

Assess yourself

How Healthy Are Your Eating Habits?

1 Keep Track of Your Food Intake

Keep a food diary for 5 days, writing down everything you eat or drink. Be sure to include the approximate amount or portion size. Add up the number of servings from each of the major food groups on each day and enter them into the chart below.

Number of Servings:						
	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Average
Fruits						
Vegetables						
Grains						
Protein Foods						
Dairy						
Fats and Oils						
Sweets						



1A Does Your Diet Have Proportionality?

- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Are grains the main food choice at all your meals? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Do you often forget to eat vegetables? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Do you typically eat fewer than three pieces of fruit daily? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Do you often have fewer than 3 cups of milk daily? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Is the portion of meat, chicken, or fish the largest item on your dinner plate? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Scoring 1A

If you answered yes to three or more of these questions, your diet probably lacks proportionality. Review the recommendations in this chapter, particularly the MyPlate guidelines, to learn how to balance your diet.

2 Evaluate Your Food Intake

Now compare your consumption patterns to the MyPlate recommendations. Look at **Table 9.1** (page 268) and **Figure 9.6** (page 283) and visit www.choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx to evaluate your daily caloric needs and the recommended consumption rates for the different food groups. How does your diet match up?

- | | Less than the recommended amount | About equal to the recommended amount | More than the recommended amount |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. How does your daily fruits consumption compare to the recommendation for you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. How does your daily vegetables consumption compare to the recommendation for you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. How does your daily grains consumption compare to the recommendation for you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. How does your daily protein food consumption compare to the recommendation for you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. How does your daily dairy food consumption compare to the recommendation for you? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. How does your daily calorie consumption compare to the recommendation for your age and activity level? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Scoring 2

If you found that your food intake is consistent with the MyPlate recommendations, congratulations! If, on the other hand, you are falling short in a major food group or are overdoing it in certain categories, consider taking steps to adopt healthier eating habits. Following are some additional assessments to help you figure out where your diet is lacking.

2A Are You Getting Enough Fat-Soluble Vitamins in Your Diet?

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Do you eat at least 1 cup of deep yellow or orange vegetables, such as carrots and sweet potatoes, or dark green vegetables, such as spinach, every day? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Do you consume at least two glasses (8 ounces each) of milk daily? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Do you eat a tablespoon of vegetable oil, such as corn or olive oil, daily? (Tip: Salad dressings, unless they are fat free, count!) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Do you eat at least 1 cup of leafy green vegetables in your salad and/or put lettuce in your sandwich every day? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Scoring 2A

If you answered yes to all four questions, you are on your way to acing your fat-soluble vitamin needs! If you answered no to any of the questions, your diet needs some fine-tuning. Deep orange and dark green vegetables are excellent sources of vitamin A, and milk is an excellent choice for vitamin D. Vegetable oils provide vitamin E, and if you put them on top of your vitamin K-rich leafy green salad, you'll hit the vitamin jackpot.

2B Are You Getting Enough Water-Soluble Vitamins in Your Diet?

- | | Yes | No |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Do you consume at least 1/2 cup of rice or pasta daily? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Do you eat at least 1 cup of a ready-to-eat cereal or hot cereal every day? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Do you have at least one slice of bread, a bagel, or a muffin daily? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Do you enjoy a citrus fruit or fruit juice, such as an orange, a grapefruit, or orange juice every day? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Do you have at least 1 cup of vegetables throughout your day? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Scoring 2B

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you are a vitamin B and C superstar! If you answered no to any of the questions, your diet could use some refinement. Rice, pasta, cereals, bread, and bread products are all excellent sources of B vitamins. Citrus fruits are a ringer for vitamin C. In fact, all vegetables can contribute to meeting your vitamin C needs daily.

Source: Adapted from J. Blake, *Nutrition and You* (San Francisco: Benjamin Cummings, 2008).

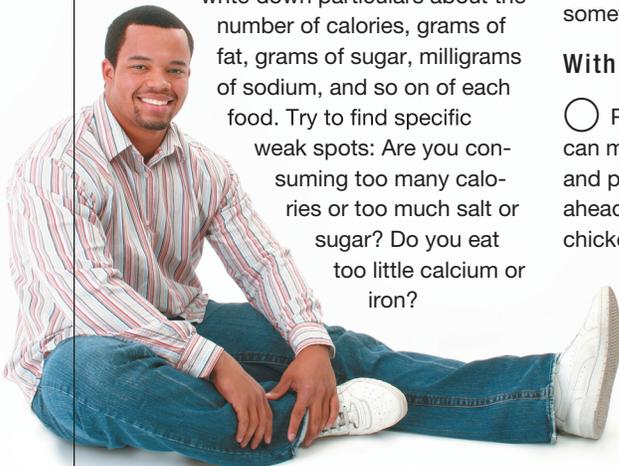


YOUR PLAN FOR CHANGE

The **Assess yourself** activity gave you the chance to evaluate your current nutritional habits. Now that you have considered these results, you can decide whether you need to make changes in your daily eating for long-term health.

Today, you can:

- Start keeping a more detailed food log. Take note of the nutritional information of the various foods you eat and write down particulars about the number of calories, grams of fat, grams of sugar, milligrams of sodium, and so on of each food. Try to find specific weak spots: Are you consuming too many calories or too much salt or sugar? Do you eat too little calcium or iron?



- Take a field trip to the grocery store. Forgo your fast-food dinner and instead spend some time in the produce section of the supermarket. Purchase your favorite fruits and vegetables, and try something new to expand your tastes.

Within the next 2 weeks, you can:

- Plan at least three meals that you can make at home or in your dorm room, and purchase the ingredients you'll need ahead of time. Something as simple as a chicken sandwich on whole-grain bread will be more nutritious, and probably cheaper, than heading out for a fast-food meal.
- Start reading labels. Be aware of the amount of calories, sodium, sugars, and fats in

prepared foods; aim to buy and consume those that are lower in all of these and are higher in calcium and fiber.

By the end of the semester, you can:

- Get in the habit of eating a healthy breakfast every morning. Combine whole grains, proteins, and fruit in your breakfast—for example, eat a bowl of cereal with milk and bananas or a cup of yogurt combined with granola and berries. Eating a healthy breakfast will jump-start your metabolism, prevent drops in blood glucose levels, and keep your brain and body performing at their best through those morning classes.
- Commit to one or two healthful changes to your eating patterns for the rest of the semester. You might resolve to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, to switch to low-fat or nonfat dairy products, to stop drinking soft drinks, or to use only olive oil in your cooking. Use your food diary to help you spot places where you can make healthier choices on a daily basis.