

Healthy Meal Planning

Middle Eastern Cuisine

Healthy eating is key to a healthy lifestyle.
Use this guide to help create meals fit for you.



How to Read a Nutrition Label

Understanding the nutrition labels on food can help you decide what food to shop for, what food to eat, and how much you should eat.

Serving size

Most packages have more than 1 serving. Pay attention to the serving sizes of your packaged food. The information on this label is only based on 1 serving.

Fat

Pay attention to how much fat is in a serving; especially saturated and trans fat.

Total carbohydrates

Make sure you're looking at how many grams of carbohydrates are in each serving.

Added sugar

Try to choose foods with small amounts of added sugars. There are many different names for sugar like sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, dextrose, maltose, honey, and others.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (68g)
Amount Per Serving	370
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	6%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 150mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 48g	17%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Total Sugars 13g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 12g	24%
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 0.9mg	4%
Potassium 188mg	4%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Portion Sizes

It's always better to measure out your food, but sometimes you can estimate. Here are some general guides to help you learn portion size.



1 CUP =
about the size
of your fist



3 OUNCES =
about the size
of your palm



1 OUNCE =
about the size
of your thumb

FOCUS: HEALTHY EATING

Think about your favorite food.
What can you do to put a healthy twist on it?

Food Guide

Fruit/Dairy

1 serving - 15 grams carbohydrates

Fruit
 1 ¼ cup strawberries
 1 ¼ cup watermelon
 1 cup cantaloupe
 1 cup blackberries/raspberries
 1 cup cherries
 ¾ cup blueberries
 ¾ cup pineapple (fresh)
 ½ cup grapes
 ½ cup mango
 2 mandarins/cuties
 2 plums
 1 small apple
 1 small orange
 1 pear
 ½ cup kiwi (sliced)
 1 peach/nectarine
 ½ banana
 ½ grapefruit
 ½ cup canned fruit in juice
 2 Tbsp dried fruit

Dairy
 1 cup milk
 6 oz light yogurt
 ½ cup of ice cream

Grains & Starchy Foods

1 serving - 15 grams carbohydrates

¼ of large bagel
 ½ cup couscous (cooked)
 ½ cup of lentils/dahl
 1 chapatti/roti
 1 dosa
 ½ cup of quinoa
 1 small biscuit
 1 slice of white bread
 1 slice of whole-wheat bread
 1 small piece of cornbread
 ½ English muffin
 ½ of hotdog/hamburger bun
 1 roll
 4 inch pancake
 ½ of pita
 1 flour or corn tortilla
 4 inch waffle
 ½ cup oatmeal or grits (cooked)
 ½ cup cream of wheat (cooked)
 ¾ cup unsweetened cereal

½ cup bran cereal
 1 ¼ cups puffed cereal
 ½ cup pasta (cooked)
 ½ cup rice (cooked)
 ½ cup couscous (cooked)
 6 saltine crackers
 6 round butter crackers
 5 whole-wheat crackers
 20 oyster crackers
 3 cups popcorn
 ¾ oz pretzels
 2 rice cakes
 10-15 chips
 ½ cup peas
 ½ cup corn
 ½ cup black beans
 ¼ baked potato (large)
 ½ cup mashed potato
 1 cup winter squash
 ½ cup sweet potato
 ½ cup baked beans
 ½ cup refried beans

Protein

1 serving - 3 ounces cooked or ¼ of plate (about the size of the palm of a hand)

Meat (beef, pork, and lamb)
 Poultry (chicken and turkey)
 Fish and seafood
 Eggs
 Cheese and cottage cheese
 Paneer
 Tofu
 Nut butter or nuts

Non-starchy Vegetables

1 serving - ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw

Artichokes
 Asparagus
 Bean Sprouts
 Beets
 Broccoli
 Brussels sprouts
 Cabbage/bok choy
 Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celery
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Green beans
 Greens (collard, turnip, etc.)
 Jicama
 Mushrooms
 Okra
 Onions
 Peppers
 Radishes
 Spinach (cooked)
 Tomatoes
 Turnips
 Yellow squash
 Zucchini

Fats

1 fat serving=5 grams of fat

2 Tbsp avocado
 1 Tbsp salad dressing
 1 tsp margarine
 1 Tbsp nuts
 1 tsp mayonnaise
 1 tsp butter
 1 Tbsp cream cheese
 2 Tbsp sour cream
 2 Tbsp half & half
 2 tsp tahini
 1 ½ Tbsp coconut milk (canned, thick)
 1 tsp coconut oil

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/meal-plan-method.html>
 Doctors on the medical staffs practice independently and are not employees or agents of Texas Health hospitals or Texas Health Resources.

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Meal Planning

Focus on filling half of a 9-inch plate with non-starchy vegetables, a ¼ of the plate with starchy foods, and a ¼ with lean protein. This is called The Plate Method. It's simple and effective, and you don't need special foods. Draw imaginary lines on your plate, and choose foods you enjoy—in the right amount.

Healthy Eating Is About Balance

Carbohydrates provide energy, but also raise blood sugar (blood glucose). Fats help absorb certain vitamins, but can add calories and raise cholesterol. Protein builds and repairs the body, but can be stored as fat if you eat too much. Ask your doctor or dietitian what a balanced diet means for you.



FRUIT/DAIRY

On the side, you can have a small piece of fruit like an orange or an apple. Or, you can have a small serving of dairy, like milk or plain yogurt.



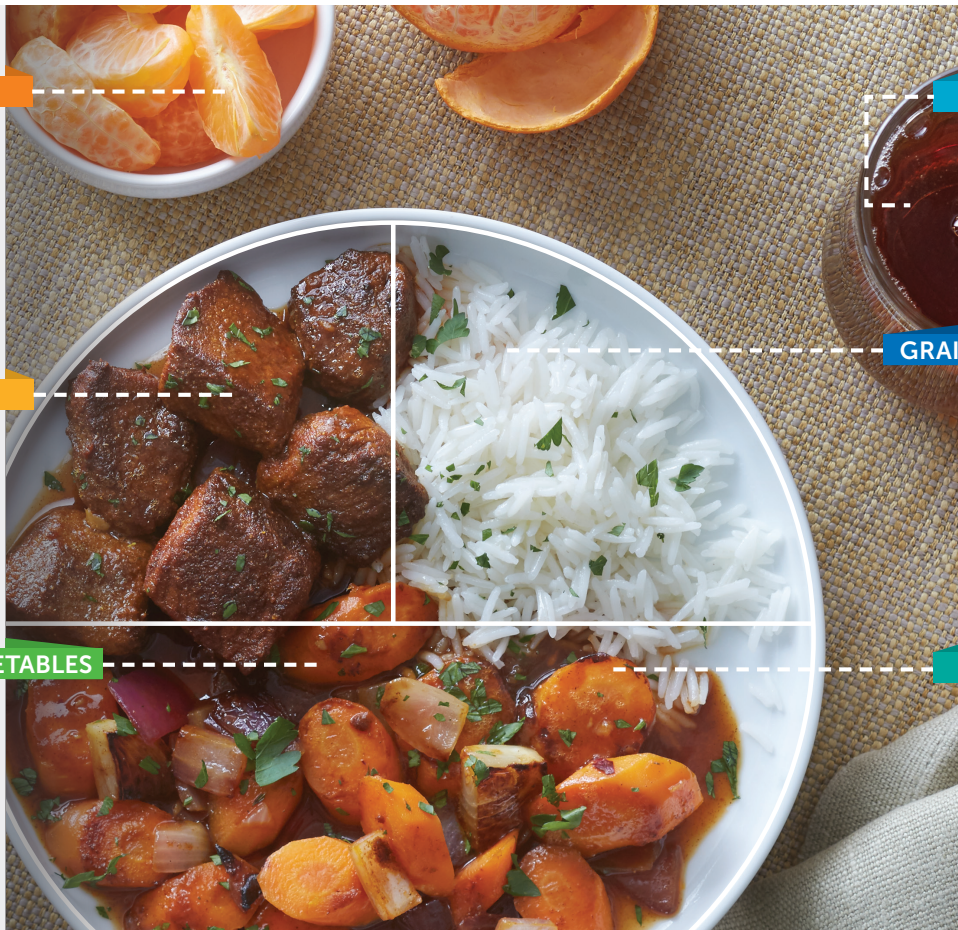
PROTEIN

One-quarter of your plate should be filled with a lean protein, like fish, turkey, lamb chicken, lean beef, eggs, or tofu.



NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES

Half of your plate should be filled with vegetables that are non-starchy, like green beans, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, spinach, salsa, or peppers.



DRINK

Add a low-calorie drink like water, unsweetened tea, or coffee.



GRAINS & STARCHY

The last quarter of your plate can be filled with grains or a starchy carbohydrate, like brown rice, whole-wheat, bread, couscous, cooked beans, or sweet potatoes.



FATS

Choose healthy fats in small amounts. Use oils for cooking. Healthy choices for salads include nuts, seeds, avocados, and vinaigrette.