

good food  
for life



# good food for life

PLANNING, PREPARING, AND SHARING

Maggie Davis

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*Good Food for Life: Planning, Preparing, Sharing*

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# Foreword

**H**AVE YOU EVER SAT IN A NUTRITIONIST'S WAITING ROOM? There are lovely flowers on a table in the corner, a pleasant receptionist typing away at the desk, and a variety of lifestyle magazines on the coffee table. Now, imagine that you are the founder of a Christian weight-loss program that has reached over a million people. Why would she be there? Surely she would already know all that needs to be known about such things! Surely she'd only be there to have a business meeting of some kind.

Well, I am that founder, and I was uncomfortable before my first meeting with Maggie Davis, MS, RD, LDN, FADA, CDE, the author of the book you are holding in your hand. We all need nutritional wisdom, including me! I went to see Maggie for advice for my own life. Meeting her became a turning point in nearly every area of my life—transforming my relationship with food and with God.

What I love most about Maggie is that she isn't about making people thin. She's not about diet as something we do to make us thin. Instead, she's about wellness and nutrition and education. That first meeting was the beginning of an important friendship. We now work together to help people see their whole life as interconnected—body, soul, and spirit.

Two years ago, Maggie and I co-authored a book entitled *Your Whole Life: The 3D Plan for Eating Right, Living Well, and Loving God*. The program I had developed thirty-five years earlier was completely revamped for a new generation of women and men. A generation ago, I used to talk about what I called the three “Ds”—diet, discipline, and discipleship. But more recently, I updated that language to be more useful to women and men today. So Maggie and I focused ourselves (I'm the plan's first and most devoted member!) and others on eating right, living well, and loving God.

*Good Food for Life: Planning, Preparing, and Sharing* is full of wisdom and fun. It builds upon what we did together in *Your Whole Life*. You will love every page of it, and you'll learn much about the beauty of food and what things you can do with food

that will enrich your life. All too many of us, because of weight issues, have come to see food as the enemy: something to avoid, something to eat as little as possible, something we dread even thinking about. The end result of these negative thoughts is that we don't plan or enjoy the preparation of good meals, and we end up eating the wrong foods, running through mealtime, and snacking with all the wrong things at the wrong time. With Maggie in your corner, you'll learn that food is a pleasure, not something to fear.

I have been in Maggie's home. She's a gourmet cook, entertains beautifully, and absolutely loves food and its presentation. I promise you that if you follow her example and begin to look at the colors on your plate, if you begin to plan your meals and shop a little differently, if you try a whole grain, or if you even read a label or two a week, your health will change, and not only will you lose a little weight, but you'll gain a lot of insight, too.

Maggie will walk you through your kitchen, look on your shelves, and check the refrigerator. She'll take you to the grocery store, show you how to read labels, and tell you what you should plant out back, if possible. What fun is in store for you within the pages of this book! Food and nutrition will look a lot different to you after you read *Good Food for Life*.

The story of the Garden of Eden is one in which you'll see how God used food to teach us the biggest lessons of life. Do we listen to God? Do we listen to our own desires? Then, at the end of the Bible, God talks about a banquet table where we will all gather to celebrate his love. And in between the beginning and the end of the Bible there's manna from heaven, loaves and fishes, water and wine, and many other stories centered around food. It's interesting that God used food so often to teach his people about love, family, fun, faith, and trust. Let's do the same.

With all my heart I endorse this book, and I thank God for Maggie and her work in my life.

*Carol Showalter*

Carol D. Showalter  
[www.3DYourWholeLife.com](http://www.3DYourWholeLife.com)

# Introduction

The ordinary acts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suggest.

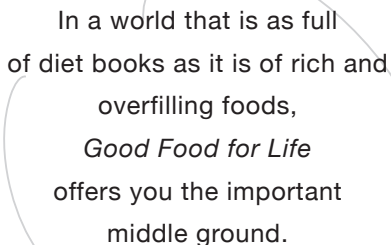
—Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul*, 1994

**A**RE YOU READY TO ENJOY HEALTHIER FOOD and to live well every day? Do you want to know more about which foods are healthy, how to plan your meals, and how get the most from the food you buy?

*Good Food for Life* follows alongside *Your Whole Life: The 3D Plan for Eating Right, Living Well, and Loving God*, which Carol Showalter wrote in 2007 to capture more than three decades of experience in living a healthy, whole Christian lifestyle. I was thrilled when Carol asked me to contribute the nutrition advice and information to that book, and I'm thrilled now to be sharing my expertise in "good food" with readers who have followed the 3D Plan and with those who are new to the concept. Think of this book as your road map for eating better for your whole life—one day at a time, one meal or snack at a time. I invite you to join me on a journey to transform your food habits and to live well. You will learn not only what to eat, but also how to manage daily meals, and how to share your table with others in ways that bring beauty into your life.

In a world that is as full of diet books as it is of rich and overfilling foods, *Good Food for Life* offers you the important middle ground—ways to make healthy eating part of your everyday life as well as an ingredient in the feasts you celebrate. This book is part information, part inspiration, part art, and part science.

Together we'll explore aspects of food and nutrition in a practical way to inform and to inspire you to improve your daily life. This volume is more than a compilation of menus and recipes. It offers an approach to managing meals, snacks, and splurges—and takes you from planning to food presentation at the table. This book is your resource for making meals a nourishing, enjoyable, and sacred part of your



In a world that is as full of diet books as it is of rich and overfilling foods, *Good Food for Life* offers you the important middle ground.

day. It is a tool that can help you to simplify and improve your everyday life in unexpected ways by applying personal values to your daily habits. Making good food a priority can help to nourish us and reduce the household food budget, lessen the burden on our planet, and better achieve our higher goals in life.

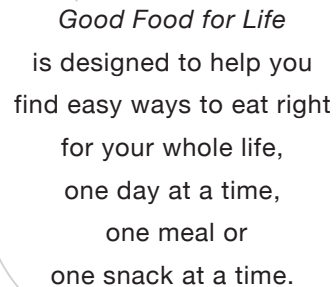
We all love programs and diets, don't we? We love to feel that—with each new plan—we can turn our lives around. And sometimes it actually happens; but most often, again and again, people all but overdose on diets and strict plans without ever making real changes in their habits. There must be a better way. In 1975, Carol Showalter sought a better way and developed 3D, a faith-based diet program, to meet her own needs as well as the needs of other women in her church, where her husband was the pastor. For thirty-five years, this plan has helped over a million people change their lives by focusing every day on eating right, living well, and loving God. Since *Your Whole Life* was published in 2007, Carol and I have been speaking to groups representing the full spectrum of Christian denominations about this mind, body, and spirit approach. We have received an enthusiastic response from audiences and from those who are actively involved in 3D groups in their workplace or church. This book was written to provide even more detail about eating right and practical advice about applying the 3D principles in daily life.

To consume good food as part of a healthy lifestyle takes time and tailoring to the individual or the family. One reason many diet programs don't work beyond the first few weeks is that they impose a particular way of eating, a narrow range of food choices, and very specific menus without teaching the reader the principles of selecting and enjoying a wide variety of foods. That's why I work with clients to help make changes that are likely to last a lifetime. So, no, I cannot promise you a miracle when you read this book, prepare the recipes, and serve the menus that you find here. But I can challenge you to a new way of thinking. I can challenge you to do the work and share the joys and hardships that come with achieving any worthwhile goal.

Diet books give us rules and menus that tell us what we should eat for a certain period of time, from days or weeks to several months. The implied promise is that if you are able to eat this exact menu for a certain period of time you will lose weight—keep exactly to the diet, they intimate, or you won't lose weight. But this book asks you to get involved in the process of creating healthful meals with thought and consideration, from beginning to end. To eat right and enjoy good food for your whole life, you will need

to rethink your approach to food. I have never worked with an individual or a family who could rely solely on a one-size-fits-all menu for all its needs. And I have never worked with anyone who could survive on prepackaged food plans or liquid meal replacements for any extended period of time. What most of us need are plans tailored to the way we work and live our lives.

*Good Food for Life* is designed to help you find easy ways to eat right for your whole life, one day at a time, one meal or one snack at a time. The transformation begins long before you go grocery shopping or turn on the stove, so we will explore simple and easy ideas for planning meals and selecting recipes that you will enjoy preparing and eating. Then we'll look at ways to get your kitchen in good working order—good food is much easier to prepare when your kitchen environment is organized and user-friendly.



*Good Food for Life*  
is designed to help you  
find easy ways to eat right  
for your whole life,  
one day at a time,  
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Once the planning's done we'll venture out to shop for food and examine the options that might work best for your budget, your available time, and your personal health goals. We'll look at efficient ways to store your food to preserve its quality and to get the most out of the items you've purchased. And you will find simple techniques for preparing food in advance, as well as for seasoning foods with simple herbs and spices even if you don't have time to follow a detailed recipe. Good taste and good health should not be mutually exclusive concepts! We'll explore techniques to achieve both of these important goals.

In *Good Food for Life* you will also find advice on using daily good food targets and learn how to apply these guidelines to your own particular needs. The book includes sample menus to show how you can eat the recommended types of foods in actual meals and snacks in a variety of different ways. These samples can also be an effective tool for creating your own daily menus. The sample menus will also prompt you to include adequate portions of fruits and vegetables into your day. Along with these menus you'll have tools to evaluate the food you buy and eat: the nutrition facts label and online-based sources of information.

In the Sharing section of this book, you will see how you can combine eating right with living well. Good food involves so much more than just what you eat. Making a commitment to keep your mealtimes sacred is equally important. If you pay attention to the

If you pay attention to the where, when, and how of eating you can take your diet—your usual meals and snacks—from good to great.

where, when, and how of eating you can take your diet—your usual meals and snacks—from good to great. For example, make lunch a time to refuel your mind, body, and spirit by mindfully focusing on the food as you relax and eat. You'll go back to work feeling satisfied and refreshed.

Eating meals that you yourself have prepared is perhaps the easiest and least expensive way to enjoy good food, but eating out is frequently a necessary part of our lives as we travel or manage busy schedules, so I will give you tips for making informed choices. And beyond just dining out, I have also included a sample buffet menu and recipes that would be suitable for any celebration or holiday get-together.

I have compiled a week of menus for each of the four seasons of the year, which are typical of the type of meals that you can plan for yourself and your household. And I have included recipes for foods that are featured in the menus so that you can try some of them and refer to them when looking at recipes from other sources. I have also given examples of what you can select for your “choice calories” and even some examples of splurges included in a particular menu. And I will give you easy tools to evaluate the food you eat—using the nutrition facts label and online sources of information.

As you read this book you will want to decide what areas need attention first. You may have a good knowledge of nutrition but not have much cooking skill. Or you may be a gourmet cook but travel on business and need to learn to make better restaurant choices. I will give you ideas for managing these situations. You may be a skilled gourmet cook but not be aware of how to make the food you cook be more nutritious by including more vegetables in your menus or by substituting whole grains for refined ones. Or you may realize that you arrive home every evening and feel stressed by deciding what to eat when you're ravenously hungry. Simply planning the night before can decrease your stress and increase the likelihood of having good food for dinner.

You don't have to change everything at once. You just need to decide where to start, and that starting point will be different for each of you.

I have included stories and experiences of some of my clients and patients, but I have changed the names to protect their privacy.

Now, before we go into the kitchen and get started, let's just briefly review some important nutrition facts that we'll use when we're planning what to eat!



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# Nutrition Basics

If more of us valued food and cheer and song  
above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world.

—J.R.R. Tolkien (1892–1973)

**G**OOD FOOD FOR LIFE IS A PRACTICAL GUIDEBOOK to help you include good food in your daily diet. I don't use the term *diet* in the sense of a restrictive way of eating, but rather as a word that describes the foods you usually eat. Whether you're trying to lose weight, gain weight, or maintain a healthy weight, you'll benefit from consuming a variety of healthy foods in moderation and balancing your intake day to day. Now let's go over some basic nutrition information before we explore the planning, preparing, and sharing aspects of good food.

First, there is no one perfect meal plan or menu or calorie level that is right for everyone. The human body can be sustained on a wide variety of foods if the energy in the food we eat is equal to the energy we burn. In times of famine the body can adapt to having less than usual. Individuals who have gone on hunger strikes can survive for weeks without eating solid food. Our bodies are designed to tap into our stores of fat, protein in our muscles and organs, and minerals and vitamins stored in our bones and other body tissues. But in daily life we strive not merely for survival but for optimum health. The best way to move toward healthful living is to provide our body with the daily nourishment of good foods in appropriate amounts for each of us.

The advice offered in this book is based on current nutrition research, in other words, what the best scientific evidence available teaches us at the present time. Of course we need to stay tuned for new information, because the work being done in genetic research is likely to make us more aware of our actual individual needs in the years to come.

The human body can be sustained on a wide variety of foods if the energy in the food we eat is equal to the energy we burn.

In reviewing individual diet histories with elderly nursing home residents, I have seen a wide variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds—all of which speak specifically to eating preferences. Some of these elders have always eaten well, and others have always eaten whatever was available or only what they liked. Most of my clients are somewhere in the middle. What they ate as growing children and young adults may hold important clues to their longevity, in addition to their genetic legacy. But I have seen that learning about what constitutes good healthy food can lead to eating right and to decreased risk of chronic diseases and better control of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease.

Today we are bombarded in all types of media with capsule news of the latest nutrition and medical research results. Bulletins are often sound bites that oversimplify or exaggerate study results. You see headlines about the “ten best foods to prevent cancer” or “miracle fruits” or “bad carbs.” So how do you know what to eat and how much? You don’t have to become a registered dietitian or licensed nutritionist to select good foods. But you do want to begin with the basics, so here are some frequently asked questions with guidance for nutrition and basic approaches to foods and thoughtful eating practices.

#### what good foods do we need TO INCLUDE IN OUR EVERYDAY DIET ?

**A**LTHOUGH CALORIES ARE OFTEN WHAT COME TO MIND when individuals are trying to eat better and care for their well-being, how we distribute those calories among good foods is perhaps even more important. We need a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats. The following chart will help you to figure out what number of portions would be an ideal amount of each good food to try to include each day. You will find typical portions of these types of foods in Appendix B (Food Groups: Serving Size Comparisons).

For women and those over 55, about 1600 Calories’ worth of servings of the core foods is a good target each day. For men or very active women, the 2200-Calorie level would be a reasonable target, and for active men the 2800-Calorie level. You can see that if your food intake is in the 2000-Calorie range (the number of Calories that are used for a guideline on the Nutrition Facts labels that we will look at in chapter 5), you should consider eating 3 fruits each day and at least 6 servings per day of vegetables.

Now, that doesn't mean that you need to eat 6 different vegetables. For example, if you have a spinach salad for lunch that has 3 cups of raw spinach, mushrooms, and onions (3 servings), and 2 stalks of celery with peanut butter (1 serving) for a snack, and 1 cup of green beans (2 servings) for dinner, you would have had a total of 6 servings of vegetables that day.

The following chart gives some specific good food targets to include in your daily meal plan based on how many calories you need. The more food your body needs, the more fruits, vegetables, and other good foods you can eat. These targets can help you compare what types of foods and the portions you usually are eating and let you know what you could eat more of or less of to be as healthy as you can be. This doesn't mean you need to sit down and count calories. And a word of caution: do not cut your calorie intake below the 1200-Calorie level without the advice of your registered dietitian, certified diabetes educator, or physician.

### good food targets VARY WITH THE AMOUNT OF FOOD YOU EAT

**R**ECOMMENDED SERVINGS OF THESE CORE FOODS provide a balance of the major nutrients: carbohydrates, protein, and fat. (For recommended serving sizes, see Appendix B.) These nutrients are the major source of the fuel (calories) that our bodies and brains need to survive and to repair our cells. For infants, children, and pregnant and lactating women, these nutrients are also necessary for growth as well as repair.

To determine how many calories you specifically need each day, go to **[www.3DYourWholeLife.com/goodfood](http://www.3DYourWholeLife.com/goodfood)** to calculate your specific needs.

This method asks you enter your usual activity level to determine your own unique needs. And don't forget to recalculate the calories if you have a significant change in your weight or your exercise level, since these factors will change the amount of fuel your body needs.

## Recommended Daily Portion Guidelines

<i>food group</i>	<i>calories/ serving</i>	800	1000	1200	1400
Vegetables	25	3	3	4	4
Fruits	80	2	2	2	2
Whole Grains	80	2	3	3	3
Starches (1 oz)	80	0	0	0	1
High Calcium Foods	100	1.5	1.5	2	2
Lean High Protein Foods	35–75	4	4	5	6
Oils & Other Fats	50	1	2	3	4
Water/ no-cal drinks (8 oz)	0	5	5	6	6

Core Food Calories	750	900	1050	1250
Your Choice Calories	50	100	150	150
Total Calories	800	1000	1200	1400

what foods do we need to eat less often OR ELIMINATE FROM OUR MEALS AND SNACKS?

**M**INIMIZE FOODS THAT CONTAIN ADDED SUGARS, saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt, or sodium, and minimize the amount of alcohol you drink (no more than 1 alcoholic beverage per day for women, 2 or fewer per day for men). And reduce your intake of processed and refined foods as much as possible. It's also important to know that salty, fatty, and sugary foods are appetite-enhancers, and they may begin to stimulate your hunger with the first bite. Saturated fats can also decrease your body's ability to know when you've had enough to eat.

1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000
5	6	6	6	7	7	8	8
3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8
5	5	6	7	7	8	9	10
7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10

1450	1650	1825	2000	2100	2300	2450	2600
150	150	175	200	300	300	350	400
2600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000

how do you define **A HEALTHY DIET?**

**A** HEALTHY DIET CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, but it should include a variety of carbohydrates, protein, and fat; water; and vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants found in real food. A healthy diet contains foods that are prepared and stored safely, minimizing the chance of food poisoning. And a healthy diet should meet the needs of the individual eating it, depending on medical condition, age, exercise level, and any other factors that may affect metabolic needs, such as pregnancy or chemotherapy. A healthy diet should also be designed to meet the food budget of the individual or household.

## how often SHOULD YOU EAT?

**S**OME FOLKS CAN'T EAT THEIR FIRST MEAL BEFORE 10 AM while others feel hungry as soon as they wake up in the early morning. It's still the total calories that count the most, but how you distribute the fuel to your body may make a difference. Research shows that individuals who eat four to six times per day are the most successful in maintaining a healthy weight. And eating more often can help prevent extreme hunger, which can lead to overeating at the next meal. Try to not go more than 4 to 5 hours between meals and snacks to keep your body evenly fueled and keep hunger under control. Eating smaller meals more often can also be helpful in stabilizing blood sugar levels in those individuals with diabetes or with low blood sugar.

## what are the current recommendations regarding CALORIES, SODIUM INTAKE, FAT, ADDED SUGARS, MICRONUTRIENTS SUCH AS VITAMINS, MINERALS, AND ANTIOXIDANTS, AND SO ON?

**F**OLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE GENERAL GUIDELINES for specific nutrient intake. Keep in mind that new research evidence is being published so frequently that recommendations may change that would override the advice listed below in the future. These guidelines may vary with an individual's medical condition and may need to be adjusted with consultation by your registered dietitian. To find a Registered Dietitian in your area, ask your doctor for a recommendation or visit the American Dietetic Association's website at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and click on "Find a Registered Dietitian."

- **calories** Americans actually consume nearly 3800 Calories per day if we average the intake of all U.S. adults regardless of their needs. By now you should have a target calorie range using one of the methods listed above. Some days you may consume more or less than other days, but think of your target calorie range as an average intake over the course of a week. Balancing your intake of good food with exercise is an important part of managing your weight and keeping your body healthy. If you are consuming more food than you need right now, consider decreasing your meals and snacks slowly, allowing your body to adjust and your mind and spirit to get used to the changes. Never cut more than 500 Calories a day without advice from your healthcare provider.

- **sodium** — The average person in the United States consumes about 3000 to 4500 mg of sodium each day, and yet our bodies need only a minimum of 250 mg of sodium daily. One quarter of a teaspoon of table salt contains about 500 mg. Sea salt contains just as much sodium as mined table salt. Many processed foods contain over 1000 mg per serving. Restaurant entrees may contain over 2000 mg. Good food containing less than 2300 mg per day is recommended for healthy individuals; less than 1500 mg daily is best for those with hypertension or who are salt-sensitive, middle-aged or older adults, or African Americans.
- **potassium** — The daily recommendation for potassium is 4700 mg per day, which is about double the amount of sodium needed per day. Major sources are fruits and vegetables, so meeting the daily portion guidelines for these foods will insure that you get enough. Individuals on certain medications such as diuretics, which cause you to lose potassium, may need to eat more high-potassium foods. If you have certain medical conditions such as kidney failure, you may be advised by your healthcare provider to limit potassium to a specific level. A nutrition professional can help you to customize your meals and snacks.
- **carbohydrates** — Try to consume at least 3 servings of whole grains. Half or more of all the grains you eat in a day should be whole grains. The more calories you burn each day, the more carbohydrates you will need. Try substituting whole-grain flour or white whole-wheat flour for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the white flour in a recipe. And look for whole-grain cereals that are minimally processed, such as shredded wheat or old-fashioned (steel cut) oatmeal. These foods will be metabolized more slowly than cereals that are more processed or refined and will keep you full longer after eating them. Whole grains will also contain all of the vitamins and minerals that occur naturally in the grain, not just the nutrients that have been put back in the enrichment process.
- **fiber** — Most adults need somewhere between 20 and 40 grams of fiber each day. The higher your calorie intake, the higher your fiber intake should be. Increase your fiber intake gradually so that your digestive system can adjust. Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will insure that your fiber intake is in the healthy range.

- **added sugars** The most specific guideline for limiting added sugar intake was issued by the American Heart Association in August 2009 ([www.AmericanHeart.org](http://www.AmericanHeart.org)). These recommendations advise that women consume no more than 100 Calories (less than 6 teaspoons or 24 grams) per day of added sugar and that men consume no more than 150 Calories (less than 9 teaspoons or 36 grams) per day of added sugar. Most Americans now consume more than 360 Calories (22 teaspoons or 90 grams) of sugar per day. Even individuals with diabetes can plan small amounts of sugar into their meals and snacks. Be aware that sugar added to foods may be listed by other names in the ingredient list on packaged foods (such as glucose, fructose, dextrose, corn syrup, agave syrup, honey, brown rice syrup, malt and many others). The bottom line is to keep your added sugar intake as low as possible most days.
- **fat** A moderate fat intake, similar to the Mediterranean diet, rather than a very low fat intake may be healthiest for most individuals. The Mediterranean diet includes less saturated fat (for example, animal fats and hydrogenated fats such as shortening) but more monounsaturated fats and omega-3s from fish, nuts, olives, and olive oil than the typical American diet. There is some evidence that intake of the omega-3s called EPA and/or DHA from fish or omega-3 fish oil supplements may help decrease the risk of diabetes, macular degeneration, and prostate cancer. It may also decrease the risk of fatal heart attacks in those individuals who have heart disease. Don't take more than 1000 mg per day without consulting with your Registered Dietitian or health care provider. **Fat is necessary for our overall health** and to provide the satisfaction we look for after eating. You can visit the American Heart Association website at [www.myfatstranslator.com](http://www.myfatstranslator.com) to calculate a target range of fat to consume, including limits on saturated fat, trans fats, and cholesterol. Try to limit your saturated fat intake to no more than one-third of the total fat you eat. That means that if you eat about 45 grams of total fat per day, try to eat less than 15 grams of saturated fat per day. Avoid trans fat completely. And if you have diabetes or a cardiovascular disease, you should consult a nutrition professional to specify your unique fat needs.
- **cholesterol** Limit your cholesterol to 300 mg per day if you don't have high cholesterol levels, but keep under 200 mg if your LDL (bad cholesterol) is high

or you are taking medication to lower your cholesterol. Your body makes approximately 1000 mg of cholesterol per day, so it's fine if you don't consume much cholesterol. Try limiting your beef intake to no more than one meal per week. A 3-ounce portion of trimmed lean sirloin steak and a 3-ounce cod filet both contain 47 mg of cholesterol, so watch your portions of protein from all animal sources to keep cholesterol consumption at your target level.

- **calcium** The reference Daily Value used for nutrition labeling is 1000 mg as a target for adults and children over the age of four years. These references are designed to meet the needs of most individuals, but after menopause women need an additional 200 mg or a total of 1200 mg to meet their needs. If you don't consume dairy products or soy products with added calcium, you may need a calcium supplement to get these recommended amounts daily. See the high-calcium food group in Appendix B for calcium content of a variety of foods and supplements.
- **vitamin D** This vitamin has been the center of attention in the nutrition world recently, and there is controversy about the amount a given individual needs. Since more individuals are being tested, I am seeing more clients who have low blood levels of this important vitamin. The reference Daily Value is currently 400 International Units (IU) per day, but some experts recommend 800 to 2,000 IU of vitamin D per day, especially during winter months for those individuals who live in northern climates or who are at risk of a deficiency. Check with your healthcare provider if you're not sure how much to take. Risk of vitamin D insufficiency increases as you age; for example, by the time you are seventy, your body is 75 percent less able to convert the vitamin D in your skin to the active form. And it's also nearly impossible to get enough of this sunshine vitamin from food, so taking a supplement might be necessary to top off the amount you get in your diet. And if your doctor tests you and finds that your blood level of vitamin D is low, he or she may want to prescribe a mega-dose for a short time to restore you to a healthy level. Also, being a smoker, taking certain medications, or drinking alcohol to excess can interfere with your absorption of vitamin D and indicate the need for supplementation.
- **iron** Intake of this mineral varies with age and gender. While men need only 6 mg per day, women need 8 mg prior to menopause but only 5 mg after menopause. Because your absorption of iron from plant-based foods can be reduced by other

substances in food that you eat on the same day, the Daily Value for iron is 18. Pregnant women need the most iron (22 mg per day). The needs of lactating women return to the pre-pregnancy level. Since animal sources are the highest in iron and the iron they contain may be easier to absorb, those individuals following a vegetarian diet may need to pay more attention to plant foods rich in iron or take a multivitamin that contains 100 percent of the Daily Value.

- **vitamin C** Adult women and men need 60 mg vitamin C per day, but pregnant women need 70 mg and lactating women need 100 mg per day. Selecting fruits and vegetables that are good sources of vitamin C daily will help to meet this recommendation, but when calories are limited a supplement may be necessary. Most multivitamin supplements provide 60 mg in a daily dose. Avoid mega-doses unless you consult with your health care provider. Food sources of vitamin C are noted in the Food Groups list in Appendix B.
- **vitamin A** This vitamin should be included at least every other day. The Daily Value for vitamin A is 5,000 IU per day or 35,000 IU per week. Because your body can store this vitamin you don't need to consume it each day. You can eat fruits and vegetables that are very rich sources of vitamin A (such as sweet potatoes or carrots) three or four times per week and be sure you are getting enough. Good foods that are high in this vitamin are noted in the Food Groups list in Appendix B. If you do take a multivitamin, avoid those that contain more than 100 percent of the Daily Value.

**Fluid Intake**—Water is the most essential nutrient, but how do you know how much to drink each day? If you are eating appropriate amounts of fruits and vegetables (which contain up to 80 percent water) you may be getting about one-fifth of the fluids you need each day from produce. But if you are eating mostly dry foods such as snack foods, protein, and fats you may be getting very little water in the solid foods. Although you can count the fluids in coffee, tea, milk, and soups, you shouldn't count alcoholic beverages as part of your daily requirement. And your fluid intake should also be spaced out during the day. Women should consume 9 cups of fluid per day; men should consume 13 cups of fluid per day. Good food targets in Appendix A include recommended amounts of fluid based on the amount of food you consume.

If you are physically active you may need 1–3 cups of additional water or fluid each day, especially before, during, and after exercise. I recommend using filtered tap water rather than bottled water, since many bottled waters are simply bottled tap water. And the amount of raw materials and energy used to bottle this water leaves a big carbon footprint on the earth. Get yourself a good glass or stainless steel insulated cup to carry your water when you are away from home.

- **alcohol** Alcohol is not a required nutrient but it does contain calories. In fact it contains nearly twice the calories of sugar. It can be consumed as part of your choice calories. Women should not consume more than 1 serving per day and men should drink no more than 2 servings per day. Serving sizes vary depending on the drink, but in general 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1 ounce of distilled liquor would count as 1 serving. Keep in mind that many mixed drinks may contain 2 or more servings in a single glass, and juices, cream, or other ingredients will also contribute extra calories.
- **antioxidants** Current research suggests that foods high in antioxidants may help prevent many diseases, but the studies are far from conclusive on exactly what amounts of these substances found in food are necessary. In the meantime, a diet that includes a wide variety of vegetables, fruits, nuts, beans, and whole grains is going to provide a significant amount of antioxidants. The various pigments that color fruits and vegetables are indicative of the antioxidant type as well as content, so varying the colors on your plate may be more beneficial in keeping us healthy than taking supplements or limiting our choices to just a few foods that are promoted as high in antioxidants.



# Meal and Snack Planning

## Managing Time, Money, and Health

At my house the main discussion at lunch was what we were going to have for dinner.

—Paul Lynde (1926–1982)

**P**LANNING IS THE STARTING POINT for achieving any worthwhile goal or embarking on any journey. Having a route mapped out does not mean that you can't take a side trip if you find an unexpected point of interest to visit. But the map will help you get to your ultimate destination without getting lost along the way.

Not everyone's plan will be the same, and not everyone's destination will be the same. So the ideas presented here are designed to help you to evaluate how you eat now and to encourage you to think about what you want to eat and be ready to commit to a general plan for every day.

Planning your at-home meals, your snacks, and your away-from-home meals can be done on a daily or weekly basis, depending on how often you shop, on how well-stocked your kitchen is, and on your lifestyle. Begin by developing a repertoire of five to seven dinner meals that you can always depend on, especially when life gets hectic and you don't even have time to think or plan. Always in a rush? Then have restaurant or menu choices planned in advance for occasions when eating out or taking out is a necessity. Even unplanned, unpredictable meals will improve as your habits and food choices become more natural and intuitive. Small, simple changes can make a big difference.

When I first met my clients Natalie and David, they were eating out or getting take-out meals nearly every night. They have two children under the age of three, and both parents work full time. They wanted to lose weight and give their young children better eating habits, but it was obvious that cooking at home every night would be too drastic a change for them. As we talked about what

Begin by developing a repertoire of five to seven dinner meals that you can always depend on, especially when life gets hectic and you don't even have time to think or plan.

changes would be realistic for them at the start, they agreed to have dinner at home two nights a week. Next we worked on selecting different items at their favorite restaurants and take-out places using menus and online nutrition information that these restaurants provide. After several months, they are now eating out only twice a week. They have both started losing weight, and they and their children are eating more fruit and vegetables, which they were rarely getting with their take-out dinners.

## Redesigning Your Meals

ready TO BEGIN PLANNING?

**I** RECOMMEND SITTING DOWN WITH A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER or a blank calendar and actually writing down what you will have for dinner for a week. Or if you really don't feel creative, simply keep track of your usual lunch or dinner meals for a week or two. Don't change everything at once; for example, you could add a second vegetable to your usual dinner even if it's a frozen entrée. You can also go to [www.3DYourWholeLife.com](http://www.3DYourWholeLife.com) to view more sample menus or to print out a meal planning worksheet.

When planning dinner, consider starting with the entrée (usually lean protein or whole grain item) first, for example, chicken legs, black beans, eggs, fish, and so on. Make the protein approximately a quarter of the food on your plate. Then you can select vegetables that are compatible with the entrée, including items from each of the color groups each day whenever possible:

blue and purple    green (pale or dark green)  
white    yellow and orange    red

Plan to have **at least half your plate full of vegetables**. You'll be increasing the visual appeal of your meal. And choosing some foods from each of the color groups insures not only a good variety of vitamins and minerals, but also each color of pigment provides a different cluster of antioxidants that are so important for optimal health. Each day's menu should include a good source of vitamin C (like citrus fruit or bell peppers) and at least 4 servings each week of a vegetable or fruit (carrots, butternut squash, spinach and other dark greens, cantaloupe, or mango) that is high in vitamin A. Try including a fruit in your main meals or snacks.

## Planning Possibilities

- Pick a day each week and set aside thirty minutes to plan what you will eat for the upcoming week. Consider your schedule and that of your dinner partners. Start with one meal a day, for instance, dinner. Write down your plan and keep it visible in the kitchen so that you can refer to it every day.
- Have meal kits bundled together for quick last-minute meals. For example, take a look at the recipe for “Shrimp, Cannellini, and Tomatoes.” Keep a copy of the recipe with some canned beans and tomatoes to avoid having to locate it when you’re rushed. Keeping frozen cooked shrimp on hand completes the recipe. You might even consider storing the ingredients and a copy of the recipe in the dish or equipment you’ll need to make it.
- Take non-perishable snacks with you when traveling or if you have limited access to good choices when away from home, such as a snack bag of nuts and dried fruit. Have snacks pre-portioned to avoid eating a larger portion if you’re very hungry or stressed. Planning the portion ahead makes it less likely that you’ll overeat. If you don’t eat the snack immediately, it will not spoil or expire that day.
- Check online for menus and nutritional information from your favorite restaurants. If your local restaurant doesn’t have a website, you might find that the national chains list typical menu items such as pizza, pasta, salads, and sandwiches on their websites. Use this information to analyze the kinds of meals you are ordering. Look for healthier options and plan to order something different next time you dine out.

Next to consider are the whole grains and starches that you will include. What texture and taste will complement the protein and produce you’ve planned? Include at least 3 servings of whole grain each day and make at least half your grains “whole.” For example, if you usually eat 6 servings of starches such as bread or cereals, then make sure that at

least 3 servings are from whole-grain sources. Of course, you can choose all whole grains to make your meals even healthier. Check the Food Group lists in Appendix B for serving sizes to evaluate the foods that you usually eat. For example, if you eat a cup of oatmeal every morning, you'll already be getting 2 servings of whole grain, since each  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup gets credit as 1 whole grain. The portions listed in the Food Groups lists in Appendix B are not necessarily the right portions for everyone, but they can help you evaluate the amounts of what you are eating and what you could include in your meal planning. Having a slice of tomato and 1 leaf of lettuce on your sandwich would not be enough to count as a serving of vegetable, although garnishes of fruits and vegetables could certainly add up over the course of an entire day to an additional serving.

Your dinner meal is only a part of your daily food intake. So you might want to jot down what you eat for two or three days (including the amount) just to see what you are consuming in a typical day. Be sure to include restaurant meals, school lunches, tasting food while cooking, snacks at meetings or while in the car, and any beverages or condiments, so that you will have a good snapshot. Next, using the good food targets in Appendix A, determine how your intake of the core foods compares with the recommended servings. Women should use the 1600-Calorie level guideline for comparison. Men should compare daily foods with the 2200-Calorie guideline for core foods. Feel free to use another calorie level for comparison if you have specific nutritional needs. For example, individuals with diabetes who are counting carbohydrates should consult with their diabetes educator or registered dietitian before changing their customary meal plan. And if you are very active physically or work out intensely, you'll need more good food than the average person who isn't seriously exercising.

On the next page is an example of how portions of the same menu might differ for a typical woman needing about 1600 Calories and a typical man needing approximately 2200.

## Menu Comparison\*

<b>Breakfast</b>	1600 Cal.	2200 Cal.
<b>Oven-baked Oatmeal</b>	1 serving	1 serving
Nonfat Milk	1 cup	1 cup
Pink Grapefruit Sections	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Lunch</b>		
<b>Thin Crust Pizza</b>	1 slice	2 slices
Green Grapes	15 (3 ounces)	15 (3 ounces)
Broccoli Slaw (oil and lemon)	2 cups	2 cups
<b>Afternoon Snack</b>		
Strawberry Greek Yogurt	6 ounces	6 ounces
Tangelo	1	1
<b>Dinner</b>		
<b>Classic Roasted Chicken</b>	3 ounces	4 ounces
Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce	2 tablespoons	2 tablespoons
Roasted Roots	1 serving	2 servings
Fresh Asparagus	1 cup	1-1/2 cups
Whole Wheat Roll	-----	1
Fruit Crisp	1 serving	1 serving
<b>Evening Snack</b>		
Air Popped Popcorn	3 cups	6 cups

\* Foods that appear in bold are available in the recipe section of Chapter 1

Below is the nutrient content of each menu. Notice that not only is the calorie count different but other nutrients such as fat, fiber and sodium are proportionately higher in the 2200-Calorie menu portions. And although the nutrition facts label does not separate the amount of added sugars from the total sugar content, there are actually only 26 total grams of added sugar (from the yogurt, the fruit crisp, and 1 gram in the pizza crust). That's far less than the 36 grams or less per day that I mentioned earlier. The remainder of the sugar is natural sugar from whole unprocessed foods such as milk, fruit, vegetables, and whole grains. These are some of the very foods that contribute to the excellent fiber content of this menu.

### 1600-Calorie Menu

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size (1793g)			
Servings Per Container			
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>			
<b>Calories</b> 1610		Calories from Fat 480	
		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 54g			<b>83%</b>
Saturated Fat 19g			<b>95%</b>
Trans Fat 0g			
<b>Cholesterol</b> 130mg			<b>43%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 910mg			<b>38%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 223g			<b>74%</b>
Dietary Fiber 30g			<b>120%</b>
Sugars 116g			
<b>Protein</b> 78g			
Vitamin A 290% • Vitamin C 470%			
Calcium 120% • Iron 60%			
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4			

### 2200-Calorie Menu

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>			
Serving Size (2273g)			
Servings Per Container			
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>			
<b>Calories</b> 2220		Calories from Fat 670	
		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 75g			<b>115%</b>
Saturated Fat 24g			<b>120%</b>
Trans Fat 0g			
<b>Cholesterol</b> 160mg			<b>53%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 1580mg			<b>66%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 307g			<b>102%</b>
Dietary Fiber 44g			<b>176%</b>
Sugars 130g			
<b>Protein</b> 107g			
Vitamin A 480% • Vitamin C 530%			
Calcium 140% • Iron 90%			
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4			

Remember, you don't have to count calories to plan healthy meals, but **YOU** will need to count servings of the core foods until you get the hang of it.

If your usual meals and snacks don't add up to the total recommended servings of the core foods, make a note of which foods you want to include more often. A client of mine, Nancy, thought she was eating a good diet and healthy foods. When she kept a food log for a week, she discovered that she was eating excessive amounts of fruit but not eating many vegetables. To get back in balance, Nancy started to substitute raw vegetables in place of fruit at lunch. And she began by buying a platter of assorted raw vegetables at the supermarket each week and placing it on a shelf at eye level in her refrigerator. **Simple changes** like the one Nancy made can lead to big improvements in your eating habits.

The lower-calorie menu comes up a bit short on iron, providing only 60 percent of the Daily Value. Since women generally need less food (and foods contain iron) than men and they need more iron before they reach menopause, it's more difficult to meet their iron needs without taking a multivitamin or overeating red meat. Choosing foods that are enriched with iron or foods that are naturally high in iron, such as dark green leafy vegetables, dried plums, dark meat chicken, and shellfish is also a great option.

### Use the three-color rule

Aim for at least three different colors on your plate for main meals. This is an easy way to get a variety of nutrients and flavors into each meal you serve, and it provides eye appeal as well. Vegetables and fruits can provide color and improve a beige or white meal nutritionally. Expand beyond pasta, potatoes, chicken, rice, and cheese!