

Achieving a Healthy Weight

Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes. Good health is more than just a number on the scale. Eating a well-balanced diet and getting regular physical activity will help you feel your best and reach a healthy weight. This will help lower your risk for many diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. If you already have a medical condition, following these tips may help you manage your condition and reach a weight that is healthy for you.

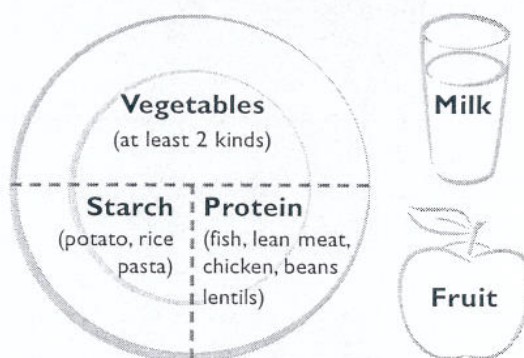
Getting Started

- Healthy weight loss will take time, so start with a reasonable goal. Losing 5 to 10% of your current body weight is a good place to start. A weight loss of ½ to 1 pound per week is realistic.
- Make healthy food choices most of the time, but remember it is okay to include higher-calorie foods occasionally. Healthy eating doesn't mean you need to totally eliminate higher-fat and higher-sugar foods. When you choose to include your favourite treats, enjoy them without guilt!
- Move more every day. Exercise helps you burn calories and build muscle, which will help with your efforts to reach a healthy weight. Any activity that gets you moving is good for your health. Start slowly and work up to at least 30 minutes of activity, such as walking, on most days. Shorter periods of activity, several times each day can be just as good as one longer exercise session. Use Canada's Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living to help you set your activity goals. (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/index.html>)

Note: If you have not been active up until now, discuss your activity plan with your doctor before you start.

What is Healthy Eating?

1. Start by following Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and enjoy balanced meals. Try to include foods from 3 or 4 food groups at each meal.
2. Use the picture of the balanced plate to plan your main meals. Start by filling half of a 10" plate with vegetables. Divide the other half between lean meat or alternatives and starchy foods. Add milk and fruit for a perfectly-balanced meal.
3. Eat regular meals and snacks. This helps to reduce food cravings and can decrease the tendency to overeat when you feel really hungry.
4. Increase your fibre intake. High fibre foods take longer to digest so you will feel full longer. Foods high in fibre include whole grains, vegetables, fruits, dried beans, split peas and lentils.
5. Drink plenty of fluids. Water is always the best choice. Sweet liquids such as pop, fruit drinks and fruit juice add extra calories that you don't need.
6. Limit your intake of alcohol as it is high in calories and low in nutrients.



Meal Plan for Healthy Eating

The following charts will help you plan a balanced diet. Remember that portion control is important. Even healthy food, when eaten in large amounts, add extra calories. Aim for the suggested number of servings from each of the food groups. The healthiest choices are listed first. Choose these most often.

Grain Products and Other Starchy Foods: A healthy diet includes grain products or other starchy foods regularly with meals and snacks. Foods from this group are rich in B vitamins, iron and dietary fibre. They also supply carbohydrate which is an important fuel for the body. Choose whole grain products often. For weight loss, aim for the following number of servings daily:

Females: 5 - 6 servings per day
(1 - 2 servings per meal)

Males: 6 - 8 servings per day
(2 - 3 servings per meal)

Check the "Nutrition Facts Table" on food labels to determine how many portions you are getting from packaged and prepared foods. One serving contains about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

One serving is:

1 slice of bread	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ - 6" pita bread
$\frac{1}{2}$ small bagel	2-3 plain cookies	1 small roti or chapati
$\frac{1}{4}$ large bagel	1 - 6" waffle or pancake	$\frac{1}{2}$ English muffin
$\frac{1}{2}$ hamburger or hot dog bun	4-6 crackers	
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup rice, pasta or potato	1 small muffin	
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened cold cereal	3 cups plain popcorn	

Choose the following foods less often as they are higher in fat and/or sugar:

Cakes, pies, donuts, cookies, bought muffins and other baked goods	Croissants
Fancy breads like cheese bread and butter buns	Creamy pasta
Fried potato products	Fried rice
Granola or cereals with sugar coating	Oriental dry noodle soups

Vegetables and Fruit: Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating suggests **5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables per day**. Aim for at least 3 whole fruits per day. If you include fruit juice, limit your intake to 1 cup per day. Include vegetables regularly with meals and snacks. Remember to fill half your plate with vegetables.

One serving is:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetable
1 medium size fruit or vegetable
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened juice
1 cup of salad

Choose these less often as they are higher in fat and/or sugar:

Vegetables in butter, cheese or cream sauce	Fried Vegetables
Coconut	Olives
Avocado	Sweetened fruit juice
Sweetened canned fruit	

Milk Products or alternatives: Most adults require **3-4 servings of milk, milk products or alternatives each day** to supply the calcium and vitamin D needed for good health. Choose lower-fat milk products more often as they have less fat and calories but just as much protein, vitamins and minerals.

One serving is:

1 cup (250 mL) milk (skim or 1% MF)	1 cup (250 mL) low-fat soy milk (enriched or fortified)
$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup yogurt (1% MF or less)	2 ounces (50 grams) low-fat cheese (less than 24% MF)

Choose these less often as they are higher in fat and/or sugar:

2% or homogenized milk	Chocolate milk	Full-fat or flavored soy milk
Ice cream and frozen yogurt	Milkshakes	Regular cheese
Sweetened yogurt or yogurt greater than 1% MF		

Meat and Alternatives: Choose **2-3 small servings per day**. Use low-fat cooking methods such as baking, broiling, steaming, poaching or barbequing when preparing meat or alternatives. Trim the fat from meat and the skin from poultry before eating.

One serving is:

3 ounces (75 g) cooked meat, poultry or fish (the size of a deck of cards)	1 to 2 eggs
$\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup (125 to 250 mL) cooked peas, beans or lentils	2 tbsp peanut butter
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cottage cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup tofu
1 to 2 ounces of cheese (25 to 50 grams)	

Choose most often:

Lean beef or pork, fat trimmed	Fish
Skinless poultry	Lean or extra-lean ground meat
Beans and lentils	Low-fat cheese (24% or less MF)
Low-fat cottage cheese (1% MF)	

Choose these less often as they are higher in fat:

Breaded meat products (examples, fish sticks and chicken fingers, chicken burgers)		
Chicken wings		
Beef and pork ribs	Hot dogs and sausages	Nuts and seeds
Side bacon	Processed luncheon meats	Nut butters
Regular ground meats	Regular cheese	

Fats and Oils: Fat is an important part of a healthy diet when eaten in small amounts. Large amounts are rich in calories that can make weight loss difficult. Limit your intake of added fat to **3-6 servings daily**. Choose healthier fats more often. (examples: olive or canola oil and non-hydrogenated margarines). 1 serving contains about 5 grams of fat.

One serving is:

1 tsp butter, margarine or oil	$1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp cheese spread	$\frac{1}{8}$ of a small avocado
1 tbsp regular salad dressing	1-2 tbsp nuts	2 tbsp 10% cream
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp light salad dressing	2 tsp peanut butter	1 tbsp whipping cream
1 tbsp cream cheese	1 tsp mayonnaise	2 tbsp sour cream
$1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp light cream cheese	1 tbsp light mayonnaise	4 tbsp light sour cream

Develop Healthy Eating Patterns:

- Practice “mindful eating”. Take the time to sit down for meals and enjoy the taste of what you are eating. Avoid watching TV or doing other activities when enjoying meals and snacks.
- Eat slowly. This gives your brain time to know that there is food in your stomach. This can help to reduce the total amount you eat at meals.
- Listen to your body's cues for hunger and fullness. Stop eating when you are comfortably full. If you frequently feel stuffed or uncomfortable after a meal, you are eating more than you need at one time.
- Keep your fridge and cupboard full of healthy meal and snack choices. Try to avoid keeping foods in your house that tempt you to make unhealthy choices.

Sample One Day Menu

<i>Breakfast</i> 1 slice whole grain toast 1 tsp non-hydrogenated margarine ½ cup oatmeal 1 banana 1 cup 1% milk	<i>Lunch</i> 1 tuna sandwich made with an 8-inch whole grain pita bread 1 tbsp light mayonnaise 1 apple raw vegetables 1 cup 1% milk	<i>Supper</i> 3 ounces chicken breast (skinless) 1 cup pasta with tomato sauce broccoli mixed green salad with 2 tbsp light dressing ¾ cup sugar-free yogurt
<i>Morning Snack</i> 1 small homemade bran muffin 1 slice low-fat cheese	<i>Afternoon Snack</i> 1 pear	<i>Evening Snack</i> 1 slice whole grain toast 2 tsp peanut butter

<i>Other Snack Ideas</i>		
1 medium fruit	¾ cup sugar-free yogurt	2-3 low-fat cookies
raw vegetables	½ English muffin with low-sugar jam	10 almonds
¾ cup cereal with milk	1 cup baked taco chips with salsa	½ sandwich
3 cups light popcorn	3-4 low-fat crackers with low-fat cheese	

Note: A lower-calorie diet may not meet the daily nutrient requirements for all people. Including a multivitamin/mineral supplement daily will help to ensure that most people meet their daily nutrient needs. Check with your doctor before starting any vitamin or mineral supplements.

For 24-hour nurse advice and health information, call Calgary Health Link at **943-LINK (943-5465)** for Calgary and area, or **1-866-408-5465** toll free.

This material is designed for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have specific questions, please consult your doctor or appropriate healthcare professional.