



HEALTH & FITNESS

Healthy Eating Made Simple

Real food, smart labels, and a weekly plan that saves you time and money.

A NOTE FROM OUR TEAM

We're not dietitians, and this isn't a diet. It's the plain-English version of the federal nutrition guidance, plus the planning habits that make eating well actually happen on a busy week. Plan on Sunday, shop with a list, cook once and eat twice. Your body and your bank account will both notice.

— The Auto Advocate Team

Healthy eating has been overcomplicated by fads, influencers, and food marketing. The real foundation is simple: eat mostly whole, minimally processed foods, drink mostly water, and plan ahead so the healthy choice is the easy choice. This guide covers what the current federal guidelines say, how to read a nutrition label in 30 seconds, and a weekly planner and grocery list to put it all into practice.

CHECK WITH YOUR DOCTOR FIRST

This is general public-health guidance. **Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise or eating plan**, especially if you have diabetes, heart or kidney disease, food allergies, are pregnant or breastfeeding, or take medication.

1 What the Current Guidelines Say

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*, released by the USDA and HHS in January 2026, center on one message: **prioritize whole, nutrient-dense foods**. Federal messaging now uses a new food pyramid graphic (at RealFood.gov) rather than the familiar MyPlate image, but the plate idea of filling up on vegetables, fruit, and protein still works at the dinner table. Based on a 2,000-calorie pattern, the guidelines suggest about:

3

SERVINGS OF VEGETABLES A DAY

2

SERVINGS OF FRUIT A DAY

3

SERVINGS OF DAIRY A DAY

2–4

SERVINGS OF WHOLE GRAINS A DAY

EAT MORE OF

- ☐ **Protein at every meal**, from both animal and plant sources (meat, seafood, eggs, dairy, beans, nuts)
- ☐ **Vegetables and whole fruits** in a variety of colors
- ☐ **Whole grains** in place of refined grains
- ☐ **Fiber** from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes
- ☐ **Healthy fats** from whole foods like eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds, olives, and avocados

EAT LESS OF

- ☐ **Highly processed foods**, such as packaged snacks with added sugar or salt
- ☐ **Added sugars**, including sugar-sweetened drinks
- ☐ **Sodium**: less than 2,300 mg a day
- ☐ **Saturated fat**: less than 10% of daily calories
- ☐ **Refined carbohydrates** like white bread and sweets

2 Read a Nutrition Label in 30 Seconds

The FDA's Nutrition Facts label tells you nearly everything you need, if you know where to look. Read it in this order:

- 1 **Serving size.** Every number on the label is for one serving. The FDA notes serving size is not a recommendation of how much to eat. If you eat two servings, double everything.
- 2 **Calories.** The label uses 2,000 calories a day as a general guide. Your needs depend on your age, sex, height, weight, and activity.
- 3 **Get less of:** saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.
- 4 **Get more of:** dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

THE 5/20 RULE (FDA)

Use the % **Daily Value** column as a quick gauge:

5% DV or less per serving is **low**.

20% DV or more per serving is **high**.

Look for low numbers on sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars, and high numbers on fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

3 Make Water Your Main Drink

The new guidelines name water as the beverage of choice. The CDC notes water helps keep your body temperature normal, cushions joints, protects sensitive tissues, and has no calories. How much you need varies by age, sex, activity level, and pregnancy or breastfeeding, and foods like fruits and vegetables count toward your fluids too.

CDC TIPS TO DRINK MORE WATER

- ☐ Carry a reusable water bottle
- ☐ Freeze water in freezer-safe bottles for cold water all day
- ☐ Add a wedge of lemon or lime
- ☐ Choose water over sugary drinks, including when eating out

4 Meal Prep: Cook Once, Eat Twice

Most healthy-eating plans fail on a Wednesday night, when you're tired and nothing is ready. An hour or two of prep on the weekend fixes that.

- 1 **Plan the week** using the planner on the next page. Pick 3–4 dinners and plan leftovers for lunches.
- 2 **Shop once** with a list. Fewer trips means fewer impulse buys.
- 3 **Batch-cook the basics:** a big tray of roasted vegetables, a pot of rice or beans, and a protein like chicken, eggs, or ground turkey.
- 4 **Wash and cut produce** as soon as you get home so it's grab-and-go.
- 5 **Store it safely.** FoodSafety.gov says cooked leftovers keep 3 to 4 days in a refrigerator set at 40°F or below. Freeze anything you won't eat by then.

5 Eat Well on a Budget

Healthy food doesn't have to cost more. Stores put tempting, high-margin items at eye level and by the register, so decide what you need before you walk in. The USDA's MyPlate shopping tips show where the savings are:

- ☐ Buy produce in season. It often costs less and tastes better
- ☐ Stock up on frozen vegetables without added sauces or butter
- ☐ Choose canned vegetables labeled "low-sodium" or "no salt added," and fruit packed in 100% juice
- ☐ Beans, peas, and lentils cost less than similar amounts of other protein foods
- ☐ Buy family-size packs of meat and freeze what you won't use soon
- ☐ Eggs and canned tuna, salmon, or sardines are low-cost proteins
- ☐ Rice and pasta are budget-friendly grains; pick whole-grain versions
- ☐ Compare unit prices (cost per ounce or pound) to find the better buy

6

Weekly Meal Planner

Week of

Prep day & time

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

7

Grocery List

Vegetables

☐

☐

☐

Fruit

☐

☐

☐

Protein

☐

☐

☐

Dairy

☐

☐

☐

Whole Grains

☐

☐

☐

Pantry & Other

☐

☐

☐

Grocery budget this week

Actual spent

PLANNING BEATS IMPULSE, EVERY TIME

You shop with a list. Shop for a vehicle with one, too.

The grocery store and the dealership work the same way: walk in without a plan and you leave with things you didn't need. With the Buyer Brief, we research the rebates, incentives, and incentivized rates on the vehicle you want and value your trade, so you know the right numbers before anyone starts selling.

Buyer Brief \$99

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THE DEALERSHIP HAS EXPERTS. NOW YOU DO, TOO.

SOURCES
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture & U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030: dietaryguidelines.gov and realfood.gov
Oklahoma State University Extension, The New Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025–2030: extension.okstate.edu
U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA), How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label: fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), About Water and Healthier Drinks: cdc.gov/healthy-weight-growth/water-healthier-drinks
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, MyPlate, Healthy Eating on a Budget and Shop Smart: myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget
FoodSafety.gov (HHS), Cold Food Storage Chart: foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/cold-food-storage-charts

General public-health education, not medical or nutrition advice. Needs vary by person. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise or eating plan.