



Nourished^{Rx}

Feed Your Health Weekly Lessons

A Guide to Better Health: Part 3





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 3

11

Balanced Meals

12

Successful
Snacking

13

*Meal
Planning/Prep
& Budgeting*

14

*Meals Away
From Home*

15

*Understanding
Your Food
Triggers*

Lesson 11

Building a Balanced Plate

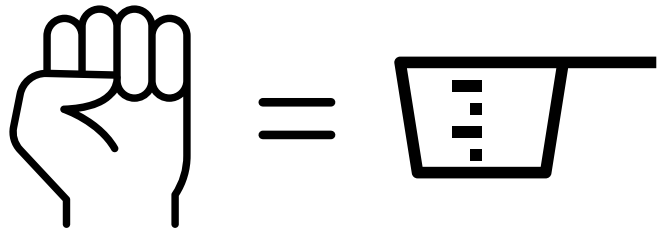


Building a Balanced Plate

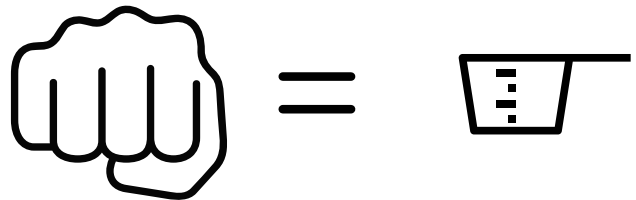
There are many tips and tricks out there about how to count calories, balance nutrients, and portion food. It can quickly sound hard to do. The good news is that it can actually be somewhat simple if you start looking at your plate differently. The plate method is a technique you can use to help you practice building a balanced plate. First, use a 9" plate. Aim to fill half of your plate with non-starchy vegetables, one-quarter of your plate with protein, and one-quarter of your plate with grains or starchy vegetables. You may also find it helpful to use your hand to determine the appropriate portion sizes you should be eating.



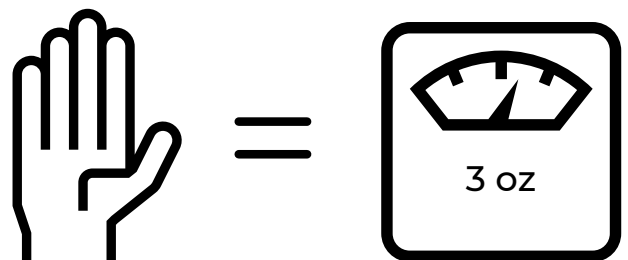
- Your fist is the size of 1 cup. Aim to fill your plate with at least 1 cup of non-starchy vegetables.



- The front of your closed fist (your fingers) is the size of ½ cup. Aim to fill your plate with ½ cup of grains and/or starchy vegetables.

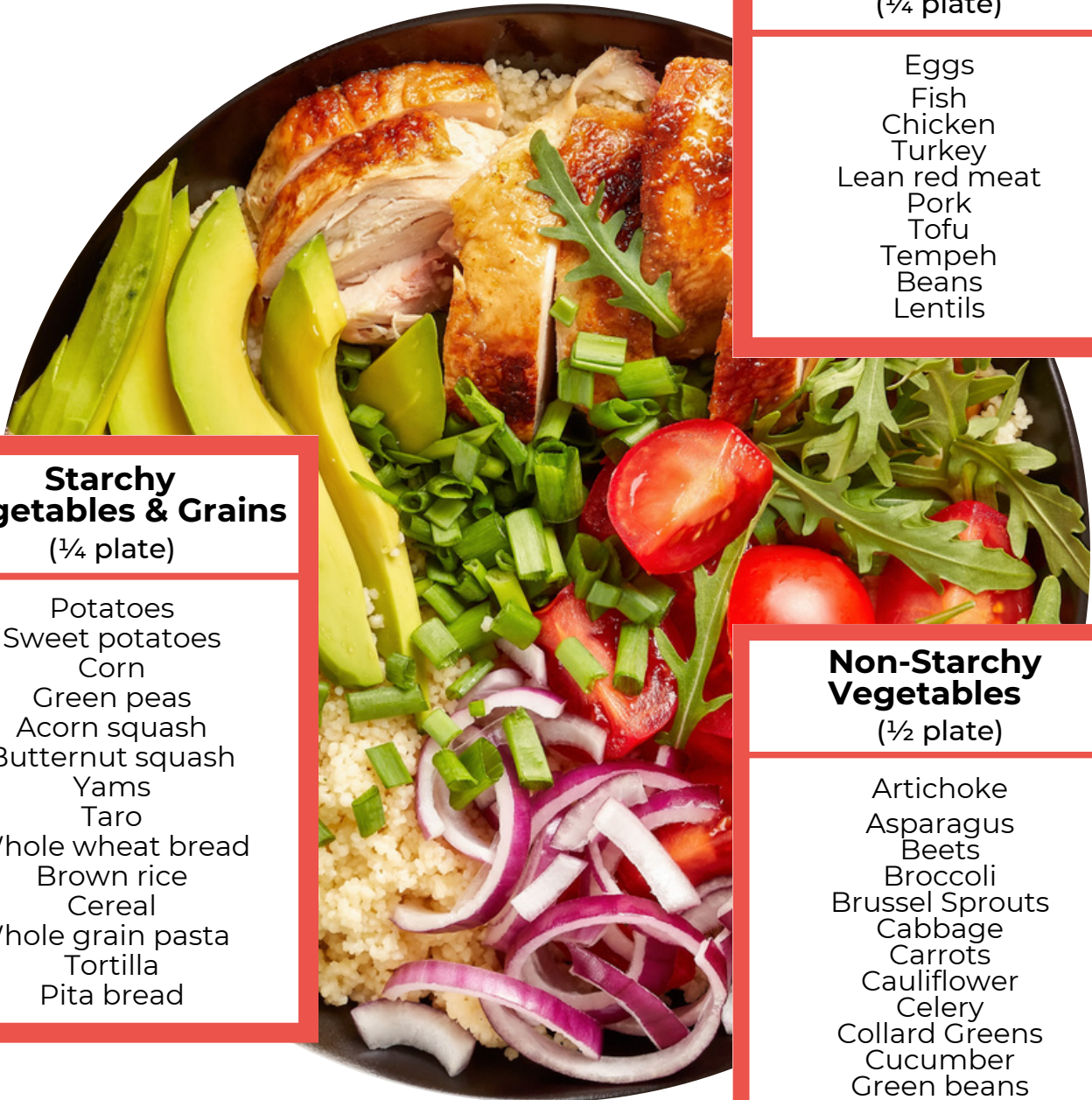


- Your palm (without including your fingers) is equal to 3 oz of meat. Aim to eat no more than a palm's worth of chicken, turkey, or beef in one meal.



The Plate Method

Review the following lists to learn the difference between non-starchy and starchy vegetables, proteins, and grains.



Protein

($\frac{1}{4}$ plate)

Eggs
Fish
Chicken
Turkey
Lean red meat
Pork
Tofu
Tempeh
Beans
Lentils

Starchy Vegetables & Grains

($\frac{1}{4}$ plate)

Potatoes
Sweet potatoes
Corn
Green peas
Acorn squash
Butternut squash
Yams
Taro
Whole wheat bread
Brown rice
Cereal
Whole grain pasta
Tortilla
Pita bread

Non-Starchy Vegetables

($\frac{1}{2}$ plate)

Artichoke
Asparagus
Beets
Broccoli
Brussel Sprouts
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Collard Greens
Cucumber
Green beans
Lettuce
Mushrooms
Onions
Peppers
Zucchini

Aim to have more servings of vegetables than fruit each day.

You can also add as many herbs and spices to your meal as you like! These foods are full of important nutrients and are low-calorie. Avoid adding excess salt or high salt spices like garlic salt.

It's okay if this new way of thinking about your plate feels unusual. Starting out, try it with one meal each day. Over time you will get better and better at building your own balanced plate!



Starchy vs. Non-Starchy Vegetables

Starchy vegetables are those plants that have a high amount of starchy carbohydrates and may have an impact on your blood sugar after a meal. This is why they are included with the whole grain portion of your plate. All other vegetables are considered non-starchy.

Starchy Vegetable Examples

- Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Lima Beans
- Corn
- Butternut Squash
- Acorn Squash
- Peas

Sample Meals

Breakfast

- Option 1: ½ cup oatmeal with ½ cup of plain yogurt
- Option 2: Omelet with mushrooms, olives, ½ cup roasted potatoes, and spinach, with ½ cup blueberries on the side



Lunch

- Option 1: ½ cup quinoa and ½ cup black bean stuffed bell pepper with avocado and onion
- Option 2: Tuna and white bean salad (tuna, bean, red onions, garlic, lemon juice, pepper) served over baby spinach



Dinner

- Option 1: Mixed stir fry vegetables with tofu, ¾ cup brown rice, and a spicy peanut dressing
- Option 2: Summer salad with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and sweet corn with grilled chicken and an olive oil-based dressing



Which meal will you more than likely try first? Circle one.

Breakfast

Lunch

Dinner

From Lesson To Action

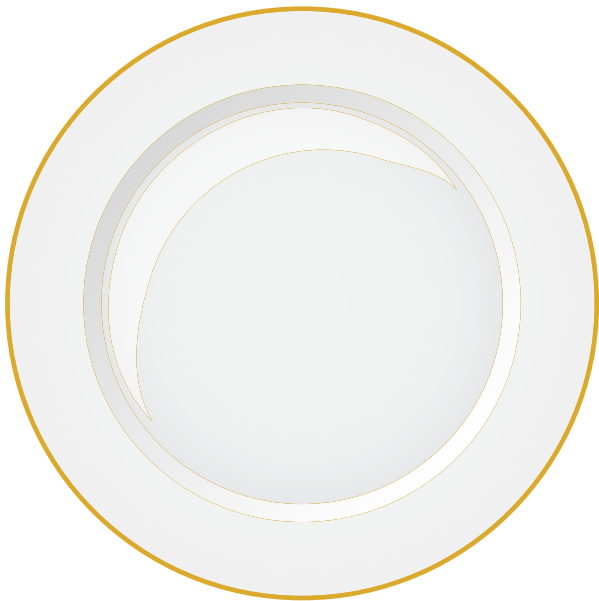
With all of the information that you've just learned, it's time to put your balanced plate creating skills to the test! First, answer the questions below, then proceed to the activity at the bottom of this page.

1) Do you use this approach for any of your meals right now? If not, what changes can you make that will closely mimic a balanced plate?

2) Which meal is the easiest for you to use this balanced plate approach and why?

Build A Balanced Plate

Using the image on the right, divide the plate into the sections that were discussed in this lesson. Think about your next meal and draw it onto the plate.



Lesson 12

Snacking

Made Simple



Snacking Made Simple

Carbohydrates, protein, and fat are the three macronutrients that are needed to support your health. These are the main groups that we focus on for meals, but what about in between meals? Let's explore how you can add these nutrients and more when snacking.

Snacking can be a time for you to get creative in the kitchen! Snacking gives your body an extra boost of energy and can also help regulate glucose levels. Below are a few tips and reminders about snacking.

Create Awareness

Not all people are the same. Another person's snacking schedule may not look like yours. Not all days are the same either. You might be really hungry for snacks on days when you are more active and not as hungry for snacks on your less busy days. Tuning in and being aware of your hunger cues (when your body is telling you you're hungry) is an important part of snacking.

Plan, Prep, and Save Money

Plan to get 3 to 4 different snacks that you might find appealing throughout the week. Washing, cutting, and portioning snacks in advance will make it easier for you to actually eat your snacks when the time comes. Your planning will help you save money by reducing impulse buys and food waste. Not sure what to snack on? See the snack ideas provided below!



Snacks That Satisfy!

When we snack, we are providing the body an extra boost of energy until the next meal. While snack time can be simple, it should also be satisfying. We encourage you to reach for fruits and vegetables first when planning your snacks, and to pair them with a protein or fat. This makes your snack more filling and helps balance blood sugar levels. For example, when you choose a complex carbohydrate like apples or carrots, pair it with a protein or fat source, like peanut butter or hummus.



Helpful Kitchen Items to Have:

- Small reusable glass, BPA-free containers, or reusable bags
- Measuring spoons
- Measuring cups

Simple Snack Ideas

- 1 small apple (carb) or banana (carb) with 1 Tbsp nut butter of your choice (fat, protein)
- 1 cup chopped broccoli (carb) and cauliflower (carb) with 1 Tbsp lite-ranch dressing (fat)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup nut and fruit trail mix (carb, fat, protein)
- 5 whole grain crackers (carb) with 1 hard boiled egg (protein)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ whole wheat English muffin (carb) with 1 oz low sodium turkey (protein)
- 1 small tortilla (carb) with 1 oz cheddar cheese (fat, protein)
- 2 cups popcorn (carb) with 1 string cheese (fat, protein)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup refried fat free beans (carb) with 1 oz shredded cheddar cheese (fat, protein)

Make Your own Trail Mix!

Use your favorite foods to make this easy and delicious trail mix. Simply mix all the ingredients together and store them in an air-tight container. Here is a general recipe, but have fun with it and create your own combination with foods and flavors you enjoy!

Serving Size: $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

Makes 9 servings

- 1 cup roasted or raw, unsalted nuts (almonds, peanuts, pistachios, cashews, etc)
- 1 cup roasted or raw, unsalted seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, hemp, etc)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened, dried fruit (raisins, dates, cherries, etc)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark chocolate chips or coconut flakes

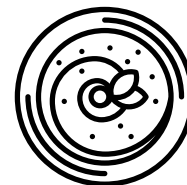
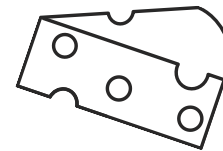
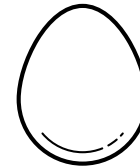
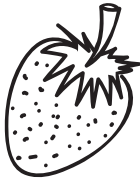


What are two snacks that you can make this month?

From Lesson To Action

Spend time this week thinking about your snacking habits and about why and when you tend to get hungry between meals. Next, plan and prep! Create a plan to make simple but satisfying snacks for those times.

Use the pictures below to mix and match different snack ideas that you look forward to trying in the next week.



Lesson 13

Meal Planning, Preparation, & Budgeting



Benefits of Meal Preparation and Planning

Eating healthy meals can feel like a big task when life is busy. Even getting groceries in the house can be hard. Because of this, it can feel easy to rely on fast food and convenience store meals. These meals usually cost more and are not as healthy. This lesson will give you simple tips on how to save time and money while planning nutrition-packed meals.



Making Life Easier with Meal Planning

Meal planning may sound like something that will make your life feel harder. But if you take it step-by-step and build the habit over time, you will find that meal planning can make your week (and life!) much easier.



Why Plan Ahead?

We have to make decisions every day, all day long. You may make it to dinner time and feel too tired from the day to make another decision about what to eat. It is hard to make the best decision for your health when you feel this way.

But, if you have previously planned your meals for the week, then the decision is already made. You simply follow the plan that you made earlier in the week.

Make planning easier by keeping these 5 things in mind:

BUDGET: How much money would you like to spend on groceries for the week?

TIME: How much time do you have to prepare meals? This helps you decide between time-intensive meals versus fast and simple meals.

FOOD: What foods do you already have in the house? For example, if you plan to make pasta one night, check to see if you already have enough pasta on hand. Then cross that off your list! What other foods do you need to buy to make these meals?

PORTIONS & LEFTOVERS: One meal can provide enough food for multiple meals! One dinner could create multiple dinners and/or lunches.

LOCATION: Is getting to a grocery store difficult for you? See if you can buy your groceries online for delivery. Or perhaps you are going to a doctor's appointment that is located down the street from a grocery store. Plan your grocery shopping and meals around when you will be near a grocery store to prevent extra trips.



Prevent meal time stress with these two key steps below!

Shop Your Plan

Take your meal plan and grocery list with you to the store. That way, you can adapt your plan if the store is out of the food that you need or you find a lower cost option and want to make a quick change. Just because you made a plan doesn't mean you can't change it! If you see something on sale, update your meal plan, and keep shopping.



Share Your Plan

If you live with family members or have roommates that you eat with, sharing your meal plan is key. This makes sure that everyone in the house is on the same page and can help prevent important ingredients from going “missing” during the week if someone else gets hungry. It can also prevent the “what are we having for dinner” question.



Meal and Ingredient Prep Ideas:

Having pre-prepped ingredients comes in handy for times when you feel too tired to cook. If you follow the ideas below, all you have to do is heat and eat!

Pre-chop and wash carrots, celery and cucumbers and store in the fridge:

- Pair with your favorite dressing or dip for a simple, quick snack.
- Use as salad toppings for an easy side dish or meal.

Wash and chop bell peppers and onions and store in the fridge:

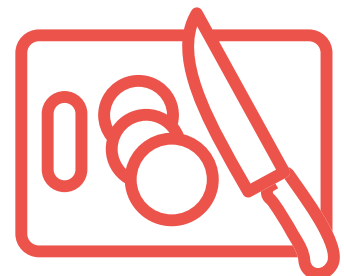
- Use them in omelets to add veggies into your morning.
- Add to salads, tacos, soups, or frozen meals for a boost of veggies.

Store drained canned beans in the fridge (rinse to help cut down on extra salt):

- Use as a quick protein for salads, tacos, or pasta dishes.
- Toss into soups or frozen meals to add extra protein and fiber.

Bake potatoes, sweet potatoes or winter squash and store in the fridge:

- Use as a quick side for breakfast, lunch, or dinner!
- Top potatoes with shredded chicken and low-fat cheese for a quick meal.



Bake a couple of chicken thighs or breasts at the beginning of the week:

- Use as a quick protein for salads, wraps, sandwiches, pasta dishes, and tacos.
- Try cooking chicken with simple spices like pepper and garlic. This way you can add different sauces when ready to eat so you never get bored!

Prepare hard boiled eggs ahead of time and store in the fridge:

- Pair with a piece of fruit for the perfect on-the-go breakfast, lunch, or snack.



Preparing for Meals To-Go

Do you make meals to eat outside the house? You can easily plan for these meals too. Having containers you can reuse can make these meals much easier to prepare. You can buy new containers or use old ones. You can even save ones from the store or restaurants. Yogurt and cottage cheese containers, for example, are perfect for quick options like oatmeal, chili, or rice. Jam or jelly jars are great for taking salad dressing on the go and not spilling it in your bag.



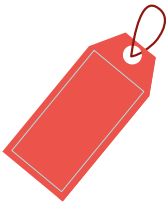
Ways to Save when Meal Planning



1. Enjoy a vegetarian meal at least once a week. Animal proteins like beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey, and fish, usually cost more than plant proteins. Try beans, lentils, and tofu for low-cost, fiber-rich dinner options.



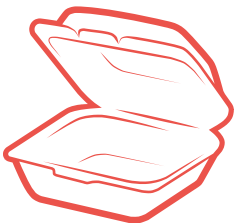
2. Eggs are another good option for one meal a week. Eggs are usually lower in cost per meal compared to animal meat and work well for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.



3. Compare name brands with store brands. Often store brands are similar in flavor and nutrition, but cost much less.



4. Use the bulk bins when available for foods like oats, rice, nuts, or dried beans. The price per pound is almost always lower than pre-packaged options.



5. Love leftovers? Cooking a little extra so that you have enough food for lunch or dinner the next day saves time and money by cutting down on the different foods you need to get at the store.



6. Avoid unique ingredients. Sometimes a recipe will call for a tiny portion of unique and expensive food. Often you can skip that item altogether or use an alternative to save money.

From Lesson To Action

My Meal Planning & Prep

1) How could meal planning help you reach your health goals or help make reaching your health goals easier?

2) Let's try planning ahead for at least two meals this upcoming week!
What meals would you like to plan?

Example: "I will plan 3 different breakfasts I can rotate for the next two weeks"

All Meal Ideas

Two Meals to Plan for Next Week!

- 1.
- 2.

3) What will you do to prepare these meals and save money this week?

Example: " I will check my fridge and cupboards for ingredients I already have before planning meals this week."

Lesson 14

Making the Most of Meals Away From Home



Making the Most of Meals Away From Home

Restaurants, fast food chains, gas stations, and grocery stores provide on-the-go meals and snacks. There are many reasons to eat out, and these meals can be tasty, fun, and easy. But, they can also be higher in calories and carbohydrates, and have fewer nutrients than the food you make at home. Below are some tips to keep in mind to make sure that you enjoy your food and support your health when you eat away from your home.

5 Tips for Eating When Not at Home



1. Go For Grilled

Choose grilled over fried to help lower the calories and fat in a meal. For example, having a grilled chicken sandwich at a restaurant instead of a fried chicken sandwich will reduce the total fat and calories in a meal.



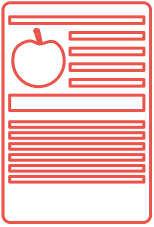
2. Add In Color

Colorful fruits and veggies add nutrients to your food. Try a side salad, fruit cup, mixed vegetables, apple slices, or coleslaw. You can ask to add veggie toppings on pizza, sandwiches, burritos, or any meal when dining out. This can be a great way to have more veggies in your diet while having all the foods you love.



3. Be Mindful of Portions

Large meal sizes are often why eating out means higher calories per meal. When choosing your meal, pause to think about how hungry you are and think about how much your body is asking for at that moment. Sharing a dish with someone or saving half for a later meal is also a great way to help cut down on portion size while also saving money.



4. Check Out the Label

Reading the nutrition labels can help you learn about what is in the meals at your favorite restaurants. This gives YOU the power to choose what you would like to eat while still thinking about your taste, health, time, and budget. You can request nutrition info at many popular food chains or find it on their websites and menus. Always check the amount of carbs, fiber, and sugar per serving!



5. Think About Drinks

Focus on water, seltzers, or no sugar-added teas. High sugar drinks such as soda, sweet tea, energy drinks, flavored coffee, or milk drinks can quickly increase the sugar and calories in your meal.

Build a Balanced “On-the-Go” Meal

You may need to grab quick snacks on the go. The best snack options are those that pair together carbohydrates and either protein or fat.

Below are some easy on the go snack or mini-meal ideas. These are quick and can often be found at gas stations or quick-marts:

- Greek yogurt + unsalted nuts + banana
- Celery sticks + peanut butter + trail mix
- Beef jerky + orange + carrot sticks
- Hummus + pretzel pack + celery sticks
- Light butter popcorn + almonds + pear
- Apple + cheese stick + whole wheat crackers
- Hard boiled egg + grape cup + granola bar
- Cottage cheese + whole wheat crackers + grape cup



Fast Food Swaps

Fast food chains are often thought of as unhealthy, but they can provide us with a quick meal or snack when needed. Luckily, it is now easier to get a fast food meal that gives you both a boost of nutrition and convenience at the same time.

Check out these simple swaps to boost your health on-the-go:

- Swap fries → **apple slices**
- Swap large meal combos → **small meal combos**
- Swap fried chicken → **grilled chicken**
- Swap beef → **lean protein such as chicken or beans**
- Swap large sodas → **small zero sugar sodas**



Managing Blood Sugar On The Go

The main thing to consider when eating away from home is the total number of carbohydrates you are eating. In the lesson on protein you learned how protein and fiber help stabilize blood sugar. Always pair the carbs (bread, potatoes, etc.) with a lean protein and veggie. Doing this is an easy way to help keep your blood sugar stable.

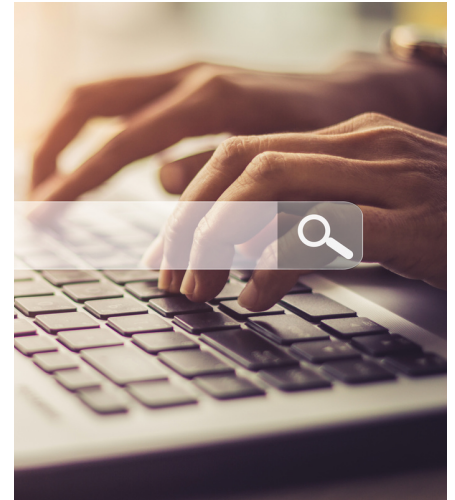
If you are traveling for a long period of time, remember to pack your equipment to test your blood sugar while away from home. Especially where food choices may be more limited, it is useful to see how these foods affect your blood sugar so you can take action to stabilize it when needed.

From Lesson to Action

What are some of your favorite meals when eating out? Try finding the nutrition labels for your favorite meals online. This will help you make informed choices when dining out.

Steps for Finding Nutritional Info

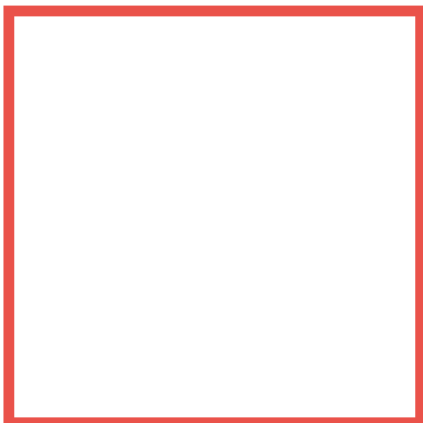
1. Google the restaurants name (i.e. Chipotle)
2. Look on the main website for a tab that reads "Nutrition". This will contain a menu with all the nutrition facts on each item.
3. If there is no "nutrition" tab, try searching for the restaurants name + nutrition and see if information can be found that way. The main website is your most trustworthy source.
4. We do not recommend trusting nutrition information from just any website, so make sure you're on the restaurant's website.



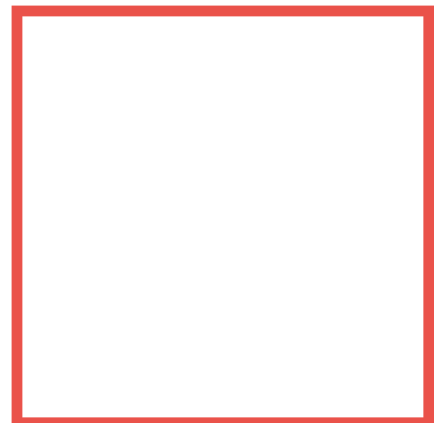
What is one swap you could make while eating out to add more fruits and vegetables to your day?

What are 1-2 healthy snacks that you may be able to find at a quick-mart or gas station?

1



2



Lesson 15

Understanding Your Food Triggers





There are many reasons why we eat the food we eat. We become familiar with certain foods based on the people and places surrounding us and our life experiences. Some foods make us feel happy and loved, maybe because they remind us of a good memory. We eat other foods purely out of habit, and others we crave only when feeling stressed.

Knowing what triggers your food choices is important in reaching your health goals. This lesson focuses on some common reasons behind why you might reach for certain foods and also gives you tips on how to change those patterns.

Love and Food

For most people and cultures, food is a source of security, love and comfort. We bring food to events of celebration and of grief. We connect with our family and friends over meals. Sharing food together is a way to nourish the mind, body and soul.

You may find that the people in your life show their love through buying and giving you food. They may often plan get-togethers centered around food. That food may not always meet your personal health goals. In these moments, it can and will be hard to say no. You may choose to eat the food to avoid hurting someone's feelings.

Communication is key. Try and be open with your loved ones about your new personal health goals. Suggest trying out a new restaurant with healthier options the next time you get together. Ask if they would want to try out some new recipes with you. It's important they know how much their support means to you and how excited you are to make these lifestyle changes.

If your family and friends are not ready to hear about your health journey and/or accommodate your needs, you can bring your own healthy food option to the party, accept a smaller portion, or order your own entrée off the menu.



Stress

Did you know that stress causes our bodies and brains to want foods higher in sugar, fat, and salt? You are not alone if you always head to the candy aisle, reach for your favorite bag of chips, or dig out the ice cream from the freezer when you are stressed. Even though our body seems to want these foods during stressful times, they have negative effects on both our mental and physical health.

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Having a stress relief plan is important because it can keep you on the right track toward better health. A stress-relief plan might look like:

- **Going for a walk or exercising**
- **Taking quiet time or a break from what you are doing**
- **Deep breathing or meditating (by yourself or using an app)**
- **Practice reframing negative thoughts in a journal**
- **Taking a nap**
- **Connecting with a friend**
- **Doing something fun and joyful**

When we have more stress relief tools in our toolbox, we can rely less on food for comfort.

Habits

“I always have pizza on Friday nights.”

“I have a donut at 3pm because my energy is low.”

“I start my morning with coffee and sugar.”

“I always snack when I watch TV.”

Much of our daily food routine is based on habits more than anything else. Sometimes our habits do not support our long-term health goals, so making changes to those habits is important.

To break a habit, you have to identify it first and then determine what can replace that habit. It may take a few tries to test out what works best for you.

Remember, changing a habit will likely not be successful if you always feel like you're depriving yourself. For example, instead of cutting out pizza night entirely and eating only a salad, try enjoying one slice of pizza with a side salad.



Seeing or Smelling Tempting Food

Food cravings are often triggered by the sight or smell of a specific food. You might see a cookie on the shelf at the grocery store or a bowl of candy on a coworker's desk and instantly want some. If you walk by a fast food restaurant when hungry, the smell of French fries may pull you right in.

One of the best ways to avoid tempting moments is to keep these foods out of sight. Skip the cookie and chip aisle in the grocery store. Walk the long way to the bathroom to avoid your co-worker's candy jar. If you always see your favorite fast food restaurant on your way home from work, try a different way home. Since we know that avoiding these moments is not always possible, try these tips:



Set a timer for 20 minutes to see if the craving passes. Distract yourself with a conversation, quick task, or a short walk. If you still have the craving after your timer goes off, go enjoy the tempting food in moderation.



Take some deep breaths and smell the food that is tempting you. Smell is a key sense of taste so smelling the tempting food for a few moments may help satisfy your craving.



If you are hungry, pair a portion of the tempting food with a protein or fiber-filled food. For example, enjoy $\frac{1}{2}$ (instead of all) of a cupcake with a low-sodium cheese stick on the side.

Feeling Lonely and Bored

When feeling sad, lonely, or bored, it is common to turn to food for comfort or stimulation. And most people do not turn to raw broccoli when they are feeling down. Similar to our stress response, foods that are high in sugar, fat, sodium, and calories often make us feel better. In moments like these, foods have a negative impact on our health if consumed in excess.

If you often snack when you are bored, try writing down a list of things you can do in those moments to help you avoid overeating. Having something in your mouth like chewing gum can be a good distraction, as it replicates the feeling of eating.

If you are sad or lonely a lot, then you may need additional support. Connecting with a friend, a family member, a counselor, or your health plan's nurse case manager can help you find strategies to support your mental health.



The Lifeline hotline is here to help you!

Call the Friendship Line anytime, day or night, 7-days a week at 1-800-971-0016. Their staff and volunteers are there to assist you.

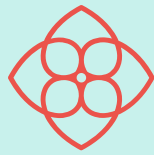
From Lesson To Action

It is time to reflect on your current food triggers, habits, and stressors.

In the box below, write one habit that you would like to change so that it better supports your health journey & one step you can take today to improve that habit!

Here are some common unhelpful triggers. Circle ones that you have in your life , and consider replacing with a helpful trigger!

Unhelpful Trigger	Helpful Trigger
Ready-to-eat, high-fat snacks like cookies and chips	Pre-cut fruits and vegetables in the front of the refrigerator
Comfy chair in front of the TV	Sneakers kept next to the door
Serving dishes on the table	Smaller plate
Family/friends wanting you be inactive with them (ex. watch tv)	Family/friends joining you in a healthy lifestyle change (ex. walking together)
Nothing to do all day	Make a to-do list with new things you want to try
Family/friends pressuring you to eat high-calorie foods	Bring a healthy dish to family/friend gatherings



Nourished^{Rx}

Food is health, food is care.
Food is healthcare.