

# WHOLE-PERSON WELLBEING (General Healthy Lifestyle): 03 — NUTRITION

*(NOTE: Check with your health care provider for any nutritional concerns related to physical conditions, for example, diabetes, hyperglycemia, heart disease, etc.)*

*(NOTE: Check with your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.)*

## KEY POINTS:

- **Gradual is good; think moderation, not perfection.**
- **Start reading nutrition labels.**
- **Minimize sugar intake** (*maximum of 50-60 grams per day*).
- **Start avoiding obvious processed foods** (*fast foods, sugary snacks, packaged meals, chips*).
- **Look for more natural foods; minimize preservatives.**
- **Lean green** (*and yellow and red*).
- **Avoid refined carbohydrates** (*white bread, sweet baked goods, sugary anything*).

## TRACK:

- **Weight** (*weekly*) *(Goal: lose ½ -2 lbs., if necessary)*
- **Water intake** (*daily — 8-ounce glasses*) *(Goal: 6-8 glasses)*
- **Breakfast (non-sugary)** (*daily — yes / no*) *(Goal: yes)*
- **Sugar intake** (*daily — grams*) *(Goal: < 50-60 grams max.)*
- **Vegetable/fruit servings** (*daily*) *(Goal: 2-4 servings)*
- **Second servings at meals** (*daily*) *(Goal: 0 seconds)*

## GOALS:

- **Read one of your snack's nutrition labels once per day.**
- **Start noticing your sugar intake** (*in grams*).
- **Replace 1 processed food each day** (*fast foods, packaged meals, sugary snacks*).
- **Add 1 additional serving of vegetables/fruits each day.**
- **Identify complex and refined carbohydrates in your daily diet.**
- **Decline to have a second serving at least 1 meal per day.**

## Introduction

Nutrition is a comprehensive topic. Ultimately you will get deeper into it when you move into the “Nourish” program. But the following points will lead you to a set of important initial goals to start you on your healthy lifestyle program. These are not one-time goals. They are goals to maintain over time. Most people do not like making large changes all at once. On the other hand, you have to get started somewhere. You wouldn't be participating in this program if you weren't anxious to make positive changes in your life. Consider these your first positive changes.

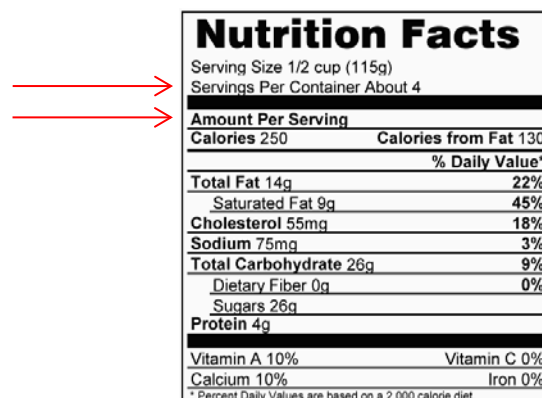
You might have heard the idea that calories are calories, and that *calories out* must equal or exceed *calories in*. As applied to weight loss, this is the belief that all you have to do is make sure that the amount of calories you take in (through food) isn't greater than the amount of calories you burn (through normal day-to-day activities and exercise). Nutrition experts now believe there is much more to this.

All calories are not created equal. And the unhealthy kind — refined sugars and other carbohydrates, processed foods, and saturated and trans fats — have a negative impact on your health and weight loss other than simply their caloric content. An added benefit to this principle is that it takes a lot more of a healthy food to equal the same calorie count of an unhealthy food. Basically, you can eat a lot more vegetables and whole-grain foods than you can fast food hamburgers and fries, chips and pastries to get the same amount of calories.

## Start Reading Nutrition Labels

Most of the information you need to make good food choices is on the nutrition labels that are on almost all foods except produce and some fresh meats.

- **Start examining labels at home or at the store on the foods you eat.**
- Specifically become aware of your sugar intake. (Are you getting too much?)
- Specifically become aware of your protein intake. (Are you getting enough?)
- Become aware of general serving sizes, number of servings per container, calorie amounts, fat, protein, carbohydrates and sugar content listed in the "Nutrition Facts" section. *(Notice that this container's volume includes 4 servings, which puts its entire contents at 1000 calories, not just 250. Companies often list their serving sizes smaller than the average person might think.)*



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup (115g)	
Servings Per Container About 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 130
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 14g	22%
Saturated Fat 9g	45%
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 75mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 26g	
Protein 4g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 10%	Iron 0%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

## Minimize Sugar Intake

Refined sugars contribute much more than their fair share of food calories. Sugar calories are often referred to as “empty calories,” that is, they have little or no nutritional value.

- ***Start to become aware of your sugar intake by reading labels, and begin to cut down.***
- ***It’s not hard to pile up the grams of sugar in a day without realizing it.***
  - Arizona Iced Tea (16-ounce can) — 48 grams
  - Coca-Cola (12-ounce can) — 39 grams
  - Yoplait Original 99% Fat-Free Yogurt, Lemon Burst (6-ounce cup) — 31 grams
- Pre-civilized humans lived without almost any sugar (and certainly no refined sugars).
- Up until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, added sugars in foods, and processed foods, were rare; sweetened treats were an uncommon, exceptional pleasure.
- Sugar is a pleasurable “want,” not a nutritional “need.”
- Today, sugar in some form is added to most pre-prepared, processed foods, often where you wouldn’t expect it.
- ***The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a maximum of 50 grams of sugar per day.*** The American Heart Association (AHA) trims that number even more.

## Start Avoiding Obvious Processed Foods

Processed foods are foods that have been chemically altered and are often made from refined (unhealthy) carbohydrates, including refined sugars and artificial substances. Processed foods are likely to have unfamiliar, chemical-name ingredients. Processed foods are characterized by increased calories, sugars, fats and sodium — and decreased nutritional value, sometimes referred to as “empty calories.”

- ***Start avoiding obvious processed foods.***
- ***Look for more natural foods; minimize preservatives.***
- ***Obvious processed foods include the following:***
  - ***Prepackaged meals (boxed or frozen)***
  - ***Quick meals (boxed or frozen)***
  - ***Addictive snacks, such as Doritos, Lays Chips, Cheese Puffs, etc.***
  - ***Breakfast bars, nutrition bars, etc.***
  - ***Most fast foods***
  - ***All junk foods***

- Manufacturers process foods to make them taste better, be more addictive and last longer on the shelf.
- Start to recognize processed foods from their nutritional labels and ingredients lists; the more unpronounceable chemical terms, the more processed is the food.
- **Gradual is good** — gradually start substituting a healthy choice for a processed snack or meal (including sweets, junk foods and most fast foods).
- Encourage the cook in the family to start cutting out boxed or frozen pre-prepared or quick meals.

## A Note About Low-Fat Foods

It is becoming generally more accepted that the recommendations against dietary fats have been exaggerated and misguided over the past few decades. What is more important is the *type* of fats you're eating.

- ***Low-fat foods have often led to high-sugar, increased sodium and other processed (therefore, high-calorie) ingredients to replace the fat.***

## Start to Lean Green (*and yellow and red*)

OK, big surprise: We should all eat more vegetables and fruits. Now it's just a matter of doing it.

- ***Start to add more vegetables and fruits to your diet whenever possible.***
- Consider substituting fruits and vegetables for processed food snacks.
- Start occasionally adding a salad for lunch, and a vegetable to your dinner menu.
- **Gradual is good** — if you don't already eat many vegetables and fruits, start small and work your way up; your plan is simply to get started, not attain perfection all at once.
- Fresh vegetables are best, but frozen is fine (avoid canned, which tend to be higher in salt and preservatives).

- **For More Information on Vegetables and Nutrition, Visit:**

- <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-tips.html>

## Differentiate Between *Complex* and *Refined* Carbohydrates

There are good carbs and bad carbs; learn the differences, and read your labels.

- ***Complex carbohydrates are the good ones (but still lean away from the white ones).***
- ***Complex carbs are generally NOT chemically altered:***
  - Whole-wheat or whole-grain foods (*not “refined” or “enriched” wheat*)
  - Vegetables (*not processed*)
  - Beans
- ***Refined carbs have generally been chemically altered or processed:***
  - White (refined) sugar
  - Most sweets such as cakes, pastries, ice cream, candy, etc.
  - Non-whole-grain pastas, pancakes, white bread, white rice, etc.
- Refined carbs are processed by the body quicker, which leads to more calorie retention.
- Refined carbs are lacking in nutritional value (sometimes referred to as “empty calories”).
- ***Gradual is good*** — processed foods contain more refined carbs, so start avoiding those.
- ***Gradual is good*** — start adding some healthy, complex carbs to your breakfast (for example, 1 piece of 100% whole-wheat toast).