

ChooseMyPlate – Weight Management (Key)

Learn What You Currently Eat and Drink

Identifying what you are eating and drinking *now* will help you see where you can make better choices in the *future*.

<i>Get started identifying what you eat and drink:</i>
1. Write down what and how much you eat and drink.
2. Start by identifying what you've already eaten today.
3. Write down the physical activities you do, and how long you spend doing each one.
4. Once you've identified what you are doing now, keep it up!

What to Eat and Drink

Your Food Plan is not a quick weight loss program. It's a way to eat for health and well being. If you stick with the Plan over time, you should gradually move toward a healthier weight.

<i>Get started knowing what to eat and drink:</i>
1. Enter your age, sex, height, weight, and activity level in the Daily Food Plan entry box.
2. If you are not within your healthy weight range, the Plan lets you choose an option to gradually move to a healthier weight.
3. Once you've entered your information and picked the "move toward a healthier weight" option, you will get a plan with your calorie limits and the amounts to eat and drink from each food group every day.

Make Better Choices

Learn how you can make better choices from these sections. Making these changes and sticking with them can help you manage your body weight.

Eat the Right Amount of Calories for You

The current high rates of overweight and obesity in the United States mean that many people are taking in more calories than they burn.

Get started eating the right amount of calories for you:

1. Get your personal daily calorie limit.
2. Keep your calorie limit in mind when deciding what to eat and drink.
3. Compare food and beverage options and think about how they fit within your calorie limit.
4. Use the Nutrition Facts label to make smart food choices quickly and easily.

Decrease Portion Sizes

The Dietary Guidelines encourage you to *enjoy your food*, but **eat less** and to **avoid oversized portions**.

Get started eating smaller portions:

1. Figure out how big your portions really are.
2. Measure a fixed amount of some foods and drinks to see what they look like in your glasses and plates.
3. Pay attention to feelings of hunger.
4. A simple trick to help you eat less is to use a smaller plate, bowl or glass.
5. It is important to think about portion sizes when eating out.
6. If you tend to overeat, be aware of the time of day, place and your mood while eating so you can better control the amount you eat.

Eat Fewer Empty Calories

A great way to help you manage your body weight is to eat fewer empty calories. Empty calories are calories from solid fats, added sugars or both.

Get started eating fewer empty calories:

1. Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars or solid fats.
2. Select products that contain added sugars and solid fats **less often**.
3. When you have foods and drinks with added sugars and solid fats, choose a **small portion**.

Focus on Foods You Need

Building a healthier plate can help you meet your nutrient needs and maintain your weight. Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need without too many calories.

Get started eating fewer empty calories:

1. Start with breakfast.
2. Have healthy snacks available at home and bring healthy snacks to eat when on-the-go.
3. When preparing meals, include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods.
4. To feel satisfied with fewer calories, replace high-calorie foods with lower calorie foods.

When Eating Out, Make Better Choices

People who eat out more often, particularly at fast food restaurants, are more likely to be overweight or obese.

Get started making better choices when eating out:

1. **What** are you eating and drinking?
2. **How much** are you eating and drinking?
3. **How** is your meal prepared?

Cook More Often at Home

When you cook at home, you can often make better choices about what and how much you eat and drink than you do when eating out.

<i>Get started cooking more often at home:</i>
1. If you don't usually cook, start gradually.
2. A healthy meal starts with more vegetables and fruits and smaller portions of protein and grains.
3. Planning ahead can help you make better food choices.
4. Experiment with healthy recipes and look for ways to make your favorite recipes healthier.
5. To help manage how much you eat, start by putting a small portion of food on your plate, and only eat seconds if still hungry.

Increase Physical Activity

Physical activity is an important part of managing body weight.

<i>Get started increasing physical activity:</i>
1. Pick activities you like and that fit into your life.
2. Be active with family and friends.
3. Keep track of your physical activity and gradually increase how much you do over time.
4. Try the President's Challenge for physical activity.

Decrease Screen Time

People, who spend more time being sedentary, particularly watching television, are more likely to be overweight or obese.

<i>Get started decreasing screen time:</i>
1. Track how much time you spend in front of a screen.
2. Develop a screen time budget.
3. Use the time you watch television to be physically active in front of the television.
4. Limit eating while watching television.

ChooseMyPlate - Calories

Calories are just a measurement tool, like inches or ounces. They measure the energy a food or beverage provides -- from the carbohydrate, fat, protein and alcohol it contains.

What are Empty Calories?

Calories from solid fats and/or added sugars. Fill in the blanks with food and drink most Americans consume that contain solid fat and added sugars.

Contains solid fat	Contain added sugars	Contain both solid fat and added sugar
Cheese	Sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks and fruit drinks	Cakes, cookies, pastries and donuts
Pizza		Ice cream
Sausages, hot dogs, bacon and ribs		

How Many Can I Have?

Complete the table with the number of calories needed for you.

Age and Gender	Estimated calories for those who are not physically active	
	Total daily calorie needs*	Daily limit for empty calories
Answers will vary.		

* These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days. Those who are more active need more total calories, and have a higher limit for empty calories. To find your personal total calorie needs and empty calories limit, enter your information into "My Daily Food Plan."

What are Solid Fats?

List some common solid fats.

1. Answers will vary.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What are Added Sugars?

List some common names for added sugars.

1. Answers will vary.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

How Do I Count Empty Calories?

You can lower your intake of empty calories by eating and drinking foods with empty calories less often. You can also cut down on empty calories by choosing a smaller amount to eat or drink. Or, you can choose foods and beverages with fewer solid fats and added sugars.