

eat well, live well:

eating well for your health





It may seem like information on diet changes daily, but there is actually a lot we know about how to eat well.

Eating well can help you improve your overall health and lower your risk for disease, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and even cancer.

Each section of this booklet describes healthy foods that are easy to include in your meals and gives you some questions to think about. At the end of the booklet there is an action plan to help you reach your goal of a healthier diet.

All recommendations are based on many diet-related research studies, including studies on the Mediterranean diet and the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA).





Despite what you may have heard, carbohydrates can be good for you. The key is to choose the right type. The healthiest carbohydrates are those that are not processed and are in their whole form, such as vegetables, fruit, and whole grains. These carbohydrates are higher in fiber and other nutrients. Choose these foods more often.

It is best to limit processed carbohydrates. These include sugar, candy, regular sodas, sports drinks, fruit drinks, white rice, and foods made from white flour, such as white bread and white pasta. These carbohydrates are stripped of fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other important nutrients. They are absorbed by your body more quickly and may increase your risk of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Healthy carbohydrates tips:

- Aim for 5 or more servings of vegetables and 2 to 3 servings of fruit a day. One serving is a small piece of fruit, 1 cup of berries or melon, or 1 cup of vegetables.
 - Don't eat the same fruits or vegetables each day—vary the kinds and colors you eat.
- Aim for 5 to 8 servings of grains a day. One serving is 1 ounce; ½ cup of grains, rice, pasta, or cooked cereal; or 1 slice of bread.
 - The best choices are brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, amaranth, barley, farro, and oatmeal.
 - Good choices are whole-wheat pasta and whole-grain breads and cereals.

- Limit processed carbohydrates and added sugars.
 - The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons or 24 grams of added sugar a day for women and no more than 9 teaspoons or 36 grams of added sugar a day for men.

Think about these questions to prepare for your action plan:

- How many servings of vegetables and fruits do I eat a day?
- Do I choose whole grains, such as brown rice, barley, or oatmeal?
- What can I do to make a change in this important area of my diet?

Action plan examples:

- I will choose oatmeal instead of corn flakes.
- I will eat 8 servings of vegetables and fruits two days this week.





You need to eat protein each day to stay healthy, but some protein choices are better than others. Fatty meats, red meats (beef, pork, and lamb), and whole-fat dairy, milk, and cheese all have saturated fat and other compounds that can increase your risk of heart disease. Red meat and processed meats like hot dogs and bacon may also increase your risk of colon cancer, and they are high in sodium. Eat less red meat and processed meats.

The healthiest protein choices are low in saturated fat or come from plant foods.

Healthy protein tips:

- Aim for 5 to 6 ounces of protein a day. One ounce is also equal to 1 egg; ½ cup of beans, peas, or lentils; or ½ ounce of nuts.
 - Choose fish (preferably wild), shellfish, or skinless chicken and turkey instead of red meat.
 - Eat red meat only once or twice a month, if at all. Choose the leanest cuts, such as round steak, top sirloin, or ham.
 - Eat more plant foods and meatless meals.
- Choose healthier cooking methods. Broil, grill, or sauté in a small amount of healthy oil (olive or canola).
- Aim for 2 to 3 servings of fat-free or low-fat 1 percent milk, yogurt, or cheese a day. One serving is 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of hard cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

Think about these questions to prepare for your action plan:

- Do I eat fish and limit red meat?
- Do I choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products?
- Do I eat several meatless meals each week?

Action plan examples:

- I will eat fish two times this week.
- I will eat red meat (beef, pork, or lamb) only one time this week.
- I will have lentil soup for dinner one night this week.
- I will eat three meatless meals this week.





All fats are high in calories, but some are healthier than others. The unhealthy fats are trans (partially hydrogenated) and saturated fats.

Just a few grams of trans fats can increase your risk of heart disease by raising “bad” (LDL) cholesterol levels and lowering “good” (HDL) cholesterol. They are also linked to an increased risk for diabetes. Trans fats can be found in:

- Margarine
- Crackers
- Microwave popcorn
- Coffee creamer
- Canned frosting
- Other processed foods

Read the ingredients list and look for the words *partially hydrogenated oil*. If listed, the food has trans fat.

Omega-3 fats and monounsaturated fats are healthier. Omega-3 fats decrease inflammation, which is related to many chronic diseases. They may also lower your risk of heart disease. Good food sources include:

- Fatty fish (salmon, trout, sardines)
- Walnuts
- Chia seeds
- Flaxseeds and flaxseed oil
- Canola oil

Monounsaturated fats help lower “bad” (LDL) cholesterol and increase “good” (HDL) cholesterol. Good sources include:

- Extra virgin olive oil
- Nuts and nut butters
- Avocados

Healthy fats tips:

- Aim for 3 to 7 teaspoons a day.
 - Choose healthy fats such as extra virgin olive or canola oil and trans-fat-free margarine.
 - Limit saturated fat and avoid trans fat.
- Keep in mind that all fats are high in calories, so eat them in small amounts.

Action plan examples:

- Instead of regular margarine, I will use trans-fat-free margarine.
- Instead of cooking with corn oil, I will use canola oil.
- I will use extra virgin olive oil on my salads.
- I will add a small amount of walnuts or ground flaxseeds to my cereals or salads.

Trans Fats

The legal definition of “trans-fat-free” is less than half a gram per serving. This means that an item can be labeled trans-fat-free, but still have trans fat. If the food has partially hydrogenated oil in the ingredients list, it has trans fat. Note the serving sizes of these foods and limit the amount you eat.





BREAKFAST

- Oatmeal with walnuts
- Fat-free milk or soy milk
- Fresh blueberries
- Hot tea or coffee

LUNCH

- Lentil soup
- Salad with fresh carrots, tomatoes, walnuts, extra virgin olive oil, and vinegar
- Slice of watermelon
- Mineral water with lemon

DINNER

- Grilled salmon
- Carrots and broccoli
- Brown rice
- Salad with fresh vegetables, extra virgin olive oil, and vinegar
- Strawberries
- Hot tea or coffee

Remember, eating a healthy diet can have a huge effect on your health. You are worth it!

final POINTS

- Start off with a few foods you are willing to change, and then add more when you are ready.
- If you can, choose USDA-certified organic foods, including fruits, vegetables, milk, and meats. Foods labeled “organic” meet specific USDA standards for growing, processing, and handling.
- Choose fresh foods over processed foods. Aim for foods with five ingredients or less.
- Aim for variety in your food choices.
- There is no evidence that vitamin pills can decrease your risk of heart disease or cancer. Many studies show an increased risk. It is best to get your vitamins from food.
- If you need to lose weight, choose the healthy foods listed in this booklet, watch portion sizes, limit calories, and be physically active for about 60 minutes every day.
- If you have a special dietary need or would like to lose weight, contact a registered dietitian or your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department for more information.

RESOURCES

For more information check out these resources:

- Your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Department
- kp.org/nutrition
- kp.org/healthylifestyles
- choosemyplate.gov

the

HEALTHY PLATE

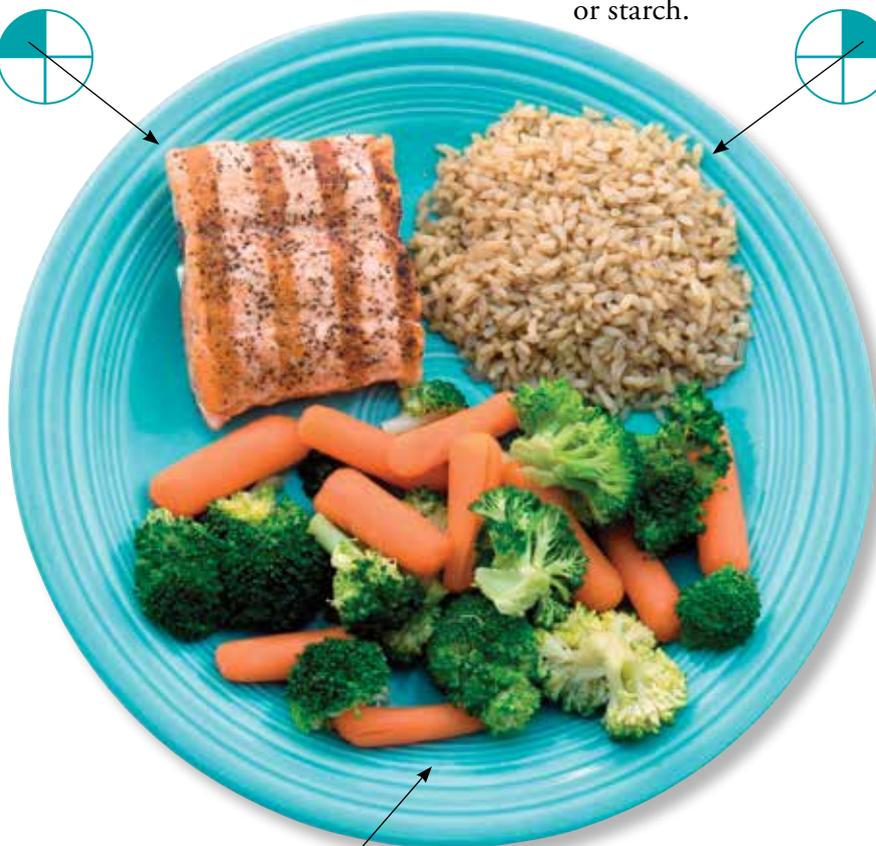
Use this plate to help you portion your food in a healthy way and make meal planning easier. Portions are based on a small dinner plate.

Fish with brown rice and vegetables

Fill one-quarter of your plate with a healthy protein source.



Fill one-quarter of your plate with healthy grains or starch.



Fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables.

Eating more plant-based meals can improve your health. Use this plate as a guide.

Black beans with quinoa and vegetables

Fill one-quarter of your plate with a healthy protein source.



Fill one-quarter of your plate with healthy grains or starch.



Fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables.

This booklet offers a lot of tips and suggestions for eating well. Don't try to do everything at once. Start by reviewing some of the examples in each section to help you create an action plan.

Action plans are short-term plans that help you reach your goal and improve your chance of success. Your plan must answer these questions:

- **What** are you going to do? → **When** are you going to do it?
- **How much** are you going to do? → **How many** days of the week are you going to do it?

Example:

This week I will eat (*what*) 5 servings of vegetables (*how much*), at lunch and dinner (*when*) on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (*how many*).

My Action Plan

This week I will:

_____ (*what*)

_____ (*how much*)

_____ (*when*)

_____ (*how many*)

Reward yourself with something (other than food) to feel good about taking care of yourself.

How confident are you that you will succeed with your plan?



0 = not at all confident

10 = totally confident

Your confidence level should be a 7 or higher to be successful.



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