



Nutrition for Everyone

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Programs & Campaigns

[5 A Day Fruits and Vegetables](#)

The 5 A Day program provides easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables into your daily eating patterns. A Spanish version is also available, [5 al día](#).

[Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls.™ site for Girls](#)

This girl-friendly Web site helps girls understand how weight-bearing physical activity and calcium can be a fun and important part of everyday life.

Also available [for Parents](#).

Healthy Weight

Understanding the Energy Equation

Whether you want to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, it's important to understand the connection between the energy your body takes in (through the foods you eat and the beverages you drink) and the energy your body uses (through the activities you do). To lose weight, you need to use more calories than you take in. To maintain a healthy weight, you need to balance the calories you use with those you take in



Want to find out if you are at a healthy weight? Use our [Body Mass Index \(BMI\) calculator](#).

Getting the Most Nutrition out of Your Calories

There is a right number of calories for you to eat each day. This number depends on your age, activity level, and whether you are trying to gain, maintain, or lose weight. You could use up the entire amount on a few high-calorie foods, but chances are, you won't get the full range of vitamins and nutrients your body needs to be healthy.



Choose the most nutritionally rich foods you can from each food group each day – those packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients, but lower in calories. Pick foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products more often.

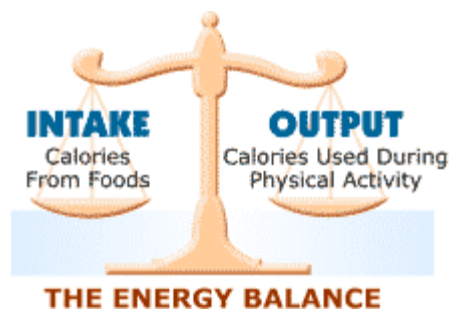
For more information about food choices and appropriate calories, visit the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005](#) and [MyPyramid.gov](#).

Finding Your Balance between Food and Physical Activity

Becoming a healthier you isn't just about eating healthy – it's also about physical activity. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness. It also helps you control body weight by balancing the calories you take in as food with the calories you expend each day.

- Be physically active, at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Increasing the intensity or the amount of time that you are physically active can have even greater health benefits and may be needed to control body weight. About 60 minutes a day may be needed to prevent weight gain.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active 60 minutes every day, or most every day.

Whether you want to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight, it's important to understand the connection between the energy your body takes in (through the foods you eat and the beverages you drink) and the energy your body uses (through the activities you do).



Energy Balance is like a scale. To remain in balance, the calories consumed (from foods) must be balanced by the calories used (in physical activity). To lose weight, you need to use more calories than you take in. To maintain a healthy weight, you need to balance the calories you use with those you take in. No matter which results you want, eating a healthy diet and being physically active can help you reach your goal.

Be sure to visit our [Physical Activity for Everyone](#) section for ideas.

For more information about calories expended in common physical activities see [Table 4. Calories/Hour Expended in Common Physical Activities](#) from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

Some of this information was adapted from the following source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. [Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005](#). 6th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005. and [Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

Related Resources

[Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005](#)

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides advice about how good dietary habits for people aged 2 years and older can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases.

Also available, a brochure for consumers: [Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)  (PDF-255K)

[How to Avoid Portion Size Pitfalls to Help Manage Your Weight](#)

Research shows that people unintentionally consume more calories when faced with larger portions. This can mean significant excess calorie intake, especially when eating high-calorie foods. Here are some tips to help you avoid some common portion-size pitfalls.

[How to Use Fruits and Vegetables to Help Manage your Weight](#)

Learn about fruits and vegetables and their role in your weight management plan. Tips to cut calories by substituting fruits and vegetables are included with meal-by-meal examples. You will also find snack ideas that are 100 calories or less. With these helpful tips, you will soon be on your way to adding more fruits and vegetables into your healthy eating plan.

[MyPyramid.gov](#)

The new USDA food pyramid replaces "one size fits all" with a customizable eating plan. Explore the new pyramid to learn about the food groups and to find additional healthy eating tips.

[Overweight and Obesity](#)

During the past 20 years, obesity among adults has risen significantly in the United States. The latest data from the National Center for Health Statistics show that 30 percent of U.S. adults 20 years of age and older—over 60 million people—are obese. This increase is not limited to adults. The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than tripled since 1980.

[Rethink Your Drink](#)

One way to decrease calorie intake is by decreasing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. This research brief explores the relationship between drinking sugar-sweetened beverages and weight management, and provides suggestion to support the availability and selection of non-caloric beverage alternatives.

[We Can! A Parent Handbook](#)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

We Can! stands for **W**ays to **E**nhance **C**hildren's **A**ctivity & **N**utrition. We Can! is a national education program designed for parents and caregivers to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight. Learn practical tips to help your family find the right balance of eating well and being physically active to maintain a healthy weight.

[Weight-control Information Network](#)

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), Weight-control Information Network (WIN)

General information, publications, and other resources on weight control, obesity, physical activity, and related nutritional issues for the general public, health professionals, the media, and Congress.

For additional resources, see the [Obesity and Overweight Resources](#).

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Please note: Some of these publications are available for download only as *.pdf files. These files require Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to be viewed. Please review the [information on downloading and using Acrobat Reader software](#).

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