



# What's On *Your* Plate?



*Smart Food Choices  
for Healthy Aging*



National Institute  
on Aging

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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**I**t's time to make lifestyle changes so you can stay active in the coming years. Research shows that it's not too late to make smarter food choices and add healthy habits, like being physically active, to help reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and osteoporosis and the disability that can result from them.

Making wise food choices as you grow older might be easier than you think. In *What's On Your Plate? Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging*, the National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), shows you how to make good food choices part of your daily life and adjust those choices as you grow older.







*What's On Your Plate?* follows the nutrition recommendations for older adults in the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The *Dietary Guidelines* is based on evidence from research, including studies conducted and supported by the NIH.

You might want to first skim through the entire book to get a general idea of all the elements involved in healthy eating. Then you can go back to the parts of the book that you want to read in more detail. Tips sprinkled throughout the book can help you make good food choices and improve your eating habits. We hope you find *What's On Your Plate?* a valuable resource for helping you choose better nutrition, an important part of health and aging. A list of more resources about healthy eating and healthy aging begins on page 74.





# Healthy Eating Patterns

*The First Step*



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**WHEN DIANA AND NICK SPENCER** both turned 50, they decided to make some changes in their lives. They'd put on some weight, and their doctor said their cholesterol levels were going up. Over the past few years, they'd been busy with work, children, and caring for their aging parents. The Spencers found themselves grabbing meals on the fly and eating too much food high in saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. They want to make better food choices. But how should they start?

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Diana and Nick can find nutrition information they can trust in the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, which contains advice about foods to include in a healthy eating pattern and how to shift toward healthier food and beverage choices. Every 5 years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) use the latest nutrition research to develop the *Dietary Guidelines*, which encourages people to make healthy food and beverage choices in their daily lives.

## Key Elements of Healthy Eating Patterns

You may need to make some changes in your food and beverage choices to achieve a healthy eating pattern. It's easier than you think! A healthy eating pattern is not a rigid prescription. Rather, it is a framework that lets you enjoy food that meets your personal preferences and fits your budget.

To encourage healthy eating patterns, the *Dietary Guidelines* provides five major guidelines:

- 1. Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.** All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, get adequate nutrients, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- 2. Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.** To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups in recommended amounts.

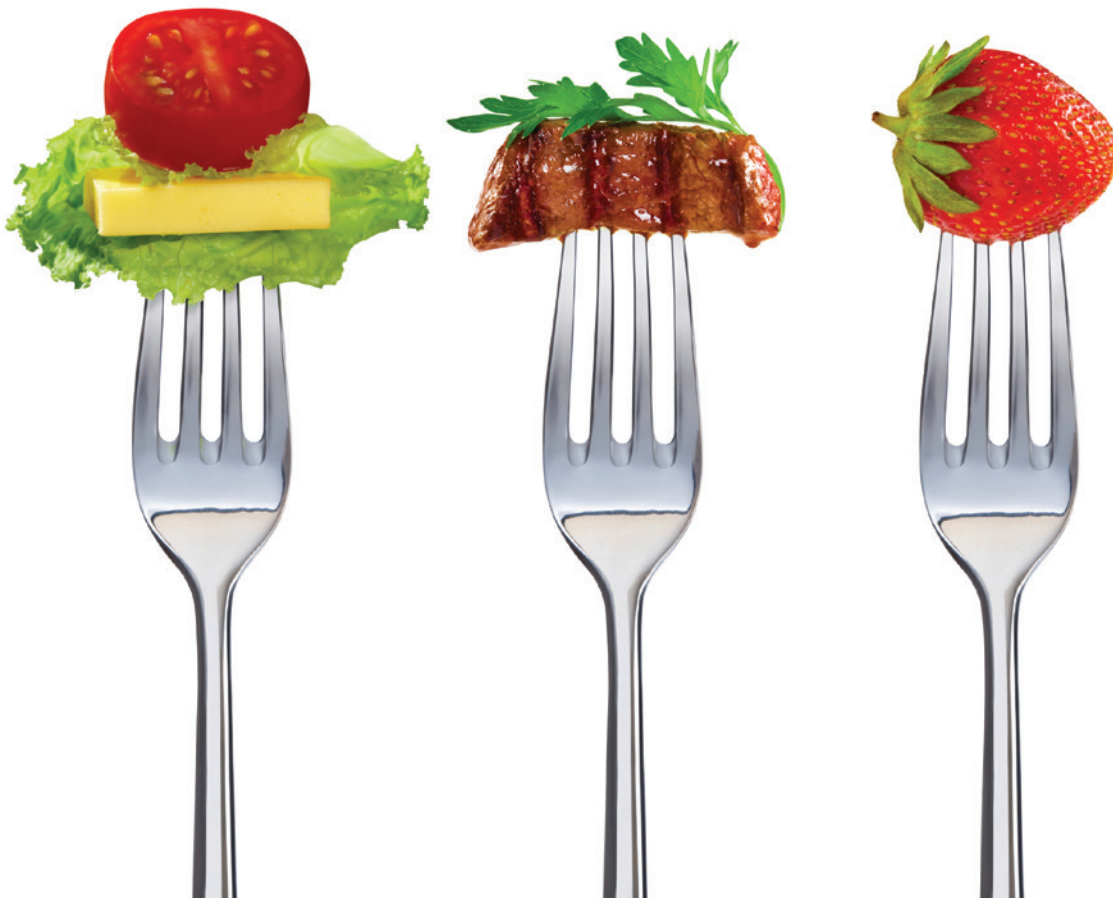




**3. Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats, and reduce sodium intake.** Cut back on foods and beverages that are high in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Aim for amounts that fit within healthy eating patterns.

**4. Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.** Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups in place of less healthy choices. Choose foods you like to make these shifts easier to maintain.

**5. Support healthy eating patterns for all.** Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns, at home, school, and work and in communities.



## Eating Patterns

The *Dietary Guidelines* describe three USDA Food Patterns: the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern, the Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern, and the Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern. Each eating pattern includes slight variations in amounts recommended from different food groups. However, they are all designed to meet nutrient needs while staying within calorie limits. And they all include the characteristics of healthy eating patterns that research has linked to reduced risk of certain diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes. You can adapt any of these eating patterns to suit your cultural or personal preferences.

### Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern

This eating pattern is based on the types and amounts of foods Americans typically consume, but in nutrient-dense forms and in healthy portions. Nutrient-dense foods give you lots of vitamins, minerals, and fiber without a lot of extra calories. This eating pattern also can help you avoid eating too many calories from non-nutritious sources. The main types of food in this eating pattern include a variety of vegetables (including dark green, red, and orange vegetables; beans and peas; and starchy vegetables like corn); fruits; whole grains; fat-free or low-fat dairy; seafood, poultry, meat, and eggs; and nuts, seeds, and soy products.

### THE DASH EATING PLAN

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) healthy eating pattern is a lot like the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern. It emphasizes vegetables, fruits, fat-free or low-fat dairy, whole grains, poultry, fish, beans, and nuts. It is low in sweets, sugar-sweetened drinks, saturated fats, and red meat. It has less sodium than the typical American diet. Studies have shown that following DASH can lower blood pressure and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. For more information, visit [www.nia.nih.gov/health/dash-eating-plan](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/dash-eating-plan).



### **Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern**

This eating pattern adapts the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern to reflect Mediterranean-style diets that have been shown to be good for your health. It contains more fruits and seafood and less dairy than the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern. There is also less calcium and vitamin D because it includes fewer dairy foods.

### **Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern**

This eating pattern contains no meat, poultry, or seafood. Compared with the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern, it contains more soy products (such as tofu), eggs, beans and peas, nuts and seeds, and whole grains. It is somewhat higher in calcium and fiber and lower in vitamin D compared to the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern.



The chart below shows how many calories per day, on average, are needed for men and women over age 50 to stay at their current weight based on their activity levels. Because calorie needs vary based on age, sex, height, weight, and level of physical activity, you may need more or fewer calories than shown here. For a personalized calorie target, go to [www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan).



“Not physically active” means a lifestyle that only includes basic movements from daily life activities. “Moderately active” means a lifestyle that adds about 1.5 to 3 miles of brisk walking per day or a similar amount of a different physical activity. “Active” means a lifestyle that adds more than 3 miles of brisk walking per day or a similar amount of a different physical activity. Other physical activities include dancing, jogging, tennis, or swimming.

**HEALTHY U.S.-STYLE EATING PATTERN:  
WHAT AND HOW MUCH TO EAT AT DIFFERENT CALORIE LEVELS**

	<b>1,600 calories</b>	<b>2,000 calories</b>	<b>2,400 calories</b>
<b>Vegetables</b>	2 c-eq	2½ c-eq	3 c-eq
<b>Fruits</b>	1½ c-eq	2 c-eq	2 c-eq
<b>Grains</b>	5 oz-eq	6 oz-eq	8 oz-eq
<b>Protein foods</b>	5 oz-eq	5½ oz-eq	6½ oz-eq
Seafood	8 oz-eq/week	8 oz-eq/week	10 oz-eq/week
Meat, poultry, eggs	23 oz-eq/week	26 oz-eq/week	31 oz-eq/week
Nuts, seeds, soy products	4 oz-eq/week	5 oz-eq/week	5 oz-eq/week
<b>Dairy</b>	3 c-eq	3 c-eq	3 c-eq
<b>Oils</b>	22 g	27 g	31 g
<b>Limits on Calories for Other Uses</b>	130 calories (8% of total calories)	270 calories (14% of total calories)	350 calories (15% of total calories)

Amounts are per day, unless labeled per week. Food group amounts are shown in cup-equivalents (c-eq) or ounce-equivalents (oz-eq). Oils are shown in grams (g).

### **Cup- and Ounce-Equivalents**

Foods come in many forms. Some foods are denser than others, and some have more air or contain more water. That's why a cup or ounce of one food is not the same as a cup or ounce of another food. Cup-equivalents and ounce-equivalents tell you the amount of different foods from each food group that have similar nutritional content. For example, in the vegetables food group, 1 cup of raw spinach and ½ cup of cooked green beans both count as 1 cup-equivalent. Pages 14-23 show equivalent amounts of food within each food group.

This table compares the *Dietary Guidelines*' three healthy eating patterns for a person who eats 2,000 calories per day. The column for the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern is the same as the 2,000-calories (middle) column on page 11.

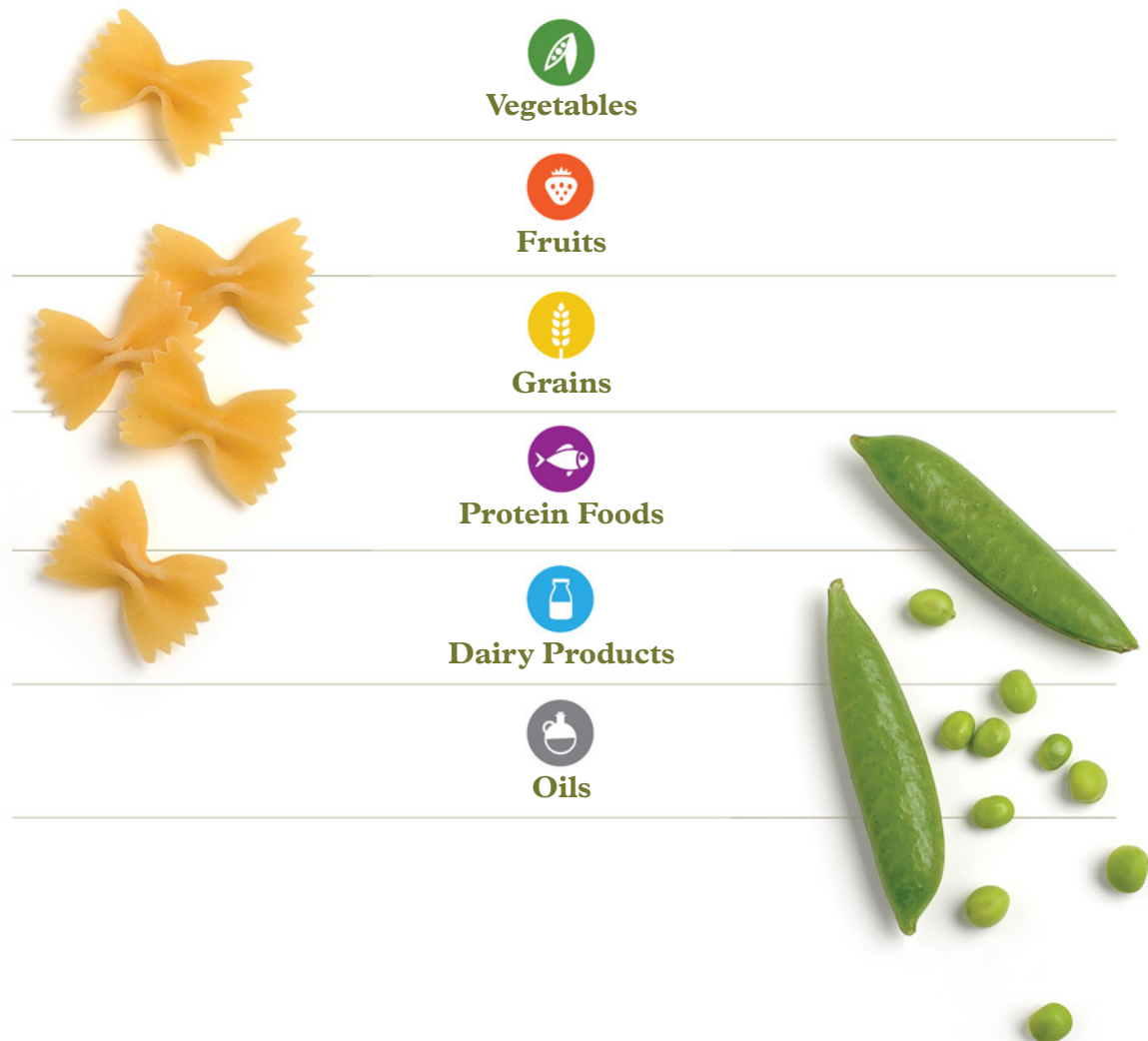
### HEALTHY EATING PATTERNS: 2,000-CALORIE LEVEL AMOUNTS

Food Group	U.S.-Style	Mediterranean-Style	Vegetarian
<b>Vegetables</b>	2½ c-eq	2½ c-eq	2½ c-eq
<b>Fruits</b>	2 c-eq	2½ c-eq	2 c-eq
<b>Grains</b>	6 oz-eq	6 oz-eq	6½ oz-eq
<b>Protein foods</b>	5½ oz-eq	6½ oz-eq	3½ oz-eq
Seafood	8 oz-eq/week	15 oz-eq/week	–
Meat, poultry, eggs	26 oz-eq/week	26 oz-eq/week	3 oz-eq/week (eggs)
Nuts, seeds, soy products	5 oz-eq/week	5 oz-eq/week	15 oz-eq/week
<b>Dairy</b>	3 c-eq	2 c-eq	3 c-eq
<b>Oils</b>	27 g	27 g	27 g
<b>Limits on Calories for Other Uses</b>	270 calories (14% of total calories)	260 calories (13% of total calories)	290 calories (15% of total calories)

Amounts are per day, unless labeled per week. Food group amounts are shown in cup-equivalents (c-eq) or ounce-equivalents (oz-eq). Oils are shown in grams (g).



Let's look more closely at the recommendations for the different food groups in each of the eating patterns described in the *Dietary Guidelines*. What foods are in each group? What are protein foods? How much of your daily fruit need is met by a medium banana? How should you count beverages? To answer these questions and more, starting on the next page, you'll find more detailed information for the five major food groups, as well as oils. We've also included some examples of equivalent amounts of food within each food group. A healthy eating pattern includes:



## The USDA Food Patterns

# Vegetables

**WHEN DIANA WAS GROWING UP**, she never wanted to eat vegetables. Her mother would overcook them until they had almost no taste. When she moved out on her own, she took cooking classes and learned how to roast, steam, sauté, and broil vegetables to her taste. Now there are several types of vegetables she is happy to eat because she has learned to cook them so they taste better. For example, she steams green beans and squeezes lemon juice over them.

Vegetables come in a wide variety of colors, flavors, and textures. They're also an important source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Dark green vegetables include broccoli, collard greens, spinach, and kale. Some red and orange vegetables are acorn squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomato, and sweet potato.

Examples of starchy vegetables are foods like corn, green peas, and white potatoes. Other vegetables include eggplant, beets, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, celery, artichokes, green beans, and onions. Beans and peas (legumes) include black beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, soybeans, and tofu. Legumes can also be counted in the protein foods group. (See the tip on page 20.) More equivalents can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/vegetables).

### HERE'S A TIP

In general,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of raw or cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or 1 cup of raw leafy greens, can be considered as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup-equivalent from the vegetables group.

**1/2 CUP-EQUIVALENT OF VEGETABLES EQUALS:**

1 cup uncooked spinach



6 baby carrots



½ cup cooked kidney beans



1 small (6-inch) ear corn

1 small (less than  
2" diameter) baked potato

½ cup broccoli florets



1 large stalk celery

½ large (3-inch diameter,  
3¾-inch long) red pepper

½ cup cooked green beans

## The USDA Food Patterns

### Fruits

**OTHER THAN ORANGE JUICE** *in the morning, the Spencers rarely had fruit. When they bought fruit from the grocery store, they often forgot it was in the drawer in their fridge. When they had lunch in the cafeteria, fruit was not usually offered.*

Nick and Diana are not alone. Older Americans generally do not eat enough fruit. Yet, there are so many choices—citrus fruits like oranges and grapefruits; different kinds of berries; fruits that grow on trees such as apricots, cherries, peaches, and mangoes; and others like figs, grapes, and pineapple. Try some fruits that you haven't eaten before.

Many fruits provide extra fiber that helps keep your digestive system moving. Just make sure you wash all fruits thoroughly before eating. Whole fruits are best, but 100% fruit juice also counts as fruit. When purchasing frozen, canned, or dried fruit, choose options that are lowest in added sugars. More equivalents can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/fruit](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/fruit).

#### HERE'S A TIP

Do you wonder how many vegetables and fruits you should eat at a meal? Look at your plate. Vegetables and fruits should fill up half the dish.



**½ CUP-EQUIVALENT OF FRUIT EQUALS:**

1 small piece fruit, such as a 2-inch peach or large plum



½ large (8-inch) banana



¼ cup dried fruit



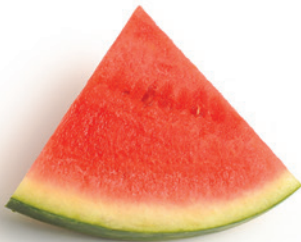
½ cup 100% orange juice



½ medium grapefruit



¼ medium canteloupe



½-inch wedge watermelon



½ cup grapes



4 strawberries

## The USDA Food Patterns

### Grains

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**DIANA LOVES BREAD AND PASTA.** *It might be easy for her to eat too much from this food group. If she eats more than is recommended for her calorie needs, she'll be taking in too many calories.*

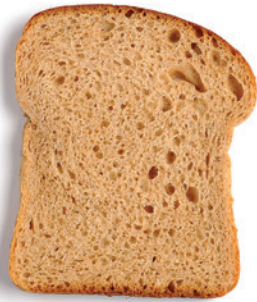
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Any food made from wheat, rye, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. In addition to bread and pasta, breakfast cereal, grits, tortillas, and even popcorn count.

Look for grain choices that are low in saturated fat and added sugar and that have no *trans* fat. But be careful—low-fat baked goods can be high in added sugar.

At least half of all grains eaten should be whole grains, which contain the entire grain kernel. Whole grains provide iron and many B vitamins, and they have fiber, too. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, whole bulgur (also known as cracked wheat), and whole cornmeal. For more on fiber, see page 34.

Some grain products are refined, which gives them a finer texture and a longer shelf life but removes fiber and nutrients. Most refined grains are enriched, which means that some nutrients are added back after processing. Examples of refined grain products include white flour, degermed cornmeal, white bread, and white rice. More equivalents can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/grains](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/grains).

**1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF GRAINS EQUALS:**

1 slice bread

 $\frac{1}{2}$  English muffin

1 mini-bagel



1 small (2½-inch diameter) muffin

1 cup breakfast cereal  
(flakes, rounds, or puffed) $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cooked cereal, rice,  
or pasta

2 (3-inch) pancakes



3 cups popcorn

1 small (6-inch diameter)  
corn or flour tortilla

## The USDA Food Patterns

# Protein Foods

**AS AN OLDER MAN**, Nick knows that getting enough protein is important for maintaining his muscles. But he realizes that relying on hamburgers, fatty pork chops, and fried chicken is not the best way to eat enough from the protein food group.

You might have a similar problem. Try to include a variety of nutrient-dense proteins in the foods you eat. Choose lean (low-fat) meats and poultry. Keep in mind that you can also get protein from seafood, eggs, beans, and peas, as well as nuts, seeds, and soy products.

The *Dietary Guidelines* recommends that you eat 8 ounces per week of a variety of seafood, not only for the protein but also because seafood contains omega-3 fatty acids such as EPA and DHA, which are good for your heart. Seafoods that are higher in EPA and DHA include salmon, shad, and trout. These seafoods are also lower in mercury, which can be harmful, than other types of seafood. More equivalents can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/protein-foods).

### HERE'S A TIP

Are you confused about whether to count beans and peas as vegetables or protein foods? Try this—count them in the vegetables group if you regularly eat meat, poultry, and fish. Count them in the protein foods group if you are a vegetarian or vegan or if you seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish.



**1 OUNCE-EQUIVALENT OF PROTEIN FOODS EQUALS:**

$\frac{1}{2}$  ounce nuts  
(12 almonds, 24 pistachios,  
or 7 walnut halves)



$2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (4-ounce)  
falafel patty



1 tablespoon peanut butter



$\frac{1}{2}$  cup split pea, lentil, or  
other bean soup



$\frac{1}{4}$  cup cooked beans



$\frac{1}{4}$  cup tofu



1 egg



1 ounce cooked  
lean beef, lean pork,  
chicken, or turkey



2 tablespoons hummus

## The USDA Food Patterns

### Dairy

**NICK LOVES DRINKING MILK**, so it is not a problem for him to get 3 cups a day. But, Diana is not a milk drinker. There are lots of other ways for her to meet her daily dairy goal.

Most adults do not get enough dairy in their diet. For your heart health, pick from the many low-fat or fat-free choices in the dairy group. Choosing fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt, as well as lower-fat cheese, gives you important vitamins and minerals, with less fat. More equivalents can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/dairy](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/dairy).

#### 1 CUP-EQUIVALENT OF DAIRY EQUALS:



1 cup yogurt



1½ ounces hard cheese,  
such as cheddar, mozzarella,  
Swiss, or Parmesan



⅓ cup shredded cheese



1 cup milk or calcium-fortified  
soy beverage



2 cups cottage cheese



1 cup pudding  
made with milk

## The USDA Food Patterns

### Oils

Oils are high in calories, but they are also an important source of nutrients like vitamin E. For adults age 51 and older, the daily allowance for women is 5 teaspoons of oil and, for men, 6 teaspoons.

If possible, use oils instead of solid fats, like butter, when cooking. Measuring your daily oils can be tricky—knowing what you add while cooking or baking is one thing. But oils are naturally part of some foods. More amounts for oils can be found at [www.choosemyplate.gov/oils](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/oils).

#### HERE'S A TIP

The suggested amounts of oils in the *Dietary Guidelines* are given in grams. How would you measure that? A teaspoon of oil has about 4.5 grams of fat.

#### TEASPOONS OF OIL:



½ medium avocado has  
3 teaspoons of oil



4 large ripe olives have  
½ teaspoon of oil



1 tablespoon peanut butter  
has 2 teaspoons of oil



1 ounce dry-roasted nuts has  
3 teaspoons of oil



1 ounce sunflower seeds has  
3 teaspoons of oil



1 tablespoon mayonnaise (not  
mayonnaise-type salad dressing)  
has 2½ teaspoons of oil

## The USDA Food Patterns

# Calories for Other Uses

**CAN NICK FOLLOW HIS EATING PLAN** *and still have a glazed donut on Sunday morning?*

Nick can still enjoy a Sunday treat. Let's say he follows the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern for 2,000 calories per day (see page 11). That gives him 270 calories per day for "calories for other uses," that is, calories he can use as he likes. For example, he can have an extra half-portion of a salmon filet. He can put a teaspoon of jam on whole wheat toast or a tablespoon of butter on a baked potato. On Sundays, he can treat himself to that glazed donut, so long as he's careful not to exceed his 270-calorie limit.

The "calories for other uses" category in the USDA Food Patterns gives you some leeway for eating more than the recommended amount of nutrient-dense foods. It also allows for some calories from foods and beverages that are not nutrient-dense, such as sweetened cereals, sodas, and alcoholic drinks.

Read the ingredient list to see if the food you are eating has added sugar. Some key words to look for are: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, and high-fructose corn syrup. You can also look for "added sugars" on the Nutrition Facts label. See pages 28-29 to learn more about food labels.

"Calories for other uses" also applies to the saturated fats in your diet. These fats occur naturally in some foods, but they are also added to foods such as baked goods and potato chips. That's why you should try to limit your intake of saturated fats. Also, keep *trans* fat intake as low as possible. *Trans* fats are harmful and are being removed from the food supply. For more information on fats, see pages 34-35.

Drinking coffee or tea barely provides any calories unless you add sugar or cream, which count as "calories for other uses." Moderate coffee consumption of three to five 8-ounce cups per day can be part of a healthy eating pattern.



As for alcohol, it is not nutrient-dense and is not part of the healthy eating patterns recommended in the *Dietary Guidelines*. It also has calories that count toward “calories for other uses.” If you consume alcohol, do so in moderation—up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men.

The important thing to remember is that “calories for other uses” includes *all* added sugars, saturated and *trans* fats, and alcohol that you consume. Pay attention to your consumption of these food components because the calories add up quickly.

### MYPLATE FOR OLDER ADULTS

The *Dietary Guidelines* presents a general outline for a healthy diet. But, as you age, some foods may be better than others for staying healthy and reducing your chance of illness. MyPlate for Older Adults is a companion to MyPlate, the federal government’s food group symbol.

MyPlate for Older Adults highlights the unique nutritional and physical activity needs of people as they age. It gives examples of foods that fit into a healthy, well-balanced diet.

To view the MyPlate graphic and accompanying video, and for tips and extra information, go to <https://hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate>.





# More Help with Healthy Eating

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**CARLOS IS 63.** *When he was growing up, he loved his mother Rosa's homemade frijoles refritos. But now he is trying to make wiser food choices, and he knows that those refried beans would be healthier prepared with olive oil instead of lard and bacon. He's also trying to decide which eating pattern to follow, and he has some questions. Can he have snacks? Does he have to measure everything he eats? And how can he understand those Nutrition Facts labels?*

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## Snacking

Snacks are okay, as long as they are smart food choices. If you want an afternoon pick-me-up or after-dinner snack, have a piece of fruit, or spread peanut butter or low-fat cream cheese on whole wheat toast. Don't forget to include snacks in your daily food count. For example, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter spread on a slice of whole wheat toast counts toward the protein foods group and the grains group. Some ideas for healthy snacking include:

- Have an ounce of cheese with some whole grain crackers, a container of low-fat or fat-free yogurt, or a 1-ounce portion of unsalted nuts.
- Put fruit instead of candy in the bowl on your coffee table.
- Keep a container of washed, raw vegetables in the fridge along with hummus or other healthy dips.
- To limit your portion sizes, don't eat from the bag. Count out a serving and put the bag away.



### HERE'S A TIP

When you are out and need a snack, don't be tempted by a candy bar. Instead, take along homemade trail mix in a plastic bag when you go out. If you need to buy a snack while you are on the go, pick up an apple or banana—most convenience stores carry them.

## Reading the Label

Reading labels can help you make informed food choices. Packaged foods and drinks—the types that come in cans, boxes, bottles, jars, and bags—have a lot of nutrition and food safety information on their labels or packaging. Look for:

**Product dates.** You might see one of three types of product dates on some foods you buy:

- “Sell by” tells how long the manufacturer suggests that a store should sell foods like meat, poultry, eggs, or milk products—buy it before this date.
- “Use by” tells how long the food will be at peak quality—if you buy or use it after that date, some foods might be stale or less tasty.
- “Best if used by” (or “best if used before”) tells how long the food has the best flavor or quality—it does not suggest a date by which the food should be purchased.

Product dates are not safety dates and are not required by federal regulations (except on infant formula). They are added voluntarily by manufacturers.

**Ingredient list.** This tells you each ingredient in the food product by its common or usual name. Did you know that the ingredients are listed in descending order by weight? That is, the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first, and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last.

**Nutrition Facts label.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires a Nutrition Facts label on most packaged foods and beverages. You can see sample labels on the following page, along with a few key things to know about them.

At the top of the Nutrition Facts label, you will find the total number of servings in the container and the food or drink’s serving size. The serving size on the label is based on the amount of food that people typically eat at one time and is not a recommendation of how much to eat.

The rest of the nutrition information on the label is usually based on one serving of the food or beverage but can be for the whole container (see Food Label A). However, if the container has more than one serving but *could* be consumed in one sitting—such as a pint of ice cream—the label will have two columns (see Food Label B). The first column lists the calories and nutrients in *one serving*. The second column lists the calories and nutrients in *the entire container*. If you eat a whole package of food that contains two servings, you will get twice as many calories, nutrients, sugar, and fat as are in one serving.

**A**

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2 / 3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160g	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	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.

**B**

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
2 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>1 cup (255g)</b>
<b>Calories</b>	<b>220</b> <b>440</b>
	<small>Per serving</small> <small>Per container</small>
	<small>% DV*</small> <small>% DV*</small>
<b>Total Fat</b>	5g <b>6%</b> 10g <b>13%</b>
Saturated Fat	2g <b>10%</b> 4g <b>20%</b>
Trans Fat	0g           0g
<b>Cholesterol</b>	15mg <b>5%</b> 30mg <b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b>	240mg <b>10%</b> 480mg <b>21%</b>
<b>Total Carb.</b>	35g <b>13%</b> 70g <b>25%</b>
Dietary Fiber	6g <b>21%</b> 12g <b>43%</b>
Total Sugars	7g           14g
Incl. Added Sugars	4g <b>8%</b> 8g <b>16%</b>
<b>Protein</b>	9g           18g
Vitamin D	5mcg      25%      10mcg      50%
Calcium	200mg      15%      400mg      30%
Iron	1mg      6%      2mg      10%
Potassium	470mg      10%      940mg      20%

\* 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.

Daily Value (DV) is a reference amount of a nutrient to consume or not to exceed each day. The percent Daily Value (%DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet. Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet, so if you are eating fewer calories and eat a serving of this food, your %DV will be higher than what you see on the label. Some nutrients on the Nutrition Facts label do not have a %DV, so use the number of grams to compare and choose products.

Most Americans exceed the recommended limits for saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars. Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of these nutrients each day.

 **HERE'S A TIP**

If a food has 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving, it is considered *low* in that nutrient. If it has 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving, it is considered *high* in that nutrient. Low or high can be either good or bad—it depends on whether you need more of a nutrient (like dietary fiber) or less (like saturated fat).



**HERE'S A TIP**

Portion size can be a problem when eating out. To keep your portion sizes under control, try ordering one or two small appetizers instead of a large entrée. Or, you could share an entrée with a friend, or eat just half and ask for a take-out container for the rest. Put the leftovers in the fridge as soon as possible. Then enjoy them the next day for lunch or dinner.

Many Americans also do not get the recommended amounts of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium. Eating enough foods that contain these nutrients can reduce the risk of developing some diseases and conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and high blood pressure. Compare and choose foods to aim for 100% DV of these nutrients.

## Servings and Portions

Do you have to measure or weigh everything you eat? Not really. Some people find it helps to measure things carefully at first, but once you get used to your new eating pattern, strict measuring probably won't be necessary. But what exactly is a serving? And is that different from a portion?

A “serving size” is a standard amount of a food, such as a cup or an ounce. Serving sizes can help you when choosing foods and when comparing like items while shopping, but they are not recommendations for how much of a certain food to eat.

The term “portion” means how much of a food you are served or how much you eat. A portion size can vary from meal to meal. For example, at home you may serve yourself two small pancakes in one portion, but at a restaurant, you may get a large stack of pancakes as one portion. A portion size may also be bigger than a serving size. For example, the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label for your favorite cereal may be 1 cup, but you may pour yourself 1½ cups in a bowl.





# Important Nutrients to Know



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**ESTHER AND STEVEN** both go to Dr. Wang for their annual check-ups. At the most recent check-up, Dr. Wang told Esther that her blood sugar is in the prediabetic range. She suggested that Esther lose a few pounds, exercise regularly, and change the amount of protein and carbohydrates she eats. Dr. Wang wanted Steven to reduce the saturated fat in his diet because his cholesterol has gone up. That was going to be hard for Steven, who loves the chips and buffalo wings with blue cheese dressing that are served when he and his friends play cards on Thursday nights.

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Your body needs nutrients to survive and stay healthy. There are five main types—proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals, and water. What does each of these nutrients do in your body? What foods are they found in?

## Proteins

Proteins are often called the body's building blocks. They are used to build and repair tissues. They help you fight infection. Your body uses extra protein for energy. The protein foods group includes seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds. Protein is also found in the dairy group. Protein from plant sources tends to be lower in saturated fat, contains no cholesterol, and provides fiber and other health-promoting components. For examples of protein serving sizes, see page 21.



### HERE'S A TIP

Different foods in each food group have different nutrients. Picking an assortment within every food group throughout the week will help you get many nutrients. For example, choose seafood instead of meat twice a week. The variety of foods will make your meals more interesting, too.

 **HERE'S A TIP**

It's better to get fiber from food than dietary supplements. Start adding fiber slowly. This will help avoid gas. To add fiber:

- Eat cooked dry beans, peas, and lentils.
- Leave skins on your fruit and vegetables but wash them before eating.
- Choose whole fruit over fruit juice.
- Eat whole grain breads and cereals that contain fiber.

## Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy. The fruit, vegetable, dairy, and grain food groups all contain carbohydrates. Sweeteners like sugar, honey, and syrup and foods with added sugars like candy, soft drinks, and cookies also contain carbohydrates. Try to get most of your carbohydrates from fruits, vegetables, fat-free and low-fat dairy, and whole grains rather than added sugars or refined grains.

Many foods with carbohydrates also supply fiber. *Fiber* is a type of carbohydrate that your body cannot digest. It is found in many foods that come from plants, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, beans, and whole grains. Eating food with fiber can help prevent stomach or intestinal problems, such as constipation. It might also help lower cholesterol and blood sugar.

## Fats

Fats give you energy, and they help the body absorb certain vitamins. Essential fatty acids help the body function, but they aren't made by your body—you have to consume them. Many foods naturally contain fats, including dairy products; meats, poultry, seafood, and eggs; and seeds, nuts, avocados, and coconuts.

Certain kinds of fat can be bad for your health—saturated fats and *trans* fats:

**Saturated fats** are found in the greatest amounts in butter, beef fat, and coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils. Higher-fat meats and dairy and cakes, cookies, and some snack foods are higher in saturated fats. Dishes with many ingredients are common sources of saturated fat, including pizza, casseroles, burgers, tacos, and sandwiches.





**Trans fats**, which is short for *trans* fatty acids, occur naturally in some foods but are also artificially produced. Because *trans* fats are not healthy, food manufacturers are phasing them out. But *trans* fats can still be found in some processed foods, such as some desserts, microwave popcorn, frozen pizza, margarine, and coffee creamer.

Fats that contain mostly *trans* fats and saturated fats are solid at room temperature. Limit your intake of saturated fats to less than 10 percent of your calories each day, and keep *trans* fat intake as low as possible.

Replace saturated and *trans* fats with these two types of healthier fats while keeping total fat intake within the recommended range:

**Monounsaturated fats.** These are found in the greatest amounts in canola, olive, peanut, sunflower, and safflower oils and in avocados, peanut butter, and most nuts.

**Polyunsaturated fats.** These are found in the greatest amounts in sunflower, corn, soybean, and cottonseed oils and in fatty fish, walnuts, and some seeds.

Oils contain mostly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and are liquid at room temperature. These types of fat seem to lower your chance of heart disease when they replace saturated fats. But that doesn't mean you can eat more than the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* suggests.

To lower the saturated fat in your diet:

- Choose cuts of meat with less fat and remove the skin from chicken
- Use low-fat or fat-free dairy products
- Choose oils, such as olive or canola, for cooking
- Replace ingredients higher in saturated fats with vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, or lean cuts of meats and poultry
- Read the Nutrition Facts label and choose products lower in saturated fats

## Vitamins and Minerals

**Vitamins.** Vitamins help your body work the way it should. There are 13 vitamins—vitamins A, C, D, E, K, and the B vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, B<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>12</sub>, and folate). Vitamins have different jobs—helping you resist infections, keeping your nerves healthy, and helping your body get energy from food or your blood to clot properly. By following the *Dietary Guidelines*, you will get enough of most of these vitamins from food.

**Minerals.** Minerals also help your body function. Some minerals, like iodine and fluoride, are only needed in very small quantities. Others, such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium, are needed in larger amounts. As with vitamins, if you eat a varied diet, you will probably get enough of most minerals.

Vitamins and minerals are measured in a variety of ways. The most common are:

- mg – milligram
- mcg – microgram
- IU – international unit

Micrograms are used to measure very small amounts—there are 1,000 micrograms in a milligram. The size of an international unit varies depending on the vitamin or drug it is used to measure.

It is usually better to get the vitamins and minerals you need from food rather than a dietary supplement. That's because nutrient-dense foods contain other things that are good for you, like fiber.

Most older people can get all the nutrients they need from foods. But if you aren't sure, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian to find out if you are missing any important vitamins or minerals. He or she may recommend a vitamin supplement.

If you do need to supplement your diet, look for a supplement that contains the vitamin or mineral you need without a lot of other unnecessary ingredients. Read the label to make sure the dose is not too large. Avoid supplements with mega-doses. Too much of some vitamins and minerals can be harmful, and you might be paying for supplements you don't need. Your doctor or pharmacist can recommend brands that fit your needs.

**Sodium.** Sodium is an important mineral. In most Americans' diets, sodium primarily comes from salt (sodium chloride). Whenever you add salt to your food, you're adding sodium. But the *Dietary Guidelines* shows that most of the sodium

**KEY VITAMINS AND MINERALS FOR PEOPLE OVER AGE 50****Vitamin D**

If you are age 51-70, you need at least 15 mcg (600 IU) each day, but not more than 100 mcg (4,000 IU). If you are over age 70, you need at least 20 mcg (800 IU), but not more than 100 mcg (4,000 IU). You can get vitamin D from fatty fish, fish liver oils, fortified milk and milk products, and fortified breakfast cereals.

**Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>**

You need 2.4 mcg each day. You can get this vitamin from meat, fish, poultry, milk, and fortified breakfast cereals. Some people over age 50 have trouble absorbing the vitamin B<sub>12</sub> found naturally in foods. They may need to take vitamin B<sub>12</sub> supplements and eat foods fortified with this vitamin.

**Calcium**

Men age 51-70 need 1,000 mg each day. Men age 71 and older and women age 51 and older need 1,200 mg each day. Don't consume more than 2,000 mg each day. Calcium is a mineral that is important for strong bones and teeth, so there are special recommendations for older people who are at risk for bone loss. You can get calcium from milk and other dairy, some forms of tofu, dark-green leafy vegetables, soybeans, canned sardines and salmon with bones, and calcium-fortified foods.

**Magnesium**

Women age 51 and over need 320 mg each day. Men need 420 mg. This mineral, generally, is found in foods containing dietary fiber, such as green leafy vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts and seeds. Breakfast cereals and other fortified foods often have added magnesium. Magnesium is also present in tap, mineral, or bottled drinking water.

**Potassium**

For people age 51 and over, 4,700 mg per day is adequate. Many different fruits, vegetables, meats, and dairy foods contain potassium. Foods high in potassium include dried apricots, lentils, and potatoes. Adults get a lot of their potassium from milk, coffee, tea, and other nonalcoholic beverages.

we eat doesn't come from our saltshakers—it's added to many foods during processing or preparation. We all need some sodium, but too much over time can lead to high blood pressure, which can raise your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

How much sodium is okay? People 51 and older should reduce their sodium intake to 2,300 mg each day. That is about 1 teaspoon of salt and includes sodium added during manufacturing or cooking as well as at the table when eating. If you have high blood pressure or prehypertension, limiting sodium intake to 1,500 mg per day, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  teaspoon of salt, may be helpful. Preparing your own meals at home without using a lot of processed foods or salt will allow you to control how much sodium you get. Try using less salt when cooking, and don't add salt before you take the first bite. If you make this change slowly, you will get used to the difference in taste. Also look for grocery products marked "low sodium," "unsalted," "no salt added," "sodium free," or "salt free." Also check the Nutrition Facts Label to see how much sodium is in a serving.

Eating more fresh vegetables and fruit also helps—they are naturally low in sodium and provide more potassium. Get your sauce and dressing on the side and use only as much as you need for taste.

## Water

It's important for your body to have plenty of fluids each day. Water helps you digest food, absorb nutrients from food, and then get rid of the unused waste. Water is found in foods—both solids and liquids, as well as in its natural state.

### **"BUT I DON'T FEEL THIRSTY"**

With age, you might lose some of your sense of thirst. To further complicate matters, some medicines might make it even more important to have plenty of fluids. Don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink water or other fluids. Take sips of water, milk, or juice between bites during meals. Add liquids throughout the day. For example, have a cup of low-fat soup as an afternoon snack. Drink a full glass of water when you take a pill. Have a glass of water before you exercise. Remember, water is a good way to add fluids to your daily routine without adding calories.










# Healthy Lifestyle

*The Next Step*



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**NICK'S COWORKER MARVIN** fondly thought back to his early 20s when he was the skinny kid on the block and tried so hard to put on weight. His mom had told him the pounds would come. Now he knows she was right. In his mid-50s, Marvin weighs 15 pounds more than he did in his 40s. What happened? And what should he do about it now?

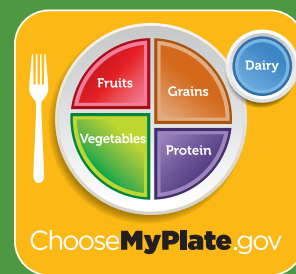
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As you grow older, if you continue eating the same types and amounts of food but do not become more active, you will probably gain weight. That's because your metabolism (how your body gets energy from food) can slow with age, and your body composition (amount of fat and muscle) may be different from when you were younger.

The energy your body gets from the nutrients in the food you eat is measured as calories. As a rule of thumb, the more calories you eat, the more active you have to be to maintain your weight. Likewise, the reverse is also true—the more active you are, the more calories you need. As you age, your body might need less food for energy, but it still needs the same amount of nutrients. What should you do?

 **HERE'S A TIP**

The MyPlate Plan shows your food group targets—what and how much to eat within your calorie allowance. Your food plan is personalized, based on your age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Find it at [www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan).



## Taking in Calories

Writing down what and how much you eat each day will help you keep track of your total daily calories and also help you see if you are making healthy choices. Try to choose mostly nutrient-dense foods. These foods give you lots of nutrients without a lot of extra calories.

**Make healthy shifts in your food choices.** You can move toward a healthier eating pattern by making shifts in food choices over time. Making these shifts can help support a healthy body weight, meet nutrient needs, and lessen the risk for chronic disease. Here are some ideas:

### SHIFT FROM:

#### High-Calorie Snacks



### SHIFT TO:

#### Nutrient-Dense Snacks



#### Fruit Products with Added Sugars



#### Fresh Fruit



#### Refined Grains



#### Whole Grains



#### Snacks with Added Salt or Sugars



#### Snacks Without Added Salt or Sugars



#### Solid Fats



#### Oils



**Make healthy shifts in your beverage choices, too.** You have plenty of beverage options that are low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium.

**SHIFT FROM:****SHIFT TO:**

Medium café latte made with whole milk

Small café latte made with fat-free milk



Regular cola

Water or water flavored with fruits or vegetables



Sweetened lemon iced tea

Sparkling water with natural lemon flavor



Another way to think about the idea of nutrient-dense and calorie-dense foods is to look at a variety of foods that all provide the same calories. Let's say that you wanted to have a small snack. You might choose:

- 7- or 8-inch banana
- 20 peanuts
- 3 cups low-fat popcorn
- 2 regular chocolate-sandwich cookies

These choices all have about 100 calories but provide different amounts of nutrients. The right choice for you may depend on what else you're eating throughout the day.

**HERE'S A TIP**

From time to time, keep a food diary. Keep track of what you eat, and check your weight once a week. Then you'll know if you are balancing the calories in and calories out and whether you need to be more active or make healthier food choices.

## Burning Calories

Balancing the calories you eat and drink with the calories you burn through physical activity can help you maintain a healthy body weight for your size. You use some calories without thinking about it in your day-to-day activities, but you may need to become more active than you are now.

How much physical activity should you get? Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. You don't have to do that all at once—break it up over the whole week, however you like. If you can't do this much activity right away, try to be as physically active as you can. Doing something is better than doing nothing at all.

The benefits of exercise aren't just about weight. Regular exercise can make it easier for you to do daily activities, participate in outings, drive, keep up with grandchildren, avoid falls, and stay independent.





**BALANCING CALORIES (ENERGY) IN AND CALORIES OUT**

ENERGY IN = ENERGY OUT

**Maintaining Weight**

Your weight will stay the same when the calories you eat and drink equal the calories you burn.

ENERGY IN < ENERGY OUT

**Losing Weight**

You will lose weight when the calories you eat and drink are less than the calories you burn.

ENERGY IN > ENERGY OUT

**Gaining Weight**

You will gain weight when the calories you eat and drink are greater than the calories you burn.

Most older people can be moderately active. But you should talk to your doctor if you aren't used to energetic activity and you want to start a vigorous exercise program or significantly increase your physical activity. You should also check with your doctor if you have health concerns like dizziness, shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, an irregular heartbeat, blood clots, joint swelling, a hernia, or recent hip or back surgery. Your doctor might have some safety tips or suggest certain types of exercise for you.

You don't have to spend a lot of money joining a gym or hiring a personal trainer. Think about the kinds of physical activities that you enjoy—for example, walking, running, bicycling, gardening, housecleaning, swimming, or dancing. Try to make time to do what you enjoy on most days of the week. And then increase how long you do it or add another fun activity.



**Go4Life**®, from the National Institute on Aging, was designed to help older adults incorporate more exercise and physical activity into their daily lives. On the **Go4Life** website, you can:

- Try strength, balance, and flexibility exercises
- Find exercise videos, including sample workouts
- Read about the health benefits of exercise
- Get safety and motivational tips
- Use tracking tools to make exercise plans and see your progress over time

For more information, visit <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov>.

*Go4Life* is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.





# Food Shopping

*Making the Trip Easier,  
Saving on the Cost*



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**MARVIN'S NEIGHBOR, SHARISE,** *is so busy she often picks up dinner at a fast-food restaurant or the food court at her local shopping mall. She only stops at the grocery store for milk, bread, snacks, and prepared meals. Sharise wants to start shopping for healthy food choices, but she wonders how she should do that, and she's also worried about the cost.*

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## Shopping for Food That's Good for You

Some grocery stores have special shelf tags or food labels that help you identify healthier choices—for example, high fiber, no added sugar, low in saturated fat, or whole grain. If your grocery store features healthy choices, this can help you can find them quickly when you shop, but always read the Nutrition Facts label to compare products.

Many people say a successful trip to the grocery store starts with a shopping list. Throughout the week, try to keep a list of food and supplies you need. Using a list helps you follow a budget because you will be less likely to buy on impulse. You can find a prepared grocery list that will help you choose healthy types of foods at [www.nia.nih.gov/WOYP-shopping-list.pdf](http://www.nia.nih.gov/WOYP-shopping-list.pdf).

When making your shopping list, check your staples. These include items like whole grain cereal and flour; cans of low-sodium soup and tuna fish; dried fruit; bags of frozen vegetables or fruit; frozen or bottled 100% juice; powdered dry milk or ultra-pasteurized, shelf-stable milk; pasta or rice; and low-sodium sauce in a jar. Staples are nice to have around for those times you can't go grocery shopping.



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**ON THE WAY TO THE GROCERY STORE,** *Sharise stopped by her parents' house. She discovered that their fridge was almost as empty as hers, so she encouraged them to come with her. While they were shopping, she was surprised to see how hard it was for her mother to walk up and down the aisles, even leaning on a cart. Her father wanted something off a top shelf and couldn't reach it. She hadn't realized before that shopping could be hard for her parents.*

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A trip to the grocery store can be a chore for anyone, but as you get older, you might have new reasons for not going. For example, getting around a big food store might be difficult. What can you do? Some stores have motorized carts, which you can use. Ask if there is an employee who can help you reach things or push your cart. If your store has a pharmacy department, you might find a seat there if you get tired. Plan to shop at a time of day when you are rested and the store is not busy so you won't have to stand in a long checkout line. Check with your local Area Agency on Aging to see if there are volunteers in your area who can help.

Some people think a grocery delivery service is helpful. You'll want to ask about fees and other charges before deciding if this service would work for you. Many require access to a computer for ordering.

Shopping for healthy foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, might be hard where you live. People who live in rural areas or some city neighborhoods often have trouble finding larger supermarkets. Instead, they have to shop at convenience stores and small neighborhood markets. Sometimes smaller stores have limited selections of fresh foods. You might try talking to the managers or owners. Let them know that you and others are interested in buying more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

**HERE'S A TIP**

If you live alone and still enjoy cooking, talk to a friend who might not enjoy cooking as much as you do. Offer to cook a meal or two if he or she will grocery shop for you.

Try to find a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) group. CSAs are membership or subscription groups that allow you to buy in-season fruits and vegetables directly from local farmers. Each week you receive a variety of the food being harvested at that time. LocalHarvest is one organization that can help you find a CSA in your area. You can go to their website, [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org), or call 1-831-515-5602.

Farmers' markets or vegetable stands offer fresh fruits and vegetables in season and might cost less than what you find in the grocery store. To find farmers' markets in your area, check with LocalHarvest, [www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets](http://www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets), or your local government. Or you can search online at [www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets](http://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets). You might also get help from the federal government to pay for vegetables and fruits from farmers' markets through the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, [www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program-sfmnp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmers-market-nutrition-program-sfmnp). They provide coupons you can use at farmers' markets and roadside stands.

## Help with Food Costs

Even when you know what healthy foods to choose, being able to pay for those foods might be hard, especially if you are on a fixed income. Start by deciding how much you can afford to spend on food. There are websites that can help you plan a food budget. For example, the USDA supports such a website through Iowa State University, <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>. This website also has inexpensive recipes based on the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Or, you can contact the Iowa State University Extension offices at [foodsavings@iastate.edu](mailto:foodsavings@iastate.edu). Their staff can connect you with resources to create a food budget.

Once you have a budget, find store ads in the newspaper or grocery store websites to see what is on sale. Try to plan some meals around featured items and pick up extra canned goods or staples that are on sale. And check the expiration or use-by date. A product might be on sale because it is almost out of date. Choose items with dates farthest in the future.

Some other ways to save money when grocery shopping are:

- Ask your local grocery stores if they have a senior discount or a loyalty or discount card. Besides getting items at a lower price, you may also get store coupons.
- Use coupons when you can. Remember, coupons only help if they are for things you would buy anyway. Sometimes, another brand costs less even after you use the coupon.

- Consider store brands—they usually cost less. These products are made under a special label, sometimes with the store name. You might have to look on shelves that are higher or lower than eye level to find them.
- Be aware that convenience costs more. You can often save money if you are willing to do a little work. For example, buy whole chickens and cut them into parts, grate your own cheese, and avoid instant rice or instant oatmeal. Bagged salad mixes cost more and might not stay fresh as long as a head of lettuce.
- Look at unit prices. Those small stickers on the shelves tell you the price, but also the unit price—how much the item costs per ounce or per pound. Compare unit prices to see which brand is the best value.
- Try to buy in bulk, but only buy a size you can use before it goes bad. If you buy meat in bulk, decide what you need to use that day and freeze the rest in portion-sized packages right away.
- Focus on economical fruits and vegetables like bananas, apples, oranges, cabbage, sweet potatoes, dark-green leafy vegetables, green peppers, and regular carrots.
- Think about the foods you throw away. For less waste, buy or cook only what you need.
- Resist temptations at the checkout. Those snack foods and candy are put there for impulse buying. Save money *and* avoid empty calories!

No matter how careful you are, the cost of food can still eat up a big part of your budget. There may be additional help. Here are some federal government programs:

**SNAP**, [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (the program in your state may have a different name), 1-800-221-5689. This used to be called Food Stamps. A special debit card can be used to buy most types of food, as well as seeds and plants to grow food.

**Child and Adult Care Food Program**, [www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program). Provides meals and snacks to eligible older adults taking part in adult day care programs.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program**, [www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/csfp/commodity-supplemental-food-program-csfp). Provides some canned vegetables and fruits, grain products, dry beans, canned meats, and dairy products to eligible older people to supplement their own food.

**The Emergency Food Assistance Program**, [www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program-tefap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program-tefap). Provides food needed by low-income older adults who might not have enough to eat.

There are also private groups working with older people to help them get enough food:

**Feeding America**, [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org), 1-800-771-2303. A network of food banks that offers several food assistance programs, including the Senior Grocery program, which provides balanced, nutritious meals that can be made at home.

**Food Bank Locator**, [www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank).

**USDA National Hunger Clearinghouse**, [www.nhc.fns.usda.gov/nhc/nhc-main-page](http://www.nhc.fns.usda.gov/nhc/nhc-main-page), 1-866-348-6479 (Spanish, 1-877-842-6273). The Hotline can help people in need find emergency food supplies and government assistance programs.

While some older people have trouble finding enough money to buy food, others need help preparing meals. There are a variety of groups that deliver meals to people who have trouble getting out of their homes. These groups usually offer one hot meal a day. One of the largest is Meals on Wheels America, at [www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org) or 1-888-998-6325 (toll-free).

### NATIONAL RESOURCES FOR LOCATING HELP WITH FOOD COSTS

There are several ways to learn more about programs that offer help with meals or food costs. You could contact each program listed above separately, or you could use one of these services:

- Eldercare Locator, <https://eldercare.acl.gov> or call 1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)
- Federal and state benefit information, [www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov) or call 1-800-333-4636 (toll-free)
- National Council on Aging, [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org)



# Making Sure Your Food is Safe



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**ED'S MOM** *recently spent several days in the hospital because she got very sick after eating a hamburger that had not been cooked to the recommended temperature. She recovered, but now the whole family is more concerned about the safety of the foods they eat.*

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Food can be unsafe for many reasons. It might be contaminated by germs—microbes such as bacteria, viruses, or molds. These microbes might have been present before the food was harvested or collected, or they could have been introduced during handling or preparation. In either case, the food might look fine but could make you very sick. Food can also be unsafe because it has “gone bad.” Sometimes you may see mold growing on the surface.

**HERE'S A TIP**

For more free information on food safety, visit [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov). Under “Topics,” click “Fact Sheets.” Or, call the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854, or visit [www.askkaren.gov](http://www.askkaren.gov).

## Avoid Getting Sick from Your Food

For an older person, a food-related illness can be life threatening. As you age, you have more trouble fighting off microbes. Health problems, like diabetes or kidney disease, also make you more likely to get sick from eating foods that are unsafe. So be careful about how food is prepared and stored.

**HERE'S A TIP**

Sometimes the government recalls food that could be unsafe. A recall means that food manufacturers and grocers are instructed to take the food off the market. You can keep track of recent recalls at [www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/recent/index.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/recalls/recent/index.html).



**Making wise food choices.** Some foods present higher risks than others. Here are some tips on selecting lower-risk food options:

- Eat fish, shellfish, meat, and poultry that have been cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature (see page 58), instead of eating the food raw or undercooked.
- Drink pasteurized milk and juices instead of the unpasteurized versions.
- Make sure pasteurized eggs or egg products are used in recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs, such as homemade Caesar salad dressings, raw cookie dough, or eggnog.
- Always wash vegetables, including all salad ingredients, before eating. Cooked vegetables also are a lower-risk option than raw vegetables.
- Choose cooked sprouts instead of raw sprouts.
- Choose hard or processed cheeses, cream cheese, or mozzarella, or any cheese that is clearly labeled “Made from Pasteurized Milk” instead of soft cheese made from unpasteurized (raw) milk, such as Brie, Camembert, blue-veined, or queso fresco.
- Heat up hot dogs, deli meats, and luncheon meats to 165° F (steaming hot), instead of eating the meat unheated.

**Taste and smell.** As you grow older, your senses of taste and smell might change. Or medicines might make things taste different. If you can't rely on your sense of taste or smell to tell that food is spoiled, be extra careful about how you handle your food. If something does not look, smell, or taste right, throw it out—don't take a chance with your health.

**Storage.** Food safety starts with storing your food properly. Sometimes that's as simple as following directions on the container. For example, if the label says "refrigerate after opening," do that! It's also a good idea to keep any canned and packaged items in a cool place.

When you are ready to use a packaged food, check the date on the label. That bottle of juice might have been in your cabinet so long it is now out of date. (See page 28 to learn more about understanding the date on the food label.)

Try to use refrigerated leftovers within 3 or 4 days to reduce your risk of food poisoning. Throw away foods older than that or those that show moldy areas.

**Foods and medicines.** Some foods, and also caffeine and alcohol, are unsafe to take with certain medicines. A food-medicine interaction can prevent a medicine from working the way it should, cause a side effect from a medicine to get worse, cause a new side effect, or change the way your body processes the food or medicine. For example, some statins (cholesterol medicines) act differently on the body if you consume large amounts of grapefruit juice. Every time you use a new medicine, check the label for interactions. If you have any questions, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## Food Safety When Cooking

When preparing foods, follow four basic steps—clean, separate, cook, and chill.

**Clean.** Wash your hands, the cutting board, and the counter with hot, soapy water, and make sure knives and other utensils are clean before you start to prepare food. Clean the lids of cans before opening. Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water, but do not use soap or detergent. Do not rinse raw meat or poultry before cooking—you might contaminate other things by splashing disease-causing microbes around.

Keep your refrigerator clean, especially the vegetable and meat bins. When there is a spill, use hot, soapy water to clean it up.

**Separate.** Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (and their juices and shells) away from foods that won't be cooked. That begins in your grocery cart—put raw vegetables and fruit in one part of the cart, maybe the top part. Products like meat and fish should be put in plastic bags and placed in a separate part of the cart. At checkout, make sure the raw meat and seafood aren't mixed with other items in your bags. When you get home, keep things like raw meat separate from fresh fruit and vegetables (even in your refrigerator). Don't let the raw meat juices drip on foods that won't be cooked before they are eaten.


**HERE'S A TIP**

Remember to rinse all fruits and vegetables under running water, even if you plan to peel them before eating. That's because it's easy to transfer bacteria from the peel or rind to the inside of your fruits and veggies when you're cutting.

When you are cooking, it is also important to keep ready-to-eat foods like fresh produce or bread apart from food that will be cooked. Use a different knife and cutting board for fresh produce than you use for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Or, use one set, and cut all the fresh produce before handling foods that will be cooked. Wash your utensils and cutting board in hot, soapy water or the dishwasher, and clean the counter and your hands afterwards. If you put raw meat, poultry, or seafood on a plate, wash the plate in hot, soapy water before reusing it for cooked food.

**Cook.** Use a food thermometer. Put it in the thickest part of the food you are cooking to check that the inside has reached the right temperature. The chart below shows what the temperature inside food should be before you stop cooking it. No more runny fried eggs or hamburgers that are pink in the middle.

Bring sauces, marinades, soups, and gravy to a boil when reheating.

### USDA-RECOMMENDED SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

<b>All whole cuts of meat and seafood</b>	145 °F (with a 3-minute rest time)
<b>All ground meats</b>	160 °F
<b>Egg dishes</b>	160 °F
<b>All poultry</b>	165 °F
<b>Hot dogs and luncheon meats</b>	165 °F

No matter what temperature you set your oven at, the temperature inside your food needs to reach the level shown here to be safe. For details, visit [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html).

**Chill.** Keeping foods cold slows the growth of microbes, so your refrigerator should always be at 40 °F or below. The freezer should be at 0 °F or below. But just because you set the thermostat for 40 °F doesn't mean it actually reaches that temperature. Use refrigerator/freezer thermometers to check.

Put food in the refrigerator within 2 hours of buying or cooking it. If the outside temperature is over 90 °F, refrigerate within 1 hour. Put leftovers in a clean, shallow container that is covered and dated. Use or freeze leftovers within 3 to 4 days.

## Eating Out

It's nice to take a break from cooking or get together with others for a meal at a restaurant. But, do you think about food safety when you eat out? You should. Pick a tidy place with clean tables and floors. If your city or state requires restaurants to post a cleanliness rating near the front door, check it out. Don't be afraid to ask the waiter or waitress how items on the menu are prepared. For example, could you have the tuna cooked well instead of seared? Or, if you find out the Caesar salad dressing is made with raw eggs, ask for another salad dressing. Consider avoiding buffets. Sometimes food in buffets sits out for a while and might not be kept at the proper temperature—whether hot or cold. If you take leftovers home, get them into the refrigerator within 2 hours—sooner if the temperature outside is above 90 °F.

### HERE'S A TIP

You may have always thought you should let hot foods cool before putting them in the refrigerator. Not true. Putting hot food items in the fridge as soon as possible will keep bacteria from growing in your food. Divide food into smaller portions, place in shallow containers, and refrigerate.





# Storing Cold Food

These short time limits for home-refrigerated foods will help keep them from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat. The guidelines for freezer storage are for quality only. Frozen foods constantly stored at 0 °F or below can be kept indefinitely.

Product	Refrigerator (40 °F or below)	Freezer (0 °F or below)
<b>EGGS*</b>		
Raw eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze. Instead, beat yolks and whites together; then freeze.
Hard-cooked eggs	1 week	Do not freeze.
<b>SALADS</b>		
Egg, chicken, ham, tuna & macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Does not freeze well.
<b>HOT DOGS</b>		
Opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
Unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
<b>LUNCHEON MEATS</b>		
Opened package or deli sliced	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
<b>BACON &amp; SAUSAGE</b>		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw — from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
<b>HAMBURGER &amp; OTHER GROUND MEATS</b>		
Hamburger, ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb, & mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
<b>FRESH BEEF, VEAL, LAMB &amp; PORK</b>		
Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
<b>FRESH POULTRY</b>		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
<b>SOUPS &amp; STEWS</b>		
Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
<b>LEFTOVERS</b>		
Cooked meat or poultry	3 to 4 days	2 to 6 months
Chicken nuggets or patties	3 to 4 days	1 to 3 months

\*For more detailed information, visit [www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/eggstorage.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/eggstorage.html).





# Everyday Healthy Eating

*Sample Menus and Recipes*



**NICK AND DIANA NOW** have a much better idea of the types and amounts of foods they should choose. But they haven't cooked a lot lately and aren't sure about how to put healthy meals together. Where can they find ideas?

Planning a day's worth of meals using smart food choices might seem overwhelming at first. Below is a sample day's menu to show you how easy it can be. It provides 2,000 calories and does not exceed the recommended amount of sodium or calories from saturated fats and added sugars. You might need to eat fewer or more calories, depending on your height, weight, activity level, and whether you are a man or a woman.

#### SAMPLE MENU



##### Breakfast

###### ½ whole wheat bagel

- 2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter

###### 1 medium banana

###### Coffee

- ¼ cup milk
- 2 teaspoons sugar

###### Fat-free strawberry yogurt (8 ounces)



##### Lunch

###### Tuna salad sandwich

- 2 slices 100% whole wheat bread
- 2 ounces canned tuna
- 2 teaspoons mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons chopped celery
- 1 medium leaf lettuce

###### 4 baby carrots

###### ¼ cup raisins

###### 1 cup low-fat (1%) milk



##### Dinner

###### Spaghetti & meatballs

- 1 cup cooked spaghetti
- ¼ cup spaghetti sauce
- ¼ cup diced tomatoes (canned, no salt added)
- 3 medium meatballs
- 1 tablespoon parmesan cheese

###### Garden salad

- 1 cup mixed greens
- 3 slices cucumber
- ¼ cup cubed avocado
- ¼ cup garbanzo beans (canned, low sodium)
- 3 tablespoons shredded, reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon ranch dressing

###### ½ medium raw apple

###### 1 cup tap water

You can find 2 weeks' worth of menus at [www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-sample-two-week-menus](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget-sample-two-week-menus). These menus provide recommended food group amounts for a 2,000-calorie USDA Food Pattern. They also meet recommended intake amounts for almost all nutrients. The menus include healthy dishes that you can learn to prepare from recipes at:

### **What's Cooking? USDA Healthy Mixing Bowl**

<https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/search/recipes>

Other cookbooks and healthy recipes for many different types of cuisines are featured at:

### **ChooseMyPlate.gov Recipes, Cookbooks, and Menus**

[www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes-cookbooks-and-menus](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes-cookbooks-and-menus)

### **Nutrition.gov Recipes**

[www.nutrition.gov/recipes](http://www.nutrition.gov/recipes)

### **Your Guide to Lowering Your Blood Pressure with DASH (NHLBI)**

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/new\\_dash.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/new_dash.pdf)

Trying to lose weight? Sample menus for 1,200- and 1,600-calorie menus are available at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose\\_wt/eat/menus.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/eat/menus.htm). These sample menus reflect several culinary styles: traditional American cuisine, Asian-American cuisine, Southern cuisine, Mexican-American cuisine, and lacto-ovo vegetarian cuisine. These menus also make use of the *What's Cooking?* recipe database. See the opposite page for a taste of what you'll find there.





**A SAMPLING OF RECIPES FROM WHAT'S COOKING? USDA HEALTHY MIXING BOWL**

For more healthful recipes, go to <https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/search/recipes>.

**Eggs over Kale and Sweet Potato Grits****Peanutty African Stew****A Simple Mexican Salad****Blue Corn Pan Bread****Hummus****Collard Green Gumbo with Ham Hock****Fruity Thai Pita Pockets****Baked Tofu****Greek Pork Chops****Strawberry Kiwi Yogurt Pops**



# Roadblocks to Healthy Eating

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**SHARISE WANTS TO HELP** *her parents make smart food choices, but each parent has special needs. How can she make it a little easier for her mom and dad to have a healthier lifestyle?*

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There are some common problems that can make it harder for older people to follow through on smart food choices. Here are some suggestions:

**Are you tired of cooking or eating alone?** Maybe you are tired of planning and cooking dinner every night. Have you considered potluck meals? If everyone brings one part of the meal, cooking is a lot easier, and there might be leftovers to share. Or try cooking with a friend to make a meal you can enjoy together. Also look into having some meals at a nearby senior center, community center, or religious facility. Not only will you enjoy a free or low-cost meal, but you will have some company while you eat.

**Do you have problems chewing food?** Do you avoid some foods because they are hard to chew? People who have problems with their teeth or dentures often avoid eating meat, fruits, or vegetables and might miss out on important nutrients. If you are having trouble chewing, see your dentist to check for problems. If you wear dentures, the dentist can check how they fit.

 **HERE'S A TIP**

It's never too late to learn some cooking skills—or refresh those you might not have used in a while. You can go online to find information on basic cooking techniques and recipes for one person. Borrow simple cookbooks from your local library, or try an adult education cooking course. TV cooking shows might be helpful—they often show you step-by-step how to prepare and cook foods. Some grocery stores even have cooking coaches to answer your questions.

**Is it sometimes hard to swallow your food?** If food seems to get stuck in your throat, it might be that less saliva in your mouth is making it hard for you to swallow your food. Or, there may be other reasons you are having trouble swallowing your food, including problems with the muscles or nerves in your throat, problems with your esophagus, or gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Talk with your doctor about what might be causing your swallowing issues.

**Does food taste different?** Are foods not as tasty as you remember? It might not be the cook's fault! Maybe your sense of taste, smell, or both has changed. Growing older, having dental problems, and medication side effects can cause your senses to change. Taste and smell are important for healthy appetite and eating. Try adding fresh herbs, spices, or lemon juice to your plate. If you drink alcohol or smoke, cutting back can improve your sense of taste.

**Do you feel sad and don't want to eat?** Feeling blue now and then is normal, but if you continue to feel sad, ask your doctor for help. Being unhappy can cause a loss of appetite. You might need to talk with someone trained to work with people who are depressed. For more information, read "Depression and Older Adults" at [www.nia.nih.gov/health/depression-and-older-adults](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/depression-and-older-adults).

**Are you just not hungry?** Maybe you are not sad, but just can't eat very much. Changes to your body as you age can cause some people to feel full sooner than they did when younger. Or lack of appetite might be the side effect of a medicine you are taking—your doctor might be able to suggest a different drug.

Try being more physically active. In addition to all the other benefits of exercise and physical activity, it may make you hungrier.

If you aren't hungry because food just isn't appealing, there are ways to make it more interesting. Make sure your foods are seasoned well, but not with extra salt. Try using lemon juice, vinegar, or herbs to boost the flavor of your food.

Vary the shape, color, and texture of foods you eat. When you go shopping, look for a new vegetable, fruit, or seafood you haven't tried before or one you haven't eaten in a while. Sometimes grocery stores have recipe cards near items. Or ask the produce staff or meat or seafood department staff for suggestions about preparing the new food. You can also find recipes online.

Foods that are overcooked tend to have less flavor. Try cooking or steaming your vegetables for a shorter time, and see if that gives them a crunch that will help spark your interest.

**Do you have trouble getting enough calories?** If you aren't eating enough, add healthy snacks throughout the day to help you get more nutrients and calories. Raw vegetables with hummus, low-fat cheese and whole grain crackers, a piece of fruit, unsalted nuts, or peanut butter are good examples. You can try putting shredded low-fat cheese on your soup or popcorn or sprinkling nuts or wheat germ on yogurt or cereal.

If you are eating so little that you are losing weight but don't need to, your doctor might suggest a protein nutrition supplement. Sometimes these supplements help undernourished people gain a little weight. If so, they should be used as snacks between meals or after dinner, not in place of a meal and not right before one. Ask your doctor how to choose a supplement.

**Do your physical problems make it hard to eat?** Sometimes illnesses like Parkinson's disease, stroke, or arthritis can make it harder for you to cook or feed yourself. Your doctor might recommend an occupational therapist. He or she might suggest rearranging things in your kitchen, make a custom splint for your hand, or give you special exercises to strengthen your muscles.

Devices like special utensils and plates might make meal time easier or help with food preparation. You can search the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' website, <https://abledata.acl.gov>, for information on products designed to make it easier for people to do things on their own, or call 1-800-227-0216 (toll-free) to learn more.





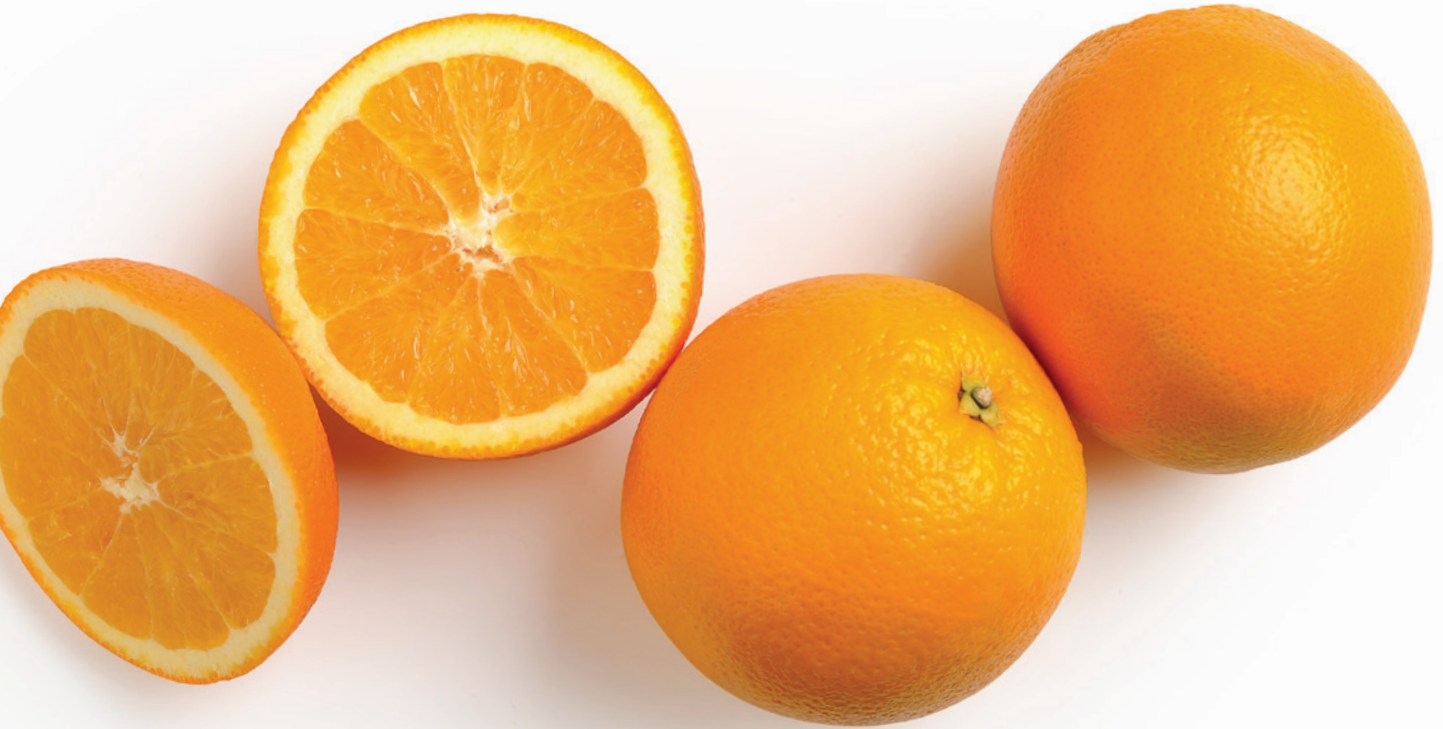
**Can foods and medicines interact?** Medicines can change how food tastes, make your mouth dry, or take away your appetite. In turn, some foods can change how certain medicines work. You might have heard that grapefruit juice is a common culprit when used with any of several drugs. Chocolate, licorice, and alcohol are some of the others. Whenever your doctor prescribes a new drug for you, be sure to ask about any food-drug interactions.

**Do you think you are lactose intolerant?** Some people have uncomfortable stomach and intestinal symptoms after they have dairy products. Your doctor can do tests to learn whether or not you do indeed need to limit or avoid foods with lactose when you eat. If so, talk to your healthcare provider about how to meet your calcium and vitamin D needs. Even lactose-intolerant people might be able to have small amounts of milk when taken with food. There are non-dairy food sources of calcium, lactose-free milk and milk products, calcium- and vitamin D-fortified foods, and supplements.

**Did you know that weight issues can add to frailty?** Some older adults do not get enough of the right nutrients. These problems can put you at risk of developing weak bones and muscles, which can make you frail and unable to do daily activities. Obesity is a growing problem in the United States, and the number of older people who are overweight or obese is also increasing. But, just losing weight is not necessarily the answer. That's because sometimes when older people lose weight, they lose even more muscle than fat. That puts them at greater risk for becoming frail and falling. They also might lose bone strength and be at risk for a broken bone. Exercise helps you keep muscle and bone. Also, for some people, a few extra pounds late in life can act as a safety net should they get a serious illness that limits how much they can eat for a while.

The *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* encourages people 65 and older who are overweight to try to avoid gaining more weight. Those who are very overweight (obese) might be helped by intentional weight loss, especially if they are at risk for heart disease. So, if you think you weigh too much, check with your doctor before starting a diet. He or she can decide whether or not losing a few pounds will be good for you and how you can safely lose weight.





# A Healthier Future



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**DIANA AND NICK SPENCER** *have changed how they eat and, so far, their cholesterol levels are a little lower. They are dancing again on Saturday nights at the community center. Nick still has a donut on Sunday morning, but he walks to the bakery. They're always on the lookout for recipes for healthy meals that they can cook together.*

*It turns out the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern was just right for Carlos. He quickly became familiar with the portion sizes for meals and snacks that are right for his calorie and nutrient needs, so he doesn't have to measure all the time. And he's lowered his blood pressure!*

*Steven still plays cards with his friends but gave up the buffalo wings. Instead, he brings baked wings with fat-free dressing, and most of his friends seem to prefer those. Esther's blood sugar is almost back to a normal level—she watches what she eats and, along with Steven, has joined a group of mall walkers.*

*Marvin is still struggling with his midlife weight gain, but he's following an exercise routine. When he rakes leaves, he can tell his endurance has improved.*

*Fast food became a thing of the past for Sharise, once she learned how to find healthy foods in the grocery store. Now she shares with others her tips for cooking quick and healthy meals at home. She arranged for her parents to eat at the senior center once a week, and that helped take a weight off her shoulders as well.*

*When Ed's family eats out, they always pepper the waiter with questions about how food is prepared. But they also leave a nice tip!*

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The Spencers and their friends, neighbors, and coworkers are all thinking about what's on their plate. Now it's your turn. Changing how you think about food might not be easy at first, but keeping your goal of a healthier lifestyle in mind will help you make better choices about the kinds of food you eat and how much. With a little practice, those choices will become a part of your everyday life, so in time you will make them without even thinking.

Keep this book handy and refer to it when you are unsure or need more information. With good nutrition and increased physical activity a part of your daily life, you will be taking charge of your health—maybe even making it better with age.



# For More Information

The National Institute on Aging offers free information about health and aging in English and Spanish.

**National Institute on Aging  
Information Center**

1-800-222-2225 (toll-free)

1-800-222-4225 (TTY/toll-free)

[niaic@nia.nih.gov](mailto:niaic@nia.nih.gov)

[www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov)

Visit [www.nia.nih.gov/health](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health) to find more health and aging information from NIA and subscribe to email alerts. Visit <https://order.nia.nih.gov> to order free print publications.

**Go4Life®**

1-800-222-2225 (toll-free)

<https://go4life.nia.nih.gov>



Here is an alphabetical list of some resources for information on nutrition. Each resource has more detailed information on topics like the *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, food safety, meal planning, and physical activity. Federal government resources are listed first.

#### **Federal Government Resources:**

##### **Benefits.gov**

1-800-333-4636 (toll-free)

[www.benefits.gov](http://www.benefits.gov)

##### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

1-800-232-4636 (toll-free)

1-888-232-6348 (TTY/toll-free)

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

##### **ChooseMyPlate**

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

##### **Dietary Guidelines for Americans**

[www.dietaryguidelines.gov](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

##### **Eldercare Locator**

1-800-677-1116 (toll-free)

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

##### **Food and Drug Administration**

1-888-463-6332 (toll-free)

[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

##### **Food Safety Information**

[www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

1-888-674-6854 (toll-free)—

Meat and Poultry Hotline

[www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

##### **Health.gov**

[www.health.gov](http://www.health.gov)

##### **MedlinePlus**

[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)

##### **Move Your Way**

<https://health.gov/moveyourway>

##### **National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute**

1-301-592-8573

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

##### **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases**

1-800-860-8747 (toll-free)

1-866-569-1162 (TTY/toll-free)

[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

##### **Nutrition.gov**

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

##### **Office of Dietary Supplements**

<https://ods.od.nih.gov>

##### **Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans**

<https://health.gov/paguidelines>

**USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion**

1-202-720-2791—(USDA Information Hotline)

[www.cnpp.usda.gov](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov)

**USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center**

1-301-504-5414

[www.nal.usda.gov/fnic](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic)

**Non-Federal Resources:****Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**

1-800-877-1600 (toll-free)

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

**American Heart Association**

1-800-242-8721 (toll-free)

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

**American Occupational Therapy Association**

1-301-652-6611

1-800-377-8555 (TDD/toll-free)

[www.ota.org](http://www.ota.org)

**Feeding America**

1-800-771-2303 (toll-free)

[www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org)

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach**

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>

**International Food Information Council Foundation**

1-202-296-6540

<https://foodinsight.org>

**LocalHarvest**

1-831-515-5602

[www.localharvest.org/csa](http://www.localharvest.org/csa)

**Meals on Wheels America**

1-888-998-6325 (toll-free)

[www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org)

**MyPlate for Older Adults**

<https://hnrca.tufts.edu/myplate>

**National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs**

1-202-682-6899

[www.nanasp.org](http://www.nanasp.org)





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on Aging

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