

General, Healthful Nutrition Therapy

If you are interested in following a general, healthful diet or if your registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) or doctor has recommended it to you, this guide can help provide you with the basic knowledge you'll need. The general healthful diet can be tailored to your personal preferences.

There are several benefits to following a general, healthful diet:

- Depending on your food choices, it could mean less calories, less salt, less added sugars, and less saturated fat and trans fat than many other diets.
- When you focus on eating more whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds, you may improve how much fiber, vitamins, and minerals you eat.
- It can lower your risk of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and cancer.

Tips

- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
 - Don't focus only on green vegetables. There are special health benefits to eating blue-purple, yellow, orange, and red vegetables.
- Eat more legumes (like beans and lentils) and more whole grains.
- Try meatless alternatives.
 - In place of meat, you can get your protein from eating eggs, fish, poultry, beans, peas, soy-based foods, and nuts/nut butters
 - Low-fat or fat-free dairy products are also good sources of protein.
- Keep your salt intake to a minimum (less than 2300 milligrams per day).
 - Avoid adding salt, soy sauce or fish sauce to your food when cooking.
 - Eat freshly prepared meals at home. Processed foods and restaurant foods contain more salt.
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables are the best choices for snacks.
 - When shopping, choose the products with lower sodium content.
- Limit your daily sugar intake.
 - Sugar can be found in honey, syrups, jelly, fruit juice, and fruit juice concentrate.
 - Limit sugar-sweetened beverages like soda pop and fruit juice, sugary snacks, and candy
 - It's best to avoid products with added sugar, but if you do eat them, read labels carefully so you know how much sugar is in each portion.
- It is better to eat unsaturated fats than saturated fats. Avoid trans fats as much as possible.
 - Unsaturated fat is found in fish, avocado, nuts, and oils like sunflower, canola, and olive oils.
 - Saturated fat is found in fatty meat, butter, ice cream, palm and coconut oil, cream, cheese, and lard.
 - Trans fats are found in many processed foods, margarines, fried foods, fast food items, convenience foods like frozen pizza and snack foods, and sweets including pies, cookies, and other pastries. Check nutrition labels.
 - When cooking, use vegetable oil instead of animal oil.
 - Boil, steam, or bake your food instead of frying.

- If you eat meat, remove the fatty part before cooking.

Foods Recommended

Include a variety of the following whole foods. Choose a healthful balance of foods from each category at your meals. Be sure the meals don't exceed your recommended calorie limit so you can achieve and/or maintain a healthy weight.

Food Group	Foods Recommended
Grains	<p>Choose whole grains for at least half of grain selections, including whole wheat, barley, rye, buckwheat, corn, teff, quinoa, millet, amaranth, brown and wild rice, sorghum, and oats</p> <p>Focus on intact cooked whole grains</p> <p>Choose grain products, such as bread, rolls, prepared breakfast cereals, crackers, and pasta made from whole grains that are low in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium</p>
Protein Foods	<p>Fresh or frozen red meat, including lean, trimmed cuts of beef, pork, or lamb a few times per week or less; avoid processed meats, such as bacon, sausage, and ham</p> <p>Fresh or frozen poultry, including skinless chicken or turkey, avoid processed meats that are higher in sodium</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, or canned seafood, including fish, shrimp, lobster, clams, and scallops at least twice per week. Focus on fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, and sardines, as a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids, and limit those which have a greater risk for contamination, including king mackerel, shark, and tilefish</p> <p>Eggs</p> <p>Nuts and seeds, such as peanuts, almonds, pistachios, and sunflower seeds (unsalted varieties)</p> <p>Nut and seed butters, such as peanut butter, almond butter, and sunflower seed butter, (reduced-sodium varieties)</p> <p>Soy foods, such as tofu, tempeh, or soy nuts</p> <p>Meat alternatives, such as veggie burgers, and sausages based on plant protein (reduced-sodium varieties)</p> <p>Unsalted legumes, such as dried beans, lentils, or peas at least a few times per week in place of other protein sources</p>
Dairy	<p>Low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt (low in added sugars), cottage cheese, and cheeses</p> <p>Frozen desserts made from low-fat milk that are low in added sugars (no more than 5 grams added sugars per serving)</p> <p>Fortified soymilk</p>
Vegetables	<p>A variety of fresh, frozen, and canned (unsalted) whole vegetables, including dark-green, red and orange vegetables, legumes (beans and peas), and starchy vegetables; low-sodium vegetable juices</p>
Fruits	<p>A variety of fresh, frozen, canned and dried, whole unsweetened fruits canned fruit packed in water or fruit juice without added sugar)</p> <p>100% fruit juice (limited to one serving per day)</p>

Oils and Fats	<p>Use in moderation, up to 5 servings per day:</p> <p>Unsaturated vegetable oils, including olive, peanut, and canola oils</p> <p>Margarines and spreads, which list liquid vegetable oil as the first ingredient and do not contain trans fats (partially hydrogenated oil)</p> <p>Salad dressing and mayonnaise made from unsaturated vegetable oils</p>
Beverages	<p>Coffee, tea (unsweetened), water, 100% fruit juice (limited to one serving per day)</p> <p>Avoid sweetened beverages, including soda, sweetened tea, sports drinks, energy drinks, and coffee drinks</p>
Other	<p>Prepared foods, including soups, casseroles, salads, baked goods, and snacks made from recommended ingredients, with low levels of added saturated fat, added sugars, or salt</p>

Foods Not Recommended

The following foods should be included occasionally, if at all.

Food Group	Foods Not Recommended
Grains	<p>Sweetened, low-fiber breakfast cereals (less than 2 grams of fiber per serving)</p> <p>Packaged (high sugar, refined ingredients) baked goods</p> <p>Snack crackers and chips made of refined ingredients, cheese crackers, butter crackers</p> <p>Breads made with refined ingredients and saturated fats, such as biscuits, frozen waffles, sweet breads, doughnuts, pastries, packaged baking mixes, pancakes, cakes, and cookies</p>
Protein Foods	<p>Marbled or fatty red meats (beef, pork, lamb), such as ribs</p> <p>Processed red meats, such as bacon, sausage, and ham</p> <p>Poultry (chicken and turkey) with skin</p> <p>Fried meats, poultry, or fish</p> <p>Deli meats, such as pastrami, bologna, or salami (made of meat or poultry)</p> <p>Fried eggs</p> <p>Salted legumes, nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters</p> <p>Meat alternatives with high levels of sodium or saturated fat</p>
Dairy	<p>Whole milk, cream, cheeses made from whole milk, sour cream</p> <p>Yogurt or ice cream made from whole milk or with added sugar</p> <p>Cream cheese made from whole milk</p>
Vegetables	<p>Canned or frozen vegetables with salt, fresh vegetables prepared with salt</p> <p>Fried vegetables</p> <p>Vegetables in cream sauce or cheese sauce</p> <p>Tomato or pasta sauce with high levels of salt or sugar</p>
Fruits	<p>Fruits packed in syrup or made with added sugar</p>

Oils	<p>Solid shortening or partially hydrogenated oils</p> <p>Solid margarine made with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils</p> <p>Margarine that contains trans fats; butter</p>
Beverages	Sweetened drinks, including sweetened coffee or tea drinks, soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks
Alcohol (for adults >21 years of age)	If you choose to drink, women should have no more than one drink per day and men should have no more than two per day (One drink is measured as 5 ounces wine; 12 ounces beer, 1.5 ounces spirits.)
Other	<p>Sugary and/or fatty desserts, candy, and other sweets; salt and seasonings that contain salt</p> <p>Fried foods</p>

General, Healthful Diet Sample 1-Day Menu

Breakfast	1 cup oatmeal 1/2 cup blueberries 1 ounce almonds 1 cup low-fat or fat-free milk 1 cup coffee
Lunch	2 slices whole wheat bread 1/4 cup lettuce for sandwich 2 slices tomato for sandwich 1 ounce reduced-fat, reduced sodium cheese 1/2 cup fresh carrot sticks 1/4 cup hummus 1 banana 1 cup milk 1 cup unsweetened tea 3 ounces turkey slices
Evening Meal	4 ounces baked salmon with basil 1 cup quinoa 1 cup green beans 1 cup mixed greens salad 1 teaspoon olive oil mixed with vinegar of choice 1 whole wheat dinner roll 1 teaspoon margarine (for roll) 1/2 cup applesauce 1 cup water
Evening Snack	1 cup low-fat yogurt 1/2 cup sliced peaches

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Notes