

Ingredients for a healthy diet

Remember that food pyramid you learned about in school? Over 4 decades of exponential deteriorating health conditions that are directly correlated to nutritional decline among Americans demonstrates that universal food pyramid guidelines fall short.

The vast majority of adult women who follow standardized food guidelines can expect to fight a losing battle with obesity, hypothyroidism, hormonal imbalance, diabetes, and even cancer. It's not because they eat too much or are lazy. Ironically, most female metabolisms cannot support such excessive amounts of carbohydrates and are literally being starved of necessary proteins and fats! This starvation response results in the plethora of metabolic malfunctions referenced above.

Humans are unique and have unique dietary requirements. Different stages in life, body types, levels of activity, places of residence, and even types of local produce available are key to developing a healthy diet plan. There are no standardized charts that take these important circumstances into consideration. So rather than offering you an ever expanding, impersonal food pyramid, this article offers a clear understanding of the Big 3 (the three primary forms of food), and how you can use them to optimize your own diet plan to meet your unique needs today... and continue to make healthy adjustments to your diet throughout the seasons of life.

Most foods can be categorized into the following three dietary categories. Many foods will fall into multiple categories. (e.g.; whole cow's milk, which has a significant amount of protein, carbs and fat)

Primarily Carbs	Primarily Fats and Oils	Primarily Proteins
<u>Sugars, starches, simple carbs</u> - honey, lactose, fructose, beets, potatoes, carrots, yams, ripe bananas, high sugar fruits and veggies, flavored yogurt, processed bread & grain products, cereals, white rice, dried fruits.	<u>Lipids</u> - oily nuts and seeds, avocados, vegetable and nut oils, peanut butter, cream, butter, high fat dairy products, rendered animal fats, lard, shortening, margarine, hydrogenated fats and oils.	<u>Plant proteins</u> - high protein legumes, peas, beans, lentils, soy, gluten, spirulina, high protein grains. <i>Plant proteins are incomplete and need to be consumed together (always serve a grain with a legume) to be metabolized. Example: beans <u>and</u> rice or lentils <u>and</u> wheat bread.</i>
<u>Whole grains, complex carbs</u> - whole wheat, brown rice, steel cut oats, lower fat/ protein nuts and seeds, most low starch vegetables and low sugar fruits. High fiber produce and grains.	<i>Hydrogenated fats and oils have undergone a process that chemically alters their composition, so that they no longer resemble anything found in nature.</i>	<u>Animal proteins</u> - plain greek yogurt, cheeses, meats, beef, chicken, pork, fish, turkey, game, eggs. <i>Animal proteins are complete and readily metabolized by humans.</i>

A well balanced diet will include getting the proper *ratio* of fats, carbohydrates (carbs) and proteins. Most women* of childbearing age require a dietary ratio that is close to 25%-35% carbohydrate, 25%-35% fat, and 25%-35% protein. That means for every 1000 calories consumed, there should be about 250-350 calories that are carbs, 250-350 calories that are fats, and about 250-350 calories that are proteins.

Comparing the chart below to most food labels can help you determine how many of each group you are consuming each day. * Women who are more active will need a higher carbohydrate ratio, whereas women who have excessive fat stores and are sedentary will need a lower ratio of carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates	Fats/oils	Proteins
1 gram = 4 calories	1 gram = 9 calories	1 gram = 4 calories
10 grams = 40 calories	10 grams = 90 calories	10 grams = 40 calories
100 grams = 400 calories	100 grams = 900 calories	100 grams = 400 calories

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Not all calories are created equally! Though the numbers may look the same, your body is not fooled. There is a *big* difference between a bowl of steel cut oats with raw honey and coconut oil versus a bowl of Honey Nut Cheerios. Understanding the quality of the food you eat is essential. Processing foods generally deteriorates nutrients. Many processed grain products are immediately converted into sugar when consumed. Some processed or shelf stable foods also contain dangerous ingredients. Fortified products are fortified with oxidized and synthetic vitamins that may be harmful to people with common genetic mutations. These excess sugars and toxins contribute to numerous health problems including infertility, diabetes, and some cancers. The chart below categorizes common foods into groups that are least or most healthy for human metabolism. A general rule is that less processed foods are usually better, but, It is important to note that most natural, unrefined sources of carbohydrates are good in limited amounts. Excessive amounts become harmful. This is especially true for root veggies like potatoes, carrots, or yams and for grains, like corn, rice, or oats. These should all be eaten with fats and proteins to moderate the way your body will metabolize them.

Most Healthy (best to use)	Suboptimal (occasional consumption ok)	Not Healthy (Inadequate or harmful)
whole grains or nuts, steel cut or old fashioned oats, freshly milled whole wheat, brown rice (most beans/ legumes and some grains are best when soaked before preparing)	packaged unbleached flour, granola, pasta, minimally processed grains. Non-fortified is best	quick oats, quick rice, white rice, most boxed cereals, white flour, white bread products, graham crackers, prepackaged pastries, fortified products
limited amounts of boiled or baked potatoes (red is best)	instant potatoes, dehydrated, boxed potatoes	excessive potatoes (more than one medium potato), potatoes fried in most oils (coconut oil is ok)
most fresh, raw, fermented or frozen vegetables & fruits (apples should be cooked)	small portions of canned vegetables, fruits (unsweetened, or lightly sweetened) jam, jellies	excessive vegetables or fruits, chemically processed vegetables, soy products
honey, molasses, unbleached cane sugar	white beet sugar, white cane sugar	inverted sugar, splenda, sucralose, other artificial sweeteners
extra virgin raw olive oil, raw safflower, raw sunflower oil, avocado oil, butter or cream (can be heated), coconut oil (can be heated), fish oil (do not heat)	almond oil, most nut oils, excessive amounts of most animal fats	hydrogenated oil, trans fats, soybean fats, canola, corn oil, margarine, shortening
most soups & broths made from animals, natural gravy	gelatin products such as pudding or custard	highly refined gelatin desserts (jell-o) refined broths, soups or gravies containing soy, nitrites and/or MSG
roasted, boiled or grilled beef, fish, mutton, chicken, turkey, game	sausages, cold cuts, jerky, smoked preserved meat, canned meats	meat products containing MSG, nitrites, hydrogenated oils, soy products
cheddar, swiss, mozzarella, provolone, parmesan, monterey and ricotta cheeses		american, velveeta, processed cheeses (made from hydrogenated fats instead of dairy)
whole fresh eggs, especially from soy-free & GMO free hens	egg whites or egg yolks	artificial egg products, such as "egg-beaters"
properly fermented or raw milk products, including yogurt, kefir, cheese	homogenized and pasteurized milk products	shelf stable milk products, including canned or boxed items that can outlast you
water, fermented beverages, unsweetened tea, green drinks, smoothies, protein drinks that don't have added harmful ingredients	100% juice products that don't have added harmful ingredients	carbonated beverages, or those containing corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, red #40

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As illustrated by the chart below, healthy daily caloric intake varies substantially. The chart below estimates average caloric needs for most childbearing age women. Of course, different circumstances change average caloric need. For example, athletes would need to add several hundred calories per day. As would pregnant and lactating women. Summer weather conditions often require less calories (unless activity increases), whereas cold winter would require more (the body burns calories to stay warm).

Approximate daily caloric need (increases with activity level)	900-1800	1200-2100	1400-2400	1600-2800
Bone Structure	petite or fine bone structure	small bone structure	Medium bone structure	Large or broad bone structure
Adult height	4'8" - 5'3"	4'11" - 5'5"	5'3" - 5'8"	5'5" - 6'0"
Optimal non-pregnant weight (increases with muscle mass)	80 lbs. - 115 lbs.	100 lbs - 130 lbs.	120 lbs. - 165 lbs.	150 lbs - 200 lbs.

Use the above guidelines to help complete a personalized dietary outline here:

My bone structure is		I should aim for this many grams of carbohydrates daily	
My height is		I should aim for this many grams of fats or oils daily	
My optimal non-pregnant weight is		I should aim for this many grams of protein daily	
Adjusting for personal circumstances and activity level, my target daily caloric intake range is		My optimal carb to fat to protein ratio should be	

When planning your meals, remember:

- Incorporate foods from each of the Big 3, so the fats and proteins are moderating the metabolism of the carbs.
- It is best to get as much of your nutrients from food sources as possible, though vitamin and mineral supplementation may be necessary to maintain optimal health.
- Add salt or seasonings that are naturally rich in vitamins and minerals.
- Remember that synthetic vitamins and minerals found in fortified commercial products are a poor alternative to the naturally occurring nutrients found in whole and minimally processed foods.
- Important at every meal is plenty of fluids, bearing in mind you can drink too much water which can lead to harmful electrolyte imbalances. 6-8 glasses of water in 24 hours is average.

