

# SMART FOOD CHOICES — BUILD A PLAN AND CHECK OFF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL

Your dietary needs are unique to you. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has an entire Web site made specifically to help you plan and track your nutritional choices. Using the *Food Guide Pyramid* and interactive Web site — complete with tips, resources, a planner and tracker, as well as adjustments for your specific needs — you can be sure you are building a healthy eating plan that is right for you.

Keep yourself going strong. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to start building your *MyPyramid Plan*.

Good health can be a puzzle to figure out. One of the most important pieces is maintaining a healthy body — which will also boost your general well-being. Besides building your *MyPyramid Plan* on the USDA's informative Web site, try to follow these tips and suggestions.

## HEALTHIER MEALS

- Substitute a whole grain product for a refined one, for example:
  - Brown rice instead of white rice.
  - Whole wheat bread in place of white bread.
  - Put whole grains in mixed meals, like barley in vegetable soup.
- Make a vegetable-centered meal, like vegetable stir-fry, and add other foods to complement it.
- Have a small salad with dinner every night. Go light on the dressing.
- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers, and onions. Ask for extra veggies.
- To lower sodium intake, prepare more foods from fresh ingredients.

## SAAVY SNACKS

- Keep a variety of fruits on hand — fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.
- Put healthy snacks in a see-through container in the refrigerator.
- Keep the skin on fruits and vegetables to get more fiber in your diet.
- Try a whole grain-snack chip, such as baked tortilla chips.
- Pop some popcorn with little or no added salt or butter.

## SMART SHOPPING

- Read the ingredient list and nutritional facts.
  - Be aware of items that have added sugar: sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, molasses.
  - Be aware of oils, too: partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- Look for “whole grain” on the list of ingredients.
- Choose products with a lower % Daily Value (DV) for sodium.

## VEGETABLES

- Dip vegetables in a low-fat salad dressing.
- Use canned vegetables labeled “no salt added.”
- Add color to salads by adding baby carrots, shredded red cabbage, or spinach leaves.
- Use in-season vegetables for year-round variety.
- Decorate plates or serving dishes with vegetable slices.

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