilled cheese (low-fat) sandwich** or fajita
- Day 6 Tuna or chicken salad** on lettuce with whole-grain wheat roll (limit mayo)
- Day 7 Heart healthy soup** (low salt)
- Coffee, unsweetened tea, juice, or 1% milk*

Other Lunch Ideas

- Chicken or turkey breast. Tuna or chicken salad** using well drained and rinsed tuna or chicken. **Low sodium broth** or bouillon, turkey bacon.
Greek Salad with fat-free vinaigrette, feta cheese, olives and garbanzo beans.

Healthy Dinner Ideas

Day 1 Cheeseburger (5 oz, grilled or broiled) on whole grain bun; whole fruit

Day 2 Mixed green salad with broiled chicken breast or beef tips, light dressing, whole grain roll

Day 3 Beef tips on noodles or stuffed pepper and small salad

Day 4 Spaghetti with sauce, broccoli or small salad, garlic bread

Day 5 Large slice of pizza or bean tamale with small salad

Day 6 Bean tamale pie

Day 7 Ground turkey patty, vegetable, baked sweet potato
Water, coffee, unsweetened tea, juice, or 1% milk

Other Dinner Ideas

Baked potato with shredded veggie, cheese and no-fat sour cream or low-fat butter, chives; diced turkey bacon. **Salmon** with ginger mint or other salsa. **A mixed green or spinach salad** with cubes of chicken. **Side dishes** such as grilled squash or zucchini slices, sweet potato, peppers, onions, etc.



Healthy Snacks & Desserts

A piece of fruit

Rice crackers or cakes

Dried apricots

Peanut butter cookie (1)

Applesauce with cinnamon

Unsalted peanuts, almonds, walnuts, pecans, etc. (1/3 cup)

Yogurt with berries, sliced peaches, etc.

Several whole-wheat crackers with peanut butter

Recipes

See SNAP-Ed Connection, a dynamic online resource sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, for recipes submitted by nutrition and health professionals or organizations. This site allows users to search by ingredients or criteria and to rate food:
<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php>.

The Color Guide

Go Green — Buy and eat leafy greens such as collard greens, spinach, Swiss chard, asparagus, zucchini, okra, green beans, honeydew melon, kiwifruit, and green apples.

Go Red — Buy and eat tomatoes, red apples, red peppers, red onions, beets, red cabbage, kidney beans, red grapes, strawberries, cherries, watermelon, raspberries, cranberries, pomegranates.

Go Blue and Purple — Buy and eat eggplant, purple grapes, plums, blueberries, purple figs, currants.



Go White — Buy and eat cauliflower, mushrooms, white beans, onions, garlic, parsnips, shallots, turnips, bananas, pears. But avoid white bread, pastries, and even white potatoes if you can eat sweet potatoes.

Websites of Interest

Nutrition Data

<http://www.nutritiondata.com>

Nutrition Data is one of the most comprehensive and thorough websites covering healthy weight goals, nutrition data for foods, calorie and dietary facts, menus, and a search feature to identify nutrition data by specific foods, types and brand. Mentions research results where applicable.

HealthierUS.Gov

<http://www.healthierus.gov/>

USDA: Food & Nutrition Center

http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=242

These federal government websites provide a wealth of information about general health and nutrition, healthy recipes, health and food tips, the Food Pyramid, and information about exercise.

MyPyramid.Gov

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

MyPyramid.Gov contains a wealth of information about the new food pyramid, dietary guidelines, food research, tips for healthier eating, nutrition, advice for parents so their children of all ages can eat healthier.