

The Whole Health Approach

Emphasizes living our best lives
in alignment with
what matters most to us.

Includes conventional treatment,
but also focuses on
empowerment and self-care
to reduce the risk of chronic
illness and optimize health and
well-being.



Self Care Review



Self-Care Areas can impact physical, emotional, and mental health

- Movement/physical activity
- **Healthy eating**
- Sleep/rest
- Healthy relationships
- Healthy surroundings
- Spiritual health
- Personal development

Today's topic: Healthy Eating

Why Should We Eat Healthy Foods?

Weight Management: making small, sustainable changes towards healthier foods can promote healthier weight.

Reduce risk of disease: healthy food intake helps prevent Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some forms of cancer.

Improve immune system: Eating healthy foods that contain vitamins, protein and antioxidants can boost your body's ability to fight disease.

Prevent damage: Just like a coat of paint can prevent metal from rusting, antioxidants help prevent toxins from damaging cells in our bodies.



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Healthy Eating Basics

- Incorporating vegetables, fruits, and whole grains into your diet to boost your fiber, vitamin, and mineral intake
- Drinking water
- Choosing healthy protein sources
- Limiting your consumption of sugary and highly processed foods

Improving the quality of your diet may mean:

- **Making some healthy additions** to your eating habits
- **Reducing some items** that you regularly eat, that you know are not so healthy



Ultra-Processed Foods

Ultra-processed foods: ready-made foods and drinks that contain additives, artificial colors, preservatives, and plenty of sugar, salt, and fat but very little nutrition.

Whether the harm is in what these foods contain or what they lack, research links them to health problems such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, vascular disease including strokes, some cancers, and an overall shorter life.

Choosing more whole or minimally processed foods and less ultra-processed food is a positive change!



Sugar and Carbohydrate

Simple Carbohydrates:

- Simple carbs have just one or two molecules that your body absorbs quickly. Examples: regular soda/sugary beverages, pastries, candy, desserts
- Eating too much simple carb is linked to obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes and elevated lipids (cholesterol)



Complex Carbohydrates:

- Complex carbs are sugar molecules bonded together in long chains; they take longer to digest. Examples: whole fruits and vegetables, whole-grain bread, oatmeal, beans
- Complex carbs keep you full longer and contain more nutrients



Two Examples of Healthy Eating Plans



The DASH Diet

(Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) meal plan based on research sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Helpful to lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease. It can also help with weight loss.

Focuses on foods like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean protein.

Limited in sodium, sugary foods/drinks, red meats, and processed foods.

[DASH Diet Foods for High Blood Pressure \(Hypertension\) \(webmd.com\)](https://www.webmd.com/healthy-living/dash-diet-foods-for-high-blood-pressure-hypertension)

The Mediterranean Diet

Studies of eating patterns of physically active people in Crete, Greece and Southern Italy. They tended to have very good health and live longer less disease.

Helpful for weight control, prevention of diabetes, heart disease, many cancers, and prevention of dementia.

Focuses on foods like vegetables, fruit, whole grains, beans, legumes, fish, olive oil, and nuts.

Limited in red meat, saturated fats, processed food, fast food, and sugar.

[Mediterranean diet for heart health - Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/mediterranean-diet/healthy-diet/mediterranean-diet-for-heart-health/art-20043861)

How Can We Sustain Healthy Eating?

Research backs these tips:

- Your plan may be more sustainable if you don't cut out your favorite, less healthy foods entirely. Just make sure to keep your portions small.
- Start cooking your own food instead of take-out and fast food. Healthy recipes and cookbooks here: <https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Recipes.asp>
- Reduce processed foods and refined sugars/simple carbohydrate.
- Drink a glass of water before eating; avoid soda or other sugary drinks.
- Increase your servings of vegetables and eat them at the beginning of your meal; you'll be less likely to overeat calorie-dense foods like meat and starchy sides.
- Make a plan that is linked to what's important to you in life and take small steps toward changing a habit. Try setting a SMART Goal: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Time-bound.

