

## Steps to Consume More and Weigh Less

You can make your diet more satisfying and filling by increasing bulk in your diet. Fruits and vegetables in puree or chopped can be added to smoothies, quick breads, main dishes or desserts. You can add pumpkin puree to muffins or loaf bread and chopped zucchini or butternut squash to meat loaf or macaroni and cheese. Doing this cuts calories, adds bulk to your diet, and increases your fruit and vegetable intake which is needed by most Americans.

Here are some additional tips to eat foods that are low in calories and high in density. These are some suggestions that come from Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

- Know when you are hungry and when you are full. Stop eating when you are full. Don't eat when you are not hungry and be a conscious eater.
- Add fruit and vegetables to traditional dishes to add more nutrients and fiber. You will also feel more full and satisfied.
- Begin each main meal with a cup of vegetable soup or a side salad. Both add bulk, but few calories. Remember to choose a low fat salad dressing and use a small amount. Also choose soups that are low in sodium and fat.
- Try salsa as a dressing for salads or on a baked potato. It adds flavor and vegetables to your diet and is low in calories as compared to other dressings like sour cream or creamy salad dressings.
- Drink water or unsweetened tea rather than juices or sweetened beverages at meals or in between.
- Fill half your lunch and dinner plate with fruits and vegetables. Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to learn about preparing health meals and snacks.
- Set a good example for children by eating fruit and vegetables everyday with meals or as snacks.
- When eating out, order a salad or extra vegetables rather than a starchy food.
- Eat a high fiber, low calorie snack like an apple before you go out to eat. Go into the restaurant feeling satisfied, not hungry and you will consume fewer calories over all.
- For snacks, choose a high fiber fruit or vegetable and pair it with a low-fat dairy product. For example, low-fat yogurt with fresh berries, or baby carrots and low-fat ranch dip. Snacks need to keep calories around 100 to 150 calories and add to the nutritional intake of your diet instead of just adding more fat, salt, sugar or calories.
- Explore different meal and snack patterns. Choose a pattern that includes at least 2 cups of fruit and 2 ½ cups of vegetables each day. Eat more whole grains by substituting a whole-grain product for a refined product, such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to substitute the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than adding the whole-grain product.
- Research has shown most of us eat the same amount of food by weight each day. If you increase the water and bulk in your meals and snacks, you will eat a similar amount of food but fewer calories. In the end, you will feel full and lose weight at the same time.

Make small changes and you can lose those extra pounds before summer starts this year!