



your health & well-being

Healthy Eating

Most people know that healthy eating is important. But what does that really mean? It means BALANCE, eating a variety of foods from the basic food groups: meat and meat substitutes; dairy; fruits and vegetables; grains, such as breads and pasta; and a limited amount of fats and sweets.

Keep these key points in mind:

- When you're trying to develop new habits – whether it's healthy eating, getting more exercise, or quitting smoking – you have a better chance of success if you plan ahead.
- Knowing **why** you want to eat healthier can help you make changes in your eating habits. Write down your reasons as a reminder later on if you get discouraged.
- Start with small, short-term goals that you can reach more easily.

Support from family and friends can help you succeed in eating healthier. Let them know what you're trying to do and ask for their help.

Where to begin?

Be aware of what you eat, and also what you may not eat enough of. To start doing this:

- Keep a food diary of everything you eat and drink for one week.
- Take note of serving sizes.
- Check that you eat a variety of foods from each of the food groups over the week.
 - Pay attention to serving sizes. A serving of cereal is usually 1 ounce, or $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup for most cereals. Instead of a big bowl of cereal and milk, have 1 to 2 ounces of cereal with a sliced banana and a small glass of juice. Try low-fat or nonfat milk or soy milk instead of whole milk.
 - Add fruits or vegetables to each meal. A serving is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a cooked vegetable or 1 cup of salad greens. Try adding lettuce and tomato or grilled veggies to your sandwich, use tomato sauce on your pasta, add a side salad to your entrée.
 - Continue with your food diary and set a weekly goal for yourself – a salad instead of french fries, vegetables on your pizza, or bring fruit or a yogurt to work every day.

Make healthier choices when you shop

Healthy eating starts with smart food shopping.

- Plan ahead and make a list.
- Don't shop when you are hungry.
- Include some healthy snack foods and treats on your list.
- Include healthy convenience foods, such as cut-up, bagged, fresh vegetables.
- Read labels and shop healthy. The outer aisles of the store are where you most often find the fresh foods – meat, produce, and dairy. Plan to shop more in those outer aisles, rather than in the inner aisles where you'll find more processed foods.

What to buy

- Choose foods lower in fat, calories, and/or sodium.
- Buy fat-free or low-fat dairy items, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Making sandwiches? Choose plain roast turkey or roast beef rather than processed lunch meat.
- Choose whole-grain breads and crackers, wheat pasta, and brown rice.
- Limit drinks with added sugar, such as soda and sweetened iced tea.
- Pick healthy convenience foods that are ready to eat after you wash them — apples, grapes, or oranges.

Make healthier choices when you eat out

- Choose a variety of vegetables from a salad bar.
- Order foods that are broiled or poached rather than fried or breaded.
- Order sauces, gravies, and salad dressings on the side so you can control how much you use.
- Share appetizers, desserts, and even entrées with your dining partner.
- Order a child's portion or take half of your meal home.

You will find a wealth of information and reliable resources on Healthwise®, the myCIGNA.com online medical encyclopedia. Just log in to the MyHealth page, and look for Healthy Eating in the topic list.



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it's time to feel better



If you have decided to start a healthy eating plan, congratulations! Making that decision is an important step in becoming a healthier person.

march tip of the month

Don't try to make big changes in your eating habits all at the same time. You will likely feel overwhelmed and deprived of your favorite foods and, therefore, be more likely to fail. Start slowly, and gradually change your habits. Try any of the following:

- Use whole wheat bread instead of white bread, and brown rice instead of white.
- Try whole wheat pasta instead of pasta made with white flour. Or try a mixture of the two.
- Use skim (nonfat) or 1% (low-fat) milk instead of whole milk or 2% milk.
- Try low-fat cheeses and low-fat yogurt.
- Add more fruits and vegetables to meals, and/or have fruits and vegetables for snacks.
- Add lettuce, tomato, and cucumber to sandwiches.

On myCIGNA.com this month

Ready to start getting your diet in better balance? You'll find support, ideas, and a great resource in the CIGNA [Feel Better, Look Better](#) online coaching program. Just go to myCIGNA.com, myHealth tab, to get started.



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