



Eat a Healthy Lunch

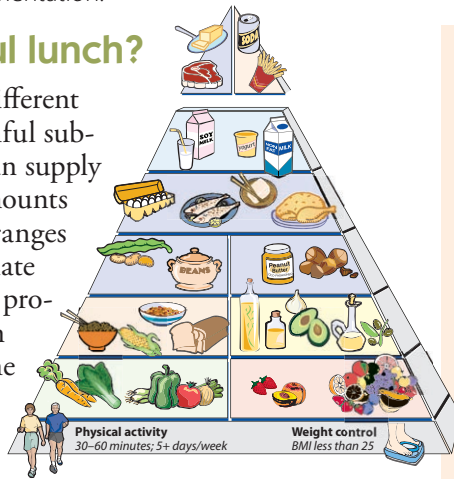
CHALLENGE
Eat healthy lunches this month.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Healthy menu choices," "Pack a healthy lunch," and "Keep brown bag lunches safe."
2. To complete the Challenge, you must eat a healthful lunch on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

What is a healthful lunch?

Different foods contain different nutrients and other healthful substances. No single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts you need. For example, oranges provide vitamin C and folate but no vitamin B12; milk provides calcium and vitamin B12 but no vitamin C. The Harvard Food Pyramid can guide you in making wise food choices.



To make sure you get all the nutrients and other substances you need for health, focus on food groups listed at the base of the pyramid. Choosing a variety within each recommended food group helps you get all the nutrients and fiber you need. It can also help keep your meals interesting from day to day.

Healthy menu choices

It takes just minutes out of your busy schedule to order lunch at your favorite drive-through. Then, paper wrap in hand, you're off to your next destination.

But just what are you eating when you slurp down a shake, nibble a bucket of fries, or munch a cheeseburger? In two words: *junk food*. The shake provides fat and sugar; the fries add fat and sodium. And the burger gives you cholesterol, fat, and sodium.

Too much saturated fat and cholesterol increases your risk for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and other health problems. Excessive sodium can raise your blood pressure. Excessive sugar contributes to diabetes, obesity, and tooth decay. And it doesn't matter whether your high-fat, high-cholesterol, high-sugar, high-sodium meal comes from a fast-food chain, a corner café, or a dine-in steak house.

Healthy eating doesn't mean you can't ever eat at a restaurant. But you should limit how often you eat there – and choose cautiously from the menu. Some restaurants post a list of the nutritive content of their foods. Choose foods in which no more than 30% of the calories come from fat. If the menu displays a heart-smart logo beside some entrees, select one of those dishes. Avoid fried foods. Instead, order salads, chicken or turkey breast deli sandwiches, vegetables and rice, fruit salads, or toasted bagels (hold the cream cheese or butter). And eat smaller portions.

Tips for healthy restaurant dining

Whether you're enjoying a business lunch – or just going out with co-workers and friends, try these strategies:

- Order à la carte or a child's plate.
- When served a large-sized portion, eat just part and save the rest for later.
- Substitute a small salad or fruit for French fries or chips.
- Be the first to order so you are not swayed by what other people order.
- Split an entrée with a friend, and then order an extra side of vegetables or a salad.
- Opt for thin-crust cheese pizza, an all-veggie pizza, or one with half the meat.
- Try something new in the fast-food lane, such as a grilled chicken sandwich, salad, yogurt, or fruit.
- If you're thirsty, order water, unsweetened tea, or 100% fruit juice.
- Eat slowly, and stop eating when you begin to feel full. Focus on enjoying the setting and your companions for the rest of the meal.
- Supersize only if you are sharing the meal with someone.
- If you want dessert, share one dessert among several people at your table.
- When the convenience store is your only option while on the go, select whole-grain snacks, a bean burrito, dried fruit such as raisins, or graham crackers.
- When a vending machine is all that's available, push the button for 100% fruit or vegetable juices, low-fat milk, nuts, or cereal bars.

Read more tips for healthy restaurant dining from the National Restaurant Association: www.restaurant.org

Pack a healthy lunch

Sack lunches can be a good source of nutrition – and they don't have to be boring. Here are some suggestions for packing healthful lunches the whole family will love.

✓ **Make a menu.** It's a lot easier for you to pack lunches if you have the supplies on hand. Even as few as 20 menu ideas could help you create healthful lunches all year long. Great lunch box items to keep on hand include oranges, bananas, carrots, cherry tomatoes, dried fruit, nuts, and whole-grain crackers. Ask your family for suggestions when planning lunch-box menus. If your children suggest peanut butter sandwiches, they're more likely to eat them!

✓ **Focus on the primary vitamins** (A, B, C, and D). Here are a few foods high in specific vitamins:

- **Vitamin A** – Dark green and deep yellow vegetables: Carrots, cantaloupe, apricots, broccoli, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, whole milk
- **B vitamins** – Whole-grain breads/crackers/cereal, nuts, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, almond butter, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, green beans, peas
- **Vitamin C** – Vegetables and fruits (especially citrus): Orange or orange juice, strawberries, kiwi fruit, broccoli, cabbage salad, sweet red or green peppers, sweet potato
- **Vitamin D** – Fortified dairy: yogurt, milk, cheese
- **Antioxidants** – Brightly colored fruits and vegetables: Berries, peppers, tomatoes, melons, carrots

✓ **Mix things up.** Pack chili on Monday, apple chunks and granola with yogurt on Tuesday, veggie-kebobs on Wednesday, a burrito and pepper rounds on Thursday, and an avocado-lettuce-tomato sandwich on Friday. To keep the sandwich from getting soggy, pack the sliced tomato separately and add it to your sandwich right before you're ready to eat.

✓ **Think contrast.** Color and variety add an appealing dimension to your lunch. An egg salad sandwich on white bread, a golden apple, potato chips, and apple juice is boring. Instead, pack an egg salad sandwich on whole-wheat or pumpernickel bread, a tart green apple, baked sweet potato chips, and grape juice.

The Lunch Bunch



✓ **Serve familiar foods in unfamiliar ways.** Vary the way you prepare the same food. Carrots can be whole, sliced in rounds, or cut into sticks. Fix celery sticks filled with hummus and dotted with raisins. Fill a sealable plastic bag with olives, grape tomatoes, radishes, and peppers. Substitute low-fat or soy cheese on sandwiches. Replace hamburgers with veggie burgers.

✓ **Plan for treats.** If life isn't pleasurable to you without a treat, then by all means, include one in your weekly menu plan. This doesn't mean you can eat a steady diet of milkshakes, fries, buttery toast, or cheesy burgers. Large quantities of sweets or fats are not healthful. But if you plan for treats and adjust your calorie intake, you can fit them into a healthful diet.

Try one of these delicious – and nutritious – treats: oatmeal cookies, apples with peanut butter, berries, and orange wedges with pecans sprinkled with a little bit of shredded coconut. If you have access to a freezer at work, you can also bring treats like frozen grapes or frozen bananas that have been dipped in honey then rolled in granola.

Keep brown bag lunches safe

Any high-protein food – like deli-style sandwiches, dairy-based foods, and eggs – must be chilled. The best way to do this is to include a frozen icepack in your lunch box. A frozen, individual juice box can also serve as a cold pack.

Invest in a well-insulated bag, container, or lunchbox, and clean it every day. When using paper bags, double bag your lunch. As a general rule, foods should not sit out unrefrigerated for more than two hours. In hot weather (90 degrees F or above), toss unrefrigerated perishables after one hour. Save only shelf-stable items for snacks later.

Try the delicious and nutritious recipes from the Vegetarian Lunch Box: www.vegetarianlunchbox.com





Eat a Healthy Lunch

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate a healthy lunch. You must eat a healthy lunch at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of good health and wellbeing.
3. Turn in your Health Challenge™ form if requested, or enter your completion of this Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month, if applicable. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

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MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>		
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ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>		
ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____	ex. min. _____		

_____ Number of days this month I ate a healthy lunch

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

