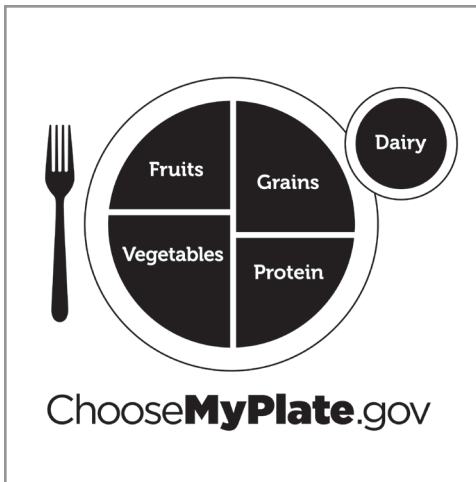


# Healthy Eating and Exercise



**Eating a healthy diet and being physically active can improve your health, and help you manage or prevent health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and arthritis.**

Healthy eating doesn't mean you have to go on a diet or follow a strict eating plan (unless your doctor recommends it to help a health condition). And it doesn't mean you have to give up the foods you enjoy. It just means that you take small steps every day toward making healthy food choices.

If you've tried exercising in the past and haven't been successful, don't give up. Remember, any activity counts—even if it's just for 10 minutes. The key to any exercise is to find something that you enjoy so you'll want to keep doing it. See p.2 for ideas to get started.

## Building Healthy Meals

To make healthy eating easier, use the **MyPlate** guidelines. Created by the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture), MyPlate shows you how much food from each food group to include on your plate at most meals. The plate is divided into the five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein and dairy.

Follow these tips when choosing foods from each group:

- **Fruits and Vegetables**—Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables. Choose fruits and vegetables of all colors to make sure you get the most nutrients. To keep it interesting, choose new fruits or vegetables to try each week, or look for what's in season.
- **Grains**—Make at least half of your grains whole grains so you get fiber and other heart-healthy nutrients. Look for whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice and pasta.
- **Protein**—Eat protein to give you energy. Keep meat and poultry portions lean and small—about the size of a deck of cards. Serve seafood at least twice a week, and get protein from nonmeat foods like beans.
- **Dairy**—Get calcium and vitamin D for bone health without the extra fat by choosing skim or 1 percent milk and low-fat yogurts and cheese.

## Making Healthy Food Choices

Try these tips to get started:

- **Limit processed and packaged foods.** Make fast food and other high-calorie foods like chips and cookies "once-in-a-while" foods.
- **Remember snacks.** Plan to have two snacks a day. Fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat yogurt, or whole-grain crackers are great choices.
- **Prepare foods in healthy ways.** Grill, bake and broil instead of frying.
- **Limit desserts and sweets.** Have fruit for dessert, or only have dessert once a week.
- **Drink water.** Avoid sugary sodas and sports drinks.
- **Pay attention to sodium.** Season food with spices instead of salt. Compare sodium amounts in packaged foods, and choose the lower-sodium options. Avoid products with more than 200 mg of sodium per serving.
- **Cook with oils that have healthy fats.** Use olive oil instead of solid fats like butter or cream.



To learn more, visit:

- **MedlinePlus**  
[www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)
- **USDA: ChooseMyPlate**  
[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

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- **Read nutrition labels.** Check for calories per serving and daily values (DVs) of nutrients. In general, a DV of 5% or less is low and 20% or more is high. Choose foods with low DVs of fat, cholesterol and sodium, but high DVs of vitamins and minerals.
- **Keep portions small.** Read nutrition labels to find out the serving sizes for packaged foods. Put food on small plates, and learn to stop eating when you feel full.

## How to Get Moving

Getting daily exercise will not only make you healthier, but it will also make you feel better. **Being active every day for at least 30 minutes can help you:**

- strengthen your heart and lungs
- lower your blood pressure
- lower your cholesterol
- sleep better and have more energy
- reduce stress
- manage conditions like diabetes or arthritis, or reduce your risk of other health conditions

Exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and help you lose weight. If you're overweight, talk to your doctor about a weight-loss plan.

### Here are some helpful tips for making exercise manageable and fun:

- You don't have to get your exercise all at once. You can exercise for 10 minutes three times a day. And walking counts!
- Add activity to your daily routine. Get off the bus a stop or two early and walk the rest of the way, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or park your car farther away from the store.
- Dance to your favorite music.
- Exercise with your family or a friend. Ride bikes or take walks together.
- Start slowly, and build up to exercising 30 minutes or more a day.

Always talk to your doctor before starting an exercise plan.

## Remember:

- You don't have to make a lot of changes at once. Small changes can make a big difference in your health.
- Follow the MyPlate guidelines when preparing meals.
- Find a way to be active that you enjoy, and work up to exercising most days of the week.