



Eat Wisely

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

Eating wisely is one of the best tools you have to prevent chronic diseases like obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, and Type 2 diabetes. The keys to better health through nutrition are to:

1. Follow a healthy eating pattern that is right for you.
2. Choose nutrient-dense food and drink choices that you enjoy, reflect your culture, and fit your budget.
3. Use nutrient-dense foods and drinks to meet food group needs and stay within appropriate calorie limits. A healthy eating pattern includes:
 - **Vegetables of all types** - dark green, red, and orange, and legumes (beans, peas, and lentils)
 - **Fruits** - especially whole fresh fruits - but they may be canned or frozen too
 - **Grains** - at least half of which are high fiber whole-grains
 - **Dairy** - fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese, and/or lactose-free versions or fortified soy alternatives
 - **An assortment of protein foods** - lean meats, poultry, and eggs; seafood; legumes (beans, peas, lentils); and nuts, seeds, and soy products
4. Maintain or strive for a healthy weight by balancing the energy (calories) from foods and drinks with the energy burned through physical activity. To lose weight, most people need to reduce the number of calories consumed and increase their physical activity.
5. Limit foods and drinks high in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, as well as alcoholic beverages. For example:
 - **Added sugars** - Consume less than 10% of your daily calories from added sugars. These are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or drinks when they are processed or prepared.
 - **Saturated fat** - Consume less than 10% of your daily calories from saturated fats and avoid trans-fats.
 - **Sodium** - Limit to no more than 2,300mg of sodium per day. Choose foods with little added salt and make meals without salt when possible. Adults with high blood pressure may benefit from limiting to 1,500mg of sodium per day.
 - **Alcoholic beverages** - Adults of legal drinking age can choose not to drink, or to drink in moderation by limiting to 2 drinks or less in a day for men and 1 drink or less per day for women and people over age 64. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. Children, pregnant women, and those with certain medical conditions should not drink any alcohol.

Want to Know More?

If you want to learn more about how to eat wisely, talk with your VA health care team. They can help you make changes to live healthier and meet your goals.

You can find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link below:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Eat_Wisely.asp

