

5 TOOLS TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR DIET & NUTRITION GOALS

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5 Tools to Help You Achieve Your Diet & Nutrition Goals

In general, the diet that's healthy for a person with MS is the same diet that's good for all of us.

Put simply by journalist Michael Pollan: "Eat [real] food, not too much, more plants."

You might already have success with certain aspects of a healthy diet, but often, there are still some specific areas that we can improve upon. Your doctor might have identified these focus areas for you, or they may be based on how different foods make you feel.

Whether it's achieving a healthy BMI, lowering your cholesterol, getting enough nutritious food for your activity level, or any other goal, **here are five tools to help!**

1. SMART Goals Worksheet

Setting goals sounds easy but achieving them often is not.

Too often, we say "I want to eat healthier meals," "I want to lose weight," or "I'm going to give up sweets." And then we get discouraged when we don't meet these goals.

The problem might be that you're not setting SMART goals; they're not specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely.

Here are some examples of SMART goals:

- I plan to add 3 servings of fresh vegetables and 3 servings of fresh fruit to my weekly diet for the next 4 weeks.
- My goal is to substitute fresh fruit for dessert 3 nights per week for 1 month.

- I will speak with an occupational therapist to learn 3 strategies for simplifying food prep and implement those strategies each dinnertime for the next month.
- For the next month, when I crave a candy bar, I will eat a piece of fruit instead.

SMART goals help you track your progress, hold yourself accountable, and actually achieve your goals!

Your goals should be relevant to your unique needs, and a nutrition specialist can help you create goals that are personalized and make sense for you (and your MS).

At the end of the specified time period, you can extend your goal if you've been successful or tweak your goal if it needs some adjustment.

And finally, be sure to put together a group of cheerleaders to support your efforts!

SMART Goal Setting
Use SMART goals to set yourself up for success!

S SPECIFIC	What exactly do I want to happen?	
M MEASURABLE	How will I measure this goal? How will I know when I have achieved it?	
A ATTAINABLE	Is the goal realistic? What will I need to accomplish it? (Outside help, skills, etc.)	
R RELEVANT	Is this goal worthwhile? Does it fit within guidance from my healthcare team?	
T TIMELY	When will you achieve your goal? What's your deadline?	

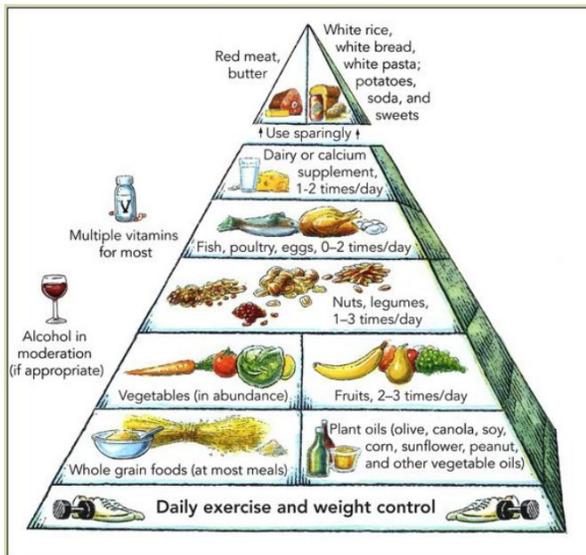
My goal is:

[Download the SMART Goal Setting Worksheet \(https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Smart-Goals.pdf?mtime=20211222191716\)](https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Smart-Goals.pdf?mtime=20211222191716)

2. Balanced Diet Diagram

One approach to heart-healthy and nutritious food intake is the Mediterranean diet. You don't necessarily need to eliminate anything; the key is filling up on the right foods and taking in others sparingly.

This is a handy graphic that shows you how to balance your food groups, and also provides suggestions for how much of each group you should take in each day.



Print this Mediterranean Diet-Inspired Food Pyramid (<https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Balanced-Diet-Pyramid.pdf?mtime=20220104200706>).

3. Healthy Kitchen Checklist

Eating well is easier when you have healthy foods at home! It may seem obvious, but it's easier said than done.

You'll save money and reduce those guilty feelings from ordering takeout if your pantry is stocked with the foods you need. Mona Bostick, a registered dietitian who lives with MS, created a handy checklist to help you stock up for success.



[ms.org/images/timeline/Quick-and-Healthy-Meals.pdf?mtime=20210204210623](https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Quick-and-Healthy-Meals.pdf?mtime=20210204210623)

[Download the Healthy Kitchen Checklist from MSBites \(https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Stock-Up-For-Success.pdf?mtime=20210204210634\)](https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Stock-Up-For-Success.pdf?mtime=20210204210634)

4. Quick and Healthy Meal Ideas

Healthy eating can be delicious, full of variety, and easy. While it's tempting to order takeout when cooking feels too daunting, remember that your body, tastebuds, and wallet will thank you if you whip up a delicious, healthy meal at home. If you don't have a lot of time or energy to cook, check out these meal ideas to inspire you!



Remember, an occupational therapist can also help you to come up with adaptations and ideas to make at-home cooking more accessible.

[Download the Quick and Healthy Meal Ideas Printout \(https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Quick-and-Healthy-Meals.pdf?mtime=20210204210623\)](https://cdn.cando-ms.org/images/timeline/Quick-and-Healthy-Meals.pdf?mtime=20210204210623)

5. Portion Diagram

This graphic from ChooseMyPlate.gov offers additional suggestions for creating a balanced meal. Print this out for an easy look at what you can mimic on your own plate.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

- Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits and vegetables.
- Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables, such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, in main and side dishes.
- Use fruit as snacks, salads, or desserts.
- Keep raw, cut-up vegetables handy for quick snacks.
- Choose whole or cut-up fruits more often than fruit juice.

Switch to skim or 1% milk

- They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.

Make at least half your grains whole

- Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta.
- Check the ingredients list on food packages to find whole-grain foods.

Vary your protein food choices

- Choose a variety of foods including seafood, beans and peas, nuts, lean meats, poultry, and eggs.
- Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.
- Try grilling, broiling, poaching, or roasting. These methods do not add extra fat.

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt

- Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars.
- Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy.
- Eat fewer foods that are high in solid fats.

Eat the right amount of calories for you

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what's in your food.
- When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options.

Get your personal daily calorie limit at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov and keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.

Be physically active your way

Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and the health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

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(<https://www.myplate.gov/resources>)

Find Placemat Printouts, Apps, and More at MyPlate.gov (<https://www.myplate.gov/resources>)

Food can be an enjoyable, nutritious, and healthy part of your life. We hope these tools help you get started!

To learn more, visit our [Diet & Nutrition \(https://www.cando-ms.org/popular-topics/diet-and-nutrition\)](https://www.cando-ms.org/popular-topics/diet-and-nutrition) page!