

If you have any questions, ask your physician or dietitian.

Calories

A calorie is a unit of measurement for energy. It tells you how much energy is in the food you eat or the drinks you drink. Just like a car needs gas to move, your body need calories to move and work properly.

To lose weight, it's important to eat just enough calories to keep you healthy, but not too many. Your body can use your stored extra energy as fuel.

If you would like to know how many calories to eat or drink for weight loss, talk with your dietitian or primary care clinician.

Manage calories

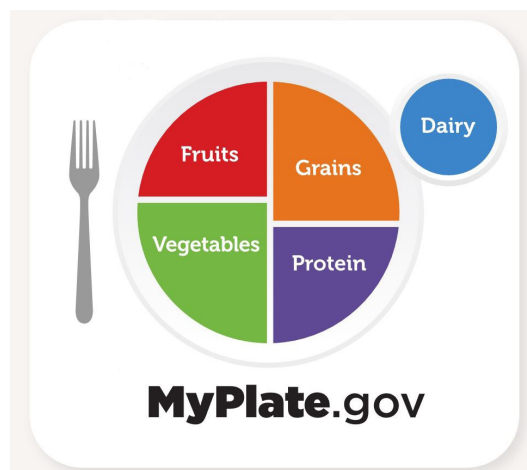
Here are some tips to help you manage the amount of calories you eat and drink.

Watch your food portions.

Eat balanced and portion-controlled meals. The MyPlate tool (Figure 1) developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture guides you on portion control.

- Fill 1/4 of your plate with protein-rich foods.
- Fill 1/4 of your plate with whole grains or starches.
- Fill 1/2 of your plate with vegetables and fruits.

Figure 1. MyPlate



For more information, go to myplate.gov to find the right plan for you.

Drink unsweetened, low-calorie beverages.

- Choose water more often. You can drink fruit-infused water or sparkling water.
- Drink unsweetened coffee and tea.
- Choose low-fat milk instead of full-fat dairy.
- Do not drink sugary beverages such as regular sodas. If you drink regular sodas often, start cutting down. Then, try not to drink them at all.
- If you have a high-calorie drink, choose a smaller size drink. Leave off sugary toppings like whipped cream.

Eat home-made foods more often.

- Try to eat fewer restaurant or fast food meals.
- Pack a healthy lunch or snacks to bring with you when you are out or at work. Make sure to keep your pre-packaged meals or snacks safe to eat. Pack them at the right temperature or choose shelf-stable options.

Make healthy food swaps.

- For a snack or dessert option, choose a piece of fruit or yogurt.
- Choose chicken or turkey breast over red meat (such as beef and pork).
- Choose air-popped popcorn (without butter) instead of potato chips.
- Swap out a bagel for a slice of whole grain toast.
- Cook your favorite “fried” foods in an air fryer instead of deep frying.
- Use plain non-fat Greek yogurt to replace mayo, sour cream or heavy whipping cream.