



Fuel Your Body with Healthy Foods to Keep You at Your Best

Food is the body's fuel – it gives you the energy and focus you need to get through the day. Just as your car's engine requires gas to run properly, your body requires a variety of vitamins, minerals and nutrients to keep you at your best.

"Eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet is one of the best things you can do for your health. When you make smart food choices, your body will work more efficiently, and any medications you're taking will have a chance to work properly." said Mary Doepke, RN, Owner of Home Helpers of Hinsdale.

Unfortunately, this is easier said than done. In today's fast-paced society, it's much easier to swing through a McDonald's drive-thru than it is to cook a wholesome dinner for your family. Not surprisingly, more than two-thirds of Americans are either overweight or obese,* and the complications of both can cause serious health risks, including:

- High cholesterol
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Type 2 diabetes
- Some forms of cancer
- Sleep apnea
- Osteoarthritis

In celebration of [National Nutrition Month](#), we encourage you to take a proactive approach to your health, one choice at a time. Rather than trying the latest fad diet, take a step back and reexamine your ultimate objective – a healthier lifestyle in which you feel more energized, optimistic and comfortable in your own skin.

The first step to better nutrition is to understand what kind of fuel your body needs. In 2011, the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#) replaced the food pyramid with a portion plate that highlights the following five food groups:



- **GRAINS** – *"Make half of your grains whole."*
 - Eat at least 3 oz. of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta every day.
 - 1 oz. is about 1 slice of bread, about 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal or pasta.
- **VEGETABLES** – *"Vary your veggies."*
 - Eat more dark leafy greens, including broccoli, spinach and watercress.
 - Eat more orange vegetables, including carrots and sweet potatoes.
 - Eat more dry beans and peas like pinto beans, kidney beans and lentils.

- **FRUITS** – *“Focus on fruits.”*
 - Eat a wide variety of fruit that’s fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
 - Go easy on fruit juices – these contain high amounts of sugar, which can cause the body’s energy levels to soar and then crash.

- **DAIRY/MILK** – *“Get your calcium-rich foods.”*
 - Go low-fat or fat-free when you choose milk, yogurt and other milk products.
 - If you don’t or can’t consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as fortified foods and beverages.

- **PROTEIN/MEATS & BEANS** – *“Go lean with protein.”*
 - Choose low-fat or lean meats and poultry.
 - Bake it, broil it, or grill it.
 - Vary your protein routine – choose more fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds.

Additionally, try to avoid processed or refined foods and foods that are high in sodium or sugar. Do the majority of your grocery shopping in the perimeter of store – that’s where you’ll find fresh produce. If you have to buy processed food, be sure to read the [Nutritional Facts](#) on the packaging.

At Home Helpers, we understand certain medications, oral health, allergies, and chronic medical conditions (e.g., Parkinson’s, stroke) may cause loss of appetite and hinder the ability to chew and swallow, thereby inhibiting medications’ effectiveness.

“Depending on our client’s unique needs and situation, we can help develop a meal plan, shop for groceries, prepare the meals and assist with feeding, thereby enabling them to enjoy a well-balanced diet and giving their medications a chance to work properly,” added LAST NAME. “Proper nutrition is the basis for optimal health, and we do what we can to support our clients’ overall well-being.”

Additional Resources

The following websites offer helpful and insightful information:

- www.nutrition.gov
- www.choosemyplate.gov
- www.cdc.gov/nutrition/index.html
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/nutrition.html

*According to data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003–2006 and 2007–2008.

HOME HELPERS – *Making Life Easier* Home Helpers offers quality non-medical, companionship, personal care and medical services* similar to the care and support often provided by family members. Our flexible care plans are tailored to fit our clients’ specific needs and budgets. Compassionate Care is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by Home Helpers. We hope you found this edition to be informative and helpful.

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