The G4G Guide: Foods and Beverages

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**Vegetables**
- Eat 3–4 cups non-starchy vegetables a day.
- See also Grains/Starches
- Leafy green salads with dark greens (spinach, arugula, romaine)
- Vegetables with small amounts of added fats/oils

**Fruits**
- Eat 2–2.5 cups of fruit a day.
- Eat your fruit, don’t drink it.
- Fresh fruit
- Frozen fruit with minimal added sugar, fat, and/or sauce
- Fruit canned in water or own juice
- Dried fruit (unsulfured, without added sugar)

**Grains/Starches**
- Choose 100% whole grain for at least half of all grain servings.
- Starchy vegetables such as potatoes and corn are included in this group.

**Protein**
- Vary your protein choices.
- Include seafood/fish twice a week.
- Include beans for protein and fiber.
- Egg whites
- Omelets with vegetables
- Fish and shellfish; Tuna canned in water
- Chicken and turkey breast without skin
- Whole eggs
- Chicken and turkey thighs and legs without skin
- Ham, roast beef
- Processed chicken/turkey deli meats
- Hamburger
- Grilled chicken/burger
- Soy patties, links, burgers
- Tuna canned in oil

**Fats/Oils**
- Choose healthy fats and oils.
- Oils—olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, sesame, grapeseed
- Salad dressings made with these oils
- Nuts and seeds—raw, dry, roasted
- Natural nut butters—peanut, almond, hazelnut, soy
- Avocado
- Oils—corn, peanut, vegetable
- Salad dressings made with these oils
- Mayonnaise made with canola oil
- Margarine/spreads (trans-fat free, limited additives)
- Peanut butter with added oils/fats
- Gravy (made with water or low-fat milk)

**Beverages**
- Choose water instead of sugary beverages.
- For milk, see Dairy
- Water (plain or carbonated)
- Naturally flavored water (no artificial sweeteners)
- Decaf tea and decaf coffee
- Herbal tea
- 100% vegetable juice
- Sports drinks
- 10% fruit juice
- Tea** and coffee**, plain or with small amounts of added sugar, cream, or milk
- Artificially sweetened beverages (diet or light sodas, teas, juices, many flavored waters)
- Energy drinks**
- Coffee and tea with whole milk or cream and sugars or syrup
- Sweetened beverages of any kind (sodas, sweet teas, fruit punches, juice drinks)

**Dairy**
- Compare sugar contents of yogurts.
- Some low-fat dairy products contain added flavors, stabilizers, sugar, or sodium; choose less-processed green items when possible.
- Milk, unsweetened (skim, 1%) Milk alternatives (soy, almond, rice, coconut), unsweetened, with calcium and vitamin D added
- Yogurt, plain (non-fat or low-fat) Cottage cheese (non-fat or low-fat)
- Milk (2% fat) Flavored (vanilla, chocolate, etc.) and sweetened milk (skim, 1%, or 2%) and milk alternatives
- Hot chocolate made with milk (skim, 1%, 2%)
- Frozen yogurt
- Yogurt, flavored, with added sugars or artificial sweeteners (non-fat or low-fat) Cheese and cottage cheese (reduced-fat, 2%)
- Cheeses naturally lower in fat (Feta, Swiss)
- Milk (whole), plain or flavored
- Hot chocolate made with whole milk
- Cream, half-and-half
- Yogurt (full-fat)
- Cottage cheese (full-fat)
- Cheese (full-fat)
- Cream cheese, sour cream (full-fat)
- Ice cream, milkshakes, gelato
- Pudding

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*For more information on energy drinks, visit HPRC’s Dietary Supplements Classification System and read about Energy Drinks.  **Contain caffeine.
For more information about Go for Green visit [hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green.](http://hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green)
The G4G Guide: Sodium

This guide is a starting point for understanding which foods are high in sodium. Sodium is a mineral found naturally in some foods and added to packaged items to preserve freshness and enhance flavor.

Too much sodium can be harmful to your health, especially if you are salt sensitive. However, too little sodium can be harmful to health and performance if you lose a lot of sodium through multiple hours of activity, extreme environments, or sweat. Sodium is important to maintain fluid balance, control blood pressure, and for muscles and nerves to work properly.

For average Americans, 2,300 mg of sodium per day\(^1\) is appropriate; this is about the amount found in one teaspoon of table salt. Sodium needs vary depending on medical condition, activity, and environment. The most active warriors who operate in extreme conditions may require as much as 3,500 mg (women) or 5,000 mg (men) of sodium per day.\(^2\) Restaurant food often contains more salt. At home and in military dining facilities, the amounts of sodium vary greatly. Increased portion sizes also increase sodium intake. For help estimating your sodium needs, visit HPRC’s website and read [hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green/go-for-green-r-for-the-warfighter](http://hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green/go-for-green-r-for-the-warfighter).

### Use along with the Food and Beverages (Green, Yellow, Red) Guide

#### Low Sodium

**Foods and Beverages**

- Fruit—fresh or frozen
- Vegetables—fresh or frozen
- No-added-salt/salt-free canned vegetable and tomato products
- Grains—plain, unseasoned
- Grain products—plain, unseasoned pasta, rice, quinoa, couscous
- Unsalted nuts, seeds
- Unsalted nut butters (peanut, almond, soynut)
- Fresh chicken, turkey, beef, pork
- Milk
- Most yogurts
- Olive oil, canola oil
- Dry beans, peas, lentils

**When to Eat**

- Eat low-sodium foods most often, especially if you have been told to follow a “low-sodium diet.”
- Not all low-sodium foods are also labeled Green; limit Yellow- and Red-labeled foods and beverages for overall good health.

**General Tips**

- Choose mostly whole, fresh foods.
- Cooking at home can help reduce sodium content.
- Purchase unflavored foods, and add your own fresh seasonings: herbs, spices, vinegars, citrus.
- When cooking with whole, fresh foods that are naturally very low in sodium, it’s okay to add a pinch of salt.

### Moderate Sodium

**Foods and Beverages**

- Some breads, rolls, biscuits, pancakes, waffles, English muffins
- Low-sodium canned vegetables
- Most snack foods (pretzels, crackers, chips, popcorn)
- Most sauces/glazes on chicken, turkey, beef, or pork
- Most homemade soups made with low-sodium broth
- Most frozen meal “starters”
- Packaged rice/grain dishes, if you use only half the seasoning packet

**When to Eat**

- Eat moderate-sodium foods sometimes.
- Moderate-sodium foods are appropriate for most warriors who are moderately active

**General Tips**

- Although snack foods and breads have moderate sodium, large portions can increase your sodium intake to high.
- Drain and rinse canned foods (beans, tuna) to reduce their sodium content.
- Even low- and reduced-sodium versions of your favorite chips or crackers may fall into the moderate sodium category.

### High Sodium

**Foods and Beverages**

- Canned vegetables and beans
- Canned tomato products
- Instant noodles with flavor packet
- Deli meats/cold cuts—turkey, ham, bologna, salami, etc.
- Processed meats—sausage, bacon, pepperoni, hot dogs
- Cheese
- Condiments and toppings—soy sauce, ketchup, marinades, cocktail sauce, gravy, nacho cheese dip, pickles
- Seasoned salts, table salt
- Canned soups
- Almost all “fast foods”
- Frozen entrees/“microwave dinners”

**When to Eat**

- Eat high-sodium foods rarely or in small amounts.
- For warriors who are active multiple hours per day and/or in extreme environments, some high-sodium foods should be included daily.

**General Tips**

- Table salt is mostly sodium; use sparingly.
- Processed, packaged, and convenience foods contribute about 80% of sodium to our diets; read food labels and pay attention to serving sizes.
- Many condiments and toppings are high in sodium.
- Restaurant foods are generally higher in sodium than homemade foods.

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1. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010
2. Military Dietary Reference Intake

For more information about Go for Green* visit [hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green](http://hprc-online.org/nutrition/go-for-green).