

Taking Charge of Our Metabolic Health

Understanding and
Acting on the Impact of
Our Food Choices

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Why the Status Quo Isn't Working

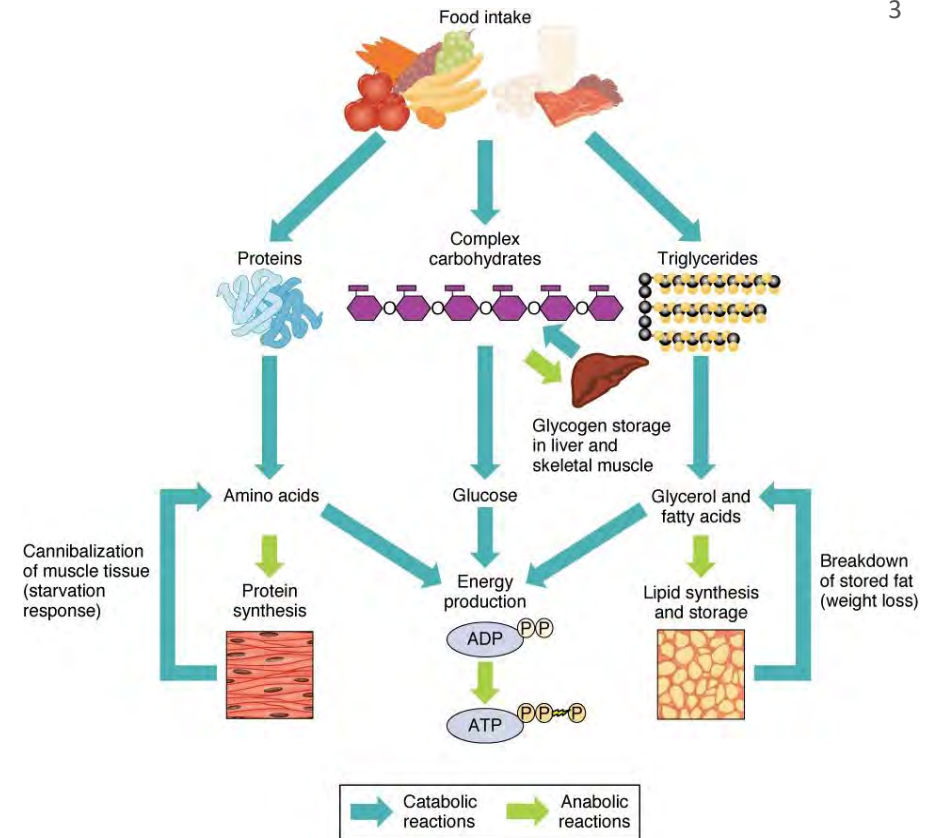
Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and obesity are on the rise, largely due to unhealthy dietary choices prevalent in modern diets. These conditions are not just statistics; they impact real lives every day.



Q. What changes have you noticed in your health or the health of those around you due to dietary habits?

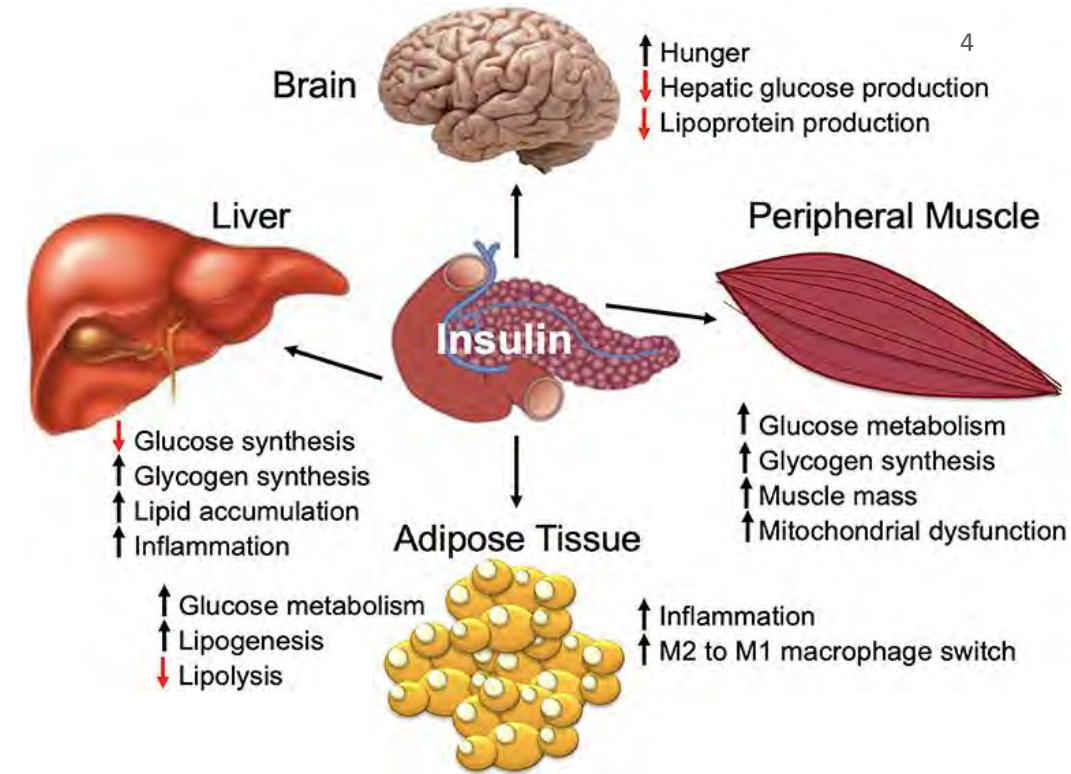
What is Metabolic Health?

Metabolic health is the foundation of your body's ability to process nutrients effectively without storing excessive fat, maintaining stable blood sugar levels, and functioning optimally without chronic disease risks.



Insulin Resistance & Its Effects

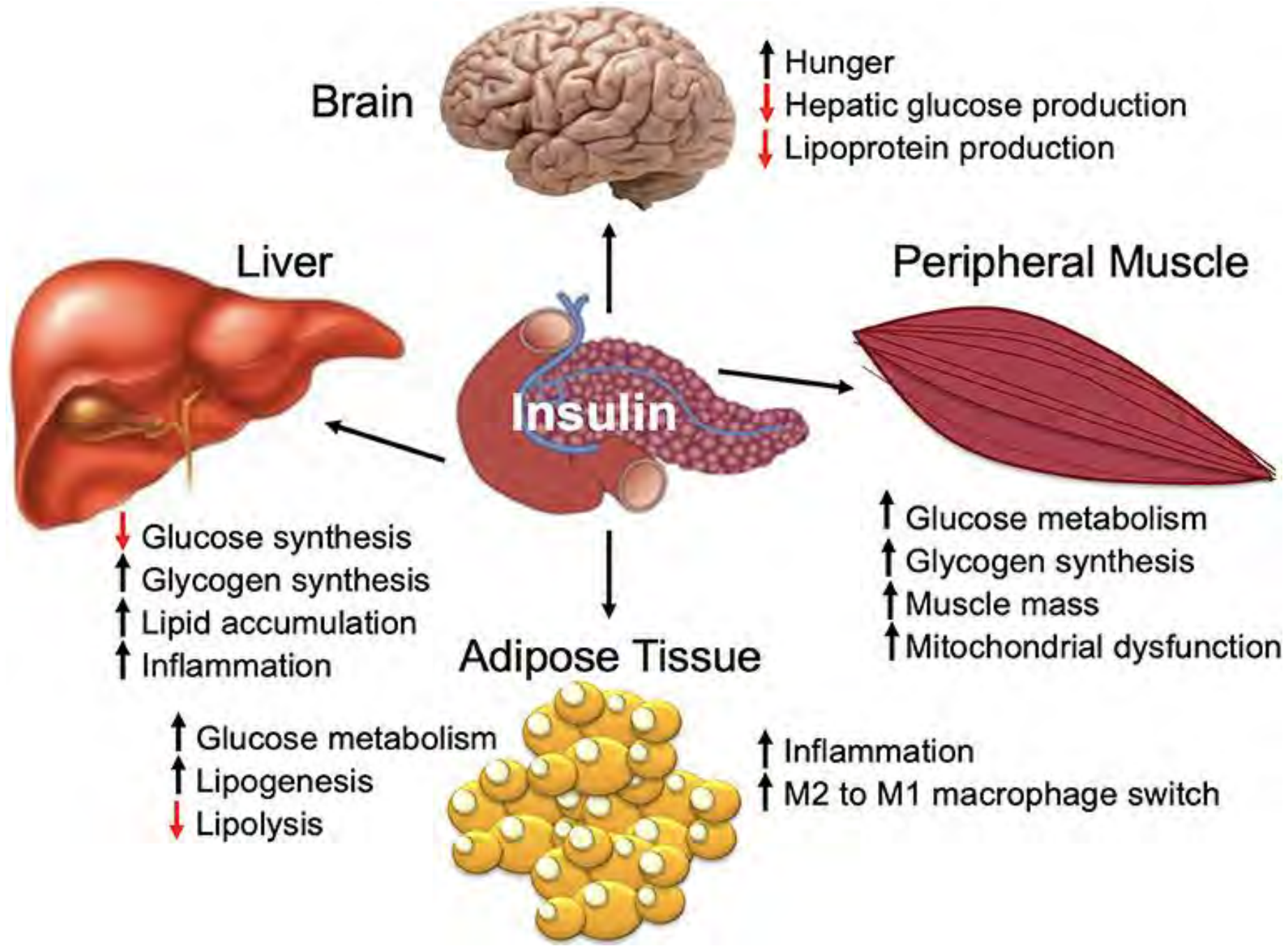
Insulin resistance occurs when cells in muscles, fat, and the liver don't respond well to insulin and can't easily take up glucose from your blood. As a result, your pancreas makes more insulin, leading to diabetes and other health issues.



Processed Foods: A Danger in Plain Sight

Processed foods often contain high levels of sugars, unhealthy fats, and salts, which contribute to **insulin resistance**, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases.





Brain:

- Insulin makes you feel hungrier.
- It helps reduce sugar production in the liver.
- It lowers the production of certain fats in the blood.

Liver:

- Less sugar is made.
- More storage of sugar as glycogen.
- More fat builds up.
- Increases inflammation.

Fat Cells (Adipose Tissue):

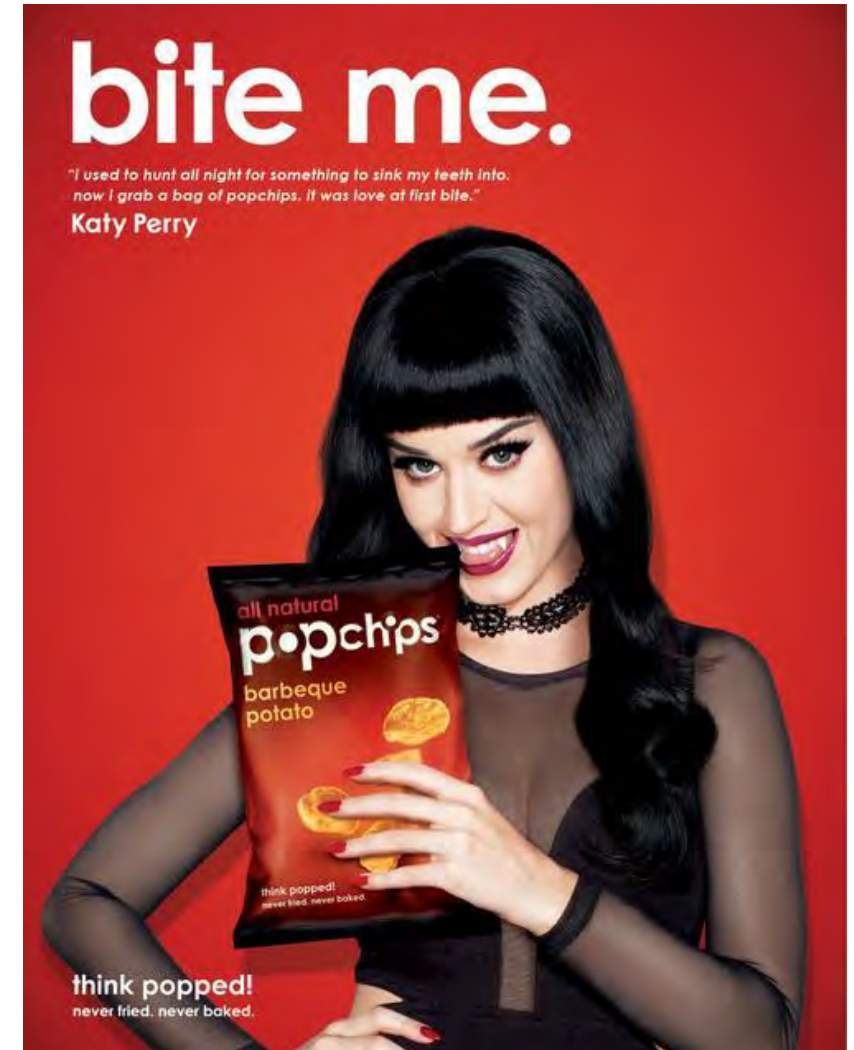
- Uses more sugar.
- Increases fat storage.
- Reduces fat breakdown.
- Increases inflammation.

Muscles:

- Uses more sugar.
- Stores more sugar as glycogen.
- Helps build muscle.
- Can cause problems in energy production.

Resisting Food Industry Manipulation

The food industry often designs products that maximize palatability (and sales) at the cost of health, using addictive additives like high-fructose corn syrup and excessive salt

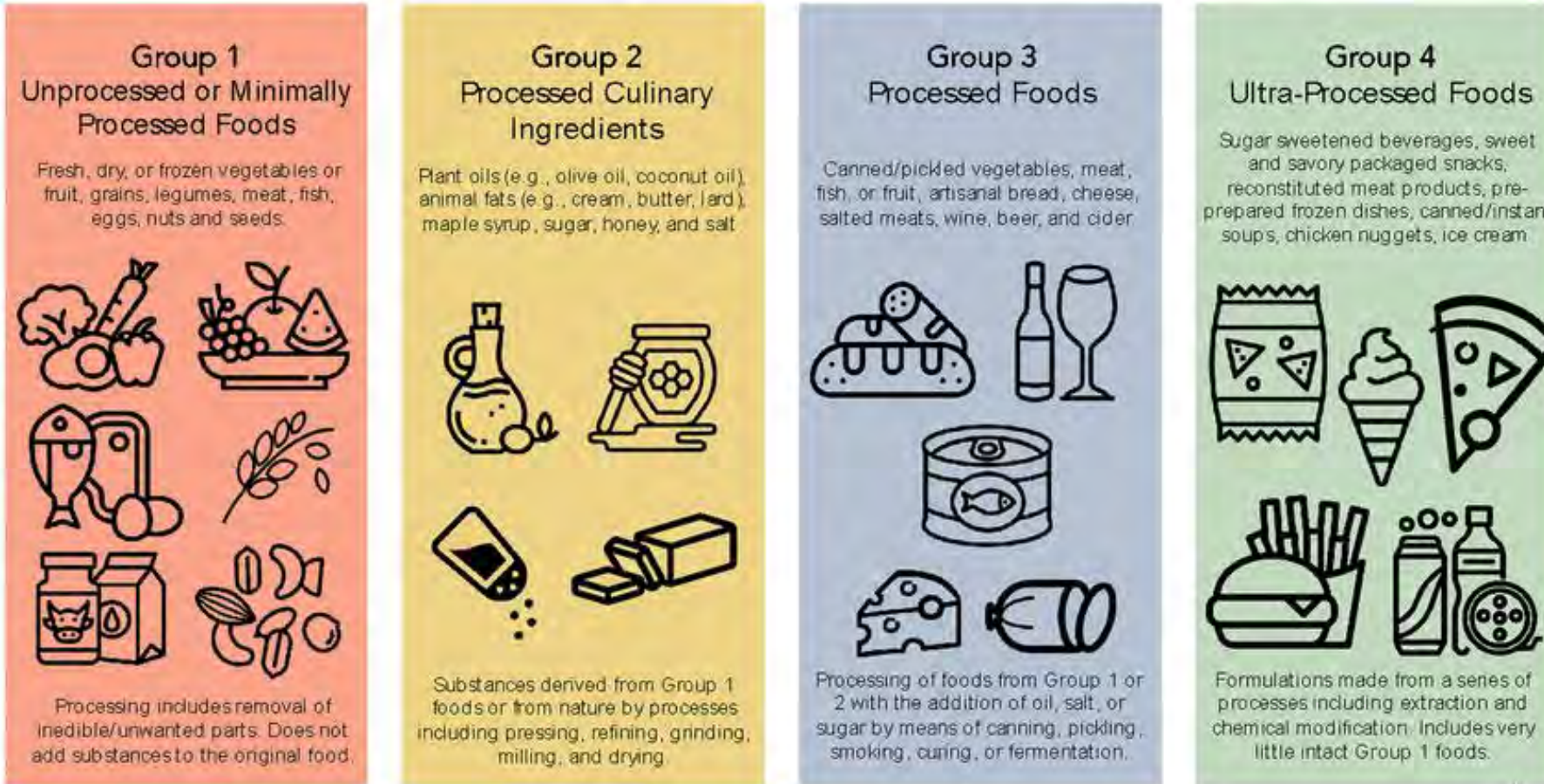


Giving "Big Food" Nothing More: Practical Steps to Clean Eating

Start by reading labels to avoid additives, cooking meals at home to control ingredients, and choosing whole, minimally processed foods.



Choosing Wisely with The NOVA Food Classification



The NOVA system classifies foods by the level of processing. Focus on Group 1 (unprocessed) and Group 2 (minimally processed) foods for healthier diet choices.

Increasing Level of Processing

Meal Planning with NOVA

Group 1
Unprocessed or Minimally Processed Foods

Fresh, dry, or frozen vegetables or fruit, grains, legumes, meat, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds.

Processing includes removal of inedible/unwanted parts. Does not add substances to the original food.

Group 2
Processed Culinary Ingredients

Plant oils (e.g., olive oil, coconut oil), animal fats (e.g., cream, butter, lard), maple syrup, sugar, honey, and salt.

Substances derived from Group 1 foods or from nature by processes including pressing, refining, grinding, milling, and drying.

Increasing Level

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Let's plan two weeks of meals using primarily Group 1 and 2 foods. This practice helps integrate healthier choices into your routine sustainably.

Week 1

Day 1:

- **Breakfast:** Overnight oats with almond milk, chia seeds, and banana.
- **Lunch:** Chicken salad with mixed greens, cucumbers, tomatoes, and olive oil vinaigrette.
- **Dinner:** Stir-fried chicken with bell peppers, onions, and brown rice.
- **Snack:** Apple slices with almond butter.

Day 2:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie with spinach, banana, and almond milk.
- **Lunch:** Tuna and avocado wrap in a whole grain tortilla.
- **Dinner:** Baked chicken thighs with sweet potatoes and steamed broccoli.
- **Snack:** Carrot sticks with hummus.

Day 3:

- **Breakfast:** Whole grain toast with avocado and a sprinkle of salt and pepper.
- **Lunch:** Lentil soup with a side of mixed greens.
- **Dinner:** Grilled shrimp with quinoa and steamed asparagus.
- **Snack:** Mixed nuts.

Day 4:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie bowl with blended berries, spinach, and topped with granola.
- **Lunch:** Quinoa salad with chickpeas, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and lemon dressing.
- **Dinner:** Baked cod with roasted Brussels sprouts and wild rice.
- **Snack:** Celery sticks with almond butter.

Day 5:

- **Breakfast:** Scrambled eggs with spinach and tomatoes.
- **Lunch:** Turkey and avocado wrap in a whole grain tortilla.
- **Dinner:** Beef and vegetable stir-fry with brown rice.
- **Snack:** Sliced bell peppers with guacamole.

Day 6:

- **Breakfast:** Chia pudding made with almond milk, topped with fresh fruit.
- **Lunch:** Veggie and hummus wrap in a whole grain tortilla.
- **Dinner:** Baked chicken breasts with roasted sweet potatoes and green beans.
- **Snack:** Apple slices with almond butter.

Day 7:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie with kale, apple, banana, and almond milk.
- **Lunch:** Chicken Caesar salad (without dairy, using olive oil and lemon juice dressing).
- **Dinner:** Grilled steak with a side of brown rice and mixed vegetables.
- **Snack:** Mixed nuts.



Week 2

Day 1:

- **Breakfast:** Overnight oats with almond milk, chia seeds, and blueberries.
- **Lunch:** Grilled chicken wrap with avocado, lettuce, and tomato.
- **Dinner:** Turkey meatballs with spaghetti squash and marinara sauce.
- **Snack:** Celery sticks with almond butter.

Day 2:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie with spinach, apple, and almond milk.
- **Lunch:** Spinach and quinoa salad with grilled shrimp and lemon dressing.
- **Dinner:** Baked pork chops with mashed cauliflower and green beans.
- **Snack:** Carrot sticks with hummus.

Day 3:

- **Breakfast:** Whole grain toast with almond butter and sliced banana.
- **Lunch:** Turkey and vegetable soup with a side salad.
- **Dinner:** Grilled salmon with quinoa and steamed broccoli.
- **Snack:** Sliced cucumber with hummus.

Day 4:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie bowl with blended spinach, mango, and topped with granola.
- **Lunch:** Lentil and vegetable stew with a side of mixed greens.
- **Dinner:** Baked tilapia with roasted sweet potatoes and steamed broccoli.
- **Snack:** Mixed nuts.

Day 5:

- **Breakfast:** Scrambled eggs with mushrooms and spinach.
- **Lunch:** Greek salad with mixed greens, olives, and olive oil dressing.
- **Dinner:** Chicken fajitas with bell peppers, onions, and whole grain tortillas.
- **Snack:** Sliced bell peppers with guacamole.

Day 6:

- **Breakfast:** Chia pudding made with coconut milk, topped with fresh fruit.
- **Lunch:** Quinoa and black bean salad with avocado and lime dressing.
- **Dinner:** Grilled steak with a side of brown rice and roasted vegetables.
- **Snack:** Apple slices with almond butter.

Day 7:

- **Breakfast:** Smoothie with kale, apple, banana, and almond milk.
- **Lunch:** Chicken and avocado salad with a side of whole grain crackers.
- **Dinner:** Vegetable stir-fry with tofu and brown rice.
- **Snack:** Mixed nuts.



Setting Personal Health Goals

Set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals to improve your diet, such as 'Incorporate two servings of vegetables in each dinner for the next month'.

Write down one dietary change you plan to make. Share it with the group.



Discussion and Wrap-Up

Open Discussion and Next Steps

Now that we've outlined steps towards better health, let's share insights and strategies to overcome challenges in adjusting eating habits.

Identifying Personal Barriers

- What are the biggest obstacles you face in making healthier food choices?
- How can we identify and address these barriers effectively?

Meal Prep and Planning

- What are some time-saving tips for meal prepping?
- How do you incorporate meal planning into your weekly routine?

Healthy Alternatives and Substitutions

- What are some healthy substitutes for common processed foods?
- How do you satisfy cravings for sweets or salty snacks in a healthier way?

Eating on a Budget

- How do you manage to eat healthily without breaking the bank?
- Share tips for finding affordable healthy food options.



Discussion and Wrap-Up

Involving the Family

- How do you encourage your family to participate in healthy eating?
- What strategies work best to get kids excited about nutritious meals?

Staying Motivated

- What keeps you motivated to stick to your healthy eating goals?
- How do you handle setbacks or moments of temptation?

Dining Out

- How do you make healthier choices when eating out?
- Share tips for navigating restaurant menus to find the healthiest options.

Practical Cooking Tips

- What are some quick and easy recipes that have worked for you?
- How do you keep your meals diverse and interesting?

Tracking Progress

- How do you track your dietary habits and progress towards your goals?
- What tools or apps do you find most useful?

Mindful Eating

- How do you practice mindful eating in a busy lifestyle?
- Share techniques that help you stay present and enjoy your meals.

