The Truth about Dieting

What is Dieting?

Dieting is not eating a certain type of food or eating a very low number of calories. For example, some popular diets may tell you not to eat "carbs." They often promise you quick and easy results.

Health Effects of Dieting

Dieting is not a healthy way to lose weight and can cause health problems. Here are some possible effects:

- Bad breath
- Yellow teeth
- Hair loss
- Dry skin
- Constipation
- Growth problems
- Delayed sexual development
- Irregular periods
- Feeling weak and tired
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling sad
- Feeling irritated often
- Poor concentration
- Sleep problems
- **If you are pregnant, there can be serious health problems for you or your baby.**

For a Healthy Weight the *Healthy* Way:

- Eat plenty of colorful vegetables and fruits
- Choose whole grains most of the time
- Eat or drink nonfat or lowfat dairy and calcium foods
- Go lean or lowfat with your protein foods
- Quench your thirst with water, not soda
- Be physically active every day

Why Many Diets Do Not Work …

When you do not give your body the energy that it requires, it thinks you are starving.

- Then, your body slows down how fast it burns calories.
- So rather than helping you to lose weight, very low-calorie diets can actually make it **easier to gain weight.**

If you do not give your body adequate fuel, it will resort to using its own supplies.

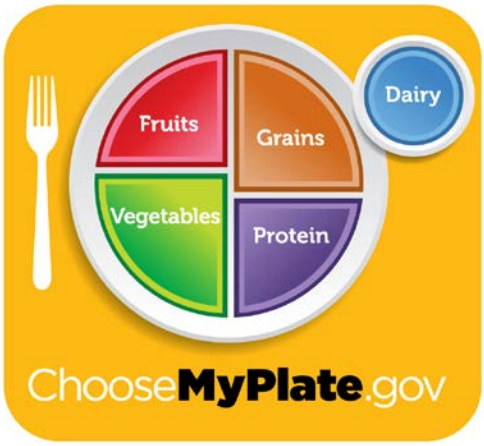
- Instead of burning only fat, it will also burn muscle tissue, which is the very thing you want to keep! Burning muscle tissue will make you feel tired, depressed, and without energy.
- You will have less energy to be active, which is one of the best ways to keep your body toned, strong and healthy.
- Popular diets are often not balanced. You may lose or not get enough of the nutrients you need. **Your hair, nails, skin and teeth may suffer and look sickly.**

Dieting often can make it harder to lose weight.

- Your body may get used to fewer calories and slow everything down.
- Trying to change your weight too often is not good for your health. It may make it harder for you to keep a healthy weight.
- **If you are pregnant, dieting can be even more dangerous.**

The bottom line: It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!

- Keep a healthy weight by eating **balanced meals and being physically active every day.**
- Make half your plate vegetables and fruits, about one quarter grains and one quarter protein. **Use the MyPlate icon to guide you.**
- Choose foods that are high in fiber and low in sugar, solid fats and salt (sodium).
- For tips and free nutrition and physical activity trackers, visit www.choosemyplate.gov .



13 Tips for a Healthy Weight

1. Do not go on a very low-calorie diet!

When your body does not get the calories it needs, it slows down how fast it burns the calories. And you might get so hungry you eat a lot at once (binging). So rather than helping you to lose weight, fad diets or very low-calorie diets can make it easier to gain weight.

2. Try not to skip meals, especially breakfast.

When you skip meals, you put stress on your body. You may feel tired and grumpy. When you are very hungry, you may eat more later, especially foods that are not healthy.

3. Eat foods from all the food groups.

Eating a variety of foods gives your body what it needs -- energy and nutrients -- to look good and feel great. For more information, visit www.choosemyplate.gov .

4. Squeeze in vegetables and fruits throughout your day.

- When you are thirsty, grab some fruit instead of soda or juice.
- Grab a fruit or vegetables as a snack-to-go.
- Eat cut-up, fresh vegetables like broccoli with a yogurt dip for a snack or at parties.
- Make half your plate vegetables and fruits, like in the picture at the top of this page.
- Add spinach and tomatoes to your sandwiches. Use avocado instead of mayonnaise.
- Try fresh salsa or avocado instead of dressing on salads.
- Eat your vegetables at dinnertime.

5. Keep healthy foods ready for snacks and to take with you.

That way when you are hungry or on the go, you will have something prepared. You will not have to rely on whatever is available, which may not be healthy. Also, you can save money!

Some ideas for healthy snacks:

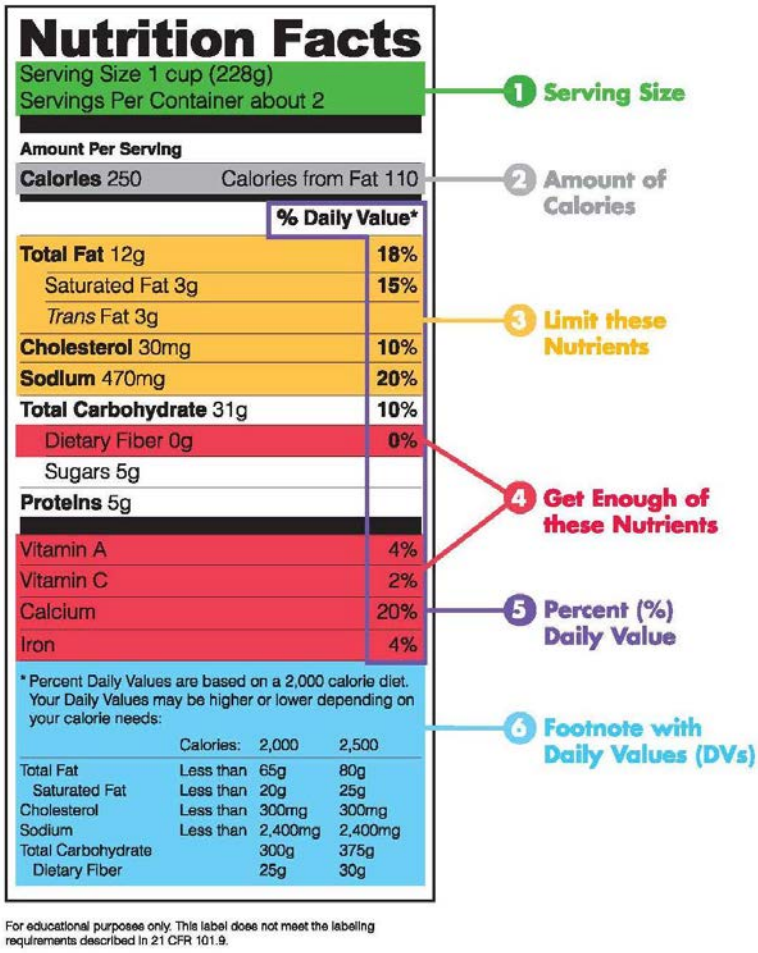
- Carrot sticks (or other vegetables) with hummus or peanut butter
- Your favorite fruit, fresh or dried
- Plain popcorn
- Hard-boiled egg
- Nonfat or lowfat yogurt with fruit
- Nuts, such as slivered almonds or pistachios
- Whole wheat tortilla with nonfat or lowfat cheese
- Keep water with you in a reusable bottle

6. Enjoy your favorite foods. Just enjoy them a little at a time.

When you deny yourself something you like to eat, you may spend time and energy thinking about it. Later, you may end up eating more than you would have if you had just eaten a little of it in the first place. Moderation is best.

7. Read nutrition labels.

Choose foods with less saturated and trans fat, salt (sodium) and sugar. Note that Total Fat can include healthy fats and oils (low in saturated fat and no trans fat, such as safflower and olive oil).



8. Listen to your body's hunger cues.

- Eat when you are hungry.
- Stop eating when you are full. Not sure if you are still hungry? Wait 20-30 minutes. If you are still hungry, then serve yourself another small portion.
- Try not to eat when you really want something else.
  - Sleep when you are tired.
  - Be physically active when you need energy.
  - Breathe deeply when you are stressed.
  - Do an activity you enjoy when you are bored.

9. Do not trick your body into thinking you are hungrier than you are.

- Do not leave prepared food at the table.
- Do not put food on very large plates.
- Serve yourself the correct portion size. You can always take more later.

10. Be mindful while you eat!

Eat slowly and consciously, savoring each bite. Try not to mix eating with other activities, like watching TV or using other electronics. This can help you from overeating without realizing it. If you have to snack while watching TV, choose healthy snacks like plain popcorn, pretzels, fruit salad, or vegetables with a yogurt dip.

11. Have fun moving your body.

Being physically active — whether in sports, dancing in your room, taking a walk — is a great way to feel and look good. Physical activity also helps reduce stress.

12. Try to get enough sleep.

Getting enough sleep can help you focus in school, give you energy and may even help you have a healthier weight! Most teens need about 9 hours of sleep every night.

13. Show yourself some love!

Appreciate your body for all that it does for you. Discover your unique beauty, inside and out!

Part I - What are my Snack Choices?

Every day, you make choices about what you eat. What snack options do you have? Assess your environment —at school, home, and any other place you usually eat. Write down the healthy foods you find to snack on. As you do, list each option under its food group. Check out www.choosemyplate.gov for more information on food groups!

		Vegetables	Fruits	Grains	Protein	Dairy	Healthy Beverages	Combination Foods
School	Cafeteria							
	Vending Machine							
	School Store							
	Other							
Home	Refrigerator							
	Freezer							
	Cabinet/ Pantry							
Other Places	Convenience Store							
	Fast Food							
	Other							

Part II - What are my Snack Choices?

Now that you know what your snack options are, these may - or may not - be all the food choices you need. This is your chance to put a plan in place to expand your food world and to get the food group snacks you want or need.

Consider Your Options. Of all the options you have now, what snacks would you choose today or tomorrow? Write down your choices and why they are best for you.

Choice	Why?

Plan for Change: What would be easy to change? What would be hard to change?

	At Home	At School	Other Places
Easy			
Hard			
Impossible			

Find **Partners for Change** who can help you.

At Home	At School	Other Places

Make a Difference:
Share your plan of action with your family, friends, teachers and others who can help you.

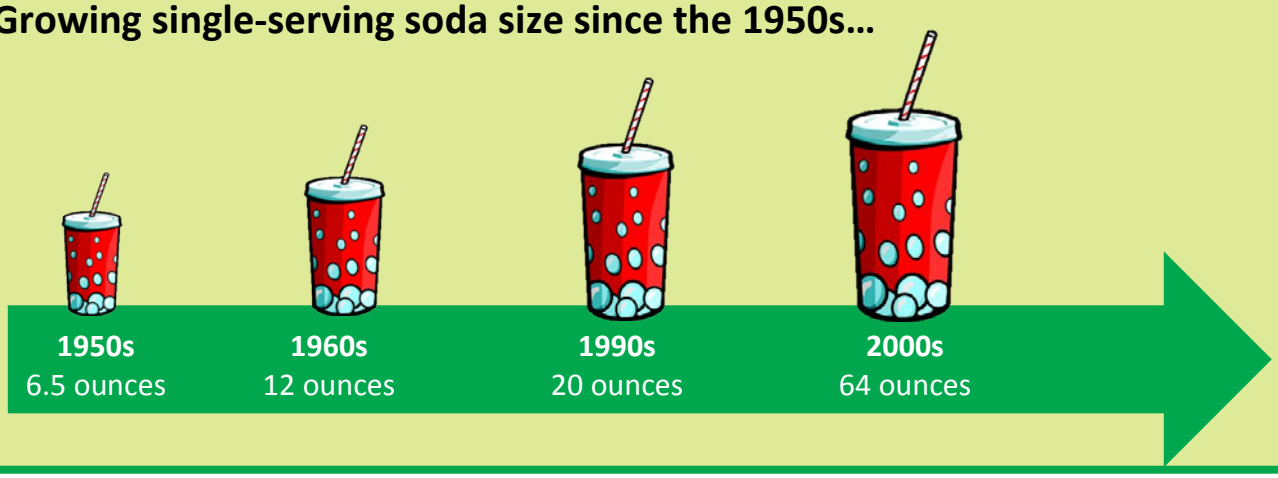
Teens, Soda and Weight

Did you know that sugary drinks, such as soda, are often a source of hidden calories and sugar?

Amount of regular (non-diet) soda an average teen drinks each day

Year	Boys (12-18 years old)	Girls (12-19 years old)
1977-78	7 ounces	6 ounces
1987-88	12 ounces	7 ounces
1994-96	19 ounces	12 ounces

Growing single-serving soda size since the 1950s…



How can soda or other sugary drinks affect your weight?

It takes about an extra 3,500 calories to make 1 pound of body weight.

- One 12-oz can of soda is about 150 calories. One can of soda per day for one year is about 55,000 calories. Therefore, one 12-oz soda per day translates into about 16 pounds of extra body weight over one year!
- One 20-oz bottle is about 250 calories. One bottle of soda per day for one year is about 91,000 calories. This translates into about 26 pounds of extra body weight over one year.

A 20-ounce soda has about 22 packets of sugar! You would not eat that much sugar, so why drink that many?

Find out how much sugar you are drinking and how much money you are spending on sugary drinks: http://www.choosehealthla.com/multimedia/sugar-calculator/ .

My Action Plan for Weight Management

Name: _____

Check the box for each step you are doing now to manage your weight. Check the boxes for the steps you plan to take. Write down other ways you plan to manage your weight.

Things that I can do to manage my weight:	Am Doing	Steps I Will Take
I will make a snack change (from high-sugar/high-fat snacks to low-sugar/low-fat snacks)	☐	☐
I will increase my fruit and vegetable intake by _____per day.		
Instead of skipping breakfast, I will try some new ideas for quick and easy morning meals.	☐	☐
I will reduce my soda consumption by _____cans or _____bottles per day.	☐	☐
I will cut back on the time I spend watching television, going online or playing video games by _____hours per day.	☐	☐
When eating at my favorite fast food restaurant, I will look at the calories per serving to make healthier choices.	☐	☐
Instead of eating fast food, I will plan a meal and prepare it at home.	☐	☐
I will be physically active daily.		
My ideas for managing my weight:		
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Signature: _____ Date: _____