

Good Eating for Good Health



written by Harvard Medical School



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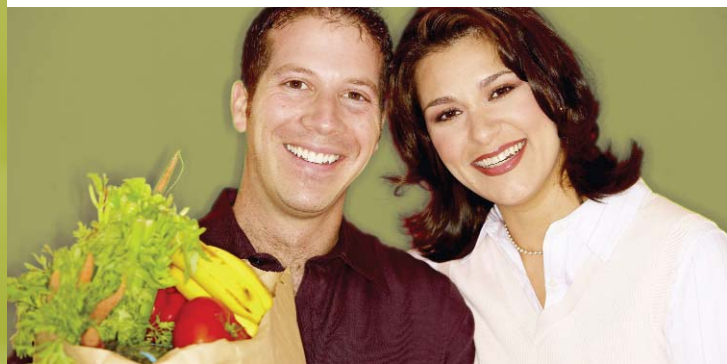
Turn on your TV and you're bound to get some confusing news about diet and health. Don't let it drive you to distraction—or to the donut shop. Instead, remember to establish healthful goals, then make the changes you need to reach your targets.

For more information about eating for good health from Harvard Health Publications, go to www.patientedu.org.

Your Goals

Keep these overall goals in mind when you shop; food labels finally provide enough information to guide wise choices.

Total calories	Adjust in conjunction with exercise to reach your best weight
Total fat	25%–35% of total calories
Saturated fat	Less than 7% of total calories
Trans fatty acids (<i>trans fat</i>)	Less than 1% of total calories
Polyunsaturated fat	Up to 10% of total calories
Monounsaturated fat	Up to 20% of total calories
Cholesterol	Less than 200 mg a day
Carbohydrates	50%–60% of total calories
Fiber	20–30 g a day
Protein	About 15% of total calories
Sodium	Less than 2,300 mg a day, but less than 1,500 mg a day for older people and those with hypertension



Your Diet

People eat foods, not nutrients. Here are 20 tips for healthful—and enjoyable—eating.

1 Eat a variety of foods; since no single food is perfect, you need a balanced mix of foods to get all the nutrients you need.

2 Eat more vegetable products and fewer animal products.

3 Eat more fresh and homemade foods and fewer processed foods. Avoid fast food and junk food. You know what they are.

4 Choose your fats wisely. Cut down on meat, the skin of poultry, whole dairy products, stick margarine, fried foods, snack foods, and commercial baked goods made with trans fat. Get “good fats” from fish and nuts.

5 Consume at least three cups of non- or low-fat dairy products a day.

6 Choose your carbs wisely. Cut down on simple sugars; remember that sodas, sports energy drinks, and fruit juices are loaded with sugar. Cut down on highly refined products made with white flour. Favor whole grain products. Learn to like bran cereal, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds.



7 Eat protein in moderation. Favor fish and skinless poultry. Aim for 5½ ounces of protein-rich foods a day; count one ounce of cooked fish, ¼ cup of cooked beans or tofu, ½ ounce of nuts or seeds, one egg, or one ounce of cooked lean meat or poultry as equivalent to one ounce.

8 Restrict your sodium intake by avoiding processed foods and salt.

9 Eat more potassium-rich foods, such as citrus fruits, bananas, and other fruits and vegetables. Eat more calcium-rich foods, such as low-fat dairy products, broccoli, spinach, and tofu.



10 Eat more grain products, especially whole grain products, aiming for at least six ounces a day. Count one cup of dry cereal; ½ cup of cooked cereal, rice, or pasta; or one slice of bread as one ounce. Whole grains and brown rice should provide at least half your grains—the more the better.



11 Eat more vegetables and beans, especially deep green and yellow-orange vegetables. Aim for at least five servings a day. Count one cup of raw leafy greens, ½ cup of cooked or raw vegetables, or ½ cup of vegetable juice as one portion.



12 Eat more fruits, aiming for at least four servings a day. Count one medium-size piece of fruit; ½ cup of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit; or ½ cup of fruit juice as one portion.

13 Eat more fish, aiming for at least two 4-ounce servings each week. Remember to broil, bake, or grill instead of frying.

14 If you choose to eat red meats, try to reduce your intake to about two 4-ounce servings per week. Avoid “prime” and other fatty meats, processed meats, and liver. Switch to chicken and turkey, always removing the skin. Be sure your meat and poultry are cooked well.

15 Eat eggs sparingly; aim for an average of no more than one yolk per day.

16 Eat seeds and unsalted nuts.



17 Choose healthful oils, favoring olive and canola oils. Avoid partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.

18 If you choose to use alcohol, drink sparingly. Men should not average more than two drinks a day, women one a day. Count five ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1½ ounces of spirits as one drink. Never drive or operate machinery after drinking.



19 Adjust your caloric intake and exercise level to reach your best weight. If you need to reduce, aim for gradual weight loss by lowering your caloric intake and increasing your exercise.

20 Avoid fad diets and extreme nutritional schemes. And remember that these guidelines are intended for healthy people; people with medical problems should consult their doctors to develop individualized nutritional plans.

Making It Work

To enjoy a healthful diet, experiment with new recipes and meal plans. Involve your family, change slowly, and be creative. Smart eating will make you healthier, and good eating can make you happier. Instead of dreading your new diet, have fun with it.





To learn more about eating for good health, visit the **Pri-Med Patient Education Center Health-e-Library** at www.patientedu.org.

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