According to the International Food Information Council, “Functional Foods” are foods or dietary components that may provide a health benefit beyond basic nutrition. When consumed regularly as part of a varied diet, functional foods can have potentially beneficial effects on health.

A large category of functional foods includes whole or conventional foods that are associated with reduced risk of disease:

**Tomatoes** contain lycopene, a carotenoid in fresh and processed tomato products that is associated with reduced prostate cancer risk.

**Kale, collards, and spinach** contain lutein, a carotenoid associated with reduced risk of macular degeneration.

**Fermented dairy products such as yogurt** contain lactobacilli and/or bifidobacteria, probiotics that have been shown to support gastrointestinal health.

**Green tea** contains catechins, which are associated with reduced risk of certain cancers.

**Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower** contain glucosinolates and indoles, which are associated with reduced risk of certain cancers.

Other categories of functional foods are those that have either been fortified to enhance the level of a specific nutrient, or food that has been associated with the prevention or treatment of a disease and usually carry authorized health claims such as:

**Orange juice** fortified with calcium to reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

**Margarines** fortified with plant sterol and stanol esters to reduce risk of coronary heart disease.

**Soy protein** to reduce risk of coronary heart disease.

---

**Good news about FATS**

It's easier than you think to find the good fats in your diet and avoid the bad ones – like trans fats and saturated fats that have been shown to raise the risk of heart disease:

**Cut back on fried foods** like french fries and fried chicken. Fried foods are typically higher in calories and total fat and may be a source of trans fats.

**Check the nutrition labels** on packaged baked goods like cookies, cakes and crackers – trans fats are now listed so you can watch what you eat!

A few products may include “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” in the ingredients list but the product lists 0 gram trans fat on the label. This means the food contains very small amounts (less than 0.5 grams) of trans fat per serving. **Pay attention to serving size!**

**Here are some easy guidelines to follow if you’re trying to choose ‘good fats’:**

When you cook, use unsaturated oils like olive oil, canola oil and safflower oil. Choose snacks like peanuts, pecans and pistachios. Keep portions moderate – about one ounce of nuts.

Eat a variety of ‘fatty’ fish like salmon, tuna and trout (or sardines). They are sources of Omega-3 fatty acids which may reduce the risk of heart disease.

Try to limit the total amount of saturated fat you eat, replace solid fats like butter, stick margarine, and shortening with tub or liquid margarine and cooking oils, and take a step in the right direction by eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products every day!
Portion Size

Are you a victim of portion distortion?
Over the last 30 years, portion sizes of everyday foods have doubled. The average pizza pie was 10 inches in the seventies and is 16 to 18 inches today. Unfortunately the more-is-better food trend has translated into nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults who are overweight (BMI > 25).

Portions lead the way! Take a look at how small amounts of food with the exception of vegetables quickly add up to the recommended number of servings in each category for a 2000 calorie diet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Category</th>
<th>Daily Needs</th>
<th>How the portion stack up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>6 oz</td>
<td>One large bagel and one bag popped microwave popcorn = 6 oz equivalents = daily number of grain servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>2 ½ cups</td>
<td>10 broccoli florets, 12 baby carrots and 1 cup raw spinach = 2 ½ cups vegetables = daily number of vegetable servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
<td>1 large banana and 8 ounces orange juice = 2 cups fruit = daily number of fruit servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>3 servings</td>
<td>8 oz. glass of milk, 6 oz. yogurt, 2 oz. cheese = 3 dairy servings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat &amp; Beans</td>
<td>5 ½ oz</td>
<td>One 6 oz steak the size of 2 decks of cards = more than an entire days worth of meat servings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since everyone’s health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about the diet and exercise plan that’s right for you.

How to master healthy grilling.

Grilling is the ultimate high-flavor, low-fat cooking method. The dry heat of the fire melts away fat and gives food a rich, smoky flavor. Grilled vegetables taste sweeter, grilled meats and seafood stay more succulent, and even fruit acquires a haunting smoke flavor when grilled.

Before you fire up your grill, you need to know about two distinct cooking methods: direct and indirect grilling.

Direct grilling
Direct grilling is done directly over the fire at a high heat for a short time. This is the way to grill small or thin pieces of food, such as chicken breasts, fish fillets, steaks, vegetables, etc.

Indirect grilling
Indirect grilling is done next to, not over the fire, and is used for large or tough cuts of meat, like whole chickens, turkeys, and briskets. In indirect grilling, you always cover the grill, which turns your grill into a sort of outdoor oven.

Serve grilled veggies!
Peppers, corn, eggplant or onions are best seasoned with herbs and placed on a hot grill until they are tender (about 10-15 minutes.) Or place sliced zucchini, tomatoes and carrots on heavy-duty foil and sprinkle with water and seasoning. Wrap the foil and grill until tender – about 6-8 minutes.

Grill fruit!
Include fruit in your meal by grilling kabobs on low heat until the fruit is hot and slightly golden.