

# Better Health Through Better Living

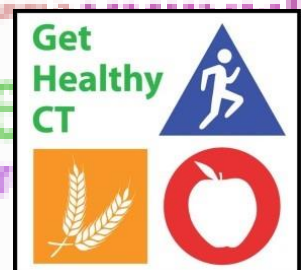
## Look inside for:

- Disease Prevention Checklist (English/Spanish)
- Environmental Wellness Checklist (English/Spanish)
- Emotional Wellness Checklist (English/Spanish)
- Social Wellness Checklist (English/Spanish)
- Physical Wellness Checklist
- My Family Health History
- Plan Your Plate
- Tips to Reduce Salt & Sodium

For more information on ways to lead a healthier lifestyle  
visit our website [getheathyct.org](http://getheathyct.org)



# September 2021



# Disease Prevention Checklist

Health screenings, vaccines, and guarding yourself from germs and bugs can help keep you feeling your best. Here are tips to help you better prevent diseases:



## GET SCREENED FOR DISEASES

Some screenings can reduce your risk of dying from a disease. But sometimes, experts say, a test may cause more harm than good. Before you get a test, talk with your doctor about the possible benefits and harms to help you decide what's best for your health.

### To learn about screening tests, ask your doctor:

- What's my chance of dying of the condition with and without a screening?
- What are the harms of the test?
- How likely are false results?
- What are possible harms of the test?
- What's the chance of finding a disease that wouldn't have caused a problem?
- How effective are the treatment options?
- What are other ways to decrease my risk?



## GUARD AGAINST GERMS

For nearly a century, bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics have helped to control and destroy many of the harmful bacteria that can make us sick. But these drugs don't work at all against viruses, such as those that cause colds or flu. Learn how to protect yourself against germs in the environment.

### To block harmful germs:

- Wash your hands often.
- If you're sick, make sure your doctor has a clear understanding of your symptoms.
- If antibiotics are needed, take the full course exactly as directed.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle—including proper diet, exercise, and good hygiene.



## PROTECT YOUR BODY'S BACTERIA

Microscopic creatures—including bacteria, fungi, and viruses—can make you ill. But what you may not realize is that trillions of microbes are living in and on your body right now. Most don't harm you at all. We tend to focus on destroying bad microbes. But taking care of good ones may be even more important.

### To protect good microbes:

- Don't pressure your doctor to give you antibiotics.
- Know when to wash your hands, like when handling food.
- Don't use antibacterial products you don't need. Antibacterial soaps and household products haven't been shown to reduce your risk of infection.
- Don't go overboard with hand sanitizers.
- Experiment with different skin moisturizers to see which work best for you.



### PREVENT MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES

Most mosquito bites are relatively harmless. The itchy bumps often last for just a day or two after a mosquito has punctured your skin. But if the mosquito is carrying certain germs, like viruses or parasites, these pathogens might enter your blood during the bite and make you sick. But we can all take simple steps to avoid getting bit by those blood-sucking insects.

#### To avoid mosquito bites:

- ☐ Use insect repellents as directed on the label.
- ☐ Cover up. When outside, wear long sleeves, pants, and socks.
- ☐ Install or repair screens on windows and doors in your home to keep insects out.
- ☐ Get rid of mosquito breeding sites. Empty standing water from flowerpots, gutters, buckets, pool covers, pet water dishes, and birdbaths on a regular basis.



### BLOCK TICK BITES AND LYME DISEASE

When warm weather arrives, you might get the urge to walk barefoot through the grass. But before you stroll through your lawn or head out on a hiking trail, you'll want to protect yourself and your loved ones from ticks that often lurk in tall grass, thick brush, and wooded areas. Many ticks carry disease, so do what you can to keep ticks from taking a bite out of you.

#### To prevent tick bites and tick-borne diseases:

- ☐ Help keep ticks off your skin by wearing long sleeves, long pants, and long socks.
- ☐ Ward off ticks by using an insect repellent.
- ☐ Walk in the center of trails and steer clear of tall vegetation.
- ☐ After being near ticks, bathe or shower as soon as possible, and wash or tumble your clothes in a dryer on high heat.
- ☐ Check your body carefully for ticks.
- ☐ Remove ticks right away.
- ☐ If you develop a rash or fever after removing a tick, see your doctor.



### PROTECT YOURSELF AND EVERYONE ELSE FROM DISEASE

We share more than food and culture within our homes and communities. We can also spread disease. Luckily, we live in a time when vaccines can protect us from many of the most serious illnesses. Staying current on your shots helps you—and your neighbors—avoid getting and spreading disease.

#### To stay up-to-date, check on shots for:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bacterial meningitis                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Influenza (flu)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickenpox                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Measles, Mumps, and Rubella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diphtheria                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Pertussis (whooping cough)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Haemophilus influenzae type b          | <input type="checkbox"/> Pneumococcal pneumonia      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis A and B                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rotavirus diarrhea          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cervical & other cancers caused by HPV | <input type="checkbox"/> Shingles                    |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tetanus                     |

# Lista de control de prevención de enfermedades

Los exámenes de salud, las vacunas y la protección contra los gérmenes y los insectos pueden ayudarlo a sentirse lo mejor posible. Estos son algunos consejos para ayudarlo a prevenir enfermedades:



## HACERSE EXÁMENES PARA DETECTAR ENFERMEDADES

Algunos exámenes pueden reducir el riesgo de morir a causa de una enfermedad. Pero a veces, dicen los expertos, una prueba puede causar más daño que beneficio. Antes de hacerse una prueba, hable con su médico sobre los posibles beneficios y daños, a fin de que lo ayude a decidir qué es lo mejor para su salud.

**Para conocer los exámenes de detección, consulte a su médico:**

- ☐ ¿Cuál es mi probabilidad de morir de la condición si realizo o no la prueba?
- ☐ ¿Cuáles son los daños asociados con la prueba?
- ☐ ¿Qué tan probables son los resultados falsos?
- ☐ ¿Cuáles son los daños potenciales de la prueba?
- ☐ ¿Cuál es la posibilidad de encontrar una enfermedad que no hubiera causado un problema?
- ☐ ¿Qué tan efectivas son las opciones de tratamiento?
- ☐ ¿Cuáles son otras formas de disminuir mi riesgo?



## PROTEGERSE CONTRA LOS GÉRMENES

Durante casi un siglo, las drogas que combaten las bacterias, conocidas como antibióticos, han ayudado a controlar y destruir muchas de las bacterias dañinas que pueden enfermarnos. Pero estos medicamentos no funcionan en absoluto contra los virus, como los que causan resfriados o gripe. Aprenda cómo protegerse contra los gérmenes en el ambiente.

**Para bloquear gérmenes dañinos:**

- ☐ Lávese las manos a menudo.
- ☐ Si está enfermo, asegúrese de que su médico tenga una comprensión clara de sus síntomas.
- ☐ Si necesita antibióticos, tome el medicamento completo exactamente como se indica.
- ☐ Mantenga un estilo de vida saludable, que incluya una dieta adecuada, ejercicio y buena higiene.



## PROTEGER LAS BACTERIAS DE SU CUERPO

Hay criaturas microscópicas, que incluyen bacterias, hongos y virus, que pueden enfermarlo. Pero de lo que quizás no se dé cuenta es de que trillones de microbios están viviendo en su cuerpo en este momento. La mayoría no le hace daño en absoluto. Tendemos a concentrarnos en destruir los microbios malos. Pero cuidar a los buenos puede ser aun más importante.

**Para proteger a los buenos microbios:**

- ☐ No presione a su médico para que le dé antibióticos.
- ☐ Sepa cuándo lavarse las manos, como cuando manipula alimentos.
- ☐ No use productos antibacterianos que no necesita. No se ha demostrado que los jabones y los productos para el hogar antibacterianos reduzcan el riesgo de infección.
- ☐ No se exceda con los desinfectantes para manos.
- ☐ Pruebe diferentes humectantes para la piel para ver cuál funciona mejor para usted.



### PREVENIR LAS ENFERMEDADES TRANSMITIDAS POR MOSQUITOS

La mayoría de las picaduras de mosquitos son relativamente inofensivas. Los bultos que pican a menudo duran solo uno o dos días después de que un mosquito haya perforado su piel. Pero si el mosquito transporta ciertos gérmenes, como virus o parásitos, estos patógenos podrían ingresar a su sangre con la picadura y enfermarlo. Pero todos podemos tomar medidas simples para evitar que nos piquen estos insectos chupasangre.

#### Para evitar las picaduras de mosquitos:

- ☐ Use repelentes de insectos como se indica en la etiqueta.
- ☐ Cúbrase. Cuando esté afuera, use mangas largas, pantalones y calcetines.
- ☐ Instale pantallas en ventanas y puertas, o repare las existentes, para mantener a los insectos fuera de su casa.
- ☐ Deshágase de los criaderos de mosquitos. Vacíe el agua estancada de las macetas, los canales, los cubos, las coberturas de la piscina, los platos de agua de las mascotas y los recipientes para pájaros regularmente.



### BLOQUEAR LAS PICADURAS DE GARRAPATAS Y LA ENFERMEDAD DE LYME

Cuando llega el clima cálido, es posible que tenga la necesidad de caminar descalzo por la hierba. Pero antes de pasear por el césped o salir por un sendero de caminata, querrá protegerse y proteger a sus seres queridos de las garrapatas que a menudo se esconden entre la hierba alta, los matorrales y las áreas boscosas. Muchas garrapatas son portadoras de enfermedades, así que haga lo que pueda para evitar que las garrapatas lo muerdan.

#### Para prevenir las picaduras de garrapatas y las enfermedades transmitidas por estas:

- ☐ Ayude a mantener las garrapatas lejos de su piel al usar mangas largas, pantalones largos y calcetines largos.
- ☐ Utilice un repelente de insectos para evitar las picaduras de garrapatas.
- ☐ Camine por el centro de los senderos y aléjese de la vegetación alta.
- ☐ Después de estar en un área cerca de garrapatas, báñese o dúchese lo antes posible y lave o seque la ropa en una secadora a alta temperatura.
- ☐ Revise su cuerpo cuidadosamente para detectar garrapatas.
- ☐ Elimine las garrapatas de inmediato.
- ☐ Si desarrolla una erupción o fiebre después de quitarse una garrapata, consulte a su médico.



### PROTEGERSE USTED Y PROTEGER A LOS DEMÁS DE LAS ENFERMEDADES

Compartimos más que comida y cultura en nuestros hogares y comunidades. También podemos diseminar enfermedades. Afortunadamente, vivimos en un momento en que las vacunas pueden protegernos de muchas de las enfermedades más graves. Mantenerse al día con sus vacunas lo ayuda a usted, así como a sus vecinos, a evitar contraer y propagar enfermedades.

#### Para mantenerse actualizado, verifique sus vacunas para:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meningitis bacteriana                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Influenza (gripe)                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Varicela y rubéola                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> El sarampión, las paperas y la rubéola |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difteria  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pertussis (tos ferina)                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> tipo b                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrea por rotavirus                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hepatitis A y hepatitis B                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Herpes                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cáncer cervical y otros rotavirus causados por el VPH | <input type="checkbox"/> Tétanos                                |



# Environmental Wellness Checklist

What surrounds you each day in your home, work, or neighborhood can affect your health. Here are some tips to make your environments safer:

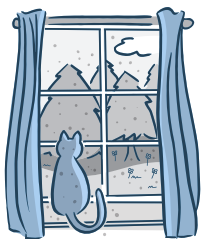


## MAKE YOUR HOME HEALTHIER

Take a look around your home. Do you know what's in your household goods and products? Some chemicals can harm your health if too much gets into your body. Becoming aware of potentially harmful substances and clearing them out can help keep you and your family healthy.

### To reduce toxic substances in your home:

- ☐ Clean with non-toxic products.
- ☐ Dust using a damp rag.
- ☐ Use a wet mop to clean floors.
- ☐ Vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- ☐ Open a window or use a fan to improve air circulation when you're cleaning.
- ☐ Have a good ventilation system.
- ☐ Wash your & your children's hands often.



## REDUCE YOUR ALLERGIES

A change in season can brighten your days with vibrant new colors. But blooming flowers and falling leaves can usher in more than beautiful backdrops. Airborne substances that irritate your nose can blow in with the weather. When sneezing, itchy eyes, or a runny nose suddenly appears, allergies may be to blame. Take steps to reduce your exposure to allergens.

### To reduce allergies:

- ☐ Avoid going outdoors when you're having allergies.
- ☐ If you go outside, wash your hair and clothing when you come inside.
- ☐ Keep humidity levels low in the home.
- ☐ Avoid upholstered furniture and carpets.
- ☐ Wash your bedding in hot water once a week.
- ☐ Vacuum the floors once a week.
- ☐ Talk with your doctor about medications and allergy shots.



## STAY SAFE DURING HOT WEATHER

Heat is the biggest danger in the summer months. Being hot for too long can cause many illnesses, some of which can be deadly. But the warmer weather also brings lots of new opportunities to improve your health. Here's how to make the most of the summer months.

### To create healthy summer habits:

- ☐ Beat the sun and heat with an early morning or evening activity.
- ☐ Wear protective clothing.
- ☐ Use sunscreen that blocks UVA and UVB.
- ☐ Use sunglasses that block UVA and UVB.
- ☐ Try to stay in the shade when outdoors.
- ☐ Go to an air-conditioned gym, do water workouts, or use a fitness video at home.
- ☐ Drink plenty of water.

**GUARD AGAINST COLD WEATHER**

The frosty air of winter can be invigorating. But cold air can also pose threats to your health, whether you're indoors or outside. Learn to recognize the signs of your body temperature dropping too low, and take steps to keep yourself and your family warm and safe during the chilly season.

**To guard against the cold:**

- ☐ Dress in layers.
- ☐ Cover up with blankets.
- ☐ Wear a jacket with a waterproof and windproof outer shell.
- ☐ To keep warm at home, wear socks, slippers, and a cap or hat.
- ☐ Set your heat at 68° or higher when it's cold outside. To save on heating bills, close off rooms you're not using.
- ☐ If you need help paying your heating bills, you may qualify for an energy assistance program.

**AIR QUALITY AND YOUR HEALTH**

The combination of high temperatures, few winds and breezes, pollution, and airborne particles can brew up an unhealthy mixture in the air, just waiting to enter your lungs. These substances can make it hard to breathe and can sap your energy. If the air quality is especially poor, it may take a few days for your body to recover. And if you're regularly exposed to high levels of unhealthy air, the health consequences can linger for months or even years.

**To reduce the effects of poor quality air on your health:**

- ☐ Avoid outdoor activities in the afternoons on warmer days, when the risk of air pollution is highest.
- ☐ Avoid strenuous outdoor activities if the air is polluted. Check your region's air quality index, which is often reported in the local news.
- ☐ Consider reducing the time and intensity of your outdoor workout or exercise indoors.

**TEST FOR TOXIC GASES**

Radon gas typically moves up through the ground and comes into homes through cracks in floors, walls, and foundations. Sometimes it enters the home through well water. Whatever the source, your home can trap radon inside, where it can build up. You might not be able to see or smell radon, but it can still harm you—slowly, and in ways that you can't detect.

**To fight radon:**

- ☐ Start by testing your home. You can do it yourself or hire a professional.
- ☐ If you find a radon problem in your home, take steps to fix it.
- ☐ If you smoke, stop. Smoking is an especially serious health risk when combined with radon.
- ☐ Get help for your radon questions at this national hotline: 1-800-55RADON (557-2366).



### STAY SAFE IN THE WATER

Summer is a great time to go out and have fun in the water. But recreational waters—including swimming pools, lakes, and oceans—can sometimes get contaminated with bacteria and viruses. Swimming in contaminated water can make you and your family sick. But you can take steps to stay safer while playing in the water.

#### To stay safer while playing in the water:

- ☐ Shower before and after going into a swimming pool.
- ☐ Stay out of the water if you've had diarrhea in the last two weeks to help protect others from infectious germs.
- ☐ Try not to swallow recreational water.
- ☐ Avoid swimming or playing near places where storm water is released on the beach.
- ☐ Stay out of the water for at least 24 hours after a storm.
- ☐ Always wash your hands before you eat or drink.



# Lista de control de bienestar ambiental

Aquello que lo rodea cada día en su hogar, trabajo o vecindario puede afectar su salud. Aquí hay algunos consejos para hacer que sus entornos sean más seguros:



## HACER QUE SU HOGAR SEA MÁS SALUDABLE

Eche un vistazo a su hogar. ¿Sabe lo que hay en sus artículos domésticos y productos para el hogar? Algunos productos químicos pueden dañar su salud si entran en su cuerpo en cantidad. Tomar conciencia de las sustancias potencialmente dañinas y eliminarlas puede ayudarlo a mantenerlos a usted y a su familia saludables.

### Para reducir las sustancias tóxicas en su hogar:

- ☐ Limpie con productos no tóxicos.
- ☐ Desempolve con un trapo húmedo.
- ☐ Use un trapeador húmedo para limpiar los pisos.
- ☐ Aspire con un filtro HEPA.
- ☐ Abra una ventana o use un ventilador para mejorar la circulación de aire mientras esté limpiando.
- ☐ Tenga un buen sistema de ventilación.
- ☐ Lave sus manos y las manos de sus hijos con frecuencia.



## REDUCIR SUS ALERGIAS

Un cambio en la temporada puede alegrar sus días con nuevos colores vibrantes. Pero las plantas que florecen y las hojas que caen pueden implicar un trasfondo no tan pintoresco. Las sustancias transportadas por el aire que irritan su nariz pueden llegar con el clima. Cuando estornuda, tiene picazón en los ojos, o aumenta la secreción nasal, las alergias pueden ser las culpables. Tome medidas para reducir su exposición a alérgenos.

### Para reducir las alergias:

- ☐ Evite salir al aire libre cuando tenga alergias.
- ☐ Si sale al exterior, lave su cabello y su ropa cuando entre.
- ☐ Mantenga los niveles de humedad en el hogar bajos.
- ☐ Evite muebles tapizados y alfombras.
- ☐ Lave su ropa de cama con agua caliente una vez a la semana.
- ☐ Aspire los pisos una vez a la semana.
- ☐ Hable con su médico sobre medicamentos y vacunas contra la alergia.



## MANTENERSE SEGURO DURANTE EL CLIMA CALIENTE

El calor es el mayor peligro en los meses de verano. Estar caliente por mucho tiempo puede causar muchas enfermedades, algunas de las cuales pueden ser mortales. Pero el clima más cálido también trae muchas nuevas oportunidades para mejorar su salud. A continuación, le mostramos cómo aprovechar al máximo los meses de verano.

### Para crear hábitos saludables de verano:

- ☐ Salga cuando el sol y el calor disminuyen al hacer actividades temprano por la mañana o bien tarde.
- ☐ Use ropa protectora.
- ☐ Use protector solar que bloquee los rayos UVA y UVB.
- ☐ Use gafas de sol que bloqueen los rayos UVA y UVB.
- ☐ Trate de mantenerse a la sombra cuando esté al aire libre.
- ☐ Vaya a un gimnasio con aire acondicionado, haga entrenamientos en el agua, o use un video de ejercicios en casa.
- ☐ Beba abundante agua.



### PROTEGERSE CONTRA EL CLIMA FRÍO

El aire helado del invierno puede ser estimulante. Pero el aire frío también puede representar una amenaza para su salud, ya sea que esté adentro o afuera. Aprenda a reconocer los signos de que la temperatura de su cuerpo baja demasiado, y tome medidas para que usted y su familia se mantengan calientes y seguros durante la estación fría.

#### Para protegerse del frío:

- ☐ Vístase en capas.
- ☐ Cúbrase con mantas.
- ☐ Use una chaqueta con una capa exterior resistente al agua y a prueba de viento.
- ☐ Para mantener el calor en casa, use calcetines, pantuflas y una gorra o sombrero.
- ☐ Establezca su calefactor a 68° o más cuando haga frío afuera. Para ahorrar en las facturas de calefacción, cierre las habitaciones que no esté usando.
- ☐ Si necesita ayuda para pagar las facturas de calefacción, puede calificar para un programa de asistencia energética.



### LA CALIDAD DEL AIRE Y SU SALUD

La combinación de altas temperaturas, pocos vientos y brisas, contaminación, y partículas suspendidas en el aire puede generar una mezcla insalubre en el aire, lista para ingresar a sus pulmones. Estas sustancias pueden dificultar la respiración y pueden afectar su energía. Si la calidad del aire es especialmente pobre, su cuerpo puede tardar unos días en recuperarse. Y si está expuesto regularmente a altos niveles de aire insalubre, las consecuencias para la salud pueden persistir durante meses o incluso años.

#### Para reducir los efectos del aire de mala calidad en su salud:

- ☐ Evite actividades al aire libre por las tardes en los días más cálidos, cuando el riesgo de contaminación del aire es más alto.
- ☐ Evite las actividades extenuantes al aire libre si el aire está contaminado. Verifique el índice de calidad del aire de su región, que a menudo se informa en las noticias locales.
- ☐ Considere reducir el tiempo y la intensidad de su ejercicio al aire libre o hacer ejercicios en el interior.



### VERIFICAR LA PRESENCIA DE GASES TÓXICOS

Generalmente, el gas radón se mueve a través del suelo y entra a las casas a través de grietas en el piso, paredes y cimientos. A veces entra a la casa a través del agua de un pozo. Cualquiera que sea la fuente, su casa puede atrapar el radón en su interior, donde puede acumularse. Es posible que no pueda ver ni oler el radón, pero aun así puede hacerle daño, de forma lenta y en formas que no puede detectar.

#### Para combatir el radón:

- ☐ Comience por examinar su casa. Puede hacerlo usted mismo o contratar un profesional.
- ☐ Si encuentra un problema de radón en su hogar, tome medidas para solucionarlo.
- ☐ Si fuma, deje de hacerlo. Fumar es un riesgo de salud especialmente grave cuando se combina con el radón.
- ☐ Obtenga ayuda para sus preguntas sobre el radón en esta línea nacional de ayuda: 1-800-55RADON (557-2366).



### MANTENERSE SEGURO EN EL AGUA

El verano es un buen momento para salir y divertirse en el agua. Pero las aguas recreativas que incluyen piscinas, lagos y océanos, a veces, pueden contaminarse con bacterias y virus. Nadar en aguas contaminadas puede enfermarlos a usted y a su familia. Pero puede tomar medidas para estar más seguro mientras juega en el agua.

#### Para estar más seguro mientras juega en el agua:

- ☐ Dúchese antes y después de ir a una piscina.
- ☐ Manténgase fuera del agua si ha tenido diarrea en las últimas dos semanas, para ayudar a proteger a los demás de los gérmenes infecciosos.
- ☐ Trate de no tragar agua recreativa.
- ☐ Evite nadar o jugar cerca de lugares donde se libera agua de lluvia en la playa.
- ☐ Manténgase fuera del agua durante al menos 24 horas después de una tormenta.
- ☐ Siempre lávese las manos antes de comer o beber.

# Emotional Wellness Checklist

Emotional wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stresses and adapt to change and difficult times. Here are tips for improving your emotional health:



## BRIGHTEN YOUR OUTLOOK

People who are emotionally well, experts say, have fewer negative emotions and are able to bounce back from difficulties faster. This quality is called resilience. Another sign of emotional wellness is being able to hold onto positive emotions longer and appreciate the good times.

### To develop a more positive mindset:

- ☐ Remember your good deeds.
- ☐ Forgive yourself.
- ☐ Spend more time with your friends.
- ☐ Explore your beliefs about the meaning and purpose of life.
- ☐ Develop healthy physical habits.



## REDUCE STRESS

Everyone feels stressed from time to time. Stress can give you a rush of energy when it's needed most. But if stress lasts a long time—a condition known as chronic stress—those “high alert” changes become harmful rather than helpful. Learning healthy ways to cope with stress can also boost your resilience.

### To help manage your stress:

- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Exercise regularly.
- ☐ Build a social support network.
- ☐ Set priorities.
- ☐ Think positive.
- ☐ Try relaxation methods.
- ☐ Seek help.

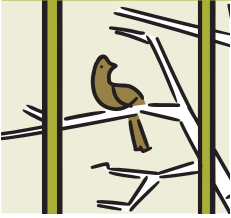


## GET QUALITY SLEEP

To fit in everything we want to do in our day, we often sacrifice sleep. But sleep affects both mental and physical health. It's vital to your well-being. When you're tired, you can't function at your best. Sleep helps you think more clearly, have quicker reflexes and focus better. Take steps to make sure you regularly get a good night's sleep.

### To get better quality sleep:

- ☐ Go to bed and get up each day at the same time.
- ☐ Sleep in a dark, quiet place.
- ☐ Exercise daily.
- ☐ Limit the use of electronics.
- ☐ Relax before bedtime.
- ☐ Avoid alcohol, nicotine, & stimulants late in the day.
- ☐ Consult a health care professional if you have ongoing sleep problems.

**BE MINDFUL**

The concept of mindfulness is simple. This ancient practice is about being completely aware of what's happening in the present—of all that's going on inside and all that's happening around you. It means not living your life on “autopilot.” Becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips to help you get started.

**To be more mindful:**

- ☐ Take some deep breaths in through your nose to a count of 4, hold for 1 second and then exhale through the mouth to a count of 5. Repeat often.
- ☐ Enjoy a stroll and notice the sights around you.
- ☐ Practice mindful eating. Be aware of each bite and when you're full.
- ☐ Find mindfulness resources in your local community, including classes, programs, or books.

**COPE WITH LOSS**

When someone you love dies, your world changes. There is no right or wrong way to mourn. Although the death of a loved one can feel overwhelming, most people can make it through the grieving process with the support of family and friends. Learn healthy ways to help you through difficult times.

**To help cope with loss:**

- ☐ Take care of yourself.
- ☐ Talk to a caring friend.
- ☐ Try not to make any major changes right away.
- ☐ Join a grief support group.
- ☐ Consider professional support.
- ☐ Talk to your doctor if you're having trouble with everyday activities.
- ☐ Be patient. Mourning takes time.

**STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health—both emotionally and physically. Whether with romantic partners, family, friends, neighbors, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being.

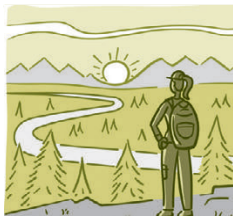
**To build healthy support systems:**

- ☐ Build strong relationships with your kids.
- ☐ Get active and share good habits with family and friends.
- ☐ If you're a family caregiver, ask for help from others.
- ☐ Join a group focused on a favorite hobby, such as reading, hiking, or painting.
- ☐ Take a class to learn something new.
- ☐ Volunteer for things you care about in your community, like a community garden, school, library, or place of worship.
- ☐ Travel to different places and meet new people.



# Lista de control de bienestar emocional

El bienestar emocional es la capacidad de manejar con éxito las tensiones de la vida y adaptarse a los cambios y los tiempos difíciles. Estos son algunos consejos para mejorar su salud emocional:



## ILUMINAR SU PERSPECTIVA

Las personas que están emocionalmente bien, dicen los expertos, tienen menos emociones negativas y son capaces de recuperarse de las dificultades más rápidamente. Esta cualidad se llama resiliencia. Otro signo de bienestar emocional es poder retener las emociones positivas durante más tiempo y apreciar los buenos momentos.

### Para desarrollar una mentalidad más positiva:

- ☐ Recuerde sus buenas obras.
- ☐ Perdónese a usted mismo.
- ☐ Pase más tiempo con sus amigos.
- ☐ Explore sus creencias sobre el significado y el propósito de la vida.
- ☐ Desarrolle hábitos físicos saludables.



## REDUCIR EL ESTRÉS

Todos se sienten estresados de vez en cuando. El estrés puede darle una avalancha de energía cuando más se necesita. Pero si el estrés dura mucho tiempo (una condición conocida como estrés crónico) esos cambios de "alerta máxima" se vuelven dañinos en lugar de útiles. Aprender formas saludables de lidiar con el estrés también puede aumentar su capacidad de recuperación.

### Para ayudar a controlar su estrés:

- ☐ Duerma lo suficiente.
- ☐ Haga ejercicio regularmente.
- ☐ Construya una red de apoyo social.
- ☐ Establezca prioridades.
- ☐ Piense positivo.
- ☐ Pruebe los métodos de relajación.
- ☐ Busque ayuda.



## PROCURAR UN SUEÑO DE CALIDAD

Para lograr hacer todo lo que queremos hacer en nuestros días, a menudo sacrificamos el sueño. Pero el sueño afecta tanto la salud mental como la física. Es vital para su bienestar. Cuando está cansado, no puede funcionar de la mejor manera. El sueño le ayuda a pensar con más claridad, a tener reflejos más rápidos y a concentrarse mejor. Tome medidas para asegurarse de dormir bien regularmente por la noche.

### Para obtener un sueño de mejor calidad:

- ☐ Acuéstese y levántese todos los días a la misma hora.
- ☐ Duerma en un lugar oscuro y tranquilo.
- ☐ Ejercítese diariamente.
- ☐ Limite el uso de productos electrónicos.
- ☐ Relájese antes de acostarse.
- ☐ Evite el alcohol, la nicotina y los estimulantes a altas horas del día.
- ☐ Consulte a un profesional de la salud si tiene problemas continuos para dormir.





### SER CONSCIENTE

El concepto de atención plena es simple. Esta antigua práctica se trata de ser completamente consciente de lo que sucede en el momento, de todo lo que sucede dentro suyo y todo lo que sucede a su alrededor. Significa no vivir su vida "en piloto automático". Convertirse en una persona más consciente requiere compromiso y práctica. Aquí hay algunos consejos para ayudarlo a comenzar.

#### Para ser más consciente:

- ☐ Inhale profundamente por la nariz hasta contar hasta 4, sostenga durante 1 segundo y luego exhale por la boca hasta contar hasta 5. Repita a menudo.
- ☐ Disfrute de un paseo y observe las vistas alrededor suyo.
- ☐ Practique la alimentación consciente. Preste atención a cada bocado y a cuando se sienta satisfecho.
- ☐ Busque recursos de atención plena en su comunidad local, lo que incluye clases, programas o libros.



### HACER FRENTE A LA PÉRDIDA

Cuando alguien a quien ama muere, su mundo cambia. No hay manera correcta o incorrecta de hacer el duelo. Aunque la muerte de un ser querido puede resultar abrumadora, muchas personas lo hacen a través del proceso de duelo con el apoyo de familiares y amigos. Aprenda formas saludables de sobrellevar tiempos difíciles.

#### Para ayudar a lidiar con la pérdida:

- ☐ Cuídese.
- ☐ Hable con un amigo afectuoso.
- ☐ Trate de no hacer cambios importantes de inmediato.
- ☐ Únase a un grupo de apoyo para el duelo.
- ☐ Considere recibir apoyo profesional.
- ☐ Hable con su médico si tiene problemas con las actividades cotidianas.
- ☐ Sea paciente. El duelo toma tiempo.



### FORTALECER LAS CONEXIONES SOCIALES

Las conexiones sociales pueden ayudar a proteger la salud y alargar la vida. Los científicos están descubriendo que nuestros vínculos con los demás pueden tener efectos poderosos en nuestra salud, tanto emocional como física. Ya sea con parejas, familiares, amigos, vecinos u otros, las conexiones sociales pueden influir en nuestra biología y nuestro bienestar.

#### Para construir sistemas de apoyo saludables:

- ☐ Establezca relaciones sólidas con sus hijos.
- ☐ Manténgase activo y comparta buenos hábitos con familiares y amigos.
- ☐ Si es cuidador familiar, pida ayuda a los demás.
- ☐ Únase a un grupo enfocado en su hobby favorito, como leer, ir de excursión o pintar.
- ☐ Tome una clase para aprender algo nuevo.
- ☐ Ofrézcase como voluntario para las cosas que le interesan en su comunidad, como un jardín comunitario, una escuela, una biblioteca o un lugar de culto.
- ☐ Viaje a diferentes lugares y conozca gente nueva.

# Social Wellness Checklist

Positive social habits can help you build support systems and stay healthier mentally and physically. Here are some tips for connecting with others:



## MAKE CONNECTIONS

Social connections might help protect health and lengthen life. Scientists are finding that our links to others can have powerful effects on our health. Whether with family, friends, neighbors, romantic partners, or others, social connections can influence our biology and well-being. Look for ways to get involved with others.

### To find new social connections:

- ☐ Join a group focused on a favorite hobby.
- ☐ Take a class to try something new.
- ☐ Try yoga, tai chi, or another new physical activity.
- ☐ Join a choral group, theater troupe, band, or orchestra.
- ☐ Help at a community garden or park.
- ☐ Volunteer at a school, library, or hospital.
- ☐ Participate in neighborhood events.
- ☐ Join a local community group.
- ☐ Travel to different places and meet new people.



## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF WHILE CARING FOR OTHERS

Many of us will end up becoming a caregiver at some point in our lives. The stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on your health. It's important to find ways to care for your health while caring for others. Depending on your circumstances, some self-care strategies may be more difficult to carry out than others. Choose ones that work for you.

### To take care of yourself while caring for others:

- ☐ Ask for help. Make a list of ways others can help. For instance, someone might sit with the person while you do errands.
- ☐ Make to-do lists, and set a daily routine.
- ☐ Try to take breaks each day.
- ☐ Keep up with your hobbies and interests when you can.
- ☐ Join a caregiver's support group.
- ☐ Eat healthy foods, and exercise as often as you can.
- ☐ Build your caregiver skills. Some hospitals offer classes on how to care for someone with an injury or illness.



## GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

Where you live, work, or go to school can have a big impact on how much you move and even how much you weigh. Being active with others in your community can have a positive effect on your health habits and create opportunities to connect. You can help your community create ways to encourage more physical activity.

### To help make a more active community:

- ☐ Start a walking group with friends.
- ☐ Drive the speed limit and yield to people who walk.
- ☐ Consider joining an exercise group.
- ☐ Participate in local planning efforts to develop walking paths, sidewalks, and bike paths.
- ☐ Join other parents to ask for more physical activity at school.
- ☐ Try different activities!



## SHAPE YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH HABITS

Many things can influence a child, including friends, teachers, and the things they see when they sit in front of the TV or computer. If you're a parent, know that your everyday behavior plays a big part in shaping your child's behavior, too. With your help, kids can learn to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits that last throughout their lives.

### To help kids form healthy habits:

- ☐ Be a role model. Choose healthy food and activities when together.
- ☐ Make healthy choices easy. Have nutritious food and sports gear readily available.
- ☐ Focus on making healthy habits fun.
- ☐ Limit screen time.
- ☐ Check with caregivers or schools to be sure they offer healthy food and activities.
- ☐ Change a little at a time.



## BOND WITH YOUR KIDS

Parents have an important job. Raising kids is both rewarding and challenging. Being sensitive, responsive, consistent, and available to your kids can help you build positive, healthy relationships with them. The strong emotional bonds that result help children learn how to manage their own feelings and behaviors and develop self-confidence. Children with strong connections to their caregivers are more likely to be able to cope with life's challenges.

### To build strong relationships with your kids:

- ☐ Catch kids showing good behavior and offer specific praise.
- ☐ Give children meaningful jobs at home and positive recognition afterward.
- ☐ Use kind words, tones, and gestures.
- ☐ Spend some time every day in warm, positive, loving interaction with your kids.
- ☐ Brainstorm solutions to problems together.
- ☐ Set rules for yourself for mobile devices and other distractions.
- ☐ Ask about your child's concerns, worries, goals, and ideas.
- ☐ Participate in activities your child enjoys.



### BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Strong, healthy relationships are important throughout your life. They can impact your mental and physical well-being. As a child you learn the social skills you need to form and maintain relationships with others. But at any age you can learn ways to improve your relationships. It's important to know what a healthy relationship looks like and how to keep your connections supportive.

#### To build healthy relationships:

- ☐ Share your feelings honestly.
- ☐ Ask for what you need from others.
- ☐ Listen to others without judgement or blame. Be caring and empathetic.
- ☐ Disagree with others respectfully. Conflicts should not turn into personal attacks.
- ☐ Avoid being overly critical, angry outbursts, and violent behavior.
- ☐ Expect others to treat you with respect and honesty in return.
- ☐ Compromise. Try to come to agreements that work for everyone.
- ☐ Protect yourself from violent and abusive people. Set boundaries with others. Decide what you are and aren't willing to do. It's okay to say no.
- ☐ Learn the differences between healthy, unhealthy, and abusive ways of relating to others. Visit [www.thehotline.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum](http://www.thehotline.org/healthy-relationships/relationship-spectrum).

# Lista de control de bienestar social

Los hábitos sociales positivos pueden ayudarlo a construir sistemas de apoyo y mantenerse más saludable mental y físicamente. Aquí hay algunos consejos para conectarse con otros:

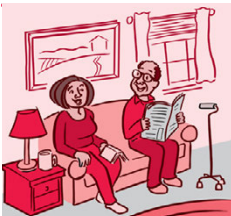


## HACER CONEXIONES

Las conexiones sociales pueden ayudar a proteger la salud y alargar la vida. Los científicos están descubriendo que nuestros vínculos con los demás pueden tener efectos poderosos en nuestra salud. Ya sea con familiares, amigos, vecinos, parejas románticas u otros, las conexiones sociales pueden influir en nuestra biología y nuestro bienestar. Busque formas de involucrarse con los demás.

### Para encontrar nuevas conexiones sociales:

- ☐ Únase a un grupo enfocado en su hobby favorito.
- ☐ Tome una clase de prueba de algo nuevo.
- ☐ Pruebe yoga, tai chi u otra actividad física nueva.
- ☐ Únase a un grupo coral, compañía teatral, banda, u orquesta.
- ☐ Ayude en un jardín o parque comunitario.
- ☐ Sea voluntario en una escuela, una biblioteca o un hospital.
- ☐ Participe en eventos del vecindario.
- ☐ Únase a un grupo de la comunidad local.
- ☐ Viaje a diferentes lugares y conozca gente nueva.



## CUIDARSE MIENTRAS CUIDA A LOS DEMÁS

La mayoría de nosotros se volverá un cuidador en algún momento de su vida. El estrés y la tensión del cuidado pueden afectar su salud. Es importante encontrar formas de cuidar su salud mientras cuida a los demás. Según sus circunstancias, algunas estrategias de autocuidado pueden ser más difíciles de llevar a cabo que otras. Elija las que funcionen para usted.

### Para cuidarse mientras cuida a los demás:

- ☐ Pida ayuda. Haga una lista de maneras en que otros pueden ayudar. Por ejemplo, alguien podría sentarse con la persona mientras hace los quehaceres.
- ☐ Haga listas de tareas pendientes y establezca una rutina diaria.
- ☐ Intente tomar descansos todos los días.
- ☐ Manténgase al día con sus aficiones e intereses cuando pueda.
- ☐ Únase a un grupo de apoyo al cuidador.
- ☐ Coma alimentos saludables y haga ejercicio tan a menudo como pueda.
- ☐ Desarrolle sus habilidades de cuidador. Algunos hospitales ofrecen clases sobre cómo cuidar a alguien con una lesión o enfermedad.



## PONERSE EN MOVIMIENTO CON OTROS

Dónde vive, trabaja o va a la escuela puede tener un gran impacto sobre cuánto se mueve e incluso cuánto pesa. Ponerse en movimiento con otras personas en su comunidad puede tener un efecto positivo en sus hábitos de salud y crear oportunidades para conectarse. Puede ayudar a su comunidad a crear formas de alentar más actividad física.

### Para ayudar a tener una comunidad más activa:

- ☐ Comience un grupo de caminatas con amigos.
- ☐ Respete el límite de velocidad cuando esté al volante y ceda el paso a los peatones.
- ☐ Considere unirse a un grupo de ejercicios.
- ☐ Participe en los esfuerzos de planificación local para desarrollar senderos, aceras y senderos para bicicletas.
- ☐ Únase a otros padres para pedir más actividad física en la escuela.
- ☐ ¡Pruebe diferentes actividades!



## DAR FORMA A LOS HÁBITOS DE SALUD DE SU FAMILIA

Muchas cosas pueden influir en un niño, incluidos los amigos, los maestros y las cosas que ven cuando se sientan frente al televisor o la computadora. Si es padre, sepa que su comportamiento diario también juega un papel importante en la formación del comportamiento de su hijo. Con su ayuda, los niños pueden aprender a desarrollar hábitos saludables de alimentación y actividad física que perduren a lo largo de sus vidas.

### Para ayudar a los niños a formar hábitos saludables:

- ☐ Sea un ejemplo a seguir. Elija alimentos y actividades saludables cuando estén juntos.
- ☐ Facilite la toma de decisiones saludables. Tenga comida nutritiva y equipos deportivos disponibles.
- ☐ Concéntrese en hacer que los hábitos saludables sean divertidos.
- ☐ Limite el tiempo de pantalla.
- ☐ Verifique con cuidadores o las escuelas para estar asegurados de que ofrezcan alimentos y actividades saludables.
- ☐ Haga cambios poco a poco.





## CREAR VÍNCULOS CON SUS HIJOS

Los padres tienen un trabajo importante. Criar niños es gratificante y desafiante. Ser sensible, receptivo, constante y disponible para sus hijos puede ayudarlo a construir relaciones positivas y saludables con ellos. Los vínculos emocionales fuertes que resultan ayudan a los niños a aprender a cómo manejar sus propios sentimientos y comportamientos y desarrollar la confianza en sí mismos. Los niños con fuertes conexiones con sus cuidadores tienen más probabilidades de enfrentar los desafíos de la vida.

### Para construir relaciones sólidas con sus hijos:

- ☐ Observe cuando los niños muestren buen comportamiento y hágales elogios específicos.
- ☐ Dele a los niños trabajos significativos en el hogar y un reconocimiento positivo después.
- ☐ Use palabras, tonos y gestos amables.
- ☐ Dedique un poco de tiempo todos los días a la interacción cálida, positiva y amorosa con sus hijos.
- ☐ Haga una lluvia de ideas compartida para resolver problemas juntos.
- ☐ Establezca reglas para usted mismo sobre los dispositivos móviles y otras distracciones.
- ☐ Pregunte sobre las preocupaciones, inquietudes, metas e ideas de su hijo.
- ☐ Participe en las actividades que le gustan a su hijo.



## CONSTRUIR RELACIONES SALUDABLES

Las relaciones fuertes y saludables son importantes a lo largo de su vida. Pueden afectar su bienestar mental y físico. De niño, usted aprendió las habilidades sociales necesarias para formar y mantener relaciones con los demás. Pero a cualquier edad puede aprender formas de mejorar sus relaciones. Es importante saber cómo es una relación saludable y cómo mantener sus conexiones de apoyo.

### Para construir relaciones saludables:

- ☐ Comparta sus sentimientos honestamente.
- ☐ Pida aquello que necesita de los demás.
- ☐ Escuche a los demás sin juicio o culpa. Sea cuidadoso y empático.
- ☐ Sea respetuoso cuando esté en desacuerdo con otros. Los conflictos no deben convertirse en ataques personales.
- ☐ Evite ser excesivamente crítico, arrebatos de ira y comportamiento violento.
- ☐ Espere que los demás lo traten con respeto y honestidad a cambio.
- ☐ Comprométase. Intente llegar a acuerdos que funcionen para todos.
- ☐ Protéjase de las personas violentas y abusivas. Establezca límites con otros. Decida lo que esté y no esté dispuesto a hacer. Está bien decir que no.
- ☐ Conozca las diferencias entre las formas saludables, no saludables y abusivas de relacionarse con los demás. Visite <http://espanol.thehotline.org/>.

# Physical Wellness Checklist

Positive physical health habits can help decrease your stress, lower your risk of disease, and increase your energy. Here are tips for improving your physical health:



## GET ACTIVE

How well your body functions affects your ability to accomplish your daily activities. Sedentary behavior—which usually means sitting or lying down while awake—has been linked to a shorter lifespan and a wide range of medical problems. Any time you get up and move, you’re improving your chances for good health.

### To increase your activity:

- ☐ Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ☐ Have “walking meetings” with colleagues.
- ☐ Walk on a treadmill while watching TV or using the computer.
- ☐ Set an alarm on your computer to go off every hour and prompt you to move around for a minute or two.
- ☐ Try walking as if you’re already late.
- ☐ Have small weights in your office or home.



## MAINTAIN YOUR BODY

Your bones, muscles, and joints all work together to make your body an amazingly movable machine. Like any machine, your body can suffer some wear and tear. It needs regular care and maintenance to keep moving with ease.

### To keep your body healthier:

- ☐ Maintain a healthy weight.
- ☐ Engage in muscle strengthening activities.
- ☐ Aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity each week.
- ☐ Wear comfortable, properly fitting shoes.
- ☐ Eat a well-balanced diet.
- ☐ Try to avoid lifting heavy objects.



## EAT A HEALTHY DIET

We make dozens of decisions every day. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart choices. A healthy eating plan not only limits unhealthy foods, but also includes a variety of healthy foods. Find out which foods to add to your diet and which to avoid.

### To eat a healthier diet:

- ☐ Limit “bad” fats. Reduce saturated fats and trans fats like butter, meat fats, and palm oil.
- ☐ Cut back on sodium. Choose fresh foods and those that have no added salt or less than 5% of the Daily Value of sodium per serving.
- ☐ Choose more complex carbs, like whole-grain breads, cereals, starchy vegetables, and legumes.
- ☐ Cut added sugars. Pick food with little or no added sugar.
- ☐ Get more fiber. Switch to whole grains and eat more vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds.

**MIND YOUR METABOLISM**

Your metabolism changes as you get older. You burn fewer calories and break down foods differently. You also lose lean muscle. Unless you exercise more and adjust your diet, the pounds can add up. Middle-age spread can quickly become middle-age sprawl. Carrying those extra pounds may be harming your health.

**To combat age-related changes:**

- ☐ Commit to a healthy diet.
- ☐ Limit snacking.
- ☐ Drink plenty of water.
- ☐ Move more. Take the stairs and add walking breaks to your day.
- ☐ Get plenty of sleep.
- ☐ Limit alcohol use.
- ☐ Avoid tobacco products. When you quit smoking, you may improve many aspects of your health and are likely to add years to your life.

**BUILD HEALTHY HABITS**

We know that making healthy choices can help us feel better and live longer. Maybe you've already tried to eat better, get more exercise or sleep, quit smoking, or reduce stress. It's not easy. But research shows how you can boost your ability to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle.

**To build healthy habits:**

- ☐ Plan. Set realistic goals.
- ☐ Change your surroundings. Remove temptations.
- ☐ Ask for support.
- ☐ Fill your time with healthy activities.
- ☐ Track your progress.
- ☐ Imagine the future.
- ☐ Reward yourself.
- ☐ Be patient. Improvement takes time, and setbacks happen. Focus on progress, not perfection.

**FIND A HEALTHY WEIGHT**

Keeping your body at a healthy weight may help you lower your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer that can result from being overweight or obese. Take charge of your weight and your health.

**To reach your weight loss goals:**

- ☐ Eat smaller portions.
- ☐ Eat colorful vegetables each day.
- ☐ Choose whole grains.
- ☐ Go easy on sugar, fats, and oils.
- ☐ Stick with activities you enjoy.
- ☐ Go for a brisk walk, ride a bike, or do some gardening.
- ☐ Do strengthening activities.
- ☐ Get active for just 10 minutes, several times a day. Every little bit counts!
- ☐ Keep a food and physical activity diary.
- ☐ Be realistic and aim for slow, modest weight loss.

# Lista de control de bienestar físico

Los hábitos de salud física positivos pueden ayudar a disminuir el estrés, disminuir el riesgo de enfermedad y aumentar su energía. Estos son algunos consejos para mejorar su salud física:



## PONERSE EN ACTIVIDAD

Qué tan bien funcione su cuerpo afecta su capacidad para llevar a cabo sus actividades diarias. El comportamiento sedentario, que generalmente significa estar sentado o acostado mientras está despierto, se ha relacionado con una vida más corta y una amplia gama de problemas médicos. Cada vez que se levanta y se mueve, mejora sus posibilidades de tener buena salud.

### Para aumentar su actividad:

- ☐ Use las escaleras en lugar del elevador.
- ☐ Tenga "reuniones a pie" con sus colegas.
- ☐ Camine en una cinta mientras mira televisión o usa la computadora.
- ☐ Configure una alarma en su computadora para que se active cada hora y solicite que se mueva durante uno o dos minutos.
- ☐ Intente caminar como si ya llegara tarde.
- ☐ Tenga pesas pequeñas en su oficina u hogar.



## MANTENER SU CUERPO

Sus huesos, músculos y articulaciones trabajan juntos para hacer de su cuerpo una máquina asombrosamente móvil. Al igual que cualquier máquina, su cuerpo puede sufrir desgaste. Necesita cuidado y mantenimiento regular para seguir moviéndose con facilidad.

### Para mantener su cuerpo más saludable:

- ☐ Mantenga un peso saludable.
- ☐ Participe en actividades de fortalecimiento muscular.
- ☐ Intente realizar 150 minutos de actividad de intensidad moderada cada semana.
- ☐ Use zapatos cómodos y de tacón bajo.
- ☐ Lleve una dieta bien equilibrada.
- ☐ Intente evitar levantar objetos pesados.



## LLEVAR UNA DIETA SALUDABLE

Tomamos docenas de decisiones todos los días. Cuando se trata de decidir qué comer y alimentar a nuestras familias, tomar decisiones inteligentes puede ser mucho más fácil de lo que piensa. Un plan de alimentación saludable no solo limita los alimentos no saludables, sino que también incluye una variedad de alimentos saludables. Averigüe qué alimentos agregar a su dieta y cuáles evitar.

### Para consumir una dieta saludable:

- ☐ Limite las grasas "malas". Reduzca las grasas saturadas y las grasas trans, como la mantequilla, las grasas de la carne y el aceite de palma.
- ☐ Reduzca el sodio. Elija alimentos frescos y aquellos que no tengan sal añadida o menos del 5% del valor diario de sodio por porción.
- ☐ Elija carbohidratos más complejos, como panes integrales, cereales, vegetales con almidón y legumbres.
- ☐ Evite los azúcares agregados. Elija comida con poco o nada de azúcar agregada.
- ☐ Consuma más fibra. Cambie a granos enteros y coma más vegetales, frijoles, nueces y semillas.



### CUIDAR SU METABOLISMO

Su metabolismo cambia a medida que envejece. Quema menos calorías y descompone los alimentos de manera diferente. También pierde músculo magro. A menos que haga más ejercicio y ajuste su dieta, las libras pueden sumarse. La pancita de la edad media puede descontrolarse rápidamente. Cargar con esos kilos de más puede dañar su salud.

#### Para combatir los cambios relacionados con la edad:

- ☐ Comprométase a una dieta saludable.
- ☐ Limite los bocadillos.
- ☐ Beba abundante agua.
- ☐ Muévase más. Tome las escaleras y agregue descansos para caminar a su día.
- ☐ Duerma lo suficiente.
- ☐ Limite el consumo de alcohol.
- ☐ Evite los productos de tabaco. Si deja de fumar, puede mejorar muchos aspectos de su salud y es probable que agregue años a su vida.



### CONSTRUIR HÁBITOS SALUDABLES

Sabemos que tomar decisiones saludables nos puede ayudar a sentirnos mejor y vivir más tiempo. Tal vez ya intentó comer mejor, hacer más ejercicio o dormir más, dejar de fumar, o reducir el estrés. No es fácil. Sin embargo las investigaciones nos muestran cómo puede aumentar su capacidad de crear y mantener un estilo de vida saludable.

#### Para construir hábitos saludables:

- ☐ Planifique. Establezca metas realistas.
- ☐ Cambie su entorno. Elimine las tentaciones.
- ☐ Pida ayuda.
- ☐ Ocupe su tiempo con actividades saludables.
- ☐ Monitoree su progreso.
- ☐ Imagine el futuro.
- ☐ Recompénsese.
- ☐ Sea paciente. La mejora toma tiempo, y hay recaídas. Enfóquese en el progreso, no en la perfección.



### MANTENER UN PESO SALUDABLE

Mantener su cuerpo en un peso saludable puede ayudarlo a reducir su riesgo de enfermedad cardíaca, diabetes tipo 2 y ciertos tipos de cáncer que pueden resultar de sobrepeso u obesidad. Controle su peso y su salud.

#### Para alcanzar sus objetivos de pérdida de peso:

- ☐ Coma porciones más pequeñas.
- ☐ Coma verduras coloridas todos los días.
- ☐ Elija granos enteros.
- ☐ Evite el azúcar, las grasas y los aceites.
- ☐ Apéguese a las actividades que disfruta.
- ☐ Salga a caminar a paso ligero, ande en bicicleta o haga algo de jardinería.
- ☐ Haga actividades de fortalecimiento.
- ☐ Póngase en movimiento durante solo 10 minutos, varias veces al día. ¡Cada poquito cuenta!
- ☐ Mantenga un diario de alimentos y actividad física.
- ☐ Sea realista y apunte a una pérdida de peso lenta y modesta.

# My Family Health History

Fill in the blanks below for each of your immediate family members. Looking at their health history can give you information about your own health and habits. Think of health conditions such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, overweight, heart attack, and stroke that affect your family members.

## Maternal (from your mom's side)

### Grandmother

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

### Grandfather

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

### Mother

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

## Paternal (from your dad's side)

### Grandmother

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

### Grandfather

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

### Father

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

## You

### Sibling

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Sibling

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health conditions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has this person passed away?:

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, at what age? \_\_\_\_\_

How? \_\_\_\_\_



# My Family Health History

Sibling	Sibling	Sibling
Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____	Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____	Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____

Sibling	Sibling	Sibling
Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____	Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____	Name: _____ Age: _____ Health conditions: _____ _____ Has this person passed away?: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, at what age? _____ How? _____



December 2013

National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute



COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER  
HEALTH DISPARITIES INITIATIVE

# NIH News in Health

National Institutes of Health • Department of Health and Human Services • [newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)

## Plan Your Plate

### Shifting to a Healthy Eating Style

What's the eating style that's best for health? Is it a Mediterranean eating plan? Vegetarian? Low carb? With all the eating styles out there, it's hard to know which one to follow.

Healthy eating is one of the best ways to prevent or delay health problems. Eating well, along with getting enough physical activity, can help you lower your risk of health problems like heart disease,

diabetes, obesity, and more. To reach your goals, experts advise making small, gradual changes.

"The best diet to follow is one that is science based, that allows you to meet your nutritional requirements, and that you can stick to in the long run," says Dr. Holly Nicastro, an NIH nutrition research expert. "It's not going to do you any good to follow a diet that has you eating things that you don't like."

The main source of science-based nutrition advice is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines describe which nutrients you need and how much. They also point out which ones to limit or avoid.

"Every five years, an expert panel reviews all available scientific evidence regarding nutrition and health and uses that to develop the dietary guidelines," Nicastro explains.

The guidelines are regularly updated, because our scientific understanding of what's healthy is continuously evolving. These changes can be confusing, but the key recommendations have been consistent over time. In general, healthy eating means getting a variety of foods, limiting certain kinds of carbs and fats, watching out for salt, and being aware of your portion sizes.



### Limit Added Sugars

Added sugar is the extra sugar added to foods and drinks during preparation. Corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, brown sugar, and honey are examples of sweeteners added to foods and drinks, especially regular sodas.

"The sugars present normally in milk and fruit are not considered added sugar," explains Dr. Kimber Stanhope, a nutrition researcher at the University of California, Davis.

Stanhope's research focuses on the effects of added sugar on the development of disease. Her studies have shown that consuming too much high-fructose corn syrup may increase the risk of weight gain and heart disease.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest a daily limit on added sugar of no more than 10% of calories. That's about the amount in 16 ounces of regular soda (190 calories). You can find information about added sugars on most Nutrition Facts labels now.



## Special Issue

### Healthy Eating

- 1 **Plan Your Plate**  
Shifting to a Healthy Eating Style
- 3 **Sweet Stuff**  
How Sugars and Sweeteners Affect Your Health
- 5 **The Skinny on Fat**  
The Good, the Bad, and the Unknown
- 7 **The Salty Stuff**  
Salt, Blood Pressure, and Your Health
- 9 **Rough Up Your Diet**  
Fit More Fiber Into Your Day
- 11 **Better Nutrition Every Day**  
How to Choose Healthier Foods and Drinks

“Anybody can improve their diet by substituting fruits and vegetables for sugar as their snacks, as part of their dessert, and as part of their meals,” says Stanhope. “There are no advantages of consuming added sugar.”

**In general, healthy eating means getting a variety of foods, limiting certain kinds of carbs and fats, watching out for salt, and being aware of your portion sizes.**

### Consider Your Fats

Fat is high in calories. Getting too many calories can contribute to obesity, which raises your risk for heart disease and other health problems. But there are different kinds of fats.

Fats that are liquid at room temperature, or oils, are generally healthier than those that are solid. Solid fats are found in high amounts

in beef, chicken, pork, cheese, butter, and whole milk. Solid fats have more saturated fats than liquid oils. Liquid oils—such as canola, corn, olive, or peanut oil—have mostly unsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.

The dietary guidelines encourage consuming liquid oils rather than solid fats. Nicasastro advises that you examine the fat content on the Nutrition Facts label. The label shows how much saturated fat a product contains. Experts suggest that you aim for getting less than 10% of your calories from saturated fats.

“For the average person, that’s going to be less than 20 grams of saturated fat per day,” Nicasastro says.

For example, a small cheeseburger may have 5 grams of saturated fat, a typical cheeseburger may have 13, and a double cheeseburger with bacon may have 24!

### Check Labels for Salt

The Nutrition Facts label also shows salt, or sodium. Experts advise you to limit salt, which tends to be very high in processed foods.

If you eat salty, highly processed food, you can quickly go over the daily limit of one teaspoon of salt (2,300 milligrams, or mg, of sodium). Two hot dogs might have 900 mg of sodium. A can of ravioli might have 1400 mg. Other examples of salty, highly processed foods are bacon, frozen pizzas, and salad dressings.

**“Stuff that comes in a box or a bag that has a whole lot of different ingredients—many of which you can’t read and understand or pronounce—those things are highly processed and generally bad for your health.”**

Along with a lot of added salt, processed foods might have preservatives, sweeteners, and other substances added during preparation.

“Stuff that comes in a box or a bag that has a whole lot of different ingredients—many of which you can’t read and understand or pronounce—those things are highly processed and generally bad for your health,” explains Dr. David C. Goff, Jr., a public health expert at NIH.

### Make a Meal Plan

“Figuring out what to eat is less than half the battle,” Nicasastro says. “Sticking to your plan is a bigger challenge. So that’s why it helps to be really prepared and plan ahead.”

You’re much more likely to stick to your meal plan if you have healthy food that is ready to go. Some people find it helpful to prepare meals for the week in advance so that healthy food is within reach.

The DASH eating plan is a good start. DASH was developed by NIH-supported researchers to help people lower blood pressure without medicine, but it’s for anyone. Studies have shown that it reduces the risk of many diseases.

“The DASH diet is very flexible because you can follow DASH without going to a specialty grocery store. You can follow it with items that are very familiar to most people in this country,” Nicasastro says.

The DASH eating plan is rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, seeds, nuts, and fish. Compared to the typical American diet, it’s lower in salt, added sugars, fats, and red meat. It’s also higher in fiber, potassium, magnesium, and calcium than the typical American diet.

“Anybody can follow it, despite specific preferences or culture,” Nicasastro says. It even works for people who are vegetarian or only eat Kosher foods.

## NIH News in Health

ISSN 2375-6993 (Print) ISSN 1556-3898 (Online)

Editor Harrison Wein, Ph.D.

Managing Editor Tianna Hicklin, Ph.D.

Graphics Alan Defibaugh (illustrations),  
Bryan Ewsichek (design)

This special issue is a collection of previously published articles. However, articles were updated and re-reviewed by NIH experts prior to inclusion. *Published August 2019.*

Use our articles and illustrations in your own publication. Our material is not copyrighted. Please acknowledge *NIH News in Health* as the source and send us a copy.

[newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)



**National Institutes of Health**  
NIH...Turning Discovery Into Health®

Office of Communications & Public Liaison  
Building 31, Room 5B52  
Bethesda, MD 20892-2094  
email: [nihealthnews@od.nih.gov](mailto:nihealthnews@od.nih.gov)  
phone: 301-451-8224

You can use the weekly DASH menus and a form to track your food and physical activity habits at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/dash-eating-plan).

### Get Expert Advice

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are designed to help people avoid developing obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. But everyone is different. You may have needs and risks that aren't like the average American. Talk to your health care provider about your unique nutritional needs.

"A great resource for someone to help you with your diet is a registered dietitian nutritionist, or DN," Nicastro says.

You can find this type of expert in your area by visiting the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at [www.eatright.org/find-an-expert](http://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert). ■



### Wise Choices

#### Make Healthy Diet Choices

- Eat a variety of foods—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, lean meat, seafood, eggs, milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Limit foods that are low in vitamins and minerals.
- Avoid foods with added sugar.
- Replace foods containing saturated fats (like butter or lard) with healthier unsaturated fat options.
- Watch out for foods high in salt.



### Web Links

For more about healthy eating, go to: [newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/plan-your-plate](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/plan-your-plate)

## Sweet Stuff

### How Sugars and Sweeteners Affect Your Health

Most of us love sweet foods and drinks. But after that short burst of sweetness, you may worry about how sweets affect your waistline and your overall health. Is sugar truly bad for us? How about artificial or low-calorie sweeteners? What have scientists learned about the sweet things that most of us eat and drink every day?

Our bodies need one type of sugar, called **glucose**, to survive. "Glucose is the number one food for the brain, and it's an extremely important source of fuel throughout the body," says Dr. Kristina Rother, an NIH pediatrician and expert on sweeteners.

**"Sugar has a bad reputation that's mostly deserved, because we consume too much of it. It's now in just about every food we eat."**

But there's no need to add extra glucose to your diet. Your body can extract glucose from the sugars and other **carbohydrates** in your food. It can also produce new glucose, mostly in the liver. That's why you can survive for a long time without eating.

Some sugars are found naturally in foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and milk. "These non-processed natural foods are healthful additions to your diet," says Dr. Andrew Bremer, a pediatrician and NIH expert on sweeteners. "When you eat an orange, for instance, you're getting a lot of nutrients and dietary fiber along with the natural sugars."



Although sugar itself isn't bad, Rother says, "sugar has a bad reputation that's mostly deserved, because we consume too much of it. It's now in just about every food we eat."

### Added Sugars

Experts agree that Americans eat and drink way too much sugar, and it's contributing to the obesity epidemic. Much of the sugar we eat isn't found naturally in food but is added during processing or preparation.

Sugars are usually added to make foods and drinks taste better. But such products can be high in calories and lack the healthful



### Definitions

#### Glucose

A type of sugar used by the body for energy. When blood glucose levels get too high, it can damage tissues and organs over time.

#### Carbohydrates

A class of food molecule that includes sugars, starches, and fibers.



benefits of fruits and other naturally sweet foods.

Sugar-sweetened beverages like soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are the leading source of added sugars in the American diet. Juices naturally contain a lot of sugar. But sometimes, even more is added to make them taste sweeter.

“Juices offer some vitamins and other nutrients, but in general, I think those benefits are greatly offset by the harmful effects of too much sugar,” Bremer says.

Over time, excess sweeteners can take a toll on your health. “Several studies have found a direct link between excess sugar consumption and obesity and cardiovascular problems worldwide,” Bremer explains.

## Cutting Back

Because of these harmful effects, many health organizations recommend that Americans cut

back on added sugars. About 15% of the calories in the American adult diet now come from added sugars. Experts recommend a daily limit on added sugar of no more than 10% of calories.

But added sugars can be hard to identify. On a list of ingredients, they may be listed as sucrose (table sugar), corn sweetener, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit-juice concentrates, nectars, raw sugar, malt syrup, maple syrup, fructose sweeteners, liquid fructose, honey, molasses, or anhydrous dextrose. Added sugar can also be listed with any word ending in “-ose,” the chemical suffix for sugars. If any of these words are among the first few ingredients on a food label, the food is likely high in sugar. To find the total amount of sugar in a food, look for “Sugars” on the Nutrition Facts label under the category “Total Carbohydrate.”

**To find the total amount of sugar in a food, look for “Sugars” on the Nutrition Facts label under the category “Total Carbohydrate.”**

Many people try cutting back on calories by switching from sugar-sweetened to diet foods and drinks that contain low- or no-calorie sweeteners. These artificial sweeteners—also known as sugar substitutes—are many times sweeter than table sugar, so smaller amounts can create the same level of sweetness.

People have debated the safety of artificial sweeteners for decades. To date, researchers have found no clear evidence that any artificial sweeteners approved for use in the U.S. cause cancer or other serious health problems like birth defects in humans.

But can they help with weight loss? The scientific evidence is

mixed. Some studies suggest that diet drinks can help you drop pounds in the short term. But their long-term effects on weight—and other health aspects—are unclear. Rother and other NIH-funded researchers are now working to better understand the complex effects that artificial sweeteners may have on the human body.

Studies of rodents and small numbers of people suggest that artificial sweeteners can affect the gut microbes that help us digest food. This in turn can alter the body’s ability to use glucose, which might then lead to weight gain. But until further studies are done in people, the long-term impact of these sweeteners on gut microbes and weight remains uncertain.

## Beyond the Gut

“There’s much controversy about the health effects of artificial sweeteners and the differences between sugars and sweeteners,” says Dr. Ivan de Araujo at the Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine. “Some animal studies indicate that sweeteners can produce physiological effects. But depending on what kind of measurement is taken, including in humans, the outcomes may be conflicting.”

**The key to good health is eating a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods and getting plenty of physical activity.**

De Araujo and others have been studying the effects that sugars and low-calorie sweeteners might have on the brain. They are finding that sugar and sweeteners tap differently into the brain’s reward circuitry, with sugars having a more powerful and pleasurable effect.

“The part of the brain that mediates the ‘I can’t stop’ kinds of



## Wise Choices

### Cut Added Sugars

- Choose water, milk, or unsweetened tea or coffee instead of sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, and fruit drinks.
- Reduce sugar in recipes. If a recipe says 1 cup, use 2/3 cup.
- To enhance flavor, add vanilla, cinnamon, or nutmeg.
- Eat fresh, canned, frozen, and dried fruits without added sugar. Choose fruits canned in their own juice or water rather than syrup.
- Use fruits to top foods like cereal and pancakes rather than sugars, syrups, or other sweet toppings.
- Read the ingredients list to pick food with little or no added sugar.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose packaged foods with less sugars.



behaviors seems to be especially sensitive to sugars and largely insensitive to artificial sweeteners,” de Araujo says. “Our long-term goal is really to understand if sugars or caloric sweeteners drive persistent intake of food. If exposed to too much sugar, does the brain eventually change in ways that lead to excess consumption? That’s what we’d like to know.”

Some research suggests that the intensely sweet taste of artificial, low-calorie sweeteners can lead to a “sweet tooth,” or a preference for sweet things. This in turn might lead to overeating. But more studies are needed to confirm the relative effects of caloric versus non-caloric sweeteners.

### Don't Sugarcoat It

“In the long run, if you want to lose weight, you need to establish a healthy lifestyle that contains unprocessed foods, moderate calories, and more exercise,” Rother says.

When kids grow up eating a lot of sweet foods, they tend to develop a preference for sweets. But if you give them a variety of healthy foods like fruits and vegetables early in life, they’ll develop a liking for them, too.

“It’s important for parents to expose children to a variety of tastes early on but realize that it often takes several attempts to get a child to eat such foods,” Bremer says. “Don’t give up too soon.”

The key to good health is eating a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods and getting plenty of physical activity. Focus on nutrition-rich whole foods without added sugars. Get tips on healthy eating and weight control at [go.usa.gov/xEjmc](http://go.usa.gov/xEjmc). ■



### Web Links

For more about sugar and sweeteners, go to: [newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/sweet-stuff](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/sweet-stuff)

## The Skinny on Fat

### The Good, the Bad, and the Unknown

Fat is an essential nutrient for our bodies. It provides energy. It helps our guts absorb certain vitamins from foods. But what types of fat should you be eating? Are there any you should avoid?

Recommendations about dietary fat have shifted over the last two decades. From the 1970s through the 1990s, nutrition researchers emphasized eating a low-fat diet.

This was largely because of concerns about **saturated fats**, explains Dr. Alice H. Lichtenstein, who studies diet and heart health at Tufts University. Saturated fat that’s in the bloodstream raises the levels of LDL cholesterol—the “bad” cholesterol. This in turn raises the risk of heart disease.

But when people started following low-fat diets, they didn’t only cut saturated fats. In many cases, they replaced healthy **unsaturated fats** with processed carbohydrates, explains Lichtenstein.

“Initially, when we recommended cutting total fat, we did not anticipate people would replace it with fat-free foods, like cookies, crackers, and ice cream, made with refined grains and sugar,” says Lichtenstein. “It is what we refer to as an unanticipated consequence.”

As scientists have learned, those replacement calories matter. Studies have shown that replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fat reduces the risk of heart disease. However, replacing saturated fat with simple carbohydrates, such as added sugar and white bread, does not.

“There’s still this misconception that eating fat—any kind of fat—is bad, that it will lead to heart attacks or weight gain. That’s not true. People really should be encouraged to eat healthy fats,” says Dr.



Frank Sacks, a nutrition expert at Harvard University.

### Healthy Fats

Research has shown that unsaturated fats are good for you. These fats come mostly from plant sources. Cooking oils that are liquid at room temperature, such as canola, peanut, safflower, soybean, and olive oil, contain mostly unsaturated fat. Nuts, seeds, and avocados are also good sources. Fatty fish—such as salmon, sardines, and herring—are rich in unsaturated fats, too.

Large studies have found that replacing saturated fats in your diet with unsaturated fats can reduce your risk of heart disease by about the same amount as cholesterol-lowering drugs.



### Definitions

#### Saturated Fats

Fats that are solid at room temperature; found in butter, lard, full-fat milk and yogurt, full-fat cheese, and high-fat meat.

#### Unsaturated Fats

Fats that tend to be liquid at room temperature; found in vegetable oils, seafood, and nuts.



People should actively make unsaturated fats a part of their diet, Sacks says. You don't need to avoid healthy fats to lose weight, he adds.

In an NIH-funded study Sacks led, called the POUNDS LOST trial, people who ate higher-fat or lower-fat diets had similar rates of weight loss. They were also both successful at keeping the weight off.

"Low-fat diets have the same effect on body weight gain or weight loss as higher-fat diets or higher-protein diets," he explains. "For weight loss, it's about getting a handle on whatever foods in your diet are giving you excess calories."

## Replacing "Bad" Fats

So are there fats you should avoid? Only a few years ago, doctors still had to advise people to avoid so-called trans fats in their diets. These largely manufactured fats could be found in things like margarine and many processed

foods. They have been shown to raise the risk of heart disease.

Since 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has taken steps to remove artificial trans fats from the food supply. Most trans fats now in food come from the small amounts found naturally in animal products, like meat and butter.

Experts already recommend that people limit their intake of animal fats. "So that takes care of those trans fats as well," Lichtenstein says.

As for saturated fat, it's complicated. Not all of the saturated fat in the bloodstream comes from the saturated fat that we eat, explains Dr. Ronald Krauss, who studies cholesterol at the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. Instead, it's produced when the body breaks down simple carbohydrates and sugars. That's one reason why replacing saturated fat in the diet with simple carbohydrates doesn't reduce the risk of heart disease.

Nutrition experts still recommend that people minimize the amount of saturated fat in the diet. But researchers are now looking at whether the type of food that saturated fat is found in matters. For example, the influence of plant-based saturated fats, such as those in coconut and palm oil, is still unclear and being researched further.

Recent studies suggest that some full-fat dairy products, such as yogurt, may actually have benefits for the heart, Krauss says.

Krauss and his colleagues recently ran a small study looking at the effects of replacing some of the sugar allowed in the DASH diet with saturated dairy fats. The DASH diet was developed by NIH to help lower blood pressure.

Participants who ate saturated dairy fat instead of sugar had less of a fat called triglycerides in their bloodstream. The higher-fat diet was also as effective at lowering blood pressure as the standard DASH diet.

More research is needed to understand which foods that contain saturated fats may influence the body in a good way.

## Individual Needs

Researchers know that there are big differences in how people's bodies react to different types and amounts of fat. But they still don't know why. Studies have found that genes aren't likely responsible, Sacks explains.

Lichtenstein and Krauss are both studying how the microbes that live in the gut interact with dietary fats. The makeup of the microbiome—all the microorganisms that normally live in the body, mainly in the gut—can differ widely between people.

It may turn out that different types of gut bacteria produce different compounds from fats. These compounds could then affect the body in different ways, Lichtenstein explains. Or different types of fats could promote the growth of different bacteria in the gut, which may then have varying effects on health.

"We just don't know yet, but there is tremendous interest in trying to understand the role of the gut microbiome in human health," she says.

If there's one thing that the research has shown, it's that the science of diets is very complex. Experts have moved away from focusing on single nutrients—such as fat—by themselves. Instead, Sacks says, researchers now talk about healthy dietary patterns: ways of eating that take all aspects of the diet into account. Learn more about healthy dietary patterns at [health.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines). ■



## Wise Choices Choosing Fats

- **Eat plant-based foods.** Plants can contain healthy fats, as well as important vitamins and minerals.
- **Include plant oils in your diet.** Healthy choices include canola, peanut, olive, safflower, soybean, sunflower, corn, and nut oils.
- **Replace foods containing saturated fats** (like butter or lard) with healthier unsaturated fat options.
- **Limit fatty red meat.** Instead, eat more fish, poultry, or lean meats.
- **Reduce sugars and replace processed grains**, such as white bread and white rice, with whole grains and brown rice. The body can use simple carbohydrates to make saturated fats.



## Web Links

For more about dietary fat, go to: [newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/skinny-fat](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/skinny-fat)

# The Salty Stuff

## Salt, Blood Pressure, and Your Health

Salt is essential to our body's fluids. That's likely why we evolved to enjoy its taste. On the other hand, anyone who's gotten a mouth full of seawater knows that too much salt tastes terrible. Maybe your body's trying to tell you something. It turns out that too much salt can lead to a host of health problems.

Dietary salt, or table salt, is made from two chemical elements: sodium and chloride. That's why its chemical name is sodium chloride. It's the sodium part that's been tied to health problems. But since most of the sodium we ingest is from salt, it's difficult to separate the effects of salt and sodium in many studies.

### Health Effects

"The best-known effect of sodium on health is the relationship between sodium and blood pressure," explains Dr. Holly Nicastro, an NIH nutrition research expert. Dozens of studies, in both animals and people, have linked a higher salt intake with higher blood pressure. Reducing salt intake, on the other hand, lowers blood pressure.

Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of **arteries** as the heart pumps out blood. When this pressure rises—a condition called high blood pressure, or hypertension—it can damage the body in many ways over time. High blood pressure has been linked to heart disease, **stroke**, kidney failure, and other health problems.

There are two blood pressure numbers, and they're usually written with one above or before the other. Systolic, the first, is the pressure when the heart beats, pumping blood through the arteries. Diastolic is the pressure when the heart is at rest between beats. The numbers 120/80 mmHg are the ones you should aim to keep your blood



pressure below.

Some research also suggests that excessive sodium intake increases the risk of stomach cancer. Scientists continue to investigate this possible connection.

Researchers do know that not everyone is equally sensitive to salt. "From our experiments, we know there's lots of variation in the blood pressure response to sodium intake," Nicastro says. Certain groups of people see greater reductions in blood pressure when they lower their salt intake: African-Americans, older adults, and people with blood pressure above normal.

"Within those groups, there's a lot of variation between people," Nicastro says. But about 1 in 3 adults nationwide has high blood pressure right now. Another third have elevated blood pressure, meaning their numbers are high enough to put them at risk to develop high

blood pressure. In light of this, she says, "It's really important for the majority of U.S. adults to reduce their blood pressure."

### How Much Salt?

Experts recommend that adults take in less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium a day—that's what's in about 6 grams of salt, or about a teaspoon. People with high blood pressure



### Definitions

#### Arteries

The vessels that carry blood from your heart throughout your body.

#### Stroke

When normal blood flow to the brain is stopped, usually by ruptured or blocked blood vessels.

should shoot for 1,500 mg. But right now, American adults eat an average of about 3,600 mg of sodium per day.

Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo at the University of California, San Francisco, led an NIH-funded study that used computer modeling to explore the effects of a modest reduction in salt intake in the United States. The researchers found that reducing salt intake by 3 grams per day (1,200 mg of sodium) could cut the number of new cases of heart disease each year by as many as 120,000, stroke by 66,000, and heart attack by nearly 100,000. It could also prevent up to 92,000 deaths each year.

All segments of the population would benefit, with African-Americans having the greatest improvements overall. Women would particularly benefit from reductions in stroke, older adults

from a decline in heart disease, and younger adults from fewer deaths.

## Reducing Salt

Some countries have tried to lower salt intake using various strategies, such as working with industry to reduce the salt content in processed foods, requiring labels on ready-to-eat foods, and educating the public. The UK achieved a 15% reduction in salt consumption between 2003 and 2011. During this time, deaths from stroke fell by 42% and from heart disease by 40%.

But wouldn't we miss the taste? "Several studies have shown that as you gradually reduce sodium intake, you lessen your desire for salty food," Nicastro says. And surveys of people across the UK found that most people didn't notice any difference in the taste of their food.

"A very modest decrease in the amount of salt, hardly detectable in the taste of food, can have dramatic health benefits for the U.S.," Bibbins-Domingo stresses.

The salt we add to our food actually accounts for about 10% of our salt consumption. Most of the salt we eat comes in processed foods from stores, restaurants, and dining halls. You may already know that fast food, cold cuts, and canned foods tend to have a lot of salt.

"Many people don't realize that a lot of our salt is from breads and cereals," Bibbins-Domingo says. Studies have found that about 15 to 20% of the sodium in the average American's diet comes from grain products, such as breads, cereals, crackers, and chips.

"In terms of advice, I think the best guidance we have is for people to pay attention to nutrition facts on the labels," Nicastro says. "The percent daily value is a better guide than the language that's used on food labels like 'low-salt.' These labels can be confusing, because they have very defined technical meanings."

Try to select foods, she advises, with less than 5% of the daily value of salt per serving.

**"In terms of advice, I think the best guidance we have is for people to pay attention to nutrition facts on the labels."**

## Making Changes

Even small salt reductions can affect your blood pressure. If you can't find a low-salt alternative to a particular food, it still helps to pick something that's lower than what you're already consuming.

"You can find remarkable variation in the amount of salt across major brands of food," Bibbins-Domingo says. "Even without choosing something labeled 'low sodium,' you can often find a lower-sodium alternative."

Beyond salt, a healthy eating plan can help keep your blood pressure under control. Check out NIH's Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan at [go.usa.gov/xEjmy](http://go.usa.gov/xEjmy). Other lifestyle measures can help you keep your blood pressure down, too. Lose weight if you're overweight or obese. Get regular physical activity. Quit smoking. Manage your stress. The more of these steps you take, the more likely you'll be to avoid related health problems.

Why not start now? Make small changes at first, and then keep working to gradually lower your family's salt intake. ■



## Wise Choices Cut Back on Sodium

- Look at Nutrition Facts labels and try to choose prepared foods that have less than 5% of the Daily Value of sodium per serving.
- Use fresh poultry, fish, and lean meat, rather than canned, smoked, or processed.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables that have no added salt.
- Rinse canned foods to remove some of the sodium.
- Add less salt—or none—when cooking.
- Use reduced-sodium bouillon, dressings, and sauces like soy sauce.
- Use fresh herbs and buy spices and blends without added salt.
- Cook at home instead of eating out, when possible. But when eating out, ask that no extra salt be added to your food.



## Web Links

For more about salt, go to:  
[newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/salty-stuff](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/salty-stuff)



# Rough Up Your Diet

## Fit More Fiber Into Your Day

Fiber—you know it's good for you. But if you're like many Americans, you don't get enough. In fact, most of us get about half the recommended amount of fiber each day.

Dietary fiber is found in the plants you eat, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. It's sometimes called bulk or roughage. You've probably heard that it can help with digestion. So it may seem odd that fiber is a substance that your body can't digest. Much of it passes through your digestive system practically unchanged.

"You might think that if it's not digestible, then it's of no value. But there's no question that higher intake of fiber from all food sources is beneficial," says Dr. Joanne Slavin, a nutrition scientist at the University of Minnesota.

### Types of Fiber

Different types of fiber can affect your health in different ways. That's why the Nutrition Facts labels on some foods may list two categories of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber is found in oats, beans, peas, and most fruits. Insoluble fiber is found in wheat bran and some vegetables.

Some soluble fiber is broken down by the complex community of bacteria and other microbes that live in the human gut. These microbes, called gut flora or microbiota, help with our digestion. Emerging research shows they can affect our health in various ways. Studies suggest that they may play a role in obesity, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and other conditions. Researchers are now looking at how different types of dietary fibers affect the gut microbiota—and how that, in turn, affects our health.

But soluble and insoluble fiber aren't always listed separated on

labels. Many foods contain both. And both types have health benefits. Experts suggest that men aim for about 38 grams of fiber a day, and women about 25 grams. Unfortunately, in the United States, we take in an average of only 16 grams of fiber each day.

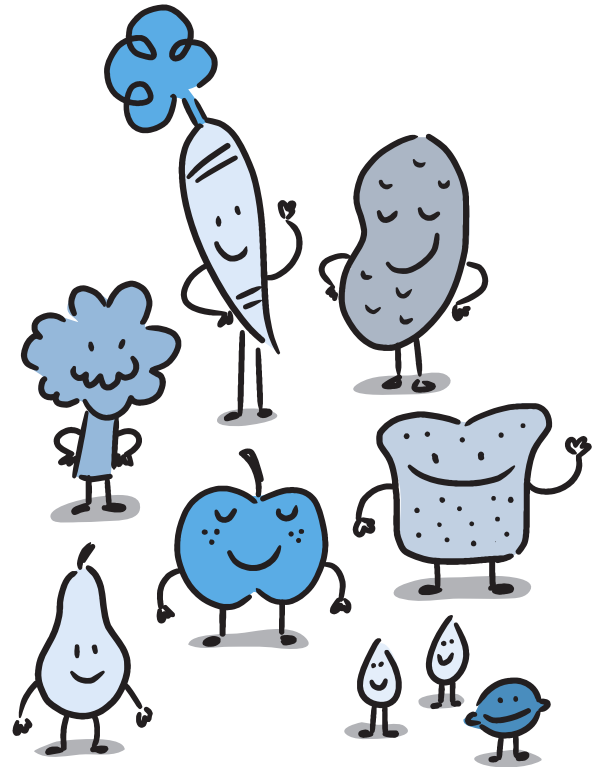
### Health Benefits

Some of fiber's greatest benefits are related to **cardiovascular** health. Several large studies have found that people who eat the most fiber had a lower risk for heart disease.

**"You might think that if it's not digestible then it's of no value. But there's no question that higher intake of fiber from all food sources is beneficial."**

High fiber intake—particularly soluble fiber—seems to protect against several heart-related problems. "There is evidence that high dietary fiber consumption lowers 'bad' **cholesterol** concentrations in the blood and reduces the risk for developing heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure," says Dr. Somdat Mahabir, a nutrition and disease expert with NIH's National Cancer Institute.

Fiber can help relieve constipation and normalize your bowel movements. Insoluble fiber is often used to treat or prevent constipation and diverticular disease, which



affects the large intestine, or colon.

Fiber may also play a role in reducing the risk for **type 2 diabetes**, the most common form of diabetes. Fiber in the intestines can slow the absorption of sugar, which helps prevent blood sugar from spiking. "With diabetes, it's good to keep glucose levels from peaking too much," explains Dr. Gertraud



### Definitions

#### Cardiovascular

The system of heart and vessels that circulates blood through the body.

#### Cholesterol

A waxy, fat-like substance that your body needs to function. However, a high level in the blood is a major risk factor for heart disease.

#### Type 2 Diabetes

A disease in which blood levels of glucose—a type of sugar—are too high.

Maskarinec of the University of Hawaii.

In an NIH-funded study, Maskarinec and her colleagues followed more than 75,000 adults for 14 years. Consistent with other large studies, their research found that diabetes risk was significantly reduced in people who had the highest fiber intake.

“We found that it’s mostly the fiber from grains that protects against diabetes,” Maskarinec says. However, she notes that while high fiber intake may offer some protection, the best way to reduce your risk of diabetes is to exercise

and keep your weight in check.

Your weight is another area where fiber might help. High-fiber foods generally make you feel fuller for longer. Fiber adds bulk but few calories. “In studies where people are put on different types of diets, those on the high-fiber diets typically eat about 10% fewer calories,” Slavin says. Other large studies have found that people with high fiber intake tend to weigh less—although that may be because their diets are healthier.

Scientists have also looked into links between fiber and different types of cancer, with mixed results. For example, there is evidence that a high intake of dietary fiber may reduce the risk for colon cancer and colon polyps.

generally contain isolated soluble fibers, such as inulin, polydextrose, or maltodextrin. These isolated fibers are included in the product label’s list of ingredients.

However, the health benefits of isolated fibers are unclear. Research suggests they may not have the same effects as the intact fibers found in whole foods. For instance, there’s little evidence that isolated fibers help lower blood cholesterol. They’ve also shown inconsistent effects on the regularity of bowel movements. On the plus side, some studies suggest they might boost the growth of good bacteria in the gut.

**“The focus should be more on eating diets that are rich in whole grains, legumes, beans, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds to get the daily fiber requirement.”**

The bottom line is that most of us need to fit more fiber into our day, no matter what the source. “It would be great if people would choose more foods that are naturally high in fiber,” Slavin says.

Increase your fiber intake gradually, so your body can get used to it. Adding fiber slowly helps you avoid gas, bloating, and cramps. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts to add a mix of different fibers and a wide range of nutrients to your diet. A fiber-rich diet can help your health in many ways. ■



## Wise Choices

### Tips to Get More Fiber in Your Diet

- **Bulk up your breakfast.** Choose a high-fiber cereal (5 or more grams per serving) or make a bowl of oatmeal and top it with nuts and fruit.
- **Switch to whole grains.** Look for bread that lists whole-grain flour as the first ingredient. Experiment with barley; wild or brown rice; quinoa; whole wheat pasta; and bulgur.
- **Add a non-starchy vegetable.** Keep a bag of frozen mixed vegetables, spinach, or broccoli florets for a quick addition to any pasta sauce or rice dish. Start dinners with a tossed salad.
- **Don’t forget legumes.** Try peas, different kinds of beans (pinto, kidney, lima, navy, and garbanzo), and lentils.
- **Snack on fruit, nuts, and seeds.** Grab a piece of fruit such as an apple, pear, or banana. Keep some almonds, sunflower seeds, and pistachios handy. Low-fat popcorn or sliced vegetables and hummus also make a great snack.

## A Fiber-Rich Diet

Experts say that the type of fiber you eat is less important than making sure you get enough overall. “In general, people should not be too concerned by the specific type of fiber,” Mahabir says. “The focus should be more on eating diets that are rich in whole grains, legumes, beans, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds to get the daily fiber requirement.”

Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are also packed with vitamins and other nutrients, so experts recommend that you get most of your fiber from these natural sources. “Unfortunately, a lot of people tend to pick low-fiber foods. They go for white bread or white rice. Most of the processed foods—foods that are really convenient—tend to be low in fiber,” says Slavin.

For people who have trouble getting enough fiber from natural sources, store shelves are filled with packaged foods that tout added fiber. These fiber-fortified products include yogurts, ice cream, cereals, snack bars, and juices. They



## Web Links

For more about fiber and health, go to: [newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/rough-up-your-diet](https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/rough-up-your-diet)



# Better Nutrition Every Day

## How to Choose Healthier Foods and Drinks

We make countless decisions every day, both big and small. When it comes to deciding what to eat and feed our families, it can be a lot easier than you might think to make smart, healthy choices. It takes just a little planning.

The foods and drinks we put into our bodies are our fuel. They provide us with energy and nutrients—like vitamins, minerals, and proteins—that our bodies need to function and thrive. Research shows that healthy food and drink choices are especially important for children's growing bodies and minds. Healthy choices have both immediate and long-lasting benefits for you and your family.

"My best advice is for parents to be good role models by eating healthy and being physically active with their children," says Dr. Holly Nicastro, a nutritionist at NIH. "Keep healthy foods around the house for meals and snacks. Involve children in the meal planning and cooking, and they will be more likely to eat the meals."

"Parents can begin teaching their children about healthy eating from the day they are born," says Dr. Donna Spruijt-Metz, whose research at the University of Southern California focuses on preventing and treating obesity in minority youth. "Setting a good example is very important."

### Healthier Choices

All foods and drinks can fit into a healthy diet. But when making choices for you or your family, try to choose ones that have lots of nutrients and aren't too high in sugar, fats, and calories. These include fruits; vegetables; whole-grain cereals, breads, and pastas; milk, yogurt, and other dairy products; fat-trimmed and lean meats; fish; beans;

and water.

Some foods and drinks should be consumed less often. These include white bread, rice, and pasta; granola; pretzels; and fruit juices. Others are best to have only once in a while—like french fries, doughnuts and other sweet baked goods, hot dogs, fried fish and chicken, candy, and soda.

"Healthier diets don't have to cost more, provided that you have the right attitude, make the right food choices, and try to cook at home," says Dr. Adam Drewnowski, a nutrition expert at the University of Washington in Seattle. With some planning, he says, you can prepare meals that are tasty, affordable, and nutrient rich.

Get the whole family to help slice, dice, and chop. NIH has developed several resources to help you learn how to improve your eating habits (see the Links box in the online version of this story). You might be surprised how easy healthy cooking and snacking can be.

### Outside the Home

These days, much of our food isn't eaten at home. It's eaten on the go. One easy way to get the nutrients you need is to pack healthy lunches—both for yourself and your kids.

"You can work with your child to make a lunch using whole-grain bread, wraps, or pita pockets filled with lean meats or cheese, vegetables, and nut butters or



spreads, such as hummus," Nicastro says. "Pack vegetables such as carrots, snap peas, and cucumbers or any fresh fruit that's currently in season. Teens can learn to pack their own lunches with a healthy variety of foods."

**With some planning, you can prepare meals that are tasty, affordable, and nutrient rich.**

If your kids buy lunch, talk to them about making healthy choices when buying food from the school cafeteria and vending machines. "Parents should encourage their children to choose the important food groups for lunch: a lean protein, fruit and vegetable, whole grains," Nicastro says. "If a salad bar is available, this is a great opportunity for kids to make their own salad with vegetables, lean protein, and fruit."

If you have a busy day with your

family planned, pack healthy snacks in a small cooler or tote bag before you leave. Consider water, fresh fruit, veggies, and low-fat cheese sticks. Pack small portions of unsalted nuts, whole-grain crackers, or a low-sugar cereal.

Fast-food restaurants can also be a challenge, but sometimes fast food is your only option. At restaurants, use the menu labels and information about calories and other nutrients to make healthier food and beverage choices. Healthy choices can include salads, sliced fruit instead of french fries, and grilled options instead of fried.

### Using Labels

When you're grocery shopping, the Nutrition Facts label is a great

resource to help you compare foods and drinks. It can help you confirm whether products marked with healthy-sounding terms really are healthy. For example, "low-fat" foods aren't necessarily healthy; they can be very high in sugar and calories.

Use the Nutrition Facts label to help guide you to limit the nutrients you want to cut back on, such as sodium or added sugar. You can also use it to make sure you're getting plenty of the nutrients you need, such as calcium and iron.

**"Food provides our bodies with needed nourishment. Teaching children to read labels while shopping as they get older is a good way to help them learn to shop for healthy foods."**

When reading the label, start at the top. Look at the serving size. Next, look at the calorie count. Then move on to the nutrients, where it lists the amount and daily values experts recommend.

Remember that what you might eat or drink as one portion can be multiple servings. For example, if you eat one bag of chips but the label says there are three servings in a bag, you need to multiply all the numbers on the label by three to find out how many calories you just ate.

### Working Together

Sometimes it can be hard to find healthy food and drink choices when shopping locally. People in some communities have been working together to make it easier

## Take time to build healthy eating decisions into every aspect of your family's life.

to find healthy foods in their neighborhoods.

For instance, in some neighborhoods, people have joined together to tend community garden plots. "Learning to garden, planting rooftop gardens, box gardens, or small planters can provide some easy growing veggies like tomatoes right at home," Spruijt-Metz says. "Another possibility is finding a fruit and vegetable truck that would be willing to come to the neighborhood."

Take time to build healthy eating decisions into every aspect of your family's life. If you're a parent or guardian, start talking with kids at an early age about health and nutrition. And practice what you preach. Make healthy food and drink choices yourself so you can set a good example for your kids.

"Food provides our bodies with needed nourishment. Teaching children to read labels while shopping as they get older is a good way to help them learn to shop for healthy foods," Spruijt-Metz says. "Teaching them to cook simple, tasty, and healthy meals when they're young is a skill that will stay with them throughout their lives." ■



### Wise Choices Tips for Eating Out

- Choose foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, roasted, poached, or lightly sautéed or stir-fried.
- Ask for food without butter, gravy, or sauces.
- Ask for salad dressing on the side and use only some of it.
- Pick drinks without added sugar, such as water, milk, and unsweetened tea or coffee. Order regular coffee or tea instead of high-calorie specialty drinks.
- Trim visible fat from meats and remove skin from poultry.
- Share your meal or take half home for later.
- Choose fruit or another healthy option for dessert.



### Web Links

For more about healthy food and drink choices, go to: [newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/better-nutrition-every-day](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/special-issues/eating/better-nutrition-every-day)

## How to get NIH News in Health

### Subscribe online.

Visit [newsinhealth.nih.gov](http://newsinhealth.nih.gov)

**Subscribe**

### Get it in print.

Contact us (see page two) to get print copies free of charge by mail for display in offices, libraries or clinics within the U.S.



## DASH EATING PLAN

# Tips To Reduce Salt and Sodium

## HEALTHY EATING, PROVEN RESULTS

Studies have found that the DASH eating plan can lower blood pressure in as fast as 2 weeks. Eating less sodium creates even bigger heart healthy benefits.

zucchini

Swiss cheese

bread

### Eat your veggies.

Choose plain fresh, frozen, or canned (low-sodium or no-salt-added) vegetables and season them yourself.

### Fresh is best.

Choose fresh or frozen skinless poultry, fish, and lean cuts of meat rather than those that are marinated, canned, smoked, brined, or cured.

### Go "low or no."

Check the Nutrition Facts labels to compare sodium levels in foods. Choose low- or reduced-sodium, or no-salt-added versions of foods.

### Pay attention to preparation.

Limit cured foods (such as bacon and ham); foods packed in brine (such as pickles, pickled vegetables, olives, and sauerkraut); and condiments (such as mustard, horseradish, ketchup, and barbecue sauce). Limit even lower sodium versions of soy sauce and teriyaki sauce, which should be used as sparingly as table salt.

### Subtract, don't add.

Canned foods such as tuna and beans can be rinsed to remove some of the sodium. Cook rice, pasta, and hot cereals without salt. Cut back on instant or flavored rice, pasta, and cereal mixes, which usually have added salt.

### Limit salty processed foods.

Skip or limit frozen dinners and mixed dishes such as pizza, packaged mixes, canned soups or broths, and salad dressings, which often have a lot of sodium. Prepare and eat more foods at home, where you can control how much sodium is added.

### Spice it up.

Boost flavor with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, vinegar, or salt-free seasoning blends instead of salt or salty seasonings like soy sauce, spice blends, or soup mixes. Start by cutting salt in half and work your way toward healthy substitutes.

## EASY TIPS FOR DINING OUT

### Move the salt shaker away.

This simple first step could become second nature.

### Research the restaurant's menu before going out.

Check online nutrition information and then avoid these on the menu: pickled, cured, smoked, soy sauce.

### Make special requests.

Ask that your meal be prepared without added salt, MSG, or salty ingredients such as bacon, pickles, olives, and cheese.

### Easy does it on the condiments.

A little goes a long way for mustard, ketchup, horseradish, pickles, and sauces with salt-containing ingredients.

### Go for healthy appetizers and side dishes.

Choose fruit or vegetables instead of salty snacks, chips, or fries.

**DASH EATING PLAN**

The DASH Eating Plan is a heart healthy approach that has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and have other health benefits. To learn more, go to [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH).



National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



# Where's the sodium?



brown rice

green beans

strawberries

black-eyed peas

milk

tuna

Most of the sodium we eat comes from added salt in packaged or prepared foods. Only a small amount occurs naturally in foods. Check Nutrition Facts labels and choose foods with lower sodium levels.

Grains			Serving Size	Milligrams of Sodium
Cooked cereal, rice, pasta (unsalted)	1/2 cup	0-15		
Ready-to-eat packaged cereal	1/2 cup	0-360		
Bread	1 slice	120-210		
Vegetables				
Fresh or frozen, cooked without salt	1/2 cup	0-70		
Canned or frozen with sauce	1/2 cup	190-430		
Pasta sauce, jarred	1/2 cup	270-490		
Fruits				
Fresh, frozen, canned	1/2 cup	0-5		
Dairy				
Milk	1 cup	110		
Yogurt	1 cup	85-190		
Natural cheeses	1 1/2 oz	90-480		
American cheese, processed	1 slice	200-240		
Nuts, Seeds, and Legumes				
Nuts, unsalted	1/3 cup	0-5		
Nuts, salted	1/3 cup	70-260		
Beans, cooked from dried or frozen (unsalted)	1/2 cup	0-10		
Beans, canned	1/2 cup	130-450		
Meats, Fish, and Poultry				
Fresh or frozen meat, fish, poultry	3 oz	55-75		
Fresh or frozen poultry, with broth	3 oz	100-170		
Tuna, canned, water pack	3 oz	140-180		
Turkey breast, lunch meat	3 oz	540-810		
Ham, lean, roasted	3 oz	920-950		

**DASH EATING PLAN**

The DASH Eating Plan is a heart healthy approach that has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and have other health benefits. To learn more, go to [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH).



National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute