

# Learning About Dietary Guidelines



## What are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide tips for eating well and staying healthy. This helps reduce the risk for long-term (chronic) diseases.

These adult guidelines from the United States government recommend that you:

- Eat lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Try to balance your eating with your activity. This helps you stay at a healthy weight.
- Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.
- Limit foods high in salt, saturated fat, trans fat, and added sugar.

## What is MyPlate?

MyPlate is the U.S. government's food guide. It can help you make your own well-balanced eating plan. A balanced eating plan means that you eat enough, but not too much, and that your food gives you the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

MyPlate focuses on eating plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and on limiting fat and sugar. It is available online at [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov).

## How can you get started?

If you're trying to eat healthier, you can slowly change your eating habits over time. You don't have to make big changes all at once. Start by adding one or two healthy foods to your meals each day.

### Grains

Choose whole-grain breads and cereals and whole-wheat pasta and whole-grain crackers.

### Vegetables

Eat a variety of vegetables every day. They have lots of nutrients and are part of a heart-healthy diet.

### Fruits

Eat a variety of fruits every day. Fruits contain lots of nutrients. Choose fresh fruit instead of fruit juice.

### Protein foods

Choose fish and lean poultry more often. Eat red meat and fried meats less often. Dried beans, tofu, and nuts are also good sources of protein.

### Dairy

Choose low-fat or fat-free products from this food group. If you have problems digesting milk, try eating cheese or yogurt instead.

## **Fats and oils**

Limit fats and oils if you're trying to cut calories. Choose healthy fats when you cook. These include canola oil and olive oil.

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