

# EAT THIS, NOT THAT: FOR HEALTHY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Trying to reach and maintain a healthier weight usually includes making some diet modifications along with stepping up the exercise. But what many people don't realize is that sometimes, even the healthy-sounding foods are anything but—and buying into a not-so-good-for-you food's "health halo" (or illusion of being nutritious) may lead you to overeat and actually put on the pounds. Try these foods instead of their less-healthy counterparts for long-term wellness.

## BREAKFAST

**YOGURT:** Yogurt has long been associated with health and wellbeing—so you'd never guess that some flavored yogurts have as much sugar as a candy bar! Skip the pre-sweetened yogurt and get plain yogurt in its place. Sprinkle in some sliced strawberries, banana, or peaches for flavor, or a small scoop of fruit preserves to mimic the flavor of fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt with less sugar.

**Eat This:** Plain low-fat or non-fat Greek yogurt with fresh fruit   **Not That:** Flavored yogurt

**CREAM OF WHEAT:** Even though it has the healthy-sounding word "wheat" in its name, Cream of Wheat and similar cereals are made from refined wheat, making them low in fiber. Oatmeal is made from whole-grain oats and is far more filling and nutritious. Add fruit, nuts, and seeds for a complete meal.

**Eat This:** Oatmeal   **Not That:** Cream of Wheat/farina

**SMOOTHIES:** Sure, smoothies are easy to make. But store-bought smoothies are often made with high-calorie blood sugar-spiking juices and mysterious protein powders. What's more, pulverizing even high-fiber ingredients like kale and berries makes them raise your blood sugar more than they would in their natural whole state, when you must chew them. Instead, mix equal parts of plain oats, yogurt, milk, and a sprinkle of chia seeds in a jar and refrigerate overnight. In the morning you have a just-as-easy, but better-for-you breakfast ready to go—just top with some fruit and you're all set.

**Eat This:** Overnight oats   **Not That:** Fruit smoothie

## LUNCH/DINNER

**PEANUT BUTTER:** The heart-health benefits of peanuts and peanut butter come in part from their unsaturated fats. Remove the fat and you will also take away some of those benefits. What's more, many reduced-fat peanut butters replace the oil with sugar—so what you're left with is a product with virtually the same number of calories, and more carbohydrates. Stick with nut butters that contain nothing more than nuts and maybe salt!

**Eat This:** Natural peanut butter   **Not That:** Low-fat peanut butter

**CREAM SAUCE:** Once dubbed by The Center for Science in the Public Interest as a "heart attack on a plate," it's no surprise that fettuccine alfredo (or anything alfredo, for that matter) is not exactly a nutritious choice. But you can make a heart-health-promoting rich and delicious cream sauce with nothing but plant-based ingredients. Soak 1 cup of raw cashews in water for 2 hours, drain and blend with 1 tablespoon lemon juice, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¾ cups water (more if you want a thinner sauce) and 1 clove garlic, minced. Use to top pasta or dress up vegetables.

**Eat This:** Cashew cream sauce   **Not That:** Alfredo sauce

**OILS:** By law, a food that has less than 5 calories per serving can be considered "calorie free." So that buttery spray you're dousing your veggies in is likely providing you with far more calories than you're expecting. Instead of living in denial, use an oil mister instead and fill it with a flavorful, rich oil that you can use mindfully and in moderation.

**Eat This:** Oil mist   **Not That:** Calorie-free sprays



**BREADING:** Panko is a type of breadcrumbs, but because they're ground more coarsely than traditional varieties, they're perfect for "oven frying," in other words, creating a crunchy, fried texture without all that oil. They're also lower in sodium than regular breadcrumbs. Use to create a crispy, baked coating on chicken, fish, and more.

**Eat This:** Whole-wheat panko **Not That:** Seasoned breadcrumbs.

## SNACKS

**VEGGIE CHIPS:** Most of the veggie chips that you buy at the store are made mostly with potato flour and starch, and a little spinach, tomato, or beet powder for color. What's more, they hardly have any fiber, which means they won't do much to satisfy. Instead, choose popcorn. It's a fiber-rich whole grain, and 3 cups equals one serving.

**Eat This:** Popcorn **Not That:** Veggie chips

**FRUIT:** A single-serving container of fruit cocktail is appealing in that you can throw it in your bag (or your child's lunch) for later. Fruit cocktail, however, is often loaded with sugar, making it not such a healthy choice. Several companies like KIND and Lara have come out with bars made from nothing but dried fruit that make a better, lower sugar alternative. You can also always go for fruit that's naturally portable like bananas, oranges, apples, and pears.

**Eat This:** A "just fruit" bar **Not That:** Fruit cocktail

**SNACK PACKS:** Hundred-calorie bags of cookies and crackers win points for being portion controlled. But they're notoriously not satisfying, leaving you looking for snack #2 (research shows people may even be inclined to eat more than one 100-calorie pack at a time, negating any portion benefits!). Instead, eat a 1-2 ounce serving of nuts (roughly a handful). The fiber and protein will help fill you up, plus you'll get other nutrients that improve heart health.

**Eat This:** A handful of nuts **Not That:** 100-calorie snack packs

## BEVERAGES

**DIET SODA:** Research shows that diet soda may not be the panacea for weight loss many dieters believe it to be. Instead of stoking your sweet tooth with artificially over sweetened beverages, try an unsweetened flavored seltzer like the ones from LaCroix, Poland Springs or Spindrift. To add flavor to your fizz, consider infusing with fresh or frozen fruit, cucumbers, or herbs.

**Drink This:** Unsweetened flavored seltzer **Not That:** Diet soda

**FLAVORED WATERS:** Flavored waters may contain sugar or artificial sweeteners—either way, ingredients you don't need. Add flavor to water without contributing calories or more by infusing it with slices of fruit like lemon, lime, cantaloupe, or even ginger root or mint leaves.

**Drink This:** Fruit-infused water **Not That:** Flavored water

**SPORTS DRINKS:** Unless you're exercising for more than an hour or in extremely hot conditions, you generally don't need a sports drink. For a routine trip to the gym or walk on the treadmill, stick with water so that you don't drink back the calories you're working so hard to burn.

**Drink This:** Water **Not That:** Sports drinks

## PORTION PATROL

With any food, nutritious or not, eating the right sized portions is key. When you buy a food, always check to see how many portions are in each package—is that bag of chips you buy for yourself actually meant for three? If so, try sharing with a friend, or pre-portioning out servings before you eat so you can stretch it out over a few days.