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Diet And Fitness
Dieting Resources
- Home
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National News
Politics
Entertainment
Sports
Traffic
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Weddings
Health
Community
Money
Food
Weird News
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Road Adventures
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Jobs
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Legal Center
Real Estate
House & Home
Education
Travel
Deals

Homepage > DIET AND FITNESS

5 Easy Steps to Healthier Eating in the New Year

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Is eating healthier one of your New Year's resolutions? Following a [fad diet](#), or being overly restrictive, will not help you or your family achieve your health goals. Healthy eating does not mean boring, tasteless foods.

Try these simple yet sensible steps that will help you adopt a healthier diet, without feeling deprived.

New Year's Resolutions You'll Want to Keep

1. Fill the plate with colorful vegetables

There are many more vegetables to try than just lettuce and tomatoes! Bright-colored and dark green leafy vegetables are especially loaded with vitamins and [antioxidants](#). They are also high in fiber, which makes them very filling. In addition, they are low in calories - good to help trim waistline. When you fill up your stomach with veggies, they will be less likely to feel the urge to binge on other high-fat or processed foods.

2. Snack on fruits - fresh or dried

When feel like snacking, grab a fruit instead of chips or cookies. Like vegetables, fruits are high in antioxidants and [fiber](#) and low in calories. To make it fun, use [low-fat yogurt](#) as a dip. This way you'll get some [calcium](#) as well as [protein](#) - which helps feel full longer. And don't forget about dried fruits. Mixing them with [whole-wheat breakfast cereal](#) and [nuts](#) makes a nutritious school snack.

3. Look for alternatives to processed meat

Instead of always packing sodium-loaded [processed ham](#) sandwiches, try using leftover high-quality protein from the night before. How does a grilled fish burger, chicken breast sandwich, or soy-based vegetarian hot dog sound to you? These protein alternatives are usually nitrate-free, low in [saturated fat](#) and more heart health friendly.

4. Choose whole grains

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating at least 3 servings of [whole grains](#) every day. Not only are they high in fiber, whole grains also contain an array of antioxidants not found in fruits and vegetables. The easiest way to increase whole grain intake is to replace some of your refined-grain products. For instance, use [whole-grain bread](#) instead of white bread when making lunch sandwiches. Substitute half the white flour with whole wheat flour in your regular recipes for cookies, muffins, and pancakes. Toss brown rice, wild rice, or barley in your vegetable soup. Or snack on popcorn instead of chips on family movie nights. (Yes, popcorn is a whole grain!) Don't forget, you don't need to completely wipe out all refined grains. You can always try serving half whole wheat/half refined as a starting point.

5. Eat breakfast

Many people often skip breakfast. Some skip it because they are too rushed in the morning and have little time to prepare. Some skip it as a measure to control weight. But studies have shown that people who eat breakfast regularly are more likely to control their weight than those who skip breakfast. An ideal breakfast contains at least 3 food groups. For instance, a bowl of whole wheat breakfast cereal with milk and blueberries can start your day the healthy way.

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