

## Improving Your Health - Nutrition: Section 5

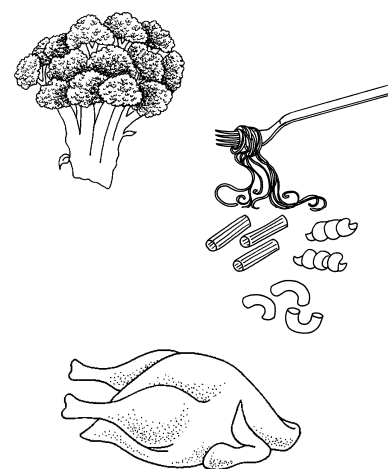
Preventive health care means more than getting regular checkups by a doctor and a dentist. It also means making good decisions about your health. To do that, you need to know what foods you should eat to stay healthy and how to plan and prepare healthy meals.

### Nutrition

Good nutrition is also preventive care. *Nutrition* or *diet* means everything that you eat or drink. *Good nutrition* is eating and drinking things that are healthy for your body. Good nutrition gives you *energy*. It also helps you *feel good*, keep a *healthy weight*, and reduce the risk of disease.

Health professionals say that you need to eat a *balanced diet*. That means you should choose foods from these six major food groups:

- *Protein Group*. The protein group includes meat, fish, dried beans, eggs, and nuts.
- *Dairy Group*. The dairy group includes milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- *Vegetable Group*. The vegetable group includes many vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, peas, and green beans.
- *Fruit Group*. The fruit group includes many fruits such as apples, oranges, and bananas.
- *Grain Group*. The grain group includes bread, rice, pasta, and cereal.
- *Fats and Sweets Group*. The fats and sweets group includes fats, oils, and sweets.



Our bodies use the foods in these six major food groups in different ways. Some foods are healthier than others. Health professionals say you should eat more of some foods than others. For example, you should eat more vegetables and grains and less protein. You should eat very little fats and sweets.

These steps will help you get good nutrition from the meals you eat:

**Step 1:** Plan ahead about the meals you and your family will eat that day or for the week. If you plan for a healthy meal, then you will have the healthy foods in your home. List the foods and drinks you need for each meal. As you plan meals, decide which foods are best. For each meal, you should try to have:

- A good balance of foods.
- The *right size serving* or amount of food for each person.
- The right foods for any health problem. For example, if someone in your family has an allergy to strawberries, then be sure that there are no strawberries in the food or juice you buy.



**Step 2:** Make a shopping list of foods that you need to buy for the day or the week.

**Step 3:** At the store, try to buy only the foods on your list.

When you buy vegetables and fruits, try to buy them *fresh*.

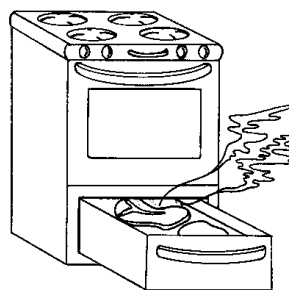
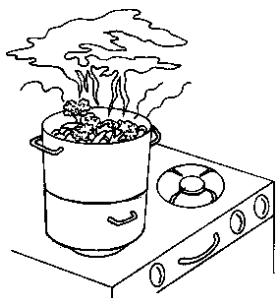
If you can't buy fresh vegetables and fruits, *frozen* is healthier than *canned*. Look at the *nutrition label* on the *food packages* to learn the number of serving sizes.

You can also look at the food package for an *expiration date*.

Most foods have an expiration date that tells you how long you can keep the food. For example, if a can of soup has an expiration date of February 2010 (02/10), you should not eat it after that date.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228 g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 13 g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Cholesterol 30 mg	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15%	Iron 4%

**Step 4:** When you cook, try to *bake, broil, grill* or *steam* your food instead of *frying it*. Try to use only a little salt and oil when cooking. If you have a health problem, talk to your health professional about how to cook foods. For example, people with high blood pressure should not use a lot of salt.



Many people have a hard time making good decisions about nutrition. Why is that?

- People often eat too much food, even too much healthy food. Read the food package or *recipe* to know the serving size. Be careful about how many servings you eat.
- Health professionals say that water is the best drink. You should drink about 8 glasses of water a day. But most people don't drink that much water each day. Drinking juice, soda pop, milk, tea or coffee is not the same as drinking water.
- Many people eat food from restaurants. Restaurants can give very large servings or give you more food for just a little more money. Then you eat too much food. So you must watch your serving size or amount of food when you eat in a restaurant.

When you eat in a restaurant, you have to choose carefully. A lot of restaurant food can be high in fats and sweets. You can eat healthy by making healthy choices. Water is healthier than soda pop. Grilled chicken is healthier than fried chicken. Plain baked potatoes are healthier than french fries.