

Chapter 7. Breaking It Down

Now, you are going to learn what makes up a healthy eating plan and the amounts of each food group necessary to meet your nutrient and calorie needs. A warning: this chapter is a little long, and it is packed full of information. But, there is light at the end of the tunnel. If you need to, go through this chapter a little at a time—in bite-size pieces. The payoff is big. At the end, you will have a healthy eating plan, full of foods you already like, designed by you. Are you excited? We are.

What is a healthy eating plan?

In chapter 6, “Calories + Nutrients = Food,” we learned a healthy eating plan is one that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and equivalent milk products. Specifically, many fruits and vegetables are packed with nutrients but have few calories.
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans (legumes), eggs, and nuts.
- Is low in saturated and *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- Balances calorie intake with calorie needs.

...and tastes good too!

So, what does this mean? In this book, appendix A has examples of two healthy eating plans, the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan¹ and the USDA Food Guide.² We will use the DASH Eating Plan as an example. From this, you can map out how much you need from each food group based on your calorie needs.

What are the food groups?

The food groups we are referring to categorize foods into major groups:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ Grains | ▪ Milk and milk products |
| ▪ Fruits | ▪ Meats, poultry, and fish |
| ▪ Vegetables | ▪ Nuts, seeds, and legumes |

Sometimes, meat, poultry, and fish, and nuts, seeds, and legumes, are referred to as the “protein group.”

¹ This eating plan was originally developed and studied by scientists at the National Institutes of Health to lower blood pressure. But it is much more than that. It meets all of your recommended nutrients within your calorie needs and allows you the flexibility to enjoy healthful foods. For more detailed information about the DASH Eating Plan, please visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov.



² You can find detailed information about the USDA Food Guide, better known as MyPyramid, on its Web site: www.mypyramid.gov. This Web site provides a personalized food intake pattern based on your age, gender, and physical activity level, as well as the MyPyramid Tracker, an interactive diet and activity assessment tool.

My Healthy Eating Plan

Let's get started on filling out a healthy eating plan for you. This will be your goal to strive for when eating healthfully. Once you've completed "My Healthy Eating Plan," you'll have an eating plan that is relevant to and realistic for you, because it will be full of food you like. Remember, this is about you, and what works for you.

In chapter 5, "A Calorie Is a Calorie, or Is It?"—you set your calorie goal. Now, you use your calorie goal, and we'll use our friend Jennifer as an example to illustrate how a completed plan looks. You can use either plan in appendix A that works for you (DASH Eating Plan or USDA Food Guide). For this example, Jennifer used the 2,000-calorie level of the DASH Eating Plan to determine what and how much she should eat from each food group. Jennifer's calorie goal is 2,000 calories. She filled out her plan for each food group.

Now, it's your turn. Turn to page 91, "My Healthy Eating Plan." Write in your calorie goal. Next, use the information in appendix A, on page 320, to fill in how much from each food group you can eat each day. Write the number of daily servings of each food group in the food group boxes at the top of "My Healthy Eating Plan." Is it more or less than Jennifer needs to eat?

ABOUT JENNIFER



Jennifer is a 30-year-old female who is 5'5" and weighs 125 pounds. She is a computer specialist who spends most of her day at her desk at work. She walks a mile to and from work each day.

Using the BMI chart on page 12, Jennifer determined that she has a BMI of approximately 21. According to the BMI chart, she is at a healthy weight.

Next, using the definitions on page 15, Jennifer determined her physical activity level. Her activity level is equivalent to 2 miles per day. She is moderately active.

Then, using the calorie chart on page 16, Jennifer estimated her calorie needs based on her age and current physical activity level. Jennifer's calorie needs are approximately 2,000 daily calories.

Next, we are going to tell you in detail what we mean by food groups, what you need to eat in each of the food groups and why, and how to meet your goal for consuming a healthy diet. We also have tips on how to get these healthy foods into your daily eating plan whether you are getting your food at the grocery store, at home, or on the go.

First look at this table, which shows you the food groups, the number of servings in each group needed for a 2,000-calorie diet, and a few examples of foods that equal 1 serving.

Food Groups	2,000-Calorie Eating Plan	Serving Sizes (1 serving)
Grains ^a	6–8 servings	1 slice bread 1 oz dry cereal ^b ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal
Vegetables	4–5 servings	1 cup raw leafy vegetable ½ cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetable ½ cup vegetable juice
Fruits	4–5 servings	½ cup fruit juice 1 medium fruit ¼ cup dried fruit ½ cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit
Fat-free or low-fat milk and equivalent milk products	2–3 servings	1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk 1 cup fat-free or low-fat yogurt 1½ oz fat-free, low-fat, or reduced fat cheese
Lean meats, poultry, and fish	2 or less servings	3 oz cooked meat, poultry, or fish (1 oz meat = 1 egg ^c)
Nuts, seeds, and legumes	4–5 servings per week	⅓ cup or 1½ oz nuts 2 Tbsp peanut butter 2 Tbsp or ½ oz seeds ½ cup cooked dry beans or peas
<p>^a Whole grains are recommended for most grain servings to meet fiber recommendations. ^b Equals ½ to 1¼ cups, depending on cereal type. Check the product's Nutrition Facts label. ^c Since eggs are high in cholesterol, limit egg yolk intake to no more than 4 per week because of the saturated fat and cholesterol content; two egg whites have the same protein content as 1 oz of meat. The number of servings is per day unless otherwise stated.</p>		

Now, let's talk more in depth about why each food group is important for your health, assess how much of each food group you currently eat, and set goals for what you need to eat to be a Healthier You. You may notice that fats and oils, and sweets, on "My Healthy Eating Plan" are not in the table. We'll talk about them in the next chapter.

Eat fruits and vegetables.

You've probably heard this all of your life—fruits and vegetables are good for you, and it's important to eat them every day.

It may help to know why.

Fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of several chronic diseases. Compared to people who don't eat enough fruits and vegetables, people who eat them daily as part of a healthy diet are likely to have reduced risk of chronic diseases, including stroke and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and cancers in certain parts of the body (mouth, throat, lung, esophagus, stomach, and colon-rectum).

A healthy diet is one that: emphasizes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and equivalent milk products; includes lean meat, poultry, fish, legumes (dry beans and peas), eggs, nuts, and seeds; and balances calorie intake with calorie needs. Sound familiar?

The fiber in fruits, vegetables, and legumes is important. Healthful diets rich in fiber-containing foods may reduce the risk of heart disease. In addition to fiber, many fruits and vegetables are also rich in other nutrients such as vitamins A and C, folate, and potassium—which are important because many of us don't eat enough foods with these nutrients. **And, these nutrients are particularly important for women who are or may become pregnant.**³ In chapter 6, “Calories + Nutrients = Food,” we discussed nutrients and their role in reducing risks for chronic diseases and promoting health. On the next page is a short list for your reference when you are looking for ideas to get more fruits and vegetables into your diet. A more extensive list for each of these nutrients is in appendix B,⁴ beginning on page 328.

Eating fruits and vegetables provides other benefits, too. One is calorie control. Many fruits and vegetables are low in calories and packed with nutrients or “nutrient dense”—a term that is gaining popularity in the “diet world.” So, if you're trying to lose weight, fruits and vegetables can help you feel full. Fruits and vegetables are

³ Since folic acid reduces the risk of the neural tube defects, spina bifida, and anencephaly in the developing fetus, a daily intake of 400 ug/day of synthetic folic acid (from fortified foods or supplements in addition to food forms of folate from a varied diet) is recommended for women of childbearing age who may become pregnant. Folic acid is critical for fetal development, especially before the woman knows she is pregnant. Pregnant women should consume 600 ug/day of synthetic folic acid (from fortified foods or supplements) in addition to food forms of folate from a varied diet. It is not known whether the same level of protection could be achieved by using food that is naturally rich in folate.

⁴ Appendix B contains food sources of selected nutrients: potassium, vitamin E, iron, non-dairy sources of calcium, calcium, vitamin A, magnesium, dietary fiber, and vitamin C.

packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other important nutrients—have we made that point yet? They can help you get the most nutrition out of the daily number of calories you're supposed to eat for a Healthier You. Remember, different fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients, so aim for a variety. And when eating vegetables, include those that are dark green and leafy or orange, and don't forget dry beans and peas.

How many fruits and vegetables do you need?

Look at “My Healthy Eating Plan.” How many fruits and vegetables do you need each day? How does this number compare with what you usually eat each day? Let's look at Jennifer's eating plan on the next page. In it, we've italicized the foods that we are talking about. You will see this eating plan throughout this chapter. Jennifer will make minor adjustments to it as she develops her healthy eating plan.

Nutrients in Fruits and Vegetables	
<p>Sources of vitamin A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bright orange vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin • Tomatoes and tomato products, and red sweet pepper • Leafy greens such as spinach, collards, turnip greens, kale, beet and mustard greens, green leaf lettuce, and romaine • Orange fruits like mangoes, cantaloupe, apricots, and red or pink grapefruit 	<p>Sources of folate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooked dry beans and peas • Oranges and orange juice • Deep green leaves like spinach and mustard greens
<p>Sources of vitamin C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citrus fruits and juices, kiwi fruit, strawberries, guava, papaya, and cantaloupe • Broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, cabbage (especially Chinese cabbage), Brussels sprouts, and potatoes • Leafy greens such as romaine, turnip greens, and spinach 	<p>Sources of potassium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked white or sweet potatoes, cooked greens (such as spinach), and winter (orange) squash • Bananas, plantains, many dried fruits, oranges and orange juice, cantaloupe, and honeydew melons • Cooked dry beans • Soybeans (green and mature) • Tomato products (sauce, paste, and purée) • Beet greens

ABOUT JENNIFER



Jennifer should be eating 8 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day (4 to 5 servings of fruits and 4 to 5 servings of vegetables) based on her calorie needs (2,000 calories). That is about 2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables. She figured out how to spread this out throughout the day. First, she asked herself what fruits she likes. Then, she asked herself what vegetables she likes. She wrote down the following:

Favorite fruits: bananas, apples, nectarines, plums, canned peaches, orange juice, strawberries, raspberries, and oranges

Favorite vegetables: lettuce, spinach, potatoes, tomato sauce, green beans, carrots, and corn

Next, Jennifer figured out how she could plan to eat these foods throughout the day. She usually eats lunch with her co-workers; they often get sandwiches for lunch. She's planned on having pasta and bean salad for dinner and raspberries for dessert. Knowing that, Jennifer realized that she needed to get in about 1½ cups of fruit throughout the day, since she plans to get her vegetables and some fruit at home that evening. Jennifer decided she would try to eat the following foods during the day:

Breakfast: *medium banana*, fat-free peach yogurt, and coffee with fat-free milk

Lunch: turkey, with whole wheat roll; *romaine lettuce, tomato, and cucumber*, with light Italian dressing; *medium orange*; and unsweetened iced tea

Dinner: pasta and bean salad (1 cup whole wheat pasta, ½ cup chickpeas, 1 cup chopped vegetables [carrots, green peppers, and onions], with olive oil) and 1 cup of fat-free milk

Dessert: *raspberries (1 cup)*

Jennifer checked her fruits and vegetables to make sure she has a variety of different kinds.

Now, it's your turn. Write down the fruits you like, in the space on the next page. If you need any ideas, look at the different lists of food sources of nutrients in appendix B.

Fruits I like:

Now, write down the vegetables you like, in the space below. You can use appendix B again if you need some help thinking of vegetables.

Vegetables I like:

**What if I don't like
fruits and vegetables?**

Some of us think we don't like fruits and vegetables. But maybe we don't like what we've tried. Look at the list of foods in appendix B and try something you've never tried before—or try them in another form. For example, if you've tried canned carrots and didn't like them, try them raw with a low-fat hummus dip or salsa.

Now, write down when you could eat these fruits and vegetables throughout the day. Try to make sure you choose a variety.

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snack:

Dessert:

One way to make it easier to eat fruits and vegetables is to keep them stocked at home and ready to eat when you get hungry. So, let's go shopping!

At the grocery store. You can buy fruits and vegetables canned, frozen, dried, or fresh. There is a sample grocery shopping list in part III, “Making a Healthier You Happen,” to help you pick up these healthy treats at the grocery store.

When shopping for fruits and vegetables, choose an assortment of different types and colors to provide you with a variety of nutrients. Buy fruits and vegetables you are most likely to eat, and sometimes, try something new! It is fun to try fruits and vegetables you haven’t tried before; you may find that you can add another favorite to your list. Remember, if you buy fresh fruits and vegetables, buy only what you will eat that week, because fresh fruits and vegetables can spoil.

A good way to save money and make sure you always have fruits and vegetables in your home is to stock up on packaged (canned, frozen, and dried) fruits and vegetables. For additional money-saving tips, we have a list in part IV, “Recipes and Resources.”

One caution about buying canned, frozen, or dried fruits or vegetables: they may contain added sugars, saturated fats, or sodium—ingredients you may want to limit. There are three places to look on a package that give you clues to what is in the food: the ingredient list, the Nutrition Facts label, and the front label of the package. Added sugars can appear on the **ingredient list** as brown sugar, sucrose, glucose, dextrose, high fructose corn syrup, invert sugar syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, honey, and fructose. A more extensive list is on page 304.

This sample product ingredient list for frozen sweetened strawberries shows you that it contains added sugars.

INGREDIENTS: Strawberries, invert sugar syrup, corn syrup.

For canned, dried, or frozen fruits and vegetables, use the Nutrition Facts label to check the calories, serving size, nutrient content, and percent Daily Value (% DV).⁵ Compare similar products and make sure the serving sizes are comparable. To make your calories count, compare the calories and % DV for the nutrients you want to limit or get enough of per serving size.

⁵ The % DVs are based on the Daily Value recommendations for key nutrients for a 2,000-calorie diet. Whether or not you consume more or less than 2,000 calories, you can use the % DV to help you determine whether the food or drink is high or low in a nutrient for the serving size listed on the Nutrition Facts label.

To help make your decisions faster, use the Nutrition Facts label on many food packages. A quick guide to using the % DV: 5% DV or less is low, and 20% DV or more is high. You should keep saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol and sodium as low as possible and get enough of other nutrients such as potassium, fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron.

While fruits and vegetables are rich in nutrients, you need to remember that packaged fruits and vegetables may contain added fat, salt (sodium), and sugars that can increase those nutrients you want less of. So, to be safe, always use the Nutrition Facts label. We'll discuss more about the Nutrition Facts label throughout the book.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Potassium 700mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Check calories

Quick guide to % DV

5% or less is low
20% or more is high

Limit these

Get enough of these

SOUND BITES:

- At the beginning of a meal, ask yourself how many fruits and vegetables you've eaten that day. Then, try to add one or two fruits or vegetables if you still haven't met your goal.
- If fruits and vegetables are canned, dried, or frozen, read the label and avoid those with saturated fat, added salt (sodium), and added sugars.
- When you're increasing the amounts of fruits and vegetables you eat, eat them *instead of* less nutritious foods.
- Put fruits and vegetables on your shopping list—choose an assortment of different types and colors to provide you with a variety of nutrients.
- When eating at a restaurant, order a low-fat vegetable dish as an appetizer or salad. Order fruit as a dessert. Watch out for added fat or sugar!

In addition, **the label on the front of the package** may contain statements or claims about the product made by the food manufacturer. Use the claims on fruit and vegetable packages to identify foods with little salt (sodium) or added sugars. Examples include “low sodium,” “no salt added,” “no added sugar,” and “unsweetened.”

Eat calcium-rich foods.

Another source of important nutrients is milk and milk products like fat-free or low-fat yogurt and cheese. Consuming milk products is especially important to bone health during childhood and adolescence—but it is also important at anytime in our lives. Diets rich in milk and milk products may reduce the risk of weakened bones throughout your lifetime. Adults and children should not avoid milk and milk products because of concerns that these foods lead to weight gain. Many fat-free and low-fat choices without added sugars are available and consistent with an overall healthy eating plan. Milk and milk products provide nutrients that include calcium and vitamin D⁶ (if this vitamin is added by the food manufacturer), vitamin A, potassium, and magnesium. Most people should aim to consume 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products that provide the equivalent amount of calcium each day.

If you don't or can't consume milk, consider ways to supplement your diet with calcium from lactose-free milk products and calcium-fortified foods and beverages. For examples, see appendix B-4, page 332.

Look for the % DV for calcium on the Nutrition Facts label so you know how much 1 serving contributes to the total amount of daily calcium you need. Remember, a food or beverage with 20% DV or more contributes a lot of calcium to your daily total, while one with 5% DV or less contributes a little.

Health experts provide advice about calcium in milligrams (mg), but the Nutrition Facts label lists only a % DV for calcium. Most adults should get

What if I'm lactose-intolerant?

If you want to use milk alternatives because of lactose intolerance, one way to still get the health benefits associated with milk and milk product consumption is to choose alternatives within the milk food group. Try yogurt or lactose-free milk, or take the enzyme lactase before consuming milk products.

What if I avoid milk products?

Choose non-dairy sources of the nutrients provided by milk, including potassium, vitamin A, and magnesium, in addition to calcium and vitamin D. Appendix B can help you make these choices.

⁶ Older adults, people with dark skin, and people who don't get enough sunlight need more vitamin D. For more information, see chapter 11, “Healthier Older Adults,” on page 73 and part V, page 263.

approximately 1,000 mg or 100% DV daily. However, adolescents and teenagers should consume 1,300 mg (130% DV), and post-menopausal women need 1,200 mg (120% DV).

How much milk or milk products do I need?

Look at “My Healthy Eating Plan.” How much milk or milk products do you need each day? How does this number sound to you? Does it seem like a lot? Or do you usually eat and drink that much each day?

Let’s look at Jennifer’s plan:

ABOUT JENNIFER



Jennifer should be eating and drinking 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products each day based on her calorie needs. She needs to figure out how to spread this out throughout the day. First, she asked herself what milk and milk products and calcium-fortified products she likes. Jennifer wrote down the following:

Favorite milk and milk products: fat-free milk, ice cream, cheese, and yogurt

Favorite calcium-fortified products: orange juice and soy drink

Next, Jennifer thought about which fat-free and low-fat versions of these foods she can eat and how she could plan to eat those foods throughout the day. As we reviewed before, she usually eats lunch with her co-workers and fat-free milk isn’t available at the places where they eat. She often drinks a glass of fat-free milk with dinner and has a fat-free yogurt for breakfast. Therefore, she usually needs to get 1 more serving of fat-free or low-fat calcium food in the day. Knowing that, she will add 1 more serving by including a calcium-fortified soy drink as an afternoon snack. She now is set for the day for her calcium-rich foods:

Breakfast: medium banana, *fat-free peach yogurt*, and coffee with *fat-free milk*

Lunch: turkey, with whole wheat roll; romaine lettuce, tomato, and cucumber, with light Italian dressing; medium orange; and unsweetened iced tea

Snack: *calcium-fortified soy drink*

Dinner: pasta and bean salad (1 cup whole wheat pasta, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas, 1 cup chopped vegetables [carrots, green peppers, and onions], with olive oil) and 1 cup of *fat-free milk*

Dessert: raspberries (1 cup)

Now, it's your turn. Write down the milk and milk products you like to drink and eat, in the space below. You should also write sources of non-dairy calcium if this fits your eating style. If you need any ideas, look at the dairy and non-dairy sources of calcium in appendix B, on pages 332 to 333.

Calcium-rich sources I like (milk and milk products or non-dairy sources of calcium):

Now, write down fat-free and low-fat versions of these foods you like or could try and how you could eat and drink those foods and drinks throughout the day.

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snack:

Dessert:

What to watch for. Unhealthy fats such as saturated and *trans* fats and cholesterol are found in many kinds of milk and milk products. So, look for choices that are fat-free or low-fat when selecting those products. Additionally, some milk products and non-dairy desserts and creamers may be processed or made with certain oils (for example, palm oil, palm fruit oil, palm kernel oil, coconut oil or hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils) that increase the amount of saturated and/or *trans* fats in the food.

	% DV
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	10%
Cholesterol 30mg	10%

The Nutrition Facts label can help you choose fats wisely. Use the % DV on the Nutrition Facts label to identify which nutrients (total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol) are high or low: 5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high...remember? There is no % DV for *trans* fat, but you should aim to keep *trans* fat as low as possible.

Additionally, the labels on some food packages have information about the specific amount or type of fat in a food. Some examples of claims to look for are “fat-free,” “low saturated fat,” or “light.”

There are many ways to reduce the saturated fat from milk and milk products in your diet. This table shows a few examples of the saturated fat content of different forms of milk and milk products you may eat. Compare foods in the same food category (for example, regular cheddar cheese and low-fat cheddar cheese)—if you choose a lower-saturated fat choice, you can still enjoy many of your favorite foods as you take steps toward a Healthier You.

Food Category	Amount	Saturated Fat Content (grams)	Saturated Fat % Daily Value ^a	Calories
Cheese				
• Regular cheddar cheese	1 oz	6.0	30	114
• Low-fat cheddar cheese	1 oz	1.2	6	49
Milk				
• Whole milk (3.5%)	1 cup	4.6	23	146
• Low-fat (1%) milk	1 cup	1.5	8	102
Frozen desserts				
• Regular ice cream	½ cup	4.9	25	145
• Frozen yogurt, low-fat	½ cup	2.0	10	110

^a % DVs listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table and on a 2,000-calorie reference diet. The DV for total fat is 65 grams and for saturated fat is 20 grams.

SOUND BITES:

- At the beginning of a meal, ask yourself how much fat-free or low-fat milk and equivalent milk products or other good sources of calcium you've eaten or drunk that day. Then, try to add 1 or 2 servings of these foods if you still haven't met your goals for the day.
- When eating or drinking milk and milk products, look on their Nutrition Facts label to check the calorie and nutrient content and look for those lower in fat, saturated and *trans* fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
- Put milk and milk products on your shopping list for the store. Some milk products vary in their calcium content; therefore, use the % DV to compare products.
- When eating at a restaurant, ask the server whether they serve fat-free or low-fat milk.

Eat whole grains.

Whole grains are an important source of dietary fiber and other nutrients.⁷ Healthful diets rich in dietary fiber have been shown to have a number of beneficial effects, including decreasing risk of coronary heart disease and promoting regularity. Some examples of whole-grain products could include whole wheat bread, whole wheat cereal, and brown rice.

But, wait a minute. Have you heard carbohydrates are bad? That we should not be eating them? Well, that's not true. So, we are here to help clear up the issue. Foods containing carbohydrates are an essential part of a healthful diet. In addition to whole grains, healthy foods that provide carbohydrates, as well as many other nutrients, are fruits, vegetables, and fat-free and low-fat milk products. Unfortunately, many of us don't always choose the best carbohydrate foods. There are some foods with carbohydrates with added sugars or added fats we need to watch out for: cakes, cookies, crackers, candy, and doughnuts, to name a few.

Foods with carbohydrates that many of us need to eat more of are those that contain dietary fiber. One example is whole grains. In addition, some refined grains can be good for us because they may be fortified with folic acid and other essential nutrients, which we discussed in chapter 5, "A Calorie Is a Calorie, or Is It?"

⁷ Fruits and vegetables are also important sources of dietary fiber.

OK, we know we are throwing a lot of terms out there...whole grains, refined grains, and fortified foods. A more detailed explanation is on pages 284 to 285, in part V, but here is a brief explanation: Whole grains are just that—whole. Nothing has been added or taken away by processing. When whole grains are processed, some of the dietary fiber and other important nutrients are removed. A processed grain is called a refined grain. Some refined grain products have key nutrients, such as folic acid and iron, that were removed during the initial processing and added back. These are called enriched grains. White rice and white bread are enriched grain products. If you read the packaging for these foods, you will see the word “enriched.” Some enriched grain foods have extra nutrients added. These are called fortified grains. Many ready-to-eat cereals are fortified.

You may be asking yourself, “What is the bottom line?” Here it is: At least half of the grains you eat should be whole-grain; other grains should be fortified or enriched. We have an easy way for you to remember: Make at least half your grains whole.

Whole grains are an important source of fiber. Many packaged foods have fiber information on the front of the package. For example, the package might say “excellent source of fiber,” “contains fiber,” “rich in fiber,” or “high in fiber.” The Nutrition Facts label will list the amount of dietary fiber in a serving and the percent Daily Value (% DV). Look at the % DV column—5% DV or less is low in dietary fiber and 20% DV or more is high.

Check the product name and ingredient list. For many but not all “whole-grain” food products, the words “whole” or “whole grain” may appear before the name (for example, whole wheat bread). Remember, though, since whole-grain foods cannot necessarily be identified by their color or name (for example, brown bread, 9-grain bread, hearty grains bread, and mixed grain bread are not always whole-grain), you need to look at the ingredient list. The whole grain should be the first ingredient listed. The following are some examples of how whole grains could be listed:

- whole wheat
- quinoa
- whole oats/oatmeal
- sorghum
- whole-grain corn
- popcorn
- millet
- wild rice
- brown rice
- buckwheat
- whole rye
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- whole-grain barley
- triticale

How much dietary fiber do you need? The recommended dietary fiber intake is 14 grams (g) per 1,000 calories consumed. Yes, we know—more counting. But take heart—your healthy heart, that is—much of the time, the grams of fiber are already counted for you on the Nutrition Facts label. The more calories you need, the more fiber your body needs. And, that is why the more calories you need, the more servings of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains you get to eat. Ahh...so there really is some logic behind all of this.



tip

how to spot a whole grain:

Check the ingredient list. The whole grain should be the first ingredient.

How many servings of grains should I be eating?

Look at “My Healthy Eating Plan.” How many servings of grains do you need each day? How does this number sound to you? Does it seem like a lot? Or, do you usually eat that much each day? Do you usually eat too many servings each day?

Let’s look at Jennifer’s plan on the next page and see how she fit in her grains.

Now, it’s your turn. Write down, in the space below, the whole-grain and fortified and enriched grain foods you like to eat.

Whole-grain foods I like are:

Fortified and enriched grain foods I like are:

Now, write down on the next page when you could consume these foods throughout the day.

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snack:

Dessert:

ABOUT JENNIFER



Jennifer should eat 6 to 8 servings of grains each day based on her calorie needs. She figured out how to spread this out throughout the day. First, she asked herself which whole-grain products she likes. She also asked herself what fortified grain products she likes. Jennifer wrote down the following:

Favorite whole-grain products: whole oat squares cereal, whole wheat bread, and whole wheat pasta

Favorite fortified or enriched grain products: many cereals, white rice, French bread, and bagels

Next, Jennifer thought about how she could plan to eat these foods throughout the day. Keeping in mind what we know about Jennifer's eating habits, let's look at what she is planning to eat.

Breakfast: medium banana, fat-free peach yogurt, and coffee with fat-free milk

Lunch: turkey, with *whole wheat roll* (3 servings); romaine lettuce, tomato, and cucumber, with light Italian dressing; medium orange; and unsweetened iced tea

Snack: calcium-fortified soy drink and *whole oat squares cereal* (1 cup = 2 servings)

Dinner: *pasta and bean salad* ([1 cup of pasta = 2 servings], $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas, 1 cup chopped vegetables [carrots, green peppers, and onions], with olive oil) and 1 cup of fat-free milk

Dessert: raspberries (1 cup)

Jennifer has enough grains in her diet. She also has at least half of them as whole grains (5 of the 7 servings are whole grains).

Which foods contain dietary fiber and how much do they contain? Here are some examples.

Food	Grams of Fiber	% DV
1/2 cup navy beans, cooked	9.5	38 ^a
1/2 cup ready-to-eat 100% bran cereal	8.8	35
1/2 cup lentils, cooked	7.8	31
1/2 cup chickpeas, cooked	6.2	25
1 medium baked sweet potato, with skin	4.8	19
1 small pear, raw	4.3	17
1 medium baked potato, with skin	3.8	15
1/2 cup frozen spinach, cooked	3.5	14
1 medium orange, raw	3.1	12
1/2 cup broccoli, cooked	2.8	11

^a % DVs listed in this column are based on the food amounts listed in the table and a 2,000-calorie reference diet. The DV for dietary fiber is 25 grams.

Let's do a check on Jennifer's selections for the day to estimate whether she ate enough fiber. Below is a list of Jennifer's food choices and on the next page, an estimate of the grams of fiber in the foods.

ABOUT JENNIFER



Breakfast: *medium banana, fat-free peach yogurt, and coffee with fat-free milk*

Lunch: *turkey, with whole wheat roll (3 servings); romaine lettuce, tomato, and cucumber, with light Italian dressing; medium orange; and unsweetened iced tea*

Snack: *calcium-fortified soy drink and whole oat squares cereal (1 cup = 2 servings)*

Dinner: *pasta and bean salad (1 cup pasta, 1/2 cup chickpeas, 1 cup chopped vegetables [carrots, green peppers, and onions], with olive oil) and 1 cup of fat-free milk*

Dessert: *raspberries (1 cup)*

Fiber-containing foods on Jennifer's menu:

Banana, medium—3 grams of fiber

Whole wheat roll—6 grams of fiber

Lettuce, tomato, and cucumber (1 cup)—4 grams of fiber

Orange, medium—2 grams of fiber

Whole oat squares cereal—12 grams of fiber

Raspberries—8 grams of fiber

Total estimated fiber = 41 grams

Jennifer's estimated fiber need = $14 \text{ g}/1,000 \text{ calories} \times 2,000 \text{ calories} = 28 \text{ grams}$.

She's done a great job at meeting her fiber needs!

Last stop, protein!

You may be thinking to yourself, where's the beef? And you can eat it—if you like beef. Try to select lean cuts such as top round and sirloin. You should also eat poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Legumes, you may be wondering? You know them, but perhaps by another name—dry beans or peas such as lentils, chickpeas, and kidney beans—see, you do know them!

While meat can be a good source of iron,⁸ it isn't best for your body if you eat meat every day because it often contains saturated fat. There are so many protein choices out there—try to vary the ones you eat. Some protein sources are high in fat or prepared in ways that are high in fat, so we need to watch how much we eat and how we prepare them. We'll talk more about fat in the next chapter, so we'll stick to the basics of protein choices here.

How much meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes should I be eating?

Look at "My Healthy Eating Plan." How much meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes do you need each day? How does this number sound to you? Does it seem like a lot? Or do you usually eat that much each day? Do you usually eat too much each day?

⁸ Teenage girls and women of childbearing age need additional iron. They can get iron from meat, poultry, and fish, from vegetables such as spinach, and from iron-fortified foods combined with an enhancer of iron absorption, such as a vitamin C source (for example, orange juice). For more information, see appendix B-3, page 331, and appendix B-9, page 339.

Let's look at Jennifer's eating plan:

ABOUT JENNIFER



Jennifer should eat 2 or fewer servings of lean meat, poultry, or fish and 1 serving of nuts, seeds, or legumes on most days based on her calorie needs. She figured out how to spread this out throughout the day. First, she asked herself which meat, poultry, and fish she likes. She also asked herself which nuts, seeds, and legumes she likes. Jennifer wrote down the following:

Favorite meat, poultry, and fish: chicken, turkey, salmon, and tuna

Favorite nuts, seeds, and legumes: lentils, peanuts, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, chickpeas, and kidney beans

Next, she thought about how she could plan to eat these foods throughout the day. She is eating approximately 3 oz of turkey at lunch. That's 1 serving of meat, poultry, or fish. She's planning to eat $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of chickpeas at dinner, which is 1 serving of nuts, seeds, and legumes.

Breakfast: medium banana, fat-free peach yogurt, and coffee with fat-free milk

Lunch: *turkey* (3 oz = 1 serving), with whole wheat roll; romaine lettuce, tomato, and cucumber, with light Italian dressing; medium orange; and unsweetened iced tea

Snack: calcium-fortified soy drink and whole oat squares cereal

Dinner: *pasta and bean salad* (1 cup pasta, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chickpeas, 1 cup chopped vegetables [carrots, green peppers, and onions], with olive oil) and 1 cup of fat-free milk

Dessert: raspberries (1 cup)

Now, it's your turn. Write down the meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, and legumes you like to eat, on the next page.

Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs I like are:

Nuts, seeds, and legumes I like are:

Now, write down when you could eat these foods throughout the day.

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Dinner:

Snack:

Dessert:



tip

for choosing lean cuts of beef:

Look for cuts that have *loin* or *round* in their name such as sirloin and eye of round.

Congratulations! Now, you have completed one full-day healthy eating plan that is made by you, for you. And guess what? Not only is it healthy, but it is full of foods you already love. You can take the list of foods you have created in each food group and make substitutions in your full-day menu to give yourself more menu options. The more you do this, the easier it will get and the more knowledge you will have. Knowledge is power, and options offer flexibility. You are on your way to a Healthier You.

Part IV of this book gives you recipes and ideas to help you expand your daily choices—when you are ready. We know that it takes time to adjust and refine your diet until you are comfortable. Take it slowly; take it at your own pace. Remember: Small steps lead to big rewards.

In the next chapter, we'll talk more about adjusting the food choices you make to help you gain even more health benefits from the foods you choose. We'll talk more about fat—and making healthy-fat food choices—sound interesting? And we'll talk about sweets and salt. You have learned a lot about food groups and healthy food choices—you should be proud.

Summing it up

Mix up your choices within each food group:

- *Focus on fruits.* Eat a variety of fruits—whether fresh, frozen, canned, or dried—rather than fruit juice, for most of your fruit choices. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need 2 cups of fruit each day (for example, 1 small banana, 1 medium orange, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried apricots or peaches add up to 2 cups).
- *Vary your veggies.* Eat more dark green veggies such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils. For a 2,000-calorie diet, you will need $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of vegetables each day.
- *Get your calcium-rich foods.* Get 3 cups of fat-free or low-fat milk—or an equivalent amount of low-fat yogurt and/or low-fat cheese ($1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of cheese equals 1 cup of milk)—every day. For kids ages 2 to 8, it's 2 cups of milk. If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free milk products and/or calcium-fortified foods and beverages.
- *Make half your grains whole.* Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. One ounce is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked rice or pasta. Look to see that grains such as wheat, rice, oats, or corn are referred to as “whole” in the list of ingredients.
- *Go lean with protein.* Choose lean meats and poultry. Bake it, broil it, or grill it and take the skin off poultry. And vary your protein choices—with more fish, dry beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.