

# Take a **NOURISH** Step

Taking small steps can help strengthen your nutrition foundation. It can help you stay strong, have more energy, elevate your mood, think clearer, prevent or control illness, heal quicker, have less pain, and more!

## **N**utrient Rich Foods

Focus on color & variety!

## **O**mega-3s & Healthy Fats

For heart, body, & mind!

## **U**nderstand

How food fuels & affects us.

## **R**ecipes & Meal Ideas

Simple and practical.

## **I**ncrease Protein & Fiber

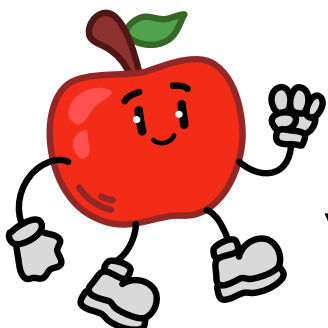
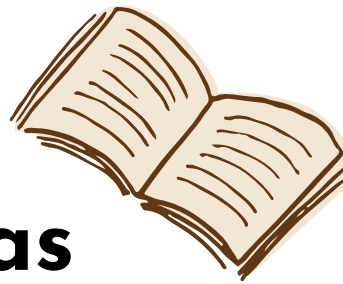
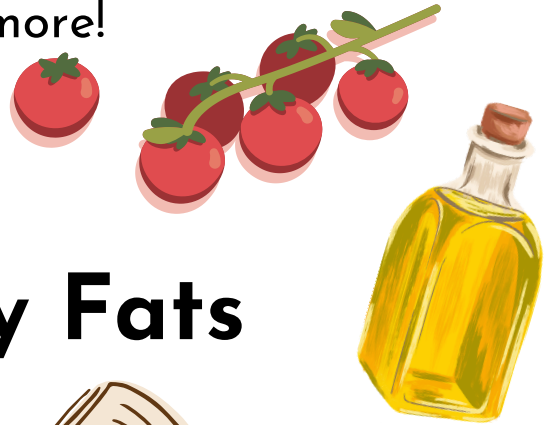
For muscle health, gut health, and blood sugar control.

## **S**ugar & **S**odium Awareness

Understand their impacts and alternatives for each.

## **H**ydrate

To look, think, & feel great!



*If you want more pep, take a **NOURISH** Step!*

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# Take a NOURISH Step

## Nutrient Rich Foods

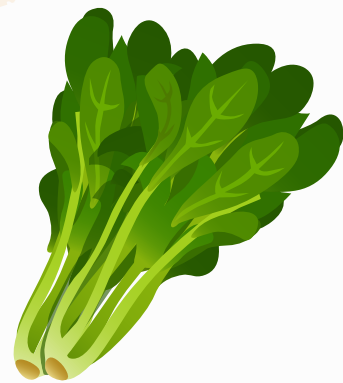
As we age, our nutrition needs change. Generally, our bodies require fewer calories yet more of certain nutrients like calcium, vitamin D, potassium, and vitamin B12. Eating a variety of colorful, whole foods can ensure that nutrient needs are being met.



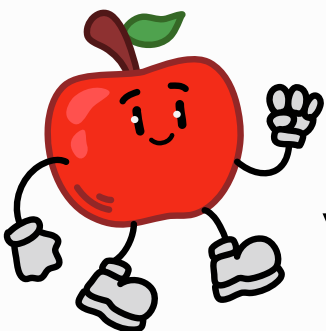
Eat the rainbow for great reward!  
Choosing fruits & vegetables of different colors is a simple way to include a variety of key nutrients in your diet.

Include plenty of WHOLE foods. Frozen or fresh, foods closest to their form at harvest typically contain more vitamins, minerals, & fiber.

Great source of calcium!



Choose in-season produce for the best quality, nutrition, and taste!  
Bonus: it's cheaper, too!



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## Older adults are at higher risk for several nutrient deficiencies.

This is due to changes in nutrient requirements, as well as changes in how some nutrients are absorbed and used by the body. Being aware of key nutrients for your age group (and where to find them) can help you make more informed decisions that protect your body & mind.

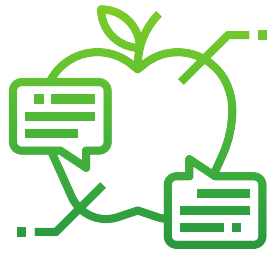
### ENERGY

As we age, we require fewer calories for regular functioning. This means we must meet our nutrient needs with more nutrient-dense foods.



### NUTRIENT DENSITY

To ensure all your nutrient needs are being met focus on the inclusion of more nutrient-dense foods can be a helpful strategy. ***So, what exactly is nutrient density?***



**Nutrient-dense foods and beverages naturally contain vitamins, minerals, and other health-promoting components and have little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.** Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans, peas, and lentils, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and lean meats and poultry—when prepared with no or little added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium— are all nutrient-dense foods.

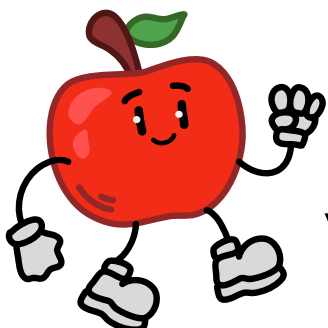
### Want to Learn More about Vitamins & Minerals.

What are they? What do they do? What foods are rich in them and more...

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/vitamins-and-supplements/vitamins-and-minerals-older-adults>

#### For More Information:

<https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/older-adults> and <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-meal-planning-tips-older-adults>



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# Take a **NOURISH** Step

## Omega-3s & Healthy Fats

“Why should I include omega-3s and other healthy fats in my diet?”

- To support heart, brain, skin, & joint health
- To help prevent age-related vision changes

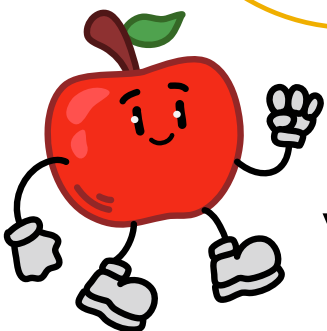


Nuts, seeds, avocados, plant oils, and fish such as salmon and mackerel.

“Which foods contain healthy fats?”

“How can I use them?”

- use olive oil in a homemade dressing
- sprinkle ground flax seeds on cereals/granolas
- add avocado to wraps, sandwiches, & tacos



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# More Information on Fats

## Classifications & Sources

**Saturated Fat:** Solid at room temperature - found in meat, dairy, & baked goods.

**Trans Fat:** Known to be harmful, found in fried foods, baked goods, beef fat, & dairy fat

**Mono-unsaturated Fat:** Healthy fat found in olive oil, avocados, nuts, & seeds.

**Poly-unsaturated Fat:** Healthy fat found in sunflower, corn, & other seed oils, fish, walnuts, and flax seeds.

Learn more at: <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/whats-food/fats>

### Choose mono- and poly-unsaturated fats.

They do not contain cholesterol and are **often liquid at room temperature.** They come from plant sources, such as canola, safflower and corn oils.

Read More about these Healthy Fats in this [Fact Sheet](#).

**To lose weight:** Limit your intake of these fats.

**To gain weight:** Add these types of fats to your meals.

### Did you know...

All fats contain 9 calories per gram vs 4 calories per gram for protein and carbohydrate foods?

## Fat Intake Recommendations

**Saturated:** *less than 10%* of total calorie intake

**Trans:** *less than 1%* of total calorie intake

**Mono- and poly-unsaturated** most or all of your fat intake (25-30% of total calories per day)



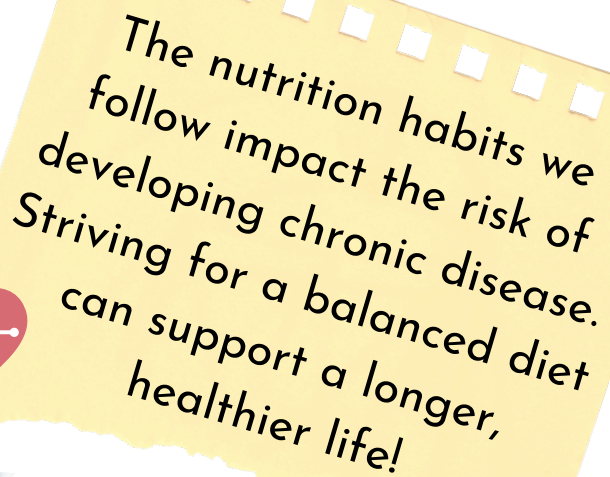
## RECIPES

Want to try some new recipes that limit saturated fat? Visit [MyPlateKitchen.gov](https://www.MyPlateKitchen.gov)

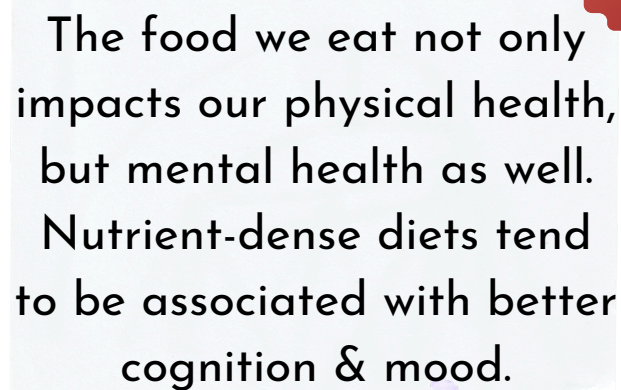
# Take a **NOURISH** Step

## Understand

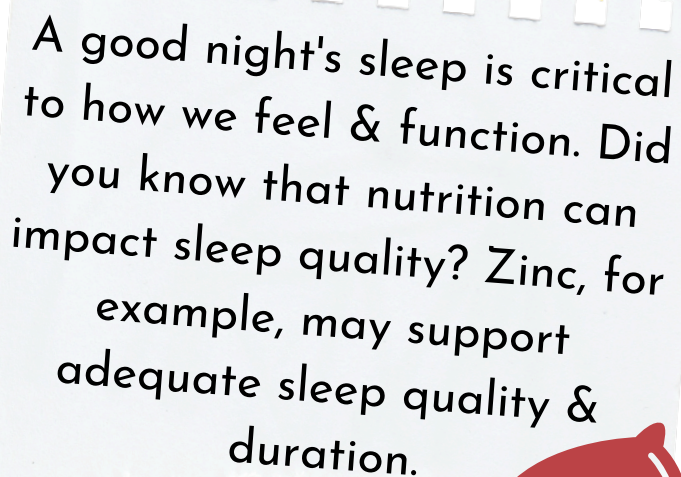
Daily food choices do more than resolve our hunger and fulfill our taste desires. What we eat impacts how we feel, how we think, our energy levels, and our body's ability to prevent disease. Consider these ideas:



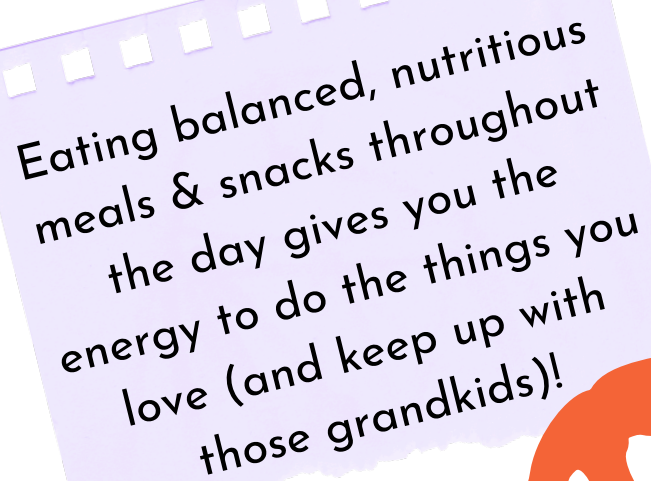
The nutrition habits we follow impact the risk of developing chronic disease. Striving for a balanced diet can support a longer, healthier life!



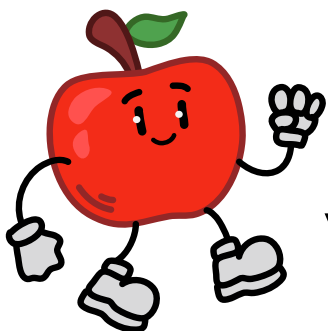
The food we eat not only impacts our physical health, but mental health as well. Nutrient-dense diets tend to be associated with better cognition & mood.



A good night's sleep is critical to how we feel & function. Did you know that nutrition can impact sleep quality? Zinc, for example, may support adequate sleep quality & duration.



Eating balanced, nutritious meals & snacks throughout the day gives you the energy to do the things you love (and keep up with those grandkids)!



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# What's the Difference?



## Cholesterol:

### HDL vs LDL

You may have heard of HDL referred to as “good” cholesterol and LDL referred to as “bad” cholesterol. HDL and LDL are lipoproteins that carry cholesterol in the body, each serving a unique purpose. **Watch this 3 minute video to increase your understanding.**



HDL (high-density lipoprotein) carries cholesterol from the blood to the liver so it can be broken down. LDL (low-density lipoprotein) carries cholesterol through the blood to cells. LDL is also responsible for depositing cholesterol on artery walls and is associated with cardiovascular risk when levels are high.

## Soluble vs Insoluble Fiber



**Insoluble fiber** remains mostly in-tact in the GI system. This form of fiber is notably useful for adding bulk and attracting water to stool. This promotes regularity! Insoluble fiber is found in the skins, stems, and husks of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.

**Soluble fiber**, on the other hand, absorbs water to form a gel. This action is useful for a few things: managing blood sugar, slowing the digestion of other nutrients, keeping you full, and even binding to cholesterol so that it can be excreted!

Soluble fiber is found in legumes, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and seeds.

Watch this 1 minute video to learn more.



# Think Healthy Eating Patterns vs “Diets”

**Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern:** The main types of food in this eating pattern include a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat dairy, seafood, poultry, and meat, as well as eggs, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

**Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern:** Contains more fruits and seafood and less dairy than the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern.

**Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern:** This pattern contains no meat, poultry, or seafood, but does contain fat-free or low-fat dairy. Compared with the Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern, it contains more soy products, eggs, beans and peas, nuts and seeds, and whole grains.

**Learn more at:**

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-meal-planning-tips-older-adults>

## Heart Healthy DASH Eating

DASH is a heart healthy approach that has been scientifically proven to lower blood pressure and have other health benefits. With this flexible and balanced eating plan, you can enjoy plenty of fruits and vegetables, fish, poultry, lean meats, beans, nuts, whole grains and low-fat dairy. There are no special foods or hard-to-follow recipes required.

**Learn more about the DASH Diet and find yummy recipes at**

<https://healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov/>



## Diabetes

Eating well with diabetes doesn't mean giving up your favorite foods, it's about finding the balance between keeping the flavors you love and incorporating the nutrients you need to live well with diabetes.

Simple swaps such as opting for the low-fat versions of cheeses and dressings, choosing lean meats, and using natural sweeteners will all help you meet your health goals—and they'll taste great too!

**Learn more about nutrition and diabetes at**

<https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition>

**Check out the Diabetes Food Hub Recipes**  
<https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/all-recipes.html>





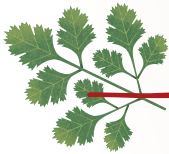
# Take a **NOURISH** Step

## Recipes & Meal Ideas

Preparing meals and snacks to support your mind & body can be fun! The possibilities are endless, and you might surprise yourself with a new favorite dish! Here are some tips to make cooking & meal preparation exciting:



**Get creative with cooking!** Try new techniques and combinations. Bake fresh vegetables with olive oil, herbs, and spices instead of boiling.

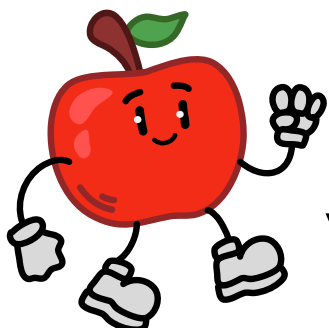


**Grab different groceries!** Finding a new fruit, vegetable, grain, protein option, or spice blend to try each time you shop can spice things up (literally).



Find a new recipe to try! Here are some great resources:

- [Eating Well](#)
- [Snap4CT](#)
- [Eatright](#)
- [Eat Well, Age Well](#)



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# Nutrients of Concern for Older Adults



## Vitamin D

Vitamin D helps calcium work better to maintain strong bones. With each decade, we're able to synthesize less vitamin D from sun exposure - this is why intake is important. Food sources include fatty fish, egg yolks, fortified milks, and fortified cereals.



## Calcium

Not only is calcium important for bone structure and strength, but it functions in nearly every cell of our bodies. ***When too little calcium is consumed, the body breaks down bone to release calcium and maintain blood concentrations of the mineral.*** Calcium is found in dairy products, fortified dairy substitutes, leafy greens, tofu, beans, and nuts.

## Recipe Resources

[Foodhero.org/older-adults](https://www.foodhero.org/older-adults)

<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen> (Recipes for 1 or 2)

<https://gwaar.org/eat-well-age-well> (Recipes for 1 or 2)

<https://www.eatright.org/recipes>



## Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 is essential for brain health, red blood cell formation, and energy production in the body. Certain medications may inhibit absorption, and the ability to absorb this vitamin naturally decreases with age, so it's very important to ensure adequate intake! Vitamin B12 is found in meat, fish, eggs, and dairy. Other sources include supplements and fortified foods.



## Magnesium

Magnesium is important for muscle, bone, and brain health. This mineral also plays a role in sleep quality, which impacts the rest of our body! Inadequate intake, age-related changes in the digestive system, and certain drugs may present a challenge to achieving adequate intake (420 mg/day for men; 320 mg/day for women). Aim to include whole grains, leafy greens, legumes, and nuts/seeds as regular parts of your diet.



# Take a NOURISH Step

## Increase Protein & Fiber

### Protein throughout the day helps muscles stay!

Aim to include a serving of protein at each meal. Choose lean sources and include plant-based proteins, as well.

Protein is the key to maintaining and building muscle. Healthy muscles means being able to move in ways that you enjoy & can help prevent falls.

Including protein with your meals and snacks throughout the day can help you feel full between meals. **20-30 g protein per meal and 12-15 g protein per snack is recommended for best utilization.**

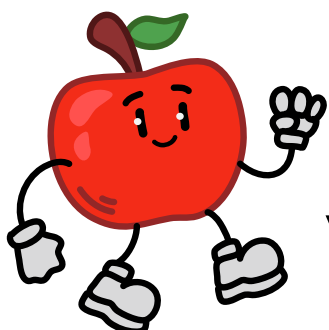
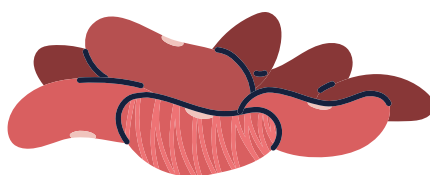
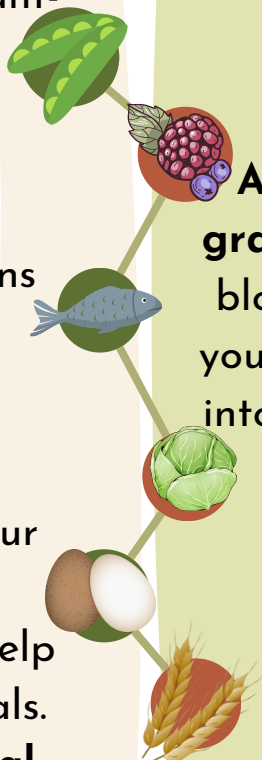
**Fiber** is a key component of digestive health. Not only does it help keep you full, but it keeps you regular in the bathroom.

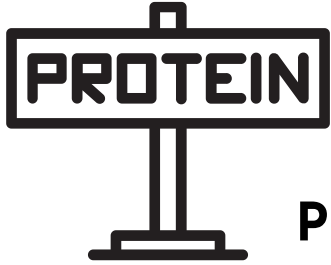
**Adequate fiber intake (20-30 grams per day)** can help regulate blood sugar. Carbohydrates from your food are more slowly released into the bloodstream after a fiber-rich meal.

Current research shows that higher fiber intakes are associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and other chronic diseases.

Beans contain both protein and fiber!

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## Protein Ideas

Good Protein choices include milk, eggs, cheese, meat, fish, poultry, nuts and dried beans or peas.

- **To lose weight:** Choose low-fat sources of protein such as lean meats and low-fat dairy products.
- **To gain weight:** Choose protein with a higher fat content, such as whole milk, whole milk cheese and yogurt.

**Important Note: Our bodies only absorb/use ~25-30 grams per meal so if you need higher amounts daily include 1-2 protein-rich snacks.**

## High Protein, High Fiber Snack Ideas

- Nuts
- Dried fruits, can make trail mix
- Spread peanut or almond butter on toast, crackers or apple slices.
  - Cheese and crackers
- Yogurt topped with dried fruit, granola, or cereal
  - Hard boiled egg
  - Cottage cheese
- Oatmeal w/banana or other fruit
- Hummus, yogurt dip or guacamole with veggies

## Ways to Up Your Fiber Intake



- **Choose whole grains:** most whole grain bread, for example, contains around 4 g fiber per slice, compared to white bread, which has less than 1 g per slice
- **Seed sprinkles:** top your toast, yogurt, oatmeal, or anything else with chia seeds or ground flax seeds. These contain 3-4 g per tablespoon!
- **Don't skip the skin:** After you wash your produce, keep the skin of your potatoes, apples, cucumbers, and others on!



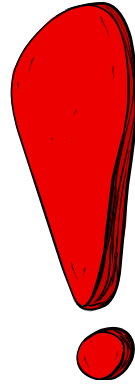
**Learn more about fiber for older adults at:**

[https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition/Nutrition-Needs\\_Fiber\\_FINAL-2.19-FINAL\\_508.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition/Nutrition-Needs_Fiber_FINAL-2.19-FINAL_508.pdf)

# Take a **NOURISH** Step

## Sugar & Sodium Awareness

With moderation, all foods can fit in a balanced diet. However, too much added sugar can displace other nutrients and contribute to inflammation in the body.



Diets high in sugar increase the risk for cognitive disorders like dementia, Alzheimer's, stroke, & various mood disorders.

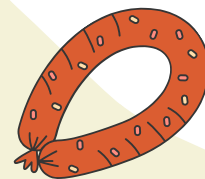
Try to limit **added sugars** to **less than 50 g per day**. Work towards this with small changes. Look for added sugars under the carbohydrate section of nutrition labels. You'd be surprised how many products sneak sugars in!



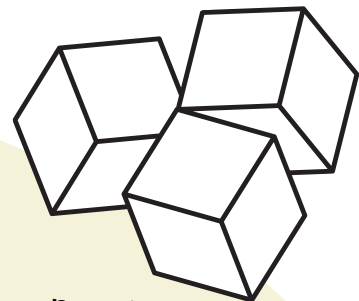
Sodium is an essential mineral for our bodies. However, too much can elevate blood pressure and increase cardiovascular risk.

Be aware of high-sodium foods and work to keep intake under **2,300 mg** per day. High levels of sodium are typically found in foods such as:

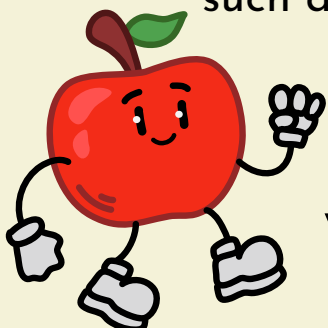
Canned goods and pre-packaged meals



processed meats



meals prepared in a restaurant setting



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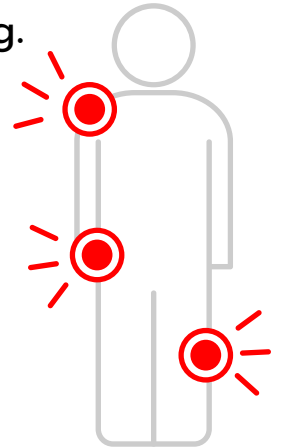
Visit [www.gwaar.org/nourishstep](http://www.gwaar.org/nourishstep) to learn more.

# Sugar, Inflammation, and Disease

Carbohydrates are the fuel that keeps our bodies going. Consuming carbohydrates in the form of whole grains, starchy vegetables, and fruits provides energy in a nutritious packaging.

***Excess added sugar in the diet can displace other important nutrients and contribute to inflammation.***

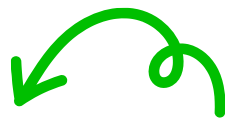
Additionally, high intakes of added sugar are associated with a higher risk of certain chronic diseases (obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and arthritis).



Regular high intake of refined sugars can decrease insulin sensitivity - meaning the body uses glucose less efficiently, and blood sugar is likely to remain elevated. Fructose is one type of sugar, often added to foods in the form of high fructose corn syrup, that's metabolized in a unique way that promotes the formation of fat.

## Common Sources of Added Sugar

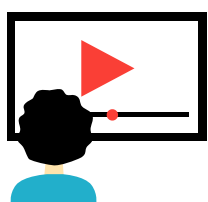
- Soda
  - 39 g/12 oz can
- Canned fruit in heavy syrup
  - 18 g/serving
- Packaged desserts - oatmeal creme pie
  - 26 g/cookie
- Sweetened cereal
  - 15 g/serving



**Learn More About Added Sugar at [this link](#).**

## Simple Swaps

- Unsweetened tea, low-cal flavored water
  - 0 g/12 oz
- Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruit in water
  - 8 g/serving (canned)
- Homemade granola bars
  - 8 g/serving
- Unsweetened cereal or oatmeal with fruit
  - 0-5 g/serving



Watch this animated 2 minute video to understand what happens when we eat sugar (glucose)

# Sodium and Cardiovascular Health

While sodium is essential for many processes in our body, it's very easy to consume excess sodium in today's food environment.

Higher intakes of sodium are associated with elevated blood pressure, which can damage blood vessels over time. Consistently elevated blood pressure is also a risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

Reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease with nutrition starts with an understanding of the nutritional content of foods. Paying attention to nutrition labels and how things like sodium add up throughout your day can help you make more informed decisions.

Watch these short animated videos to learn more

[Blood Pressure Basics](#) from CDC

[Treating High blood Pressure](#) from CDC

## Pay attention to these foods:

- processed meats
- canned soups
- frozen meals
- packaged snacks
- restaurant meals
- cheese
- canned vegetables

## Healthier Seasoning

### Substitutes

- herb-based seasoning
- a squeeze of lemon or lime
- nutritional yeast (bonus: tastes like cheese & is packed with vitamins)
- flavored vinegars
- flavor extracts
- spicy seasoning/sauces



## Sodium & Water

Sodium attracts and retains water in the body, which is one way it contributes to elevated blood pressure. This can also mean retaining "water weight". If you're concerned about puffiness, bloating, or a stubborn few pounds, being aware of your sodium intake may be helpful!

# Take a **NOURISH** Step

## Hydrate

We've all heard it: staying hydrated is important. This is no lie! Water is a crucial part of every cell in our bodies and helps us function at our best (both physically and mentally) when proper hydration is maintained.

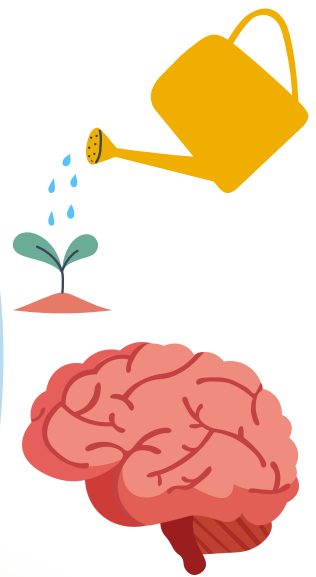
### WHY?

As we age, our sense of thirst declines & concentrating urine becomes more difficult - this means a higher risk for dehydration.

Proper hydration keep joints lubricated and working with less pain and friction.

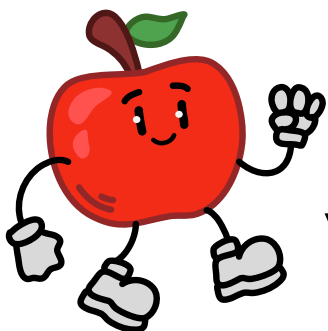
The water in your body helps oxygen & nutrients get where they need to go so you can *feel and look energized!*

Even mild dehydration can impair mood, memory, and overall brain function. **"Hydrate to think straight!"**



### HOW?

Of course, water is a good place to start - but it's not the only way to stay hydrated! Unsweetened tea, low-calorie flavored water, soups/broths, & other foods with a high water content can help meet your needs. These include most fruits, cucumbers, lettuce, celery, and more.



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# Why Water?

You've heard it before: hydration is important. **Water plays a role in every cell in our bodies.** Hydration impacts everything, even how we think! **Watch this 3 minute video to understand the critical role water plays in our bodies.**

Did you know your thirst sensation works less efficiently with age. This means we need to rely on our brains a little more than our mouths. Generally, 7-9 cups of water each day meets average requirements. However, you may require more fluid if you're taking certain medications or are very active. Or, you may even need to restrict fluid intake if you have certain conditions (kidney disease, cardiovascular disease). Be sure to follow your physicians advise.

## Recognize the signs

Knowing what dehydration looks and feels like can ensure you take action when needed.

### Common symptoms include:

- increased thirst
- dry eyes & mouth
- fatigue
- yellow-brown urine
- infrequent urination
- headaches & dizziness
- confusion

## Set yourself up for success

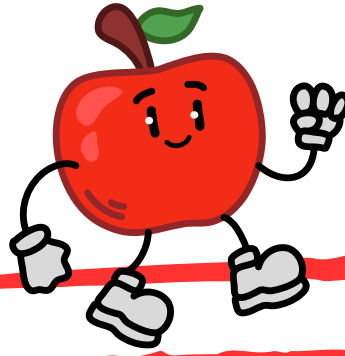
Try to make drinking fluids **easy and fun.**

Carry water everywhere you go, and make a challenge of it! Team up with a buddy to make a friendly competition of drinking a set amount each day!



Learn more about ***Making Healthy Drink Choices*** at [this link](#)

# Take a NOURISH STEP



## A Gateway to Reliable & Fun Nutrition Information

Are you interested in action-based steps for understanding and Improving your nutrition?

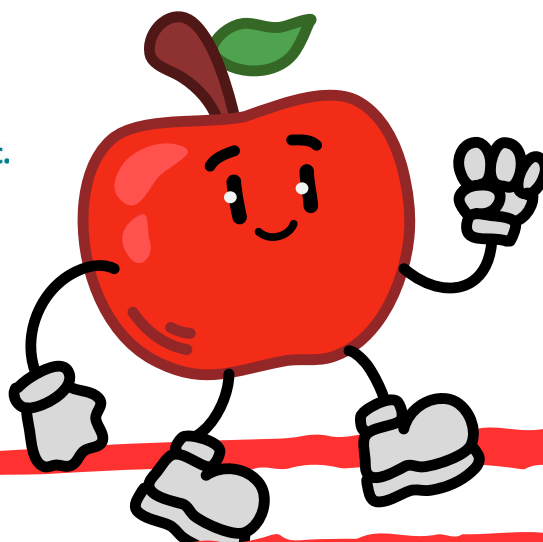
Want Recipe ideas and practical tips to feel better with food?

Do you want more Pep?

**If yes, then take a NOURISH Step!**



[GWAAR.ORG/NOURISHSTEP](http://GWAAR.ORG/NOURISHSTEP)



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