



Macronutrient/Food Group Handout

A well-balanced diet prevents many diseases like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer.

A healthy diet has a balance of the macronutrients, carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.

Below are nutrition recommendations for most healthy adults. Talk to your health care provider if you have a chronic health condition as your recommendations may differ.

Carbohydrates:

45 to 65 percent of total calories should come from this macronutrient group. Not all carbohydrates are created equal. Refined carbohydrates like white bread and white rice are not as healthy as whole grains, vegetables, and fruits.

Less than 6 percent of daily calories should come from added sugars found in soda and sports drinks, candy and desserts, and many other processed foods.

To calculate your daily recommended sugar intake, multiply the number of calories you eat daily by 6%. Then divide this number by 4. (Example: 2000 calories x 6% = 120. 120/4 = 30 grams of sugar).

Protein:

10 to 35 percent of total calories should come from protein. Protein-rich foods include lean meat, poultry, eggs, fish, beans, peas, soy and nuts and seeds. Protein sources with high fat or sodium content should be avoided (i.e. oil roasted salted nuts, fatty cuts of meat).

Fat:

20 to 35 percent of total calories should come from fat. Less than 10 percent of total calories daily should come from saturated fats. Saturated fats are found in animal products like meat, lard and dairy. Trans-fats should be mostly eliminated and are found in partially hydrogenated oils, and processed foods (like snack foods and baked goods).

Fat in the form of fish, olive or canola oil and nuts may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Fiber:

14 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories eaten is recommended. Fiber is the part of plants that cannot be broken down by the stomach and intestine. High fiber diets may prevent the development of heart disease and control diabetes.

- Most Americans eat less than 14 grams of fiber per day. This is less than half the recommended amount. Fiber should be increased slowly to avoid causing excess gas. Increase fiber by a couple extra grams weekly for several weeks.

Micronutrients are nutrients needed in very small amounts in the diet.

Sodium:

Commonly known as salt, less than 2300 mg of sodium should be eaten daily.

Calcium and vitamin D:

1000 to 1200mg of calcium should be eaten daily. 600 – 800 international units of vitamin D should be eaten daily. These micronutrients are essential for bone health and may prevent colorectal cancer.

Food Groups**Whole Grain:**

Carbohydrate that is a good source of fiber and nutrients (i.e. oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, brown rice, whole grain cereal). Half of the grains consumed should come from this group.

Refined Grains:

Carbohydrates with much of the fiber and nutrients removed to make finer and lengthen shelf-life (i.e. white rice, white bread, sweetened cereal)

Enriched Grains:

carbohydrates with fiber removed but iron and B-vitamins added in (i.e. enriched white bread)

Dairy:

Three cups of dairy products should be eaten daily (i.e. milk, yogurt, ice cream, cheese); reduced risk of colorectal cancer and heart disease

Protein-rich foods:

5.5 ounces of protein-rich foods, or about 2 -3 servings. Should be eaten daily.

Alcohol:

Alcohol intake should be limited to no more than one drink per day for women and two for men.

Macronutrient	Amount
Fruit	2 servings daily
Vegetables	2.5 servings daily
Grains	6 ounces daily
Dairy	3 cups daily
Protein-rich foods	5.5 ounces (2-3 servings) daily

References:

Codlitz, G.A. (2019, December 11). Healthy diet in adults. *Uptodate*.
https://www.uptodate.com/contents/healthydietinadults?search=macronutrients&source=search_result&selectedTitle=1~35&usage_type=default&display_rank=1