

## Eating for Weight Management

### Fiber

#### WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT IT?

Fiber is like a sponge, absorbing and expanding in your stomach to make you feel fuller sooner. Also, fiber grabs onto the fats in foods and pulls them out of you before they can get absorbed, leading to lower cholesterol levels. Balancing fiber can lead to healthy digestion, wellness, and an easier path to weight management. Current goals:

25 grams per day for women

38 grams per day for men

### Grains

#### LOOK FOR:

-Fiber content. More fiber can indicate less processed, an easy way to compare grains in the grocery store. Aim for at least 4-6 grams of fiber per slice of bread.

#### AVOID:

-Label scams. Many products state they are "made with 100% whole wheat" or "whole grain" but they put just enough of those ingredients in there to make that claim and then fill the rest in with the processed ingredients. By checking both the ingredient list and the fiber content, you can get a better idea of how much of the good stuff is actually there.

### Veggies

#### LOOK FOR:

-Veggies that come in multiple different colors and that you consume from different sources of cooking to absorb different nutrients (roasting in a little spray oil allows you to absorb vitamins A and E better but steaming over water allows you to absorb vitamins B and C better).

#### AVOID:

-Veggies that are shelf stable from being packaged with salt. Steamables in the frozen section are very convenient for adding veggies to the busy family weeknight dinner, but make sure there's nothing but veggies in it!

### Dairy

#### LOOK FOR:

-Low-fat options, which include anything 1% or lower. If you can't tolerate the taste of milk that low, try mixing your current milk with the next one down, like 2% with 1%.

-If you drink a nut-based milk (i.e., almond milk), make sure it is fortified with vitamins and minerals, labeled with phrases such as "fortified" or "added calcium" on the packaging. If not, you are just drinking calorie water.

#### AVOID:

-Cheeses that are higher in fat. There are many different perceptions on how to judge fat content of cheese. The sharper the cheese, the less fat in it. Fat gives cheese moisture, so the more 'squish' a cheese has, the more fat it has. Think gouda — a high fat cheese.



## Protein

### LOOK FOR:

- Varying your choices (balance your choices between fish, skinless poultry, and lean meat choices).
- Egg recommendations: 5 yolks a week with no current limitation on egg whites.

### AVOID:

- Having a large protein serving all at once. Breaking up one large serving into two smaller ones spaced out over a few hours will help your body utilize it instead of turning it into fat.

## Fats

### LOOK FOR:

- Heart healthy options such as vegetable oil, avocado, canola oil, and nuts. Think of it like this – if the fat is liquid at room temperature, then it will be liquid in your arteries and will not clog them. An exception to this rule is coconut oil – while it is a saturated fat (and solid at room temperature), research shows that this plant-based oil does not contribute to increased cardiovascular risk.

### AVOID:

- An excessive amount of saturated fats (the artery-clogging kind usually found in animal meats and butter)
- Be avoidant of *trans* fats, which have direct links to cardiovascular conditions. The FDA has banned *trans* fats from the market, but any product with 0.5 grams per serving or less can be labeled as “*trans* fat free” and put on the shelf. To identify these products, look for the words “partially hydrogenated oils” because that indicates these *trans* fats are present. This can help you sort through the butter alternatives to choose the best option, as well as additional processed foods found in the middle aisles of the grocery store.

## Fruits

### LOOK FOR:

- A variety of fruits in different colors - whole fruits are best because they still retain their fiber (liquid fruit such as in a smoothie no longer has its fiber content). The variety of colors will offer different nutrients to help keep you healthy (think of them as WD-40 for all of the hinges in your body!)

### AVOID:

- The belief that there are “good” and “bad” fruits. Fruit is an important element to health – it’s just knowing how much a serving is. It is also important to choose fruits that are not mixed with added sugars – look for 100% juice or canned fruit packed in water. Juice doesn’t have to be the enemy, just remember that it is liquid so there is no fiber, and it is a condensed portion – an 8-ounce glass of apple juice is equal to 3 apples!

## Nuts/Seeds/Legumes

### LOOK FOR:

- Leaner nut options such as almonds are a good protein source that’s quick and convenient. Seeds and beans (such as great northern beans or kidney beans) are good sources of protein to add to foods for a better variety.

- Peanut butter is an easy go-to, but quickly adds up in fat calories. For a better option, powdered peanut butter is available as it is protein without the high fat. You can find this at chain grocery stores and reconstitute it with water to make the taste and texture of real peanut butter without all of the fat.

### AVOID:

- Large portions of these foods – for example, 3 handfuls of nuts can add up to about 600 calories.
- Salted nuts that can impact your blood pressure