

Colorful Choices for Weight Control

If you're watching your weight, the only kind of diet to consider is one with lots of fruits and vegetables. They're high in carbohydrates, your body's preferred source of fuel, along with vitamins and minerals, which help you burn calories and maintain your metabolism. They also help you fill up so you don't overeat and keep your fat intake down so you don't fill out.

Break through

Breakfast truly is the most important meal because it sets the stage for the rest of your day. Contrary to what some believe, eating breakfast actually helps you maintain a healthy weight. Breakfast eaters tend to eat less fat and overeat less during the day. People who eat fruit for breakfast also tend to get their full color complement for the day. Breakfast helps

you concentrate more effectively in the late morning, work more efficiently, and maintain a good mood. Your goal is to eat about 1/3

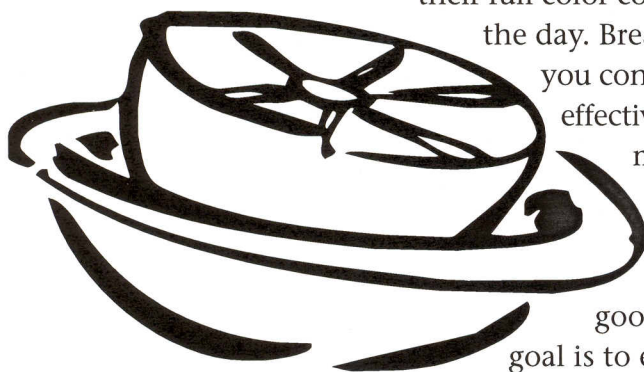
of your daily calories and 2 servings of fruits and vegetables in the morning.

The perfect fast food

Fast food has become a mixed bag for many — it's easy and convenient but often high in fat and calories. It doesn't have to be that way. Fast food can actually be very healthy — it's a matter of selection. Rethink what you consider fast food and train yourself to grab fruits or vegetables when you need something in a hurry and on the run. For a healthier meal opt for the salad or baked potato at your local fast-food restaurant. Just be careful of the high-fat toppings. You also can create your own fast food — great snacks include bananas or apples, dried fruit, juices, baby carrots, and snack-size fruit cups.

Portion distortion

Most people underestimate the amount they eat because they underestimate portion sizes. Did you know for example, that a bagel is really 2 servings of bread? To add to this portion distortion, most restaurant



meals contain double servings — a 6-ounce cut of meat is really 2 servings and a plate of pasta can be 2 or 3 servings. That's how overeating begins. But, when it comes to fruits and vegetables, there's usually no portion distortion. A serving is a piece of fruit or a fist-size worth of vegetables. It's that simple.

Satisfaction quotient

Fruits and vegetables help satisfy your hunger — their high fiber and water content fills you up. Try them as an appetizer or first course; that way you can pace yourself through the rest of your meal. And since it takes more time to chew fruits and vegetables, you eat more slowly and fill up faster. Peeling and cutting also mean they take a little longer to prepare — which gives you time to fill up while you nibble.

As a rule of thumb, watery or fibrous foods like fruits and vegetables have fewer calories than fatty or greasy foods. Fruits and vegetables are mostly carbohydrates so they have only 4 calories/gram compared to fatty foods at 9 calories. Remember, the more produce and lean foods you eat, the less room for high-fat foods.

Favor flavor

Use fruits and vegetables to flavor your meals. When you can truly taste food, you tend to slow down and savor it more — bland and boring passes quickly by your lips. For example, bake, broil, grill, or sauté chicken, meat, and fish with fruit salsa, fruit juice, or dried fruit for a subtly sweet taste.

You can learn new ways to intensify the flavor of your fruits and vegetables, with taste as your primary consideration.

Here are some delicious ideas-with little or no fat:

- Choose strong-tasting cheeses — romano, parmesan, feta, gorgonzola, asiago, and blue cheese — and you'll only need a little bit for great taste. For example, instead of blue cheese dressing, use a light vinaigrette with some blue cheese crumbles on top.
- Season your vegetables with spices and fresh herbs for more flavor. Fresh herbs can be stored for days in your refrigerator if you wrap them in a damp paper towel.
- Substitute balsamic vinegar or fruit juice for some of the oil in salad dressings to add a sweet and tangy taste.
- Add extracts and cinnamon or nutmeg to any fruit dish.

Substitution Solution

Fruit and vegetable purees or juices help take the fat out of many foods while adding vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants.

	Instead of this...	Use this...
Brownies	Butter	Pureed prunes
Muffins, quick breads, or cakes	Butter/oil	Apple sauce or canned pumpkin
Pasta sauce	Oil	Carrot or roasted red pepper puree
Guacamole	1/2 the mashed avocado	Pureed green peas
Soups, sauces, muffins, or cakes	Butter/oil	Pureed yams or sweet potatoes
Salad dressing or marinades	Oil	Fruit juice