

Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

18 Health Tips for 2018

GO FURTHER with FOOD by incorporating these food, nutrition and physical activity tips.

1. Eat Breakfast

Start your morning with a healthy breakfast that includes lean protein, whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Try making a breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, low-fat cheese, salsa and a whole wheat tortilla or a parfait with low-fat plain yogurt, fruit and whole grain cereal.

2. Make Half Your Plate Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and veggies add color, flavor and texture plus vitamins, minerals and fiber to your plate. Make 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables your daily goal. Experiment with different types, including fresh, frozen and canned.

3. Watch Portion Sizes

Get out the measuring cups and see how close your portions are to the recommended serving size. Use half your plate for fruits and vegetables and the other half for grains and lean protein foods. To complete the meal, add a serving of fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt.

4. Be Active

Regular physical activity has so many health benefits. Start by doing what exercise you can for at least 10 minutes at a time. Children and teens should get 60 or more minutes of physical activity per day, and adults should get two hours and 30 minutes per week. You don't have to hit the gym—take a walk after dinner or play a game of catch or basketball.

5. Fix Healthy Snacks

Healthy snacks can sustain your energy levels between meals, especially when they include a combination of foods. Choose from two or more of the MyPlate food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. Try raw veggies with low-fat cottage cheese, or a tablespoon of peanut butter with an apple or banana.

6. Get to Know Food Labels

Reading the Nutrition Facts panel can help you shop and eat or drink smarter.

7. Consult an RDN

Whether you want to eat better to lose weight or lower your risk or manage a chronic disease, consult the experts! Registered dietitian nutritionists can help you by providing sound, easy-to-follow personalized nutrition advice.

8. Follow Food Safety Guidelines

Reduce your chances of getting sick by practicing proper food safety. This includes: regular hand washing, separating raw protein foods from ready-to-eat foods, cooking foods to the appropriate temperature, and refrigerating food promptly. Learn more about home food safety at www.homefoodsafety.org.

9. Drink More Water

Quench your thirst with water instead of drinks with added sugars. Stay well hydrated by drinking plenty of water if you are active, live or work in hot conditions, or are an older adult.

10. Get Cooking

Preparing foods at home can be healthy, rewarding and cost-effective. Resolve to learn some cooking and kitchen basics, like how to dice an onion or cook dried beans. The collection of “Planning and Prep” videos at www.eatright.org/videos will get you started.

11. Dine Out without Ditching Your Goals

You can eat out and stick to your healthy eating plan! The key is to plan ahead, ask questions and choose foods carefully. Compare nutrition information, if available, and look for healthier options that are grilled, baked, broiled or steamed.

12. Enact Family Meal Time

Plan to eat as a family at least a few times each week. Set a regular mealtime. Turn off the TV, phones and other electronic devices to encourage mealtime talk. Get kids involved in meal planning and cooking and use this time to teach them about good nutrition.

13. Banish Brown Bag Boredom

Whether it’s a lunch for work or school, prevent brown bag boredom with easy-to-fix, healthy lunch ideas. Try a whole-wheat pita pocket with veggies and hummus or a low sodium vegetable soup with whole grain crackers or a salad of mixed greens with low-fat dressing and a hard boiled egg.

14. Explore New Foods and Flavors

Add more nutrition and eating pleasure by expanding your range of food choices. When shopping, make a point of selecting a fruit, vegetable or whole grain that’s new to you or your family.

15. Eat Seafood Twice a Week

Seafood—fish and shellfish—contains a range of nutrients including healthy omega-3 fats. Salmon, trout, oysters and sardines are higher in omega-3s and lower in mercury.

16. Cut Back on Added Sugars

Foods and drinks with added sugars can contribute empty calories and little or no nutrition. Reviewing ingredients on the food label can help you identify sources of added sugar. Visit www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

17. Experiment with More Plant-Based Meals

Expand the variety in your menus with budget-friendly meatless meals. Many recipes that use meat and poultry can be made without. Eating a variety of plant foods can help. Vegetables, beans, and lentils are all great substitutes. Try including one meatless meal per week to start out.

18. Make an Effort to Reduce Food Waste

Check out what foods you have on hand before stocking up at the grocery store. Plan meals based on leftovers and only buy what you will use or freeze within a couple of days. Managing these food resources at home can help save nutrients and money.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information, visit www.eatright.org.



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.