



Building a Healthy Plate

Whether preparing a meal at home, packing lunch to go, or ordering at a restaurant, use this guide to make your meal nutritious, balanced, & satisfying.

HEALTHY MEAL MODEL



Water

Unsweetened options include tap water, sparkling water, water infused with fruit and/or herbs, and unsweetened coffee or tea. Sweetened beverages such as soda, smoothies, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee drinks and teas may contribute to chronic disease risk.

Grains and Starches

Whole grains and starchy vegetables are filling and nutritious. Whole grains include oats, barley, quinoa, corn tortillas, and whole grain bread or pasta. Starchy vegetables include sweet potato, peas, corn, and winter squash. These foods provide fiber, which can also be added with vegetables, beans, lentils, and fruit.

Vegetables and Fruit

Selecting a variety of colors provides a variety of nutrients and makes a meal more appealing. Whole fruit is more filling than juice because of the fiber. Vegetables or fruit can be raw or cooked and fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.

Proteins

Choose plant-based protein options more often, such as tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, nut butters, and seeds. Other healthy protein options include skinless poultry, seafood, lean cuts of meat, eggs, and plain yogurt.

Proportions

The proportions shown above can be adjusted to your energy needs and hunger level. Use the hunger scale to gauge how much food to eat to feel satisfied, checking in with yourself before, during, and after eating as a way to eat mindfully.

Healthy Fats

Nuts and seeds, nut butters, hummus, avocado, tuna, salmon, and liquid plant oils such as olive oil are sources of heart-healthy, unsaturated fats. Choosing unsaturated fats over saturated fats may lower your risk of heart disease. Saturated fats are found in higher fat meats like ribs and some processed meat, butter, cheese and other high-fat dairy products and snack/dessert foods.