

Eat Well Live Well

Making Healthy Choices

Eat Well, Live Well

Your diet has a profound effect on your life. What you eat can change how you feel, both emotionally and about yourself as a whole. An over-caffeinated person may be aggressive in traffic or confrontational at work; someone with high-calorie, low-nutrient eating habits may feel lethargic and find it hard to focus; under-eating causes numerous health issues, depression and low energy among them.

Unfortunately, “eating better” is hard to do. Many foods claim to be good for you—which ones actually are? How can you eat healthy while rushing from work and home, and how do you make nutritious meals on a budget?

section **01**

Your March Activity: Monitor Your Diet and Meal Plan

This month's activity focuses on gradually improving your diet. Each week will build on the previous week's progress!



Eat Better On the Go

Between travel, off-hour schedules, working through lunches and every other hectic thing, today's work week is a little different for everyone. We all face difficulties sticking to a healthy diet when we're busy, but there are actions you can take to set yourself up for success.

One way to do this? **Willpower!** If you're eating out with friends or co-workers, or if you're traveling, you can almost always find a healthy option — the hard part is actually ordering it. To avoid temptation, try and remember how much better you feel when you eat foods that don't come out of a fryer. Then, do what you need to do to eat healthy: ask for whole grain buns and bread, order salads with a small amount of vinaigrette dressing on the side, and stop eating when you're comfortably full, not when your plate is clean.

Lose Weight, Not Money

Better food doesn't have to cost oodles of cash. While fresh, natural ingredients can cost more than frozen or processed foods, it's possible to eat a diet that is healthy for you and your budget.

Healthy on a Budget

Plan your meals, make a list and don't shop hungry

Know what you're going to the store for and stick to those items! Unplanned purchases add up in a hurry, and they're usually items that dent your diet as well as your bank account.

Use coupons when you shop

This one seems obvious because it is. Most people don't make an effort to look online or in newspapers for grocery coupons, but those that do save a lot of money over time! Start clipping coupons (or seeking out deals and specials online). If you track how much you save, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the results!

Compare brands

When you want to purchase a name-brand item (e.g., soda, cereal, even health and beauty products), compare it with cheaper brands and see if you can tell the difference—often, you really are just paying for the name on the box.

Join your store's loyalty program

Many grocery store chains offer additional discounts, coupons or incentives to customers who sign up for a loyalty program. Most of these programs are free to join. If your local store offers one, take advantage of it!

Buy in bulk

If there are non-perishable, durable items you know you'll use, see if it's cheaper to buy in bulk! You'll typically see cost savings and avoid adding another small purchase to your list each time you go to the store.



Reading a Nutrition Label

You're ready to start eating healthy—that's great! But how do you know where to start? Here are a few simple tips and tricks you can use to help determine if a food is good for you.

Tip #1

You'll Feel Better When Your Food Is Actual Food

Do you know what xanthan gum or glycerol monostearate looks like? We don't either. The best and simplest tip for reading food labels is to only consume foods with ingredients you can picture and pronounce. This means buying products made with whole, natural ingredients. Two big ones to avoid: high fructose corn syrup (now sometimes listed as just "corn syrup") and partially hydrogenated oil, which contains trans fats.



Tip #2

Avoid Trans Fats and Limit Sodium

If you see trans fat in the ingredients list or partially hydrogenated oil on the ingredients list, put it back on the shelf. Trans fats, a synthetic product rarely found in nature, contain no nutritional value and are extremely difficult for your body to process.

Sodium, on the other hand, is fine in proper doses — just be aware that most canned, packaged and processed foods use preservatives that spike a food's sodium level. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure, increased risk of heart disease and stroke, and kidney problems.



Tip #3

Pay Attention to Serving Size

The nutrition listed on a food label applies to the amount per serving, not the amount in the entire container. Serving size has been better regulated in recent years, but companies still try to mask unhealthy ingredients when they can. To use a past example: 20 oz. Cokes used to claim that one bottle contained approximately 2.5 servings (at a still-excessive 27 grams of sugar per serving) instead of 1 serving with 65 grams of sugar. Monitor serving size and don't inadvertently overeat!



March Recipe

Yogurt Parfaits

Next time you're craving a processed treat with added sugar, try this yogurt parfait instead.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups fresh fruit (your choice!)

2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt

Raisins, dried fruit, chopped nuts, sunflower seeds and/or granola (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash fruit and cut into bite-sized chunks
2. Put 1/4 cup of fruit in the bottom of four glasses
3. Top with 1/4 cup vanilla yogurt
4. Top with optional ingredients if desired
5. Keep chilled until ready to serve

Total Time (Cook and Prep): 10 minutes
Servings: 4



NUTRITION INFO:

272 calories

7 g fat

73 mg cholesterol

405 mg sodium

27 g carbohydrates

3 g fiber

24 g protein

