

NEWtrition

EATING WELL DOES YOUR BODY GOOD NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Web exclusive

With all the nutrition advice flying at us on the news, in advertisements and from friends, how do you know how much of what kinds of nutrients you need each day? [Check out our chart of daily recommendations.](#)

Healthy tailgating

Don't let tailgating, picnics and potlucks throw you off track nutritionally. [Click here](#) for healthy and easy-to-make recipes.



Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet today continues to serve you well into the future — by lowering risks for weight gain and certain diseases. Nutrition's enduring health benefits are a perfect complement to physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.

"We know now that nutrition is one part of a long and healthy life," says Liz Weinandy, MPH, RD, LD, outpatient dietitian in The Ohio State University Medical Center's Department of Nutrition Services. "Without exercise and kicking bad habits, like tobacco use or extreme stress, you can't achieve maximum nutritional benefits."

Good and Gone

Long considered separate concepts, eating to be healthy and eating to lose weight are now one and the same, provided that you're dedicated to being healthy, patient about losing weight and focused on long-term health. A healthy daily diet is packed with energy, protein, vitamins and minerals from all the food groups, including grains, vegetables, fruit, milk, meat, beans and healthy oils. Processed foods should be eaten sparingly. If weight loss is your goal, slow and steady — a loss of no more than

one to two pounds per week — should be your target.

Here's where a healthy diet today influences a healthy weight tomorrow. A nutritious, well-balanced diet gives your body what it needs to function, which includes feeding your metabolism so it efficiently burns calories for energy. While quick-fix diets bring speedy results, they generally result in more lost muscle and water than body fat. To rebalance itself, the body slows down your metabolism, a disadvantage that can continue long after the rapid weight-loss diet ends and in part causes you to regain weight.

Eating Well

Nutritious foods that increase your chance of long-term weight loss also strengthen your body's ability to fend off certain diseases and boost your immune system. Eating for tomorrow's good health is a passionate topic for Robin Gaff, RD, LD, CSO, clinical dietitian for the Department of Nutrition Services. "Diet is a four-letter word! Too many people connect it with food deprivation, something that can set you up for failure and can increase risk for disease. In my counseling sessions, I use the term 'lifestyle changes,' meaning optimized nutrition for lasting improved health and wellness."

The consequences Gaff refers to include immediate short- and long-range health risks, ranging from dehydration, fatigue and irritability to cardiac stress, hair loss and muscle loss. Evidence also suggests that repeated crash dieting increases risk of heart attack.

On the flip side, a nutritious, well-balanced diet can help lower your cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. As an added bonus, Gaff adds, "Good nutrition feeds you physically and mentally."

Make the Move

When it comes to reaching or maintaining a healthy weight, the best path is a lifelong combination of eating smarter and moving more. Weinandy stresses that nutrition is only part of the equation. "You need to stay active and make healthy choices. Research shows that someone who's thin but sedentary can be in worse health than someone who's marginally overweight but fit — especially when it comes to cardiovascular fitness."

"It's not always easy to eat healthy and get moving," Gaff adds. "Start slow and set reasonable and obtainable goals. You may not even notice all the benefits right away, but once you make it part of each day, it eventually becomes your lifestyle."

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Change it up

[Click here](#) for simple ways to make a recipe healthier.

Learn how to eat healthy on a [budget](#) and about foods like [garlic](#) and [soy](#) that can improve your health.

Sweet Temptations

You know that ice cream cone is no good for you. But what's going to satisfy that craving without piling on the empty calories? Reach for this chart before you reach for the vanilla fudge ripple.

What You're Craving	What You Could Eat Instead	What You Should Eat Instead
Crunchy, salty potato chips	Crunchy, salty, fat-free pretzels	Julienned veggies for crunch and salsa for dipping
Sweet, high-calorie, high-fat milk chocolate bar	Dark chocolate, which is lower in fat and sugar	Your favorite healthy cereal with skim milk and a sprinkle of dark chocolate chips
Sweet, creamy vanilla ice cream in a large waffle cone	Frozen vanilla yogurt in a bowl	A smoothie: In a blender, mix equal portions of fruit, like peaches, bananas, pineapple or any berry, low- or non-fat vanilla yogurt and low- or non-fat milk. Toss in a few ice cubes and a dash of honey — both optional — and blend until smooth.

Super Natural

Superfood is a term used to describe food with chemical compounds that occur naturally in plants. Superfoods are thought to be especially good for you because of their nutrients and long-term health benefits. Many superfoods are also classified as antioxidants that may help protect cells from damage by creating a sort of force field. Some superfoods appear to boost the body's ability to fend off disease.

Consider adding these to your menu:

Avocadoes

In addition to being a good source of unsaturated fats that help with growth and development of the central nervous system and the brain and being packed with nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and protective, disease-preventing nutrients, avocadoes help the body absorb more fat-soluble nutrients from other foods, such as alpha- and beta-carotene, as well as lutein.



Beans

Loaded with soluble fiber, which helps lower cholesterol, as well as insoluble fiber, which fills you up and helps rid your body of waste, beans (particularly black, pinto, white and kidney) are also a good low-fat source of protein, carbohydrates, magnesium and potassium.



Berries

Berries are packed with antioxidants and are high in potassium and vitamin C. Not only can they likely lower your risk of heart disease and cancer, they are also anti-inflammatory.



In the first-ever study comparing the cancer- preventive properties of berries, researchers at Ohio State's Comprehensive Cancer Center tested seven berry types and found that all seven were about equally effective in preventing the development of esophageal cancer.



Broccoli

A rich source of vitamin A, vitamin C and bone-building vitamin K, broccoli has plenty of fiber to fill you up and help control your weight.

Dark Chocolate

Packed with antioxidants, dark chocolate can help lower blood pressure.



Eggs

Nutritious, versatile, economical and a great way to fill up on protein, eggs also contain 12 vitamins and minerals, including choline, which is good for brain development and memory. However, eggs should be eaten in moderation per the government's Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.



Salmon

Packed with omega-3 fatty acids, salmon lowers heart disease risk, helps arthritis and may possibly help with memory loss and Alzheimer's disease.



Tea (green or black)

Full of polyphenols (a group of chemical substances found in plants), tea is a good source of antioxidants, which may help protect our bodies from premature aging.



Tomatoes

Tomatoes are loaded with lycopene, an antioxidant that reduces the risk of prostate, breast, lung and other cancers, and has heart-protective effects.

