

# *My Bright Future:*

## *Physical Activity and Healthy Eating*



U.S. Department of Health  
& Human Services  
Health Resources &  
Services Administration

*For Adult Women*

Updated February 2013



## YOUR BRIGHT FUTURE: HOW THIS BOOKLET CAN HELP

This booklet will help you learn more about the importance of physical activity and healthy eating in your daily life. It will also help you talk with your health care provider about these topics and set healthy goals.

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The publication was produced for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration by Social Solutions International, Inc. under contract number HSH250201100112P.

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# Getting Started

This section asks questions about your current levels of physical activity (moving your body) and healthy eating. Please check the boxes that best answer each question.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

1. How much time do you spend being physically active on a typical day?
  - More than 30 minutes
  - 20-30 minutes
  - Less than 20 minutes
  - Less than 10 minutes
  - 0 minutes
2. How many days a week do you do physical activities?
  - 7 days
  - 5-6 days
  - 3-4 days
  - 1-2 days
  - 0 days
3. How much time do you spend doing activities such as briskly walking, water aerobics, ballroom dancing or general gardening?
  - 2.5 hours or more per week
  - 1.5-2.5 hours per week
  - 0.5-1.5 hours per week
  - Less than 0.5 hours per week

4. How much time do you spend doing activities such as racewalking, jogging or running, swimming, jumping rope, bicycling faster than 10 miles per hour or heavy gardening?
  - 1 hour 15 minutes or more per week
  - 45 minutes - 1 hour 15 minutes per week
  - 15 - 45 minutes per week
  - Less than 15 minutes per week
5. How often do you do muscle strengthening activities such as lifting weights, calisthenics like pushups, pull ups or sit ups or heavy gardening?
  - More than 2 times per week
  - About 2 times per week
  - Once a week
  - Less than once a week
6. What types of physical activity do you enjoy doing? (Check all that apply.)
  - Walking
  - Running
  - Playing individual or team sports
  - Swimming
  - Dancing
  - Climbing stairs
  - Housecleaning
  - Yard work
  - Lifting weights
  - Playing actively with children
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_

7. What are some of the reasons that keep you from being as physically active as you'd like to be? (Check all that apply)
  - Don't know how to be more physically active.
  - Don't have a safe place to be physically active.
  - Don't want to exercise in front of other people.
  - Have a physical problem, pain, or disability.
  - Lack of energy.
  - Lack of time.
  - Childcare is not available.
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_



## HEALTHY EATING

1. On a typical day, how often do you have foods from the dairy group? For example, how often do you drink a cup of low-fat milk, drink fortified soy beverages, add milk to your cereal, or eat yogurt or cheese?
  - Three times per day
  - Two times per day
  - One time per day
  - Less than once per day
2. When eating foods from the dairy group, how often do you choose fat-free or low-fat options?
  - Always
  - Often
  - Occasionally
  - Never
3. On a typical day, how often do you eat foods from the protein group, such as hamburger, chicken, turkey, fish, pork, peanut butter, eggs, nuts, beans, or tofu?
  - 5-6 times per day
  - 3-4 times per day
  - 1-2 times per day
  - Less than once per day
4. When you eat meat, how is it usually prepared?
  - Fried, breaded or battered
  - Baked, broiled or grilled
  - A combination

5. On a typical day, how many of your grain group choices come from whole grains such as brown rice, oatmeal, whole wheat bread, or whole grain crackers instead of refined or enriched grains?
  - More than half
  - About half
  - Less than half
  - None
6. On a typical day, how often do you eat fruit or drink a cup of 100% fruit juice?
  - 5-6 times per day
  - 3-4 times per day
  - 1-2 times per day
  - Less than once per day
7. On a typical day, how often do you eat a cup of vegetables or drink 100% vegetable juice?
  - 5 or more times per day
  - 3-4 times per day
  - 1-2 times per day
  - Less than once per day
8. Do you eat a variety of vegetables, including dark green, red and orange, and beans and peas?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Sometimes

“Since last year, I’ve gained a few pounds and don’t feel good with this extra weight. I started paying more attention to the things I eat, but knew that I had to start exercising. So I joined an exercise class at my church with a good friend. We kept each other going, and after 3 months, I’ve lost 10 pounds and found I have more energy. Not only that, but since I’ve had so much fun and made some great new friends, I’m going to keep up the classes.”

Linda  
Springfield, Illinois







9. How often do you use oils (like olive oil, vegetable oil or soft margarine) instead of solid fats (like butter, stick margarine or pork fat)?

- Always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Never

10. How often do you drink regular sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks and/or fruit drinks?

- 3 or more times a day
- 2 times a day
- Once a day
- Less than once a day

11. How often do you eat cake, cookies, ice cream, other desserts and/or candy?

- 3 or more times a day
- 2 times a day
- Once a day
- Less than once a day

12. On a typical day, do you think about or do any of the following? (Check all that apply.)

- Think about the nutrients in my food.
- Try to eat nutrient-rich foods.
- Get the recommended nutrients through my food.
- Take vitamins or minerals.

13. What are some of the reasons that keep you from eating as healthy as you'd like to?

- Not sure which foods are healthy for me.
- There isn't a grocery store in my neighborhood.
- Healthy food is expensive.
- Don't have time to cook healthy food.
- Have to cook foods that my kids will eat.
- Others



# Talking With My Health Care Provider



Many health care providers will answer your questions about physical activity and healthy eating. Let your provider know that you have some questions at the start of your visit or if he or she asks if there is anything that you'd like to talk about. Here are some examples of questions that you may want to ask.

- 🍏 Am I getting enough physical activity?
- 🍏 How do I fit more physical activity into my life?
- 🍏 What are some physical activities that I can add to a typical day?
- 🍏 I have back pain or knee pain. What are some activities that I can do safely?
- 🍏 Am I in a healthy weight range for my height and age?
- 🍏 I would like to lose some weight. What is a safe and healthy way for me to do this?
- 🍏 What are some nutrient-rich foods for me to eat?

In the space below, write questions you would like to ask your health care provider. **My own questions:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Share this booklet and the previous sections that you've completed with your health care provider. Remember to ask your questions.





# My Health Care Visit

These pages are for your health care provider to fill in. Now is the time for you and your health care provider to review this information together.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Height (inches): \_\_\_\_\_

Weight (pounds): \_\_\_\_\_

BMI: \_\_\_\_\_

(Use chart on the right to find where height and weight meet)

The body mass index (BMI) is a proxy measurement of body fat based on height and weight (not just weight alone). A BMI of 25 or higher may mean you are overweight or obese and at a higher risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and other conditions. (Note: People who are muscular tend to have higher BMI scores without necessarily being overweight.)

Other measurements to keep in mind:

Blood pressure: \_\_\_\_\_

Cholesterol level: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Physical Activity Level Assessment:

- On target
- Recommend changes

Current Nutrition and Eating Habits Assessment:

- On target
- Recommend changes

		Weight in pounds															
		100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250
Height in feet and inches	4'10	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52
	4'11	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	49	51
	5'0	20	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49
	5'1	19	21	23	25	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	45	47
	5'2	18	20	22	24	26	27	29	31	33	35	37	38	40	42	44	46
	5'3	18	20	21	23	25	27	28	30	32	34	35	37	39	41	43	44
	5'4	17	19	21	22	24	26	28	29	31	33	34	36	38	40	41	43
	5'5	17	18	20	22	23	25	27	28	30	32	33	35	37	38	40	42
	5'6	16	18	19	21	23	24	26	27	29	31	32	34	36	37	39	40
	5'7	16	17	19	20	22	24	25	27	28	30	31	33	35	36	38	39
	5'8	15	17	18	20	21	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	34	35	37	38
	5'9	15	16	18	19	21	22	24	25	27	28	30	31	33	34	35	37
	5'10	14	16	17	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	29	30	32	33	35	36
	5'11	14	15	17	18	20	21	22	24	25	27	28	29	31	32	34	35
	6'0	14	15	16	18	19	20	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	33	34
	6'1	13	15	16	17	19	20	21	22	24	25	26	28	29	30	32	33
	6'2	13	14	15	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	30	31	32
6'3	13	14	15	16	18	19	20	21	23	24	25	26	28	29	30	31	
6'4	12	13	15	16	17	18	20	21	22	23	24	26	27	28	29	30	

Underweight:  
Less than 18.5

Healthy Weight:  
18.5 – 24.9

Overweight:  
25 – 29.9

Obese:  
30 and above

Health Care Provider's Advice on Next Steps:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Setting My Goals

**Setting clear goals can help you make healthy changes.** To set goals that are right for you, think about what you want to change and why, and what steps you can take to reach your goals. These changes don't have to be big. Even small steps can make a difference in your health!

**Here is a sample chart of Goals.** Use this chart to set simple physical activity and healthy eating goals with your health care provider. You can also ask your family or friends to help.

Sample Goal	Lose 10 Pounds
My reason for this goal	To be at a healthy weight and fit into my favorite dress for my sister's wedding
Steps I'll take	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eat three balanced meals each day.</li> <li>2. Eat smaller portions at home and at restaurants.</li> <li>3. Join the lunchtime walking group at work.</li> </ol>
Who will help me	My family and friends
Challenges	Time limits, motivation, and expenses
Resolve Challenges	Incentives and improved time management
When I'll start	Today
When I'll meet my goal	By the wedding — in 3 months
How to reward myself for progress toward my goal	Relaxing weekend

Page 15 includes a blank chart for you to record your goals.



**This is a blank form for you to fill out your own goals.**

My Goal		
My reason for this goal		
Steps I'll take	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol>
Who will help me		
Challenges		
Resolve Challenges		
When I'll start		
When I'll meet my goal		
How to reward myself for progress toward my goal		



# Tools for Reaching Physical Activity Goals

This section provides some information on physical activity and healthy eating choices to help you with your goals.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

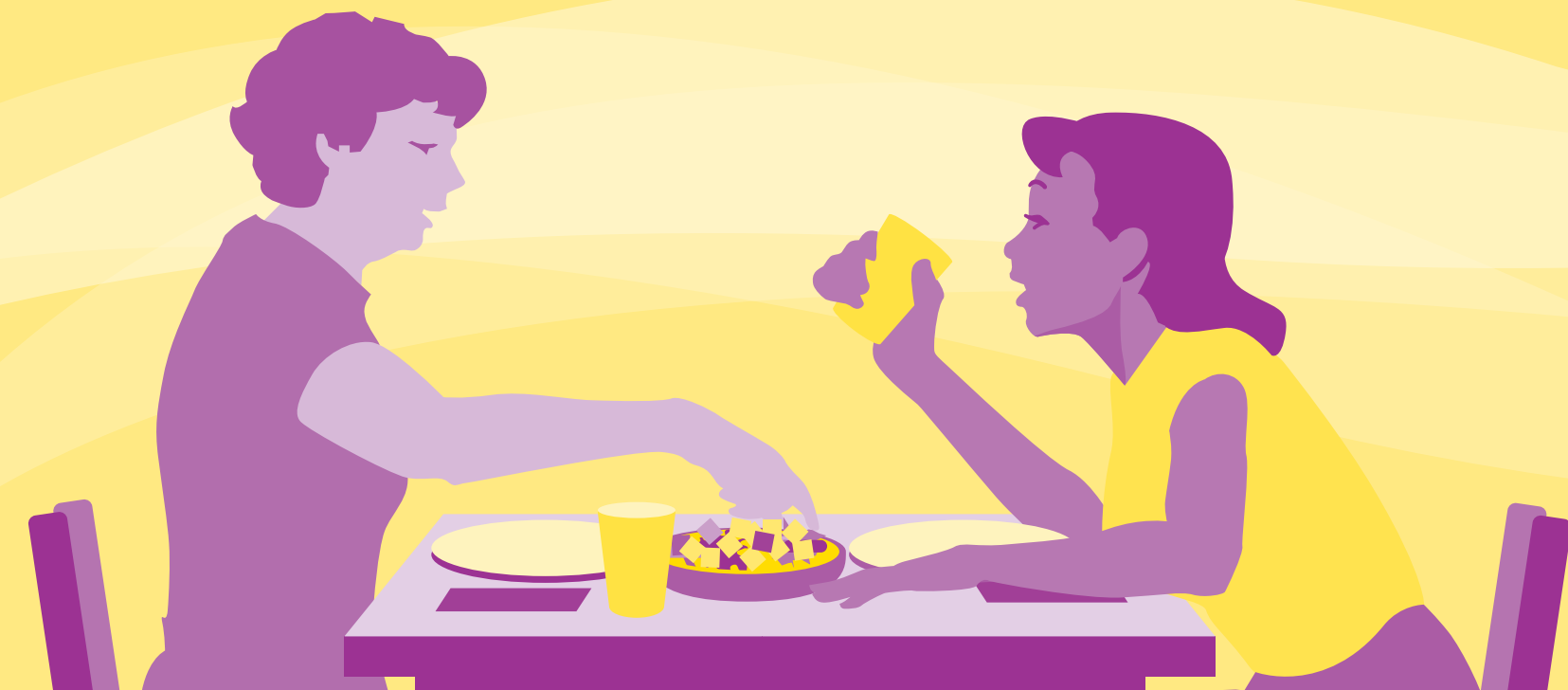
Being physically active means moving your body. Regular physical activity may:

- 🍏 Help you beat depression and improve mental health
- 🍏 Help you sleep better
- 🍏 Help you lower your risk of many diseases
- 🍏 Help you control weight by balancing the calories you take in with the calories you burn



## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 🍏 You can do this all at one time or break it up into shorter bouts of physical activity throughout the day. Activity can be broken up into periods as short as 10 minutes.
- 🍏 Get some physical activity every day. Aim for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes per week of moderate-intensity physical activity. It is best to spread the activity across the week. If you enjoy vigorous activity, 1 hour and 15 minutes per week is sufficient for good health. You can combine moderate and vigorous if you like.
- 🍏 For additional health benefits, you may need to increase to 5 hours per week of moderate-intensity physical activity or 2 hours and 30 minutes of vigorous activity. More health benefits accrue from even more physical activity.
- 🍏 Include muscle-strengthening activities that use all major muscle groups at least twice per week.








## Make Physical Activity a Part of Your Day






For...	Try... For the recommended 1.5 hours of activity a week
Flexibility *	Stretching, yoga, dancing
Strength	Lifting weights, sit-ups, push-ups, carrying groceries or a child
Aerobic Benefit	Brisk walking, running, biking, swimming, jumping rope, roller skating, using aerobic equipment (for example, treadmill, stationary bike)

### Physical Activity Safety Tips

If you have a chronic condition or injury you should speak with your healthcare provider before beginning any program.

-  Slow down if you're out of breath. You should be able to talk while exercising without gasping for breath.
-  Drink water before, during, and after exercise.
-  Wear supportive shoes and use sunscreen when outdoors.

STOP exercising and call 9-1-1 right away if you feel any of the signs below for more than a few minutes:

-  Have discomfort or pain in the center of your chest
-  Have discomfort in your arm(s), back, neck, jaw, or stomach
-  Feel dizzy or sick
-  Feel short of breath
-  Break out in a cold sweat

\* Improving flexibility is an important part of physical fitness, however it is necessary to combine stretching with muscle-strengthening and/or aerobic activities.

## MAKING HEALTHY FOOD GROUP CHOICES

Daily amount*	Reaching the daily amount	
Grains 6 ounces	1 ounce = 1/2 cup of cooked rice, pasta, couscous or cereal; 1 slice of bread; 1 small tortilla; 1 small muffin; 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal.	Choose whole grains at least half the time, such as whole grain bread, oatmeal, brown rice.
Vegetables 2 1/2 cups	1 cup = 1 cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables; 1 cup vegetable juice; 2 cups leafy salad greens.	Vary the types of vegetables you eat. Eat more dark green and orange vegetables, beans, peas.
Fruits 2 cups	1 cup = 1 cup cut-up raw or cooked fruit; 1 cup 100% fruit juice.	Eat a variety of fruits. Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit. Go easy on fruit juices.
Dairy 3 cups	1 cup = 1 cup milk or yogurt; 1 cup calcium fortified soy beverage; 1 1/2 ounces fat-free or low-fat natural cheese; 2 ounces processed cheese.	Choose fat-free or low-fat milk products. If you can't tolerate milk, try lactose-free milk products or fortified soy options.
Protein Foods 5 1/2 ounces	1 ounce = 1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg, 1/4 cup beans, peas or tofu; 1 tablespoon (Tbsp) peanut butter; 1/2 ounce nuts or seeds.	Choose non-fried lean meats and poultry and include seafood, and unsalted nuts and seeds. Aim for 8 ounces of seafood per week.
Oils ** 6 teaspoons	1 teaspoon (tsp) = 1 tsp vegetable oil or soft margarine; 1 Tbsp low-fat margarine, 2 Tbsp light dressing.	Limit solid fats like butter, soft margarine, shortening, and lard, by replacing them with oils.

\* Recommendations are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Women who are very active may need to consume more calories and women who are less active may need less. For more information and a personalized daily food plan, visit [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov). brought to us by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

\*\* Oils are not a food group; however they are emphasized because they contain essential nutrients and warrant special consideration.



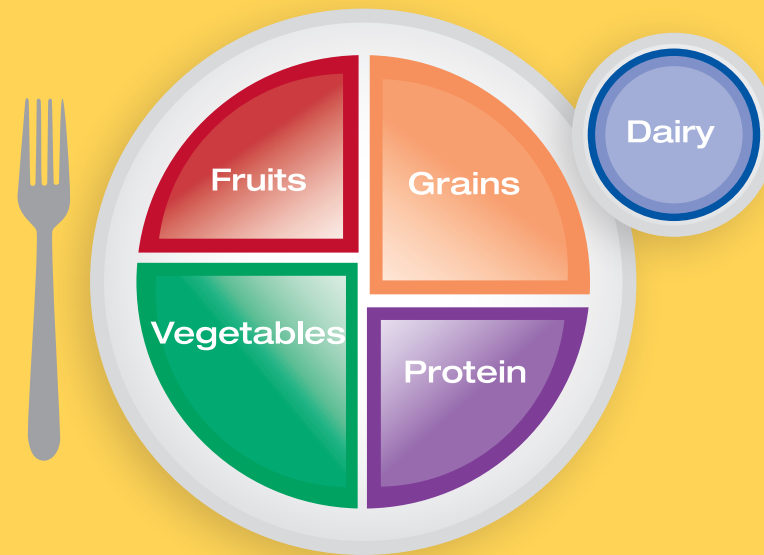
## HEALTHY EATING

### Food Variety

Eating a variety of foods can help ensure that you get the nutrients your body needs every day. Following Dietary Guidelines for Americans or MyPlate can help you create a balanced healthy diet by giving you suggestions for the types and amounts you should have from all food groups each day. Be careful to limit sodium, solid and saturated fats and added sugars to work toward a healthy diet.

### Food Groups and Oils

- 🍏 The Grains Group gives you carbohydrates for energy, and whole or enriched grains offer vitamins such as folic acid, B vitamins, and minerals. Whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal also have fiber that helps protect you against certain diseases and keeps your body regular. Half of your grains should come from whole grain sources each day.
- 🍏 The Fruit and Vegetable Groups give you vitamins such as vitamin A and C, and folic acid; fiber; minerals such as iron and potassium; and other nutrients that are important for good health. They can also help protect you against disease and keep your body regular.
- 🍏 The Dairy Group gives you minerals such as calcium and vitamins such as vitamin D to build strong, healthy bones and teeth. Foods in this group also have carbohydrates for energy and protein for important body functions. Try to limit saturated fats by choosing fat-free or low-fat dairy foods instead of whole milk dairy foods. Also consider lactose-free and fortified soy options.



Choose **MyPlate.gov**

- 🍏 The Protein Foods Group may give you protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals like iron. High-fat processed meats like bologna contain high amounts of saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium, so it's a good idea to limit these and try other foods such as chicken, seafood, beans and unsalted nuts.
- 🍏 It is important to note that oils give you essential fatty acids and vitamin E. It is important to include the recommended amount of oils in your diet, but limit trans and saturated fat, found in whole dairy foods, many meats, butter, and lard, which raises the risk for heart disease—the number-one cause of death among women. Oils such as canola and olive oils are low in saturated fat and are healthier for you.

“I rarely cook meat because my teenage daughter won't eat it, so I was concerned about us not getting enough iron. How relieved I was to hear that we could get iron from other foods, such as fortified cereals, whole wheat bread, beans, like kidney and pinto beans, and spinach. So, now we're making all types of iron-rich meals and we're both enjoying something new at the dinner table.”

Shawna  
Baltimore, Maryland





# NUTRIENTS

Iron, folic acid, calcium, and vitamin D are a few of the many nutrients that are important for you.

Nutrient	Why is it important?	How do I get it?
Iron	Helps prevent iron-deficiency anemia, which can make you feel tired.	Eat lean meats; shellfish such as shrimp; ready-to-eat cereals with added iron; spinach; beans and lentils; and enriched and whole grain breads.
Folic Acid	Needed for healthy blood and body proteins. Folic acid also helps to prevent some birth defects before and during pregnancy.	Drink orange juice; eat oranges, dark green leafy vegetables, beans and peas, or fortified cereals. (Check the food label for folic acid-fortified breakfast cereals)
Calcium	Needed for strong, healthy bones and teeth, and for the heart, muscles, and nerves to work well.	Drink fat-free or low-fat milk and calcium-fortified 100% juice or soy based beverages; eat fat-free or low-fat milk products like yogurt or cheese and calcium-fortified cereals and breads. Eat collards, greens, kale, and Chinese cabbage.
Vitamin D	Helps the body absorb calcium to build strong bones.	Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy, lactose-free or soy products fortified with vitamin D.
Potassium	Can help decrease blood pressure, reduces the risk of kidney stones, and helps decrease bone loss.	Eat fruits and vegetables, milk and milk products such as yogurt and cheese.
Fiber	Helps decrease the risk of heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and ensures normal GI function.	Eat vegetables, especially beans and peas, fruits, whole grains and unsalted nuts.

# UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD LABEL

The Nutrition Facts label on the food label can help you make smart food choices by giving you information on serving sizes, calories, and nutrients, such as saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Just look on the back of most food packages to find the label. % Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

- 🍏 Read the label to see if a food is a good source of a nutrient or to compare similar foods—for example, to find which brand of macaroni and cheese is lower in fat.
- 🍏 The food label gives you information on the calorie content of the portions you eat. Check the serving size and the number of servings per container. Compare this to how much you actually eat.
- 🍏 The % Daily Values (DVs) that are listed on the right-hand side tell what percentage of a certain nutrient you'll get from one serving of that food. If you want to limit a nutrient, such as sodium, then choose foods with a lower % DV. If you want to eat more of a nutrient such as calcium, then choose foods with a higher % DV.
- 🍏 Iron, folic acid, calcium, vitamin D, potassium, and fiber are a few of many nutrients that are important for your overall health.

**Nutrition Facts**  
 Serving Size 1 cup (228g)  
 Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250    Calories from Fat 110	
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 12g	<b>18%</b>
Saturated Fat 3g	<b>15%</b>
Trans Fat 1.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 470mg	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g	<b>10%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	
	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

“I used to do a clothing exchange with my girlfriends with clothes that no longer fit. The last straw came when I had to give up my favorite brown suit. I knew it was time to start an exercise plan. So, I borrowed a fun exercise tape, cleared out my living room, and started exercising with friends a few times a week. Soon we started doing other fun things like line, salsa, and belly dancing activities that we could do for the long haul, not just for quick fixes.”

Janette  
Los Angeles, California





# Hints for Reaching My Goals



- Choose to move. Add more physical activity into your daily life.
- Set realistic and safe goals. Build up your strength, endurance, and fitness.
- Involve your friends and family in your physical activity choices.
- Choose a variety of foods from all food groups to eat balanced meals.
- Try to limit solid fats and added sugars. Replace solid fats with oils. Also choose foods with low sodium content.
- Share and enjoy mealtimes with friends and family.
- Be sure to start your day with breakfast, and eat regular meals and snacks that fit into your daily schedule. Think about **what**, **when**, and **how much** you eat.
- Your body needs several key vitamins and minerals. Remember to eat:
  - For **calcium and vitamin D** try fat-free and low-fat foods from the dairy group.
  - For **iron** try lean meats, ready-to-eat cereals, spinach, beans, lentils, and enriched and whole grains.
  - For **folic acid** try fortified breakfast cereals, dark leafy green vegetables, and citrus fruits.
  - For **potassium** try fruits and vegetables and low-fat dairy products.
  - For **fiber** try beans and peas, fruits and vegetables, whole grains and fruits.
- Eat healthy and be physically active to improve your health and maintain a healthy weight today and later in life.

“My friend’s daughter passed away from diabetes complications. At the time, I weighed 365 pounds and knew that obesity can set off diabetes. Since this disease runs in my family, I knew I had to take control of my weight. I read a lot about how to eat healthy and I made changes. Instead of breading and frying chicken like I used to, I grill or bake it now. I’ve not only lost 165 pounds, I’ve learned how to be healthy for many years to come.”

Mary  
Omaha, Nebraska



# *More Information*

Visit these Web sites for more tips and information about nutrition, physical activity, and women's health.

Bright Futures for Women's Health and  
Wellness Initiative

[www.hrsa.gov/womenshealth/wellness](http://www.hrsa.gov/womenshealth/wellness)

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

[www.dietaryguidelines.gov](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)

Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

[www.health.gov/paguidelines](http://www.health.gov/paguidelines)

How to read the nutrition facts label

[www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/NFLPM/  
ucm274593.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/NFLPM/ucm274593.htm)

Weight Loss and Control Health Information

[www2.niddk.nih.gov/HealthEducation/HealthNutrit.htm](http://www2.niddk.nih.gov/HealthEducation/HealthNutrit.htm)

National Women's Health Information Center

[www.womenshealth.gov](http://www.womenshealth.gov)

My Plate

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)