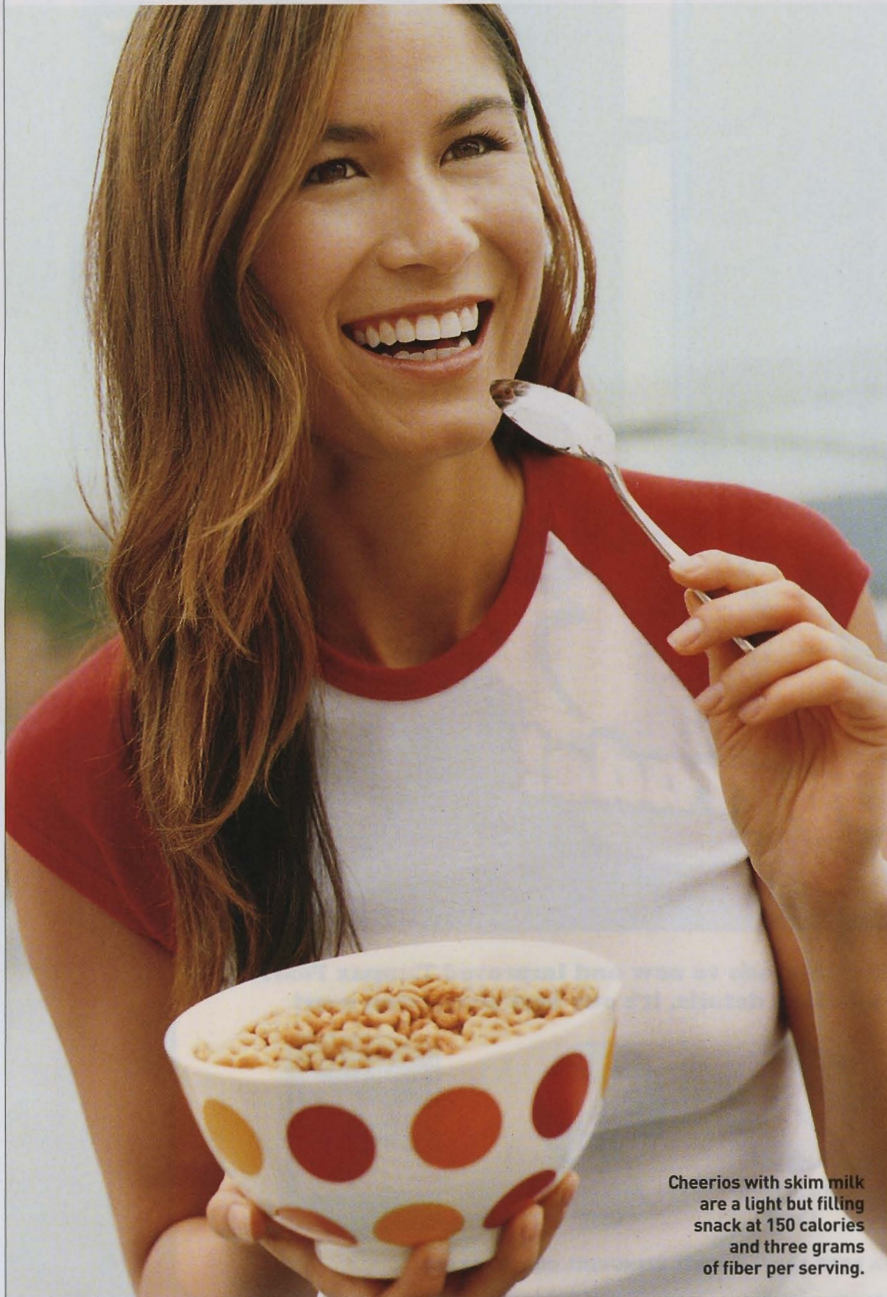


# 4 Easy Nutrition Fixes

**DIET? NAH. USE THIS SIMPLE PLAN TO EAT FOR ENERGY AND FIGHT DISEASE.**

BY ELIZABETH SOMER, R.D.

**IF YOU'VE ADOPTED LAST MONTH'S SMART FOOD MOVES**, by now you're not missing the old salt-induced bloat and you're feeling practically immune to junk-food cravings. Now, take your diet up another notch (or, if you've just decided to eat healthier, this is a great place to start). Tackling the strategies below will help you supercharge your energy levels, ward off disease and feel fantastic.



Cheerios with skim milk are a light but filling snack at 150 calories and three grams of fiber per serving.

## 1 SWITCH TO HEALTHIER FATS

Eating more foods that contain healthy monounsaturated and omega-3 fats such as olive oil, avocados, fish and nuts, along with more vegetables, fruits and whole grains, can lower your risk for heart disease by 80 percent and diabetes by 90 percent, according to a recent Harvard study. But just including these foods on top of all the saturated and trans fats already in your diet will add up to excess calories. Instead, trade the bad for the good. Here's how:

- **DO BETTER THAN BUTTER.** "Dip bread in extra-virgin olive oil infused with herbs, such as basil and oregano flakes," recommends Cynthia Sass, R.D., a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Or, says Jackie Newgent, R.D., a culinary nutritionist in New York City, add a drizzle of white truffle oil and roasted garlic to mashed potatoes before serving, instead of flavoring with butter.

- **ADD NUTS.** Coat chicken breasts in a mix of spices and crushed pecans or almonds, then bake, for a healthy alternative to fried chicken. Sprinkle ground flaxseed on your morning cereal and top with walnuts for a hefty boost of omega-3 fats.

- **SWAP TURF FOR SURF.** Switch from filet mignon to fillet of salmon, which is rich in omega-3s; choose wild or organic farmed salmon if it's available, since these have lower levels of mercury contamination. Aim for two servings of seafood per week—other types high in omega-3s include chunk light tuna (albacore has more mercury), oysters and herring.

- **GO FOR GUAC.** Top an omelet with sliced avocado—high in monounsaturated fat—instead of cheese, which is one of the biggest sources of saturated fat in the American diet. "Or use guacamole as a mayo alternative on your sandwich," recommends Newgent.



A serving of 23 almonds has nine grams of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat and 164 calories.

## 2 PICK WHOLE GRAINS

Fiber-rich whole grains lower your risk for just about everything, from heart disease and cancer to diabetes. Yet the average person gets fewer than one of the three or more recommended daily servings. Here are four ways to go with the grain:

### • STOCK HEALTHY STAPLES.

Choose breakfast cereals that supply at least 3g of fiber and no more than 4g sugar total per serving, such as Shredded Wheat and Kashi 7 Whole Grain Nuggets.

Buy bread, bagels and English muffins with *whole* wheat listed as the first ingredient (and at least 2g fiber per serving).

### • CHOOSE SNACKS THAT SATISFY.

Fiber-rich foods digest slowly, keeping you full longer. Try whole-grain pita bread (with more than 2g fiber) cut into wedges and dipped in hummus or fat-free bean dip. Or make mini pizzas by topping whole-wheat English muffins (more than 4g fiber each) with pizza sauce, reduced-fat cheese, red peppers and mushrooms.

### • GET TAKEOUT-SAVVY.

At Mexican restaurants, ask for corn tortillas, with 1.5g fiber each, rather than white-flour tortillas. When ordering Chinese, if the restaurant doesn't have plain steamed brown rice (3.5g fiber per cup), make your own instant brown rice at home.

• **ADJUST YOUR RECIPES.** Whether you're making waffles, pancakes, muffins or bread, for every cup of all-purpose flour called for, substitute a 50/50 blend of whole wheat and white flour. And switch from regular pasta to whole-wheat, or at least a blend, like Ronzoni Healthy Harvest.

## 3 GO CRAZY FOR CALCIUM

You need the calcium equivalent of three glasses of milk every day to help ward off osteoporosis. However, most people consume only about three-quarters of the recommended 1,000 mg daily. To prevent fractures and avoid becoming a hunched-over old lady, try these tips:

• **DRINK MILK.** At Starbucks, order a grande nonfat latte—you'll get 45 percent of your daily calcium requirement for only 160 calories. Or make a frappuccino at home by whipping nonfat milk, coffee, ice and a drop of hazelnut or almond flavoring in a blender, suggests Sass. Non-coffee drinkers can start the day with a smoothie made from milk, yogurt or calcium- and vitamin D-fortified soy milk and fruit, recommends Lisa Young, Ph.D., R.D., an adjunct professor of nutrition at New York University.

• **AND COOK WITH IT TOO.** Prepare instant oatmeal with nonfat milk instead of water. Do the same with canned condensed tomato soup, and add a handful of edamame (boiled green soybeans, which have 130 mg calcium per half cup).

Also, try adding nonfat dry milk powder to prepared pancake batter.

### • THINK HIGH IN CALCIUM BUT LOW IN FAT.

Sprinkle mini chocolate chips or shredded coconut on top of low-fat yogurt to make your own sundae. Or enjoy some fresh mozzarella, which has less fat than hard cheeses, especially if made from part-skim milk.

### • LOOK BEYOND THE DAIRY CASE.

"Some fruits and vegetables contain calcium, including rhubarb (105 mg per cup), turnip greens (104 mg per cup), broccoli (43 mg per cup) and spinach (30 mg per cup)," says Young.

## 4 SNEAK IN MORE PRODUCE

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables has been shown to lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, cancer and obesity. Five servings a day is a good start, but nine is best. Here are four simple ways to get there:

### • INCLUDE COLOR IN EVERY MEAL.

Have at least one serving at every breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack. That one serving could be a medium-size whole fruit, six ounces of 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice, one-half cup of fresh, frozen or canned produce (such as green beans or berries), one cup of leafy greens or one-fourth cup of dried fruit.

• **HIDE IT IN EVERYDAY FAVORITES.** "Add shredded, chopped or minced vegetables to whatever you're already eating. You'll boost your intake without feeling the pressure of having to add yet more food to your diet," says Sass. Throw chopped broccoli or peas into a beloved casserole, onions and mushrooms into a pasta dish or leftover vegetables into soup. Trade the syrup on your pancakes, French toast or waffle for one cup of fresh or thawed berries, peaches or bananas.

• **LOOK FOR VEGGIE OPPORTUNITIES.** Request extra lettuce, red onion and tomato on your deli sandwich. At restaurants, ask if you can swap the potato, chips or fries for a side of vegetables.

• **ADD FRUIT TO EVERYTHING.** Place a platter of cut-up fruit out on the coffee table after dinner. Or add some to yogurt: Try cantaloupe in lemon yogurt, fresh peaches in vanilla yogurt or blueberries in raspberry yogurt. •

## CHECK OFF YOUR CHANGES

Even if it's one per day, you're on your way!

Su M T W Th F S

Whole grains can include oats, bulgur, barley, brown rice and popcorn.

One 56-calorie kiwifruit provides more than a day's worth of vitamin C.

Cheese is a concentrated source of calcium—and saturated fat. Stick to a two-inch cube.