

Don't go "on" a diet

Learn to improve your diet for good!

By Lacy Wolff, ERS Health Promotion Administrator



When most people hear the word “diet,” they think of caloric restriction, hunger, flavorless foods that taste like cardboard and often the removal or restriction of macronutrients (fat, carbs, or protein). Most people think of a “diet” as an eating plan they must follow for a period of time in order to reach a specific goal.

A “diet” is what you eat on a daily basis. That’s it! Your diet is simply what you eat. So, rather than temporarily restricting the quantity and types of foods you eat (which results in weight regain 95% of the time, anyway), build your eating competence instead.

Having eating competence means you:

- Have a positive attitude about eating and about food
- Are willing to try an ever-increasing variety of available food
- Eat only when you’re hungry and eat foods that will give you lasting satisfaction
- Understand nutrition and what should be included in the meals you make for your family

To truly be healthy, you must create sustainable habits so you eat in a way that supports good health. Building those habits can be challenging, but it can be done!

Here are some strategies you can use to build your eating competence and make changes in your diet that can dramatically improve your health:

- Make half of everything you eat plants. The more variety the better.
- Make your breakfast and lunch on most workdays—no more daily runs to the fast-food joint!
- Eat your lunch away from your computer.
- Chew your food slowly. Remember you taste food in your mouth. Don’t be in a rush to get it to the stomach!
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store, where you will find fresh foods that will spoil over time. Processed foods found in the middle of the store will have a longer shelf life, but are higher in sodium, sugar, hydrogenated fats and simple carbohydrates. All of these can diminish health and energy levels.

If you are ready to improve your health and would like to learn more strategies to improve your eating competency, check out the programs available to you through your health plan. Visit ERS’ [Wellness Resources webpage](#). Or, click one of the following links to find out what your health plan to offers you and your family:

- [HealthSelect of Texas® and Consumer Directed HealthSelectSM Wellness Benefits](#)
- [Community First Health Plan Wellness Benefits](#)
- [Scott & White Health Plan Wellness Benefits](#)

Additionally, Mike Harper, the Fitness Wellness Training Supervisor at the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), will conduct a webinar that will focus on nutrition. Attend “Outsmart Your Mind to Eat Better” and learn simple strategies to improve food choices. You can find the link to register through the [ERS Wellness Events page](#).



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