



Healthy eating tips the easy way

I'm interested in eating more healthfully and hopefully losing a few pounds, but I don't want to track everything I eat or count calories. Do you have any general tips that could help?

Many people do find that keeping a food log helps them lose weight, but if you're not interested in doing that right now, yes, of course you can take other steps. Here are some tips:

- The Harvard Medical School suggests cutting back on carbohydrates, particularly from sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks and from refined-carbohydrate foods, including many types of bread, cereal, pasta, snack foods, and French fries and other types of fried potatoes. Instead, choose water or unsweetened beverages, and whole-grain foods that offer fiber and other nutrients. Look for at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.

- Pay special attention to portion sizes, even if you're eating something you consider to be good for you. A study recently published in the *International Journal of Obesity* showed that people tend to eat more of a food if it's labeled as "healthy," even if it has the same number of calories as similar options.

- Similarly, don't assume cutting fat is always healthier. Some low- or no-fat food products replace the fat with added refined-carbohydrate

ingredients — not necessarily a benefit. And, research has shown a little fat, such as that in dressings or avocados, helps the body absorb nutrients in leafy greens. Instead, focus on limiting saturated fat and eliminating trans fat, opting instead for unsaturated fats.

- Eat a wide variety of produce, whole grains, and beans and other legumes to get a broad range of nutrients. In particular, choose fruits and vegetables of many colors, especially green, red, yellow, orange and dark purple. The pigments in colorful produce contain vitamins and phytochemicals that are linked with a lower risk of certain cancers and heart disease.

- Incorporate more fish and small amounts of nuts into your diet. They are good sources of protein and healthy fats, and Americans tend to not get enough of them.

- Never shop for groceries on an empty stomach. A study recently published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, a journal of the American Medical Association, provided compelling evidence supporting what you probably already know: People tend to choose more high-calorie foods if they shop when they're hungry. Eat first and you'll be healthier for it.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



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