

Tips to help you make wise choices from the meat & beans group



Go lean with protein:

- Start with a lean choice:
 - The leanest beef cuts include round steaks and roasts (round eye, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts.
 - The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, center loin, and ham.
 - Choose extra lean ground beef. The label should say at least “90% lean”. You may be able to find ground beef that is 93% or 95% lean.
 - Buy skinless chicken parts, or take off the skin before cooking.
 - Boneless skinless chicken breasts and turkey cutlets are the leanest poultry choices.
 - Choose lean turkey, roast beef, ham, or low-fat luncheon meats for sandwiches instead of luncheon meats with more fat, such as regular bologna or salami.
- Keep it lean:
 - Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.
 - Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying.
 - Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
 - Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish. Breading adds fat and calories. It will also cause the food to soak up more fat during frying.
 - Prepare dry beans and peas without added fats.
 - Choose and prepare foods without high fat sauces or gravies.



Vary your protein choices:

- Choose fish more often for lunch or dinner. Look for fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, and herring.
Some ideas are:
 - Salmon steak or filet
 - Salmon loaf
 - Grilled or baked trout
- Choose dry beans or peas as a main dish or part of a meal often.
Some choices are:
 - Chili with kidney or pinto beans
 - Stir-fried tofu
 - Split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups
 - Baked beans
 - Black bean enchiladas
 - Garbanzo or kidney beans on a chef's salad
 - Rice and beans
 - Veggie burgers or garden burgers
 - Hummus (chickpeas) spread on pita bread



- Choose nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Use nuts to replace meat or poultry, not in addition to these items:
 - Use pine nuts in pesto sauce for pasta.
 - Add slivered almonds to steamed vegetables.
 - Add toasted peanuts or cashews to a vegetable stir fry instead of meat.
 - Sprinkle a few nuts on top of low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt.
 - Add walnuts or pecans to a green salad instead of cheese or meat.

What to look for on the Food Label:

- Check the [Nutrition Facts label](#) for the saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium content of packaged foods.
 - Processed meats such as hams, sausages, frankfurters, and luncheon or deli meats have added sodium. Check the ingredient and Nutrition Facts label to help limit sodium intake.
 - Fresh chicken, turkey, and pork that have been enhanced with a salt-containing solution also have added sodium. Check the product label for statements such as “self-basting” or “contains up to ___% of ___.”
 - Lower fat versions of many processed meats are available. Look on the Nutrition Facts label to choose products with less fat and saturated fat.

Keep it safe to eat:

- Separate raw, cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Do not wash or rinse meat or poultry.
- Wash cutting boards, knives, utensils and counter tops in hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next one.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Cook foods to a safe temperature to kill microorganisms. Use a meat thermometer, which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat and poultry, to make sure that the meat is cooked all the way through.
- Chill (refrigerate) perishable food promptly and defrost foods properly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours.
- Plan ahead to defrost foods. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter at room temperature. Thaw food by placing it in the refrigerator, submerging air-tight packaged food in cold tap water, or defrosting on a plate in the microwave.
- Avoid raw or partially cooked eggs or foods containing raw eggs and raw or undercooked meat and poultry.
- Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children should avoid some types of fish and eat types lower in mercury. See www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/admehg3.html or call 1-888-SAFEFOOD for more information.