

# Healthy Eating: Make It Happen

Making healthy food choices and building healthy meals can be tough. You are probably busy from morning until night. When it's time to eat, it's too easy to stop for fast food or grab an unhealthy snack from a vending machine or convenience store.

Research shows that this eating style leaves you light on the healthy foods—fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy foods—and heavy on fats, sugar and salt.

But it does take time and effort to choose and eat healthy meals and snacks. But if you spend time planning ahead, shop regularly, and be ready to make healthy meals, you'll set yourself up to eat healthier. You may even lose a few pounds. Two extra bonuses are that you'll save time and money. So, make healthy eating happen in your life with these tips:



- Buy and keep mostly healthy foods. If only healthy foods are in your house, then that's what you'll eat. Weed out the not-so-healthy foods. If they aren't there, you are less likely to eat them.

- Create a simple system to track the foods you have and the food you need to buy. Start by taking a few minutes to list the foods you always like to have in the house—the ones that help you eat healthy. Make copies of this list and use one copy at a time as the start of your shopping list. Create this list with foods grouped together the way your supermarket is laid out. For example, all fresh fruits and vegetables together, all dairy foods together, etc.

- Keep your food tracking list somewhere in your kitchen and keep a pen nearby. When you run out of an item and need to replace it, make a note on your list.

## Shopping Tips:

- Set a day and time that you usually go to the market. Limit this to no more than once a week. The less you shop, the less you are tempted.
- Don't shop if you are hungry.
- Shop in the same market. This way you are familiar with the lay out and can shop more quickly.

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## Planning Tips:

- Set aside a few minutes each week to think about the meals you'll make the next week. Ask yourself three questions: 1) Which foods do I need from the store to make these meals? (2) What other foods do I need to eat healthy breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks? (3) What foods do I already have in the house? Make your shopping list from your answers to these questions.
- Keep a good stock of the basics on hand. Always have on hand such staples as vinegars, mustards, lemon and lime juice, canola or vegetable oil, tomato sauce, cans of tuna fish and salmon, broth, canned or frozen fruit and vegetables, seasonings, etc.

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- Keep in mind that the healthiest items are around the sides of the market—fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy, meats, poultry and cheeses. Spend time in these sections. Avoid the aisles with foods you are best off leaving on the shelves.
- Find out when the store shelves are most chock full. Ask the manager.
- Shop with your grocery list and when the market isn't crowded. This helps you avoid crowds and shop quickly.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label on foods that have them to check out whether the food should be in your basket or be left on the shelf. Remember the Nutrition Facts are for one serving of the food.  
<http://www.diabetes.org/nutrition-and-recipes/nutrition/foodlabel.jsp>
- Don't buy special or diet foods. For the most part these foods don't save you many calories or grams of carbohydrate or fat. Also they tend to cost more and aren't too tasty.

## **Tips for Making Meals & Snacks**

- Always have what you need to prepare at least three quick and easy family meals. Choose recipes with no more than five ingredients. Make sure you can whip the recipe together quickly. If you can make enough to have leftovers, that's even better.
- Supply yourself with a stash of ready-to-eat healthy meals, such as frozen meals, eggs, yogurt with fruit and dried cereal, or pasta with jar of tomato sauce.
- Keep fruits and vegetables on hand and ready for snacking. This is extra important if you have kids.
- Make enough for a second or third meal when you cook. Have the meal later in the week or store enough in the freezer for another meal.
- Eat at home as much as possible. It's a good idea to eat out less than three times a week. Research shows that people eat fewer fruits and vegetables and more fat, salt and sugar when they eat out.

It might sound hard to use all these tips, but over time you'll find that they save you time and money. They'll also help you eat more healthfully. Keep in mind that eating healthy, losing weight, and keeping weight off doesn't just happen. It takes time and effort. But you can do it!



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