

7-Day Healthy and Balanced Meal Plan Ideas: Recipes & Prep

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At Verywell, we believe there is no one-size-fits-all approach to a healthy lifestyle. Successful eating plans need to be individualized and consider the whole person. Before starting a new diet plan, consult with a healthcare provider or a registered dietitian, especially if you have an underlying health condition.

Consuming a healthy, balanced diet is a goal for many people. While this is an excellent goal for health reasons, the terms "healthy" and "balanced" will vary for each individual. A healthy, balanced diet generally means one that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats. A meal plan is a great tool to help you plan.

Meal planning can help keep you on track, no matter what your nutrition goal is. Prepping and planning doesn't have to be time-intensive and complicated. A few simple steps, including basic meal constructs, making a shopping list, shopping strategically, and methodically preparing food ahead of time, are what make meal planning a helpful tool to keep you energized, meet your nutrition goals, reduce food waste, and save money.

Why Nutrition is Important for a Healthy and Balanced Diet

A healthy, balanced diet looks different for each person, as nutrition needs vary based on gender, height, weight, activity level, and many more factors. When thinking about what is "healthy" and "balanced" for you, there are many considerations. Think about taste preferences, nutrition needs, cooking ability, medical conditions, budget, and more.

Planning a daily menu isn't difficult as long as each meal and snack has some protein, fiber, complex carbohydrates, and a little bit of fat. You may want to plan approximately 100 to 250 calories for each snack and 300 to 600 calories per meal; however, you may need more or less depending on your hunger levels and energy needs.

What to Eat for a Healthy Balanced Diet

A healthy diet generally includes a combination of the following:

- **Vegetables:** Always a smart choice, aim to fill about half your plate with veggies. Add plenty of cruciferous veggies like broccoli, leafy greens, as well as colorful options like peppers.
- **Fruits:** Go for fresh fruit whenever possible and try a variety of colors. Berries, grapes, apples, and grapefruits make great choices.
- **Whole grains:** Eating grains in their whole form provides additional fiber and nutrients. This includes brown rice, oats, and 100% whole grain breads.
- **Lean protein:** High in protein and relatively low in fat, lean proteins include grilled chicken, ground turkey, and white fish.
- **Healthy fats:** Fatty fish, such as salmon and tuna, as well as nuts, such as walnuts, provide essential omega-3 fatty acids. Avocados are a great source of beneficial unsaturated fats.

7-Day Sample Menu

This one-week meal plan was designed for a person who needs about 2,000 to 2,200 calories per day and has no dietary restrictions. Your daily calorie goal may vary. Learn what it is below, then make tweaks to the plan to fit your specific needs. Consider working with a registered dietitian or speaking with a health care provider to assess and plan for your dietary needs more accurately. There are also several helpful fitness books that cover all things health and nutrition to help you find the best meal plan to meet your goals.

Each day includes three meals and three snacks and has a healthy balance of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. You'll also get plenty of fiber from whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes.

It's OK to swap out similar menu items, but keep cooking methods in mind. Replacing a sirloin steak with grilled chicken is fine, for instance, but replacing it with chicken-fried

steak isn't going to work because of the breading changes the fat, carb and sodium counts—and the calories. Finally, you can adjust your calorie intake by eliminating snacks if you want to lose weight or eating larger snacks if you want to gain weight.

Day 1

Breakfast

- One grapefruit
- Two poached eggs (or fried in a non-stick pan)
- One slice 100% whole wheat toast

Macronutrients: approximately 327 calories, 18 grams protein, 41 grams carbohydrates, and 11 grams fat

Snack

- One banana
- 1 cup plain yogurt with 1 tablespoon honey

Macronutrients: 324 calories, 14 grams protein, 62 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fat

Lunch

- 6 ounces grilled chicken breast
- Large garden salad (3 cups mixed greens with 1 cup cherry tomatoes, 1/4 avocado, topped with 2 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette)

Macronutrients: 396 calories, 41 grams protein, 18 grams carbohydrates, 18 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup (about 10) baby carrots
- 3 tablespoons hummus
- 1/2 piece of pita bread

Macronutrients: 192 calories, 7 grams protein, 31 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fat

Dinner

- 1 cup steamed broccoli

- 1 cup of brown rice
- Halibut (4-ounce portion)

Macronutrients: 399 calories, 34 grams protein, 57 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fat

Snack

- Two pitted Medjool dates
- 1 ounce 70% dark chocolate

Macronutrients: 302 calories, 3 grams protein, 49 grams carbohydrates, 12 grams fat

Daily Totals: 1,940 calories, 117 grams protein, 258 grams carbohydrates, 55 grams fat

Note that beverages are not included in this meal plan. Individual fluid needs vary based on age, sex, activity level, and medical history. For optimal hydration, experts generally recommend drinking approximately 9 cups of water per day for women and 13 cups of water per day for men. When adding beverages to your meal plan, consider their calorie count. Aim to reduce or eliminate consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and opt for water when possible.

Day 2

Breakfast

- One whole-wheat English muffin with 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- One orange

Macronutrients: 391 calories with 14 grams protein, 52 grams carbohydrates, and 17 grams fat

Snack

- One 7-ounce container 2% plain Greek yogurt with 1/2 cup blueberries

Macronutrients: 188 calories, 20 grams protein, 19grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fat

Lunch

- Turkey sandwich (6 ounces of turkey breast meat, large tomato slice, green lettuce, 1/4 avocado, and 2 teaspoons honey mustard on two slices of whole wheat bread)

Macronutrients: 540 calories, 59 grams protein, 34 grams carbohydrates, 18 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup (about 30) grapes

Macronutrients: 100 calories, 1 grams protein, 27 grams carbohydrates, 0 grams fat

Dinner

- 5-ounce sirloin steak
- One roasted sweet potato
- 1 cup cooked spinach (made with 2 teaspoons olive oil)
- 1 cup green beans

Macronutrients: 612 calories, 48 grams protein, 40 grams carbohydrates, 30 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup plain popcorn
- 1 ounce 70% dark chocolate

Macronutrients: Approximately 214 calories, 2.9 grams protein, 17 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams fat

Daily Totals: 2,045 calories, 145 grams protein, 188 grams carbohydrates, 85 grams fat

Day 3

Breakfast

- Overnight Oats (one mashed banana, 2 tablespoons chia seeds, 1/2 cup oats, 1 cup almond milk, 1 teaspoon cinnamon)

Macronutrients: approximately 431 calories with 12 grams protein, 73 grams carbohydrates, 13 grams fat

Snack

- One fresh pear
- 1 ounce (22) almonds

Macronutrients: 271 calories, 7 grams protein, 33 grams carbohydrates, 15 grams fat

Lunch

- One fried egg
- One slice whole wheat bread
- 1/2 avocado, mashed
- 1 medium apple

Macronutrients: 408 calories, 13 grams protein, 48 grams carbohydrates, 21 grams fat

Snack

- 3 tablespoons hummus
- 1 cup baby carrots
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes

Macronutrients: 140 calories, 6 grams protein, 21 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fat

Dinner

- One whole wheat english muffin
- One slice tomato, two leaves lettuce, one slice onion
- 5-ounce turkey burger
- 2 tablespoons ketchup

Macronutrients: 531 calories, 43 grams protein, 38 grams carbohydrates, 24 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup of ice cream
- 1 cup fresh raspberries

Macronutrients: 337 calories, 6 grams protein, 46 grams carbohydrates, 15 grams fat

Daily Totals: 2,118 calories, 86 grams protein, 259 grams carbohydrates, 93 grams fat

Day 4

Breakfast

- Two slices 100% whole wheat toast with 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- One banana

Macronutrients: approximately 454 calories with 16 grams protein, 62 grams carbohydrates, and 18 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup grapes
- 1 ounce (14) walnuts

Macronutrients: 290 calories, 5 grams protein, 31 grams carbohydrates, 19 grams fat

Lunch

- Tuna wrap with one wheat flour tortilla, 1/2 can water-packed tuna (drained), 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, lettuce, and sliced tomato
- 1/2 sliced avocado

Macronutrients: 496 calories, 27 grams protein, 28 grams carbohydrates, 132grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup cottage cheese (1% fat)
- 1/2 cup blueberries

Macronutrients: 205 calories, 29 grams protein, 17 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams fat

Dinner

- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat pasta
- 1 cup tomato sauce
- Small garden salad (1 cup mixed greens with one half cup cherry tomatoes topped with one tablespoon balsamic vinaigrette)

Macronutrients: 472 calories, 18 grams protein, 91 grams carbohydrates, 8 grams fat

Snack

- One apple

Macronutrients: 95 calories, 0.5 grams protein, 25 grams carbohydrates, 0.3 grams fat

Daily Totals: 2,012 calories, 96 grams protein, 255 grams carbohydrates, 80 grams fat

Day 5

Breakfast

- One whole wheat bagel
- 3 tablespoons cream cheese

Macronutrients: approximately 441 calories with 15 grams protein, 59 grams carbohydrates, and 16 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup baby carrots
- 1 cup cauliflower pieces
- 2 tablespoons ranch dressing

Macronutrients: 191 calories, 3 grams protein, 15 grams carbohydrates, 14 grams fat

Lunch

- Veggie burger
- Whole grain bun
- One slice cheddar cheese
- One sliced apple

Macronutrients: 573 calories, 25 grams protein, 62 grams carbohydrates, 26 grams fat

Snack

- One banana
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Macronutrients: 293 calories, 8 grams protein, 35 grams carbohydrates, 16 grams fat

Dinner

- 4 ounces trout filet
- 1 cup steamed green beans
- 1 cup brown rice
- One small garden salad with 1 tablespoon salad dressing

Macronutrients: 526 calories, 38 grams protein, 60 grams carbohydrates, 15 grams fat

Snack

- One fresh peach

Macronutrients: 68 calories, 2 grams protein, 17 grams carbohydrates, 0.4 grams fat)

Daily Totals: 2,092 calories, 90 grams protein, 249 grams carbohydrates, 88 grams fat

Day 6

Breakfast

- One (7-ounce) container of 2% Greek yogurt
- One banana
- One hard-boiled egg

Macronutrients: approximately 323calories with 27 grams protein, 35 grams carbohydrates, and 9 grams fat

Snack

- 10 whole wheat pretzel twists
- 3 tablespoons hummus

Macronutrients: 305 calories, 10 grams protein, 55 grams carbohydrates, 6 grams fat

Lunch

- One whole wheat tortilla
- 4 ounces turkey
- One slice cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mixed greens
- 1 tablespoon honey mustard

Macronutrients: 531 calories, 43 grams protein, 25 grams carbohydrates, 28 grams fat

Snack

- 1/2 ounce (11) almonds
- One fresh peach

Macronutrients: 153 calories, 5 grams protein, 20 grams carbohydrates, 8 grams fat

Dinner

- 5 ounces pork loin
- Small garden salad with 1 tablespoon vinaigrette
- 1 medium baked sweet potato
- 5 asparagus spears

Macronutrients: 440 calories, 42 grams protein, 31 grams carbohydrates, 16 grams fat

Snack

- One medium chocolate chip cookie
- 1 cup sliced strawberries

Macronutrients: 201 calories, 3 grams protein, 32 grams carbohydrates, 8 grams fat

Daily Totals: 1,952 calories, 130 grams protein, 198 grams carbohydrates, 75 grams fat

Day 7

Breakfast

- 1 cup cooked oatmeal
- 1/2 cup blueberries
- 1/2 cup non-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons almond butter

Macronutrients: 439 calories, 17 grams protein, 50 grams carbohydrates, 21 grams fat

Snack

- One (7-ounce) container 2% Greek yogurt

- One sliced apple

Macronutrients: 241 calories, 20 grams protein, 33 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams fat

Lunch

- 6-ounce baked chicken breast
- Large garden salad with tomatoes and onions and 2 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette
- One baked sweet potato

Macronutrients: 708 calories, 45 grams protein, 42 grams carbohydrates, 40 grams fat

Snack

- 1 cup raw broccoli florets
- 1 cup baby carrots
- 3 tablespoons hummus

Macronutrients: 168 calories, 8 grams protein, 26 grams carbohydrates, 6 grams fat

Dinner

- 4-ounce serving of baked or grilled salmon
- 1 cup brown rice
- Five asparagus spears

Macronutrients: 468 calories, 31 grams protein, 49 grams carbohydrates, 16 grams fat

Snack

- One peach

(Macronutrients: 68 calories, 2 grams protein, 17 grams carbohydrates, 0 grams fat)

Daily Totals: 2,093 calories, 124 grams protein, 218 grams carbohydrates, 86 grams fat

How to Meal Plan for a Healthy, Balanced Diet

- **Eating breakfast will help you start your day** with plenty of energy. Choose protein and fiber for your breakfast.

- **A mid-morning snack is totally optional.** If you eat a larger breakfast, you may not feel hungry until lunchtime. However, if you're feeling a bit hungry and lunch is still two or three hours away, a light mid-morning snack provide satiety.
- **Lunch is often something you eat at work or school**, so it's a great time to pack a sandwich or leftovers that you can heat and eat.
- **A mid-afternoon snack is also optional.** Prioritize protein, healthy fat, and fiber to keep you going until dinnertime.
- **Dinner can sometimes feel like a feat to cook and prep, but it can be very simple.** Consider stocking up on meal prep containers so you can chop and store vegetables ahead of time, as well as easily reheat food. For an easy trick, mentally divide your plate into four quarters. One-quarter is for your meat or protein source, one-quarter is for a complex carbohydrate, and the last two quarters are for green and colorful vegetables or a green salad.
- **A complex carbohydrate-rich evening snack may help you sleep.** Avoid snacking on high sugar items before bedtime.

Planning healthy meals isn't difficult, but if you're not used to it, the planning can take a little practice. The examples we provided should give you a great start. Don't feel discouraged if you don't stick to the plan exactly as outlined—it's OK to make variations that fit your lifestyle and needs. Do your best to incorporate healthy choices into your day—vegetables, fruit, lean proteins, beans and legumes, and whole grains are always smart bets.

We recognize that meal plans may not be appropriate for all, especially those with disordered eating habits. If you or a loved one are coping with an eating disorder, contact the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) Helpline for support at **1-800-931-2237**.

Grocery delivery services can help you get your food shopping done quickly. If you're in the market for a grocery delivery service, explore the best grocery delivery services to determine which option may be best for you.

2 Sources

Verywell Fit uses only high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial process to learn more about how we fact-check and keep our content accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

1. USDA. 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
2. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. How Much Water Do You Need.