

your health

Nutrition Newsletter

Cut the Fat

Let's face it. Americans consume too much fat. Trimming the pork from the federal budget is complicated, but cutting fat from our diets isn't. Here are 6 simple steps:

1. **Use measuring spoons.** Don't pour oil straight from the bottle for sautéing or throw butter on mashed potatoes without measuring first. Measuring promotes awareness. You'll find it easier to stay within your daily fat allowance if you do.
2. **Pick fish, lean meat cuts or white meat chicken or turkey.** Trim all the visible fat from meat and skin poultry.
3. **Grill, broil, bake, steam and microwave foods instead of frying them.** It's okay to sauté, but use minimal amounts of healthy fats like olive or safflower oils.
4. **Choose non-fat dairy products or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese.** You'll save 6 grams of fat by drinking a glass of 1 percent milk instead of whole milk.
5. **Watch for hidden fats in baked goods.** Croissants, muffins, cookies and crackers can be high in fat. Ban trans fats from your diet. Look for trans fats on food labels or partially hydrogenated oil in ingredients list.
6. **Be extra careful when eating out.** Fast food meals and many restaurant meals are laden with hidden fats. Ask the waiter for a low-fat recommendation.

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A Dozen Ways to Get More Fruits and Veggies

You've heard the mantra - get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. In reality, you should aim for five to nine servings. Sadly, the typical American eats only about one serving a day. Think it's hard to work in all those fruits and veggies? First, consider that any of the following equals one serving:

- 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables
- 1 cup of raw vegetables
- 1 small piece of fruit
- 1/2 cup diced fruit
- 4 oz. 100 percent juice

Have you ever measured 1/2 cup of cooked broccoli? It's a quite small amount. Next time you have vegetables, take out a measuring cup and see for yourself. Follow the easy suggestions below and you'll have your fruit and veggie intake up in no time. Along with feeling less hungry, you'll also get loads of vitamins and minerals.

Fruit

- Top your cereal with apples, bananas, berries or raisins.

- Pack an apple, pear or Clementine with you on your way to work.
- Add some berries or sliced banana to your low-fat yogurt.
- Snack on a handful of dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cherries, prunes) mixed with 2 tablespoons of nuts or seeds.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending frozen fruit (berries, bananas, mango) with low-fat milk and yogurt, or with orange juice.
- Mix strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, mangos, grapes or apples into green salads or chicken salads.

Vegetables

- Create veggie-based meals, like winter squash stuffed with brown rice.
- Puree veggies in a blender and add to soups.
- Pop a bag of frozen veggies in the microwave or heat on the stove.
- Use bagged lettuce or spinach for a quick and easy salad.
- Sauté a large zucchini and a container of sliced mushrooms and add to your favorite pasta sauce.
- Pack some raw veggies, like mini carrots, celery strips and grape tomatoes into a plastic bag and bring to work.

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Healthy Eating on a Budget

You know you should improve your diet, but "health foods" always seem to cost more. It is possible to have a healthy diet on a reasonable budget, though. If you follow these tips, you'll discover that you don't have to shop at expensive health food stores to eat well.

Buy in bulk.

- Buy large portions, divide into individual servings and freeze. This works well for lean meats and poultry.
- Buy in bulk at chains like Sam's Club or Costco. They have whole-grain cereals, soups, sauces, pasta, meats, fruits and vegetables at much lower cost than regular markets.
- Many health food stores/co-ops have bulk sections where you can buy rice, beans, oatmeal, nuts and other grains for much less than prepackaged products.
- When available, buy bags of fruit instead of individual pieces by the pound.
- Avoid snack traps like 100-calorie packs. Make your own single-serving portions with mini snack bags.

Cook and store in bulk.

- Make dishes on the weekends that you can eat during the week, or freeze and use at a later date. A big bowl of bean soup or chili can be dinner as well as lunch for the next day or two.
- This saves on expensive frozen dinners or take-out food, trips to the cafeteria and last-minute detours to the drive-through window.

Manage the meat.

- Look for lean meat, poultry and fish on sale, and freeze for later use.
- Trade lean meats for other protein sources sometimes.
- Beans, tofu and eggs are excellent protein choices and good alternatives to pricier animal protein.

Be season-savvy

- Seasonal fruits and vegetables taste best and are often much less pricey than imported out-of-season varieties.
- Look for reduced produce in the supermarket. It is usually only a day or two old, but much less expensive.
- Visit local farmers and ethnic markets, where produce is often cheap and fresh.

Go generic. Generic or store brands offer great savings and typically, are just as nutritious as their costlier counterparts.

Convenience counts.

- If you find your produce often goes bad, try frozen options. Look for products packed in their own juice, or made without salt or sugar.
- Stock up on low-cost staples, such as brown rice, barley, dried or canned beans and whole-wheat pasta. These are great for stretching meals at little cost. Add brown rice to a canned vegetable soup, or mix lean ground beef with rinsed canned beans and whole-wheat elbow noodles.

Plan ahead.

- Menu planning will help you reduce any waste of produce and other fresh foods.
- Research shows that shoppers without a list tend to buy more food, especially of the snacking variety!

Don't go to the store hungry. Being hungry will weaken your resolve. You'll be more tempted to indulge in items that are unhealthy and more costly.

Limit junk food.

- Ice cream, chips, cookies and prepared frozen foods can add up to be the most expensive things in your cart.
- Trade the money you spend on junk for fresh avocados, luscious grape tomatoes and crunchy apples. All are delicious and totally natural.

Follow these simple tips, and your budget-conscious ways may also lead to fewer medical bills and prescriptions. A healthy body is the best bargain of all.

By: Jane Harrison, R.D., HealthAtoZ Nutritionist

American Heart Association Recommends Dietary Changes for Kids

It's a fact: more and more children in the United States are becoming overweight and obese. Because of this problem, the American Heart Association (AHA) updated the Dietary Recommendations for Children and Adolescents in September 2005. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) agrees with these recommendations.

Diet and Exercise

Kids are eating unbalanced meals made up of high-calorie foods, and they aren't exercising enough. Children can easily get their hands on junk food, candy and fried foods, and these poor eating habits follow them into adulthood. Instead of playing outdoor sports, kids are watching TV or playing computer games.

As a result, an alarming number of children are gaining weight and developing weight-related health problems as young adults. Common problems include heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. The AHA reports that 75 percent to 90 percent of heart disease cases are related to these problems. Heart disease is the number one killer in the United States.

Based on Studies

Studies show that heart disease begins in childhood. Young people don't usually think about what they're eating and how it might affect their health, but this attitude needs to change.

The AHA urges children to eat more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fish and lean meats. They also suggest less time in front of the TV or computer screen and more time exercising and playing sports.

Specific Recommendations by the AHA:

- Drink fewer sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Use unsaturated oils (like canola or corn oil) instead of solid fats (like butter or margarine) when cooking.
- Use the portion sizes recommended on labels when serving food.
- Serve vegetables and fruits at every meal.
- Eat fish twice a week.
- Remove the skin before eating chicken or turkey.
- Use lean cuts of meat and reduced-fat meat.
- Limit high-calorie sauces.
- Eat more whole-grain breads and cereals.
- Eat more beans and tofu and less meat.
- Choose high-fiber, low-salt, low-sugar substitutes.
- Balance dietary calories with physical activity.
- Engage in physical activity for 60 minutes daily.
- Limit TV and computer time to less than two hours per day.
- Use non-fat (skim) or low-fat milk and dairy products daily.

Healthier People

Children need help deciding which foods to choose, how many calories to take in and how much physical activity they need. If the entire family works together within these guidelines, we can hope for healthier children who will in-turn, become healthier adults.

By Joe Kim, M.D., HealthAtoZ writer

10 Tips for Improving Your Child's Diet

Are you tired of dinnertime battles and bargaining with your kids to eat "just two more bites" of their veggies? If they prefer soda to milk, or would rather snack on cookies than an apple, all hope is not lost. The following tips can help get your child's diet back on track.

1. **Add healthy ingredients to foods your kids already like.** For instance, add blueberries to pancakes or fruit to their favorite cereal.
2. **Let your kids help** you plan the menu, shop for food and prepare meals.
3. **Steer clear of the potato chip aisle.** Your kids can't eat unhealthy foods if you don't buy them. Without the cookies and chips to tempt them, they'll be more likely to pick up a carrot stick or an orange when they get hungry. Also, keep 100 percent fruit juice on hand and avoid buying colas and sugary drinks.
4. **Have a snack schedule.** Kids like routine and will know when it's time to eat. They'll also be hungry

- enough to eat what you offer them. Try separating snacks into two food groups. Offer cheese with whole-grain crackers, apple slices with low-fat yogurt or peanut butter on whole-wheat bread.
5. **Keep healthy finger foods available.** String cheese, carrot sticks and sliced fruit all make great finger-foods.
 6. **Don't force your kids to clean their plates.** Children should be encouraged to stop eating when they're full. Otherwise, they may overeat and take in too many calories.
 7. **Make it a game for your kids to "eat their colors."** Getting a variety of brightly colored foods helps kids get the most nutrients.
 8. **Don't cut out treats altogether.** If your kids are deprived of a scoop of ice cream or slice of cake once in a while, they'll be more likely to overeat when they do get them. Moderation is the key.
 9. **Keep dinner at the dinner table and not in front of the TV.** Eating while watching TV distracts most people from realizing how much they're actually eating. Meal time is also an important time for busy families to catch up.
 10. **Set a good example.** If you don't eat right, your kids won't either.

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Waging War Against Trans Fat

New York City has become the nation's first city to ban the use of trans fat in restaurants. By July 2007, all cooking oils and spreads must contain less than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving. By July 2008, all foods in City restaurants must have less than 0.5 grams.

Trans fat raises your risk for heart disease. There is a direct link between diets high in trans fat and LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Increased LDL cholesterol increases your risk for coronary heart disease. In addition, trans fat lowers HDL ("good") cholesterol, further worsening your risk for heart disease.

Many foods in restaurants and stores contain trans fat. These include fried foods, baked goods, crackers, candies, salad dressings, shortening and snack foods.

What you can do to avoid trans fat:

- **Check food labels.** Choose foods with 0 grams of trans fat. If a food has less than 0.5 grams, the package will say it contains 0 grams. If a label indicates 0 grams of trans fat, check to see if it lists shortening, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil or partially hydrogenated oil. If it does, that means it does contain trans fat, but less than 0.5 grams.
- **Ask what types of oils and fats a restaurant uses for cooking.** Don't order any foods with hydrogenated vegetable oil.

As of January 2006, all product labels must provide information on trans fat. Many companies have switched to ingredients that don't contain trans fat. Some of the companies and products that have either stopped using trans fat or are planning to include Kraft, Ruby Tuesday, Frito-Lay, KFC and Crisco.

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