

# Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



## Smart Tips for Getting Nutrients that May Be Lacking

The *U.S. Dietary Guidelines* provide recommendations for healthy dietary patterns. A pattern of eating, is a combination of the foods and beverages you eat and drink over time.

A healthy eating routine includes a variety of foods from each of the food groups. This helps us to get the nutrients at each stage of life. But when we aren't meeting targets for different food groups, we might be at risk of missing out on certain nutrients, and this can affect our health.



### Potassium

Potassium is important for many of the things your body does. It plays a role in muscle movement, managing blood pressure, and heart and nerve function. Yet, many Americans don't consume enough of the foods that provide this important nutrient.

#### Where it's Found

Vegetables, fruits and dairy products contain potassium. Good choices include sweet and white potatoes, white beans, kidney beans, plain yogurt, apricots, cooked lentils, acorn squash, and raisins.

### Iron

Iron is a nutrient of concern specifically for young children and women who are pregnant or capable of becoming pregnant.

Iron is important for growth and development. It also plays an important role in transporting oxygen throughout the body.

#### Where it's Found

Iron-fortified cereals and breads, meats, seafood, poultry and beans are a few examples of foods that provide iron. Including a source of vitamin C, such as citrus fruit, strawberries or bell peppers can help the body increase its absorption of iron from these foods.

## Calcium and Vitamin D

Calcium and vitamin D do more than help with healthy bones. Calcium plays a role in heart health and both calcium and vitamin D are involved with nerve function.

### Where it's Found

Dairy products, like milk, yogurt and cheese are good sources of calcium. Fortified foods and beverages, including soymilk and calcium-set tofu, also provide this important nutrient, as do fish with edible bones, such as sardines and canned salmon, and some types of leafy, green vegetables.

Your body converts sunlight into vitamin D when it hits unprotected skin. However, avoid extended exposure to sunlight without sunscreen.

Foods sources of vitamin D include certain types of fish, such as salmon, herring, mackerel and tuna and fortified foods and beverages like milk, soymilk, yogurt, and breakfast cereals.

To identify good sources of these nutrients using the new Nutrition Facts Label, check the % Daily Values (DV).

- **Good source of** – Provides at least 10% of the DV of a particular nutrient per serving.
- **High in** (or Excellent source of) – Provides 20% or more of the DV of a specified nutrient per serving.

## Dietary Fiber

Although the body can't digest dietary fiber, it plays an important part in healthful eating. Foods with fiber tend to be filling, which may help with weight management. Fiber also promotes regular bowel habits and may lower the risk for certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease.

### Where it's Found

Dietary fiber can be found in a variety of sources, including whole fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds. Whole grains, like oatmeal and quinoa and foods made with whole grains, such as bread, cereal and pasta, also provide dietary fiber.

*Choose foods first for your nutrition needs. If a supplement is needed, be sure to discuss safe and appropriate options with a registered dietitian nutritionist or another healthcare provider before taking.*

---

**For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).**

 **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics**

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

---

Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition.* December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](http://DietaryGuidelines.gov).

©Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Reproduction of this tip sheet is permitted for educational purposes. Reproduction for sales purposes is not authorized.