

HEALTHY EATING

START THE NEW YEAR OUT WITH HEALTHY WEIGHT GOALS

A healthy lifestyle involves many choices. Among them, choosing a balanced diet or eating plan. So how do you choose a healthy eating plan? Let's begin by defining - what is a healthy eating plan?

According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs

Eat Healthfully and Enjoy It!

A healthy eating plan that helps you manage your weight includes a variety of foods you may not have considered. If "healthy eating" makes you think about the foods you **can't** have, try refocusing on all the new foods you **can** eat—

Fresh fruits – don't think just apples or bananas. These are great choices, but try some "exotic" fruits, too. How about a mango? Or a juicy pineapple or kiwi fruit! When your favorite fresh fruits aren't in season, try a frozen, canned, or dried variety of a fresh fruit you enjoy. One caution about canned fruits is that they may contain added sugars or syrups. Be sure and choose canned varieties of fruit packed in water or in their own juice.

- **Fresh vegetables** – try something new. You may find that you love grilled vegetables or steamed vegetables with an herb you haven't tried like rosemary. You can sauté vegetables in a non-stick pan with a small amount of cooking spray. Or try frozen or canned vegetables for a quick side dish – just microwave and serve. When trying canned vegetables, look for vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces. Commit to going to the produce department and trying a new vegetable each week.
- **Calcium-rich foods** – you may automatically think of a glass of low-fat or fat-free milk when someone says "eat more dairy products." But what about low-fat and fat-free yogurts without added sugars? These come in a wide variety of flavors and can be a great dessert substitute for those with a sweet tooth.
- **A new twist on an old favorite** – if your favorite recipe calls for frying fish or breaded chicken, try healthier variations using baking or grilling. Maybe even try a recipe that uses dry beans in place of higher-fat meats. Ask around or search the internet and magazines for recipes with fewer calories – you might be surprised to find you have a new favorite dish!

Do I Have to Give Up My Favorite Comfort Food?

No! Healthy eating is all about balance. You can enjoy your favorite foods even if they are high in calories, fat or added sugars. The key is eating them only once in a while and balance them out with healthier foods and more physical activity.

Some general tips for comfort foods:

- Consume them less often. If you normally eat these foods every day, cut back to once a week or once a month. You'll be cutting your calories because you're not having the food as often.
- Eat smaller amounts. If your favorite higher calorie food is an afternoon chocolate bar, have a smaller size or only half a bar. Be careful! This technique works well for some people, but others may find it is too tempting to have their favorite food available, even in smaller amounts.
- Try a lower-calorie version. Use lower-calorie ingredients or prepare it differently. For example, if your macaroni and cheese recipe uses whole milk, butter, and full-fat cheese, try remaking it with non-fat milk, less butter, light cream cheese, fresh spinach and tomatoes. Just remember to not increase your portion size. For more ideas on how to cut back on calories, see [Eat More Weigh Less](#).

The point is, you can figure out how to include almost any food in your healthy eating plan in a way that still helps you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

Being consistently healthy in your eating choices is the key. Making the same healthy eating choices over time can lead to better eating habits. By thinking more positively and focusing on what you can have, you'll help yourself establish healthy eating habits.

Want to Learn More?

Improving Your Eating Habits

To learn more about getting started and changing your eating habits.

Planning Meals

By stocking up on healthier foods that contain fewer calories, you'll be making small changes that can prepare you to be a weight-loss success story!

Cutting Calories

Ways to cut calories for your meals, snacks, and even beverages.

Healthy Recipes

Links to healthy recipes with calorie counts and nutritional information.

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January is GLAUCOMA Awareness Month

Fifty million Americans are at risk for vision loss from glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness in the United States. Are you one of them? If you are, do you know how to reduce your risk of blindness?

Glaucoma is a condition in which the optic nerve is damaged. It can be associated with elevated pressure inside the eye and can lead to vision loss.

There are usually no symptoms at first, but as the disease progresses, a person with glaucoma may notice gradually failing vision with:

- Blurred vision
- Loss of peripheral vision
- Difficulty focusing on objects
- Presence of halos around lights

Anyone can develop glaucoma. Those who are at higher risk and should have an eye exam at least every one or two years include:

- African Americans over age 40
- Individuals over age 60
- Family history of glaucoma
- Experienced a serious eye injury
- Other health conditions, such as diabetes

Although glaucoma cannot be cured, early detection and treatment can usually preserve vision. An Ophthalmologist can help control glaucoma in several ways. However, vision loss due to glaucoma cannot be restored and, if left untreated, glaucoma can lead to blindness.

For more information about GLAUCOMA write:

National Eye Health Education Program
2020 Vision Place
Bethesda, MD 20892-3655
or visit
www.nei.nih.gov

Sources: National Institute of Health – www.nih.gov ;
Center for Disease Control – www.cdc.gov

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