

# GUIDELINES FOR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Balanced eating patterns support a healthy body weight and can reduce the risk of chronic disease. This handout provides tips for healthy eating and weight management.

## Choose a HEALTHY MEAL PATTERN

Eat **3 MEALS** and up to  
**1 - 2 SNACKS** per day



- Space meals 4 - 6 hours apart with low calorie, fiber-rich snacks in between. If you skip a meal, you may be tempted to overeat later in the day.
- Breakfast is an important meal. Include a source of protein with your breakfast

### Simple breakfast suggestions:

- 1. Veggie scramble:** 1-2 eggs with spinach, mushroom, and onion cooked in 1 tsp olive oil. Serve with 1-2 slices of 100% whole grain toast and 1 piece of fruit
- 2. Overnight oats:** ½ cup old fashioned oats, ½ cup low fat milk or unsweetened plant-based milk, 1 tbsp chia seeds, ¼ tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp vanilla extract. Mix ingredients in a jar and refrigerate overnight. Top with ½ cup diced apple or pear or berries, and 2 tbsp walnuts.
- 3. PB & B:** Toasted whole grain English muffin with 1 tbsp nut butter and 1 banana
- 4. Fruit parfait:** 1 cup low fat, unsweetened Greek yogurt with 2 tbsp muesli, and ¾ cup of berries

### Choose healthy snacks:

- air-popped popcorn
- cut up raw vegetables with 2 tbsp hummus
- string cheese
- low fat unsweetened Greek yogurt with ¾ cup berries
- a piece of fresh fruit, such as apple, orange, pear or peach
- Limit nuts and seeds to no more than ¼ cup or 2 tbsp of nut butter per day due to high calorie content.

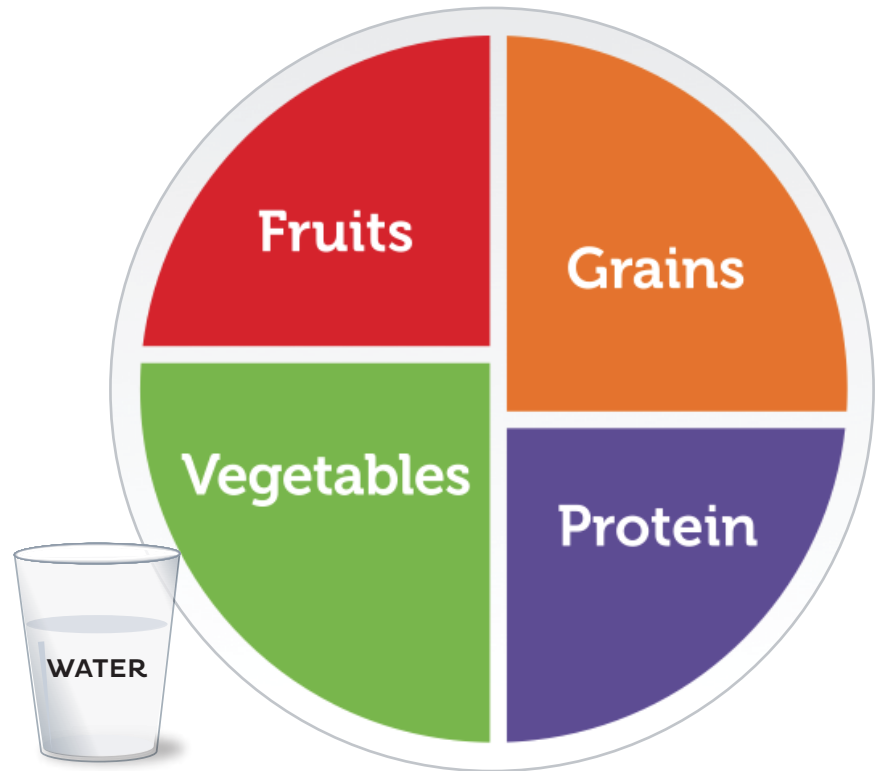
# BUILD A BALANCED PLATE

Fill ½ of your lunch and dinner plate with **non-starchy vegetables**

Fill ¼ of the plate with **non-fried lean protein**

Fill the remaining ¼ of the plate with **grains, bread, or starchy vegetables**

Include a serving of **fruit**, if desired



## FRUIT PORTION SIZES

- 1 small apple, orange, peach, or banana
- 1¼ cups strawberries or watermelon
- ¾ cup blueberries, blackberries, or pineapple
- 1 cup cantaloupe, raspberries, or papaya
- 17 small grapes
- 2 tablespoons raisins or dried fruit

## NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

- asparagus
- beets
- bok choy
- broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- cabbage
- carrots
- cauliflower
- cucumber
- eggplant
- green beans
- leafy greens
- jicama
- mushrooms
- okra
- onions
- peppers
- snap peas
- spinach
- tomato
- zucchini

## Pay attention to **SERVING SIZES** and **FOOD PREPARATION**

### Portion suggestions:

**Grains and starches:** the size of your clenched fist

**Lean proteins:** the size of your own palm

**Fats and oils:** the size of your thumb

**Milk or yogurt:** 1 cup

**Fruit:** 1 small piece, ½ large piece, or about 1 cup

**Vegetables:** no limit on salad or non-starchy vegetables

### Instead of frying

choose lower fat cooking methods: bake, broil, roast, stew, boil, steam, poach, grill, microwave, or lightly sauté foods

## BUILD A BALANCED PLATE

### Choose **WHOLE GRAINS** most often, limit white, refined grains

- Whole grains contain fiber which is a beneficial nutrient that makes you feel full longer.
- Choose brown rice, wild rice, black rice, barley, farro, quinoa, bulgur, steel cut oats, buckwheat, 100% whole grain bread, whole grain noodles.
- Look for the words whole grain, whole wheat, or sprouted grain as the first ingredient on the ingredient list found on the food package. Select whole grain breads with at least 2 grams of dietary fiber per serving.
- Good whole grain cereal options include those with 3 or more grams of fiber per serving and less than 5 grams of added sugar.

### Choose a variety of non-fried, **LEAN PROTEIN** sources Avoid or limit processed meats

- Choose fish, seafood, skinless poultry, tofu, beans, peas, lentils, eggs, nuts and seeds.
- Choose lean red meats such as tenderloin, sirloin, and flank steak.
- Limit processed meats. Studies show that processed meats such as salami, hot dogs, bacon, and sausage can increase your risk for heart disease and cancer.

### **Limit** saturated fats, trans fats, hydrogenated fats, and sodium

- Saturated fats tend to be solid at room temperature and are found in animal products such as butter, cream, and in the fat marbling in meats.
- Limit tropical oils such as coconut and palm oils. These solid fats are saturated fats and not heart healthy.
- Trans fats were previously found in processed foods such as cakes, cookies, margarines and fried fast food. These fats were eventually banned in the United States and are no longer used in food manufacturing.
- Limit salt. Season food with herbs, spices, lemon juice and vinegar. Add garlic, onion and ginger for added flavor.

### Choose **HEART-HEALTHY FATS** and oils

- Choose unsaturated fats and oils such as olive, avocado, canola, peanut, sunflower, sesame, or soybean oil. Foods that contain heart healthy fats are avocados, nuts, seeds, and fish, especially especially salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring and trout.
- Seafood and fish are lower in saturated fat and rich in omega-3 fats, which are heart healthy. Aim for 2 servings of fish or seafood per week. a serving is 3-4 oz or a size of deck of cards.
- Heart healthy fats can help you feel full longer but contribute a lot of calories. Be sure to limit your portion size. Examples of serving sizes include ¼ cup of nuts or the size of a shot glass, 2 tsp of nut butter, or 1 tsp non-tropical plant oil per serving.

# BUILD A BALANCED PLATE

## Choose **NONFAT AND LOW-FAT DAIRY** products.

- Switch from whole fat dairy products to nonfat or 1% milk or yogurt.
- The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 3 servings of calcium-rich dairy or dairy alternative per day. A serving is equal to 1 cup of milk, 1 cup yogurt, or 1½ ounces of cheese.
- Choose reduced fat or low-fat cheeses but limit your intake to limit calories from saturated fat. One serving of cheese is about the size of a string cheese, sandwich slice, or a 2 one-inch cubes.
- If your diet is low in dairy products, choose an unsweetened, calcium-fortified plant-based alternative such as soy, almond, pea protein, or oat milk.

## **Decrease** intake of added sugars, sweets, and desserts

- Some healthy foods have natural sugars, such as fruits, milk, and yogurt. Other foods have added sugars. Sugar-sweetened treats should be limited. That includes sodas, candies, desserts, and sweetened cereals.
- Sugars contribute calories without providing your body with essential nutrients. Desserts are often high in both sugar and fat.
- Limit added sugars, desserts, treats and sweets. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons or 25 grams of added sugar for adult women and no more than 9 teaspoons or 36 grams of added sugar for adult men. Avoid all sugary drinks.
- Sugar substitutes such as sucralose, stevia, and aspartame can be used if desired.
- For a sweet low-sugar treat, Try fresh fruit, frozen fruit such as grapes, berries, mango, pineapple, non fat frozen fudge bars, apple slices with peanut butter or a square of dark chocolate.
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## Drink **water** throughout the day

- Avoid sugary beverages such as soda, juice, lemonade, sweetened coffee, or tea beverages. Instead, try water with lemon or lime, unsweetened iced tea, or flavored zero calorie sparkling water.

## **Limit alcohol** to 1 drink per day

- 1 drink = 5 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1½ ounces of liquor

## Engage in **daily physical activity**

- Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 or more days per week.
- If unable to complete 30 min. at one time, then three 10-min.e bouts of physical activity can also be beneficial.
- Brisk walking, jogging, dancing, biking, swimming, and tennis are great forms of cardio exercise.
- Include resistance workouts such as lifting weights or using resistance bands at least twice a week.

# STICK WITH IT for the long haul

Focus on a long-term healthy lifestyle, not on short-term dieting. When you are healthy, you will feel better and will be more motivated to continue this lifestyle.

## Practice MINDFUL EATING

- Plate your food. Leave leftover food in the kitchen. Eat slowly, take small bites, chew food well. put your fork down between each bite.
- Wait 20 minutes before deciding to have a second helping.
- To control portion sizes, serve meals on a smaller plate such as a salad plate.

## STRATEGIES for success

- Eat more at home.
- Make time in your schedule to plan your meals and shop for groceries.
- Limit fast food and calorie dense take out food.
- Find simple, healthy recipes at:  
<https://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/>  
<https://eatfresh.org/find-a-recipe>

## Keep a DAILY FOOD RECORD

- Studies have shown that people who keep food records have more success with weight loss. Food records can help strengthen your motivation and build your confidence, all predictors of weight loss success.
- Consider tracking your food intake using a website or app such as [www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com) or [www.loseit.com](http://www.loseit.com).

## Focus on ONE CHANGE AT A TIME

- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is a process and can be overwhelming at times. Adjusting one thing at a time will make this process a little easier. Be patient with yourself, you are making some major changes!

