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## BALANCED DIET

### WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW:

A balanced diet means eating different kinds of healthy foods each day. You will be eating a balanced diet if you eat foods from each of the groups below. You may need to eat less food if you weigh too much. If you are underweight, you may need to eat more food. Exercise will help you stay at your best weight. You will also keep your heart and lungs healthy by exercising.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Try to vary the foods that you eat each day. Eat healthy foods from all of the 6 food groups: fruits, vegetables, breads, dairy products, meat and protein, and fats.
  - Choose lean meats and low fat or fat-free dairy products. Your diet will then be low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol.
  - Limit the amount of salt and sodium you eat. Do not eat a lot of sugar and sweet foods.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses (the same size as 4-7 soda-pop cans) of liquid each day. Or, follow your caregiver's advice if you must limit the amount of liquid you drink. Good liquids to drink are water, juices, and milk. Limit the amount of caffeine you drink, such as coffee, tea, and soda.

**Serving Sizes:** Use the lists below to measure foods and serving sizes.

- 1-1/2 cup (12 ounces) of liquid is the size of a soda-pop can.
- 1 cup (8 ounces) of food is the size of a large handful.
- 1/2 cup (4 ounces) of food is about half of a large handful.
- 2 tablespoons (Tbsp) is about the size of a large walnut.
- 1 tablespoon (Tbsp) is about the size of the tip of your thumb (from the last crease).
- 1 teaspoon (tsp) is about the size of the tip of your little finger (from the last crease).
- A serving size means the size of food after it is cooked. Three ounces of cooked meat is about the size of a deck of cards.

**FOOD GROUP CHOICES:** Eat foods from each of these groups every day. Try to eat the number of servings listed. This will give you a well balanced diet that has all of the nutrients you need each day.

- **BREAD, CEREAL, OR GRAIN GROUP:** 6 to 11 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 1 slice bread
  - 1/2 small bagel
  - 1/2 hot dog or hamburger bun
  - 1/2 cup (1/2 handful) cooked rice or pasta
  - 3-inch potato or 1/2 cup mashed potatoes

- 3/4 cup (1 ounce) dry cereal
- 1/2 cup (1/2 handful) cooked cereal
- 1 small biscuit, muffin, or roll
- **DAIRY GROUP:** 2 to 3 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 1 cup (8 ounces) any milk or yogurt
  - 1/2 cup (4 ounces) cottage or ricotta cheese
  - 2 Tbsp parmesan cheese
  - 1/2 cup frozen yogurt
- **FATS:** 1 to 3 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 1 tsp oil or margarine
  - 1 tsp regular mayonnaise or 2 tsp low fat mayonnaise
  - 1 Tbsp regular salad dressing, or 2 Tbsp low fat salad dressing
  - 2 Tbsp nuts
  - 1/8 avocado
- **FRUIT GROUP:** 2 to 4 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 1 medium size apple, peach, orange, pear
  - 1-1/4 cup (large handful) berries or melon cubes
  - 1/2 cup applesauce or canned fruit
  - 1 small banana
  - 1/2 cup (4 ounces) fruit juice
  - Eat or drink a high vitamin C food or juice each day (like oranges, grapefruits, and strawberries)
- **MEAT & MEAT SUBSTITUTES GROUP:** 2 to 3 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 2 to 3 ounces any lean meat, fish, or poultry
  - 1 to 2 ounces semi-hard cheese
  - 1 large egg: Limit eggs to 3 a week.
  - 3/4 cup (3/4 handful) cooked dried beans, peas or lentils
  - 1/2 cup (4 ounces) soy tofu or tempeh
  - 1 cup soy milk
  - 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- **VEGETABLE GROUP:** 3 to 5 servings a day. One serving equals:
  - 1/2 cup (1/2 handful) cooked or 1 cup (full handful) raw

- o 3/4 to 1 cup vegetable or tomato juice
- o 1/4 cup tomato paste or sauce
- o 1 cup vegetable soup
- o Include a dark green, leafy, yellow or orange vegetable each day

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