



HEALTHY LIVING

Toolkit

CONTENTS

Introduction.....4

Dietary Guidelines.....5

Your Healthcare Team.....6

Healthy Lifestyle Choices.....7

Meal Planning.....14

Building Healthy Habits.....26

Nutrition Myths Debunked.....27

Sample Meal Ideas.....30

Meal Planner.....31

Price Tracker.....32

The Healthy Living Toolkit is brought to you by the Florida Medical Association and the FMA Foundation for Healthy Floridians. Content provided by Kristen Hicks-Roof Ph.D., RDN, LDN and the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

INTRODUCTION

As the leading voice of physicians in the state of Florida, the FMA is committed to working with doctors to improve the health of all Floridians.

HERE ARE THE FACTS:

Obesity is an epidemic. Thirty-six percent of Americans are obese and only 36 percent of Floridians are at a healthy weight. One in every three children (31.7 percent) ages 2 to 19 is overweight or obese.

Obesity and being overweight contribute to diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, cancer and strokes. Florida's growing obesity crisis is a growing health care crisis.

Each year, obesity-related diseases (muscle and joint problems, chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, etc.) result in an estimated 400,000 deaths nationwide and \$190 billion in health care costs – nearly 21 percent of all medical spending.

At this rate, by 2030, over half of Florida's population will be obese. This could cost an additional \$91 billion by 2023 (\$73

billion from lost productivity and \$18 billion in costs associated with treating chronic disease).

The FMA is uniquely positioned to help patients and physicians address these health concerns. Our goal is to help reduce chronic disease and promote a healthier Florida. We are assisting Florida's physicians in educating their patients about the long-term benefits of good nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.

This guide is intended to help you and your family make well-informed decisions about diet, nutrition, and everyday behaviors to support better health and wellness. As you review the information, focus on making small changes that fit your lifestyle. Strive to make incremental modifications in your diet and other behaviors to achieve a sustainable healthy lifestyle for the entire family.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are released every five years to reflect the goals of nutrition and health for Americans. The most recent guidelines were released in 2020. These guidelines reflect the vital steps required to piece together a nutritious diet and healthy lifestyle.

Rather than focusing on individual nutrient intake and specific recommendations for carbohydrates, fat and protein, these guidelines promote a holistic approach to achieving long-lasting dietary changes. This toolkit will provide information, tips and strategies to help you implement these guidelines successfully.

Along with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, there is another handy tool to help you make smart nutritional choices at every meal. You may remember the Food Pyramid, introduced in 1991, which displayed each food group with the recommended daily servings. This Food Pyramid was replaced in 2011 with a tool called “MyPlate”. Consider using this helpful resource to ensure that you and your family are consuming the recommended mix of food and beverages from the five food groups: Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Proteins, and Dairy.

THE GUIDELINES:

- Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan. All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, support nutrient adequacy, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount. To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups in recommended amounts.
- Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake. Consume foods low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Cut back on foods and beverages higher in these components to amounts that fit within healthy eating patterns.
- Shift to healthier food and beverage choices. Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups in place of less healthy choices. Consider cultural and personal preferences to make these shifts easier to accomplish and maintain.

View the full guidelines: <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>

YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

Your health and wellness is of utmost concern to all of the healthcare professionals who contribute to your care.

Remember that your healthcare team includes some or all of the people listed below:

- *Primary Care and Specialty Physicians and/or Resident Physicians*
- *Nurse Practitioners and/or Physician Assistants*
- *Nurses*
- *Pharmacists*
- *Registered Dietitian Nutritionists*
- *Therapists (Physical, Occupational, Speech, Respiratory, Recreational, Mental Health)*
- *Social Workers*
- *Technicians and/or Aides*

All of these healthcare professionals can be vital in helping you achieve a healthy, rewarding quality of life. Many of these professionals, particularly Lifestyle Medicine physicians and Registered Dietitian Nutritionists, can help you improve your dietary and lifestyle habits.

If you feel your habits are poor, ask your physician for advice. Some physicians may themselves provide dietary counseling to patients. Others may have internal experts to assist you, and some may want to refer you to a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. If you have been diagnosed with one or more chronic diseases (e.g. Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Disease, Renal Disease), it is highly recommended that you work with your physician and/or a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist to manage your chronic disease(s) most effectively with dietary and lifestyle modifications.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES

Lifestyle medicine is an approach to decreasing the risk and development of chronic disease by improving lifestyle choices such as nutrition, physical activity, stress management, sleep habits, smoking cessation and avoiding alcohol and drug abuse. When you are ready, your healthcare team can provide you with the support you need to modify problematic habits and implement healthier choices.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- Don't be afraid to ask your physician for help and/or a referral to see a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.
- Increase your daily physical activity. The recommendation for adults is 30 minutes per day while the recommendation for children is 60 minutes per day. Look for ways to add physical activity into your day - take the stairs, park farther from entrances, add a daily walk, do an outdoor family activity, or plant/maintain a garden.
- Work with a healthcare professional to quit smoking. You are never too old to quit, as smoking increases your risk for serious health conditions, diseases and even death. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit smokefree.gov for free support services.
- Get plenty of sleep. The National Sleep Foundation recommends 7-9 hours per night for adults. Boost your ability to sleep well by reducing screen time (TV, phone, computer), including daily physical activity in your day, adding a relaxing bedtime ritual to your routine (reading, warm bath, meditation), or try a sleep mask.

GEAR UP FOR HEALTHY SHOPPING

Eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables every day can reduce your risk of chronic diseases, such as type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and some types of cancers. It can also play an important role in gastrointestinal health and vision¹.

Most produce is nutrient-dense, packed with vitamins and minerals, low in calories, and a great source of fiber. Not only is it important to get enough fruits and vegetables daily, but eating a wide variety is the key to reaping the benefits of their nutrient power. Maximize your intake by

choosing produce from all different colors of the spectrum!

How much do I need?

The national recommendations (Choose My Plate) vary slightly based on age and gender. Generally, most adults need 2.5 to 3 cups of vegetables and 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit daily.

To learn more about vegetable servings and subgroups, and more information on fruit servings and varieties, visit choosemyplate.gov.

Why do I need variety?

Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and beans, herbs, spices, nuts and seeds are all rich sources of phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are a natural part of plants and are responsible for their many different colors, tastes, and smells. Getting a wide variety of different phytonutrients helps to provide our bodies with protection from cellular damage and can reduce the risk of some chronic diseases 2. To learn more about phytochemicals, antioxidants, and the different colors associated with each product, see ag.ndsu.edu (NDSU Extension Service).

How can I find out what produce is “in season”?

Buying local produce “in season” not only

supports local farmers and producers and saves you money, but also gives you the freshest and tastiest seasonally available choices. Learn which Florida produce is available during every month of the year at freshfromflorida.com.

What if I don’t always have access to fresh produce?

Whether it’s fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% fruit juice, all forms count for good nutrition.



DINING OUT

It can be challenging for busy individuals and families to make on-the-go food and meal choices that are both convenient and healthy. When dining out, whether you choose fast food or fine dining, the choices can be confusing and many of the food options are likely to contain more

calories, fat and sodium than what you might eat at home. Follow these simple tips to make smarter food choices when dining out.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- *Explore the menu options and make a few smart choices. Look for the “light” or “healthy” choices on the menu. Select vegetables for sides instead of fries. Avoid options with words like “jumbo”, “deluxe”, or “super-size”. Skip the cheese and get sauces/dressings on the side.*
- *Many restaurant portion sizes are more than one recommended serving. Next time you dine out, ask your server to place half of your meal into a to-go container to enjoy later, choose an appetizer instead of an entrée, or share one entrée with a dining partner.*
- *Skip sugar-sweetened beverages (soda, sweet tea, sports drinks, flavored juice drinks, energy drinks, and sweetened coffee).*
- *Pick lean cooking methods for your protein (baked, boiled, or grilled versus breaded, fried, or battered).*
- *Slow down and enjoy the taste of your food. It takes 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you’re full, so put down your fork periodically and sip water between bites.*

EATING AT HOME

If you are new to healthy eating or want to improve the quality of your meals, a good place to start is at home. It is much easier to prepare a healthier meal when you are in control of the ingredients. In the past several decades, sales from eating out have surpassed grocery sales (Department of Commerce, 2016). When breaking it down, a typical meal at a restaurant costs approximately \$13, whereas it is possible to cook similar dishes at home for approximately \$3 to \$7. Not only is eating out more expensive, but it also often results in food choices that are less healthy (more calories, fat, and sodium). Eating at home can create a positive environment for you and your family to spend time together cooking and eating nutritious meals.

If necessary, start making small changes to improve the quality and nutritional value of the ingredients you keep at home. Stock up on long-lasting vegetables and store them in a cool, dry place. Potatoes, carrots, pumpkin, calabaza, and sweet potatoes taste great for several weeks after you buy them. Frozen produce is another great option, especially if you are

cooking for one or two. See the Shopping List section for more information about healthier food choices.

Set yourself up for success. Making healthier food choices is easier when you can see them. For example, keep a bowl on the counter stocked with fruit rather

than candy or have pre-cut vegetables or fruits available in the refrigerator, especially on the shelf at eye level.

Eating at home requires that you take the time to maintain a grocery list and shop periodically. While this may seem daunting at first, the end result will be less expensive, healthier meals.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- *Make it a habit to prepare a grocery list, go to the store and have food readily available at home. This may mean weekly, biweekly or monthly shopping. Do what works best for you.*
- *Create a meal plan for the week. Start by selecting a grain, a protein and a vegetable for each meal. Work on basic cooking techniques and work your way up to more complex recipes (see the Shopping List online at HealthyFlorida.FLMedical.org).*
- *Use this What's for Dinner? resource at mealtime.org to plan your meals more effectively.*
- *Choose healthier cooking methods, such as baking, boiling, broiling, grilling, roasting, and steaming.*
- *Frozen meals can be convenient options. Find healthier options by observing these guidelines (300-500 calories, less than 600mg sodium, and over 10 grams of protein). Skip frozen dinners that are breaded/fried or include creamy sauces and gravies).*
- *Use measuring cups and spoons to keep portions under control.*
- *Aim to get your family involved in the process of both preparation and cooking. It is essential to teach future generations basic culinary skills and the importance of healthy eating habits.*
- *Try growing your own vegetables and/or herbs. You don't necessarily need a back yard. Grab a few small- to-medium pots and plant some seedlings. Contact your local Master Gardener or become a Master Gardener yourself. Visit the master garden program at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/> to learn more.*
- *Designate a place to eat and "unplug" from technology. This helps to reduce mindless eating and encourages mealtime conversations.*
- *Have a positive attitude and outlook. You can do this!*

SNACK SMART

Make your snacks count. Instead of empty calories (higher calorie foods or drinks with little nutrition), choose snacks that fill in your nutritional gaps. For example, if you are not eating enough vegetables in a day, choose your favorite vegetable for a snack. If you are lacking in the dairy group, choose a low-fat yogurt. Whatever food group you might not get enough of, snacks are a great way to increase your intake and meet your daily nutritional goals.

One helpful hint is to include snacks in your weekly meal plans. Each week, be sure to keep your personal schedule in mind. Will you be on the go? At home? In the car? Will you need a cooler to keep the temperature of your snacks safe? Schedule your snacks in between meals and in small portions. Snacking smart means not only eating just enough to tide you over until your next meal, but also making a healthy snack or beverage selection. Choosing snacks containing fiber or protein will help to keep you full longer. This may also help you reach your next mealtime without additional, unplanned snacks.



Healthy Snack Ideas

- Low-fat cheese sticks
- Yogurts (especially ones low in fat and/or sugar)
- Roasted garbanzo beans
- Air popped popcorn (season with your favorite herbs or spices)
- Raw vegetables
- Hardboiled eggs
- Whole fruits
- Handful of unsalted nuts
- Combine a variety of veggies to create a power snack. Try raw carrots, broccoli or snow peas with hummus or bean dip. Add whole wheat crackers and your power snack is ready to go! If you have leftover produce from your weekly meal preparation, use them as snacks. Extra bananas? Use them in a smoothie. Whatever combinations you choose, make your smart snack count.

PANTRY STAPLES

A well-stocked pantry makes quick meal and snack preparation easier. Keep a variety of the following foods on hand for simple and fast meals throughout the week.

Proteins: Canned tuna, canned chicken, canned beans (kidney, pinto, black), peanut butter

Vegetables: Stock your favorite canned or frozen vegetables. Green beans, canned tomatoes and tomato sauce are good to keep on hand for simple meals.

Grains: Oatmeal, pasta, rice, quinoa, flour, bread crumbs (choose whole grains for a healthier choice)

Other canned and dry goods: Low-sodium soups and broths, canned or dried fruits, crackers, quick bread mixes (whole grain muffins), etc.

Stock the fridge: With eggs, milk, cheese, fresh fruits and vegetables, bagged salad and condiments like ketchup, mustard, and salsa.

Make your own meals: With freezer foods like ground meat and chicken breasts. Freeze cooked meat and ready-to-cook casseroles for easy and fast meal preparation.

Spices, Seasonings, Flavor Enhancers

Oregano, basil, and parsley are great additions to tomato or Italian-style dishes. Cumin and chili powder are favorites used in Mexican-style dishes.

Other flavor enhancers to keep on hand include vanilla extract, lemon juice, lime juice and pepper.

Keep Food Safe

Clean: Keep cooking and food preparation surfaces clean. Wash cooking utensils between each use. Wash your hands with soap for twenty seconds before eating or preparing food. Wash fruits and vegetables before peeling, cutting or eating. Do not wash meat, poultry, and eggs.

Separate: Prevent cross-contamination by keeping meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods. Bacteria from meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can make you sick. Keep these foods separate at the grocery store, in the refrigerator, and while cooking.

Cook: Use a food thermometer and cook foods to the proper temperature. Use the guide below for internal cooking temperatures. Reheat leftovers to 165°. Bacteria multiply quickly in the “Danger Zone” (between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit). Keep hot foods hot (above 140 degrees).

Cold: Keep cold foods cold (below 40 degrees). Refrigerate foods promptly and follow the “two-hour rule”. Refrigerate perishable foods like meat, poultry, seafood and eggs within two hours of cooking or purchasing. Bacteria multiplies quickly at room temperature and even quicker at higher temperatures. If the temperature is greater than 90 degrees, cut the two-hour rule to one hour. Thaw and marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

Store: Proper storage helps keep your food safe and reduces food waste. Use this guide, www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FY/FY128900.pdf, for proper food storage. Remember, when it doubt, throw it out. You cannot see or smell if a food is unsafe to eat. Never taste food to see if it is safe to eat. The bacteria that causes food-borne illness does not make the food taste bad; you could get really sick.

SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

°F	Food
165°F	Poultry (whole, pieces, and ground), stuffing, combined dishes and leftovers and food cooked in a microwave
160°F	Ground beef, pork, veal, lamb and egg dishes
145°F	Beef, pork*, veal, and lamb (steaks, roasts, and chops) and fish

**Whole cuts of pork (e.g., roasts, loins, chops) also need a 3-minute rest time after removal from the heat source. During these three minutes, the meat’s internal temperature remains constant or continues to rise, which destroys harmful bacteria. Source: FoodSafety.gov*



MEAL PLANNING

Planning ahead can save you time and money at the grocery store.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- Write some weekly meal plans with your schedule in mind. Choose some meals using recipes that are quick and easy to prepare for busy days. Go online to healthyflorida.flmedical.org to view a meal planner.
- Review store ads, and online and paper coupons to help save money.
- Use the whatscooking.fns.usda.gov and freshfromflorida.com websites to find healthy recipes.
- Know your food budget. Meal planning and cooking at home is less expensive than eating out. Meals prepared at home are often healthier, especially if you are preparing recipes low in fat and sodium. Track your food dollars to see how much you are spending and saving.
- Plan to use leftovers. Make double batches of soups and stews setting aside some to freeze for use later. Freeze leftovers in single portions to use for lunch or your own ready-to-eat freezer meals to use throughout the week.
- Pack your meals with fruits and vegetables. Plan ahead to make half of your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Add low-cost options to your meal plan such as brown rice, beans or lentils. These foods are full of nutrients and fiber, which will help to keep you full for a longer period of time.
- Use your meal plans to create your shopping list and stick to it. Remember to check the foods you may already have on hand. A list helps you organize the items you need to buy and helps you avoid impulse buys or unneeded items that can add to your food costs.
- Cook and freeze in large batches. This can help you save money by cooking more at home and having meals ready to heat from the freezer.
- Have a family? Get input from your kids on what they want to eat for the week. Working as a team to come up with meals will encourage them to think about healthy foods, and they will be more likely to eat what you cook that week.

AT THE STORE

Once you have created meal plans and shopping lists, making healthy choices at the store should be easier. Focus on your list and do your best to stick to it. No time to prepare a shopping list? Try to come up with a few meal ideas in your head before entering the store to get an idea of all of the items you will need to purchase. As you become more familiar with your local grocery store, you will feel more comfortable and confident in your shopping routine.

LABEL-READING BASICS

Reading and understanding the Nutrition Facts labels on packaged food products are handy skills to hone to ensure that you are better prepared to make healthy and economic choices. The Nutrition Facts label was recently redesigned and is now required to be prominently featured on all products by 2021. This redesign will make it make it easier to read labels and distinguish between different products. Servings per container and calories per serving must be listed in a larger

SIMPLE TIPS:

- *Eat a meal or snack before you go shopping. Going to the grocery store on an empty stomach can result in impulse shopping and more unhealthy food choices.*
- *Try to focus on shopping the perimeter of the store, where there are fewer processed, packaged foods.*
- *Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season. Buying canned and frozen fruits and vegetables can save money, but watch for added fat, sugar or sodium.*
- *Some foods are good buys year round. Bananas, carrots, potatoes and apples are low-cost options. Use beans to save money on protein foods.*
- *Buy common products in bulk to save money (e.g. rice, beans, cooking oil and frozen vegetables). Be sure you have enough storage space and that you will be able to use the items before they expire.*
- *Convenience foods and single-serving items generally cost more. Use your meal plan to prepare your meals at home. Make your own frozen meals and single-size servings to save money.*
- *Have spare time on the weekend? Take your family out to a farmer's market to purchase some fresh, local produce. Look online to find a market near you.*

font size on the new labels, and there is a new “added sugar” section under Total Carbohydrates. The “added sugar” information will show you whether the food has natural sugar, such as sugar from fruit, or added sugars (sugar, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, syrup etc.). Finally, the updated label will require that Vitamin D and Potassium percentages be listed under Nutrition Facts, since many Americans are deficient in these nutrients. With so much information on a tiny portion of the package, it can be overwhelming to determine exactly what to focus on and what is most important in deciding whether a product is a good choice. Follow these simple steps when reading a Nutrition Facts label:

1. Determine the serving size of a portion and note how many servings are included per container.

- Generally, meals should contain between 300 and 700 calories, and snacks should contain fewer than 200 calories.

2. Recognize that the percentages featured in the middle of the label correspond to the total fat contained in the product (both saturated and

transfat), cholesterol and sodium per serving.

- Look at the Daily Value percentages for these components and try to find foods that contain lower percentages. (low percentage = <5%; high percentage = >20%)

3. Notice the nutrients listed at the bottom of the label (Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron and Potassium)

- Look at the Daily Value percentages for these nutrients and try to find foods that contain higher percentages. (Low percentage = <5%; High percentage = >20%)

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 17g	26%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	13%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 7g	5%

SHOPPING AT CONVENIENCE/ DOLLAR STORES

Over 12% of all United States households are judged to be food-insecure, meaning they have uncertainty or an inability to obtain enough food to meet the needs of all household members (USDA, 2016). Florida has nearly 3.4 million residents who are food-insecure (Feeding Florida, 2016). Whether food insecurity is a concern for you or not, shopping at local convenience stores and/or dollar stores may sometimes be necessary.

Review these tips to help you select foods at these types of stores to maximize nutrition content. Also, see the Shopping List Section for other useful tips on each food group.

- *Canned foods can be great options to add nutrient-rich food to your daily meals (tuna/chicken in water, reduced-sodium vegetables, beans, and fruit in natural juices)*
- *Frozen foods can be used as sides or quick-convenient choices, such as frozen vegetables or fruit or frozen meals (select choices that are 300-500 calories, 10-20 grams protein, fewer than 600 milligrams of sodium).*

- *Grab staple grains (whole-grain options such as rice, pasta, popcorn, crackers or oats).*
- *Choose your proteins wisely (eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, peanut butter, mixed nuts or beef jerky).*
- *Limit “extras” that provide little nutritional value, such as chips, candy, sugar-sweetened beverages or packaged pastries.*

SHOPPING LIST

There are so many wonderful options when selecting your fruits, vegetables, grains and proteins. Use the food lists in this toolkit to explore new food items that you and your family have never tried. Aim for variety within each food category. Each food grouping provides a unique combination of phytochemicals and nutrients.

Fruit & Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables (produce) can easily be split into categories based on color. Each color category represents a different combination of vitamins and minerals. While boosting your intake of dark green and red vegetables is highly recommended, there are nutritional benefits in each color category of fruits

Vegetables

These vegetables pack the most nutrition for the lowest cost.

GREENS

- Bok choy
- Romaine
- Broccoli*
- Mixed salad greens
- Cabbage *
- Mustard greens
- Collard greens*
- Spinach
- Kale*
- Swiss chard
- Lettuce
- Turnip greens*

WHITE/TAN

- Cauliflower
- Onion
- Garlic
- Parsnips
- Hearts of Palm
- Potatoes
- Jerusalem artichoke
- Rutabaga
- Jicama
- Shallot

ORANGE/YELLOW

- Bell peppers
- Sweet potato (yams)
- Calabaza
- Winter squash (butternut, acorn)
- Carrots
- Yellow squash, summer squash
- Pumpkin

RED/PURPLE

- Beets
- Red cabbage
- Eggplant
- Red onion
- Purple cauliflower
- Rhubarb
- Purple yam
- Radishes

STARCHY

- (high carbohydrate content)
- Cassava/Yuca
 - Parsnips
 - Corn
 - Peas
 - Lima beans
 - Potatoes

**If you are taking anticoagulant medicine to help thin blood (e.g. Coumadin®), be sure to ask your physician about these foods because some of them can interact negatively with your medication.*

SIMPLE TIPS:

- *Replace iceberg lettuce with an alternative leafy green such as Mixed Greens, Spinach, Romaine or Kale. Iceberg lettuce contains significantly fewer nutrients as compared to these other lettuce varieties. Individuals taking anticoagulant medicine to help thin blood (e.g. Coumadin®) should ask their physicians about the best lettuce choice for their particular situation.*

- *Remember to eat a variety of vegetables. Our “best” picks are good to start with, but try other produce as well.*

- *Limit starchy vegetables in favor of other choices with lower carbohydrate content. This is particularly important for individuals with diabetes.*

- *Check out local Farmers’ Markets and produce vendors for fresh, ripe, and in-season varieties. It can be easy to get your daily dose of vegetables!*

- *Chop a variety and add them to salads, soups, casseroles, sauces, and more.*

- *If you purchase canned vegetables, be sure to drain and rinse them to get rid of some of the added sodium.*

- *Most varieties of vegetables freeze well. Slice, dice, and chop larger quantities and pack the rest in freezer-safe bags or small containers to use at another time. It saves time and money!*

- *Buy dried beans and peas and soak them yourself! You can save lots of money at the store with just a little extra effort.*

and vegetables. Plant-based foods contain phytonutrients (“phyto” means plant in Greek), which offer an additional boost in nutritional value. Phytonutrients are believed to keep your body working properly and lower your risk for chronic diseases.

Consuming fresh fruits and vegetables is encouraged, but that is not always an option. If that is the case, don’t worry. You can opt for frozen or canned choices. When selecting frozen produce, check labels and choose brands with no ingredients added to the fruit or vegetables if possible. When selecting canned produce, look for low-sodium or no salt added vegetables, and fruit in water. Rinse your canned vegetables with water first to remove excess salt if necessary.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- Add fruits, low-fat milk or yogurt, peanut or almond butter, and ice together in a blender for a nutritious and easy smoothie.
- Don’t overdo dried fruit – it has LOTS of sugar! One serving equals $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. A $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit is equal to a 1-cup serving of fresh fruit.

Fruit

There are no fruits that are “bad” for you. Fruits contain a natural sugar called “fructose”, which is not the same as high fructose corn syrup, a processed sugar. Each fruit provides a unique set of vitamins and minerals, so aim to consume a variety of different fruits.

EXAMPLES OF FRUITS

- Apples
- Apricot
- Avocado
- Banana
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Grapes
- Grapefruit*
- Honeydew
- Kiwi
- Oranges
- Nectarines
- Papaya
- Peaches
- Pear
- Starfruit
- Strawberries
- Tangerine
- Watermelon



EXAMPLES OF DRIED FRUITS

- Apricots/
Nectarines
- Apples
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Figs
- Mango
- Plums/Prunes
- Raisins



*Taking medication?
Ask your doctor about grapefruit.

Grains

A grain can be an excellent source of fiber, depending on the way it is processed. When selecting a grain option, choose whole grains over refined, which have been stripped of several layers of nutrients (bran and germ). Refined grain options include plain white rice, white flour and white bread. As you prepare your own meals, strive to incorporate whole grains, such as the following choices, onto your plate as sides with lean protein and vegetables.



EXAMPLES OF WHOLE GRAINS

- Amaranth
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur
- Cereal (cracked wheat)
- Millet
- Oatmeal, rolled oats, or muesli
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Triticale
- Whole grain barley
- Whole grain cornmeal
- Whole rye
- Whole wheat bread, buns, rolls
- Whole wheat crackers
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Wild Rice

SIMPLE TIPS:

Rice and Other Grains

- **High fiber:** Try for at least two grams of fiber per serving in bread and five grams in pasta.
- **Don't be fooled. Read the label.** Make sure the word "whole" is the very first ingredient listed. "Multi-grain" or "wheat" isn't enough. Just because it looks brown doesn't mean it's whole grain.
- **Start kids off right with whole grains, not white bread and white pasta.** If they're not used to whole grains, mix them in gradually.
- **Buy in bulk and stock up during sales.** Make your own oatmeal because packets cost more and are often loaded with salt and sugar. Buy whole grain bread on sale and save it in the freezer.

Breakfast Cereals

- **Read the nutrition fact label.**
- **Low sugar:** Pick a whole grain cereal with the lowest sugar content.
- **High fiber:** Aim for at least three grams of fiber per serving.
- **Lower sodium (salt):** Look for a cereal with fewer than 210 mg of sodium per serving.

Bread and Pasta

- **Read the nutrition facts:** Look for "whole grain" as the first ingredient.
- **Low sodium (salt):** Pick whole grain bread or pasta with the lowest sodium content.



Protein

There are many different types of animal-based and plant-based proteins. Both have a variety of benefits and can help provide the optimal nutrients your body needs to stay healthy. Animal-based proteins range from lean to medium/high-fat options. It is recommended to consume lean animal-based protein. If you choose to consume animal-based products, aim to consume less than one serving per week of medium/high-fat animal-based protein sources.

An animal-based protein is considered to be a “complete” protein source because it includes all the essential amino acids that your body needs. Research has shown that plant-based proteins can be a healthy alternative, as long as they provide all of the nutrients necessary for optimal health. A majority of plant-based proteins are considered “incomplete”;

LEAN MEATS

- Skinless chicken
- Beef (*tenderloin, top loin, top round, sirloin, flank steak*)
- Cornish hen
- Pork (*tenderloin, top loin, pork chop, ham*)
- Turkey
- Wild game (*deer, elk, antelope, pheasant*)
- Veal

MEDIUM/HIGH-FAT MEATS

- Chicken with skin
- Deli meat (*salami, pepperoni, pastrami, bologna*)
- Lamb (*rib roast*)
- Pork (*bacon, roast, sirloin, spare ribs*)
- Hot dog
- Beef (*brisket, ribs, T-bone steak, short rib, filet*)
- Sausage

however, by combining certain plant-based proteins like legumes and whole grains or nuts/seeds, you can create a “complete” protein.

If you opt to eat deli meat on a regular basis, look for low-sodium varieties. Additionally, try to limit cured meats such as sausage, pastrami, pepperoni, ham and bacon due to the high sodium content. Instead, select a roasted chicken or turkey option that can be sliced for sandwiches or chopped into pieces for salads.

Seafood

Healthy

Fish and shellfish provide protein, are low in saturated fat, rich in many micronutrients, and provide certain omega-3 fatty acids that the body cannot make and are important for normal growth and development.

Twice a week

Women and children should eat two to three servings (8-12 ounces for adults and children over age 10, smaller amounts for younger children) of a variety of fish and shellfish each week. Go to www.epa.gov for specific recommendations.

Variety

Both wild-caught and farm-raised are excellent choices. Florida produces over 80 varieties of wild-caught and farm-raised products.



FLORIDA WILD-CAUGHT

- Catfish
- Crappie
- Flounder
- Lobster
- Pompano
- Red snapper
- Scallops
- Shrimp
- Snook
- Spotted trout
- Tripletail
- Yellowfin tuna

SHELLFISH

- Calamari (squid)
- Clams
- Mussels
- Oysters
- Shrimp

FISH HIGHER IN OMEGA-3S AND LOWER IN MERCURY

- Mackerel, Herring, and Sardines
- Oysters
- Salmon
- Trout
- Tuna—canned “light”

BEYOND THE FILLET

- Grilled fish tacos
- Pollock
- Salmon patties
- Shrimp stir-fry
- Tilapia
- Tuna
- Whiting

Plant-Based Protein

Beans & Peas

Beans and peas (legumes) are unique foods that are considered both a vegetable and a protein source, making them a great substitute for meat. They are also an excellent source of fiber and contain other nutrients such as iron, zinc, potassium, and folate.

Eggs

Eggs are a powerhouse of perfect nutrition. They are loaded with essential vitamins and minerals, packed with protein, and only about 70 calories each. Eggs make a great addition to many nutritious dishes and meals! Check out these great recipes from www.eggnutritioncenter.org.

SIMPLE TIPS:

- *Eggs, beans and nuts are excellent sources of protein and easy to add to almost any dish.*
- *Add nuts to oatmeal, cereal, salads and stir-fries for a healthy, hearty meal. Raw nuts are often cheaper. Roast them for a delicious snack. Nuts stay fresh longer in the freezer.*
- *Whole or cut-up, bone-in chicken can be a money saver. Bake extra and use all week. Buy family-size packs on sale and freeze.*
- *Soak and cook dried beans to save money. Canned beans save time, but rinse them before using.*
- *Combine legumes and whole grains for a complete protein. Examples include: rice and beans, lentils and barley, bulgur with beans or peanut butter on 100% whole wheat bread.*
- *For a meatless meal, use tofu crumbles in place of ground beef when making spaghetti or chili.*

Soy Products

Soy is a high quality, plant-based protein that is often found in foods as a replacement for meat, or to just boost the protein content. Because it is a plant product, soy is low in calories and contains no cholesterol.

Dairy

Dairy is one of the primary food groups included on MyPlate because it is an excellent source of calcium, which helps to build strong bones and aids in the body's absorption of Vitamin D. Many of the foods that are high in calcium fall into the dairy category; however, there are other choices if you are unable or choose not to consume dairy. Other foods that contain high amounts of calcium include: collard greens, kale, soy, sardines, fortified orange juice, fortified milk alternatives and fortified cereals.

RECOMMENDED DAIRY CHOICES

- Milk (non-fat/skim, 1% or 2%)
- Dry milk (non-fat/skim, 1% or 2%)
- Soy milk
- Yogurt (low-fat or Greek)
- Low-fat cheese (colby, monterey, mozzarella, cottage cheese, ricotta, queso blanco, feta and reduced-fat options)

SIMPLE TIPS:

- Try to eliminate whole milk from your diet, since fat-free or low-fat milk provides the same nutritional benefits with a fraction of the calories from fat.
- Dry milk powder plus water make a low-cost substitute for recipes.
- Freeze cheese that starts going bad. Defrosted cheese tastes best melted.
- Don't buy shredded cheese – shred it yourself!
- Substitute yogurt for cream and sour cream in recipes.
- Infants are the exception to this tip:
 - Children under 1 year old should not drink cow milk or soy milk. Breast is best, or formula.
 - Children ages 1 to 2 can drink whole cow's milk.
 - Children older than 2 should drink low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk like the rest of the family. For kids who are not familiar with low-fat milk, mix it in gradually.

Dairy Alternatives

As many individuals forgo dairy due to gastrointestinal or personal reasons, there has been a rise in the availability of dairy-alternative beverages. Below is a table comparison of the nutritional values of these dairy alternatives.

NON-RECOMMENDED DAIRY CHOICES

- Cream cheese
- Sour cream
- Butter
- High-fat yogurt
- High-fat cheese (processed cheese slices, mascarpone, cheddar, parmesan, brie and goat cheese)

Diary Alternatives	Skim Milk	Whole Milk	Rice Milk	Soy Milk	Coconut Milk	Almond Milk	Hemp Milk
Calories	83	149	115	105	76	37	70
Protein (g)	8	8	1	7	1	1	2
Fat (g)	0	8	2.5	4	5	2.5	5
Carbohydrate (g)	12	12	23	10	7	7	9
Calcium	315	276	300	300	450	400	300

Fats

Fats are considered to be an essential macronutrient that has many functions. This macronutrient often receives a negative reputation as being “bad for you”; however, there are healthy and unhealthy fat sources. A healthy fat source is considered one that is composed of monounsaturated (MUFA) and polyunsaturated (PUFA) fatty acids. These fat choices are often liquid at room

temperature based on their higher levels of MUFA and PUFA. On the other hand, an unhealthy fat source is composed of high levels of saturated fat (SFA) and trans-fat (TFA). These fat choices are often solid at room temperature based on their higher levels of SFA and TFA. For optimal heart health, strive to consume more healthy fats than unhealthy fats. It is important to remember that fat is not bad. It is good in moderation, as with every other nutrient.

HEALTHIER FAT CHOICES (HIGH IN MUFA/PUFA)

- Canola oil
- Corn oil
- Olive oil
- Peanut oil
- Safflower oil
- Soybean oil
- Sunflower oil

LESS HEALTHY FAT CHOICES (HIGH IN SFA/TFA)

- Butter
- Coconut oil
- Palm oil
- Partially hydrogenated oils
- Pork fat/lard
- Shortening
- Stick margarine

SIMPLE TIPS:

- Coconut oil is very high in saturated fat, even more than butter and lard, and therefore should be consumed in low to moderate doses. Select an oil that is a liquid at room temperature—again an indication that it is high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids, a healthier option.
- Make your own cooking spray with a spray bottle and your favorite oil. You'll use less oil and save money.
- Skip solid and trans fats. If it's solid at room temperature or the label says “trans fats”, beware. Limit these fats for heart health. Remove chicken skin. Eat less beef, pork, cheese, lard, butter, stick margarine, shortening and foods with partially hydrogenated oils.

Footnotes:

(1) Vegetables and Fruits. The Nutrition Source. Harvard School of Public Health. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/>
(2) Phytonutrient Spectrum Comprehensive Guide. 2014 Institute of Functional Medicine.

BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS

Do you feel like you should or need to change one of your lifestyle habits? Good. This is the first step, but just because you feel this way doesn't mean you are ready to begin changing this habit. Next time you think about a behavior you would like to modify, ask yourself, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how ready am I to change this habit or behavior?" (1= no interest at all, 10 = I'm starting today). If you rate your readiness between 1 and 5, perhaps it is not the right time to make a change. On the other hand, if your score is higher, then it just might be the perfect time to start working on that goal.

SET SMART GOALS

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. So don't decide to eat healthier. Decide to eat at least one serving of vegetables every day. Narrowing your focus to one specific habit and setting realistic, measurable expectations is the key to success when it comes to making improvements.

SIMPLICITY IS KEY

We often bite off more than we can chew. Approaching this with an "all or nothing" attitude probably won't garner sustainable, healthy habits. Do you have five habits that you are trying to change simultaneously? Take a step back and focus on one or two.

BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Setting goals and changing habits can be daunting, so partner with family members or friends who are trying to achieve similar

goals. This type of networking can provide support and accountability to motivate and encourage you to stay on the right path. You can also hold yourself accountable by recording food intake and/or physical activity with an app on your phone or a journal.

REWARD YOURSELF

A positive result from your sustained, improved habits can be empowering and motivating. A reward may be as small as a 10-minute nap after a long mid-day walk or a new set of utensils to encourage you to cook at home. Or it could be as large as a new pair of shoes to encourage you to exercise daily. Once you've set your SMART goal, check back in a few weeks or months to see how you have progressed and if you've developed a sustained change. Keep up the good work!

NUTRITION MYTHS DEBUNKED

In order to lose weight, I have to give up all of my favorite foods, especially carbohydrates (grains).

FACT: Nutrition choices should be selected based on balance, variety, and moderation. A healthy adult can consume just about any food s/he desires, however, it is important to control portion sizes and frequency of intake. All food groups provide a unique set of macro and micronutrients that the body can use. It is most important to avoid “supersizing” portions and limiting the consumption of high calorie foods.

I have to avoid all fats in order to be healthy and/or lose weight.

FACT: Fats play an important role in health. They help the body absorb various nutrients, transmit nerve signals, maintain cell membrane structure and support your vital organs. Fats are not created equally. Aim to reduce your consumption of trans-fat and saturated fat in favor of more unsaturated fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated). As with any macronutrient, fat-laden foods, when eaten in excess, may contribute to weight gain.

Coconut oil is the healthiest of all oils.

FACT: Coconut oil is high in saturated fat, higher even than butter. While the saturated fat in coconut oil is mostly medium-chain triglycerides, which may help to boost HDL cholesterol level, this high saturated fat product can also raise your LDL cholesterol and contribute to a higher calorie diet. While there is a lot of media hype extolling the virtues of coconut oil, it is still recommended that you consume it in moderation. There are many other alternative oils that are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids (e.g. canola, peanut, soybean, sunflower and safflower oil).

Foods labeled “natural” or “organic” are better for me.

FACT: The FDA does not regulate the term “natural” on a nutrition label; therefore, these claims can be made on any food product. Organic foods are almost nutritionally identical to conventional foods. The term “organic” describes the pesticide exposure to produce while it is growing in the field. While there has been some research to relate pesticide exposure to chronic disease,

the evidence is inconclusive. In general, non-organic foods with a skin or peel that you remove (e.g. avocados, corn, bananas) are perfectly safe. You may choose to select organic versions of other foods.

Egg yolks can raise your blood cholesterol levels.

FACT: While this was once thought to be true, we now know that the cholesterol from egg yolks does not significantly raise blood cholesterol levels. Therefore, you can eat whole eggs from time to time with no negative consequence.

Gluten-free products are healthier and help you lose weight.

FACT: Unless you have Celiac disease or gluten intolerance, there is no reason to avoid gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye and barley products, all of which provide many nutrients and are high in fiber. If going on a gluten-free diet means you plan to eliminate all white breads and pastas, pastries and refined products, then it makes sense that this would be a healthier option. However, the protein, gluten, does not make a product less healthy.

You should detox regularly to cleanse your system.

FACT: There is no research to support the claim that a detox or cleanse can help to improve digestion and metabolism. The human body is very efficient at eliminating toxins on its own via the kidneys and liver. Instead of spending money on a “detox” product, focus on adding more fruits, vegetables and whole grains to your diet since they are high in fiber and will help improve digestion.

Sugar causes diabetes.

FACT: While sugar can contribute to the development of diabetes, so can many other foods that we consume regularly. Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition that affects the way the body processes blood sugar (glucose). Foods that contain glucose can contribute to raising blood glucose, including grains, starchy vegetables, fruit, milk/yogurt, sweetened beverages and sweets (candy/pastries). To put it simply, “sugar” itself does not cause diabetes, but regular overconsumption of foods that are high in glucose can contribute to the development of diabetes.

Meat is bad for you.

FACT: Every person has different dietary preferences, and each food group (including meat) can contribute to a healthy diet. Animal protein is a complete protein source and contains Vitamin B12, which is only found in animal-based products. Lean animal protein can certainly be a part of a healthy meal plan; however, overconsumption of high-fat processed meats has been linked to the development of some chronic diseases. There are many plant-based protein alternatives that are good for you and can be combined in such a way as to contribute to a healthy diet as well.

Eating healthy is difficult and expensive.

FACT: Eating healthy can be achieved on a budget. It does require some thought, planning and basic cooking skills. Eat healthier on a budget by eating at home, using coupons, buying fruits and vegetables in season, and stocking up on inexpensive staples (e.g. whole grains, legumes, frozen vegetables).

I need to find the best diet for my body type.

FACT: The term “diet” makes most people think about giving up all of their favorite foods, starving themselves, or having just a few food options to choose from. The term “dietary pattern” is sometimes used to describe the quantities, proportions, and combinations of foods, drinks, and nutrients that a person consumes on a regular basis. It is easier to think about modifying your dietary pattern to achieve better health than incorporating a strict set of restrictions that will be difficult to maintain over the course of your life. Rather than recommending one diet over another, this toolkit provides tools and tips that you can use to adopt a healthier dietary pattern to ensure better long-term health and wellness.

SAMPLE MEAL IDEAS



BREAKFAST

- Aim to add a protein + carbohydrate (grain, fruit, vegetable)
- Oatmeal with fruit and/or nuts
- Hard-boiled eggs with fruit
- Scrambled eggs with diced vegetables (onion, tomato, pepper)
- Peanut butter toast
- Fruit smoothie (1 cup dairy, 1 cup fruit+ any extra toppings)
- Breakfast taco (egg, bean, potato, vegetable)
- Mixed nuts (1/2 cup) and piece of fruit
- High-fiber cereal



LUNCH/DINNER

- Pack a punch with fruits and vegetables + your favorite protein.
- Bowl of salad with mixed greens and chicken/turkey pieces
- Wheat tortilla filled with black beans, lettuce, tomato and cheese
- Open-faced sandwich filled with your favorite protein & veggies
- Crackers and cheese slices with fresh fruit
- Low-sodium soup with open-faced tomato and avocado sandwich
- Rice with mixed vegetables and protein (meat, beans, fish)
- Spaghetti squash with marinara and a side salad



SNACKS

- Find options <200 calories, pair a carbohydrate (grain, fruit, vegetable) with a protein.
- Celery sticks, rice cakes, crackers or an apple with peanut butter
- Yogurt parfait (yogurt + nuts/fruit)
- Crackers with cheese or hummus
- Vegetable sticks with dip
- Mixed nuts or trail mix (1/2 cup)
- Mini-container of ready-to-eat food (cottage cheese, tuna)
- Hard-boiled egg(s)
- Any fresh fruit/vegetable
- Bag of popcorn
- Granola bar + piece of fruit

MEAL PLANNER

Downloads of this resource are available at healthyflorida.flmedical.org.

SUNDAY	
MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	

PRICE TRACKER

Downloads of this resource are available at healthyflorida.flmedical.org.

FOOD	STORE	DATE	PRICE

HealthyFlorida.FLMedical.org



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