

# Get Healthy with Your Benefits: Diet and Nutrition

## VEBA online



## The importance of nutrition

Did you know that heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes — among the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S. — are directly related to nutrition? Good nutrition alone won't necessarily lead to a longer, healthier life, but should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle that excludes smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, and includes:

- Regular exercise
- Stress management
- Limited exposure to environmental hazards.

To stay healthy, you must eat the right balance of carbohydrates, fats and protein. You also need to consume minerals and other substances from a variety of foods. And, moderation is important. Be careful not to eat too much or too little of a particular food. If you need help creating a nutrition plan, work with your doctor to develop a plan that's right for you.

## A well-balanced diet

A well-balanced diet should include a variety of foods from each of the four food groups:

- Fruit and vegetable
- Milk
- Grain
- Meat

Be sure to eat three meals per day, including breakfast, and eat foods from each of the above food groups at every meal. If you snack throughout the day, be sure to mix it up and eat foods from each food group.

## Healthful snack ideas

If you get hungry in between meals, try some of these nutritious snack ideas:

- Pretzels (low-salt)
- Peanut butter on apple slices
- Hummus with pita bread
- Graham crackers
- Dried apricots or prunes
- Baked potato chips (low-salt)
- Baked tortilla chips with bean dip
- Yogurt or pudding popsicles
- Mozzarella string cheese
- Pasta salad.

## online resources

To learn more about the importance of nutrition, search these informational Web sites:

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov) — this site provides a wealth of information on nutrition, food safety and more

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/consumersite> — at this site you'll find materials prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding nutrition, dietary guidelines, and the food guide pyramid.

Read the consumer brochure *Finding Your Way to a Healthier You: Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans* at <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/brochure.pdf>.

### Get help through your medical plan

Kaiser Permanente members have access to HealthMedia Nourish® — a program that gives you personalized strategies for making smart and delicious food choices to increase your energy, manage your weight, and help you live a longer, healthier life.

To learn more, go to <http://www.kp.org/nutrition>.

PacifiCare offers members a discount on DietMate® — a complete diet and exercise program offering personalized information and support. Visit [www.pacificare.com](http://www.pacificare.com) and click on *PacifiCare Weight and Fitness* under the *Health Programs* menu for details.