

Better Food Choices

Skip This, Eat That!

For years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been trying to help people make healthier and more balanced food choices. They have been tweaking the Food Pyramid and grouping foods together hoping Americans will use a simple guideline of what to eat every day.

According to the USDA an adult on a 2,000 calorie a day diet should eat this:

- 2 cups of fruit.
- 2 1/2 cups of vegetables.
- 6 ounces of grains with 3 of them being whole grains.
- 5.5 ounces of meat, poultry, fish, nuts, seeds and/or dry beans.
- 3 cups low-fat or fat-free dairy.
- 6 teaspoons or 24 grams of oils.

If you followed that, you would then have about 267 calories leftover that you can choose to fill with the foods of your choice.

The USDA has conveniently laid out exactly how much you should eat from the six major food groups with the recommendations above. But even with all that, people still manage to make unhealthy choices while following the guidelines. What people don't seem to understand is how devastating poor choices can be to our bodies, even when those choices are small. Here's an example.

If you currently drink two cups of 2% milk every day, you're taking in almost 10 grams of fat and 244 calories. Switch to fat free milk and you'll drop 63 calories a day. It may not seem like much, but 63 calories add up to 6.5 pounds a year. And that's just for switching your milk.

In an effort to educate and help us make better choices, a series of books have come out under the title, *Eat This, Not That!* We want to congratulate the authors because they help people see what's wrong with their current choices and then they show alternatives that are

better for you. The problem is, many of those alternatives are still poor choices. Here's an example.

Eat This, Not That shows a McDonald's Big Mac with 540 calories and 29 grams of fat as a better choice. They compare it to the Burger King Whopper with Cheese that has 760 calories and 47 grams of fat. If those two burgers were your only choice of food in the world, they'd be right, pick the Big Mac. But there are several other options on both restaurant menus that would make far better choices.

Visit McDonalds and you can get a Mac Snack Wrap (which still has beef) that has only 330 calories and 19 grams of fat. Burger King sells the Double Burger which has only 370 calories and 19 grams of fat. While neither of those could be considered healthy foods, they're both significantly better than the "good" choice of a Big Mac.

In an effort to help make healthy choices easier, we've decided to combine two things. The serving recommendations of the six food groups by the USDA with a list of foods grouped into better and worse choices. Instead of just saying you can eat beef, poultry or fish, I list cuts of meat that are leaner and the ones higher in fat to avoid.

We've made these lists as a tool so you can plan in advance what you're going to eat. Consider what you're going to cook on the spot, what can be made in advance and what you can grab when you're on the go. Remember to include any sauces, dips and drinks in your total calculations.

The goal isn't to completely change everything you're eating, but to switch to healthier versions of the foods you already know and love. Small changes made over time are much more effective than grand sweeping reform. Start tracking your food today.



Fruits

Suggested serving size is two cups of fruit a day. Whole fruits have heart healthy fiber, they're low in fat, packed with good antioxidants and they're naturally sweet.

Skip This	Eat This
Dried fruit is too densely packed with sugar and calories. One-quarter cup of raisins has 21 grams of sugar while half a cup of grapes has only 12.	Fresh or frozen whole fruit with no sugar added.
Fruit juices are high in calories and sugar content. Early research seems to indicate our bodies don't register the calories from juice as readily as we do with whole foods, so we tend to drink too much.	Fresh or frozen whole fruit with no sugar added.
Canned fruit in syrup.	Canned fruit in water with no sugar added.

<i>Fruit</i>	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Calories</i>
Apple	1 medium _____	95
Apricots	5 _____	84
Banana	1 medium _____	105
Blackberries	1.5 cups _____	93
Blueberries	1 cup _____	83
Cantaloupe	½ melon _____	94
Cherries	18 _____	93
Figs	3 small _____	89
Grapefruit	1 large _____	53
Grapes	25 grapes _____	85
Honeydew Melon	¼ melon _____	90
Kiwi	2 medium _____	93
Mandarin Oranges	2 medium _____	93
Mango	1 cup sliced _____	107
Nectarine	1 medium _____	62
Orange	1 medium _____	62
Papaya	1.5 cup cubes _____	82
Peach	2 medium _____	76
Pear	1 medium _____	96
Pineapple	1 cup chunks _____	83
Plums	3 _____	91
Raspberries	1.5 cups _____	96

Strawberries	1.5 cups sliced _____	80
Tangerine	2 medium _____	93
Watermelon	2 cups diced _____	91

Vegetables

Suggested serving size is two and a half cups of vegetables a day. Vegetables have lots of healthy fiber; they're low in fat and packed with vitamins and beneficial antioxidants. They'll fill you up without taking a lot of calories.

Skip This	Eat This
Fried or breaded vegetables that are coated with unhealthy fats.	Vegetables raw, steamed, broiled or baked.
Vegetables served with regular cream, cheese, butter sauces or dressings.	Vegetables with low fat or fat-free creams, cheeses and dressings. Fat-free cream cheese on some celery, low-fat cheese on an apple or fat-free dressing to dip some broccoli in is delicious.
Deep fried vegetables like French fries or potato chips have little redeeming value.	Baked French fries or potato chips are just as good tasting with a quarter of the unhealthy fats. When baked potatoes are made into a cold potato salad, the chilling step forms a type of resistant starch that actually helps burn fat.

<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Calories</i>
Corn	½ cup kernels _____	77
Corn on the Cob	1 ear _____	59
Green Beans	½ cup _____	18
Mushrooms	5 large _____	25
Onions	¼ cup, sliced _____	12
Peas, Green	2 cups _____	82
Peppers, Green Bell	1 cup, sliced _____	18
Plantains	½ cup sliced _____	90
Potato, Baked	½ cup _____	57
Radish	½ cup _____	9
Sauerkraut	1 cup _____	27
Spinach	4 cups _____	28

Squash.....	1 ½ cups chopped	30
Sweet Potato, Baked ..	½ cup	90
Tomato	1 medium	22
Turnip	½ cup	17
Veggies, Mixed	1 cup	80
Water Chestnuts	4 nuts	35
Yams, Baked	½ cup	90
Zucchini	1 ½ cups chopped	30

Grains

Suggested serving size is 6 ounces of grains with 3 of them being whole grains. The fiber in whole grains lower the risk of heart attack, boosts the good bacteria in your digestive system and helps prevent obesity. The key word to look for is “whole” as in “whole wheat” or “whole grains.”

Skip This	Eat This
Biscuits, croissants, white breads and white bread rolls.	Whole wheat breads, pita bread and whole-wheat rolls have healthy fiber.
Cereals with more than 5 grams of sugar per serving.	Cereals with 5 grams of sugar or less per serving and 3 grams or more of fiber.
Donuts, pastries and scones.	Whole-wheat English muffins and small whole grain bagels or half a regular sized whole grain bagel are lower in fat and higher in fiber.
Traditional crackers are higher in salt and many have trans fats.	Whole-wheat crackers with reduced sodium and no trans fats.
Granola is packed with calories, fat and sugar.	Low-fat and low-sugar granola cereals with 5 grams of sugar or less per serving and 3 grams or more of fiber.
Oatmeal instant packets.	Oatmeal instant packets with no sugar or regular unsweetened oatmeal.

Skip This	Eat This
Pancakes with traditional syrup.	Whole wheat pancakes with sugar free syrup.
Pasta that’s white and no fiber.	Whole-wheat pasta with fiber.
Popcorn buttered.	Unbuttered popcorn with spices added.
Potato chips fried.	Potato chips baked or pretzels with reduced salt.
Rice white or fried.	Brown rice that’s boiled, microwaved or steamed.
Tortillas fried.	Soft tortillas made from corn or whole wheat. For lower sodium, choose corn tortillas.
Waffles with traditional syrup.	Whole-wheat waffles with added fiber and sugar free syrup.
White flour.	Wheat flour.

Grains	Serving	Calories
Bagel (Wheat)	½ bagel	77
Bread (Wheat)	1 slice	100
Cereal (Bran Flakes)	¾ cup	96
Cereal (Shredded Wheat)	2 biscuits	128
English Muffin (Wheat)	1 muffin	130
Granola (Low-Fat)	½ cup	190
Grits	¾ cup	107
Hamburger Bun (Wheat) .	1 bun	120
Hot Dog Buns (Wheat) ...	1 bun	90
Oatmeal Unsweetened	1 cup	147
Pancake (Wheat) 4” Dia .	1 pancake	92
Pasta (Wheat)	1 cup	174
Pita Bread (Wheat)	1 pita 6-1/2 dia	170
Popcorn (Air Popped)	3 cups	93
Potato Chips, Baked	11 crisps	110
Pretzels, Lower Sodium ..	10 twists (2.1 oz.)	228
Rice, Brown	1 cup cooked	216
Roll (Wheat)	1 roll	170
Tortilla (Corn)	3 shells (1.1 oz.)	150
Tortilla (Wheat)	1 tortilla (1.2 oz.)	120
Waffle (Wheat)	2 waffles (2.5 oz)	140

Protein

Suggested serving size is 5.5 ounces and these include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dry beans, peas, nuts and/or seeds. Ideally you should pick from a variety of these each week. Vegans and vegetarians should pay special attention to this group so they make sure to get enough.

Skip This	Eat This
Beef 93% lean or lower, ground.	94% lean or greater ground beef, chicken or turkey.
Beef porterhouse, skirt steak (outside) or rib eye.	Beef round or chuck are the leanest options. Cuts you should choose with caution include top sirloin, tri-tip, strip, T-bone, tenderloin, flank and skirt steak (inside).
Crabs, clams or shellfish in butter and cream sauces.	Crabs, clams or shellfish steamed or broiled.
Fish with traditional breading or fish cakes fried in oil.	Fish with whole wheat breading and baked.
Fish canned in oil.	Fish fresh, frozen or canned in water. When choosing canned, get lower sodium if possible.
Hot dogs or sausage.	Fat free hot dogs, turkey dogs and chicken dogs.
Lunchmeats higher in fat and sodium including bologna, pepperoni, salami or liverwurst.	Lean lunchmeats including fat free bologna, chicken, ham and turkey.
Pork spare ribs and bacon.	Pork that's lean including tenderloin, loin chop and turkey bacon.
Shrimp breaded or fried with cream or sugar based sauce.	Shrimp steamed with low-fat cocktail sauce.
Whole Eggs.	Egg Whites.

Skip This	Eat This
Eggs that are fried in butter.	Eggs that are boiled, baked or fried in fat free spray.
Fried or refried beans and peas.	Baked beans and peas or fat free refried beans.
Nuts roasted in oil and salted.	Nuts raw, baked and unsalted.
Peanut butter, regular.	Lower fat peanut butter or natural peanut butter with oil poured off.
Seeds roasted in oil and salted.	Seeds raw, baked and unsalted.

<i>Protein</i>	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Calories</i>
Beans, Baked	½ cup	140
Beef, Ground, 95% Lean	4 oz.	193
Beef Chuck, Braised	3 oz.	180
Bologna Lunch Meat, 98% Fat Free	2 slices (1 oz)	25
Chicken Breast, Boneless, Skinless	4 oz.	124
Clam, Steamed	3 oz.	126
Crab, Steamed	4 oz.	110
Egg, Boiled	1 large egg	78
Egg Whites in Fat Free Spray	1 large	17
Fish, Salmon Baked	4 oz.	233
Fish, Tilapia Baked	4 oz.	145
Garbanzo Beans	½ cup	134
Hot Dog, Fat Free	1 frank (1.8 oz.)	40
Kidney Beans	½ cup	112
Lentils	½ cup	115
Lima Beans	½ cup	108
Lobster, Steamed	4 oz.	111
Nuts, Mixed Raw	¼ cup	203
Peanut Butter, Reduced Fat .	1 Tbsp.	95
Pinto Beans	¼ cup	61
Pork Tenderloin	4 oz.	185
Refried Beans, Fat Free	½ cup	100
Scallops	4 oz.	127
Shrimp	4 large (.8 oz.)	22
Sunflower Seeds, Raw	¼ cup	150
Tuna Fish, Canned in Water .	4 oz.	131
Turkey Breast	4 oz.	153
Turkey Bacon	1 strip (.5 oz.)	35

Dairy

Suggested serving size is 2 to 3 cups low-fat or fat-free dairy. There are lactose-free and soy versions for the lactose intolerant and vegans.

Skip This	Eat This
Buttermilk, regular.	Buttermilk from 1% or non-fat milk.
Cheese that's full fat.	1% or fat free cheese.
Cottage cheese, regular.	Cottage cheese that's low fat, nonfat and dry-curd with less than 2% fat.
Cream cheese, regular.	Cream cheese, fat free.
Evaporated milk.	Evaporated non-fat milk.
Half & half, regular.	Half & half, fat free.
Ice cream, regular.	Sorbet, sherbet, low-fat or fat free ice cream.
Ricotta cheese, regular.	Ricotta cheese, low fat or fat free.
Sour cream, regular.	Sour cream, fat free.
Whole milk and 2% milk.	1%, skim milk and low fat soy milk.
Yogurt with whole milk.	Greek yogurt with low-fat or non-fat milk.

<i>Dairy</i>	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Calories</i>
Buttermilk, Fat Free	1 cup _____	90
Cheddar Cheese, Fat Free	2 slices _____	62
Cottage Cheese, Fat Free	4 oz. _____	81
Cream Cheese, Fat Free	3.5 oz. _____	96
Evaporated Non-fat Milk	¼ can (3 fl. oz.) _____	74
Greek Yogurt, Low-fat	1 cup _____	160
Half & Half, Fat Free	¼ cup _____	38
Milk, Fat Free	1 cup _____	91
Ricotta Cheese, Fat Free	¼ cup _____	50
Sherbet	½ cup _____	107
Sorbet	½ cup _____	100
Sour Cream, Fat Free	3.5 oz. _____	74
Soy Milk, Light	1 cup _____	80

Fats and Oils

Suggested serving size is 6 teaspoons or 24 grams of oils. Make sure to limit these because excess amounts cause coronary artery disease, diabetes, some cancers, heart disease, obesity and osteoarthritis.

Skip This	Eat This
Drinks packed with sugar including regular soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit juices.	Water, sugar free soda, reduced sugar fruit juices and no sugar added tea.
Butter, margarine or shortening.	Canola oil, fat free sprays, olive oil or soybean oil.
Cookies, regular.	Cookies with lower sugar like gingersnaps or reduced fat such as oatmeal.
Mayonnaise, regular.	Mayonnaise, fat free.
Salad dressing, regular.	Salad dressing, light or fat free.

<i>Fats and Oils</i>	<i>Serving</i>	<i>Calories</i>
Canola Oil.....	1 tsp. _____	40
Gingersnaps, Sugar Free	7 cookies (1.1 oz.) _____	130
Oatmeal Cookie, Fat Free ..	1 large (.6 oz.) _____	59
Olive Oil	1 tsp. _____	39
Mayonnaise, Fat Free	1 tsp. _____	20
Salad Dressing, (1,000 Island) Fat Free	1 Tbsp. _____	21