



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

## Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine



### Top Ten Tips For a Healthy Diet

Following are tips for consuming a healthy diet to reduce your risk for the most common chronic diseases such as certain types of cancer (e.g. breast, colon, prostate, ovarian, endometrial, and lung (to name a few), heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. When making dietary changes, pick one goal to work on for several weeks before choosing another. Within a couple of weeks, the changes you've made should have become more of a habit thereby making it easier to target another goal to work on. The more of the following recommendations you integrate into your lifestyle, not only will your diet be healthier but your risk for developing the chronic diseases discussed above will be lower. In the event that you already have one of these diseases, making any of the following dietary recommendations may reduce symptoms associated with the disease and may even decrease the progression or seriousness of the disease.

#### FOCUS ON CLEAN AND WHOLESOME FOOD

Choose fresh, seasonal vegetables and fruits, and foods free from preservatives, additives, hormones, antibiotics, and other chemicals. Shop for natural and organic foods as much as possible. Consult the Environmental Working Group Dirty Dozen list, which is updated each year, to find out the most important produce to buy as organic.

#### MAKE YOUR DIET PRIMARILY A PLANT-BASED DIET

The risk for disease is decreased with an intake of 8–10 servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Try many colors and kinds; fresh or frozen. Aim to eat at least 2–3 servings of vegetables for every 1 serving of fruit. Fruits and vegetables that provide the most nutrients:

- Vitamin A & carotenoids:** carrots, sweet potatoes, spinach, collards, mango, cantaloupe, apricots, tomatoes
- Vitamin C:** citrus fruits and juices, kiwi fruit, strawberries, cantaloupe, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes,

cabbages, romaine lettuce, spinach

- Folic acid:** beans, peas, peanuts, oranges, orange juice, spinach, romaine lettuce, and fortified grains and cereals
- Potassium:** potatoes, milk, tomatoes, bananas, oranges, apricots, prunes, beans

Increase consumption of nuts, seeds, and soy products:

- Edamame, soy milk, soy nuts, tofu, tempeh.

#### CONSUME 20-35 GRAMS OF FIBER DAILY

High fiber foods:

- Breakfast cereals—look for 6 g per serving
  - Uncle Sam 10 g per 1 cup serving
  - Kashi (To Good Friends/Go Lean) 8–9 g per serving
  - Muesli 8 g per serving
  - Oatmeal 4g per cup, cooked
- Legumes (1/2 cup) 7–9 g per serving
- Breads (look for whole grains): goal, 3 g per slice
- Fruits/vegetables (most 2–3 g per 1/2 cup serving)
  - Apples/pears with skin 3–4 g per serving
  - Raw blackberries 4.4 g per 1/2 cup serving
  - Broccoli 3 g per 1/2 cup serving
  - Avocado, 1 whole: 13g
  - Artichoke, 1 medium 7g

#### CHOOSE A VARIETY OF WHOLE GRAINS DAILY

- Whole grains provide many vitamins, minerals, and trace nutrients as well as fiber needed to maintain health and decrease the risk for disease (e.g., folic acid, iron, zinc, magnesium, niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, etc).
- Whole grains aid in bowel regularity and stabilization of blood glucose and energy levels.
- Choose whole grain or stone-ground breads, beans, oatmeal, brown rice.

## MODERATE FAT IN DIET (25-35% OF TOTAL CALORIES)

- ❑ Limit intake of saturated fats: cheese, whole milk, regular ice cream, and red meat.
  - 1,800 kcal diet = goal: 14 g of saturated fat or less/day
- ❑ Limit intake of trans-fatty acids: look on labels for hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils; found in hard margarines, commercially fried foods and bakery goods — best to avoid.
- ❑ Choose foods with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats: canola and olive oils, nuts, olive, avocados, fatty fish (salmon).
- ❑ Very low-fat diets may decrease HDL-C and increase triglyceride levels for some..

## INCREASE INTAKE OF OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

- ❑ Reduces risk for heart disease, and reduces inflammation.
- ❑ Sources: fatty fish (salmon, tuna, trout, sardines), walnuts, pumpkin seeds, soybeans, flaxseeds milled (2 tbsp/day or flaxseed oil (1 tbsp/day recommended), eggs from hens specifically fed flaxseed meal.
- ❑ Avoid consuming farm-raised salmon more than 2 times per month.

## MODERATE SALT INTAKE

- ❑ Choose and prepare foods with less salt.
- ❑ 2,400 mg of sodium recommended per day (=1 tsp of salt).
- ❑ Use herbs, spices and fruits to flavor foods.
- ❑ When eating out, choose foods that are grilled or roasted.
- ❑ Read the nutrition facts labels; low sodium foods contain 140mg or less sodium per serving.

## MODERATE SUGAR INTAKE

- ❑ Consume fresh fruits, small amounts of natural sugars such as natural maple sugar, honey, brown rice syrup or natural sugar.
- ❑ A food is likely to be high in sugar if one of the following names appears near the beginning of the ingredient list: corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses raw sugar, sucrose, syrup, table sugar.
- ❑ 1 teaspoon = 4 g of sugar
- ❑ Recommended intake: 6 teaspoons/day (24 g) for 1600 kcal diet; 12 tsp/day (48 g) for 2200 kcals
- ❑ Diets high in sugar may decrease HDL-C levels and increase triglyceride levels.

## CHOOSE FOODS LOW ON THE GLYCEMIC INDEX

- ❑ Avoid processed foods that raise blood sugar levels quickly; blood sugar and energy levels then drop quickly.
- ❑ Combining protein, carbohydrate, and fat at meals and snacks can lead to better control of blood glucose levels and promote satiety.
- ❑ Choose beans and lentils, vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, sweet potatoes, basmati brown rice, apples, pears, cherries, peaches, plums.

## EAT INTELLIGENTLY

- ❑ Establish a pattern of eating regularly.
- ❑ Be mindful of portion sizes.
- ❑ Learn to distinguish between hunger and cravings.
  - Eat at least every 3–4 hours to avoid the build-up of hunger and avoid cravings.
  - Establish a pattern of breakfast, lunch, mid-afternoon snack and dinner.
  - Eating regularly helps keep blood glucose and energy levels more stable.



## Healthy Meal Suggestions: BREAKFAST

### Oatmeal

- one cup oatmeal
- 6 oz. organic milk (or substitute with milk from soy, almond, hemp, oat, rice, cashew, or goat)

Flavoring options:

- 1 Tbsp. fresh ground flax meal
- ¼ cup walnuts -or- almonds
- 1 tsp brown sugar -or- honey -or- stevia
- cinnamon
- raisins

### Bagel & Lox Alternative

- two oz. wild smoked salmon -or- trout
- one Tbsp. organic cream cheese -or- soft goat cheese
- small whole-wheat pita pocket -or- whole-wheat English muffin

### PB & J Sandwich

- nut/seed butter (peanut, almond, cashew, sunflower, etc)
- jelly
- whole-grain bread

### Eggs with Toast

- two scrambled eggs
- one slice whole-grain toast

### Cold Cereal

- ¾ cup high-fiber, low-sugar cold cereal such as Kashi, All-Bran, or Grape-Nuts
- ¼ cup almonds -or- walnuts
- 1 cup organic milk (or substitute with milk from soy, almond, hemp, oat, rice, cashew, or goat)
- ¾ cup berries

You can do half of kid-friendly cereal (e.g., Cheerios, Corn Flakes, Honey Nut Oats) and mix with high-fiber, low-sugar cereal until a taste is developed for the healthier brands.

### Protein-Rich Smoothie

- plain yogurt (Greek style has the most protein and the least sugar)
- favorite fruit (frozen organic berries work great post-season)
- organic milk (or substitute with milk from soy, almond, hemp, oat, rice, cashew, or goat)
- -or- use a small amount of juice (pomegranate, pineapple, orange, etc.)
- add ice for a thick frozen taste

### Cottage Cheese

- 1 cup organic cottage cheese

Flavoring options:

- one Tbsp. flax oil
- ¾ cup berries, chives, or tomatoes

### Yogurt & Fruit

- 8 oz. Greek style organic plain yogurt
- one cup of fruit (berries, banana, or other favorite fruit)
- one Tbsp. flax oil -or- ¼ cup nuts

### BLT Alternative

- 3 slices nitrate-free, organic turkey bacon
- tomato
- avocado
- whole wheat toast
- a piece of fruit

### Healthy Whole-Grain Pancakes or Waffles

- drizzle natural maple syrup
- Add protein to help balance the carbohydrates: add extra eggs -or- a couple of tablespoons of protein powder\* -or- serve with a couple of slices of turkey bacon

\* A pure brown rice protein powder is the least likely to cause allergy problems and is minimally processed.



## Healthy Meal Suggestions: DINNER

### Turkey Sandwich and Side Salad

- 4 slices white turkey meat
- tomato
- Dijon mustard
- 1 slice wholegrain bread -or- small pita
- spinach salad with flax & olive oil dressing on the side

### Stir Fry Bowl

- brown rice
- stir fry: tofu, snow peas, onions, bean sprouts, red pepper over ½ cup

### Bean Burrito and Side Salad

- vegetarian refried beans with shredded cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla
- green salad with flax & olive oil dressing on the side

### Veggie Wrap and Side Salad

- mixed grilled vegetables
- cheese
- choice of healthy wrap
- mixed salad with olive oil & vinegar dressing on the side

### Vegetarian Lasagna and Side Salad

- healthy lasagna basic ingredients
- spinach
- choice of additional veggies (e.g., mushrooms, broccoli, tomatoes, zucchini, red bell pepper)
- salad with flax & olive oil vinaigrette on the side

### Vegetarian Chili and Side Salad

- basic chili ingredients mixed with favorite beans, tomatoes, and onions
- sprinkle with cheese
- whole-wheat pita bread
- mixed salad with olive oil & vinegar dressing on the side

### Healthy Mac & Cheese

- whole-wheat pasta
- real cheddar cheese
- milk
- small broccoli pieces mixed in

### Fish Dish

- 3-4 oz. broiled fish
- steamed broccoli sprinkled with cheese
- baked yams

### Flounder Wrap and Rice

- 4 oz. stuffed flounder wrapped with spinach
- ½ cup brown rice mixed with carrots and zucchini
- sprinkle with feta cheese

### Quinoa Meal and Side Salad

- quinoa
- black beans or edamame
- minced vegetables (e.g., carrots, zucchini, broccoli)
- Greek salad with olives and feta cheese on the side

### Make Your Own Pizza Night and Side Salad

- homemade whole-wheat or store-bought healthy crust
- natural tomato paste
- grated cheese
- vegetable choices for toppings (e.g., spinach, broccoli, mushrooms, eggplant)
- large mixed salad with olive oil & vinegar dressing on the side

### Lentil Casserole

- lentils
- brown rice
- choice of mixed vegetables
- two oz. goat cheese



## Healthy Meal Suggestions: LUNCH

### Basic Sandwich

- leftover baked turkey or chicken -or- Nitrate-free regular turkey -or- soy hotdog
- whole-grain bread -or- bun
- apple slices -or- fresh fruit on the side

### Hummus Wrap

- hummus, lettuce, and tomato in a whole-wheat wrap
- clementine -or- grapes on the side

### Wholegrain Roll Sandwich

- nitrate-free ham, turkey, salami
- slice of cheese, mustard on a wholegrain roll
- soy chips -or- pretzels on the side

\*Using a large amount of lunch meat or hot dogs with nitrates can cause mild to severe symptoms in children and should be minimized. Nitrates are also classified as carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals).

### Fish Burger

- wild salmon -or- water-packed albacore tuna\* mixed with mayo and molded into a patty, then browned in a skillet
- whole-wheat pita
- carrot sticks on the side

\* We don't recommend tuna more than once a week because of the high mercury content

### Burger

- hamburger, turkey burger, or veggie burger
- lettuce and tomato on a whole-wheat bun
- coleslaw and pickles on the side

\*Try a sunshine burger that is made with sunflower seeds, brown rice, and minced, kid-friendly vegetables, and avoid the highly processed soy varieties.

### Salad

- favorite lettuce -or- mixed greens with
- chicken -or- turkey -or- tuna on top
- whole-grain roll -or- crackers on the side

### PB & J Sandwich

- nut/seed butter (peanut, almond, cashew, sunflower, etc)
- jelly (Polaner® All-Fruit)
- whole-grain bread
- cucumbers and celery sticks with salad dressing to dip on the side.

### Chicken or Egg Salad Sandwich

- chicken -or- egg salad
- mayo
- whole-wheat bread
- grapes and carrot sticks on the side

### Salad

- favorite lettuce -or- mixed greens with
- goat cheese, pear slices, and sprinkled walnuts on top
- whole-grain roll on the side

### Pita Pizza

- pizza sauce
- mozzarella cheese
- whole-wheat pita
- small salad on the side

### Bean Burrito

- vegetarian refried beans with shredded cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla
- baked or non-hydrogenated corn chips and salsa on the side.

### Soup

Cook together:

- chicken -or- turkey -or- beef -or- beans
- veggies
- brown rice
- salad and whole wheat bread on the side



## Healthy Meal Suggestions: SNACKS

Nut/seed peanut butter with apple slices -or- celery sticks

¼ cup of nuts with one piece of fruit

1 serving whole-grain crackers with 1 oz. cheese -or- cheese stick

1 serving soy, veggie, or baked potato chips with salsa

A hard-boiled egg

One cup Greek yogurt with apples or berries

Raw almonds (even low-sugar chocolate or carob covered)

Baked or nonhydrogenated corn chips and salsa

Your favorite protein bar (without corn syrup or hydrogenated oils)

Fresh fruit with cheese

½ cup mixed trail mix using nuts, berries, coconut pieces, and high-fiber cereal

Baked pita triangles with bean dip -or- hummus

Raw veggies and hummus

Trail mix: store-bought or homemade with dried fruit and raw nuts such as almonds (high in calcium), walnuts (high in omega-3 fats), cashews (high in magnesium)

Homemade nachos: baked tortilla chips, topped with black or refried beans and covered with mixed shredded cheese, serve with healthy salsa