



FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Enjoy this food group in abundance to maintain a healthy, balanced diet. Fruits and vegetables are easy to prepare and are important sources of natural sugars, fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals, and antioxidants. They're also naturally low in fat!

Deep-fried vegetables
Sweetened fruit juice
Ketchup
Vegetable chips
Fruit jams and spreads
Chips and french fries

Canned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables
Unsweetened applesauce
100% fruit and vegetable juices
Potatoes

Green peas
Raw carrots
Broccoli
Apples and berries
Dark leafy greens

WHY WASH YOUR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES BEFORE EATING THEM?

High pesticide residues have been reported in apples, pears, cherries, strawberries, celery, peppers, potatoes and lettuce. Wash your fruits and veggies and make the organic choice if/when you can!

Best Nutritional *Bang For Your Buck*

LOCAL, SEASONAL PRODUCE
FLASH-FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
SWEET POTATOES
CABBAGE
SPINACH & KALE

IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR

Fresh, local, organic fruits and vegetables. They have higher nutritional value, are easier on the environment, and contain fewer chemical residues.

What's on my plate?

Aim for five servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit every day. About half of your plate should consist of veggies and fruit at every meal or snack.

Sample portions: one cup of green salad, one medium sweet potato, ½ cup of cooked vegetables, ½ cup of grapes, ¼ cup of raisins

Food fact

Eat a rainbow! Different colour pigments have different health benefits. Choose a variety of dark, colourful vegetables and fruit every day!





PROTEIN

Our bodies need protein to make antibodies for our immune system, to build body tissue and muscle, to transport oxygen in our blood, and to make the hormones and enzymes required for chemical reactions that make our bodies function.

Processed meats like cold cuts and hot dogs Bacon Ham	Lean beef, lamb and goat Wild game and rabbit Eggs Tofu and tempeh Liver Chicken and turkey	Fish Nuts and seeds Plain yogurt Lentils and beans Whole grains Edamame
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WHY MINIMIZE PROCESSED MEAT?

Eating processed and smoked meats like cold cuts, ham and bacon has been linked to cardiovascular disease, cancer and early death.

Best Nutritional *Bang For Your Buck*

- UNSALTED SUNFLOWER SEEDS
- QUINOA
- LENTILS
- BLACK BEANS
- CANNED SALMON
- CHICK PEAS

IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR

Antibiotic-free, free-range, hormone-free, local, organic, pasture-fed, wild-caught

What's on my plate?

¼ of your plate should contain a healthy source of protein. Aim to eat no more than 1 to 2 servings of red meat per week, as it can be high in saturated fats.

Sample portions: ¾ cup of cooked lentils or quinoa, one handful of nuts, a deck-of-cards sized portion of meat, fish or tofu

Food fact

Quinoa (pronounced keen-wa) contains more protein than other grains. It also cooks faster than brown rice, and can be served chilled or warm, as a side dish or salad. Look for it in the bulk foods aisle of most grocery stores.





FISH

Fish is considered a healthy food, and a lean source of protein. But choose your fish carefully: some fish contain high levels of pollutants like mercury that are harmful to your health. Always be aware of where your fish comes from, and how it was caught: many fisheries are severely depleted, and lots of fish are caught using environmentally unsustainable fishing practices.

Shark	Tilapia	Wild salmon
Swordfish	Arctic char	Rainbow trout
King mackerel	Striped sea bass	Sardines
Chilean sea bass	Halibut	Herring
Grouper	Haddock	Mackerel
Orange roughy	Sole, Cod	
White or albacore tuna	Light or Skipjack tuna	

WHY MINIMIZE LARGE PREDATOR FISH?

Large predator fish like ahi tuna or swordfish eat smaller fish and can have a higher concentration of mercury.

Best Nutritional *Bang For Your Buck*

**CANNED SARDINES,
CANNED SALMON, CANNED
LIGHT OR SKIPJACK TUNA,
ANCHOVIES, HERRING**

IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR

Cold-water fish high in Omega 3 fatty acids like wild salmon and mackerel, which can help to reduce the risk of heart disease, Alzheimer's and macular degeneration.

What's on my plate?

When fish is your source of protein, make it ¼ of your plate. Fish can also be a source of healthy fat. You should aim to eat fish at least twice a week.

Sample portions: deck-of-cards sized piece of fish, ½ a can of salmon, tuna or sardines

Food fact

SeaChoice is a Canadian organization that can help you make smart seafood decisions for a healthy body and a healthy earth. Visit them online at www.seachoice.org.





GRAINS

Whole grains contain carbohydrates that give us energy and prevent disease, and fibre that helps the body better control blood sugar and insulin levels and keep hunger at bay. Whole grains can also reduce the risk of heart disease and constipation and can help in healthy weight management.

Crackers and packaged cookies White flour and white bread White rice Muffins and croissants Sweetened breakfast cereals Regular pasta and instant noodles	Whole-grain breakfast cereals Rolled oats Whole wheat flour Multigrain or rye bread Whole wheat noodles Brown rice noodles	Brown rice Steel-cut oats Wheat berries Quinoa Millet Buckwheat
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<p>WHY MINIMIZE REFINED FLOUR PRODUCTS?</p> <p>When whole grains are turned into flour and refined, most of the vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants are stripped out, leaving us with a high number of calories that are low in nutrition.</p>	<div style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px; display: inline-block;"> Best Nutritional Bang For Your Buck </div> <p>BROWN RICE STEEL-CUT OATS BROWN RICE NOODLES WHOLE-GRAIN PASTA</p>	<p>IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR</p> <p>Recipes that incorporate whole grains with lots of veggies. For example, try a quick and easy quinoa salad with summer vegetables for lunch, or steel-cut oats with seasonal fruit and a bit of honey for breakfast.</p>
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What's on my plate?

¼ of your plate should be whole grains for any meal

Sample portions: one slice of whole grain bread, a tennis-ball-sized scoop of brown rice, quinoa, millet, oats or whole grain pasta

Food fact

Get on your way to a healthier diet by making at least half of your daily grains whole grains. Start by replacing white flour, pasta, and cereals with whole grain alternatives.



DAIRY

Dairy products are an important source of the calcium needed for healthy teeth and bones. Vitamin D is important for keeping our muscles, nerves and immune systems in good working order. The probiotics contained in yogurt and kefir are a source of healthy bacteria that aid in digestion, help to maintain a healthy immune system and reduce the spread of harmful bacteria.

<p>Low-fat dairy products</p> <p>Cheeses with added colour, and moldy and soft cheeses (i.e.: brie)</p> <p>Processed cheese slices and spreads</p> <p>Ice cream</p>	<p>Cottage cheese</p> <p>Flavoured or artificially sweetend yogurt</p> <p>Cheddar</p> <p>Canadian cheese & milk</p> <p>Ice milk & frozen yogurt</p>	<p>Kefir</p> <p>Plain, full-fat yogurt</p> <p>Goat's and sheep's milk</p> <p>Goat's and sheep's cheese (i.e.: feta)</p>
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<p>WHY MINIMIZE LOW-FAT DAIRY ITEMS?</p> <p>Low-fat dairy products can contain artificial ingredients such as thickeners and sweeteners.</p>	<p>Best Nutritional <i>Bang For Your Buck</i></p> <p>PLAIN YOGURT (ADD YOUR OWN FRESH FRUIT, HONEY, NUTS AND/OR SEEDS) COTTAGE CHEESE GOAT'S FETA CHEESE</p>	<p>IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR</p> <p>Organic dairy (your best choice for minimizing pesticide exposure). Natural dairy fats (important for absorbing calcium and protein). Sheep's and goat's milk (easier to digest than cow's milk).</p>
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What's on my plate?

Aim for one to two servings of dairy products each day.

Sample portions: 1 cup of milk, ¾ cup of yogurt or kefir, 1 cup of cottage cheese, 1 ½ oz of cheese (the size of your index finger)



Food fact

Dairy isn't for everyone. Other good sources of calcium include sardines, canned salmon, kale, black-eyed peas, blackstrap molasses, figs and almonds. Aim for 10 minutes (fair skin tone) to 30 minutes (darker skin tone) exposure to sunlight daily in the summer to get your daily dose of Vitamin D. In winter months, supplement with vitamin D-fortified foods or supplements.





FATS & OILS

Instead of thinking “low-fat,” focus on getting to know your fats, both good and bad. Healthy fats and oils are important to helping your body store energy, insulating vital organs, keeping your immune system functioning, improving your cholesterol levels, maintaining a healthy heart and helping with brain function.

Margarine and shortening	Trans-fat free margarine	Nuts and seeds
Sweetened nut butters	Butter	Trout and mackerel
Fried and deep-fried foods	Natural nut butters	Avocado
Most fast foods	Coconut oil	Extra-virgin olive oil
	Canola oil	Safflower and sunflower oil

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Bang For Your Buck**

WHY AVOID TRANS FATS?

Trans fats are mutated fat molecules that do not “work” in our bodies. Eating trans fats increases the risk of heart disease.

UNSALTED SUNFLOWER SEEDS
SARDINES AND HERRING
NATURAL PEANUT BUTTER
AVOCADO
RAW ALMONDS
SAFFLOWER OIL

IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR

Food with these words on the label: Cold-pressed, extra virgin, organic, non-GMO.

What's on my plate?

In any given meal, no more than two to three tablespoons of fats or oils should be included.

Sample portions: 1 tbsp of nut butter, a deck of cards-sized portion of cooked fish or meat, a handful of nuts and seeds, 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, ¼ avocado

Food fact

Some fats are safe when heated, like in a stir-fry. They include butter, lard, coconut oil, peanut oil, and grapeseed oil.

Some fats are healthiest when not heated, like in a salad dressing. They include extra-virgin olive oil, walnut oil, and flax oil. Some fats can be used heated or not, like canola oil, safflower oil and sunflower oil.



BEVERAGES

The body needs plenty of water every day in order to maintain adequate energy levels, eliminate toxins, maintain clear brain function and healthy body weight, reduce joint pain and maintain healthy skin.

Diet or regular soft drinks Energy drinks Sports drinks Alcohol	Coffee Caffeinated tea Store-bought fruit and vegetable juices	Water Fruit or herbal teas (hot or iced) Fresh-pressed fruit or vegetable juices Caffeine-free fruit or herbal teas (hot or iced)
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WHY MINIMIZE DRINKING YOUR CALORIES? Fruit juices and soft drinks (even the calorie-free ones) have been proven to contribute to obesity and diet-related illnesses.	Best Nutritional Bang For Your Buck WATER! WATER! WATER! Tips for kids: Instead of soda or fruit juice, try iced caffeine-free, herbal or fruit tea sweetened with a little bit of honey.	IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR Tap water. It's free. It's safe. It has zero calories. It's the most cost-effective way to improve your health today.
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What's on my plate?

Try to drink eight to ten 8 oz glasses of water per day – the equivalent of a 2L bottle. If you're eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, you can drink somewhat less. If you're exercising heavily, you'll need more.

Food fact

While there are antioxidant health claims to drinking coffee and red wine, moderation is the key. Any more than 8 oz of either beverage daily strips away the benefits.



SNACKS

Healthy snacking can keep your blood sugar level from spiking or dropping, and is a healthy way to curb your hunger and maintaining a healthy body weight. Try to include a raw fruit or vegetable in every snack you eat. Adding a protein can keep you feeling satisfied longer.

<p>Potato chips</p> <p>Salted and buttered popcorn</p> <p>Cake and pastries</p> <p>Chocolate bars and candy</p> <p>Ice cream and popsicles</p>	<p>Granola bars</p> <p>Air-popped popcorn</p> <p>Raisins</p> <p>Almond butter</p> <p>Fruit gelato</p> <p>Unsweetened apple sauce</p>	<p>Fresh raw fruits and vegetables</p> <p>Nuts and seeds</p> <p>Hummus</p> <p>Plain, full-fat yogurt</p> <p>Fruit and vegetable smoothies</p>
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<p>WHY MINIMIZE SNACKING WHEN YOU'RE NOT HUNGRY?</p> <p>Learn to recognize true hunger and fullness. If you think you're hungry, try drinking a glass of water first — if you're still hungry, reach for some carrots and hummus or a cup of yogurt with a bit of granola.</p>	<p>Best Nutritional <i>Bang For Your Buck</i></p> <p>NATURAL PEANUT BUTTER, RAW CARROTS, ORGANIC APPLES, BEAN DIPS, BOILED EGGS, HOMEMADE OATMEAL COOKIES</p> <p>DATES AND RAISINS</p>	<p>IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR</p> <p>Dark chocolate. Chocolate is healthiest if it has 70% or more cocoa and contains no added fats, just cocoa butter.</p>
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What's on my plate?

Aim for two snacks per day, and try not to snack before bed-time.

Sample portions: one medium fruit with 1.5 oz of cheese, one cup of raw vegetables with 2 tbsp of hummus, ½ cup of yogurt with ¼ cup of fresh fruit and a small handful of granola

Food fact

Homemade smoothies make a great snack and are a tasty, fun way of getting more fruit and vegetables into your diet. Try blending milk, yogurt or juice with a banana and a bit of almond butter, or spinach and blueberry, or beets and strawberries.



SWEETENERS

Sugar lowers immune function, leads to loss of bone density and dental decay, feeds harmful gut bacteria, can damage blood vessels and contributes to Type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. Sweeteners are not an essential part of a balanced diet and are a hidden ingredient in many processed foods like pasta sauce, breakfast cereals, and cured meats. Some sweeteners like molasses contain beneficial minerals such as calcium, potassium, iron and magnesium, and when consumed in moderation, can be part of a healthy, balanced diet.

Brown and white sugar Corn syrup Table syrup Artificial sweeteners	Brown rice syrup Agave syrup Raw and cane sugar Stevia	Blackstrap molasses Unpasteurized honey 100% pure fruit juice Pure maple syrup Unsweetened applesauce or puréed fruit
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WHY MINIMIZE ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS?

Artificial sweeteners like aspartame, sucralose, and Splenda have been linked to health issues such as diabetes and some cancers. Be alert to ingredients ending in “ose” — high-fructose corn syrup (glucose-fructose) is a common one to avoid.

Best Nutritional *Bang For Your Buck*

BLACKSTRAP MOLASSES
UNPASTEURIZED HONEY
UNSWEETENED APPLESAUCE

IF YOU CAN, LOOK FOR

Unpasteurized honey over its pasteurized counterparts. Unpasteurized honey has antibacterial properties — try it in your next cup of tea or coffee instead of sugar.

What’s on my plate?

Ideally, there is no place for added sweeteners on your plate or in your cup. When you’re craving something sweet, reach for fruit. You can also add lots of flavour to desserts by using spices: cinnamon, ginger and cardamom are some good places to start.

Food fact

Delay introducing sweetened foods to children as long as possible and limit them when you do. Once a taste for sweets is instilled, it is difficult to reverse.

