

# FOOD AND HEALTH CALENDAR

Take a systematic approach to improving your diet and lifestyle with the new Food and Health calendar. Instead of resolving to “eat better and lose weight,” set one resolution for each month throughout the year. This can improve the chance that your resolutions are kept and that they actually turn into new and healthy habits.

By Food and Health Communications Inc, and Beth Fontenot, MS, RD.



## January

January is the season for New Year’s Resolutions. As you approach a health and fitness plan, don’t be fooled by silly, expensive, or ineffective so-called “diets.” Start with a plan that is gradual, high in fiber, and high in nutrients.

## February

Make your heart happy with a healthful diet that is low in saturated fat. Begin by reducing your intake of artery-clogging saturated fat by switching from full-fat dairy products to low-fat or nonfat dairy products. Stick to MyPlate’s advice and choose low-fat or nonfat dairy options over less healthful versions.

## March

Celebrate Nutrition Month with especially healthful choices. Choose nutrient-dense foods like fruits and veggies, and steer clear of calorie-dense foods like candies, cakes, and fried foods.

## April

MyPlate advises people to fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables at each meal. This is a lot easier when you make one of your meals a salad. Start with dark, leafy greens, then pile on colorful vegetables. You can even bulk your salad up with some lean protein (like chicken breast or beans).



## May

Limit your intake of sodium. Choose “low salt” or “no salt added” versions of foods such as crackers, nuts, canned vegetables, soups, and soy sauce. Use less salt in cooking, and don’t add salt to food at the table.

## June

Celebrate Fruit and Vegetable Month with extra fruits and vegetables. Make it as easy to reach for a piece of fruit as it is to reach for a cookie by keeping a bowl of fresh fruit on the kitchen counter. When it comes to veggies, choose dark green, red, and orange vegetables like spinach, bell peppers, broccoli, and carrots.

## July

Try to exercise for at least 2.5 hours every week. If it has been a while since you were last physically active, be sure to talk with your doctor before beginning any new plan. Start slowly and gradually increase your distance or intensity.

## August

Pack a healthful lunch. Whether you’re heading back to school or just into the office, make sure your lunch is healthful and balanced. For tips, check out [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov).



## September

Eat less saturated fat, cholesterol, and trans fat. Instead, work on increasing your fiber intake. Not sure where to start? Why not choose a bowl of high fiber cereal. Look for cereals that have at least 4 grams of fiber per serving.

## October

Eat at least one meatless meal each week. Plan menus that include pasta dishes, bean dishes, whole grain breads, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Baked potatoes are easy to make and are a fantastic entree when laden with fresh vegetables. Vegetarian chili is another tasty option.

## November

As the holiday season approaches, begin practicing low-fat cooking techniques. Look for ways to modify your favorite recipes in order to lower the fat and calorie content. Attend cooking classes that focus on health, nutrients, and wellness.

## December

The holiday season is upon you. Try to maintain your weight by sticking to a consistent exercise schedule and limiting high calorie foods. As you look back over this year, you will have now developed 12 new habits to improve your health for many years to come.