Health is often described as having a sound mind, body, and spirit. Healthy looks different on everyone and is individual and subjective. Plus, food has many meanings and is not just representative of nutrients.

*Always consult your healthcare provider(s) when it comes to matters pertaining to your own individual health and that of your family members.*

Make nutrition choices that honor your health, budget, societal access, goals, and taste preferences. We recognize ALL bodies and backgrounds deserve dignity and an inclusive view of health that promotes overall well-being.*
BUILD A HEALTHIER relationship with food

Ditch the Diet Mentality

Throw out the diet books and magazine articles that offer you the false hope of losing weight quickly, easily, and permanently. It’s what you do consistently over time that matters.

Respect Your Body

Accept your genetic blueprint. Just as a person with a shoe size of eight would not expect to realistically squeeze into a size six, it is equally futile (and uncomfortable) to have a similar expectation about body size. Respect your body so you can feel better about who you are. It’s hard to reject the diet mentality if you are unrealistic and overly critical of your body size or shape.

Honor Your Hunger

Keep your body biologically fed with adequate energy and carbohydrates. Otherwise, you can trigger a drive to overeat. Once you reach the moment of excessive hunger, all good intentions are fleeting and irrelevant.

Make Peace with Food

Call a truce; stop the food fight! If you tell yourself that you can’t or shouldn’t have a particular food, it can lead to intense feelings of deprivation that build into uncontrollable cravings and, often, binging. Silence the internal dialog saying that you’re “good” for eating minimal calories or “bad” because you ate a piece of chocolate cake.

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Discover the Satisfaction Factor

When you eat what you really want, in an environment that is inviting, you trigger a powerful force to help you feel satisfied and content. With this experience, you may find that it takes just the right amount of food for you to decide you’ve had “enough.” Observe the signs that show that you’re comfortably full. Pause in the middle of eating and ask yourself how the food tastes, and what your current hunger level is.

Cope with Your Emotions with Kindness

Find kind ways to comfort, nurture, distract, and resolve your issues. Anxiety, loneliness, boredom, and anger are emotions we all experience. Food may comfort for the short term, distract from the pain, or even numb you. But food won’t solve the problem—you’ll ultimately have to deal with the source of the emotion.

Enjoy Movement

Forget militant, extreme exercise. Shift your focus to how it feels to move your body, rather than the calorie-burning effect of exercise. If you focus on how you feel from working out, such as energized, it can make all difference.

Source: Intuitive Eating, Evelyn Tribole, M.S., R.D.N., and Elyse Resch, M.S., R.D.N.
be mindful:
4 HABITS TO AVOID

Eating too quickly. 
Do you tend to gobble your food? Sip water and put your fork down between bites to slow down.

Eating while distracted. 
If you usually eat in front of a screen, turn everything off and focus on your food instead.

Drinking soda or sugary drinks often. 
Soda and sweet juices are big sources of unneeded calories. Swap it out for water on a regular basis.

Eating when you’re not hungry. 
It’s easy to snack because you’re bored, anxious, or lonely. Break this habit by asking if you’re truly hungry before you eat. If not, do something else instead, like going for a walk or calling a friend.

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Tips for handling food cravings:

- **Schedule your snacks.** Plan for nutritious snacks to keep your body biologically fed. Keep portable, nutrient-dense snacks in your desk, backpack, or car.

- **Take a walk, work on a hobby, or call a friend.** When an intense craving hits, take a moment to consider what else you might be needing at that moment. Are you actually hungry or are you bored or lonely?

- **Start a craving journal.** Note the time of day your craving appeared, how long it lasted, the food you craved and how you handled the situation.

- **Keep what you often crave on hand.** Eat it mindfully, enjoy the experience and put it away when you’re satisfied. When you know you have the treat on hand, you’re less likely to overeat it.

Misleading Claims:

- Recommendations that promise a quick fix.
- Dire warnings of danger from a single product or regimen.
- Claims that sound too good to be true.
- Simplistic conclusions drawn from a complex study.
- Recommendations based on a single study.
- Dramatic statements that are refuted by reputable scientific organizations.
- Lists of “good” and “bad” foods.
- Recommendations made to sell a product.
- Recommendations based on studies published without peer review.
- Recommendations from studies that ignore differences among individuals or groups.

Source: The Food and Nutrition Science Alliance

RED FLAGS

When people follow restrictive diets or completely cut out groups of foods, cravings can become more intense and can lead to a vicious cycle of indulging, overeating and guilt.

WHEN CRAVINGS CALL

Always consult your healthcare provider(s) when it comes to matters pertaining to your own individual health and that of your family members.
STRESS-busters

When it comes to food and stress, it’s complicated! One of the best things you can do for your body is to choose a balanced, healthy eating style. Participating in regular physical activity is also beneficial for managing stress. Additionally, to ward off stress try:

- Relaxation activities, such as meditation, guided imagery or breathing exercises.
- Socializing with friends and loved ones for emotional support during stressful situations.
- Limiting excess caffeine.
- Consider seeking professional help. Stress can become debilitating. Counselors and other health care providers can offer treatments to help combat stress.

You don’t have to do it alone.

For more information:
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Nutrition.gov | USDA
- USDA Food and Nutrition Information Center | FNIC
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration | FDA
- The American Heart Association | AHA

Your Perspectives EAP, MAP or SAP is here to support you on your health journey.

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