

Tips for Healthy Meal Planning

General Tips

- Use measuring cups and spoons to control portions. Measure each serving to be sure you are eating the amount of food given in your meal plan.
- Tortillas, rice, beans, and corn are the main sources of carbohydrate in most traditional Mexican diets. Be sure to stay within your meal plan when eating these and other foods.
- Whole grain foods, nonstarchy vegetables, and fruits are good sources of fiber and other nutrients. Include them in your daily meal plan.
- Eat less fat and fewer fried foods.
- Have sweets, pastries, donuts, muffins, cake, and candy only occasionally and in small portions.



Tortillas



- If you make flour tortillas by hand, cut back on the fat or lard (manteca). Just a teaspoon of lard adds a lot of flavor.
- Also, try making flour tortillas with canola oil instead of lard or pork fat. You'll need less oil than fat to make the dough the right texture.
- When making enchiladas, brush one side of the tortillas with canola oil. Then stack them and

warm the stack in the microwave. The small amount of oil keeps the tortilla from getting mushy in the sauce.

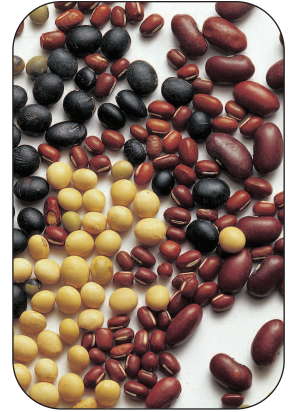
Rice

- Limit the fat in Spanish rice to just a tablespoon of canola oil.
- Instead of frying rice in oil, toast it in a warm pan and then add the cooking liquid.
- Avoid adding salt to rice dishes while cooking or at the table. Season with herbs and spices instead.
- Limit the use of consommé because it is high in salt.
- If you use canned products in rice dishes, choose salt-free or low-sodium types.



Beans

- Boil beans instead of frying them.
- Mash boiled beans and add milk or vegetable broth to give them the texture of fried beans.
- When cooking beans, limit salt to 1 to 2 teaspoons per pound of beans.
- If you use canned beans, choose low-sodium or salt-free types, or rinse them in water to remove some of the added salt.



Starchy Vegetables



- Types of starchy vegetables include potatoes, yams, sweet potatoes, peas, and corn.
- Boil and bake vegetables instead of frying.
- You can also pan-fry vegetables in nonstick cooking spray.
- Season dishes with onions, garlic, peppers, herbs, and spices instead of salt.

Fruits

- Enjoy fresh or frozen fruits, or have canned fruits packed in juice or extra-light syrup. Avoid fruit canned in heavy syrup.
- Eat fruit more often and drink fruit juices less often.
- If you drink juice, choose 100% fruit juice in small amounts. The portion size for fruit juice is $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

Nonstarchy Vegetables

- Choose low-fat and no-fat ways of cooking vegetables, such as steaming them in water or microwaving them.
- To cut calories and fat, limit or avoid vegetable dishes made with cheese or creamy sauces.
- Add lemon or lime juice to raw vegetables for flavor.
- Limit the amount of regular salad dressings that you eat. They add more calories, fat, and salt.



Milk and Milk Products

- All types of milk have the same amount of carbohydrate. For less fat and fewer calories, choose nonfat (skim) or 1 % milk instead of whole or 2 % milk.
- Enjoy low-fat or fat-free yogurt or sour cream instead of regular types.
- Try nonfat condensed milk or fat-free half-and-half in coffee and puddings. They add rich flavor but no fat!
- Limit cheese to small amounts and choose types that are low in fat, like part-skim mozzarella.
- If you grate cheese instead of slicing it, you probably will use less.



Meats and Meat Substitutes

- Cut off all visible fat from beef, pork, and other meats. Remove skin from chicken.
- Bake, broil, or stew beef, pork, fish, seafood, or chicken.
- Pan-fry meats, fish, and chicken with non-stick vegetable spray instead of frying in oil.
- Use chorizo only occasionally because it is high in fat, salt, and calories. Cook a small amount and drain it on paper towels before adding it to eggs or other dishes.
- Limit egg yolks to three a week. Use two egg whites instead of a whole egg with the yolk. (The yolk contains all the cholesterol in the egg.)

Fats and Oils

- All types of fat and oil are high in calories. Limit them to small amounts. Choose heart-healthy fats more often.
- Avocados and nuts have heart-healthy fats. Eat them in small amounts.
- Replace lard, drippings, butter, and stick margarine with small amounts of heart-healthy olive or canola oil.
- Avoid *trans* fats. Foods made with hydrogenated oils (like stick margarine and many packaged snack foods) have *trans* fat.



Holiday Foods

- Many holiday foods, like tamales, hot chocolate, pan dulce, and atoles, are high in carbohydrates and calories. Enjoy these foods in small amounts.