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**Choices for Good Health: American Cancer Society Guidelines for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention**

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# Choices for Good Health: American Cancer Society Guidelines for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention

IT'S TRUE: A HEALTHY DIET AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY HELP PREVENT CANCER

And healthy communities can help us make the right choices. After reviewing the scientific evidence, the American Cancer Society (ACS) has confirmed that maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, and eating a healthy diet can help prevent cancer. And you can start to eat smarter and be more active at any time—from childhood to old age. No matter when you start, you'll begin to be healthier and reduce your cancer risk. This set of guidelines for nutrition, physical activity, and cancer prevention was developed to help you make choices that may reduce your risk of cancer, and to promote healthy changes where you live, work, and play.

HOW CAN I USE THESE GUIDELINES?

You may already be following some or all of them. If you want to make changes:

- Try some of the tips included here.
- Start slowly—small steps can add up to big changes!
- Promote healthy changes in your community, worksite, or schools.

1. MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT THROUGHOUT LIFE.

- Balance caloric intake with physical activity.
- Avoid excessive weight gain throughout the life cycle.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight if currently overweight or obese.

## The Right Weight

Calculating your body mass index (BMI) is one of the best ways to learn whether your weight is right for someone of your height. You can find your BMI by using a simple chart, by calculating it online (visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) and search for “bmi calculator”), or by asking your doctor. Maintaining a healthy weight is more important than ever! Eating right and being active go hand in hand. Watching what and how much you eat and being more active are keys to weight control.

## Downsize!

It seems like everything these days is “supersized.” Cutting back can be as simple as watching your portion sizes. Share a restaurant entree with a friend or just eat half and have the rest the next day. Little steps can add up to big calorie savings.

## Read Those Food Labels!

Low-fat and fat-free don't always mean low-calorie. Low-fat foods that are high in calories from sugar and other refined carbohydrates won't necessarily help control your weight. Try substituting vegetables, fruits, and whole grains for higher-calorie foods.

TABLE Examples of Moderate- and Vigorous-intensity Physical Activities

	Moderate-intensity Activities	Vigorous-intensity Activities
Exercise and leisure	Walking, dancing, leisurely bicycling, ice and roller skating, horseback riding, canoeing, yoga	Jogging or running, fast bicycling, circuit weight training, aerobic dance, martial arts, jumping rope, swimming
Sports	Volleyball, golfing, softball, baseball, badminton, doubles tennis, downhill skiing	Soccer, field or ice hockey, lacrosse, singles tennis, racquetball, basketball, cross-country skiing
Home activities	Mowing the lawn, general yard and garden maintenance	Digging, carrying and hauling, masonry, carpentry
Occupational activity	Walking and lifting as part of the job (custodial work, farming, auto or machine repair)	Heavy manual labor (forestry, construction, firefighting)

## 2. ADOPT A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE.

- *Adults:* Get at least 30 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity, above usual activities, on 5 or more days of the week; 45 minutes to 60 minutes of intentional activity on 5 or more days per week is preferred.
- *Children and adolescents:* Get 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity at least 5 days per week.

### Have Fun and Be Fit

You can be active by walking briskly, swimming, gardening, doing housework, and even dancing! The more you do, the better. If you have children, be active with them.

### It Adds Up

Your daily amount of activity doesn't need to be continuous, but is most valuable if done at least 20 minutes at a time.

## 3. EAT A VARIETY OF HEALTHY FOODS, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON PLANT SOURCES.

- Choose foods and beverages in amounts that help you achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat five or more servings of a variety of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Choose whole grains in preference to processed (refined) grains and sugars.
- Limit consumption of processed and red meats.

### Eat Your Way to Good Health

There's no doubt about it: Eating a diet composed of mostly vegetables, fruits, and whole grains is good for your health and can help reduce your cancer risk. And eating five or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day is easy when you consider how small one serving really is:

- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables.
- 1 cup leafy vegetables.
- 1/2 cup 100% juice.
- 1 medium-size piece of fruit.
- 1/2 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit.
- 1/4 cup dried fruit.

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4. IF YOU DRINK ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, LIMIT CONSUMPTION.

- Drink no more than one drink per day for women or two per day for men.
- A drink is 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

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HELP TO CREATE HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Any change you try to make for a healthier lifestyle is easier when you live, work, play, or go to school in an environment that supports healthy behaviors. Look for ways to make your community a healthier place to live.

- Ask for healthier meal and snack choices at school or work. Support retailers and restaurants that serve healthy options.
- Help make your community an easier place to walk, bike, and enjoy a variety of physical activities.