

Learn at Home: Nutrition Lessons for Healthy Living

Watch Your Fat, Sugar, and Salt

By choosing to complete this mail lesson, you have taken the first step in learning more about the importance of nutrition and its relationship to good health. Choosing the right foods will help us feel and look our best and it may even decrease our risk for certain diseases. The key to eating healthy is choosing a variety of food every day.

To complete this lesson:

- Carefully read this lesson. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Answer the questions included with this lesson.
- When you are finished, place the questions in the prepaid envelope and place the envelope in the mail.

Eating Healthy: Watch your fats, sugar, and salt

This mail lesson will discuss:

- Why eating healthy is important
- Fats and oils
- Choosing healthy foods
- Eating low-fat foods
- Tips for cooking with less fat
- Tips for eating out
- Tips for lowering sugar intake
- Tips for lowering salt intake
- Using the food label



◆ Why is healthy eating important?

Eating healthy is important for feeling your best, avoiding illness, and it may lower your risk for getting certain diseases. Healthy and balanced eating can help you maintain a healthy body weight while providing your body with important nutrients. These nutrients give you energy and keep your heart beating, your mind alert, your muscles working, and your bones and muscles strong.

◆ Fats and oils

Fats and oils add flavor to food, help you to feel full, and provide your body with energy, fatty acids, and vitamin E. You need some fat in your diet for good health, but it is important to eat the right type and amount of fat to keep your heart healthy.

Types of fat

There are two types of fat; saturated or unsaturated.

Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature and can be found in fatty meats, the skin and fat on poultry, high fat dairy products (like cheese, whole milk, cream, butter, stick margarine and ice cream), coconut oil, and lard. Try to limit the amount of saturated fat you eat.



Unsaturated fats tend to be liquid at room temperature and are sources of good fats. They include polyunsaturated fats such as vegetable oils (corn oil, safflower oil), nuts, and some margarines. Unsaturated fats also include monounsaturated fats such as the fat in olives, olive oil, avocado, and canola oil.

Trans fats are those such as margarine is made from vegetable oil and goes through a process that results in a type, known as trans fat, that acts like saturated fat. The best margarine choices are those made from corn or safflower oils.

◆ Choosing healthy foods:

- Use MyPyramid to help you make healthy choices.
- Eating foods that are naturally low in fat, like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, is a great way to eat healthy.
- Limit your intake of high-fat processed meats such as bacon, sausages, salami, bologna, and other cold cuts. Try the lower fat versions, such as sliced turkey or chicken.
- The average adult should choose 5 to 6 ounces of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans or peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Exact amounts vary depending upon age, gender, and activity level. Go to MyPyramid.gov to see the exact amount you need.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat milk, fat-free or low-fat yogurt, and low-fat cheese most of the time.



◆ Eating foods low in fat

Eating foods that are low in fat does not mean you lose flavor. You can choose and prepare low-fat foods that your family will enjoy. Try using some of the tips below to lower the amount of fat you eat.

- Bakery foods such as doughnuts, sweet rolls, and muffins can contain a lot of calories from fat, but very few nutrients. Choose these foods less often. Snacks such as angel food cake and gingersnap cookies can satisfy your sweet tooth without adding fat to your diet.

- Instead of adding fat, like margarine, butter, mayonnaise, and sour cream vegetables and fruits, try using herbs instead to add flavor to food. Replace mayonnaise with plain low-fat yogurt in dips and salads. Select low-fat, lean cuts of meat by choosing cuts with “loin” or “round” in the name.



- Dry beans, peas, and lentils offer protein and fiber without the cholesterol and fat that meats have. Once in a while, try substituting beans for meat in a favorite recipe, such as lasagna or chili.
- Try low-fat cheeses. Skim ricotta can replace cream cheese on a bagel or in a vegetable dip. Use part-skim mozzarella instead of cheddar cheese in recipes. Try cheddar cheese made from 2% milk. Use 1% cottage cheese for salads and cooking. Eat string cheese as a low-fat, high-calcium snack.

◆ Tips for cooking with less fat

- Trim off the fat you can see on meat or poultry.
- Take the skin off of chicken.
- Buy tuna packed in water, not oil.
- Use non-stick cooking spray.
- Use herbs to flavor foods instead of margarine or butter.
- Drain the fat off of cooked ground meats, by rinsing the cooked ground meat in a colander under hot running water.

◆ Low-fat Cooking Methods and Tips for Eating Out:

Use these cooking methods at home to cook your own food with less fat. Look on menus for foods cooked with these cooking methods when eating out.

- Baking
- Broiling

- Grilling
- Microwaving
- Poaching
- Roasting
- Steaming
- Stir-frying
- Order items grilled or baked instead of breaded and fried.
- Order kids meals or a small adult sized order, instead of super sizing.
- Choose low-fat/fat-free salad dressings or ask for the salad dressing on the side.
- Add lettuce, tomato, or other vegetables to sandwiches.
- Skip the mayonnaise and special sauces.
- Share a meal with a friend.
- Have a piece of fruit, side salad, or healthy snack before going out to avoid overeating.
- Ask for substitutions (for example, ask for steamed vegetables or a salad instead of French fries).

Added Sugars:

Sugar that is added to our food or that is naturally occurring in our food make foods taste sweet, but also contains extra calories that are not necessary for a healthy diet. Sugar in moderation is not a bad thing. Sugar provides the body with calories used for energy. Many foods have sugars already in them, like fruits, breads, and milk. Many foods have sugars added to them during the baking or processing process. Foods with added sugars are usually high in calories and have little or no vitamins, minerals, and nutritional value. These types of foods are those that we should limit in our diet.

Looking at the Nutrition Facts panel of the food label will help you determine if a food has added sugars or not. The ingredient list will have the sugars listed if they are present. Some common added sugars are: brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, maltose, malt syrup, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, or syrup.

◆ **Tips for eating less sugar:**

If you are craving a sweet snack, reach for fruit (fresh or dried). Although fruit has naturally occurring sugar, it is also packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Use a sugar substitute. If you can't resist sweetening a food or beverage, use a sugar substitute. They contain little or no calories, but still offer you the sweet flavor you are craving.

Eat whole grain cereal instead of sugar sweetened cereal. Cereal with fiber will keep you full longer than sugar sweetened cereal, and it tastes great.

Choose canned fruit that is packed in its own juice, rather than fruit that is packed in heavy syrup. If you have canned fruit that is packed in heavy syrup, drain and rinse the fruit before you eat it to rinse off some of the added sugar.

Cut back on pop. A 12 ounce can of pop contains 9 teaspoons of added sugar. Choose drinks without added sugar, like water or fat-free milk.

Control Salt and Sodium:

Sodium is important to help your body control its fluids. However, too much sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, which may lead to a heart attack or stroke. Most sodium, or salt, comes from processed foods but it is important to watch how much table salt you use because it also contains sodium.

◆ **Tips to help control sodium:**

Taste before you shake! Many people add salt to the food they eat, before they even taste it. Taste first, if it needs more flavor then add a small amount of salt.

Flavor foods with herbs, spices, vinegar, or lemon. Herbs and spices can add so much flavor to foods, salt may not even be necessary.

Go easy on salty snacks! Snack foods, such as chips, pretzels, popcorn, and crackers are usually very high in salt. Eat these foods in moderation, or choose snacks that are full of flavor, but low in salt like fresh fruits and vegetables.

Buy fresh rather than processed foods. The more processed a food is, the more salt it usually has. For example, buy frozen boneless skinless chicken breast rather than breaded chicken patties and you will save yourself a lot of extra fat, calories, and salt.

◆ What is on a food label?

You can gain useful information by reading labels on the foods you buy. The food label provides information about the ingredients and nutrients in foods. This information can be used to help you make healthy food choices. The food label can also help you watch your fats, sugar, and salt.

Ingredient list: A food label must include a list of ingredients in decreasing order by weight. This list is required on all foods with more than one ingredient.

Nutrient Content Claims: Words and phrases that may be used to describe the amount of a nutrient in a food, but does not tell exactly how much. Some nutrient content claims that may be seen on a food product label include, “low-fat,” “sugar free,” “good source of calcium,” “low sodium,” or “reduced sodium.”

Health Claims: Describes how a food or food component such as fat, calcium, iron, or fiber relates to disease or health related conditions. Only health claims supported by science are allowed on labels.

Nutrition Facts Label: On the nutrition facts label, food producers are required to provide information on certain nutrients. The label must include information on total calories, calories from fat, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

What should you look for on the food label?

1. Serving size

The amount of food you eat as a serving, may be different than the serving size listed on the Nutrition Facts Label. Be aware that you may be eating more than one serving. For example, ½ cup of macaroni and cheese is one serving according to the food label. If you eat 1 cup of macaroni and cheese, you have eaten 2 servings based on the food label. This means you have to double the nutrition facts information.

2. Total fat

Try to keep your fat intake low to help keep total calories low. A serving of food that has 5% or less of

the “Daily Value” for fat is considered to be low-fat. A serving of food that has 20% or more of the “Daily Value” for fat is considered to be high-fat. It is also important to look at the amount of “Saturated Fat” on the label. Ten percent or less of the “Total Fat” should come from saturated fat.

3. Limit some things...

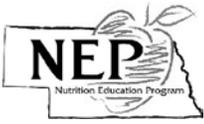
Total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium are nutrients that should be limited. Use the percentage on the right side of the nutrition facts label to help identify if a food is high or low in a certain nutrient. 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high. So, choose foods that have 20% or less on these nutrients you should limit most of the time.

4. Watch your sugar and salt.

Sodium and sugars are listed on the Nutrition Facts Label. Choose foods that have less than 20% of your daily value of sodium. Sugars are also listed on the food label, keep added sugar to a minimum for good health.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size (170g)			
Servings Per Container			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 80		Calories from Fat 0	
		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g			0%
Saturated Fat 0g			0%
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol --mg			--%
Sodium 20mg			1%
Total Carbohydrate 18g			6%
Dietary Fiber 0g			0%
Sugars 16g			
Protein 0g			
Vitamin A 0%		Vitamin C 80%	
Calcium 0%		Iron 0%	
*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
Saturated Fat	Less Than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
	Fat 9	Carbohydrate 4	Protein 4

This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-430-3244.



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Watch Your Fats, Sugar, and Salt

Watch Your Fats, Sugar, and Salt Questions:

1. Healthy eating is important...
 - a. For good health
 - b. To lower your risk of getting certain diseases
 - c. To help you maintain a healthy body weight
 - d. All of the above
2. **True or False.** Fat that is solid at room temperature is called saturated fat.
3. Saturated fat is found in...
 - a. Cheese
 - b. Whole milk
 - c. Ice cream
 - d. All of the above
4. Some ways to reduce fat in your diet include...
 - a. Choosing bakery foods less often
 - b. Selecting low-fat, lean meats
 - c. Using low-fat cheese
 - d. All of the above
5. **True or False.** You can make a favorite recipe lower in fat by using herbs for flavor instead of butter or margarine.
6. **True or False.** Frying is an example of a low-fat cooking method.
7. **True or False.** Baking, broiling, and grilling are 3 low-fat cooking methods.



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8. **True or False.** You can incorporate low-fat foods into your breakfast meals by choosing cereal with fat-free or low-fat milk.
9. You can choose lower fat foods when you dine out by...
- a. Ordering grilled or baked foods
 - b. Asking for the salad dressing on the side
 - c. Sharing a meal
 - d. All of the above
10. **True or False.** Plant foods such as grains, fruits, and vegetables are naturally high in fat.

Mini Goals

Setting goals is important when making healthy lifestyle choices. Please choose or create at least one mini-goal to complete *before your next* lesson.

Based on what you have learned during this mail lesson, what is one lifestyle change you plan to make?

Do you have an idea for a mini-goal? Go ahead and share your idea with your NEP staff member!

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Client's Name: _____	ID: _____
Staff Name: _____	Date: _____

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