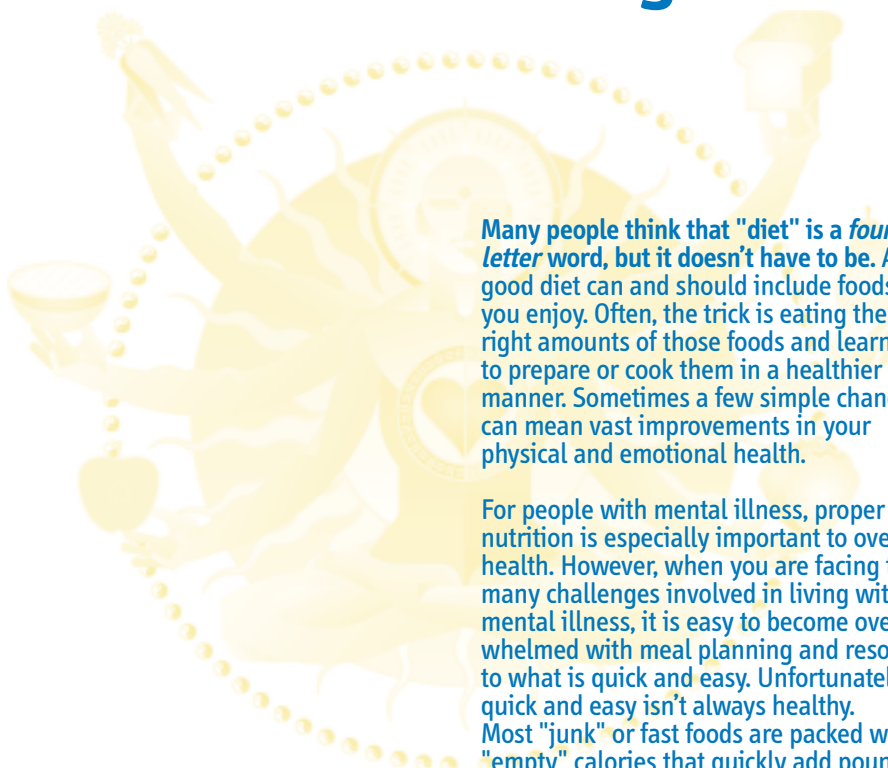


food for thought



Many people think that "diet" is a *four-letter* word, but it doesn't have to be. A good diet can and should include foods you enjoy. Often, the trick is eating the right amounts of those foods and learning to prepare or cook them in a healthier manner. Sometimes a few simple changes can mean vast improvements in your physical and emotional health.

For people with mental illness, proper nutrition is especially important to overall health. However, when you are facing the many challenges involved in living with a mental illness, it is easy to become overwhelmed with meal planning and resort to what is quick and easy. Unfortunately, quick and easy isn't always healthy. Most "junk" or fast foods are packed with "empty" calories that quickly add pounds but provide little nutritional value.

"For me, I found foods with sugar and caffeine contributed to my depression, so I cut them out."

-Mark, 36, depression

Facing mental illness can also be isolating, and many people seek refuge in food. That can create a vicious cycle in which you lose self-esteem as you gain weight, leading to further isolation.

The foods you select have a direct impact on how you feel. A well-balanced eating plan can help you feel energized and alert and keep your weight under control. A poor diet can leave you feeling lethargic, unattractive and at risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, certain cancers, stroke and other diseases. Being overweight can cause shortness of breath and affect mobility, limiting how much you can participate in and enjoy life. It also increases your risk of diabetes, which can place extra stress on the arteries and cause damage to the cardiovascular system.

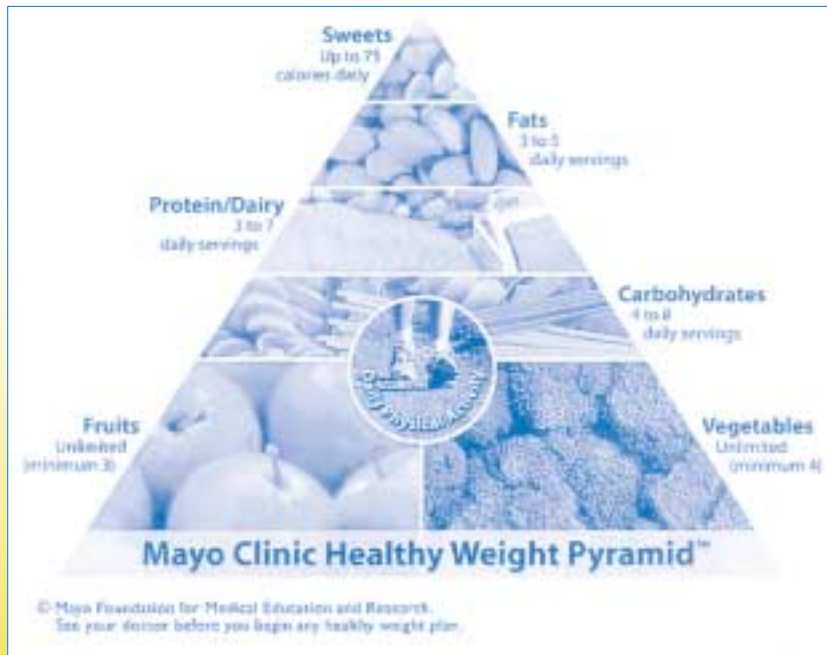
Certain foods have direct interactions with medications commonly prescribed to treat mental illness that can cause serious health problems, such as high blood pressure. **Ask your pharmacist about which foods could interact harmfully with your medications.** Some medications may affect your body's metabolism, making you more prone to weight gain or loss. However, these changes can be managed through a well-balanced diet and exercise program.

Portion Size Suggestions

Oversized portions add unneeded calories, fat, and sodium. Here are some guidelines to help you determine what a "serving" is.

- 1 bagel = a **hockey puck**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit, vegetables, pasta or rice = a **small fist**
- 3 ounces of cooked meat, poultry or fish = a **deck of cards**
- 1 ounce of cheese = **4 dice**
- 1 teaspoon of margarine or butter = a **thumb tip**
- 1 serving of snack foods (pretzels, chips) = a **small handful**
- 1 muffin = a **large egg**
- 2 tbsp. peanut butter = a **golf ball**
- 1 baked potato = a **computer mouse**





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Take Charge of Your Eating, Take Charge of Your Health

Just like everything else, the secret to eating smart is balance. No foods are "bad." What matters is eating each food in the proper amount. To help you develop a balanced eating plan that meets all your nutritional needs, the Mayo Clinic's food pyramid can serve as a good guideline. Your family doctor or primary-care physician can also help you create a nutritional program.

Scheduling regular, healthy meals and snacks is a good way to stay on track. It will help you avoid unplanned, between-meal or late-night eating, which is when many people pile on the calories.

Another tool that helps many people is a food diary. Often we eat without thinking about it. A cookie here and a burger there can add up to a lot of fat and calories. Jot down what you eat each day and you can begin to see patterns of when you eat and how much you really do eat. That will help you figure out what changes you can make. **A sample food diary that you can use to track your meals and snacks is located at the end of this booklet.**

You might realize that you nibble on chips through the day or that you overindulge when you are feeling sad or bored. Perhaps you'll find that you eat more than you should when you are with a certain friend. With that knowledge, you can decide to substitute something healthier, such as carrot or celery sticks, for the chips; plan an activity you enjoy to avoid the fridge; or engage your friend as a partner in healthier eating.

How you prepare food is almost as important as the food itself. Some healthy, easy-to-prepare recipes are included at the end of this booklet. Frying adds a lot of unnecessary fat and calories. Salt is another culprit, contributing to bloating, water retention, and, for some people, high blood pressure. Other spices can add flavor without the negative effects of salt. Instead of pouring gravy, sauces or salad dressings on your food, put a small amount on the side of the plate and dip your food into it.

Sometimes food serves as a way to cope with emotional issues. Before you pop that donut in your mouth, ask yourself if you are really hungry, or if something else is going on. Are you sad? Afraid? Under stress? Being able to identify the reason for eating can help you take more control of your weight, your health and your life.

Hitting the Supermarket

A trip to the supermarket can tempt even the most dedicated, healthy eaters. **One trick to staying on track is to develop a shopping list and stick to it. A chart that you can use as a guide to write your shopping list is included at the end of this booklet.** Avoiding impulse purchases can help you follow your eating program and save money. It sometimes helps to take

someone with you when you shop. Not only can you help one another stick to your lists, but doing chores with someone else is more fun.

The fruit and veggie aisle is the place to start. Most of the items here are low in fat and calories, which will help you control your weight, manage your cholesterol and reduce your risk factors for diabetes and heart disease. They are also packed with vitamins that can give you more energy and are essential to good health. Although there are numerous and delicious ways to prepare these foods, often the easiest and healthiest way to eat them is raw. If your community has a farmers' market or co-op, you can save money and often get fresher produce.

Although at first it might seem that fast food or a big bag of chips is a bargain, most people end up eating more and thus spending more. They are loaded with fat and sodium, which contribute to weight gain, high cholesterol and other health risks. Junk foods also have no nutritional value, so you are not getting the vitamins you need to stay healthy when you eat them. Factor in the long-term healthcare costs of those empty calories and the "super-size" seems like less of a bargain.

Food labels on the sides of packages provide information on calories, fat, sodium, carbohydrates, vitamins and recommended portion sizes. Comparing these labels can help you choose foods that have maximum nutrition and minimum fat and calories.

"I'm lousy at structured diets so I tried to change the way I eat. I carry water with me all the time, even in the car. I eat as many fruits and veggies as I can. I found that if I deny myself chocolate and popcorn, which I love, I just end up pigging out. So now I let myself have them, but in small portions."

-Amy, 45, bipolar disorder

Avoid the Fat and Calorie Trap

You don't have to give up your favorite foods. Here are some tricks to satisfy your hunger but help you take charge of your calorie count.

Instead of

Snack dips
Butter on bread
Soda pop
Donut
Fried seafood or chicken
Refried beans
Gravy or sauces on top
Ice cream
Chips

Cream cheese

Chocolate cake
Guacamole
Cheese and crackers
Candy
Mayonnaise
Bacon
Cream/whole milk
Flour tortillas
Alfredo sauce
Extra cheese pizza
Super-sized fast food

Try

Salsa
Dipping bread in olive oil
Water, herbal iced tea, diet soda
Apple, banana, peach or other fruit
Broiled or baked seafood or chicken
Borracho beans and Spanish rice
Dip fork in gravy, then put on food
Frozen yogurt, frozen fruit or popsicles
Carrot slices, celery sticks, pretzels, rice cakes, popcorn or baked chips
Low-fat or fat-free cream cheese, all-fruit preserves or jams, low-fat ricotta cheese
Angel food cake
Salsa
Low-fat cheese cubes with carrots/celery
Dates or other fruits
Mustard
Turkey bacon
Low-fat or fat-free milk
Corn tortillas
Marinara sauce
Veggie pizza
Regular size, occasionally

And on the Subject of Eating . . .

Good health doesn't stop with what you eat. It also includes what you do after you eat! People often overlook the importance of good dental care; poor dental hygiene can lead to the buildup of germs and bacteria. This can cause cavities, bad breath, sensitivity to hot or cold and gum disease. If untreated, poor dental hygiene can lead to tooth loss; this not only affects self-esteem and appearance, but makes it difficult to chew, causing digestive problems. Recent studies have even shown a relationship between gum infections and heart disease and strokes.

Brush up and down with a soft-bristled toothbrush twice a day. If you can brush after every meal, that's even better. Flossing is just as important because it helps you get into places a brush can't reach. Seeing a dentist twice a year can help prevent problems or keep small dental problems from getting worse. Many clinics and university dental schools offer low-cost or free care.



NUTRITION TIPS

- * Water is your best friend. It makes you feel "full," which can help you eat less. Try drinking eight 8-ounce glasses a day and more during physical activity.
- * If you are taking a medication that gives you "dry mouth," some people find that hard sugarless candy works better than water.
- * Calcium helps keep bones strong to avoid osteoporosis. For people who have trouble digesting dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese), orange juice fortified with calcium is a great and easy alternative.
- * Never go to the supermarket when you are hungry. You'll end up spending extra money on impulse (often unhealthy) snacks.
- * If you crave something, don't act on it right away. Wait about 20 minutes and it will probably pass.
- * Foods that claim to be "low-fat" or "fat-free" are often very high in calories, sugar or sodium. Read the label to determine if it's really a better choice.
- * If you like to snack while watching TV, keep a glass of water by your side and sip that. Substitute healthy, low-calorie fruits and vegetables for cookies or chips.
- * Knitting, woodworking or crossword puzzles can help keep your hands too busy to snack.
- * Find a "food buddy." You can call one another to help stay on track, go food shopping or prepare healthy meals together!

A Quick Look at Diabetes

Diabetes is a life-threatening condition. Risk factors include obesity, high blood pressure, elevated glucose, being age 45 or older, a family history of the disease and race/ethnicity (African American, Native American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino and Pacific Islander). Exercise and weight loss can help avoid adult-onset diabetes (type 2). **Could you be at risk?** Some evidence suggests that people with mental illness are at a higher risk for diabetes than the general public, regardless of weight and other risk factors.

There has been increasing interest and concern about the connection between atypical antipsychotics and the development of sugar problems and diabetes in people who take these medicines. This is important for people to monitor, as diabetes is one of the important factors that predicts heart disease. We encourage people to follow this as the field learns more about this relationship. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency responsible for putting together information and making recommendations about the indications, risks and safety of medicine, recently issued an advisory warning about the risk on atypical antipsychotics. The easiest way to follow their work is at www.fda.gov.

Here are some common symptoms of type 2 diabetes. This list is not complete and these symptoms could also be caused by other conditions.

Fatigue	Increased appetite
Thirst	Slow healing
Frequent urination	Blurred vision
	Impotence

If you are concerned, ask your primary-care physician or psychiatrist about how to get tested. With appropriate treatment, diabetes can be controlled.