### Assessment of Current Eating Habits

#### Vegetables, Fruit, Whole Grains, and Beans

**On an average ****DAY, how many servings of these foods do you eat or drink?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
<th>Needs to be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Greens and non-starchy vegetables</strong> like collard, mustard, or turnip greens, salads made with dark-green leafy lettuces, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, string beans, Brussels sprouts, carrots, okra, zucchini, squash, turnips, onions, cabbage, spinach, mushrooms, bell peppers, or tomatoes (including tomato sauce)</td>
<td>□ 4+</td>
<td>□ 2-3</td>
<td>□ 0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fresh, canned (in own juice or light syrup), or frozen <strong>fruit</strong> or 100% fruit juice (½ cup of juice equals a serving)</td>
<td>□ 3+</td>
<td>□ 1-2</td>
<td>□ 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Bread, rolls, wraps, or tortillas made all or mostly with <strong>white flour</strong></td>
<td>□ Never</td>
<td>□ Some of the time</td>
<td>□ Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. Bread, rolls, wraps, or tortillas made all or mostly with <strong>whole wheat flour</strong></td>
<td>□ Most of the time</td>
<td>□ Some of the time</td>
<td>□ Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In an average ****WEEK, how many servings of these foods do you eat?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Desirable</th>
<th>Could be improved</th>
<th>Needs to be improved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Starchy vegetables</strong> like acorn squash, butternut squash, beets, sweet peas, corn, sweet potatoes, or yams (do not include white potatoes)</td>
<td>□ 4-7</td>
<td>□ 2-3</td>
<td>□ 0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>White potatoes</strong>, including French fries and potato chips</td>
<td>□ 1 or less</td>
<td>□ 2-3</td>
<td>□ 4+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Beans or peas</strong> like pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, butter or lima beans, or black-eyed peas</td>
<td>□ 3+</td>
<td>□ 1-2</td>
<td>□ 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In an average **WEEK**, how often or how many servings of these foods do you eat?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White rice or regular pasta, like noodles, spaghetti, or macaroni</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td><strong>Brown rice, whole grain pasta</strong>, or other whole grain products</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regular cold or hot cereals, like corn flakes or instant grits, instant oatmeal, or instant cream of wheat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>3+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Are Vegetables and Fruits Important?
Eating plenty of vegetables and fruits is a very important part of improving your heart health!

Vegetables and fruits:

- Have lots of good vitamins and minerals.
- Have lots of fiber.
- Make good snacks and desserts.
- Helps lower your chances of getting heart disease.

How Many Vegetables and Fruits Should I Eat?
Most experts recommend at least 7 servings of vegetables and fruits every day. In general, a half-cup of a cooked vegetable or 1 cup of a raw vegetable is a serving. For fruit, a small apple or half of a banana is a serving (see page 105).

You should eat:

- Many types of BOTH vegetables and fruits.

This is because different vegetables and fruits contain different nutrients your body needs to stay healthy.

What Types of Vegetables Should I Eat and How Often?
Vegetables are grouped based on nutrient content and health effects. The groups are greens and non-starchy vegetables, starchy vegetables, and white potatoes. Most vegetables do not raise the blood sugar very much, but some do.

Green and non-starchy vegetables are very healthy foods and do not raise blood sugar very much. Most experts recommend 4 or more servings per day.

Greens and non-starchy vegetables include collard, mustard, or turnip greens, salads made with dark-green leafy lettuce, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, string beans, Brussels sprouts, carrots, okra, zucchini, squash, turnips, onions, cabbage, spinach, mushrooms, bell peppers, and tomatoes (including tomato sauce).

Starchy vegetables are also healthy foods, but they can raise the blood sugar some, so 1 serving or so per day is a good goal.

Starchy vegetables include acorn squash, butternut squash, beets, sweet peas, corn, sweet potatoes, and yams.
White potatoes have fewer nutrients than other vegetables and can raise the blood sugar quite a bit. It is best to eat white potatoes no more than once a week.

- White potatoes include French fries and potato chips.

**What Types of Fruits Are There and How Often Should I Eat Each Type?**

Like vegetables, fruits are grouped by nutrient content and their effects on health. The groups are citrus fruits, berries, other fruits, melons, tropical fruits, dried fruits, and fruit juices. Most fruits do not raise the blood sugar very much.

Experts recommend 3 or more servings per day of citrus, berries and “other” fruits. Though somewhat high in “fruit sugar” content, these fruits do not raise the blood sugar very much.

- Citrus fruits include oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, lemons, and limes.
- Berries include strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and cranberries.
- Other fruits include apples, pears, grapes, peaches, plums, apricots, nectarines, and kiwi.

**Melons and tropical fruits** tend to raise the blood sugar a bit more than citrus, berries, and “other” fruits. It is easy to eat too much of these types of fruit. For those with diabetes, it is best to limit these fruits to 1 serving a day or less.

- Melons include cantaloupe, honeydew, and watermelon.
- Tropical fruits include bananas, mangos, and pineapple.

**Dried fruit and fruit juices** can raise the blood sugar quite a bit. It is best to eat fresh fruit and to completely avoid fruit flavored drinks. It is okay to have one 4-ounce serving of fruit juice a day.

- Dried fruit include raisins, prunes, dried apricots, and dried apples.
Why Are Whole Grains and Beans Important?

Eating whole grains and beans is another way to improve your heart health. Whole grains and beans have even more fiber than vegetables and fruits, and these foods do not raise the blood sugar as much as refined grains.

Eating more fiber is important for many reasons. Fiber:
- Helps you feel full.
- Keeps you regular.
- Helps lower your chances of getting heart disease.

What Whole Grains Should I Eat and How Often?

Bread, tortillas, rice dishes, pasta, and hot and cold cereals are made from grains. There are 2 types of grains: whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains have the entire grain kernel, which means they have more vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Refined grains have been milled which removes nutrient and fiber. Examples are white flour and white rice. Whole grain foods do not raise the blood sugar as much as refined grain foods.

Whole grains include:
- Whole wheat flour
- Whole oats (such as rolled oats and steel-cut oats)
- Brown rice
- Whole cornmeal

Whole grains do NOT include white flour, white rice, and regular pasta. You should try to eat whole grains rather than refined grains.
What Beans Should I Eat and How Often?

Beans are good sources of fiber and protein. Beans are a good substitute for meat because they are high in protein (like meat) but are less expensive. Eating beans instead of red meat can reduce your chances of developing heart disease.

Beans come in a wide variety and include:
- Pinto beans
- Navy beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Split peas
- Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- Lentils
- Black beans

A healthy eating plan includes eating beans 3 or more times per week.

How Much Fiber Do I Need?

Each day you should have at least 25 to 35 grams of fiber. It’s easy to get enough if you choose foods that are good sources of fiber. There is no need to count fiber grams, just follow the suggestions we have already covered for vegetables, fruits, grains, and beans.

Summary

Here is a summary of key points about Vegetables, Fruits, Whole Grains, and Beans.

- Vegetables and fruits are a very important part of healthy eating and improving your heart health!
- You should try to eat at least 7 servings of vegetables and fruits each day. Remember to eat a variety of the different types of fruits and vegetables.
- Whole grains and beans are good sources of fiber. Fiber in the diet reduces your chances of heart disease.
Check the goals you want to work on for the next contact.

1. Try for 4 or more servings of greens and non-starchy vegetables each day.

A word about serving sizes:

- In general, a half-cup of a cooked vegetable and 1 cup of a raw vegetable (such as salad) is a serving size.
- Though it is good to aim for about 4 or more servings a day, it is also important to eat a variety of vegetables.

Eat a variety of greens and non-starchy vegetables.

- Try broccoli, cauliflower, string beans, or greens like kale and collard greens.
- Include spinach, romaine, or other dark-green leafy lettuce in salads.
- Add Brussels sprouts, bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, or carrots to steamed or stir-fried vegetables.

Keep costs down.

- Buy fresh vegetables in season (look for a farmers’ market).
- Buy seasonal vegetables in bulk and freeze or can some for later use.
- Grow your own.
Add variety to meals with vegetables.
- Add onions, mushrooms, peppers, tomatoes, or salsa to your omelets.
- Make sandwiches, wraps, or burritos with lots of lettuce, tomatoes, onions, or other sliced vegetables.
- Bring cut-up vegetables to work instead of eating vending machine snacks.
- Steam, fry, or sauté vegetables in vegetable oil.

Spice up your vegetables
- Use onions, garlic, vinegar, herbs, spices, vegetable oil, or trans fat free margarine to season and add flavor to fresh greens and other vegetables. (See “Fresh Greens, Southern Style” and other ways of preparing vegetables on pages 43-55 of the Cookbook.)
- Use broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, or squash in place of white rice or pasta in your favorite soup or casserole.

2. Try for 3 or more different fruits each day.
- Fruit makes a tasty snack or dessert.
- Eating more fruit doesn’t have to be expensive; buy fruit that is in season or pick your own.
- Citrus fruit, berries, apples, pears and peaches are good choices.
- Tropical fruits like bananas and melons have more sugar. Half a banana and a cup of cut-up melon are 1 serving size for these fruits.
- Dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or apricots are okay snacks but be careful not to eat too many. One quarter of a cup, or about a handful, is 1 serving.
- Dried fruit goes well with nuts, nut butters or cheese. Eating dried fruits along with these types of foods helps to reduce the effect that dried fruit can have on raising blood sugar.

Continued ➔
Tips

Vegetables, Fruit, Whole Grains, and Beans

✻ Eat whole fruit (fresh, frozen, or canned) instead of drinking fruit juice—whole fruit gives you more fiber, which also can help you feel full.

✻ Avoid canned or frozen fruits with added sugar or syrup (look for canned fruit labeled “in its own juice”).

✻ If you do get canned fruit in light or heavy syrup, drain off the syrup and eat the fruit without it.

3. If you eat bread, rolls, or wraps, try to eat whole grain products most of the time.

✻ Whole grain products have more nutrients than refined grains and do not raise blood sugar as much.

✻ Pick whole grain breads and wraps instead of white bread or wraps. Look for whole wheat flour or whole grains as the first ingredient on the food label.

✻ Try to limit white bread to once or twice a week or less.

4. It’s okay to eat starchy vegetables like green peas and sweet potatoes once a day.

✻ Starchy vegetables include acorn squash, butternut squash, beets, green peas, sweet potatoes, or yams (white potatoes are VERY starchy vegetables and are covered below)

✻ A great way to eat these vegetables is to add them to steamed or stir-fried dishes.

✻ Try drizzling vegetable oil over cubes of starchy vegetables, sprinkle on some dried thyme, salt, and pepper, and then roast the vegetables for a delicious, easy, and healthy side dish.

✻ Starchy vegetables can stay in the pantry for a while, so stock up in the late summer and fall when they are in season.
5. **White potatoes, including French fries and potatoes chips, should not be eaten often.**

- White potatoes are very starchy vegetables and can raise the blood sugar quite a bit.
- Greens and non-starchy vegetables have a lot more nutrients than white potatoes.
- Eat white potatoes about once a week or less.
- When you eat white potatoes, choose a small potato or half of a large one.
- Try to limit how many fries and chips you eat.

6. **Eat more beans and peas. Try to eat beans or peas 3 or more times per week.**

- Beans and peas are a good source of fiber and protein and can be a healthy, high fiber substitute for meat. They also cost less than meat.
- Soak beans overnight to shorten the cooking time.
- Use onions and garlic for seasoning, or season with vegetable oil or small pieces of ham, turkey, or beef. Spices like cumin, chili pepper and oregano can make a bean dish into a tasty meal.
- Make a quick healthy meal, like Bean Tacos, with canned beans. (See bean recipes on pages 24-42 of the Cookbook and “Cooking for One on the Run,” page 109.)

7. **Try other whole grain foods like brown rice, barley, and whole grain pasta. Aim to eat 3 or more servings each week.**

- Whole grains are foods like brown rice and whole wheat bread and pasta. These foods are high in fiber and B vitamins.
- Though brown rice tastes a bit different from white rice, it’s easy to get used to the taste. Many people prefer the taste of brown rice.
- To get used to the taste of whole grain pasta, try mixing with regular pasta at first.
8. If you eat cereal for breakfast, choose whole grains.

- Cereals like shredded wheat, bran flakes, or old-fashioned oatmeal are all good whole grain choices.
- Stay away from cereals with lots of added sugar (like frosted flakes).
- Try eggs, yogurt and fruit, peanut butter on whole-wheat toast, or other breakfast foods that have more protein and healthy fats than most boxed cereals.
My Goals and First Steps

To make changes, it is important to make goals and keep track of your progress. Enter the 2 goals you selected to work on today. Then enter your “First Steps” for achieving these goals. First Steps should be specific and realistic to get you started.

To plan First Steps, think about:

✦ When you will start working towards this goal.
✦ What you need to get started.
✦ If you can actually reach the goal.

Finally, keep track of your progress using the tables provided.
My Goals and First Steps

Date: ______________________

Goal 1: ________________________________ Goal 2: ________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

First Steps: ____________________________ First Steps: ____________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

Place this sheet where you will see it often (refrigerator or bathroom mirror). You may monitor goals by the week (left side of table) or by the day (right side of table).

GOAL 1: Did you meet your goal? (Check ☑ for Yes, or ☒ for No)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Weekly Goal</th>
<th>Daily Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GOAL 2: Did you meet your goal? (Check ☑ for Yes, or ☒ for No)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Weekly Goal</th>
<th>Daily Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>