

How to Build a Healthy Eating Pattern

There are many different ways to eat healthy. You can eat healthy in a way that works for you and your family. Healthy eating can fit all tastes and traditions — and can be affordable, too.

The key is to build a healthy eating pattern, which means choosing a variety of nutritious foods in the right amounts for you — and making these choices part of your everyday routine.

Follow these tips — based on the 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans — for making choices that can help you reach or keep a healthy body weight, get the nutrients you need, and lower your risk of health problems like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancers.

Get a Variety of Nutritious Foods and Beverages

Eating a variety of foods and beverages is important. It helps you get the range of nutrients you need to be healthy.

Eat a mix of foods across all food groups

Choose foods and beverages from all food groups – vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and proteins – and not just 1 or 2 of them.



Vegetables



Fat-free and low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soy beverages



Fruits, especially whole fruits



Protein foods, like seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, legumes (beans and peas), nuts, seeds, and soy products



Grains, especially whole grains

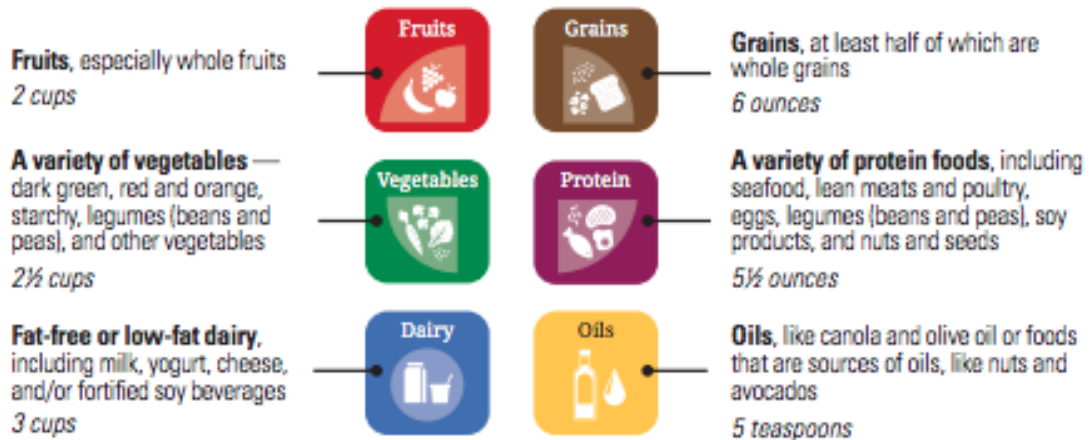
Eat a mix of foods within each food group

For example, each week try eating several types of vegetables, including dark green, red and orange, starchy ones, legumes and others. Switch up the protein foods you eat, too – for example, consider fish, black beans and peanut butter, not just lean meats and poultry.

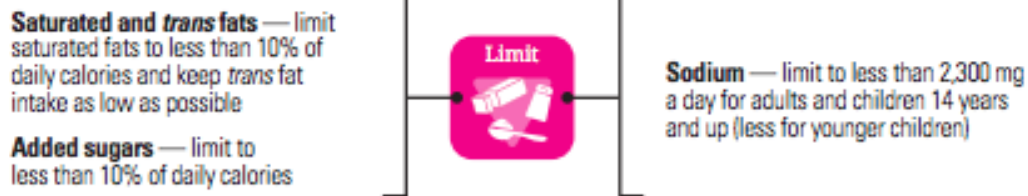
What's in a Healthy Eating Pattern?

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines has recommendations for a healthy eating pattern.

For someone who needs 2,000 calories a day, a healthy eating pattern includes:



And it has limits on:



A variety of meals and snacks can fit within healthy eating patterns. Many meals have several food groups within one dish. Check out these examples.

Taco salad	Tofu-vegetable stir-fry	Tuna salad sandwich
		
<p>½ cup avocado 1 tsp lime juice</p> <p>1 cup chopped lettuce 2 Tbsp salsa</p> <p>½ ounce low-fat cheddar cheese</p>	<p>¼ cup pineapple</p> <p>½ cup chopped Chinese cabbage ¼ cup sliced bamboo shoots ¼ cup chopped sweet red and green peppers</p> <p>1 cup fortified soy beverage</p>	<p>1 medium peach</p> <p>1 Tbsp chopped celery ½ cup shredded lettuce</p> <p>1 cup fat-free milk</p>
<p>  2 ounces tortilla chips</p> <p>  2 ounces cooked ground turkey</p> <p>  2 tsp corn oil for cooking turkey</p>	<p>  1 cup cooked brown rice (2 ounces dry)</p> <p>  4 ounces firm tofu</p> <p>  1 Tbsp canola oil for cooking stir-fry</p>	<p>  2 slices whole-wheat bread</p> <p>  2 ounces canned tuna</p> <p>  1 Tbsp mayonnaise</p>

Adapted from: 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans – How to Build a Healthy Eating Pattern