

All Foods Fit

Whether you want to feel better, lose weight, or improve your health, changing the way you eat can make a huge difference. But face it. Diets are often temporary and can be hard to follow in the long run.

This time, make changes that you can live with – forever!

Remember, all foods can fit into a healthy diet!

There really are no “good” foods or “bad” foods. Sure, some foods are healthier than others but even a less healthy food eaten in moderation can add pleasure to your diet — and that is good!

The most important thing is to think about your choices. Here are some things to think about:

Am I hungry?

Whenever you feel like eating, first notice whether you’re actually hungry. Hunger is a physical feeling — for example, your stomach may growl or you might feel irritable or have trouble concentrating. If you’re not hungry, then it’s likely that your urge to eat came from something you saw (like an advertisement), something you thought (like “I don’t want to waste food”) or something you’re feeling (like stress or boredom).

Once you’ve decided that you’re actually hungry, ask yourself a few simple questions to help you decide what to eat.

1. What do I want?
2. What do I need?
3. What do I have?
4. How much do I need?

What do I want?

When you’re hungry, a certain food, flavor or texture may come to mind. As you listen to your true hunger signals, you may realize what type of food or taste will satisfy you.

Why is it important to think about what you want? Satisfaction is not just physical fullness. Satisfaction also comes from enjoying the food you eat. Sometimes when you don’t eat the food you really want you might overeat other foods instead. You may eventually get around to eating what you wanted anyway but feel too guilty to actually enjoy a reasonable portion size.

If the food you want isn’t very healthy, ask yourself

- “Do I really, really, really, really want (fill in the blank) or is there something healthier that could satisfy me right now?”

That’s the **Four Really Test**. When you match the food you choose to what you’re hungry for, you’ll experience greater satisfaction and more enjoyment — with less food.



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What do I need?

Food fuels your body. It's wonderful to enjoy the food you choose but remember the main purpose of eating is to provide your body with the energy and nutrients it needs to function at its best.

- What health issues do you need to be aware of when choosing your food?
- Do you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes?
- Do you need to lose some weight?
- How do you feel when you eat too much of certain foods?
- What small changes could you make?
- Do you need more fruits and vegetables?
- Fewer sugary drinks?
- Less saturated fat?

Instead of thinking in terms of good and bad, keep in mind balance, variety and moderation to guide your choices.

What do I have?

Plan ahead to have a variety of foods available as you learn to let hunger guide your choices.

- What kind of food could you keep on hand to eat when you're hungry?
- How about packing a lunch and keeping healthy snacks in the car for you and the kids?
- Can you keep the ingredients for quick, healthy meals on hand?
- If you are eating out, are there options that are both satisfying and healthy?

How much do I need?

Your stomach is only about the size of your fist so it only takes about a handful of food to fill it! Serve or buy only enough to satisfy your hunger and remember, there's no need to clean your plate. The goal is to feel energetic and comfortable after eating so stop eating before you feel full or stuffed.

All foods fit. You're in charge of your decisions so think about what you eat and choose foods that are both healthy and enjoyable!

Balance — Provide your body with the nutrients it needs. Balance eating for nourishment with eating for enjoyment. You don't need to be perfect every time you eat because you have the flexibility to adjust your intake from one meal to the next to achieve overall balance.

Variety — Eating the same foods all of the time may not meet all of your nutritional requirements and leads to boredom. Eat a variety of foods from the different food groups and a variety of foods within each group for overall health and enjoyment.

Moderation — Think about your overall dietary intake, not just the portion size of one particular item. When you're listening to your instincts, you're more likely to choose less healthful foods in moderation.