

21 Easy Ways to Improve Your Diet

Eating healthy reduces your risk of heart disease, certain cancers, diabetes, stroke, and other diseases, and lengthens your life.

Tips to Improve Your Diet

1. Have seconds on vegetables. This ensures you eat the recommended daily minimum of 3 to 5 servings. A typical vegetable serving size is ½ cup.
2. Eat whole-grain cereal for breakfast.
3. Top your cereal with fresh fruit. This adds fiber and a healthy dose of vitamins.
4. Order healthy choices when dining out. Request certain foods be baked, not fried.
5. Go easy on regular salad dressing or use low-fat. Four tablespoons of regular dressing contain 60 grams of fat, which is the most adults should consume in a day.
6. Eat fish once a week. The omega-3 fatty acids reduce your risk of heart attack.
7. Choose whole fruit over fruit juice. You'll consume less sugar and more fiber.
8. Add onions to pizza, sandwiches, hamburgers, salads, and chili. They're good for your blood and heart.
9. Educate yourself about nutrition.
10. Drink a full glass of water before and with a meal. You will stay hydrated and be less likely to overeat.
11. Add lentils, beans, kasha, brown rice, and peas to your diet for an added fiber boost.
12. Buy low-fat or fat-free bologna, ham, and other cold cuts.
13. Choose low-fat alternatives when a food craving hits: a low-fat candy bar over a regular one, or baked chips instead of regular.
14. Don't peel apples, pears, peaches, and potatoes. Many of their nutrients and fiber are contained in or under their skins.
15. Buy "healthy," low-salt versions of soup, pasta sauce, and luncheon meats.
16. Drink iced tea instead of soda. Tea contains antioxidants and protects against heart disease and cancer.
17. A 12-ounce can of regular soda contains 10 teaspoons of sugar; diet sodas are sugar-free but contain a lot of chemicals.
18. Read labels of comparable brands and choose those with the least fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
19. Switch from whole milk to 1 percent or skim.
20. Take fresh or dried fruit to work for a midmorning snack.
21. Eat reasonable portions. Healthy foods can cause weight gain by eating too much. ■

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The Recipe Box

Cream of Broccoli Soup

Instead of hot chocolate, chase a winter chill with a steaming cup of cream of broccoli soup.

- 1 cup powdered nonfat milk
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 4 cups cold water
- 2 tablespoons chicken bouillon powder
- 1 to 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1 onion, chopped (about a cup)
- 3 cups chopped fresh broccoli or one 10-ounce package frozen chopped broccoli

Dissolve powdered milk and cornstarch in cold water. Add bouillon powder, basil, onion and broccoli. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer till broccoli and onion are soft, about 5 to 7 minutes.

Makes approximately 6 one-cup servings. Each serving contains approximately 79 calories, 7 grams protein, less than a gram of fat, 7 grams carbohydrate.

Variation: Chop leftover baked potato into soup. Garnish with a light sprinkling of shredded cheddar cheese.

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Quitting Smoking

To quit smoking can be very hard. Why? Nicotine is a very addictive drug which makes the smoker want more. People usually try to quit several times before succeeding - that is okay. The good news is each time someone tries to quit, he will be stronger and closer to quitting for good.

Why You Should Quit

Most people know why they should stop smoking – primarily for their health. Smoking is a key contributing factor for large numbers of deaths from cancer, heart attacks, stroke, and lung disease. Also, low birth weight, premature delivery, respiratory distress syndrome, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) are linked to smoking during pregnancy. Home fires started by smoking materials are responsible for up to 25 percent of all deaths.

Also, chewing tobacco causes cancer of the mouth and throat, and is not any less hazardous than cigarettes.

Identify Your Triggers

For a week, smoke as you normally would, and do your usual activities. Be aware of every cigarette. For every time you smoke, write down your triggers in a journal – date, time, place, who you are with, why you smoked, and how you felt. Be honest.

When you have enough information to identify your triggers, you can stop writing. Answers probably will repeat and you will see a pattern. Review what you wrote and form a plan to avoid those traps.

Prepare Yourself to Quit

Given that smoking is bad for your health, most people do want to quit. If you are one of the 47 million people in the United States who smoke, the steps below may help you quit. Anyone can quit, regardless of age, health, or lifestyle.

- **Prepare for it today.** Set a quit date and stick to it. Plan to quit completely and for good. If you slip, forgive yourself and get back on track. Focus on making it through today – one day at a time. Your success will be influenced by your desire and determination to quit for good.



- **Find support.** Tell as least 10 friends, and take advantage of their encouragement and prodding. Check with your doctor for support. The American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society offer classes and support groups. Employers and health care systems also offer help.
- **Find a substitute.** Find other things to keep your mouth and hands busy — sugarless gum, hard candy, or flavored toothpicks. Try activities such as woodworking, needlework, or playing with fidget toys.
- **Be physically active.** Eat a balanced diet, avoid sugary or fatty foods, and drink at least six glasses of water a day. The average weight gain after quitting smoking is less than 10 pounds.
- **Avoid smoking situations.** Go where smoking isn't allowed—nonsmoking restaurants or a movie theater. Take breaks with nonsmoking coworkers. After eating, take a walk or do the dishes. When you can't avoid a smoking situation, having sugarless gum or a healthy snack nearby can help.
- **Modify your daily routines** if they included smoking. If your coffee break once meant coffee and a cigarette, try walking or reading a book.

When you decide to quit, you most likely will experience withdrawal symptoms, such as headaches, constipation, irritability, nervousness, trouble concentrating, or insomnia. Increased coughing may also occur. But remember, these symptoms will not last and you will be on your way to being smoke-free. ■

Holidays on a Budget

Sometimes we forget that the holidays are about enjoying time and having fun with family and friends. Too many times we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays with the additional stress of overspending.

Tips for Gift-Giving

- **Make a plan and know your limits.** Decide how much you will spend on each person. Then make a list of what you plan to buy. You can get through the stores much faster with a list in hand and are less tempted to buy on impulse.
- **Start early and compare prices.** This will help you find the best deals. Waiting until the last minute leaves you exhausted and less likely to save money. The best time for holiday shopping is October 1 – December 1.
- **Get creative.** Homemade gifts save money as well as are more personal. Most people don't need more "stuff." Gift ideas might include coupons for babysitting, a photo album of family and friends, or a special dish for their family gathering. Other great ideas can be found on the Internet or at your local crafts/hobby store.
- **Spend cash.** Leave your checkbook and credit cards at home. You won't be tempted to use them if you don't have them. Take only as much with you as you plan to spend. Once it is gone, you are finished with your shopping.



- **Start a family gift exchange.** Instead of buying gifts for everyone in your family, draw names. This way you can focus on one or two special gifts. Or for a fun twist, do a white elephant gift exchange.

Tips for Entertaining

- **Have a potluck party.** Invite guests to bring a dish to share while you provide the main dish. A few low-budget ideas that feed a lot of people are pasta or a crock pot full of steaming chili. For more fun, include a few games such as cards, charades, or a board game.
- **Try a wine tasting party.** Have guests bring a bottle of their favorite wine to share, while you provide the food.
- **Cookie exchange.** Have friends bring one dozen of their favorite cookies to exchange with others. When the party is over, everyone takes home several dozens of various cookies.
- **Don't overshop.** Cramming your refrigerator full of festive food is tempting, but most of it will be thrown away. Buy only what you need and use up any leftovers or share with guests.
- **Start your decorating shopping early.** After the holidays is a great time to stock up on decorations for the next year. Many stores offer huge discounts, so take advantage. ■

Awareness Months

October

- Eye Injury Prevention
- Halloween Safety
- Healthy Lung
- Let's Talk
- National Breast Cancer Awareness
- National Dental Hygiene
- National Disability Employment Awareness
- National Domestic Violence Awareness

- National Down Syndrome Awareness
- National Physical Therapy
- National Spina Bifida Awareness
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome [SIDS] Awareness
- "Talk About Prescriptions"

November

- American Diabetes
- Diabetic Eye Disease
- Jaw Joint – TMJ Awareness

- Great American Smokeout – November 17
 - Lung Cancer Awareness
 - National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness
 - National Hospice Palliative Care
 - Pancreatic Cancer Awareness
 - Prematurity Awareness
 - Pulmonary Hypertension Awareness
- December**
- Safe Toys and Gifts

Why Get the Flu When It's So Preventable?

With the flu and cold season starting up again, you can choose NOT to get the flu. However, many people don't, because they ignore simple preventive steps.

First, get a flu shot!

The shot does not give you the flu – it does not contain a living virus. When you are injected, your body reacts as if it has been infected with the actual living virus and makes antibodies that provide immunity against the real virus. These antibodies remain effective only six to nine months, which is why you need to be revaccinated each year. It takes approximately two weeks after being inoculated for a healthy individual to create antibodies, so get your flu shot in October, if possible.

Raise the humidity. The flu bug exists in higher quantities in dry nasal and oral passages, which is one reason why flu epidemics occur in dry winter months. By raising the humidity in your workplace and at home to keep your nasal passages and mouth moist, your body will be better able to flush out the flu bug.

Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze. The best way to sneeze is into a tissue but if you don't have one, sneeze into your elbow to prevent the germs from getting on your hands. If someone else is sneezing near you, turn

your face away or cover your face with your hands.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. When you do wash your hands, use soap and rub them together for 15 to 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use



an alcohol-based hand rub. Also, keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth, and nose as much as possible. Germs are spread this way as well.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. One of the biggest problems in the workforce is people showing up to work who are sick. Your

productivity and the quality of your work suffer when you go to work feeling sick. You also are spreading germs to your coworkers at the same time.

Clean your equipment. If you work in a cubicle or share office equipment with someone else, clean your area with sanitizing hand wipes before you start your work.

And finally – if you are sick, stay home! Use common sense and good judgment – stay home to help stop the spread to coworkers and their families. If you must work around sick coworkers, the next best thing is to limit your contact with common areas such as the break room, cafeteria, or kitchen. ■