



Healthier Eating in 10 Easy Steps

Is your New Year's resolution to lose weight, have more energy, or just improve your overall health? Incorporate these food tips into your every day life and you may find it much easier to keep your resolutions this year!

1. **Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.** It's best to eat the actual food then relying solely on the juice because you also have the advantage of the fiber, which will keep you fuller longer and promote healthy digestion.
2. **Eat a rainbow.** Throughout the day ensure your food has a variety of different colors. The colors found in different produce can actually indicate the types of nutrients they contain. By eating a rainbow you are getting the various nutrients needed to maintain good health.
3. **Think of your plate as a pie (chart).** Contrary to how food is served at restaurants, meat and grains shouldn't be a majority of your plate. Aim for having $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate filled with fruits or vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate filled with grains or starchy vegetables, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate filled with concentrated proteins, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes and soy. If you are wondering about actual pie, best to have a piece that's less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate, and have in moderation.
4. **Eat more fiber.** You can certainly get this from whole grains, such as whole wheat, brown rice, quinoa, and millet. Remember to get fiber from fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds, too.
5. **Incorporate more good fats in your diet.** Most people in Western society are deficient in omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties and are important for brain, eye, skin, and cardiovascular health. These are found in foods such as fatty fish, flax seeds, walnuts, and grass-fed meats.
6. **Drink enough water.** Part of your daily intake can include broths, herbal teas and diluted juices. A rough guide to determine how much water you should drink in a day is to take your weight in pounds and divide it by two. The number you get is the amount of water in ounces. For example, a 140 lb person should drink about 70 oz of water a day. Of course this will vary based certain factors, such as activity level and climate.
7. **Start reading the back of the box.** Reading the ingredient list is more important than knowing how many carbs or fats you are consuming. If you do not recognize or cannot even pronounce a majority of the ingredients listed, chances are most of what you're eating was synthesized

somewhere in a lab. Also, best to limit foods that have sugar or some type of sweetener listed as one of the first three ingredients.

8. **Stay away from trans-fats and high fructose corn syrup (HFCS).** Trans-fats are usually synthesized fats found in processed foods such as packaged bake goods, crackers and some margarine. Trans-fatty acids have been connected with cardiovascular disease. High fructose corn syrup is a cheap sweetener found in many processed foods, especially soda and fruit drinks. One study found that HFCS can promote high cholesterol, insulin resistance and increased abdominal fat.

9. **Eat local and organic when possible.** Eating local produce supports farmers in your area and is more environmentally friendly. While organic produce are free of chemical pesticides and are better for the environment, buying organic can be expensive. If cost is an issue, limit to purchasing organic produce that normally has the highest pesticide content when grown conventionally. For example, peaches are usually high in pesticides. For a list of the top 10 foods with the highest and lowest pesticide content, check out www.foodnews.org.

10. **Food nourishes the body and the soul.** While food provides us with the nutrition to survive, it is also a part of our culture and social interactions. Therefore, it is important to respect your food and be aware of what you are eating. Savor your food. Notice the taste, aromas and texture. Pay attention to when you feel satiated, and don't eat to the point of physical discomfort or if it contributes to emotional guilt. Try not to eat while standing, on the run, or in front of the TV or computer. Sit at a table and plate your food; actually have a meal. Even better, share a meal with your family, friends or community.