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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Tips For Healthy Eating

A healthy diet can help reduce your risk of heart disease, high cholesterol, stroke, and other health conditions.

## Building a Healthy Plate



Figure  
1.  
Building  
your  
plate  
for a  
healthy  
meal.

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### Make vegetables and fruits half of your plate

- Eat vegetables and fruits that are different colors, such as dark leafy greens, red peppers, and orange squash. This will make sure you get all the nutrition you need. When it comes to healthy eating, potatoes do not count as vegetables. They increase your blood sugar.

### Make $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate whole grains

- Some good whole grains are whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, quinoa, oats, and brown rice. You can also eat foods made with whole grains. These foods have a lower effect on blood sugar and insulin than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains. They can also help you digest your food, keep your heart healthy, and keep your weight under control.

## Make ¼ of your plate protein

- Fish, poultry (such as chicken and turkey), beans, and nuts are healthy protein sources. They can be mixed into salads or served with vegetables. Limit how much red meat (such as beef) you eat to 1 or 2 servings a week. Do not eat processed meats, such as bacon and sausage.

Limit how much dairy you eat and drink to 1 or 2 servings a day of low-fat or fat-free milk or yogurt. Skim and 1% milk have the same amount of calcium and nutrients than whole milk, but with less fat and fewer calories.

Use healthy vegetable oils when you cook. Examples are olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower, and peanut oil.

Drink water, coffee, or tea. Avoid drinks high in sugar, such as soda and energy drinks. A 12-ounce can of soda is the same as eating 10 packets of sugar!

It's OK to treat yourself once in a while. Foods such as olive oil, nuts, and avocados are good for your heart. They have a lot of calories, though, so eat them in small amounts. Limit how often you eat pizza, ice cream, cookies, fried foods, and foods cooked in palm oil, margarine, or butter.

## Learn More

**MyPlate**

[www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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