

Tips To Healthy Eating

As the [obesity epidemic](#) continues perhaps we need some guidelines for our daily eating habits.

So here it is:

Journal. To make changes you first must be aware of your eating habits. Are they good or bad, you may not even know. Write down everything you eat for 3 days. Then check your list according to the rest of these tips.

Variety. Eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods. You need more than [40 different nutrients](#) to have maximal body function. These nutrients do not exist in one or two foods, so you need to eat a wide variety of foods. Eat whole grains, fruits and vegetables. 6-11 servings from the bread, rice, cereal and pasta group, 3 of those being whole grains. 2-4 servings of fruit. 3-5 servings of vegetables.

Moderate portions. If you keep portion sizes reasonable, it's easier to eat the foods you want and stay healthy. The recommended serving of cooked meat is 3 ounces, similar in size to a deck of playing cards, not a half pound burger. A medium piece of fruit is 1 serving and a cup of pasta is 2 servings. A pint of ice cream contains 4 servings, so make it last 4 nights, do not eat it all at once! Instead of 4 pieces of pizza eat 3, that is a 25% decrease! Moderation is the key.

Reduce frequency of bad choices. Most people eat for pleasure as well as nutrition. If your favorite foods are high in fat, salt or sugar, the key is moderating how often you eat these foods. For example if you love fried chicken you don't have to give it up. Just eat it less often.

Eat regular meals. Skipping meals can lead to out-of-control hunger, resulting in overeating. When you're hungry, it's also tempting to forget about good nutrition. Snacking between meals can help curb hunger. Skipping breakfast can decrease your [metabolic rate](#) by 5%, adding up to 10lbs per year. The ideal diet is 4-6 small meals. Not eating for long periods can lower your metabolic rate 10-20% preventing the use of 250-300 [calories](#) a day. [Dr. Sears, The Zone](#)

Balance your choices. Not every food has to be "perfect." When eating a food high in fat, salt or sugar, select other foods that are low in these ingredients. If you miss out on any food group one day, make up for it the next. Your food choices over several days should fit together into a healthy pattern.

Replacement. Try skim or low-fat dairy products, lean cuts of meat, foods with low [sodium levels](#), etc.

Make changes gradually. Just as there are no "super-foods" or easy answers to a healthy diet, don't expect to totally revamp your eating habits overnight. Changing too much, too fast can get in the way of success. For instance, if you don't like the taste of skim milk, try low-fat. Eventually you may find you like skim, too.

Remember, foods are not good or bad. Select foods based on your total eating patterns. Don't feel guilty if you love foods such as apple pie, potato chips, candy bars or ice cream. Eat them in moderation and choose other foods to provide the balance and variety that are vital to good health.