



## A healthy lifestyle starts with good nutrition

### Eating with a Purpose

With March being National Nutrition Month®, we're highlighting the importance of eating a balanced diet, with the right foods, to create a healthy lifestyle and reduce health risk.

Eating a diet that includes a variety of food groups and moderate portions is key in maintaining a healthy weight.

The goal? To pack in as many nutrients as possible while keeping the calorie count down.

### Reduce Health Risks with Foods High in Nutrients

When it comes to nutrition, focus on eating nutrient-dense foods and avoid sugars and sodium. Doing this will keep your body nourished and energized, while reducing health risks!

#### A few things to keep in mind:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are full of antioxidants and may help protect your cells against certain kinds of cancer and other diseases.
- Limit your intake of added sugars. Eating extra sugar can lead to excess calories, which can lead to weight gain over time.
  - Check nutrition labels of packaged products and beverages. Be mindful of how much sugar you add when baking.
  - Women should have a maximum of 25 grams, 6 tsp. of added sugars daily.
  - Men should have a maximum of 37.5 grams, 9 tsp. of added sugars daily.
- Less sodium in your diet may help you lower or avoid high blood pressure. The American Heart Association recommends a limit of no more than 1,500 mg per day and no more than 2,300 milligrams (mgs) a day for most adults.
- Don't forget the fiber. Aim for 30 grams per day. It keeps you feeling full longer and helps your body absorb nutrients. Choose fiber from whole foods rather than supplements. It is more easily digested.
  - ½ cup of beans = 5 grams
  - 1 cup instant oatmeal (plain) = 5 grams
  - ½ cup cooked quinoa = 3.5 grams
  - 1 cup chopped broccoli = 5 grams
  - 1 medium apple = 4.5 grams

# Healthy Food Swaps

## Out and About

Avoiding fast and fried foods is important to staying healthy and decreasing the risk of certain health conditions, such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

### How can you be healthier while on the go?

- Ask for extra vegetables on any item to get more fiber and nutrients. Most places are happy to accommodate.
- Love pizza? Switch from regular crust to thin crust pizza and save almost 100 calories per slice.
- Opt for the “grilled” choices over “fried.” If it doesn’t list an option, just ask!
- Pass up the French fries and order a small side salad or fruit.

## Sip Smart

What you drink matters almost as much as what you eat!

### Try these ideas to start sipping smarter:

- Choose water 80-90% of the time.
- Add fruit, cucumber slices, or fresh mint to water for refreshing flavor.
- Follow a one-for-one rule at parties or social events. Alternate one sugary or alcoholic beverage with one glass of water.
- Do the math. If you drink sugary teas and sodas, look at the label and see how many calories and sugars you are drinking.

## For the Cook

Are you willing to trade in some excess calories and fat for a little cooking time?

### Try these techniques to lighten up your meal:

- Use applesauce, Greek yogurt, or pumpkin in place of butter when baking. Ratio: 1 cup butter = ½ cup substitute.
- Coat the surface of the food or meat with a small amount of oil or buttermilk, then bake in the oven instead of deep frying.
- Don’t forget whole grains! Use quinoa, brown rice, and barley as a high-fiber, high nutrient side dish.

## Tips Toward Better Nutrition

- Talk with your doctor to discuss what the right number of calories is for you.
- Check with your pharmacist if you are on medications that may interact with specific nutrients or vitamins.
- Partner up! Have a friend, family member, or co-worker join you in eating better.
- Take advantage of your resources. Local farmers markets and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares are a cost-effective way to get fresh produce.

## Your Diet & Your Brain

Studies are starting to show diet and nutrition may play a role in mental health as well as physical health.

- Whole foods have protein-building tissues that help transfer signals between the brain and body.
- Folate and B vitamins are essential for brain functioning.

We care about your health and well-being and our staff of registered nurse care managers, mental health professionals, wellness coaches, and clinical pharmacists are here to help. If you have questions, please call 855-586-2568, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. MT.