

AMA Healthier Life Steps™

A Physician's Guide to Personal Health

Action plan for healthy eating

The goal

What to do daily:

- Eat 1 ½ to 2 ½ cups of fruit
- Eat 2 to 4 cups of vegetables
- Eat mostly whole grains
- Avoid unhealthy trans fats and saturated fats
- Limit salty and sugary foods
- Maintain a healthy weight

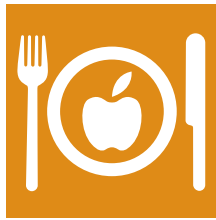
Studies show that if you engage in healthy eating habits, you are more likely to counsel your patients to do so.

Get ready

Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the American Heart Association and the American Institute for Cancer Research, you can stay up to date on the most recent recommendations concerning diet, health promotion and disease prevention, which can help you achieve your nutritional goals and help you model these goals for patients. (See “Useful resources” section, page 3.)

Make a plan

I will commit to eating more _____
and less _____ per day/week.



Take action

To begin your plan to make eating changes, choose one or two of the action items listed below. Or, write your own eating changes in the space provided.

- Snack on fruit instead of candy bars
- Have at least one cup of vegetables (cooked or raw) at dinner
- Use whole wheat bread on sandwiches instead of white bread
- Drink water or unsweetened iced tea instead of soda

My start date:

Track your healthy meals and snack choices on your **Healthy eating progress tracking calendar**, which is enclosed in this packet (or visit www.ama-assn.org/go/healthierlifesteps to download a copy).

Factors for success

- Share your goals and progress with a colleague, friend or life partner
- Share your goals and progress with your physician
- Prepare for disruptions in your plan (e.g., illness, busy at work, travel, vacations, etc.)
- Keep fruit in your office
- Be realistic—often we have high expectations, and when we have difficulty or feel we failed to meet our goals, we give up
- Take time to enjoy your food; eat slowly—it takes 20 minutes for the neural message of satiety to reach the brain



Useful resources

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Dietary Guidelines for Americans**
Includes the scientific rationale for the guidelines and resources for health professionals.
www.cnpp.usda.gov/Dietaryguidelines.htm
- **American Institute for Cancer Research**
A thorough, systematic review of the literature on diet, physical activity and cancer prevention.
www.aicr.org
- **American Heart Association**
Diet and nutrition guidelines, along with other useful resources for health care professionals and patients.
www.heart.org
- **Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Dietary Reference Intakes**
An interactive tool for health professionals.
<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/interactiveDRI/>
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture and National Agricultural Library, Food and Nutrition Information Center**
<http://fnic.nal.usda.gov>