

# R.E.A.L. Goal<sup>SM</sup>: Eating Better

(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)

**Example:** I will make one minor change this week to start eating better, such as reducing unhealthy fats or avoiding added sugars.

**Limit added sugar:** Not all sugar is the same. Natural sugars are found naturally in foods like fruit, dairy, and honey. Added sugars are added to the food or beverage during the creation of the item, have no nutritional value, and add many calories.



- Limit added sugars by looking for high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, sucrose, or cane juice/syrup on the label.
- When possible, buy unsweetened beverages, applesauce, canned fruit, oatmeal, or nut butters.
- Substitute enriched white carbohydrates for whole grains. Try whole-grain pasta, whole-wheat bread, and whole-wheat crackers. The fiber in whole wheat options helps increase the nutritional value and tends to have lower sugar.
- Limit high-sugar items like candy, desserts, cereals, and sweet drinks. Try finding an option like a dessert-flavored protein shake or make a fruit smoothie as a substitute for a sweet treat.

**Increase fruits and veggies:** Vegetables and fruits are high in nutritional value, meaning they have a lot of vitamins, minerals, and fiber we need to function while tending to have fewer calories than processed foods.

- Wash and pre-cut your fruits and veggies so they are ready to go when you need them.
- Make a smoothie with fruits and veggies. Adding spinach or kale to a fruit smoothie can hide the taste!
- Mix up old favorites by adding different veggies to your scrambled eggs, sweeten up your oatmeal with fruit, or add zucchini, mushrooms, tomatoes, or eggplant to the marinara sauce for added flavor and texture.
- Have canned or frozen fruits and veggies on hand. Fruits and veggies are often picked and frozen at the peak of their nutritional value and ripeness. When buying canned versions, look for no added sugar or salt.

## Three types of fats:

**Unsaturated** are healthy fats that help to increase your HDL - good cholesterol.

- Healthy options include olives, olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocados, and fish - tuna, salmon, trout, and mackerel.
- Walnuts are particularly high in good omega-3 fats.
- Avoid fried fish; instead, try grilled, baked, or poached.
- Remember to stick to recommended serving sizes.

**Saturated** are unhealthy fats in large quantities

- Focus on limiting saturated fats. Limiting them can help improve lipid (cholesterol) profiles.
- Use in moderation - butter, cheese, coconut oil, poultry with the skin, dairy 2% fat or higher, and red meats.
- Many baked goods and fried foods can also contain high levels of saturated fats.

**Trans fats** are extremely unhealthy fats that you should avoid or limit

- Trans fats raise your LDL/bad cholesterol levels and lower your HDL/good cholesterol levels.
- Eating trans fats increases your risk of developing heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.
- Avoid or limit fried foods, baked goods, frozen pizza, chips, and hydrogenated oils, including some butter spreads.

## Resources:

Try one of the many different online options listed below for different healthy recipe options.

- [MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)
- [AmericanHeartAssociation.org](https://www.americanheart.org)
- [WebMD.com](https://www.webmd.com)
- [Noom.com](https://www.noom.com)
- [AmericanDiabetesAssociation.org](https://www.americanheart.org)

## Healthy Substitutions

Instead of	Use	Comments
Sour cream	Plain Greek yogurt	Higher in protein and lower in fat
Mayonnaise	Avocado or hummus	High in omega-3 fatty acids
Flavored yogurt	Plain yogurt with fresh fruit	Less added sugar and more natural sugar
Heavy cream	1% Milk, almond, coconut, or oat milk	Use in soups and stews
Oil for baking	Applesauce	Same flavor and texture with fewer calories
White flour	Whole wheat, almond, or coconut flour	More nutrients
White rice	Brown rice or quinoa	Whole grain
Tortilla wraps	Lettuce wraps or whole-grain wraps	Watch for lower carbs with more nutrients
Iceberg lettuce	Spinach, kale, arugula	Darker greens equal more nutrients
Breadcrumbs or croutons	Oats, seeds, or crushed nuts	Whole grain and higher fiber
Potato chips	Baked kale or sweet potato chips	Toss in olive oil and seasonings
Ground beef	Ground turkey or chicken	Try leaner meat with 93% lean and 7% fat vs. 80% lean and 20% fat
Milk chocolate	Dark chocolate	High levels of antioxidants

## Explore more [Real Goals and Supplemental Resources](#)

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