Internal & Respiratory Medicine Specialty Clinic

Nutrition & Healthy Eating Guide

General information for adults. Your healthcare needs may require a different plan.

Healthy eating does not need to be perfect. Aim for patterns you can maintain over time: more minimally processed foods, more vegetables and fruit, whole grains, protein foods, and water as your main beverage.

A SIMPLE PLATE GUIDE

1/2 plate	1/4 plate	1/4 plate
Vegetables and fruit	Whole-grain foods	Protein foods

CHOOSE MORE OFTEN

- **Vegetables and fruit:** fresh, frozen, or lower-sodium canned choices.
- **Whole grains:** oats, barley, brown rice, quinoa, whole-grain breads and pastas.
- **Protein foods:** beans, lentils, tofu, eggs, fish, poultry, yogurt, milk or fortified alternatives, nuts and seeds.
- **Unsaturated fats:** foods such as nuts, seeds, avocado and vegetable oils can replace foods higher in saturated fat.
- **Water:** make water your usual drink. Unsweetened tea or coffee can also fit for many adults.

CHOOSE LESS OFTEN

- Highly processed foods that are high in sodium, free sugars, or saturated fat.
- Sugar-sweetened drinks such as regular pop, sweetened coffee drinks, energy drinks, and many fruit drinks.
- Frequent fast-food or restaurant meals that are high in sodium or saturated fat.
- Large amounts of processed meats and foods where sodium is a major ingredient.

PRACTICAL HABITS

- **Plan ahead.** Keep simple meals and snacks available so healthier choices are easier when you are busy.
- **Cook more often.** Preparing food at home gives you more control over sodium, sugar and saturated fat.
- **Notice hunger and fullness.** Slow down when you eat and give yourself time to notice when you are comfortably satisfied.
- **Use food labels.** Compare similar products for sodium, sugars and saturated fat.
- **Make gradual changes.** Small changes that you can repeat are usually easier to maintain than an all-or-nothing plan.

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Nutrition & Healthy Eating Guide - Everyday Situations

EATING OUT

- Choose meals built around vegetables or salad plus a protein food.
- Ask for sauces and dressings on the side when possible.
- Choose grilled, baked, roasted or steamed foods more often than heavily breaded or deep-fried foods.
- If portions are large, consider sharing, taking some home, or stopping when comfortably full.

SNACK IDEAS

- Plain yogurt with berries
- Vegetables with hummus
- A small handful of unsalted nuts
- Fruit with a protein food such as yogurt or nut butter
- Whole-grain crackers with tuna, hummus or lower-sodium cheese

SLEEP, STRESS & ACTIVITY

- **Sleep:** regular, restorative sleep supports overall health and can affect appetite, energy and food choices.
- **Stress:** stress can change eating patterns. Planning simple meals and non-food coping strategies may help.
- **Activity:** regular movement supports cardiovascular and metabolic health. If you have chest pain, dizziness, significant shortness of breath, or another medical concern, speak with your healthcare provider before increasing activity.

WHEN TO ASK FOR PERSONALIZED ADVICE

Speak with your clinician or a registered dietitian before making major dietary changes if you have kidney disease, diabetes treated with medication, heart failure, liver disease, significant food allergies, swallowing problems, pregnancy, a history of an eating disorder, or another condition that affects nutrition.

Sources & further reading

This handout is an original clinic summary informed by Canada's Food Guide and Heart & Stroke Foundation healthy-eating guidance. It does not reproduce another clinic's handout.

Health Canada: https://food-guide.canada.ca/ | Heart & Stroke Foundation: https://www.heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/healthy-eating

General information only: This handout is not a diagnosis or individualized nutrition prescription. Follow the advice of your own healthcare team.