# Foodie DUTY

**Impact family health through meal planning and prep.** You may not consider yourself a gourmet cook or fine food aficionado, but what you eat and how you prepare food for yourself and your family can keep you healthy and help prevent serious disease. It can also help you and your family maintain a healthy weight, prevent chronic disease and boost your energy levels.

Eating is one of the great pleasures of life and a key component of many of our social interactions. However, many of us consume more calories than we actually need. That's why nearly 69 percent of U.S. adults 20 and older are overweight or obese. Being obese increases your risk for heart disease, diabetes and other serious illnesses.

The key to healthy eating is to consume the right amount of calories from the right kinds of foods to support your activity level. It's easier than you might think. Start by focusing on "real foods" and how you prepare them. Food writer Michael Pollan (author of "In Defense of Food and Food Rules") says real foods are what our ancestors ate before science started "improving them" (think: processed foods).

**If you're ready to become a healthy foodie, here are some tips to get you started.**

■ Shop the perimeter of the grocery store, where you'll find most of the real food, including meat, dairy and produce.

■ Not all calories are alike. Some foods provide a lot of calories per bite, but not a lot of nutritional value (for example, ice cream and cookies). Other foods have fewer calories per bite, but pack more nutritional punch, such as fruits, vegetables, lean meats and low-fat dairy products. These are nutrient-dense foods. Eat more of them. Here's an added bonus: Eating these nutritious foods fills you up so you're less likely to overeat.

■ Eat foods cooked by humans, not by manufacturers.

■ Limit foods with added sugars and skip foods that list sugar as one of the top five ingredients. Be aware of sugars by other names, including sucrose, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup and fructose.

■ Grill or broil food, rather than frying it or slathering it in calorie-rich sauces and gravies.

■ Use healthy oils (such as olive oil) instead of lard or butter.

■ Add flavor with herbs and spices. Added bonus: Most are chock full of healthy nutrients.

■ Use smaller plates. It will encourage you to eat moderate serving sizes.

■ Pack healthy lunches and snacks for work and school instead of eating out or visiting the vending machine.

■ Eat with others and savor food with family and friends.

■ Drink water instead of soda or fruit juices. Soda is one of the biggest sources of extra calories.

■ Focus on adding healthy foods to your diet, rather than just taking away unhealthy foods. Enjoy your favorite food indulgences in moderation by eating them less frequently or eating smaller portions.

■ Eat at home instead of eating out. You'll consume 20 to 40 percent fewer calories.

■ If you are overweight, reduce the number of calories (the amount of energy in a serving of food or drink) you consume, increase your activity levels, or both. There are 3,500 calories in one pound. So, to lose one to two pounds per week (a good target), you'll need to take in 500 to 1,000 fewer calories per day.

**DO ONE THING**

Keep a food diary for several days. Most people don't really pay attention to how much food they actually eat. Keeping a food diary will give you a realistic idea of your true food intake. Record when you eat and how you feel when you eat. Then you can also identify bad habits or food-related triggers, such as snacking mindlessly in front of the TV or eating when you feel stressed.

Here is a sample food diary from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**My Food Diary**          Day_____

| Meal/Snack (Indicate time) | What You Ate & Drank | Where and with Whom | Notes (Feelings, hunger, etc.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Breakfast | | | |
| Snack | | | |
| Lunch | | | |
| Snack | | | |
| Dinner | | | |