Turning Over a New Leaf

Why is healthy eating important?

Healthy eating is important for many reasons. Healthy eating:

- helps to prevent many health problems, such as heart disease, strokes, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- can help you control existing conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes
- can help you manage or maintain your weight and feel better

Making changes: You can do it!

Many people know they should eat healthy but don’t know if they can switch to a new way of eating. Here are some answers to concerns that people have about making changes.

**Concern: It costs more to eat healthy.**

- If you choose carefully, eating healthy does not need to cost more (see *Eating Healthy on a Budget*, page B-23.)
- Eating less meat can save you money. Use beans or eggs in place of meat to make tasty and inexpensive main dishes. (See the *New Leaf* cookbook, pages 34–42 for recipes.)
- Fruits and vegetables don’t have to be fresh to be healthy—canned and frozen are fine, but watch out for added salt or sugar.
- You can buy some healthy foods in bulk—they cost less that way.

**Concern: Healthy foods take more time to buy and cook.**

- You don’t have to shop at special stores to get healthy foods.
- You can cook healthy foods simply and quickly (see *Cooking for One or on the Run*, page B-25.)
- Some healthy foods don’t need much cooking at all. A small sweet potato takes 5-10 minutes to cook in the microwave, a salad is easy to throw together, and fruit is the original “fast food”!
Remember…
It’s OK if you get off track every now and then. Don’t give up—just try again.
You can do it!

Concern: I’ll have to give up all my favorite foods.
- You can eat smaller amounts less often.
- Learn other ways to prepare your favorite foods—check out the New Leaf cookbook.
- Try something different—it may become a new favorite!

Concern: Healthy foods just don’t taste as good.
- The New Leaf cookbook has lots of great-tasting recipes.
- If you give healthy foods a chance, you can get used to a new way of cooking and eating.

Concern: Healthy foods will leave me feeling hungry.
- Eat lots of high-fiber vegetables to feel satisfied with fewer calories.
- Foods like soups and water-rich fruits and vegetables can fill you up.
- Having some protein and foods with healthy fats at most meals can help you not feel hungry so soon after eating. A small spoonful of peanut butter on a banana is a satisfying treat. Or, eat a good breakfast like oatmeal or yogurt with a few nuts.

Concern: I don’t know where to start.
- Make changes slowly to get used to a new way of eating. Take one step and one day at a time.
- Make small changes you can stick with.
- Think about changing your habits for the long haul (rather than going on a “quick diet”).
- Think of how good you will feel, both physically and mentally, when you eat healthy.
- Get the whole family involved—healthy foods are better for everyone.
- Use our practical tips to make small changes that add up (see Healthy Eating Tip Sheets, page A-11.)
A Healthy Eating Plan for Life

Eating in a healthy and balanced way means choosing a variety of foods: vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, dairy products, lean red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts. Eating healthy also means limiting unhealthy fats and avoiding added sugars and salt.

Choosing well from each food group

**Vegetables**

Vegetables have important vitamins, minerals and fiber with few calories. Eating lots of vegetables may lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Vegetables that are high in potassium (a mineral) can help you control or lower your blood pressure (see *Good Sources of Potassium*, next page).

- Vary your vegetable choices to keep meals interesting (see *Healthy Eating Tip Sheets*, page A-11.)
- Include dry beans and peas often.
- Try to eat 5 or more servings of vegetables each day (at least 2½ cups). Fill half of your plate with vegetables.

**Fruits**

Fruits are important sources of potassium (see *Good Sources of Potassium* on the next page), dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folic acid. Dietary fiber from fruit, as part of a healthy diet, may lower your risk of heart disease.

- Vary your fruit choices to keep snacks and desserts interesting.
- Try to eat about 4 servings of fruit (2 cups) each day.

**Grains**

Bread, tortillas, rice dishes, pasta, and hot and cold breakfast cereals are made from grains like wheat, rice, and rye. Cornmeal-based products also are part of this group. Eating whole grain foods is a good way to get fiber and B vitamins. Fiber may reduce your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes, and can help prevent constipation.

- Try to eat only or mostly whole grains (see *Know Your Grains*, next page).
- The amount of overall grains that you need depends on how physically active you are.
Good Sources of Potassium

Vegetables
- Dark-green vegetables (like spinach and beet greens)
- Orange vegetables (like sweet potatoes and butternut squash)
- Starchy vegetables (like white potatoes and lima beans)
- Tomatoes and tomato products (like tomato sauce and paste)
- Cooked dry beans and peas (like lentils, kidney beans, and split peas)

Fruits
- Bananas
- Cantaloupe and honeydew melon
- Dried fruit (like raisins, prunes, and dried apricots)

Red meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, and beans

These foods are good sources of protein and have important vitamins and minerals. Lean red meat and poultry are okay in moderate amounts. Fish and nuts have healthy fats that your body needs.

- Eat some red meat and poultry but keep your portions small (about 3 ounces—the size of a deck of cards). Trim the fat from meats.

- Eat at least two servings of fish and shellfish a week, especially fish that have lots of “omega-3 fatty acids”—healthy fats that many Americans don’t get enough of (see Fish Facts, next page).

- Use nuts or beans to replace fatty meat or cheese in snacks, salads, or main dishes.

- Don’t forget about eggs. Eggs are a good source of low-cost, high-quality protein. Eating an average of one egg a day does not affect most people’s cholesterol levels.

- On a typical day, you might eat two 3-ounce servings of red meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg; and 2 tablespoons of peanut butter.

Know Your Grains

- Whole grains (like whole wheat flour, whole oats, brown rice, and whole cornmeal) have the entire grain kernel—make sure the list of ingredients says “100% whole wheat.” Foods that say “multigrain,” “seven grain,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” or “bran” are probably not whole grain foods.

- Grains that have been refined (like white flour, white rice, and regular pasta) are missing fiber, iron, and many B vitamins.
Milk, yogurt, and cheese

Milk and milk products contain several important nutrients, including calcium, potassium, and Vitamin D. When you can, choose 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk, low- or nonfat yogurt, and low-fat cheese. If you are lactose intolerant, have fortified cereals or other foods high in calcium, or drink small amounts of orange juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

Oils and seasonings

Vegetable oils low in saturated fats (like olive oil and canola oil) and trans-fat-free margarines are good choices. Foods like fish, nuts, and avocados also have healthy oils.

- Stay away from processed foods with lots of trans fats or added salt.
- Mayonnaise is high in fat but it contains mostly healthy fats.
- Aim for 2-3 tablespoons of healthy oils, mayonnaise, or other spreads each day.

For balanced healthy eating...

- Eat a variety of foods to get the nutrients you need.
- How much you eat is important to stay at a healthy weight. Avoid overeating and large portions.
- Watch out for foods that have a lot of trans fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt, and empty calories—go easy on sweets, sodas, and sports drinks!

Fish Facts

These fish are high in the healthy fats (omega-3 fatty acids) that our bodies need:

- Tuna
- Sardines
- Herring
- Salmon
- Lake trout

Some fish contain mercury. Mercury is harmful to everyone if eaten at high levels (and especially harmful for pregnant/nursing women and children). Use the following guidelines to plan the types and amounts of fish you eat:

- Eat as many as 1–2 servings per week of canned light tuna (packed in water), catfish, sardines, shrimp, salmon, trout, anchovies, Atlantic mackerel, and herring—these fish are low in mercury.
- Eat no more than 6 ounces per week of king mackerel, tile fish, shark, or swordfish—these fish contain high levels of mercury. (Serve even smaller portions of these fish to children.)
- Albacore tuna has more mercury than canned light tuna. Don’t eat more than 6 ounces per week of albacore tuna.
Focus on Fruits & Vegetables

Why should I eat more fruits and vegetables?

- There are many reasons to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Vegetables and fruit:
  - have lots of good nutrients
  - make good snacks and desserts
  - fill you up
  - have fiber, which is good for you
- Eat more servings of vegetables than fruits (vegetables usually have fewer calories). Aim for at least 5 servings of vegetables and about 4 servings of fruit each day.
- Try to eat vegetables from all five groups (and especially the first two) (see *Types of Vegetables*).

There are many ways to eat more fruits and vegetables every day. (See *Healthy Eating Tip Sheets*, page A-11, for suggestions.)

### Types of Vegetables

- **Dark green vegetables**: greens (collards, mustard or turnip greens, beet greens, kale, chard, leafy lettuces), spinach, broccoli
- **Orange vegetables**: carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, pumpkin
- **Starchy vegetables**: corn, white potatoes, green peas, lima beans
- **Other garden vegetables**: tomatoes, cabbage, celery, cucumber, onions, peppers, green beans, okra, zucchini, turnips, beets
- **Dry beans and peas**: pinto beans, navy beans, lentils, chickpeas, black-eyed peas

### Types of Fruit

- **Citrus fruits**: oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, lemons, limes
- **Berries**: strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, cherries, cranberries
- **Melons**: cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon
- **Tropical fruits**: bananas, mangos, papaya, pineapple, pomegranate
- **Other fruits**: apples, pears, grapes, peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines, kiwi
- **Dried fruit**: raisins, prunes, dried apricots, dried apple
Fiber—Are You Getting Enough?

Getting enough fiber is important. Fiber helps you feel full and keeps you regular. Eating high-fiber foods also can help lower your cholesterol and prevent heart disease and diabetes.

What is fiber?

Fiber (or “roughage”) is found in all vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and nuts. There are two types of fiber. Insoluble fiber helps with constipation by keeping you regular. This type is found mostly in the tougher parts of foods like...

- the skins of fruits and vegetables
- leafy greens like turnips and collards
- the outer layer of beans and grains like wheat

Soluble fiber can help to lower your cholesterol, which is good for your heart. It is found mainly inside the softer parts of foods like...

- beans and peas
- fruits like apples, oranges and grapefruit
- vegetables like squash, sweet potatoes, and cabbage
- oatmeal and oat bran

How much fiber do I need?

Each day you should have at least 25 to 35 grams of fiber. If you choose foods that are good sources of fiber at each meal and snack, it’s easy to get enough (see sample menu, next page). To get the fiber you need...

- Eat 5 or more servings of vegetables and about 4 servings of fruit each day. Eat the skin or peel, when possible.
- Eat beans and peas (like pinto beans and split peas) at least 3 times a week.
- Choose whole grain breads. Be careful: Breads that look “brown” are not always made from whole grain! Read the ingredient list and make sure that it lists whole wheat flour or whole grain as the first ingredient. Pick a bread that has at least 2 grams of fiber per slice.
- Choose high-fiber cereals like bran flakes, shredded wheat, and old-fashioned oatmeal (not instant).
- Add a few nuts to your salads (or breakfast cereal) or have a small amount as a snack.
# Sample Daily Menu with Recommended Amount of Dietary Fiber

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fiber (grams)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Old-fashioned oatmeal (1 cup)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange (1 medium)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2% milk (1 cup)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat bread (2 slices)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean ham or turkey (2 ounces)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettuce and tomato (2 pieces each)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise (1 Tbsp on sandwich)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple with skin (1 medium)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat yogurt (6 ounces)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked chicken (3 ounces)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinto beans (1/2 cup)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnip greens (1 cup)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornbread (2” square)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans-fat-free margarine (1 tsp. on cornbread)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snacks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts (1/4 cup)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn (1 cup)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit cocktail in its own juice (1/2 cup)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total fiber</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sugar-sweetened Drinks

Why should we limit sodas and other sugar-sweetened drinks?

Sodas and other sugar-sweetened drinks have lots of added sugar. These are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages during processing or preparation.

- Added sugars provide lots of extra calories but nothing else!
- Drinking one or more sugar-sweetened drink each day can increase your risk of becoming overweight and developing diabetes.
- Added sugar and sodas can lead to tooth decay.

What is a sugar-sweetened drink?

Drinks with added sugar include:

- regular sodas (soft drinks)
- fruit punches and fruitades
- lemonade
- sports and energy drinks
- other sweetened drinks, like iced tea, Kool-Aid™, or sweetened coffee drinks

Types of Added Sugar on Food and Drink Labels

- High fructose corn syrup
- Fruit juice concentrates (or “concentrated juice” or “juices from concentrate“)
- Corn syrup or corn sweetener
- Other syrups like malt syrup or sucrose syrup
- Sugar, invert sugar, cane sugar
- Fructose, glucose, dextrose, maltose, lactose, sucrose
- Honey
- Molasses

What can I drink instead?

Try these...

- Plain water, add a twist of lemon or lime for a fresh taste
- Sparkling water mixed with a splash of 100% fruit juice
- Unsweetened or sweetened ice tea, hot or herbal tea, or coffee—but go easy on the sugar!
- 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk products
- A small amount of 100% fruit juice (4 oz.), no more than twice a day.

If you drink diet soda, be sure not to drink too much. (Diet sodas have no nutritional value and can lead to bone loss. Some experts have concerns about the long-term health effects of large amounts of artificial sweeteners.)
Watch out for high fructose corn syrup!

The main sugar product added to most drinks is high fructose corn syrup. WATCH OUT for drinks and processed foods with high fructose corn syrup! But be careful—added sugars have many other names too (see Types of Added Sugar, previous page).

What About Alcohol?

You may have seen news reports saying that regularly drinking small amounts of alcohol can lower heart disease risk. This is probably true but most health experts would not tell someone to start drinking alcohol or to drink more often as a way to avoid heart disease. Drinking large amounts of alcohol regularly (or even once in a while) has harmful health effects. Also, some experts think that even small amounts of alcohol may increase a woman’s chances of getting breast cancer.

The bottom line: If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, drink alcohol wisely and in small amounts. This means:

- No more than 1 drink per day for women, or 2 drinks per day for men.
- A drink is 4 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1 ounce of liquor.
Know Your Fats

What are the types of fat?

Fats are an important part of what we eat. Our bodies need fats to carry out many functions. It is important to know which fats are best for you.

There are several different types of fat in the foods we eat. They are:

- trans fats or trans fatty acids
- saturated fats
- unsaturated fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated)

Trans fats

Trans fats (or trans fatty acids) are made when liquid vegetable oils are turned into solid fats for margarine, shortening, or deep-fat frying. Trans fats can increase your chances of developing heart disease and diabetes, even if you do not eat a lot of them (see Avoiding Trans Fats, below). To avoid health problems, it is best to eat no trans fats at all or almost none! Trans fats are found in foods like...

- Baked goods, packaged snack foods, doughnuts, crackers and chips
- Greasy, shiny, or greasy-crisp fried foods and biscuits from fast food places and restaurants
- Hard stick margarine
- Shortening

Avoiding Trans Fats

Even a small amount of trans fat can be bad for your health. For most adults, as few as 2 to 7 grams of trans fat a day can be harmful. Be aware that food labels can say “zero trans fat” when a food has less than 0.5 grams (500 mg) of trans fats per serving, so you could be eating trans fats even when you see “zero” on the label! Looking at the ingredients list for “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” or “hydrogenated vegetable oil” is the ONLY way to know for sure whether something has trans fats in it.

Note the trans fats in this list of ingredients from a food label:

**Ingredients:** Enriched flour, sugar, vegetable oil, whey (from milk), **partially hydrogenated soybean oil**, salt, baking soda, calcium lactate, malic acid, high fructose corn syrup.

Saturated fats

Eating too much saturated fat can also increase your chances of having heart problems. Try to eat less than 20 grams of saturated fat per day. Saturated fats are mostly hard or solid fats. They are the main fats found in foods from animals. Foods like...

- Fatty meats—ribs, ground beef, steak, barbecue, salt pork, and fatback
- Processed meats—bacon, sausage, bologna, and hot dogs
- Cheese
- Whole milk (regular sweet milk)
- Ice cream
- Cream
- Butter
- Lard
Unsaturated fats

The unsaturated fats (mono- and polyunsaturated) are better for your heart. These fats are softer, more liquid fats that are found mostly in plant foods and some oily fish. Foods like...

- Vegetable oils—olive, canola, safflower, peanut, corn, and soybean oils
- Salad dressings made with these oils
- Trans-fat-free margarine spreads
- Fish—salmon, tuna, and sardines
- Peanut butter and other nut butters
- Nuts—almonds, pecans, peanuts, and walnuts

To keep your heart healthy and lower your chances of getting heart disease...

Choose foods that are LOW in trans and saturated fats

- Fruits and vegetables*
- Beans*
- Whole grain breads and cereals*
- Lean meats, chicken, turkey and fish
- 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk, low-fat cheese, and low-fat or nonfat yogurt
- Watch out for foods made with coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils, which are high in saturated fat.
  * These foods are also high in fiber!

Eat more of these other kinds of fat

- Use liquid vegetable oils and trans-fat-free margarine spreads for cooking and seasoning instead of animal fats like lard, bacon grease, side meat, or fatback.
- Eat a small amount of nuts for a healthy snack.
- Choose fish more often.

Become a smart shopper

- The list of ingredients can tell you whether a food has “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” (trans fat) in it.
- The food label shows how much saturated fat is in the foods you buy. (See Read the Label! on page B-17.)
Understanding Cholesterol

Your body needs a little cholesterol to be healthy, but too much cholesterol can be bad for your heart. Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death in this country and are more likely to occur in people who have high blood cholesterol levels. The food you eat can make a difference in the amount of cholesterol in your blood.

What are LDL and HDL cholesterol?

There are two main types of cholesterol:

- LDL is the “bad” cholesterol. **LDL cholesterol** should be below 130 mg/dL, and for those who have heart disease, below 70 mg/dL.
- HDL is the “good” cholesterol. **HDL cholesterol** should be above 40 mg/dL.
- A good **total cholesterol level** is below 200 mg/dL, and for those who have heart disease, below 150 mg/dL.
- **Triglycerides** are another fatty substance in the blood; they should be less than 150 mg/dL.

What happens if my cholesterol is too high?

If there is too much cholesterol in your blood, the walls of your blood vessels may enlarge with cholesterol deposits. These can clog the blood vessels and lead to heart attacks and strokes.

What can I do to lower my cholesterol?

Cut down on the amount of trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol that you eat (see *Know Your Fats*, page B-11). This will help lower your LDL or “bad” cholesterol and may reduce your chances of getting heart disease.

It also helps to be active, get rid of extra weight and, if you smoke, quit!
How Much Can I Eat?

It’s not just what you eat that counts. Controlling how much you eat is very important if you want to lose weight or maintain your weight. Learn how to eat the right amount...

1. Read food labels.
   - Most packaged foods come with a label that tells you how much one serving is. (See Read the Label!, page B-17.)
   - Look for the serving size on the food label. Ask yourself: “Is this how much I usually have?”

2. Put the right amount on your plate.
   - Use measuring cups and spoons to measure portions.
   - If it’s hard to measure your food every day, see Be Serving Size Wise at the beginning of this notebook, for an easy way to serve the right amount of food.

3. Use these general guidelines:
   - For foods such as meat, fish, or chicken, use a food scale to measure the right amount (about 3 ounces). A 3-ounce serving is about the size of your palm or a deck of cards.
   - For breakfast cereals, soups, and salads, a serving size is usually one cup, which is about the size of your two hands cupped together.
   - For whole grain pasta, brown rice, old-fashioned oatmeal, or fruit salad, a serving size is 1/2 cup, or about the size of one hand cupped.
   - For butter or trans-fat-free margarine, one teaspoon is one fingertip.
   - For salad dressing and sour cream, a serving size is two tablespoons, which is about the size of a ping-pong ball.
   - For hot and cold beverages, a serving size is 8 fluid ounces, about the size of your fist.

Remember—When you fix a plate, don’t pile the food high!
Spice It Up Without Salt

Too much salt (also called sodium) causes high blood pressure in some people. High blood pressure is bad for your heart. Most of the salt that Americans eat comes from the salt that is added to processed and restaurant foods. To keep your heart healthy and your blood pressure normal, use the following tips.

1. **Check food labels for salt or sodium.**
   - One level teaspoon of salt is about 2300 milligrams of sodium. Try not to go over this amount with ALL your foods in one day—that means the salt already in processed foods as well as the salt that you add to food you cook.
   - Look for foods that have less than 300 milligrams of sodium in a serving (see *Added Salt Adds Up!* next page).
   - A food is pretty HIGH in salt if a serving has over 400 milligrams of sodium.
   - Look for foods that say no salt added or low or reduced sodium.

2. **Watch out for salty foods.**
   - Boxed dinners (like macaroni & cheese or Hamburger Helper®), canned soups and vegetables, frozen vegetables with sauces, and cheese sauces are often HIGH in salt (sodium). Look for foods that have less sodium.
   - If you eat frozen dinners, buy low salt or low sodium meals or have regular frozen dinners no more than once a week. Better still, make your own frozen dinners—cook larger amounts of food and freeze the extra in containers to reheat later. (You’ll save money too!)
   - Go easy on hot dogs, lunchmeats, and cured meats like bacon, ham, sausage, and beef sticks.
   - Don’t overdo fast foods and salty chips and snacks (these may also have a lot of trans fats).
   - Choose carefully at restaurants—even “healthy” menu items often have lots of salt.

3. **Break the salt shaker habit.**
   - ALL the salt you have in one day should fit in one level teaspoon. Remember that most of your salt is in the foods already, so only add a very small amount.
   - Taste your food first, before adding salt.
   - If a recipe calls for salt, add less than half the amount.
   - Keep the salt shaker away from where you cook and eat.

4. **Try herbs and spices.**
   - Try herbs and spices to bring out the flavor in your foods without adding salt.
   - For beef: Use sage, garlic, thyme, pepper, or turmeric.
   - For chicken: Use paprika, rosemary, curry, or garlic or onion powder.
For pork: Use thyme, basil, sage, pepper, curry, or garlic or onion powder.

For fish: Use lemon or lime juice, dill, or garlic or onion powder.

Try Mrs. Dash® or make your own herb and spice mixture. Keep it in a shaker and use when cooking or at the table.

Be careful! Some seasonings and sauces have lots of salt: garlic and onion salts, poultry seasoning, soy sauce, barbecue sauce, ketchup, some hot sauces, and spaghetti and tomato sauces.

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**Added Salt Adds Up!**

Watch out for the salt in snack and convenience foods. Compare the salt (sodium) in a baked potato versus 1 serving of potato chips:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food/Amount</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Salt (Sodium)</th>
<th>Saturated Fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 baked potato</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2.5 mg</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 potato chips (1 serving)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>333 mg</td>
<td>2 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read the Label!

It’s easier to make good choices when you know how to read food labels. Everything on the label is based on ONE serving. Here’s what to look for:

Food label

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving Size: 1 cup (228g)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Servings Per Container: 8</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount Per Serving</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories: 280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Daily Values*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat: 8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Fat: 4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat: 1.5g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cholesterol: 60 mg | 18% |
| Sodium: 590mg | 26% |
| Total Carbohydrate: 29g | 10% |
| Dietary Fiber: 4g | 15% |
| Sugars: 2g |
| Protein: 4g |

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

Serving Size
Look at the serving size and ask yourself, “How many servings am I eating?” Here, a serving is one cup. If you ate two servings (2 cups), you would have 16 g of fat (8+8), 1180 mg of sodium (590+590), and 560 calories (280+280).

Calories
Eating too many calories per day is linked to overweight and obesity. Looking at the calories in a serving can help you manage your weight. In general, 40 calories per serving is low-calorie, 100 calories per serving is moderate, and 400 or more is high.

Saturated Fat
Too many saturated fats are not good for your heart. Try to eat less than 20 grams of saturated fat per day. This food has 20% of the saturated fat you should have in a day (see %DV). Balance this food with others that are lower in saturated fat.

Trans Fat
These are some of the worst fats for your heart. Try not to eat any! Be careful: The food label may say “trans fat=0 grams” but if the ingredient list shows “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” then eating lots of servings still could add up to lots of trans fat! (See Know Your Fats, page B-11.)

Cholesterol
Keep this number as low as you can.

Sodium (salt)
Salt can be a problem for people with high blood pressure. Keep sodium at less than 2,300 mg (about 1 level teaspoon of salt) a day. One serving of this food would give you 26% (one fourth) of the sodium that you should get for the whole day!

Total Carbohydrate
Whole grain breads, fruits, and vegetables are some of the best kinds of carbohydrates because they are high in fiber. The more physically active you are, the more carbohydrates you can eat without gaining weight.

Dietary Fiber
Try to get at least 25-35 grams each day. Fiber lowers your cholesterol and keeps you regular. Here, you get 4 grams of fiber per serving.
**Sugars**
These include naturally occurring sugars (like those in fruit and milk) but also sugars added to foods or drinks. Read the ingredients list and avoid foods that contain high fructose corn syrup or other added sugars (such as fruit juice concentrate, sugar, maltose, dextrose, or sucrose) as one of the first few ingredients (see *Sugar-sweetened Drinks*, page B-9).

**Protein**
Most Americans get more than enough protein. Animal proteins often come with a lot of saturated fat and cholesterol.

**Vitamins and Minerals**
Your goal should be to get 100% of the Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium, and iron that you need each day. Eat a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products to reach this goal.

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### % Daily Value (DV)

The percent daily value shows you what percent of your daily goals are contained in one serving of a given food. A few nutrients, like trans fat, sugars, and protein, do not have a % DV. Try to eat almost no trans fats. Note that the % daily values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet—your own values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

**In general, 5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high.**

Aim for these daily values:

- Low %DV of:
  - saturated fat
  - cholesterol
  - sodium
- High %DV of:
  - dietary fiber
  - Vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron

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### Now You Try It! Food Label Quiz

Use the information in the food label to answer the following questions:

1. How many grams of **saturated fat** would you get if you ate only ½ a cup (½ a serving size) of this food?
2. With 1 cup (1 serving) of this food, how many grams of **trans fat** would you be eating?
3. What is the total amount of **dietary fiber** you would get if you ate 2 servings (2 cups) of this food?

**Answers:**

1) 2g of saturated fat
2) 1.5g of trans fat
3) 8g of dietary fiber
Fast Food Facts

Fast food is convenient, may taste good, and doesn’t cost a lot, but most fast food is unhealthy. It is best to stay away from fast food restaurants because most fast foods are high in trans and saturated fats, salt, sugar, and calories, and they use a lot of white breads and noodles. Make careful menu choices at other restaurants too!

If you eat at fast food restaurants, remember...

- Eat out only once in a while.
- Eat small portions, or try a kids’ meal—stay away from “supersized” food and beverage portions!
- Beware of “Market Fresh” or “Premium” menu items—they may sound healthy but they often are not.
- Ask for the Nutrition Facts sheet to make the best choices.
- Foods that are lower in trans fat and saturated fat can still be loaded with salt.

How do I make better fast food and restaurant choices?

**Breakfast**

- Avoid biscuits, hash browns, or fried potatoes, which usually have a lot of trans fat.
- Choose lean meat or plain eggs.
- Try fruit and yogurt.
- Unsweetened cereal with 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk can be a good choice.
- If you order toast, English muffins, pancakes, or waffles, ask for butter or trans-fat-free margarine on the side. Use 1/2 or less of the syrup packet.

**Salads**

- Salads can be a good way to eat more vegetables—but avoid toppings like fried or crispy chicken, other fried meats, croutons, tortilla strips, cheese, macaroni salad, or potato salad.
- Use a small amount of Italian or oil and vinegar salad dressing—stay away from the ranch, caesar, thousand island, and other creamy dressings.
French fries and other fried side dishes

- Skip the fries, onion rings, fried cheese sticks, and fried jalapeños—they are usually cooked in partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (trans fat).
- Instead, order a baked potato with just a little bit of butter, soft margarine, or cheese.
- If you do order fries, share a small order with a friend instead of eating them all yourself.

Burgers and sandwiches

- Subway sandwiches on whole wheat bread can be a healthy choice. Ask for lean meats like turkey breast and plenty of vegetables. Avoid meatballs.
- Try a grilled chicken sandwich.
- Order burgers and sandwiches plain or with lettuce and tomato. Add your own mustard or ketchup, and skip the “special sauces” and cheese!
- Burgers have less trans fat than fried chicken nuggets.

Chicken and fish

- Order grilled chicken instead of fried or "crispy."
- If you get fried chicken, ask for regular not crispy—“extra crispy” means “extra trans fat.”
- Baked or oven-roasted chicken can also be good options.
- Order fish sandwiches with the cheese and tartar sauce on the side—and only use a little.
- Try fish with lettuce and tomato and a splash of lemon.

Tacos

- Order “Fresco Style” tacos—these use salsa instead of cheese and dressings.
- Avoid most tortillas, burritos, and chalupas, which have a lot of trans fats.

Pizza

- Don’t eat more than 1-2 pieces of pizza for your meal. Add a side salad to fill you up!
- Ask for half the cheese.
- Order vegetable toppings like onions, green peppers, tomatoes, and mushrooms.
- Skip the high-salt meat toppings like sausage and pepperoni.
- Avoid stuffed crust pizza, which has lots of extra calories, unhealthy fat, and salt.
**Food bars**

- Enjoy a large salad with plenty of dark leafy greens and other vegetables like broccoli or carrots. Add a small amount of sunflower seeds or almonds. Go easy on the cheese and use oil and vinegar dressings.
- Vegetable soups can be good choices if they don’t have lots of added salt or sugar.
- Choose vegetables without sauces.

**Drinks**

- Have a glass of water with a refreshing twist of lemon or lime.
- Order unsweetened iced tea or coffee, or sweetened—but go easy on the sugar!
- Ask for 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk.
- Avoid sugar-sweetened drinks like sodas, fruitades, or powerades.
- Order a small (4-oz.) orange or apple juice.

**Desserts**

- Choose low-fat yogurt instead of milkshakes, apple turnovers, and cookies.
- Bring a piece of fresh fruit from home.

**Salt**

- Avoid dipping sauces, like “chipotle” or “bbq.” Most dipping sauces are loaded with salt.
- Go easy on extra meats like bacon or sausage.

Choose carefully—fast foods have lots of trans fats, salt, and sugar!
Eating Healthy on a Budget

Healthy foods don’t have to cost more. By choosing carefully you can eat healthy AND keep your food costs down. You will have more money to buy healthy foods because you will save money not buying unhealthy foods!

Shop wisely.

- Compare prices and ingredients—store brands are often cheaper and just as good.
- Look for day-old whole wheat bread or reduced price fruits and vegetables—but only buy what you will use quickly!
- Do the work yourself—trim the fat from meat and debone chicken at home. Wash and cut fruits and vegetables instead of buying them prewashed or precut.
- Eat before you go shopping to avoid impulse buying!

Buy a larger amount for less money.

- Buy big bags of inexpensive fruits and vegetables like apples, oranges, and carrots—but don’t let them go to waste.
- Get a bushel of produce from a farmer (pick-your-own, roadside stand, or someone you know), then can or freeze it in smaller servings. (Your local Cooperative Extension Service can tell you how to do this.)
- Stock up on healthy foods when they are on sale—foods like canned fish, canned beans, nuts, brown rice, and whole grain pasta.
- Shop with a friend and split larger packages of food when you get home.
- Buy a large container of yogurt or cottage cheese and use it all week (instead of several small containers).

Buy fruits and vegetables in season.

- Fruits and vegetables cost more (and don’t taste as good) when they’re out of season. Enjoy seasonal fruits and vegetables over the year.
- Watch for produce sales at the supermarket, or look for roadside stands or farmers markets where you may get better prices.
- Try a “pick-your-own” farm. You can get fresh produce at a good price, and some exercise too! (Call your local Cooperative Extension Service for a list of farms near you.)
- When you can’t find what you want in season, buy canned or frozen—but stay away from added sugars, syrups, salt, and sauces.
Get creative with main dishes.

- Stretch your food dollar by using beans more often (see *Making the Most of Beans* on page B-26).
- Have eggs for dinner. Make a vegetable omelet and eat it with whole wheat toast.
- Eat a large salad. A yummy salad might include: romaine lettuce or spinach, tomatoes, other vegetables, hardboiled eggs, tuna, a small amount of cheese, sunflower seeds or nuts (see *Lower-cost Ways to Eat More Nuts*, below), and a homemade oil and vinegar dressing.
- Buy canned fish like salmon, tuna, and sardines, or freeze extra fish caught fresh. See salmon patty and tuna salad recipes in the *New Leaf* cookbook, pages 23–24.

Bring food from home (and eat out less often).

- Bring easy-to-pack sandwiches, soups, hardboiled eggs, fruit, or leftovers to work.
- Get a reusable plastic container or thermos for your drink.
- Store leftovers in clear containers so they won’t spoil before you can take them for lunch.

**Lower-cost Ways to Eat More Nuts**

- Look for nuts and nut butters on sale.
- Buy nuts in bulk, when possible.
- Get pecans from a neighbor’s (or your own) tree.
- Find local farmers who can sell you peanuts.
- Natural peanut butter (the kind with the oil on top) makes a good snack or lunch food.
Cooking for One or on the Run

It might seem like a lot of trouble to make a regular meal when you’re the only one eating or when you’re rushing from one thing to the next. But even if you’re in a hurry, you can still choose a healthy eating plan (see A Healthy Eating Plan for Life, page B-3).

Here are five ideas for fixing quick, balanced meals:

1. **Keep frozen or canned vegetables on hand** for easy additions to soups, sauces, and stews.
   - Combine canned goods with fresh ingredients.
   - Buy low-salt canned goods when possible.
   - Buy frozen vegetables in bags, not boxes - it’s easier to take out a small amount.

2. **Buy nuts and fresh fruit** for quick and healthy snacks.

3. **Cook large batches of food** and freeze leftovers.

4. **Use leftovers** to save time and money. Toss leftover meat or vegetables in soups, spaghetti sauces, or homemade burritos.

5. **Plan a week’s meals around a few main ingredients**, like lean meats or fish, whole grains, vegetables, and beans (see Easy Balanced Meals, below and Making the Most of Beans, next page).

### Easy Balanced Meals

On Sunday, cook a pot of brown rice. Mix the rice with vegetables and lean meat, poultry, fish, or eggs to build your week’s meals...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Add vegetables and some brown rice to low-salt chicken broth to make a hearty soup.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Sauté onion with two cups of fresh or frozen vegetables in vegetable oil, mix in brown rice, and stir in a beaten egg for quick and easy stir-fried rice. A little low-sodium soy sauce will make it taste like a real Chinese meal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Make your own hamburger helper: brown ground turkey or lean ground beef with onions and green pepper, then add a scoop of brown rice from your pot. Add extra sautéed or frozen vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Open canned salmon, and eat with brown rice and steamed vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Make a quick “stir-fry” with mixed vegetables and cut-up chicken, and serve over brown rice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making the Most of Beans

Beans make a great-tasting, low-cost, healthy main dish, and have lots of fiber. There are many kinds of beans: pintos, kidney beans, black beans, navy beans, chickpeas (also called garbanzos), lentils, black-eyed peas, split peas, and others.

- If beans are hard on your system, use these cooking tips:
  - Soak the beans overnight, then rinse.
  - Change the water before cooking the next day and skim the foam off the top.
  - Make sure the beans are cooked completely.
  - Use onions, garlic, vinegar, or a taste of lean ham for seasoning instead of fatback.

- Serving beans with vegetables or a whole grain can help you feel full.

- Use canned beans to save time, but make sure you drain and rinse the beans several times to get rid of the added salt (sodium).

- Try cooking a pot of beans on Sunday and using the beans during the week. You can:
  - Spoon the beans over brown rice, whole grain noodles, or potatoes.
  - Mix beans and ground turkey or beef with spaghetti sauce to make hearty chili.
  - Add beans to canned or homemade vegetable soup.
  - Mix 3 kinds of beans with a healthy salad dressing for a cold 3-bean salad.
  - Spoon beans, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and a little cheese onto a soft whole wheat tortilla and roll up into a burrito.
Helping Others Make Healthy Food Choices

Healthy eating is good for everyone, even people who don’t have health problems. Here are some reasons why:

- If everybody eats the same thing, cooking is easier and nobody feels left out.
- Children learn healthy eating habits early in life.
- If heart disease, diabetes or high blood pressure run in the family, eating healthy can help everyone lower their risk.

Use the following tips to help your family or friends make changes.

**Praise**

- When others eat something that’s healthy, say “That’s great!”
- Give a pat on the back for small changes—every step is important.

**Give**

- Give hope, not fear. Don’t try to scare family or friends by nagging or pointing out their unhealthy eating habits. Focus on how good changes help.
- Give a gift of food that is good tasting and good for you, like fresh fruit in season, homemade soup, or garden vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned).

**Help**

- Ask family and friends not to eat junk foods in front of you—explain why it’s even better not to eat them at all!
- When you eat out, go to restaurants with healthy choices. Avoid all-you-can-eat places.
- Keep foods high in sugar, salt, and saturated or trans fats out of sight.
- Better yet, don’t even bring unhealthy foods home.

**Share**

- Talk about changes that have made you feel better, like eating healthier, quitting smoking, or being more active.
- Trade recipes and good food ideas.
- Invite a friend over to eat—share what you have learned about healthy cooking!

**Plan**

- Think up fun things to do with family and friends that do not include food.
- Focus on activities that can help all of you be physically active—things like walking, washing the car, playing ball, going to the park, or raking leaves.
- Plan ways to avoid temptation—but if you slip, just get back on track!

*It’s easier to change when you do it together!*
# Shifting the Balance

If you feel like it’s hard to eat healthy, use these tips to remind yourself how easy it can be!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Choose these foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>more often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast</strong></td>
<td>Whole grain cereal with 1%, 1/2%, or skim (nonfat) milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole grain pancakes and fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A few spoonfuls of chopped almonds or walnuts added to cereal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An egg with whole grain toast</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetable omelet</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small piece of lean ham</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole or cut-up fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>less often</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bacon, sausage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sugary breakfast cereals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doughnuts, sweet rolls, white flour pancakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biscuits, hash browns, fried potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grits or potatoes with a lot of butter or gravy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td>Whole grain sandwich with peanut butter and jelly, tuna, lean roast beef, grilled chicken, or turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetable beef soup with barley</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plain hamburger</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low-fat or nonfat yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raw or cooked vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baked potato</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh or dried fruit</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>less often</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hot dog on white bun</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bologna and cheese sandwich on white bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamburger with all the fixings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack chips and pretzels</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cookies, snack cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sodas, snack cakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinner</strong></td>
<td>Baked or BBQ chicken (low-sodium sauce)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baked or broiled fish, especially tuna or salmon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lean beef or pork</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoppin’ John or vegetarian chili</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole grain breads or pasta, brown rice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vegetables seasoned with olive, canola, or other vegetable oils</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spinach or romaine salad with oil and vinegar dressing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>less often</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chicken or fish fried in shortening</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatty cuts of beef or pork ribs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French fries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boxed macaroni and cheese</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Canned biscuits with butter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vegetables seasoned with bacon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sodas and other sugary drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack foods and desserts</strong></td>
<td>Raw vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unbuttered popcorn</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuts (a small handful)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A small amount of frozen yogurt</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>less often</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snack chips and pretzels</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cookies and cakes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sodas or other sugar-sweetened drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ice cream, custard or cream pie</td>
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</tbody>
</table>