



CIGNA Behavioral Health

# Becoming a Healthy Eater

It's an individual decision to improve eating habits. The average diet is often unhealthy. Since the majority of people eat foods with too much fat, oil, salt or sugar, you need to become an "abnormal" eater to be a healthy eater.

Improved eating habits will make you feel better and function better, both on and off the job. There are no instant foods or pills that can do this. You hold the power over what enters your mouth.

## Strategies

Eat a variety of foods each day. This means fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, fish, lean meats, low-fat dairy products, nuts, seeds, dry peas and beans. As a general rule of thumb, eat some protein, two pieces of fruit and a salad daily. Your salad should have a variety of mixed ingredients, such as carrots, celery, lettuce, bell pepper, onion, cabbage and beets. A tablespoon of dressing goes a long way if you toss the salad well.

## What About Fat and Salt?

It's always a good idea to limit the amount of fat, saturated fat and cholesterol you eat. This includes the fat in meats, eggs, butter, cream and shortenings. Reduce your intake of salt, too. This can be done by cooking with smaller amounts of salt, avoiding salty snacks and using low-salt seasoning or herbs to flavor foods.

## Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth

To become a healthy eater you must also avoid eating too much sugar. Reduce frequent snacks of candy and soft drinks. You can curb your sweet tooth cravings by eating natural sugars such as raisins, apples, bananas, pears, melons or other fruits. An occasional dessert won't hurt you.

## The Golden Keys

The above practices are the golden keys to a balanced diet. Becoming a healthy eater will be easier when you eat foods your body truly needs and can use. Your body will reach a more even level of functioning once you replace empty calories with nutritious foods.



Eat a variety of foods each day.



Limit fat, saturated fat, salt and cholesterol.



Eating a salad a day is a key strategy.



Satisfy your sweet tooth with fresh fruit.