A healthy eating style includes all foods and beverages. Many beverages contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too many calories from saturated fat. Here are some tips to help you make better beverage choices.

1. **Drink water**
   Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Non-diet soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of calories from added sugars and few nutrients.

2. **How much water is enough?**
   Let your thirst be your guide. Everyone’s needs are different. Most of us get enough water from the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. A healthy body can balance water needs throughout the day. Drink plenty of water if you are very active or live or work in hot conditions.

3. **A thrifty option**
   Water is usually easy on the wallet. You can save money by drinking water from the tap at home or when eating out.

4. **Manage your calories**
   Drink water with and between your meals. Adults and children take in about 400 calories per day as beverages—drinking water can help you manage your calories.

5. **Kid-friendly drink zone**
   Make water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or 100% juice an easy option in your home. Have ready-to-go containers available in the refrigerator. Place them in lunch boxes or backpacks for easy access when kids are away from home. Depending on age, children can drink ½ to 1 cup, and adults can drink up to 1 cup of 100% fruit or vegetable juice* each day.

*100% juice is part of the Fruit or Vegetable Group.

6. **Don’t forget your dairy**
   Select low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soy beverages. They offer key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium. Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups of milk per day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

7. **Enjoy your beverage**
   When water just won’t do—enjoy the beverage of your choice, but just cut back. Remember to check the serving size and the number of servings in the can, bottle, or container to stay within calorie needs. Select smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.

8. **Water on the go**
   Water is always convenient. Fill a clean, reusable water bottle and toss it in your bag or briefcase to quench your thirst throughout the day. Reusable bottles are also easy on the environment.

9. **Check the facts**
   Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery store. The food label and ingredients list contain information about added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and calories to help you make better choices.

10. **Compare what you drink**
    Food-A-Pedia, an online feature available at SuperTracker.usda.gov, can help you compare calories, added sugars, and fats in your favorite beverages.

** Milk is a part of the Dairy Group. A cup = 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.
Make healthier holiday choices

The holidays are often filled with time-honored traditions that include some of our favorite meals and foods. As you celebrate, think of little changes you can make to create healthier meals and active days.

1. **Create MyPlate makeovers**

2. **Enjoy all the food groups at your celebration**
   Prepare whole-grain crackers with hummus as an appetizer; add unsalted nuts and black beans to a green-leaf salad; include fresh fruit at the dessert table; use low-fat milk instead of heavy cream in your casseroles. Share healthier options during your holiday meal.

3. **Make sure your protein is lean**
   Turkey, roast beef, or fresh ham are lean protein choices. Trim visible fat before cooking. Try baking or broiling instead of frying. Go easy on sauces and gravies.

4. **Cheers to good health**
   Quench your thirst with low-calorie options. Drink water with lemon or lime slices. Offer seltzer water with a splash of 100% fruit juice.

5. **Bake healthier**
   Use recipes with unsweetened applesauce or mashed ripe bananas instead of butter. Try reducing the amount of sugar listed in recipes. Use spices such as cinnamon, allspice, or nutmeg to add flavor.

6. **Tweak the sweet**
   For dessert, try baked apples with cinnamon and a sprinkle of sugar instead of apple pie. Invite your guests to make their own parfait with colorful sliced fruit and low-fat yogurt.

7. **Be the life of the party**
   Laugh, mingle, dance, and play games. Focus on fun and enjoy the company of others.

8. **Make exercise a part of the fun**
   Make being active part of your holiday tradition. Have fun walking and talking with family and friends after a holiday meal. Give gifts that encourage others to practice healthy habits such as workout DVDs, running shoes, and reusable water bottles.

9. **Enjoy leftovers**
   Create delicious new meals with your leftovers. Add turkey to soups or salads. Use extra veggies in omelets, sandwiches, or stews. The possibilities are endless!

10. **Give to others**
    Spend time providing foods or preparing meals for those who may need a little help. Give food to a local food bank or volunteer to serve meals at a shelter during the holiday season.
MyPlate snack tips for kids

10 tips for making great tasting snacks

If you’re a budding chef, it’s easy to create a great tasting snack!
Below are some quick ideas that you can make on your own.

1. create a yogurt sundae!
   Top plain, low-fat or fat-free yogurt with fresh, frozen, or canned fruit, like bananas, strawberries, or peaches. Sprinkle whole-grain cereal on top for crunch.

2. make pita pockets
   Stuff a small whole-wheat pita with sliced bell peppers, salsa, and a slice of low-fat cheese. Melt in the microwave for 15-20 seconds.

3. jazz up your favorite cereal
   Make a trail mix! Stir 1/4 cup of unsalted nuts, 1/4 cup of dried raisins or cranberries, and 1/4 cup of whole-grain cereal together.

4. make a fruit sandwich
   Cut an apple into thin slices. Spread peanut butter or almond butter between two slices to create “apple sandwiches.”

5. dip your veggies
   Create veggie treats by dipping slices of cucumbers, peppers, and carrots in a low-fat salad dressing or hummus.

6. pack an afterschool snack
   For a healthy afterschool snack, keep a fruit cup packed in 100% juice or water in your bag. Some fresh fruit, like bananas and oranges, are also easy to pack and eat any time.

7. try a piece of cheesy toast!
   Toast a slice of whole-wheat bread and top with a slice of your favorite low-fat cheese.

8. freeze your fruit
   For a frozen treat on hot days, try freezing grapes or bananas! Don’t forget to peel bananas and pull grapes from the stem before freezing.

9. power up with ‘roll-ups’
   Roll a slice of low-salt deli turkey or ham around an apple wedge or around a slice of low-fat cheese.

10. build a fruit salad
    Mix your favorite sliced fruits such as pineapple, grapes, and melon.

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.
Make Half of Your Grains Whole

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm.

Some Examples of Whole Grains:
- brown rice
- buckwheat
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- oatmeal
- popcorn
- whole-wheat cereal
- muesli
- whole-grain barley
- whole-grain cornmeal
- whole rye
- whole-wheat bread
- whole-wheat crackers
- whole-wheat pasta
- whole-wheat sandwich buns and rolls
- whole-wheat tortillas
- wild rice
- whole cornmeal
- shredded wheat cereal

Whole Grain Tips—Check the ones you already do:
- Choose a whole grain, such as oatmeal, when you have hot cereal.
- Read the label on a cereal box to find the word “whole” listed with the first ingredient.
- For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.
- When baking, substitute whole-wheat or oat flour for at least half of the flour in a recipe.
- Eat whole-grain crackers.
- Serve and eat whole grains every day with meals or as snacks. Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack.

Adapted from
Team Up At Home Team Nutrition Activity Book

USDA
ChooseMyPlate.gov
“Cook-Off Craze”

It was the end of the school year, and summer was just around the corner. It was almost time for the annual (1) ___________ County School End-of-Year Cook-Off! (2) ___________ and (3) ___________ entered themselves in the cook-off. They knew they had a good chance of winning if they used fresh veggies from Grandma and Grandpa’s garden — the secret to their recipe! They were ready to start (4) ___________!

Once they got the pot of water (5) ___________, they began adding the ingredients. While (2) ___________ chopped up the (6) ___________, (3) ___________ washed the (7) ___________. (8) ___________ and (9) ___________ cabbage were next. After this, they threw in some grated (10) ___________, going crazy with all of their yummy fresh veggies! Making sure they didn’t forget some grains, they added some whole wheat (11) ___________, and for protein power, chopped (12) ___________. For a finishing touch, they sprinkled some low-fat (13) ___________ on top. Voilà! Summer Garden Soup!

The day of the cook-off finally arrived and they were ready. The event was a huge success! At the end of the day, it came time for the group of (14) ___________ to announce the winners. After Runner-Up went to a (15) ___________ (16) ___________ frozen yogurt, (2) ___________ and (3) ___________ were (17) ___________ their breath. “And first place, with the highest score, goes to (2) ___________ and (3) ___________’s Summer Garden Soup!!!” They were so happy that they (18) ___________ all day long!