

What Makes a Meal Plan Healthy?

A meal plan helps many people lose weight. It shows exactly what to eat. That makes it easier to shop for and prepare food. You also have fewer foods around to tempt you.

Not all weight-loss meal plans are healthy. Choose one with the features below. The healthy breakfast, lunch, and dinner menus that follow are good examples. Build your own meal plan by choosing foods that are:

 **Low in saturated fat**

Saturated fat is bad for your heart. It is found in:

- Fatty meats, poultry skin, and meat drippings
- High-fat dairy products (such as whole-fat cheese and milk, cream, ice cream, and butter)
- Lard
- Palm oil, coconut oil, and coconut

 **Low in trans fat**

Trans fat is also bad for your heart. It is a solid fat made of liquid fat. It is found in:

- Many margarines (*Note: The softer the margarine, the less trans fat it contains. Squeeze and tub margarine have less trans fat than stick margarine.*)
- Shortening
- Many baked goods, snack foods, and fried foods
- Foods that contain “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” oils. Check the ingredient list on food labels for these terms. Avoid foods that list them.

What if the Nutrition Facts label lists 0 grams of trans fat? By law, there can be up to one-half gram per serving. So check the ingredient list for the above sources of trans fat.

 **Low in cholesterol**

Cholesterol is bad for your heart. It is found in:

- Egg yolks
- Organ meats (such as liver, kidney, and brain)
- High-fat dairy foods (such as whole or 2% milk and cheese; cream; ice cream; and butter)
- Meat and meat products, poultry with skin, and some fish and shellfish (such as shrimp)



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Also, make sure to get: **Plenty of fiber**

Fiber is good for your heart. It also prevents constipation and makes eating more filling. Slowly increase the amount of fiber you eat. Drink plenty of water with high-fiber foods. These foods are rich in fiber:

- Dried beans and peas
- Whole grains and whole grain bread products (such as 100% whole grain bread, crackers, cereals, oatmeal, oat bran, whole wheat pasta, and brown rice)
- Whole fruits and vegetables, with edible skins and seeds

 **Enough – but not too much – low-fat protein**

Most Americans eat more protein than they need. Many protein-rich foods are high in fat. Also, too much protein is bad for the kidneys. Follow these guidelines:

- Limit meat to 5 or 6 ounces of cooked lean meat per day.
- Eat fish at least twice a week. Fish, especially oily fish such as salmon, is good for your heart.
- Try cooked dried beans, peas, and lentils instead of meat. They are good sources of protein and are high in fiber. They are also very low in fat.

 **Enough calcium for healthy bones**

Low-fat, low-calorie sources of calcium include:

- Skim milk, 1% milk, low-fat or nonfat yogurt (plain or without sugar), low-fat cheese, salmon, broccoli, leafy green vegetables
- Calcium pills

 **Not too much sodium**

Sodium raises blood pressure in many people. These foods are high in sodium:

- Table salt
- Salty snacks such as potato chips, salted crackers, and salted nuts
- Salty or smoked meats and fish, luncheon meats
- Foods in brine such as pickles
- Processed foods such as frozen entrees, soups, baked goods, and fast foods
- Ketchup, soy sauce, and most salad dressings



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UPMC MyHealth Weigh to Wellness™ Weight Loss Meal Plan**Healthy Menus**

Each breakfast menu below contains **200-300** calories. Choose one breakfast menu for each day. Make your food choices from the Breakfast Choices list.

Menu 1

- Cold or hot cereal (1 serving)
- Milk (4 ounces)
- Non-fat or 1% fruit juice (4 ounces) or fruit (1 serving)

Menu 2

- Bread (2 servings)
- Jam, jelly, fat-free cream cheese, or diet margarine (2 servings)
- Fruit juice (4 ounces) or fruit (1 serving) or non-fat/1% milk (4 ounces)

Menu 3

- Egg substitute (1 serving)
- Bread (1 serving)
- Jam, jelly, fat-free cream cheese, or diet margarine (1 serving)
- Fruit juice (4 ounces) or fruit (1 serving)

Menu 4

- Non-fat fruit yogurt (any brand with 100-120 calories and 1 gram of fat/serving)
- Bread (1 serving)
- Jam, jelly, fat-free cream cheese, or diet margarine (2 servings)
- Fruit juice (4 ounces) or fruit (1 serving)



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Planning and Shopping for Healthy Meals

Breakfast Choices

Foods	Amount	Calories	Fat grams
Cereal			
*Bran Flakes	¾ cup	100	0
*Cheerios® (plain)	1 cup	110	0
Corn Flakes®	1 cup	100	0
*Oatmeal, cooked, no fat added, unsweetened or 1 package instant, plain	½ cup cooked	100	2
*Raisin Bran®	½ cup	95	1
*Shredded Wheat,® spoon size	½ cup	85	1
Special K®	1 cup	110	0
Milk, yogurt			
Skim milk	4 oz	43	0
1% milk	4 oz	51	2
Non-fat fruit yogurt (any brand with 100-120 calories and 0 grams fat per serving)	6-8 oz	100-120	0
Bread			
*Whole wheat toast	1 slice	70	1
White toast	1 slice	70	1
English muffin	½	67	1
Bagel (any flavor)	½	80	1
<i>(Note: This is half of a standard size bagel. Some bagels have up to 160 calories per half.)</i>			
Diet bread	2 slices	80	0
Egg substitute			
Fleischmann's Egg Beaters®	½ cup	38	0
Egg whites	3 large	42	0
Fruit juice			
Orange juice, unsweetened	4 oz	56	0
Grapefruit juice, unsweetened	4 oz	47	0
Apple juice, unsweetened	4 oz	58	0
Fruit			
*Banana, 8" long	½ fruit	48	0
*Orange, fresh, 2-5/8" diameter	1 fruit	62	0
*Grapefruit, 4" diameter	½ fruit	47	0
*Strawberries, fresh	1 cup	46	0
*Raisins, dried	2 Tbsp	58	0
*Grapes, all kinds	½ cup	57	0
*Pear, fresh, 2-1/2" diameter	½ fruit	49	1
Jam, jelly, fat-free cream cheese, reduced-fat margarine			
Jam or jelly, regular (any flavor)	2 tsp	32	0
Jam or jelly, diet (any flavor)	2 tsp	27	0
Cream cheese, fat-free	2 Tbsp	30	0
Margarine, diet	2 tsp	34	4

* Foods marked with an asterisk (*) are good sources of fiber.



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Lunch Menus

Each lunch menu below contains **300-400 calories**. Choose one lunch menu for each day. Make your food choices from the Lunch Choices list.

Menu 1

- Chicken, turkey, salmon, tuna, or ham (1 serving)
- Bread (2 servings)
- Condiment (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)

Menu 2

- Chicken, turkey, salmon, tuna, or ham (1 serving)
- Salad (see Free Food list)
- Condiment or fat-free or reduced-fat salad dressing (1 serving)
- Bread (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)

Menu 3 (Vegetarian option)

- Beans, cottage cheese, tofu, or hummus (1 serving)
- Bread (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)
- Salad greens/raw veggies (no limit)

Menu 4

- Low-calorie frozen entrée (less than or equal to 300 calories and less than or equal to 10 grams fat)
- Salad (see Free Foods list)
- Reduced-fat or fat-free salad dressing (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)



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Planning and Shopping for Healthy Meals

Lunch Choices

Foods	Amount	Calories	Fat grams
Chicken, turkey, salmon, tuna, or ham			
Tuna, canned in water, drained	3 oz	99	1
Salmon, canned in water, drained	3 oz	118	5
Turkey breast, processed luncheon meat, oven-roasted	3 oz	90	3
Chicken breast, processed luncheon meat, oven-roasted	3 oz	90	3
Ham, processed luncheon meat, sliced or chipped	3 oz	90	5
Vegetarian meat alternative			
Cottage cheese, 1% milk fat	½ cup	82	1
*Hummus (chickpea dip), plain	2 Tbsp	79	4
Tofu, regular, no fat added	½ cup	94	6
*Beans and peas, canned or dried, no fat added	½ cup cooked	129	1
*Chickpeas (garbanzos)	½ cup cooked	134	2
Bread			
Pita or pocket bread, white or *whole wheat, 7" diameter	½ pita	96	1
Bagel (<i>any flavor</i>)	½	80	1
<i>(Note: This is half of a standard size bagel. Some bagels have up to 160 calories per half.)</i>			
*Whole wheat bread	1 slice	70	1
Crackers, reduced-fat or fat-free (check label)	6	100	0-3
Bread stick, 5" long	1	64	1
Rice, white, *wild, or *brown	½ cup cooked	105	1
Fruit			
*Apple, 2-3/4" diameter	1 each	81	0
*Orange, fresh, 2-5/8" diameter	1 each	62	0
*Peach, fresh, 2½" diameter, or canned in water	1 each	37	0
*Pear, fresh, 2-½" diameter, or canned in water	½ fruit	49	1
*Pineapple, fresh or canned in juice	½ cup	38	0
*Banana, 8" long	½ fruit	48	0
Condiment, salad dressing			
Mayonnaise, low-calorie	1 Tbsp	49	5
Mayonnaise, fat-free	1 Tbsp	12	0
Salad dressing, fat-free (check label)	1 Tbsp	16	0
Salad dressing, low-calorie	1 Tbsp	43	1-3
Mustard (check the label of honey mustard for fat grams)	2 Tbsp	24	1
Frozen entrées or dinners, low-calorie			
Choose any with less than or equal to 300 calories and less than or equal to 10 grams of fat.			

* Foods marked with an asterisk (*) are good sources of fiber.



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Dinner Menus

Each dinner menu below contains **500-600 calories**. Choose one dinner menu for each day. Make your food choices from the Dinner Choices list.

Menu 1

- Fish or poultry, baked or broiled (1 serving)
- Pasta, potato, or rice (1 serving)
- Vegetable (1 serving)
- Margarine, diet (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)

Menu 2

- Low-calorie frozen entrée (less than or equal to 300 calories, less than or equal to 10 grams of fat)
- Vegetable (1 serving)
- Margarine, diet (1 serving)
- Salad (see Free Foods list)
- Salad dressing, low-calorie or fat-free (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)

Menu 3 (Vegetarian)

- Beans, cottage cheese, tofu, or hummus (1 serving)
- Rice (2 servings) or 1 serving of pasta or potato
- Vegetable (1 serving)
- Margarine, diet (1 serving)
- Fruit (1 serving)



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Dinner Choices

Foods	Amount	Calories	Fat grams
Fish or poultry, baked or broiled			
Fish, fresh or frozen, no fat or breading	3 oz	90	1
Turkey, ground, lean (breast only)	3 oz	160	8
Turkey, light meat, skin removed	3 oz	140	3
Chicken, white meat, skin removed	3 oz	141	3
Vegetarian meat alternatives			
Cottage cheese, 1% milk fat	½ cup	82	1
*Hummus (chickpea dip), plain	2 Tbsp	79	4
Tofu, regular, no fat added	½ cup	94	6
*Beans and peas, dried, no fat added	½ cup cooked	129	1
*Chickpeas (garbanzos)	½ cup cooked	134	2
Pasta, potato, rice, or roll			
Pasta, white or *whole wheat, plain	1 cup cooked	197	1
Rice, white, *wild, or *brown	½ cup cooked	105	1
Potato, mashed, made with skim milk and no fat added	1 cup	156	0
*Potato, baked in skin	Medium	220	0
Potato, boiled without skin	Medium	120	0
*Sweet potato or yam, baked in skin	½ cup	131	0
Roll, white, 2-½" x 2-½" x 1", plain	1 each	108	3
Vegetables			
*Broccoli, cooked	1 cup cooked	52	0
*Brussels sprouts, cooked	1 cup cooked	66	0
*Cabbage, red or green, cooked	1 cup cooked	32	0
*Carrots, cooked	1 cup cooked	70	0
*Cauliflower, cooked	1 cup cooked	34	0
*Corn, whole kernel, cooked	½ cup cooked	66	0
*Green beans	1 cup cooked	38	0
*Peas, green	½ cup cooked	62	0
*Peas, snow	1 cup cooked	70	0
*Peppers, bell, chopped	1 cup cooked	38	0
*Spinach	1 cup cooked	54	0
*Squash, summer	1 cup cooked	44	0
Marinara sauce, jarred (any with less than or equal to 100 calories and less than or equal to 2 grams of fat per cup)	½ cup	50	1

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Fruit			
*Apple, 2-3/4" diameter	1 each	81	0
*Orange, fresh, 2-5/8" diameter	1 each	62	0
*Peach, fresh, 2½" diameter, or canned in water	1 each	37	0
*Pear, fresh, 2 ½" diameter, or canned in water	½ fruit	49	1
*Pineapple, fresh or canned in juice	½ cup	38	0
*Banana, 8" long	½ fruit	48	0
Condiment or salad dressing, diet, reduced-fat or fat-free			
Salad dressing, fat-free	1 Tbsp	16	0
Salad dressing, low-calorie	1 Tbsp	43	1-3
Margarine, diet	2 tsp	34	4
Frozen entrées or dinners, low-calorie			
Choose any with less than or equal to 300 calories and less than or equal to 10 grams of fat.			

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Free Foods

The following foods are very low in calories and fat. You may eat them or add them to foods on your Weight Loss Meal Plan menus at any time.

Salad greens and raw vegetables

- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Endive
- Lettuce
- Mushrooms
- Onion
- Peppers
- Radishes
- Romaine lettuce
- Spinach
- Sprouts
- Summer squash
- Tomato
- Zucchini

Condiments

- Artificial butter flavorings
- Ketchup (1 Tablespoon)
- Horseradish
- Hot sauce
- Mustard (check label)
- Picante sauce
- Pickles (dill, unsweetened)
- Taco sauce
- Vinegar

Drinks

- Broth without fat (low sodium)
- Bouillon without fat (low sodium)
- Carbonated drinks (sugar-free)
- Carbonated water (sugar-free)
- Coffee, tea (sugar-free and fat-free)
- (Use only low-fat or nonfat creamers, skim milk, or 1% milk in coffee or tea. Adjust milk or yogurt servings to subtract out what you use in coffee and tea.)
- Drink mixes (sugar-free)
- Tonic water (sugar-free)

Sweet substitutes

- Candy, hard, sugar-free
- Gelatin, sugar-free
- Gum, sugar-free
- Artificial sweeteners

Other items

- Herbs and spices
- Lemon juice
- Nonstick pan spray
- Soy sauce
- Worcestershire sauce



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Snacks

The snacks below contain 50-200 calories. Make one or two choices each day that keep you under your total daily calorie and fat gram goals.

Foods	Amount	Calories	Fat grams
Fruit			
*Apple, 2-3/4" diam	1 each	81	0
*Orange, fresh, 2-5/8" diam	1 each	62	0
*Peach, fresh, 2½ " diam, or canned in water	1 each	37	0
*Pear, fresh, 2½ " diam, or canned in water	½ fruit	49	1
*Pineapple, fresh or canned in juice	½ cup	38	0
*Banana, 8" long	½ fruit	48	0
Milk and dairy products			
Cottage cheese, 1% milk fat	½ cup	82	1
Skim milk	4 oz	43	0
1% milk	4 oz	51	2
Nonfat yogurt, artificially sweetened (any brand with 100-200 calories and 0 grams of fat per serving)	6-8 oz	100-120	0
Fruit juice			
Orange juice, unsweetened	4 oz	56	0
Grapefruit juice, unsweetened	4 oz	47	0
Apple juice, unsweetened	4 oz	58	0
Pineapple juice, unsweetened	4 oz	70	0
Snack foods			
*Popcorn, air-popped, plain	2 cups, popped	61	0
*Popcorn, microwave, light or fat-free, popped from package, plain (check label)	2 cups, popped	51	0-5
Pretzels, hard type	1 oz	108	1
Rice cake, standard size (check label)	2	100-120	0
Granola bar, low-fat	1	110	2
Crackers, reduced-fat or fat-free (check label)	6	100	0-3
Cookies, reduced-fat or fat-free (check label)	2-4	150-200	0-1
Hot chocolate			
Sugar-free hot cocoa	1 envelope	50	0-1

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Take Action

- First, read over the shopping list below. Add other healthy food items you like in the spaces provided.
- Next, make your meal plan for the week. Choose from the healthy menus included or make your own.
- Then, fill out this shopping list and take it with you to the store. Get everything you need for the next week's meal plan.

Source: Information provided by the University of Pittsburgh Obesity and Nutrition Research Center (grant DK046204 from the National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases).

Shopping List

This list includes healthy food choices. The foods below are listed by grocery store sections. Use this list to shop for the foods needed for your meal plan.

Before you go shopping, choose the foods you plan to eat during the week but don't already have at home. Circle them. Then check them off after you put them in your shopping cart. You can make extra copies of this list before you fill it out. Use one each time you go shopping.

Fresh Fruit

- Apples, 2¾" diameter
- Bananas, 8" long
- Grapefruit, 4" diam.
- Grapes, all kinds
- Lemons
- Oranges, 2 5/8" diam.
- Peaches, fresh, 2½" diameter.
- Pears, fresh, 2½" diameter
- Pineapple, fresh
- Raisins, dried
- Strawberries, fresh
- _____
- _____
- _____

Deli

- Turkey breast, processed luncheon meat, oven-roasted
- Chicken breast, processed luncheon meat, oven-roasted
- Ham, processed luncheon meat
- _____
- _____
- _____



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Planning and Shopping for Healthy Meals

Fresh Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage, red or green
- Carrots
- Celery
- Corn
- Endive
- Green beans
- Lettuce, all types
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Peas, green or snow
- Peppers, bell
- Radishes
- Spinach
- Sprouts
- Squash, summer
- Squash, acorn, butternut, or hubbard
- Potatoes, medium
- Sweet potatoes/yams
- Tofu, regular, no fat added
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini
- _____
- _____
- _____

Pasta, etc.

- Pasta, white or whole wheat, plain
- Marinara sauce, jarred (any with 100 calories or less and 2 grams of fat or less per cup)
- Refried beans (nonfat)
- _____
- _____
- _____

Beverages (Non-dairy)

- Sugar-free hot cocoa, such as Carnation®, mocha or rich chocolate
- Carbonated drinks, sugar-free
- Coffee or tea, unsweetened
- Nonfat or low-fat coffee creamers
- Tonic water, sugar-free
- Drink mixes, sugar-free
- _____
- _____
- _____

Frozen Foods

- Frozen entrées with 300 calories or less and 10 grams of fat or less
- Orange juice, unsweetened
- Grapefruit juice, unsweetened
- Apple juice, unsweetened
- Fish and poultry (see back page)
- _____
- _____
- _____

Canned Fruit and Miscellaneous

- Canned peaches, in water
- Canned pears, in water
- Canned pineapple, in juice
- Spices, herbs
- Nonstick pan spray
- Artificial butter flavorings
- Worcestershire sauce
- _____
- _____
- _____



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Planning and Shopping for Healthy Meals

Snacks

- Popcorn, air-popped, plain
- Popcorn, microwave, light or fat-free, plain (check label)
- Pretzels, hard type
- Rice cake, standard size (check label)
- Granola bar, low-fat
- Crackers, reduced-fat or fat-free (check label)
- Candy, hard, sugar-free
- Gelatin, sugar-free
- Gum, sugar-free
- Artificial sweeteners
- _____
- _____
- _____

Canned, Dried Foods

- Tuna, canned in water
- Salmon, canned in water
- Dried or canned beans, plain (chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, cannellini beans, navy beans, lentils, split peas, black-eyed peas)
- Rice, white, wild, or brown
- _____
- _____
- _____

Fish and Poultry

- Fish, fresh or frozen, no fat or breading
- Chicken, white meat (no skin)
- Turkey (ground, lean, breast only)
- Turkey, light meat
- _____
- _____
- _____

Soups, Condiments

- Jam or jelly, regular or diet (any flavor)
- Broth or bouillon, no fat, low sodium
- Soy sauce
- Ketchup
- Mustard (check label)
- Pickles (dill, unsweetened)
- Vinegar
- Taco sauce
- Picante sauce
- Hot sauce
- Horseradish
- Salad dressing, low-calorie
- Mayonnaise, low-calorie or fat-free
- _____
- _____
- _____

Bread and Cereal

- Whole wheat or white bread
- English muffins
- Pita, white or wheat (7" diameter)
- Bread stick, 5" long
- Roll, white, 2½ x 2½ x 1½", plain
- Bagels (with 80 calories and 1 gram fat per bagel)
- Bran flakes
- Cheerios®
- Corn flakes
- Oatmeal, unsweetened
- Raisin Bran®
- Shredded Wheat®
- Special K®
- _____
- _____
- _____



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Dairy Case

- Orange juice, unsweetened
- Grapefruit juice, unsweetened
- Apple juice, unsweetened
- Low-fat plain or light yogurt
- Fleischmann's Egg Beaters™
- Eggs
- Cottage cheese, 1%
- Skim milk
- 1% milk
- Nonfat fruit yogurt (any brand with 100-120 calories and 0 grams of fat per serving)
- Cream cheese, fat-free
- Margarine, diet
- _____
- _____
- _____



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