

## 5 Steps for Eating Healthier



Changing the way you eat can improve your health. It can lower your cholesterol and blood pressure, and help you stay at a healthy weight. Your diet doesn't have to be bland and boring to be healthy. Just watch your calories and follow these steps:



### Step 1. Eat fewer unhealthy fats

- Choose more fish and lean meats instead of fatty cuts of meat.
- Skip butter and lard, and use less margarine. Replace these with healthier fats, such as olive, canola, or avocado oils.
- Pass on foods that have palm, coconut, or partially hydrogenated oils.
- Eat fewer high-fat dairy foods like cheese, ice cream, and whole milk.
- Get a heart-healthy cookbook and try some new recipes.

### Step 2. Go light on salt

- Keep the saltshaker off the table.
- Limit high-salt ingredients, such as soy sauce, bouillon, and garlic salt.
- Instead of adding salt when cooking, season your food with herbs, spices, and other flavorings. Try lemon, garlic, onion, vinegar, or salt-free herb seasonings.
- Limit convenience foods, such as boxed or canned foods and restaurant food.
- Read food labels and choose lower-sodium options. Buy fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables that don't have added salt.

### Step 3. Limit sugar

- Pause before you add sugars to pancakes, cereal, coffee, or tea. This includes white and brown table sugar, syrup, honey, and molasses. Cut your usual amount by half.
- Swap out sugar-filled soda and other drinks. Buy sugar-free or low-calorie beverages. Remember, water is always the best choice. Try adding lemon juice to water for extra flavor.

- Read labels and choose foods with less added sugar. Keep in mind that dairy foods and foods with fruit will have some natural sugar.
- Cut the sugar in recipes by 1/3 to 1/2. Boost the flavor with extracts like almond, vanilla, or orange. Or add spices such as cinnamon or nutmeg.

#### Step 4. Eat more fiber

- Eat fresh fruits and vegetables every day.
- Boost your diet with whole grains. Go for oats, whole-grain rice, and bran.
- Add beans and lentils to your meals.
- Drink more water to match your fiber increase to help prevent constipation.

#### Step 5. Pay attention to serving sizes

- Remember that a serving size is a standard measurement. It will let you track the amount of fat, calories, and other nutrients in the food you eat.
- Read the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods to learn their serving sizes.
- Use serving sizes to assess how much food you put on your plate. Pay attention to your portions. How many servings are you eating?
- Keep in mind that your needs may change if you're more active or less active, or if you have other factors that change your calorie needs.
- Use your hand to help you measure serving sizes. For example:
  - **1 teaspoon:** This is about the size of the first joint of your thumb.
  - **1 tablespoon:** This is about the size of the first 2 joints of your thumb.
  - **1 ounce:** This is about what you can fit in your cupped hand.
  - **2 to 3 ounces:** This is about the size of the palm of your hand.
  - **½ cup:** This is also about what you can fit in your cupped hand.
  - **1 cup:** This is about the size of your fist.

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