

Introduction

This guide is a collection of resources on healthy diets to help adults adopt healthier, evidence-based diets patterns. Parts of multiple researched patterns (D.A.S.H., Mediterranean, Low-fat, Paleo, etc.) are included, which allows you to select a variety of beneficial foods that meet your dietary needs.

This guide was made to be general and applies to adults of all genders, sexes, muscle masses, activity levels, energy needs, etc. Ask your doctor if you have other questions regarding your specific diet.

Section 1: General guidelines

3-4 servings per day of vegetables:

Dark green vegetables

Examples: Kale, spinach, collard greens, beet green, swiss chard, green leafy lettuce, amaranth leaves, cilantro, basil, endive, romaine, parsley, bok choy



Serving size:

- 2 cups raw vegetables
- 1 cup cooked vegetables
- 1 cup 100% vegetable juice



Red, orange, and yellow vegetables

Examples: Bell peppers (red/yellow/orange), carrot, squash (acorn, butternut, spaghetti, summer, Hubbard), pumpkin, sweet potato/yam, tomatoes, pepper (red chili, pimento)



Serving size:

- 1 cup raw
- 1/2 cup cooked
- 1/2 cup dried vegetable

Other

Examples: Bamboo shoots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower, eggplant, jackfruit, cassava, green peas, green beans, plantains, parsnip, onions, garlic, rutabaga, mushrooms, sea vegetables (seaweed, nori, kombu, dulse, arame, wakame, etc.)

Serving Size:

- 1 cup raw
- 1/2 cup cooked
- 1/2 cup dried vegetable

2-2.5 servings per day of fruit

Examples: Apricots, apples, bananas, blueberries, cherries, guavas, figs, persimmons, mangoes, melons, oranges, papayas, peaches, kiwis, pineapples, plums, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines, watermelons

Serving size:

- 1 cup of fruit or 100% fruit juice
- 1 medium piece of fruit
- 1/2 cup of dried fruits



7-10 servings per day of grains

Note: Starred grains are gluten free

Serving size:

- 1/2 cup cooked rice/corn/pasta/cereal
- 1/3 cup dry pasta
- 1/8 cup dry rice
- 1 medium slice (~1 oz.) of bread/tortilla/flatbread
- 1 cup (~1 oz.) ready-to-eat cereal



6-7 servings per day of protein foods

Note: Bolded examples indicate sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Nuts and seeds

Examples:

Flax seed, chia seed, walnuts, almonds, pistachios, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, sesame, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pecans, cashews, hemp seeds, hazelnuts, peanuts



Serving size:

- 1/8 cup of nuts or seeds
- 1 tbsp. of nut or seed butters



Beans, peas, lentils

Examples:

Bean varieties (bayo, black, brown, fava, garbanzo, kidney, lima, mung, navy, pigeon, pink, pinto, soy, white), pea varieties (black-eyed peas, split peas, green peas), lentil varieties (red, green, brown), baked/refried beans, tofu, tempeh, falafel, or hummus

Serving size:

- 1/4 cups cooked beans, peas, lentils, tofu

Poultry, red meats, seafood, and eggs

Examples:

Lean meats (beef, goat, ham, lamb, pork, game meats, organ meats), lean poultry (chicken, turkey, duck), seafood (**sardines, mackerel, herring, salmon, light tuna, cod**, trout, tilapia, oysters, perch, canned seafood products), egg (chicken, duck, goose, **omega-3 fortified**)

Serving size:

- 1 oz. ounces of meat, poultry, or fish
- 1 egg, or 3 tbsp. of egg white product

3 servings/day of dairy or soy-fortified alternatives:

Examples: Milk (2% or lower fat preferred), evaporated milk, low-fat yogurt, hard cheeses (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan), ricotta cheese, low-fat cottage cheese, calcium fortified soy milk, calcium fortified soy yogurt; calcium-fortified soy-based cheese

Serving size:

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1/3 cup shredded hard cheese
- 1.5 oz. cheese
- 1 slice of cheese
- 1/2 cup cottage cheese

Notes:

- Cow's milk is often the default dairy option at stores, but other types of milk (sheep, goat, etc.) have similar nutritional content. You can substitute them for cow's milk if you tolerate them better.
- Soy milk and soy-alternatives to dairy usually have added vitamins and minerals to provide similar nutritional content found in standard dairy. You can have plant alternatives (almond, cashew, coconut, etc.), but they can't be substituted for dairy or fortified-soy options.



Serving size references

Deck of cards:
about 2-3 oz.



Golf ball: 1 oz. or
2 tbsp.



Shot glass: 2
oz.



Tennis ball: 1
cup



Baseball: 2
cups



Section 2: What to know about other food groups

Whole vs. refined grains

- Make half (or more) of your grains whole grains
- Typical whole grains are identified by being able to see the **entire grain**:



- Products containing significant amounts of whole grains are labeled with a stamp to help consumers achieve their minimum servings (3.5-5) of whole grains/day:



1 full serving of whole grains
(100% stamp)



1 half serving of whole grains (8g whole
grains stamp or basic WG product)



- The amount of fiber in whole grains varies. The amount of fiber on the nutrition label cannot be used as an indicator of a whole grain. Generally, a serving of whole grains will not exceed 4 grams of fiber:
- The nutrition label shows whole grain bread with less than 4 grams of fiber per slice).

There are a range of different grains:

- Whole-food whole grains

Nutrition Facts	
17 servings per container	
Serving size 1 Slice (45g/1.6oz)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 3g	4%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 1g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%

- Products containing significant amounts of whole grain ingredients
- Refined grains
- Products containing refined grains



Potatoes & corn

Potatoes and corn are typically defined as vegetables because of their high starch content, but they are processed in the body more like grains than other common vegetables. You can include potatoes and corn in your diet alongside other nutrient-dense whole grains.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving size: • 1 medium potato (boiled/baked) • 1 cup fresh, diced, mashed, or frozen | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving size: • 1 large ear • 1 cup of kernels, fresh or frozen |
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Added sugars

Added sugars are called by many different names, including:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brown/white sugar • Beet sugar • "Syrups" or other "sugars" • Glucose or dextrose • Dextrin or maltodextrin • Glucose syrup solids • Sucanat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cane sugar • Corn syrups • Caramel • Lactose • Maple syrup • Turbinado • Cane syrup |
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Many foods contain hidden sugars, and even packaged whole-food products can have added sugar, including: coffees, teas, fruit juices, yogurts, packaged fruits, salad dressings, sauces, condiments, and sports drinks.



Other food that are often high in added sugars include:

- Fast food items (buns, wraps, etc.)
- Sauces (marinara, barbecue, etc.)
- Breakfast cereals
- Deli meats (honey or sugar cured)
- Juice concentrates (orange, grape, apple, etc.)
- Soft drinks

Products will vary in their added sugar content, but they can always be identified on the nutrition facts label. The amount of added sugar in a product can be found under "Total Carbohydrates" as "**Added Sugars**".

Nutrition Facts	
servings per container	
Serving size	2 Tbsp (30ml)
Amount per serving	
Calories	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	10%
Total Sugars 25g	
Includes 25g Added Sugars	50%
Protein 0g	
Calcium 42mg	4%
Not a significant source of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, dietary fiber, vitamin D, iron and potassium.	
*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Limit your intake of added sugar to **9 teaspoons** (or less) of added sugar per day.

Fats and oils

Use **minimal** fats and oils for cooking and in dressings

- For cooking, aim for 1 teaspoon of added fat or oil per person per meal
- Some fats and oils can be extra sources of **omega-3 fats** for vegan or vegetarian diets

Note:

Bolded examples indicate sources rich in omega-3 fats

Healthy fats include:

- **Flaxseed oil**
- **Walnut oil**
- **Canola oil**
- **Cod liver oil**
- Olive oil
- Safflower oil
- Sunflower oil
- Avocado oil
- Almond oil
- Corn oil
- Soybean oil
- Peanut oil
- Sesame oil

Foods rich in healthy fats include:

- Avocados
- **Fish**
- Nuts/seeds (**flax, chia, hemp**, almonds, etc.)
- Nut/seed butters



Eat less foods rich in saturated fat, including:

- Processed meat
- Fatty red meats
- Chicken and turkey skin
- Pizza
- Full fat dairy foods
- Lard
- Tropical oils (coconut/palm)
- Stick margarine
- Deep fried foods
- Processed foods (doughnuts, frosting, desserts, baking mixes, microwave popcorn)



Dairy and soy alternatives

If you don't eat dairy and soy, you can substitute plant products as long as they are fortified. Check the ingredients of plant-based alternatives to see if they are fortified in **calcium, potassium, or Vitamins A, D, and B12**. Other vitamins and minerals are often included.

You can also use foods from other groups to make up for the nutrients found in dairy and soy products. Increasing your intake of the following foods can help meet your nutrient requirements:

- Leafy green vegetables
 - (Calcium, Vitamin A)
- Small fish bones
 - (Calcium)
- Nuts and seeds
 - (Protein, Phosphorous, Zinc)
- Beans/peas/lentils
 - (Protein, Phosphorous, Zinc)
- Yellow/red/green vegetables
 - (Vitamin A)
- General fruits/vegetables
 - (Potassium, Magnesium)
- Seafood
 - (Selenium, Phosphorous Vitamins B12 & D)
- Eggs
 - (Protein, Vitamin B12)
- Nutritional yeast
 - (B Vitamins)



***You can also get Vitamin D through exposure to sunlight. Exposing your arms and legs to 10-20 minutes daily can increase Vitamin D to optimal levels.**

Sea vegetables

Sea vegetables are different types of edible seaweed. They are a potent source of antioxidants and are low in calories, making them nutrient-dense. You can eat sea vegetables fresh or dried. You can purchase them at health food stores or online.

Different types of sea vegetables include:

- Kelp
- Kombu
- Wakame
- Arame
- Dulse
- Nori

- Irish Moss
- Alaria Esculenta
- Spirulina
- Chlorella
- Sea lettuce
- Ogonori

There are many different types of nutrients in sea vegetables, such as **vitamin A, vitamin C, B vitamins, manganese, copper, iron, potassium, calcium, iodine, magnesium, and zinc**. Additionally, they have beneficial antioxidants, such as **polyphenols and terpenoids**, as well as unique anti-inflammatory compounds such as **fucoidans**.



Where can I learn more?

- USDA MyPlate: <https://www.myplate.gov/>
- Mediterranean Diet: <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/aa98646>
- Diabetes Nutrition: <https://www.diabetes.org/healthy-living/recipes-nutrition>
- Harvard Healthy Eating Plate: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate/>
- CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity: <https://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/>
- AAFP Food and Nutrition Resources: <https://www.familydoctor.org/prevention-and-wellness/food-and-nutrition/>
- DASH Diet: <https://dashdiet.org/>
- Paleo Diet: <https://thepaleodiet.com/paleo-101>
- American Heart Association Healthy Eating: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating>

