

The G4G Guide: Foods and Beverages



Tips to build a healthy plate	Eat Often Whole foods, least processed Naturally packed with nutrients	Eat Occasionally More-processed foods Choose portions carefully	Eat Rarely Most processed, least nutrients Choose small portions
Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat 3–4 cups non-starchy vegetables a day. • See also Grains/Starches 	Fresh or frozen vegetables—grilled, steamed, or raw Leafy green salads with dark greens (spinach, spring mix) Vegetables with small amounts of added Fats/Oils from the Yellow or Red column	—	Deep-fried, tempura, or breaded vegetables Vegetables in cheese or creamed vegetables Salads/vegetables with large amounts of Fats/Oils or Protein from the Red column
Fruits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat 2–2.5 cups of fruit a day. • Eat your fruit, don't drink it. 	Fresh fruit Frozen fruit with minimal added sugar, fat, and/or sauce Fruit canned in water or own juice Dried fruit (unsulfured, without added sugar)	Fresh or frozen fruit with added sugar/syrups Canned fruit in light syrup Dried fruit (sulfured) Dried fruit with added sugar 100% fruit juice	Fresh fruit with cream Frozen fruit with added sugars, fats, and/or sauce Dried fruit with coatings (yogurt, chocolate, etc.) Canned fruit in heavy syrup Sweetened applesauce
Grains/Starches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose 100% whole grain for at least half of all grain servings. • Starchy vegetables such as potatoes and corn are included in this group. 	Brown rice, wild rice, bulgur Oats, quinoa, barley Baked potato/sweet potato with skin with toppings from Green column Baked sweet-potato “fries” Whole-grain pasta and couscous Whole-grain, low-sugar cereal/granola with less than 10g sugar and at least 3g fiber Whole-grain breads, bagels, rolls, waffles, pancakes, muffins English muffins with at least 3g fiber Popcorn with small amounts of butter or oil	White rice, couscous, pasta Grits, plain Baked French fries White potatoes made or topped with ingredients from the Yellow column Whole-grain cereals/granola with 11–18 grams sugar per serving Sweetened oatmeal/oatmeal packets White-flour breads, bagels, English muffins, rolls, waffles, pancakes Pretzels, baked chips Crackers, high-fiber, reduced-fat	Biscuits, croissants, full-fat muffins Doughnuts, Danishes, pastries, sweetened breads Grains or pasta with cheese or cream sauce French fries (fried in oil) White/sweet potatoes made or topped with moderate to large amounts of Fats/Oils from the Red column Processed cereals with more than 18g sugar per serving Deep-fried chips, most snack crackers Movie-style popcorn
Protein <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vary your protein choices. • Include seafood/fish twice a week. • Include beans for protein and fiber. 	Egg whites Omelets with vegetables Fish and shellfish; Tuna canned in water Chicken and turkey breast without skin Ground beef (90/10), ground poultry Pork tenderloin Beans/lentils Tofu, tempeh, edamame Veggie burgers, vegetable- or bean-based	Whole eggs Chicken and turkey with skin Chicken and turkey thighs and legs without skin Ham, roast beef Processed chicken/turkey deli meats Hamburger Ground beef (85% lean) or ground poultry Chicken/turkey sausage or bacon Soy patties, links, burgers Tuna canned in oil	Fried meat, poultry, fish, seafood Ground beef (standard or unspecified fat), fatty (marbled) cuts of red meat, beef ribs, corned beef Cheeseburger Pork sausage and bacon Hot dogs, kielbasa, bratwurst Salami, bologna Refried beans made with lard or topped with cheese Fried tofu
Fats/Oils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose healthy fats and oils. 	Oils—olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, sesame, grapeseed Salad dressings made with these oils Nuts and seeds—raw, dry, roasted Natural nut butters—peanut, almond, hazelnut, soy nut Avocado	Oils—corn, peanut, vegetable Salad dressings made with these oils Mayonnaise made with canola oil Margarine/spreads (trans-fat free, limited additives) Peanut butter with added oils/fats Gravy (made with water or low-fat milk)	Oils—coconut, palm, palm kernel Shortening and lard Most mayonnaises Most margarines Creamy salad dressings Nut butters with added sugar or chocolate Gravy (made with fat drippings)
Beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose water instead of sugary beverages. • For milk, see Dairy 	Water (plain or carbonated) Naturally flavored water (no artificial sweeteners) Decaf tea and decaf coffee Herbal tea 100% vegetable juice	Sports drinks 100% fruit juice Tea** and coffee**, plain or with small amounts of added sugar, cream, or milk Artificially sweetened beverages (diet or light sodas, teas, juices, many flavored waters)	Energy drinks* Coffee and tea with whole milk or cream and sugars or syrup Sweetened beverages of any kind (sodas, sweet teas, fruit punches, juice drinks)
Dairy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare sugar contents of yogurts. • Some low-fat dairy products contain added flavors, stabilizers, sugar, or sodium; choose less-processed Green items when possible. 	Milk, unsweetened (skim, 1%) Milk alternatives (soy, almond, rice, coconut), unsweetened, with calcium and vitamin D added Yogurt, plain (non-fat or low-fat) Cottage cheese (non-fat or low-fat)	Milk (2% fat) Flavored (vanilla, chocolate, etc.) and sweetened milk (skim, 1%, or 2%) and milk alternatives Hot chocolate made with milk (skim, 1%, 2%) Frozen yogurt Yogurt, flavored, with added sugars or artificial sweeteners (non-fat or low-fat) Cheese and cottage cheese (reduced-fat, 2%) Cheeses naturally lower in fat (Feta, Swiss)	Milk (whole), plain or flavored Hot chocolate made with whole milk Cream, half-and-half Yogurt (full-fat) Cottage cheese (full-fat) Cheese (full-fat) Cream cheese, sour cream (full-fat) Ice cream, milkshakes, gelato Pudding

* For more information on energy drinks, visit HPRC's Dietary Supplements Classification System and read about Energy Drinks. **Contain caffeine.

The G4G Guide: Sodium






This guide is a starting point for understanding which foods are high in sodium. Sodium is a mineral found naturally in some foods and added to packaged items to preserve freshness and enhance flavor.

Too much sodium can be harmful to your health, especially if you are salt sensitive. However, too little sodium can be harmful to health and performance if you lose a lot of sodium through multiple hours of activity, extreme environments, or sweat.

Sodium is important to maintain fluid balance, control blood pressure, and for muscles and nerves to work properly.

For average Americans, 2,300 mg of sodium per day¹ is appropriate; this is about the amount found in one teaspoon of table salt. Sodium needs vary depending on medical condition, activity, and environment. The most active warriors who operate in extreme conditions may require as much as 3,500mg (women) or 5,000 mg (men) of sodium per day.² Restaurant food often contains more salt. At home and in military dining facilities, the amounts of sodium vary greatly. Increased portion sizes also increase sodium intake. For help estimating your sodium needs, visit HPRC's website and read hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green/go-for-green-r-for-the-warfighter.

Use along with the Food and Beverages (Green, Yellow, Red) Guide to help choose appropriate foods and beverages for your sodium needs.	<p style="text-align: center;">Low Sodium</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">LOW</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Moderate Sodium</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">MODERATE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">High Sodium</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">HIGH</p>
Foods and Beverages	Fruit—fresh or frozen Vegetables—fresh or frozen No-added-salt/salt-free canned vegetable and tomato products Grains—plain, unseasoned Grain products—plain, unseasoned pasta, rice, quinoa, couscous Unsalted nuts, seeds Unsalted nut butters (peanut, almond, soynut) Fresh chicken, turkey, beef, pork Milk Most yogurts Olive oil, canola oil Dry beans, peas, lentils	Some breads, rolls, biscuits, pancakes, waffles, English muffins Low-sodium canned vegetables Most snack foods (pretzels, crackers, chips, popcorn) Most sauces/glazes on chicken, turkey, beef, or pork Most homemade soups made with low-sodium broth Most frozen meal “starters” Packaged rice/grain dishes, if you use only half the seasoning packet	Canned vegetables and beans Canned tomato products Instant noodles with flavor packet Deli meats/cold cuts—turkey, ham, bologna, salami, etc. Processed meats—sausage, bacon, pepperoni, hot dogs Cheese Condiments and toppings—soy sauce, ketchup, marinades, cocktail sauce, gravy, nacho cheese dip, pickles Seasoned salts, table salt Canned soups Almost all “fast foods” Frozen entrees/“microwave dinners”
When to Eat	Eat low-sodium foods most often, especially if you have been told to follow a “low-sodium diet.” Not all low-sodium foods are also labeled Green; limit Yellow- and Red-labeled foods and beverages for overall good health.	Eat moderate-sodium foods sometimes. Moderate-sodium foods are appropriate for most warriors who are moderately active	Eat high-sodium foods rarely or in small amounts. For warriors who are active multiple hours per day and/or in extreme environments, some high-sodium foods should be included daily.
General Tips	Choose mostly whole, fresh foods. Cooking at home can help reduce sodium content. Purchase unflavored foods, and add your own fresh seasonings: herbs, spices, vinegars, citrus. When cooking with whole, fresh foods that are naturally very low in sodium, it’s okay to add a pinch of salt.	Although snack foods and breads have moderate sodium, large portions can increase your sodium intake to high. Drain and rinse canned foods (beans, tuna) to reduce their sodium content. Even low- and reduced-sodium versions of your favorite chips or crackers may fall into the moderate sodium category.	Table salt is mostly sodium; use sparingly. Processed, packaged, and convenience foods contribute about 80% of sodium to our diets; read food labels and pay attention to serving sizes. Many condiments and toppings are high in sodium. Restaurant foods are generally higher in sodium than homemade foods.

¹ Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010

² Military Dietary Reference Intake