NUTRITION AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

We get information about nutrition and health every day from many sources – newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, health professionals, family and friends. Unfortunately, there is a lot of conflicting information out there about nutrition and weight management.

Nutrition isn’t about what you can’t or shouldn’t eat. Rather, it's about knowing what and how much to eat and developing a plan you can follow most of the time. And, weight management isn't just about eating. Physical activity and exercise are just as important as nutrition in long-term weight management. When it comes to weight, your mentor will help you focus on weight management, not just weight loss. With weight loss programs, the major focus is on appearance. Although helping you focus to lose weight and look trim and fit is important, your mentor’s goal is to help you to achieve and maintain good health. And, even if you currently are not overweight, you need to keep from gaining excess weight in the future. Successful weight management means preventing unnecessary weight gain in the first place. Remember, eating is an essential part of living and should be pleasurable.

Benefits of Maintaining a Healthy Weight

National health statistics show that a large percentage of adult Americans consider themselves overweight. And, about two in three adults are overweight to the degree that it increases their risk of health problems. Unfortunately, this number is on the rise. Indeed, many experts now consider obesity as one of America’s most important diseases! Other developed countries are experiencing similar trends.

Unfortunately, the body has an almost unlimited capacity to store fat and gain weight. The more your weight increases, the more difficult it may be for you to stay healthy.

Excess body fat may:

- Put a strain on your heart and increase your risk of heart disease.
- Increase your blood pressure and risk of stroke.
- Increase your body’s resistance to insulin. Insulin resistance can lead to the development of diabetes and the metabolic syndrome. The metabolic syndrome is a condition that puts you at risk for heart disease.
- Raise your blood cholesterol and triglycerides.
- Lead to shortness of breath and fatigue. This may be the first sign of strain on your body by excess fat.
• Put extra burden on your back and your joints. It's like carrying a heavy suitcase all the time.
• Aggravate arthritis and gout. Excess weight can make simple movements painful.
• Increase your risk of certain types of cancer.
• Increase your risk of developing gallstones.
• Lead to complications following surgery. Wounds don’t heal as fast and infection is more common if you are overweight.

The good news is you don’t have to be thin to be healthy! Overweight people who lose even small amounts of weight – as little as 5 to 10 percent of their initial body weight – can significantly reduce their risk for many of the above health problems.

Keep in mind that one of the most common reasons people fail in their attempt at weight management is they set unrealistic goals. Remember this if you want to try to lose more weight than recommended.

**Basic Principles of Energy Balance and Healthy Eating**

It is difficult to lose weight and keep it off. Genetic factors and lifestyle habits complicate the issue. Experts say as much as 33 percent of weight is determined by genes. Consider your parents and grandparents. What are their shapes and sizes? Keep this in mind as you set your weight goal.

Genes are important, but don’t disregard the impact of lifestyle. Even if your family history says you are likely to be heavier than you desire, you don’t have to be obese or unhealthy. Physical activity and eating right can help you achieve a healthier weight and prevent gradual weight gain with age. It is difficult to lose weight and it is even more difficult to keep it off. Healthy weight loss is slow and gradual. Do not try to lose weight too fast. The risk to your health outweighs the benefits. A gradual loss of no more than two pounds a week is recommended.

There is only one way to lose weight and that is to use up more calories than you take in. If the calories you eat equal the number of calories you use for basic living and physical activity, you’ll maintain your present weight. You’ll lose weight when you use more calories than you take in. Starving yourself doesn’t work. Even when you are trying to lose weight, your body still needs adequate food. Make moderate changes over time rather than drastic changes you can’t stick with. If you eat too many calories one day, eat less the next day. There are no foods that are completely off limits – it’s all a question of how much and how often.

**Severe dieting:**

• Lowers the rate at which you burn calories. The body thinks it is starving so your metabolism slows down to adjust to less fuel.
• Causes the body to lose water. This type of weight loss is easily re-gained.
• Causes the body to lose lean muscle. This lowers the rate at which you burn calories even more.
• Promotes re-gaining weight. When you start to eat more food (and you will to keep from starving!), your body stores fat faster and easier. You end up being fatter and less healthy than before!
• Is hard to stick to.
• Is not necessary for weight loss.
• Is no fun and you feel bad!

The key to long-term weight management is balancing the calories you eat with the calories you use.

Regular exercise:

• Burns calories.
• Allows you to eat a reasonable amount of food and still lose weight.
• Promotes loss of body fat and development of lean muscle. These changes in your body help increase the rate at which you burn calories, making it easier to lose weight and keep it off.
• Promotes loss of abdominal fat. Abdominal fat is a risk factor for the metabolic syndrome, diabetes, and heart disease.
• Increases your chances of keeping the weight off for a lifetime.
• Benefits your health even if you don’t lose weight.

It’s not enough to eat healthy foods and exercise for a few weeks or even several months. You have to change for good the habits that made you overweight in the first place. You can’t stop eating healthy and exercising regularly. But, like any new habit, it gets easier the longer you practice.

Start Cutting the “Unhealthy” Fat and Making Healthier Choices

All fat is high in calories - nine calories per gram as compared to four calories per gram for carbohydrate and protein. If you are trying to lose weight or manage your weight, eating less fat could help you cut out several hundred calories a day. But, while all fat is high in calories, some fats are healthier than others. There are four major types of fats you should know about:

1. Saturated fats

   These fats are usually solid at room temperature and are commonly found in animal foods (meats, poultry, egg yolks, dairy products). A few vegetable products, such as coconut, palm and palm kernel oils, and cocoa are also high in saturated fat. Saturated fats are “unhealthy” fats. You should avoid them as much as possible because they increase LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and your risk for heart disease.
2. Polyunsaturated fats

These fats are usually liquid at room temperature. Unlike saturated fats, they don’t raise your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. There are two major types of polyunsaturated fats: omega-6 and omega-3 fats.

a. Omega-6 fats
Certain vegetable oils, such as safflower, sunflower, corn, and cottonseed, are rich in omega-6 fats. Omega-6 fats seem to be neutral in relation to heart disease. They are neither harmful nor especially beneficial.

b. Omega-3 fats
In contrast, omega-3 fats are protective against heart disease. That makes omega-3 fats “healthy” fats. Flaxseed oil, linseed oil, canola oil, soybean oil, and walnut oil are vegetable oils that contain omega-3 fats. Oily fish, such as salmon, trout, tuna, herring, and sardines, are also rich in omega-3 fats. (Be aware that some oily fish can concentrate toxins, such as mercury, in their flesh).

3. Monounsaturated fats

These fats are also usually liquid at room temperature. Examples of oils that contain monounsaturated fats include olive oil and canola oil. These are among the best types of oils for heart disease prevention and may increase your HDL (“good”) cholesterol.

Monounsaturated fats are “healthy” fats. Cooking with olive oil, common in the heart-healthy Mediterranean-type diet, may make it easier to eat a larger quantity of vegetables and legumes in the form of salads and cooked foods. Because of its flavor, olive oil may not be the best choice for baked products. Canola oil, made from rapeseeds grown in Canada, is similar to olive oil (except for the flavor) and is less expensive.

4. Trans fats

These fats are typically created through processing. Liquid vegetable oils become trans fats by a process called hydrogenation. Hydrogen is added to the fat to make it more solid and to improve the shelf life of products. Common uses of trans fats include fast foods, commercially-prepared baked goods, stick margarine, and regular peanut butter. Trans fats, like saturated fats, may increase your risk for heart disease. They are “unhealthy” fats. If you see the word “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” on food labels, avoid these foods as much as possible. Small amounts of naturally occurring trans fats can also be found in some animal products, such as butter, milk products, cheese, beef, and lamb.
In summary, related to heart disease, there are two types of “healthy” fats – monounsaturated fats and omega-3 polyunsaturated fats – and there are two types of “unhealthy” fats – saturated fats and trans fats. Remember, however, that eating too much fat of any kind can be bad for you, especially if you are concerned about your weight.

**Cutting the “Unhealthy” Carbs and Making Healthier Choices**

Carbohydrates (carbs) have about half the calories of fats (four calories per gram vs. nine calories per gram). And, just like with fats, there are different types of carbohydrates. Some are better for you than others.

There are two major types of carbohydrates: simple carbohydrates (sugars) and complex carbohydrates (starches).

**Sugars**

Some sugars occur naturally in foods, such as fruits (fructose) and milk (lactose). These foods contain other important nutrients that make them healthy choices. Fruits contain vitamins A and C, and also fiber. Milk contains protein and important minerals (calcium) and vitamins (A and D).

Sugars are also added to foods and beverages, such as desserts (cakes, cookies, pies, candies), soft drinks, tea, coffee, jellies, and syrups. Foods with added sugar are high in calories and usually low in nutrition. Added sugars are “unhealthy” carbs and should be avoided as much as possible. Foods containing large amounts of added sugar often also contain large amounts of fat, particularly saturated fat and trans fats. Eating fewer foods and beverages with added sugars may help you manage your weight and improve your health.

**Starches**

Starches are found in fruits, vegetables (including dried peas, beans, and lentils), and grains. These foods are rich sources of fiber and important vitamins and minerals. Starches are filling and satisfying and make you feel less hungry. They are also convenient to buy and store, easy to prepare, and inexpensive.

Fruits and vegetables without added sugar or sauces are “healthy” carbs. They are healthy choices, especially when eaten raw. Whole grains are also “healthy” carbs. But, grains can become “not so healthy” carbs. Milling and refining removes the germ and the bran layers from the grain to shorten its cooking time and allow it to be processed into flour. These layers contain 28 percent of the grain’s protein, all of its fiber, and the vast majority of its B vitamins. Bleaching removes even more vitamins. Enriched or fortified breads, cereals, and pastas have returned some of the B vitamins that were removed in the milling and refining process. But these products typically lack the protein and fiber found in the whole-grain foods.

Choose more fruits, vegetables (including dried peas, beans, and lentils), and whole-grain foods (“healthy” carbs). Avoid foods with added sugars and those made from
refined grains ("unhealthy" carbs) as much as possible. Later, you will have the opportunity to learn how to count the grams of carbohydrates you eat. Counting carbs is an important skill for people with diabetes.

Choosing What to Eat

You need many different nutrients for good health – carbohydrates, fats, proteins, water, and a number of vitamins and minerals. No one food supplies all you need. You must get the nutrients you need from a variety of foods. Eating healthy is a matter of variety, balance, and moderation.

The Five Food Groups in the Food Guide Pyramid

Your individualized meal plan gives the number of servings to eat each day from the five food groups for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks. You will use the Food Guide Pyramid to know the foods in each of the five groups and the appropriate serving size of the various foods.

The pyramid is divided into five food groups arranged on three levels, and the tip:

Level 1 – Grains, Beans and Other Starchy Vegetables

Level 2 – Non-starchy Vegetables; Fruits

Level 3 – Milk and Yogurt; Meats, Cheese and Meat Substitutes

Tip – Fats, Oils, Sweets, and Alcohol

The three food groups that form the first two levels of the pyramid are the foundation of a healthy diet. Most of the foods you eat should come from these groups. These foods can be good sources of complex carbohydrates for energy, and important vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

1. Level 1

The first level of the pyramid consists of grains, beans and other starchy vegetables. These foods are grouped together because a serving of each contains about the same amount of carbohydrate or "carbs" (15 grams per serving). Grain products include any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal. Examples include bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits.
There are two major types of grains:

1. Whole grains (such as, whole-wheat flour, bulgur or cracked wheat, whole cornmeal and brown rice)
2. Refined grains (such as, white flour, de-germed cornmeal, white bread, and white rice).

Whole grains are “healthy” carbs. Make at least half your daily grains whole. When choosing foods from this group, try to avoid foods made from refined grains as much as possible. Starchy vegetables include dried and canned peas and beans, potatoes, corn, yams, and squash. One way to know if a vegetable is starchy or non-starchy is to mash it with a fork. If the vegetable is juicy (contains large amounts of water), it is definitely not starchy. For example, a tomato contains a lot of juice and is considered a non-starchy vegetable. A potato does not produce juice when mashed and is considered a starchy vegetable. Like whole grains, beans and other starchy vegetables are generally “healthy” carbs.

2. Level 2

The second level of the pyramid consists of two food groups – non-starchy vegetables and fruits. These are considered nutrition rich foods. Eat at least “Five a Day.”

A. Any fruit or 100 percent fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, dried, or canned. Fruits may be whole, cut-up, or pureed. Fruits are generally “healthy” carbs. Although fruit juices can be part of a healthy eating plan, it is better to eat the whole fruit rather than drinking fruit juice because the fruit contains more fiber than the juice.

B. Non-starchy vegetables contain less carbohydrate than starchy vegetables – 5 grams versus 15 grams per serving. Non-starchy vegetables are “healthy” carbs. Choose colored vegetables (dark green, orange, red, and yellow) and eat them fresh and raw without added fat as much as possible.

3. Level 3

As the pyramid narrows to the third level, you find the two remaining food groups – milk and yogurt and meats, cheese and meat substitutes. These foods are good sources of protein, but they often contain unhealthy “saturated” fats. You need fewer servings from these groups. Make your selections carefully to manage your weight and prevent heart disease and cancer.
The Tip of the Pyramid

The tip of the pyramid is not a food group. The tip contains fats, oils, sweets, and alcohol. When considering the fats you will eat, know the difference between saturated and trans fats ("unhealthy" fats) and unsaturated fats ("healthy" fats). Butter, lard, stick margarine (containing hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils or trans fats), and tropical oils (palm and coconut oils) contain saturated fats. Saturated fats occur naturally in meats and dairy products. Saturated and trans fats are also added in the preparation of some foods, such as chips, crackers, cakes, cookies, and fried foods. All of these are “unhealthy” fats and should be avoided as much as possible.

Monounsaturated and omega-3 polyunsaturated fats, or “healthy” fats, are also found in the tip of the pyramid. These fats are liquid at room temperature. Olive oil, canola oil, certain other vegetable oils, and the oils found in cold water fish are examples of “healthy” fats. Although they are “healthy” fats, they are high in calories. You may need to limit the amounts of “healthy” fats you eat, especially if you are trying to manage your weight.

Sweets are typically foods or beverages that contain mostly sugar and no other nutrients, such as table sugar, jelly, jam, honey, syrups, candies, and sweetened drinks. Sugars may be added to prepared foods to add structure and flavor. These are “unhealthy” carbs and should be avoided as much as possible. Sugars can occur naturally in foods, such as fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose). Although fruit and milk contain sugar, it is typically not necessary to avoid these foods since they are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

Alcohol has almost as many calories as fat (alcohol = 7 calories/gram and fat = 9 calories/gram). Drinking too much alcohol can lead to accidents and other health and personal problems. If you drink, do so in moderation. If you are trying to manage your weight, it may be best not to drink at all.

Learn to Use a Food Diary

Learning to use a food diary is an important skill for healthy eating. It will help you in two ways:

1. You will be more aware of what and how much you eat.

2. You will be able to make better food choices.

People who use a food diary regularly to record what they eat are more successful in losing weight and keeping it off for good. You can use it to help you decide foods to choose and foods to avoid and the best food choices if you are hungry and need to eat between meals.
Later you will learn the precise number of servings from each food group you should eat each day and a daily fat gram target. You may also learn how to count grams of carbs. For each food group, see the specific recommendations of foods to choose, foods to decrease/avoid, and serving size. This information is important. Study it carefully. Fats, Oils, Sweets and Alcohol are not a food group. *Use fats, oils, sweets and alcohol sparingly, especially if you are trying to manage your weight.* If you add fats or oils, choose “healthy” fats, such as olive oil or canola oil. Try not to add sweets to your foods or meals. You will get some fats, oils, and sugars because they occur naturally in foods in the five food groups. Have no more than two alcoholic drinks a day (women should have no more than one drink a day) or, better yet, don’t drink at all.

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**Reading a Food Label**

Much of the food you eat comes from packaged products you buy at the grocery store. Because of new laws in recent years, it is easier than ever to know exactly what’s in the food you buy. And you can trust that the information on a food label is true and accurate. There are several ways reading a food label can help you eat healthy. Knowing *what to eat* is important. The food label tells the nutrient content of the food. Facts about serving size can help you know *how much to eat.* The food label is an important tool to manage your weight and improve your health.

**Key Nutrition Terms**

You don’t need to be an expert on nutrition to know what to eat. But understanding the meaning of a few key nutrition terms will be helpful.

*Nutrients* – substances found in food that are needed to keep the body healthy. There are six major nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals and water. Carbohydrates, fats and proteins are the classes of nutrients that supply energy (calories).

*Calorie* – a unit for measuring the amount of energy in a food or nutrient (1 calorie = 4.18 kilojoules).

*Saturated fats* – fats that come primarily from animal sources and are usually solid at room temperature. Saturated fats increase blood cholesterol levels. We call them “unhealthy” fats. Examples of foods that contain saturated fats include high-fat meats and high-fat dairy products such as butter, stick margarine, cream and cheese. A few plants contain saturated fats – palm, palm kernel, and coconut oil. These are also “unhealthy” fats and should be avoided.

*Trans fats* – vegetable oils that become solid fats through the process of hydrogenation. These are also “unhealthy” fats. They are used to make shortening, stick margarine, and commercially prepared baked goods, snack foods, fried foods, and regular peanut butter and margarine. Small amounts of naturally occurring trans fats can be found in some animal products, such as butter, milk products, cheese, beef, and lamb. Like saturated fats, trans fats should be avoided as much as possible.
**Unsaturated fats** – polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats come mainly from plant sources and are soft or liquid at room temperature. Because omega-3 polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats, when used in moderation, can benefit your heart, we call them “healthy” fats. Examples include canola oil, olive oil, soybean oil, flaxseed oil, linseed oil, and walnut oil. When it comes to oils, canola oil and olive oil are the best choices. Fish, especially cold-water fish such as salmon, trout and tuna, are also rich in “healthy” omega-3 fats.

**Cholesterol** – a fat-like substance found only in animal foods. Eating foods high in cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease. Examples of high cholesterol foods include meats, egg yolks, dairy products, and organ products such as liver and kidneys.

**Sodium** – a mineral that regulates the amount of fluid in the body. Sources include salt and many processed foods. Eating too much sodium can be a problem for people with high blood pressure or heart failure.

**Complex carbohydrates** – found in foods such as breads, cereals, pasta, rice, dry beans and peas, fruits, and vegetables. Complex carbohydrates are the body’s best source of energy. We call whole grains, fruits and vegetables (including dried peas, beans, and lentils) “healthy” carbs. Limit your intake of white bread and other complex carbohydrates made from refined grains (“unhealthy” carbs).

**Dietary fiber** – a type of complex carbohydrate found in plant foods such as bran, wholegrain cereals, whole-grain breads, fruits and vegetables. Dietary fiber is not broken down or absorbed by the human digestive system so no energy (calories) is provided from the fiber in food. Fiber is important for proper bowel function.

**Simple carbohydrates (sugars)** – naturally-occurring or processed sugars. Sugars occur naturally in fruit and fruit juice (fructose) and milk (lactose). Processed sugars (honey, table sugar, and corn sweeteners) are often added to foods during processing or preparation. Added sugars contain calories and little nutrition, so we call them “unhealthy” carbs. **Avoid foods with lots of added sugar.**

**Sugar alcohols/Polyols** – a group of carbohydrates that have a lower caloric count than other carbohydrates (two calories per gram vs. four calories per gram). Neither sugar nor alcohol, these sweeteners are used by food manufacturers to replace sugars or fat and create foods that are lower in calories, sugar, or fat. The names of polyols are easily recognized in the ingredients because most of them end in “ol.” If a manufacturer makes a nutrition claim that the food is sugar-free or has no added sugar, and it contains a sugar alcohol, then they must put the grams of sugar alcohol on the Nutrition Facts under total carbohydrate.

**Protein** – provides the building blocks for muscle, skin, blood, enzymes and hormones. Proteins promote healing and regulate important body processes. Protein is found in both animal and plant foods and also provides energy.

**Calcium** – a mineral that is important for formation of bones and teeth and for muscles to contract or move. Sources include dairy products, broccoli and green leafy vegetables.
Potassium – a mineral that may help maintain blood pressure in a healthy range. Sources include sweet potatoes, white potatoes, tomato products, spinach, kidney beans, split peas, prune juice, bananas, cantaloupe, dried peaches or apricots, and orange juice.

Learn to Read a Nutrition Facts Label

Starting in 1994, the Nutrition Facts label was required by law to appear on all packaged foods. Most processed meats and poultry foods will carry a nutrition label. Many stores voluntarily provide nutrition information for fresh, raw meats, poultry and fish, and raw fruits and vegetables. At this time, restaurant foods and foods prepared on-site in grocery store bakery or deli department are not required to provide a nutrition label.

Here’s what you can learn by reading the Nutrition Facts food label:

Serving Size – Amounts are given in household measures – cups, pieces, slices, or in weights, like grams. All other facts on the label are based on this serving size – see “Amount Per Serving.” Unfortunately, this serving size may differ from serving sizes given on food guide pyramids and the amount you normally eat. For example, a food label may say one serving is two cookies, but you may eat more. If you eat more than one serving, you’ll need to adjust the amounts given for calories and various nutrients. Use the serving size to compare similar foods and to control how much you eat. It’s easy to make comparisons among various brands because serving sizes on food labels are the same for all similar foods.

Servings Per Container – Use this information to help you decide how much of the product you need to buy, especially if you expect to feed your entire family.

Calories and Calories from Fat – This lists the amount of total calories in one serving and the calories from fat in one serving. If you eat more or less than one serving, you will need to adjust these numbers.

Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol, Sodium, Total Carbohydrate, Dietary Fiber, Sugars, Protein, Calcium – These are the nutrients of interest to most people. If you are trying to manage your weight and health, the values for total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, fiber, and sugars will be most important to you. Amounts of each nutrient may be listed two ways: grams (g) or milligrams (mg) and by % Daily Value (%DV). For our purposes we will use grams and milligrams as part of our “fat budget”.

% Daily Value – This number shows how a food fits into a daily diet of 2,000 calories (2,000 calories represents the calories per day for an “average” adult; 2,000 calories = 8,360 kilojoules). This number may be less useful to you because your specific meal plan may contain fewer or more than 2,000 calories. In addition to the Nutrition Facts, the food label includes an ingredient list. This lists all ingredients in the product in descending order from the most to the least. Check the ingredient list for the words
“whole grain” or “whole wheat” to decide if a food is made from whole grains or refined grains. Buy mainly grain products that have “whole grain” or “whole wheat” as the first ingredient on the label. Foods that are high in “unhealthy” fats will usually have one or more of the following ingredients near the beginning of the list:

- Beef fat
- Cream
- Butter
- Lard
- Palm oil
- Coconut oil
- Cocoa butter
- Liquid or partially hydrogenated oils (corn, cottonseed, safflower, sesame, soybean or sunflower)

**Health Claims on Food Labels**

Claims about what’s in the product and how it can improve your health often appear on the front of the food package or container. These claims are strictly defined by law. When you see key words and health claims on product labels, they mean what they say. Here are a few you might see on products you buy.

**Calorie-free** – Fewer than five calories per serving.

**Low-calorie** – 40 calories or less per serving.

**Light or lite** – 1/3 less calories or no more than ½ the fat of the higher-calorie, higher-fat version; or no more than ½ the sodium of the higher-sodium version (These products may still be very high in fat or sodium).

**Fat-free** – Less than ½ gram of fat per serving.

**Low-fat** – Three grams of fat (or less) per serving.

**Reduced or less fat** – At least 25 percent less fat per serving than the higher-fat version (These products may still be very high in fat).

**Not a significant source of trans fat** – Less than ½ gram of trans fat per serving. Food manufacturers are allowed to list amounts of trans fat that are less than ½ gram per serving as 0 (zero) on the Nutrition Facts label. As a result, you will see a few products that list 0 grams trans fat on the label, while the ingredient list will have “shortening” or “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” on it. This means the food contains very small amounts (less than ½ gram) of trans fat per serving.

**Cholesterol-free** – Less than two milligrams cholesterol and two grams or less of saturated fat per serving.
**Lean** – Less than 10 grams of fat, four grams of saturated fat, and 95 milligrams of cholesterol per serving.

**Extra lean** – Less than five grams of fat, two grams of saturated fat, and 95 milligrams of cholesterol per serving.

**Sugar-free** – Less than ½ gram of sugar per serving.

**No added sugar** – No sugars added during processing or packing, including ingredients that contain sugars, such as juice or dried fruit.

**Reduced sodium** – At least 25 percent less sodium per serving than the higher-sodium version (These products may still be very high in sodium).

**Sodium-free** – less than five milligrams sodium per serving.

**High-fiber** – five grams or more per serving.

**Use the Nutrition Facts Label to Know If Foods are Low-fat or High-Fat**

Fats and oils are part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat you eat makes a big difference to heart health. The total amount of fat consumed is also important, especially for weight management. Most Americans eat too much fat. Eating a lot of saturated fat and trans fat (“unhealthy” fats) increases the risk of unhealthy blood cholesterol levels, which, in turn, increase the risk of heart disease and stroke. A very high intake of fat - more than 35 percent of daily calories - typically increases saturated fat and trans fat intake to unacceptable levels. Eating too much fat also makes it much more difficult to avoid eating too many calories, and may even increase the risk for certain types of cancer. On the other hand, eating too little fat - less than 20 percent of daily calories - may mean you aren’t getting enough of certain important vitamins and essential fats. There are some essential fats that the human body can’t make, so they must be obtained through the foods you eat. Saturated fats and trans fats are not essential fats. You don’t need to eat any saturated or trans fats. Your goal will be to reduce the amount of fat you eat to about 20 percent of your total calories and less than 7 percent of your total daily calories from saturated fat and as little trans fats as possible (less than 1 percent of your total daily calories).

Our goals are consistent with the recommendations of the US Department of Health and Human Services and USDA as outlined in their *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. They are also consistent with the recommendations of other expert organizations such as the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association and the National Cancer Institute.

The above-mentioned goals are based on a percentage of your total daily calories. We will teach you how to monitor the number of servings you eat each day. We will also teach you to count fat grams, or to follow a “fat budget”.
Determine the Fat in Foods When There is No Food Label

You have learned how useful a food label can be in helping you decide what to eat. But not all the food you eat will come in a package with a food label on it. It is hard to know what is in food when you eat out or when food has been prepared from “scratch” at home.

Generally foods that do not have a label are meats, fish, poultry, and fresh produce. Fresh produce does not have significant amounts of fat.
KNOWING HOW MUCH TO EAT

Previously, you learned about what to eat. Choose a variety of whole grains, dried beans, peas, and lentils, fruits, and vegetables ("healthy" carbs) that are good sources of complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Include fish, lean meats, low-fat dairy products, and limited amounts of monounsaturated and omega-3 polyunsaturated oils ("healthy" fats). Avoid foods high in saturated fats and trans fats ("unhealthy" fats), refined carbohydrates and added sugars ("unhealthy" carbs), cholesterol, and sodium (salt).

Know What Determines How Much You Need to Eat

You can measure how much you eat by servings (cups, ounces, or grams) or calories (units of energy; 1 calorie = 4.18 kilojoules). Either way, how much you need to eat depends on several factors including:

1. Your goals – whether you are trying to lose weight, maintain your current weight or gain weight.
2. Your size – larger, heavier people need more calories than smaller, lighter weight people.
3. Your gender – men usually need more calories than women, even if their weight is exactly the same. This is because men have more muscle than women. Muscle is active tissue and uses more calories.
4. Your activity level – active people need more calories than people who are inactive.

You can’t change your gender, and you can’t change your height or body frame size, but you can change your activity level, the amount of calories you eat, and your weight. Once you achieve your healthier weight goal, if you continue to be physically active, you will be able to eat more calories and still maintain a healthy weight.

Know the Serving Size for Common Foods

It is important to watch the calories you eat if you are trying to lose weight or maintain your weight. But counting calories can be complicated. If you eat the number of servings recommended by you dietitian, you will be eating the approximate number of calories you need to achieve or maintain your healthier weight goal.

To achieve your goals, you need to know how much food is contained in one serving. While you don’t have to measure every serving precisely, you must realize one serving is not necessarily what you serve yourself!

The serving size for dry cereals is given as one ounce in weight (1 ounce = 28 grams). One ounce by weight will vary depending upon the type of cereal. If you are like most people, your serving of dry cereal is more than one serving.
One Ounce (28 Grams) Amount in Cups

Flake cereal – corn flakes, wheat flakes, bran flakes 1 cup
Puff cereal – corn or rice puffs ¾ cup
Granular cereal – barley, bran, wheat germ ½ cup

As you read through the list of serving sizes, note foods that are typically eaten as more than one serving. For example:

- Sandwich with two slices of bread = 2 servings
- Whole bagel = 2 servings
- Whole English muffin = 2 servings
- Dinner salad = 1 ½ cups or 1 ½ servings
- Beverage glasses = 8 to 12 ounces (240 to 360 mL) or 1 to 1½ servings of milk or 2 to 3 servings of fruit juice

Typical Serving Sizes

Grains: 1 serving = 1 ounce-equivalent
- 1 ounce (28 grams) of dry cereal, such as 1 cup of flaked cereal
- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup of cooked rice, pasta, or cereal
- 1 tortilla
- ½ hamburger bun
- ½ English muffin or bagel
- 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin

Beans: 1 serving =
- ½ cup of cooked dried beans, peas, or lentils

Starchy Vegetables: 1 serving =
- ½ cup of chopped raw or cooked starchy vegetables
- 1 medium corn on the cob
- 3 ounces (84 grams) baked potato

Tips:
- Make at least half of the total grains eaten each day whole grains or a minimum 3 servings.
- Check the food label for the fiber content.
- Consider dry beans and peas as an alternative to meat or poultry as well as a vegetable choice.

Non-starchy Vegetables: 1 serving =
- ½ cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup of leafy raw vegetables
- ½ cup of vegetable juice
Tips:
- Eat more dark green vegetables, orange, red, and yellow vegetables.
- Remember to record dried beans and other starchy vegetables with the grains, beans and other starchy vegetables group.

Fruits: 1 serving =
1 small to medium piece of fruit or melon
½ grapefruit
½ cup berries
½ cup of canned fruit
¼ cup of dried fruit
½ cup of juice

Tips:
- Keep the amount of fruit juice to less than half of the total amount of fruit eaten each day.
- Select fruits that are in season to increase variety.
- Choose fruits canned in juice or water to avoid added sugar.

Milk and Yogurt: 1 serving =
1 cup of milk or yogurt

Tips:
- Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk as a beverage.
- Consume other calcium-rich foods if milk and milk products are not consumed.
- Remember to record cheeses in the group with meats and meat substitutes.

Meats, Cheese and Meat Substitutes: 1 serving =
2 to 3 ounces (56 to 84 grams) of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish
1 egg
2 egg whites
2 tablespoons of peanut butter
1 ½ ounces (42 grams) of natural cheese
2 ounces (56 grams) of processed cheese

Tips:
- Make choices that are low-fat or lean when selecting meats and poultry. Select fish as a choice from this group more often, especially fish rich in omega-3 fats (“healthy” fats). Strive for 2 servings per week.
- Choose natural peanut butter (low in trans fats).
- Keep the overall amounts of foods eaten from this group within your daily fat budget. Select appropriate portion sizes to meet daily recommendations.
Fats, Oils, Sweets and Alcohol:

Tips:

- Choose monounsaturated or omega-3 polyunsaturated fats ("healthy" fats). Sources include fish rich in omega-3 fats (salmon, trout, tuna and herring), nuts, seeds, and vegetable oils (canola, olive, peanut, soybean, flaxseed, linseed, and walnut oils).
- Avoid sweets and sodas with lots of added sugar
- Drink alcohol only in moderation or not at all. Moderate drinking means no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men. One drink or serving of alcohol is 12 ounces (360 ml) of beer, 5 ounces (150 ml) of wine, or 1½ ounces (45 ml) of 80-proof distilled spirits. Ideally, you should only drink alcohol with meals. Some people or people in certain situations, should not drink alcohol at all.
- Remember that alcoholic beverages are high in calories. There are about 100 calories in one serving of light beer, table wine, or distilled spirits. Higher alcohol content or mixing alcohol with regular soft drinks, tonic water, fruit juice, or cream increases the calories in the beverage.

Measuring Your Food

Know Common Measurements and Abbreviations

1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
1 ounce = 2 tablespoons
1 cup = 8 ounces or 240 milliliters
1 pint = 16 ounces or 240 milliliters
1 quart = 2 pints or 4 cups
1 gallon = 4 quarts
1 pound = 16 ounces or 448 grams
1 ounce = 28 grams
1 fluid ounce = 30 milliliters
1 gram = 1,000 milligrams

You probably already have the tools you need to measure your servings. Keep these handy and use them often.

- Measuring spoons – Use a standard set rather than your silverware.
- Measuring cups – A liquid measuring cup should be clear. Set the cup on a level surface and check it at eye level to measure accurately. Level the top of a dry measuring cup with a flat knife to eliminate any excess.
- Food scale – Weigh foods without a food label (such as bagels, potatoes, snack foods) on a scale. Weight is typically given in ounces and may be converted to grams.
Visual Cues

Here are a few guidelines to help you see 1 serving of foods:

- Thumb tip = 1 tsp mayonnaise, salad dressing, or margarine
- Thumb = 1 oz cheese or meat
- Palm of woman’s hand or deck of cards = 3 oz. of cooked meat (boneless)
- Tennis ball = ½ cup of noodles or rice, canned fruit, or cooked vegetables
- Handful = 1 cup raw vegetables or 2 servings of pasta

Record Servings of Food in Your Food Diary

Your dietitian will provide you with the recommend number of servings you should eat each day from each food group. This number of servings will provide the approximate number of calories you need to achieve or maintain your healthier weight goal. It will also ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need for good health. Review the serving sizes carefully. If possible, measure your food in the beginning until you know the proper serving sizes.

Count only beverages that contain calories. Do not count water, tea without sugar, coffee without sugar or cream or cream substitute, or diet soft drinks. All other beverages count as servings of food. Fruit and vegetable juices count in those food groups. Keeping a food journal for a period of time will give you a good idea of how many servings from the different food groups you are actually eating compared to what you should be eating.

Some people enjoy keeping careful and detailed records of what and how much they eat on an ongoing basis. These people are often the most successful in eating healthy and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Some people don’t care for this type of record keeping. If this sounds like you, we ask you to try for at least three to four weeks. It will take effort, but you will learn from the experience.

- Record what you eat or drink immediately after eating. Then check how many servings still remain for each food group before you eat your next meal.
- Record the number of servings of each food on a separate line in the appropriate food group.
- Record partial servings as ½ or ¼.
- Record only beverages that contain calories.
- List combination foods on separate lines and in separate food groups, if appropriate.

At the end of each day, total the number of servings you have eaten from each food group. Write the number in the square for that day. Compare what you ate to your daily servings goal. Try to eat no more than the number of servings specified on your meal plan. Be sure to eat a variety of foods within each food group. Don’t go hungry. Choose a healthy snack if you get hungry between meals.
Tips for Using the Food Diary

- Measure your food until you know the proper serving size.
- Record what you eat or drink immediately after eating. Be accurate.
- Count only beverages that contain calories. Fruit and vegetable juices count in those groups. Fruit drinks and sweetened soft drinks count in the Fats, Oils, Sweets, and Alcohol Group. Record alcoholic beverages in the Fats, Oils, Sweets, and Alcohol Group. Limit alcohol to no more than two drinks per day, preferably with meals.
- Check how many servings still remain for each food group before your next meal.
- Use fats, oils, sweets, and alcohol sparingly. These are not a food group. Try to add as little as possible to your foods or meals.

Your Fat Budget

You have learned “Foods to Choose” and “Foods to Decrease/Avoid” for healthy eating. You have also learned how to measure and record servings of foods from the five food groups in your Food Diary. You have been provided a plan that recommends a specific number of servings from each food group. This is an easy way for you to know how much to eat.

The US Department of Health and Human Services and USDA, in their Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, recommend that 20 to 35 percent of your total calories each day should come from fat. We use 20 percent of total calories from fat as the target goal for a low-fat meal plan for most people.

Using these guidelines, we will provide for you a daily fat grams target goal. Your goal is to keep your total fat grams as close as possible to this number every day. If you consistently eat less than your target fat gram number, speak to your doctor about taking fish oil or flaxseed oil capsules as a dietary supplement if you are not already taking these.

See the Fat

It’s hard to visualize a gram of fat. But you can see a teaspoon. One teaspoon equals about four grams of fat. Find your daily fat grams target on the chart below to know the number of teaspoons of fat you could have each day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Fat Grams Target</th>
<th>Teaspoons of Fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>6 (2 Tablespoons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>9 (3 Tablespoons)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notice that 48 grams of fat equals 12 teaspoons, which is the same as ¼ cup. One-fourth cup is the size of the ladle used to serve salad dressings at most salad bars. One ladle of regular salad dressing is more fat than most people should eat all day.

**Know the Types of Fats**

Related to weight management, all fats contain nine calories per gram. Related to your health, all fats are not alike. Although all fats are high in calories, some fats are “healthy” and others are “unhealthy.”

In summary, related to heart disease, there are two types of “healthy” fats – monounsaturated fats and omega-3 polyunsaturated fats – and there are two types of “unhealthy” fats – saturated fats and trans fats. Omega-6 fats seem to be neutral in relation to heart disease. They are neither harmful nor especially beneficial. Remember, however, that eating too much fat of any kind can be a problem for you, especially if you are concerned about your weight.

**Record the Grams of Fat You Eat**

Each day, as you record your number of servings from each food group, also record the number of fat grams in the serving. Read the food label to know the number of fat grams per serving of food. Make adjustments if you eat more or less than one serving. If a food label is not available because you prepared the food yourself or purchased it from a restaurant, check a fat gram booklet or table. Write the fat grams to the right of each serving in your Food Diary. For example, a sandwich might have two slices of whole-grain bread, one ounce (28 grams) of turkey, one tablespoon of reduced-calorie mayonnaise, two lettuce leaves, and two slices of tomato.

Your entry would look like this:

- **Grains group** 2 – 2g.
- **Non-starchy vegetables group** ½ – 0 g
- **Meats group** ½ – 0.8g.
- **Fats / Oils** 1 – 5g.

Your total fat grams for the sandwich would be 7.8 or 8 grams.

At the end of each day, total the number of fat grams you have eaten that day. Compare what you ate to your daily fat budget.
Tips for Cutting Fat

Eat no more than two servings (six ounces or about 168 grams) of lean meat, fish, or poultry each day. Eat chicken or turkey without skin and choose white meat instead of dark meat. Fat in meat is saturated fat and meat contains cholesterol. Generally, fish is a much healthier choice than red meat or even poultry. There is some concern, however, about worrisome amounts of toxins, such as mercury, in some cold-water fish. Flounder, cod, tilapia, herring, sardines, and many other fish are considered safe to eat.

Try to eat more meatless meals, such as cooked dried beans and brown rice. Eat no more than three egg yolks each week, including those used in cooking and baking. Fat in egg yolks is mainly saturated fat and egg yolks also contain cholesterol. Try egg whites, egg substitutes, or even omega-3 eggs, a new type of egg that contains somewhat less cholesterol and more omega-3 fats.

Gradually cut back to choosing 1% fat or less for all milk products. Fat-free (skim) milk is best. Fat in dairy products is mainly saturated fat. Choose non-fat or fat-free sour cream, cream cheese, and yogurt. Choose cheeses made from fat-free or skim milk.

So what’s a cheese lover to do? Compromise most of the time and treat yourself some of the time. This means changing your relationship with cheese. Instead of using cheese as a central ingredient, use it to accent dishes. Aged cheese is good for this. It tends to be more flavorful so you actually don’t need to use very much of it. Such cheeses include extra-sharp or sharp Cheddar, Gorgonzola, Parmesan, and Asiago.

Many cheeses are naturally lower in fat than others. These include part-skim Mozzarella, string cheeses, farmers cheese, and Nuefchatel. Goat cheese is lower in fat and has fewer calories than cow’s milk cheese. Choose whole-grain breads and cereals made without coconut. Avoid breads made with eggs, lard, butter, shortening (trans fats), or other fats, such as donuts, croissants, Danish pastries, egg bagels, egg noodles, fried snack crackers, biscuits, and some muffins.

Choose low-fat and fat-free salad dressings and sandwich spreads. Avoid rich sauces and gravies made with cheese, cream, butter, or margarine.

Choose natural peanut butter instead of regular, which contains trans fats, or choose one of the new special varieties with Omega 3 fatty acids. Be aware that foods like natural peanut butter, avocados, olives, seeds, and nuts are high-fat foods, even though the fats they contain are mainly “healthy” fats. Eat these foods in moderation only.
SHOPPING WISELY

The first step in cooking and eating healthy foods is shopping wisely. If you don't buy foods high in calories, “unhealthy” fats or “unhealthy” carbs and bring them home, you can't use them in the meals you cook. Having healthy food on hand at home also keeps you from eating out. Eating more of your meals at home can help control the temptation to overeat. Eating at home saves money, too. Your entire family will benefit by enjoying tasty and healthy meals.

Tips for Shopping

- Plan your meals and snacks for several days at a time. A week is best. Follow the meal plan your mentor has set up with you.
- After you have written your meal plans, make a list of the specific foods you need to buy. Keep an ongoing shopping list in your kitchen. You could attach it to the refrigerator with a magnet. When you find you need something, write it on the list. You can't follow your meal plan if you don't have the foods you need and if they're not ready to use.
- Check new recipes you plan to try to be sure you have all the ingredients before starting to prepare the dish. Ask your mentor for healthy menus and recipes.
- Be sure to take your shopping list with you before leaving the house.
- People who shop for food when they're hungry are more likely to add items to the shopping cart they don't need. And, there is a good chance the extra items will be high in calories, “unhealthy” fats or “unhealthy” carbs.
- Choose to shop at a store that carries a good selection of fresh foods – produce, wholegrain breads, lean meats, poultry, and fish. Other grocery items don't vary so much from store to store as the fresh foods.
- Avoid shopping at convenience stores. You'll pay too much and the selection is limited.
- Get to know the staff of the store where you shop. Feel comfortable asking them questions or to stock an item you need.
- Try the house brands. Private label or supermarket brands can be priced as much as 50 percent less than nationally advertised brands. House brands are often produced by the same manufacturers as the names you recognize.
- When you enter the store, go only to the aisles where you need specific items. Walking up and down every aisle can cause you to make impulse purchases. Impulse items are usually located on the ends of aisles and near the checkout counter.
- Shop the perimeter or outside aisles of the store first. That's where you will find the fresh, "whole" foods that don't have a lot of added fat, sugar, or sodium.
- Avoid the free samples offered while you shop. You don't need to eat the extra calories. These items are often high-fat, high-calorie foods not on your list or on your meal plan.
• If you take your children with you when you shop, use the opportunity to teach them about making healthy food choices.
• If you are trying to manage your weight, buying foods in bulk might not be a good idea. Having a large container, even of a healthy food, may make it difficult to control how much you eat. For example, it may be best to buy individual containers of frozen yogurt rather than a half-gallon. When you are sure you can control the amount you eat, then buy larger sizes and save the extra money.
• There may be a cost for convenience. But if the extra convenience helps you follow your meal plan, it’s worth it. Look for conveniences to help you eat healthy. For example, it’s easy to include fresh vegetables in meals and snacks if you don’t have to wash and peel. Pre-prepared salads are another convenience.
• Always read the label. In addition to information about nutrition and fat grams, check the date to know how long the product will be wholesome and safe.
• It's tempting to use a coupon to try something new. Don't buy something you don't want or need just to save a few pennies. If you do, be sure you read the label carefully.
• Learn to recognize the hidden sources of calories, “unhealthy” fat and sugar in processed foods.
• Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other food in the shopping cart.
• Chill perishable foods promptly after purchasing them.
• Avoid types of fish that might contain high amounts of mercury.

Sugar Substitutes and Fat Replacers

When sugars and fats are taken out of a food, other ingredients are often added. Sugar substitutes may be added to give a sweet taste to foods such as diet soft drinks or sugar-free gelatin. Fat replacers may be added to fat-free salad dressings or salty snack foods to give the food a pleasing texture. Foods containing sugar substitutes or fat replacers sometimes, but not always, have fewer calories than the regular foods. Sugar substitutes and fat replacers are generally safe, especially if used in moderate amounts. They must be tested for safety before food manufacturers can put them in foods. Their use must follow US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rules. In the future, fat replacers are likely to become more common.

One of the biggest factors in eating healthy is time. Many people believe it takes too much time to eat healthy, especially to cook your meals at home. We believe it takes skills to cook and eat healthy. However, because we know time and convenience are important to you, we’ve included time saving tips along with the skills to help you cook healthy foods.

If someone else in your family is responsible for cooking the food you eat, share this with him or her. Also, help out with the cooking. The extra help will surely be appreciated. Your entire family will benefit by enjoying tasty and healthy meals.
Organize Your Kitchen for Healthier Cooking

There are many resources you can use to help you cook healthier. If you don’t already have some of these tools in your kitchen, consider buying them for yourself or suggest them as gifts you would like to receive from friends and family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>How It Helps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonstick baking sheets, loaf pans, and muffin cups</td>
<td>Eliminates “greasing” the pans to prevent sticking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large nonstick pots with lids – choose heavy duty</td>
<td>Use to make large batches of low-fat stews, soups, and chili to freeze in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials</td>
<td>pre-portioned amounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat-separating measuring cups</td>
<td>Use to separate the fat from liquids such as gravies, sauces, and soups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steamer rack</td>
<td>The spout is at the bottom of the cup. The fat floats to the top. Pour off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food processor or blender</td>
<td>the liquid and remove the fat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage containers</td>
<td>Use for storing pre-made meals. Some containers should be freezer and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>microwave safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wok – stove top or electric</td>
<td>Use for low-oil frying. Cooking foods on the side of the wok allows the fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to drain to the bottom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave oven</td>
<td>Use to defrost frozen meats, cook fresh and frozen vegetables and entrees,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and reheat pre-cooked meals. Learn to use your microwave to do more than</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>warm up leftovers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good set of knives</td>
<td>Use for chopping, slicing, paring. Have a variety of types and sizes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>including ones with a serrated blade for bread, angel cake, tomatoes. Be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>careful when using these.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic press</td>
<td>Use to mince garlic to add to meats, poultry, fish, sauces, etc. Fresh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>garlic is one of the most useful herbs. Choose a garlic press that is easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to clean.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbecue grill</td>
<td>Use to cook meats, poultry, fish, and vegetables outdoors. This is a good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low-fat cooking method because the fat drips away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colander or strainer</td>
<td>Use to rinse canned fruits and vegetables, especially cooked dried beans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tasty Kitchen Tips

For tasty, healthy cooking, keep these items on hand in your pantry:

- Try new spices and herbs. Use fresh garlic or garlic powder instead of garlic salt. Other popular spices include cayenne pepper, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and nutmeg. Choose dried herbs or grow your own – basil, chives, dill weed, parsley, rosemary, oregano, thyme, cilantro, mint.
- Use cornstarch to thicken sauces and gravies.
- Buy oils (olive oil and canola oil are the healthiest) in small quantities to prevent spoilage or store them in the refrigerator.
- Keep condiments for variety and taste – mustards, broths, butter-flavored granules, salt-free seasoning mixes, cooking wine, low-sodium soy sauce, hot sauce, salsa, and balsamic, fruit, or herb-flavored vinegars.

Time Saving Tips

For saving time in the kitchen, try these tips:

- Use ingredients that have already been partially prepared to cut down on your preparation time. Examples include:
  
  Frozen chopped vegetables and frozen fruits  
  Peeled carrots  
  Shredded cabbage  
  Pre-washed salad greens and spinach  
  Sliced fresh or canned mushrooms  
  Low-fat spaghetti sauces  
  Cooked dried beans  
  Grated fat-free or low-fat cheeses
- Prepare your own ingredients ahead of time and save the cost of buying pre-prepared items. Set aside time to slice, dice, and chop the ingredients you use most often, such as onions, peppers, and celery. Store them in clear freezer-type plastic bags for easy identification. Mark the date on the package.
- Cook foods to freeze for future use. Make a double recipe and freeze what is left in individual portion sizes for quick meals another time. These foods freeze well:
  
  Brown rice  
  Cooked dried beans or legumes  
  Low-fat marinara sauce  
  Sauces without mayonnaise, yogurt, or sour cream  
  Cooked and raw meats and poultry  
  Vegetables, without sauces  
  Fruits, without sugar  
  Hard cheeses  
  Dough  
  Whole-grain breads  
  Low-fat bran muffins  
  Casseroles
Vegetarian pizza with half portion of cheese
Whole-grain pancakes
Whole-grain waffles
Stews or chilis
Soups and soup stock, low salt (sodium)

- Use canned foods to save time and money. Canned foods can be high quality and healthy. Read the label to check the amount of sugar and salt (sodium). Rinse canned foods in water to remove sauces and salt. These are good canned foods to have in your pantry:
  - Fruit packed in water or fruit juices (pears, peaches, pineapple, orange or grapefruit sections)
  - Unsweetened applesauce
  - Unsweetened fruit juices
  - Fruit spreads (instead of jelly)
  - Legumes (black beans, pinto beans, kidney beans, etc.)
  - Tomatoes, tomato paste, tomato sauce (look for low-sodium versions)
  - Low-fat spaghetti sauce
  - Tuna packed in water
  - Salmon packed in water
  - Chicken packed in water
  - Fat-free, low-sodium broths
  - Broth-based soups

Food Safety Tips

- Wash your hands in hot soapy water before preparing food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going to the next one.
- To remove dirt and germs, scrub fresh produce briskly with hands or a brush under clean running water. Dry the produce after washing it.
- Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don’t drip onto other foods.
- Use a meat thermometer which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry to make sure that meat is cooked all the way through.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within two hours.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator, in an air-tight package under cold running water, or in the microwave
- Avoid raw (unpasteurized) milk or any products made from unpasteurized milk, raw or partially cooked eggs, or foods containing raw eggs, raw or undercooked meat and poultry, and unpasteurized juices.

Modify Recipes to Reduce Calories, Fat, and “Unhealthy” Carbs

The final step in healthier, lighter eating is in the cooking. Use the following ideas to guide you in modifying your favorite recipes. Be creative and try to develop new recipes of your own.
A. When Cooking Meat, Fish, and Poultry Dishes

- Use lean cuts and trim all visible fat before cooking. Remove skin from poultry before cooking.
- Use cooking methods that minimize adding fat – baking, braising, grilling, roasting, steaming, sauteing, stir-frying.
- Start with four ounces of raw meat to yield a three-ounce cooked serving.
- Tenderize lean, less tender cuts of meat by marinating before cooking. Marinate in liquids such as vinegar, fruit and vegetable juices (pineapple, lemon, tomato juice), wine, or low sodium marinades. The longer you marinate, the more tender and tasty the food becomes.
- Slice meat thinly or diagonally (cross-grain) or pound with a mallet to help tenderize. This works well when using meat in a stir-fry recipe.
- Remove fat from stews, soups and casseroles by chilling them and skimming the hardened fat from the top.
- Use a minimal amount of oil or cooking spray when sauteing. If the food begins to stick, add chicken broth, vegetable broth, water, or wine to release.
- Cook meats, poultry, seafood, and vegetables on the grill outside. Some of the fat drips away from the food.
- Roast large pieces of meat (whole turkeys or chickens) on a rack to prevent food from sitting in drippings. Use vegetable or fruit juices, broths, or wine for basting, instead of drippings. Prepare main dishes that limit meat portion and emphasize whole grains, fruits, and/or vegetables, such as stir-frys or kabobs.
- Learn to make a few tasty low sodium marinades or sauces that you can use on lean meats or seafood.
  - Teriyaki sauce for chicken breast, pork tenderloin, or fish
  - marinara sauce for chicken, clams, pasta, and vegetables
  - Spicy salsa for rice and beans, egg-white omelets
  - Lime (or lemon), pepper, and garlic marinade for chicken or fish

B. Cooking Baked Goods and Other Recipes

Reducing the calories from sugars, especially in baked products, is a little more difficult. Sugar helps to replace some of the bulk and moisture when fat is removed from baked goods. Generally, you can reduce the amount of sugar by one-fourth to one-third without noticing a major difference in the taste or texture of the recipe. You can also substitute whole-wheat flour for white flour in some baked products, which is a good way to increase fiber. You may need to use more liquid or more leavening agent (baking powder or yeast) because whole-wheat flour is coarser than white flour.

In addition to substituting and reducing the amounts of fat and sugar in recipes, some ingredients can be eliminated altogether. If the ingredient is added for appearance, out of habit, or is optional, you can leave it out. Here is a list of ingredients that may be reduced or eliminated.

- Nuts in baked products (use in reduced amounts)
- Olives in salads (use in reduced amounts)
- Avocados in salads (use in reduced amounts)
• Whipped toppings and thick frostings on desserts (can be eliminated)
• Butter or margarine on sandwiches or in mashed potatoes (can be eliminated)

Although nuts, olives, and avocados contain “healthy” fats, they are still higher calorie foods and should not be eaten in excess.

C. Learn to Measure

Many excellent cooks say they never measure ingredients for the recipes they prepare. If you are trying to eat healthy and manage your weight, we advise you to measure when you cook. Always measure oil or fat in recipes. Often this habit will cut down on the amount you use. You can save fat grams and calories without compromising quality and taste. It’s hard to visualize a gram of fat. But you can see a teaspoon. One teaspoon equals about five grams of fat. See the fat in these common foods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Teaspoons of Fat</th>
<th>Fat Grams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carrot and celery sticks</td>
<td>No fat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slice of bread</td>
<td>¼ teaspoon of fat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ounces (84 g) of lean beef</td>
<td>1 teaspoon of fat</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup creamy coleslaw</td>
<td>3 teaspoons of fat</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croissant</td>
<td>3 teaspoons of fat</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 hot dogs (3 oz. or 84 g)</td>
<td>7 teaspoons of fat</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the following amounts of regular spreads and salad dressing provide about the same amount of fat as one teaspoon of butter or margarine (four grams of fat):
• 1 teaspoon of regular mayonnaise
• 2 teaspoons of Italian or French salad dressing
• 3 teaspoons of mayonnaise-type salad dressing
• 3 teaspoons of cream cheese
• 3 teaspoons of reduced-calorie mayonnaise
• 4 teaspoons of light cream
• 5 teaspoons of sour cream
The following chart shows ways you can substitute, reduce, or eliminate ingredients from recipes to save calories and fat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Ingredient</th>
<th>Substitute/Reduce</th>
<th>Calorie Savings</th>
<th>Fat Gram Savings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup whole milk</td>
<td>1 cup skim milk</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup half and half</td>
<td>1 cup evaporated skim milk ((thicken with 1 Tbsp. cornstarch, heat just to boil)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for gravy or cream sauce)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup heavy cream</td>
<td>1 cup evaporated skim milk</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup sour cream</td>
<td>1 cup non-fat yogurt or 1 cup 1% cottage cheese blended with 2 Tbsp. lemon juice</td>
<td>350 / 315</td>
<td>48 / 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup grated cheddar cheese</td>
<td>1 cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ounces cream cheese</td>
<td>1 cup yogurt cheese (2 cups non-fat yogurt strained overnight in a cheese cloth)</td>
<td>544 / 404</td>
<td>76 / 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or ½ cup fat-free cream cheese with ½ cup light cream cheese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbsp. oil for sautéing</td>
<td>non-stick vegetable spray and 1 Tbsp. oil or 2 Tbsp. wine or 2 Tbsp. fat-free broth</td>
<td>125 / 220 / 235</td>
<td>12 / 24 / 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 egg</td>
<td>2 egg whites</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Tbsp. mayonnaise</td>
<td>1 Tbsp. reduced-calorie mayonnaise or 1 Tbsp. non-fat mayonnaise</td>
<td>50 / 68</td>
<td>6 / 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 cup walnuts</td>
<td>½ cup walnuts</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REDUCING THE SODIUM IN YOUR DIET

We will use “sodium” and “salt” interchangeably in some instances, although they aren’t really the same. Common table salt (sodium chloride) is about 40 percent sodium and 60 percent chloride. Salt is added to food as a preservative and to sharpen the flavor of foods.

Sodium is a mineral used by the body to control blood pressure and blood volume. People with high blood pressure and heart failure can benefit by reducing the amount of sodium they eat. Too much sodium causes the body to retain fluid. This causes the blood pressure to increase and worsens heart failure. If your blood pressure is normal, you can reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure by reducing the amount of sodium you eat. Eating more potassium-rich foods can also help control blood pressure.

Asses your eating habits for the amount of sodium you eat. The following are examples of high sodium processed foods:

- Processed meats (bologna, salami, Canadian bacon, hot dogs, sausage links, cured ham, bacon)
- Canned fish or shellfish
- Canned vegetables and vegetable juices
- Canned spaghetti sauce, canned tomato products
- Condiments (pickles, olives, bottled salad dressings, soy sauce, steak sauce, barbecue sauce)
- Processed cheese
- Salty snack foods (chips, crackers, pretzels, popcorn)
- Peanut butter, salted nuts
- Frozen T.V. dinners, pizza
- Canned soup, chili
- Commercially-prepared baked goods, cookies, rolls
- French fries, hamburgers, tacos, fried chicken, and other fast foods

How often do you add salt to your food after it is served at the table?

☐ Always (at every meal)
☐ Sometimes (with certain foods)
☐ Never

How often do you add salt in cooking or preparing food?

☐ Always
☐ Only when it is necessary, and in small, measured amounts
☐ Never
☐ I don’t know if salt is added in the cooking
The questions above were intended to help you determine the sources and amounts of sodium you eat. Most people eat far more sodium than they need. A typical American eats as much as 7,000 milligrams of sodium a day. You do not need to eat more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day for your body to function properly. The American Heart Association recommends that most people eat no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day.

*People with heart failure you should eat no more than 2,000 milligrams of sodium each day.*

**Sources of Sodium in the Typical American Diet**

- 77% – Processed foods
- 6% – Added at the table
- 5% – Added during cooking
- 12% – Occurs naturally in foods

Foods are not naturally high in sodium. Processed foods are the largest single source of sodium for most people. Even foods that don’t taste salty can contain a lot of salt. Here are a few examples that might surprise you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Milligrams of Sodium</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table salt</td>
<td>1 teaspoon</td>
<td>2,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bologna</td>
<td>2 slices</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna</td>
<td>canned in oil</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steak sauce (regular)</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tartar sauce</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketchup</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned dried beans</td>
<td></td>
<td>600-900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dill pickle</td>
<td>1 large</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.V. dinner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100-2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen pizza</td>
<td>2 slices</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato chips</td>
<td>20 chips</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned soup</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed American cheese</td>
<td>1 oz. (28 g)</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato juice</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaghetti or barbecue sauce</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast food hamburger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500-900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The best way to know the amount of sodium in the processed foods you buy is to read the label. The amount of sodium in a serving of food is listed in milligrams (mg) on the nutrition label.
Some food packages make claims about sodium. These claims can only be used if a food meets strict government definitions. Here are some terms you should know:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claim</th>
<th>What it Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sodium/salt-free</td>
<td>Less than 5 mg sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low sodium</td>
<td>35 mg or less sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-sodium</td>
<td>140 mg or less sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced-sodium/Less sodium</td>
<td>At least 25% less sodium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light in sodium</td>
<td>50% less sodium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sodium is often added to food in other forms beside salt. Watch for these ingredients on food labels.

- Monosodium glutamate (MSG) – a flavor booster
- Sodium saccharin – a calorie-free sweetener
- Disodium phosphate – sometimes added to hot cereals to help them cook faster
- Baking soda and baking powder – found in many baked goods

**Learn Ways to Reduce the Amount of Sodium You Eat**

Most people should eat no more than 2,300 mg of sodium each day. This is about the amount of sodium in a teaspoon of table salt. Reducing the amount of sodium you eat is a matter of changing your taste. Follow the tips below and after a few weeks or months, your taste will change. You will actually prefer less salty food. If you have switched from whole milk to skim milk, you probably now prefer skim milk. Drinking whole milk would seem odd to you. The same will happen if you reduce the amount of salt you eat.

**Tips for Eating Less Sodium**

- Choose fewer processed foods. Buy fresh or frozen unprocessed foods and prepare most of your meals at home. By starting with fresh or frozen foods, you can control the amount of salt added during cooking.
- Avoid fast food restaurants where food is usually precooked or preprocessed by commercial vendors.
- When eating out at restaurants that provide table service, ask to have food prepared without salt or MSG when possible. Also, avoid sauces that may be high in salt, such as steak sauce, soy sauce, Asian sauces, and BBQ sauce.
- Be aware that Chinese, Japanese, or Indian restaurants typically serve foods high in salt.
- At home, remove the salt shaker from the table.
- Reduce the salt in cooking and in recipes to half the amount – or omit salt completely and try your own new seasonings or one of the commercially available salt-free spice and herb blends.
- Experiment with seasonings and flavorings. Use pure herbs and spices instead of seasoned salts. For example, use fresh garlic or buy garlic powder instead of garlic salt.
• Make your own salad dressings. You can control the type and amount of fat, sugar, and the sodium!
• Avoid canned or bottled sauces such as steak sauce, barbecue sauce, soy sauce, ketchup, or tartar sauce. There are some commercial sauces that are low in sodium, including Tabasco sauce (which is good news if you enjoy spicy food).
• Purchase unsalted or low-sodium products, especially canned vegetables (green beans, tomatoes, cooked dried beans). Always read the label to know how much sodium a food contains.
• Rinse canned vegetables, especially cooked dried beans, to remove excess sodium.
• When experimenting with herbs and spices, add small amounts at a time. Use approximately one-fourth teaspoon for every four servings of food.
• Store herbs and spices in a cool, dry, dark place (not over the kitchen range top). Herbs and spices can also be frozen in plastic bags.

### All Purpose Spice Blend

5 teaspoons onion powder  
2 ½ teaspoons garlic powder  
2 ½ teaspoons paprika  
2 ½ teaspoons dry mustard  
1 ¼ teaspoon thyme  
½ teaspoon ground white pepper

*Combine ingredients and keep tightly covered in a jar. Shake well before using.*

### Sodium Substitutes: Salt-like Taste With Minimal Sodium

Below are listed salt substitutes we recommend, followed by those we cannot recommend because the sodium content is still too high. Check with your doctor and/or pharmacist before using salt substitutes for possible food or drug interactions.

**Recommended**

- No-Salt New Vegit Dia-Mel Salt-It
- Chef’s Selection Products NoNak Pleasong Nu-Salt (Sweet-n-Diamond Crystal Featherweight “K” Salt Low Brand)
- Morton’s Salt Substitute Mrs. Dash Spice/Herb Blend Adolph’s Salt Substitute
- Bakon Seasonings (6 different blends)

**Also Recommended**

- Low-sodium baking powder
- Adolph’s Unsalted 100% Natural Tenderizer

**Not Recommended**

- Morton’s Lite Salt (it contains half the amount of sodium as regular salt)
- Sea salt (one teaspoon of sea salt equals 1,716 mg of sodium)
- Kosher salt
Consider Adding Potassium-Rich Foods

Another way to help lower blood pressure is to eat foods rich in potassium. A potassium-rich diet also blunts the effects of salt on blood pressure, may reduce the risk of developing kidney stones, and possibly decreases bone loss with age. The recommended intake of potassium for most adolescents and adults is 4,700 mg/day. People with certain medical conditions, such as severe chronic kidney disease, may need to reduce their potassium intake.

For most people, potassium should come from food sources.

- Fruits – bananas, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, prunes, dried peaches or apricots, orange juice, and prune juice
- Vegetables – sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, tomato products, soybeans, lima beans, winter squash, spinach, lentils, kidney beans, and split peas

People on certain types of diuretics or “water pills” may need to take extra potassium in the form of supplements. Potassium supplements should only be taken under the supervision of a physician. Too much potassium can be dangerous. Be aware that certain types of diuretics and some other medications can cause an increase in blood potassium levels – another reason why potassium supplements should only be taken under the supervision of a physician.
EATING OUT

Eating out can be a great opportunity to socialize, to celebrate, and to try new foods and flavors. Sometimes eating out is an excuse for overeating or for making less healthy choices.

You can eat out and eat healthy. If you eat out often, learn to plan ahead. Advanced planning can help you select healthy meals and prevent the day’s events, your moods, your environment, and other distractions from interfering with your good intentions.

How Often?

For many people, eating out is a fact of life. Less than 50 percent of the American food dollar is spent on food prepared at home. You are learning that eating healthy is a matter of choice and control.

Why?

Can you reduce the number of times you have to eat out just to obtain food?

- Take brown bag meals with you for breakfast or lunch on work days.
- Keep a supply of healthy snacks on hand to ward off hunger pains at work or when traveling.
- Learn to use pre-prepared and convenience foods to save time in preparing meals at home.

If most of your eating out is out for special occasions—while food is a major part of these events, it is not really the primary reason for getting together. Eating at special occasions can be a problem if you feel you don’t have to follow the guidelines of healthy eating that apply at “necessity” meals. Can you focus on the many non-food pleasures related to the occasion?

- Enjoy the people and conversation.
- Consider it a treat not to cook or do dishes.
- Appreciate the atmosphere and ambiance of the setting or surroundings.

With Whom?

Although pleasurable, eating with others can create problems when you are trying to eat healthy and manage your weight. All special occasion eating involves others. Seeing others overeat can prompt you to eat more than you normally would. The peer pressure to order a special dessert or after dinner drink can be tempting. Stressful situations may lead you to overeat in response to feeling anxious. Can you plan ahead to be assertive when eating out with others?

- Avoid dining partners who will encourage you to overeat.
- Sit next to someone who you know will eat healthy.
• Match your eating pace with the slowest eater at the table.
• Rehearse how you will resist pressures to have a drink, dessert, or other food that you haven’t planned on eating.

While you wouldn’t always want to eat alone, it can have benefits. If you eat alone you have more control. When traveling alone, ordering room service may reduce the temptations of selecting from the full menu. It may also be easier to ask questions or make special requests. Eating alone can give you an opportunity to relax and enjoy a quiet break. Try not to eat too fast.

Where?

Where you eat is important. Eating away from home reduces your ability to control what you eat. You can’t control the ingredients or methods used to prepare the food. And, it’s difficult to control the size of the portion served. With all the choices available when you eat out, the temptations to overeat can be overwhelming. Fortunately, many restaurants now offer healthier items on their menus. Choose restaurants that support your goals to eat healthy. Choose those where:

• You know the staff and feel comfortable asking questions and making requests.
• You can order “a la carte” and build your own meal the way you want it.
• You have a variety of foods from which to choose.
• You can enjoy your meal without feeling rushed.

Avoid restaurants that:

• Serve only one type of food.
• Feature “all you can eat” specials or buffets.

Learn Strategies for Making Healthy Choices When Eating Out

These specific tips can help make eating out an enjoyable and healthy experience.

Before going to the restaurant:

• Know where you are going.
• Decide what and how much you will eat before going out.
• Call the restaurant in advance to ask questions about what’s available.
• Consider how what you will order fits your daily meal plan (servings, fat grams).
• Don’t go to the restaurant feeling especially hungry. Have a light snack before you go.
• Increase your physical activity for a few days before eating out to save some calories.
• Commit to follow your plan to eat healthy.

When you are seated:

• Sit by someone who will support your healthy eating goals.
• Ask for water and keep your glass filled throughout the meal. Sip water while
others eat bread or drink alcoholic beverages.
• If you order an alcoholic drink, don’t have an appetizer or dessert.
• If you order an alcoholic drink, still ask for water and alternate between the two.
• If bread or chips are provided before the meal, politely ask the waiter to take them
away, or take some on your plate, then send the basket to the other end of the
table.
• Learn to enjoy bread without butter or margarine.
• Plan to be the first to order so you won’t be influenced by others.
• Know what you want before arriving at the restaurant so you don’t have to look at
the menu.

When ordering:

• Feel free to ask the waiter questions about the menu and how foods are prepared.
• Be assertive and politely ask for what you want. Request vegetables without butter
and salad dressing “on the side.”
• Have a cup of soup instead of a bowl.
• Ask to leave off potato chips, fries, and other high-fat items.
• Ask to split an oversized portion.
• Order a low-fat appetizer as an entree.
• Ask for a luncheon size portion of meat instead of a dinner size portion.
• Choose foods in their simplest forms.
• Avoid sauces and condiments on meats and vegetables.
• Order a vegetarian meal.
• Have black coffee or tea for dessert.
• Order fresh fruit for dessert (usually less than 100 calories and no fat).

When eating:

• Concentrate on eating slowly and enjoying your meal.
• Drink water throughout the meal.
• Stop eating when you are full. You don’t have to eat it just because you paid for it.
• Ask to have your plate taken away when you are full.
• Before you start to eat, ask for a take-home container and save a left-over portion
for another meal.
• Split a dessert with a friend or spouse.

After eating out:

• Evaluate your experience. What would you do differently, if anything, next time you
eat out?
• Remember the non-food benefits of eating out. You have received more than food
for your money.
• Go for a walk to burn a few calories.
Ethnic Restaurants

Ethnic restaurants are popular with most people. They offer tasty foods that might be difficult to prepare at home. Eating at ethnic restaurants presents some unique challenges. Because of cultural differences, it might be difficult to know what ingredients are used or how foods are prepared. Some are known to have numerous high-fat items on their menus. Be sure to ask questions if you are unfamiliar with the food. Mexican, Chinese, and Italian are among the many ethnic foods available both as fast food and full-service restaurants. Here are a few suggestions for selections at these three popular ethnic restaurants.

A. Italian

- Minestrone soup pasta with Alfredo or cream sauce
- Whole-grain pasta with no-meat red sauce (such as marinara sauce)
- Lasagna, ravioli, and tortellini made with cheese
- Shrimp or chicken primavera breaded or parmesan dishes (veal, eggplant)
- Whole-grain pasta with red clam sauce garlic bread
- Unbuttered whole-grain bread or whole-grain bread with a small amount of olive oil
- Cheese dishes
- Vegetarian pizza with half portion of cheese Caesar salad
- Meat balls, Italian sausage, ham, salami
- Fried calamari
- Specialty coffees made with cream

B. Mexican

- Black bean soup (without sour cream)
- Queso (regular cheese)
- Gazpacho
- Excessive Guacamole (avocado is one of the few high-fat vegetables, although “healthy” fat)
- Corn and whole-wheat tortillas (steamed, not fried) or baked/fat-free tortilla chips
- Chili Con Carne
- Soft tacos Tortilla chips (fried)
- Chicken or shrimp fajitas (with lots of lettuce and tomatoes)
- Refried beans (when cooked in lard)
- Salsa, pico de gallo
- Sour cream toppings or sauces
- Spanish rice dishes made with regular ground meat
- Low-fat bean burrito (ask if beans are fried in lard or oil)
- Dishes with lean meat or chicken
C. Chinese

- Won ton or other clear broth soups MSG (high in sodium)
- Chicken, Shrimp, or Fish Lo Mein Fried rice
- Chop Suey
- Lobster sauce
- Steamed rice (brown rice is preferable to white rice, if available)
- Gravies
- Stir-fried or steamed vegetables
- Excessive nuts (high in fat, although “healthy” fat)
- Fried noodles or fried won ton
- Sweet and sour sauces
- Pork dishes
- Fried egg
- Egg batter