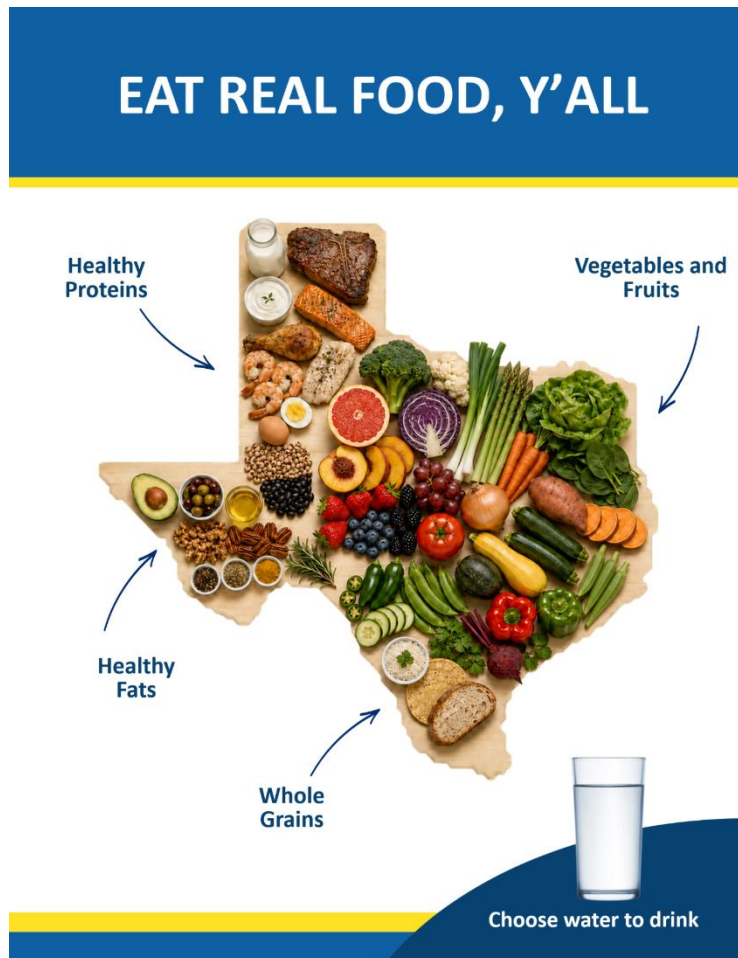


Dietary Guidelines for Texans

What Texans Need to Know:



The Dietary Guidelines for Texans are built on three pillars to guide Texans making personal choices about their nutrition.

Foods without
a lot of
processing
are best for
your body.

How you
prepare your
food matters.

There are
many ways to
eat healthy.

The guidelines include examples of healthy foods. Many foods not listed may also be great choices.

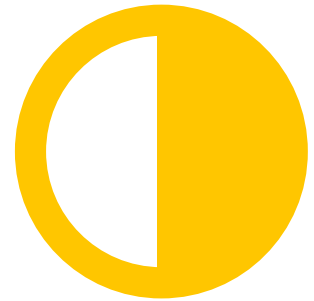
Foods without a lot of processing are best for your body.

Foods in their original form, like they are found in nature, form the basis for health.

Eating well means eating healthy food most of the time, food from each group, and enough to meet your needs.

Fill **half your plate with vegetables and fruit** at every meal for better digestion and health. Choose a variety of colors such as:

- red/pink (beets, radish, tomatoes, strawberries, apples, grapefruit, red peppers);
- orange/yellow (carrots, squash, pumpkin, sweet potato, peaches, cantaloupe);
- green (spinach, asparagus, broccoli, okra, cucumbers, pears);
- blue/purple (cabbage, berries, plums);
- white (cauliflower, potatoes, onion).



Eat **three or more servings of healthy proteins** each day to keep your muscles, brain, bones, and skin strong.

- Healthy proteins are unprocessed or minimally processed. This means they are close to how they are in nature—avoiding added ingredients, such as preservatives.
- Beans, peas, lentils, seafood, poultry, beef, pork, lamb, wild game, eggs, nuts, and seeds are all good ways to get protein.

Include **healthy fats** every day.

- Some sources of healthy fats include nuts, seeds, fatty fish, olive oil, and avocados.



Eat **food for healthy bones and teeth** every day. Foods that help keep bones healthy include those with:

- Protein
- Calcium
- Vitamin D
- Vitamin K
- Magnesium



Foods that have these nutrients include:

- Unflavored dairy foods with no sugar added whole fat or low-fat milk, kefir, yogurt, and cheese.
- Non-dairy foods
 1. Fatty fish with bones like jarred/canned salmon or sardines
 2. Tofu
 3. Fortified soy or other plant-based milk
 4. Okra
 5. Green cabbage
 6. Broccoli and leafy greens (kale, mustard greens, collards, bok choy, turnip, dandelion)
 7. Beans (black-eyed peas, soy, white, navy, great northern, garbanzo)
 8. Seeds (sesame, chia, flax, poppy, hemp)
 9. Nuts (almonds, Brazil, hazelnut)

When you choose grains, **choose whole grains**.

- Whole grains are unprocessed or minimally processed. That means they are close to how they are in nature. They do not have lots of added ingredients like preservatives.
- Whole grains include brown rice, corn, barley, buckwheat, millet, quinoa, whole oats, whole wheat, farro, and others.



Drink water when you are thirsty.

- If you drink tea or coffee, consider reducing or avoiding sugar, sugar substitutes, or artificial creamers.
- There is no safe amount of alcohol. Consider reducing or avoiding alcohol.

How you prepare your food matters.

- Make your own food to save money and have more control over what is in it.
- Prepare food simply using spices and herbs to make it taste better and help prevent disease. Limit excess sugar, fat, and salt.
- Bake, broil, roast, poach, lightly sauté, stir-fry, or steam your food to keep the nutrients in them.
- Smoking, frying, and grilling can create substances in your food that can be harmful to your health. Use these cooking methods less often.
- When buying food in packages, jars, cans, or boxes, look for items without many added ingredients.
 - Frozen, jarred, or canned produce without added coloring, preservatives, salt and sugar are good choices.
 - UPF are foods made in a factory that are less healthy. They may have excess fat, sugar, salt, and ingredients like artificial colors, flavors, and sweeteners. Choose these less often.
- Avoid heating food in its packaging (plastic).

There are many ways to eat healthy.

- Many patterns of eating can be healthy. Find healthy foods that fit your culture, budget, and likes.
- Traditional diets, with foods like seafood, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy fats, help maintain health and prevent chronic disease.
- Eating mostly minimally processed plant foods is another way to stay healthy.
- Foods from animals like unprocessed or minimally processed meat and dairy can be part of a healthy diet. Balance them with plenty of high fiber foods like vegetables and fruits.

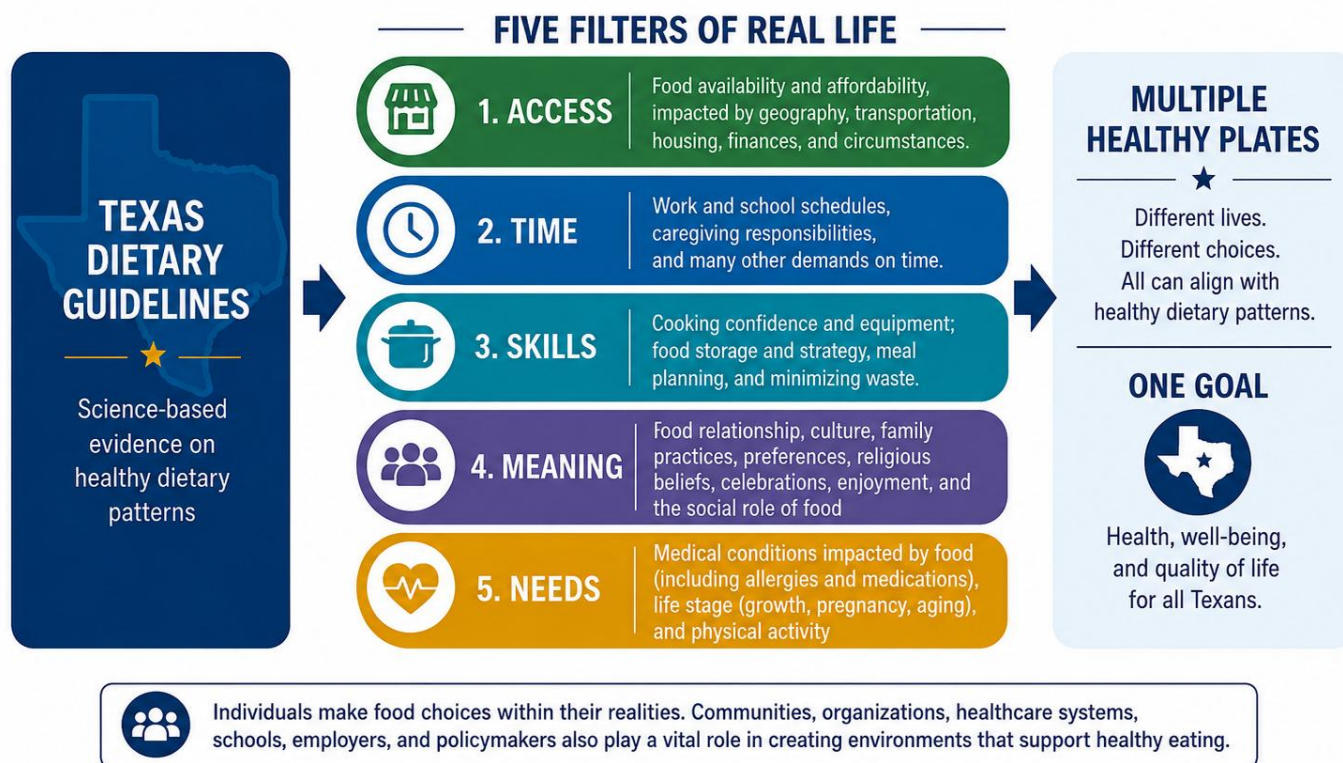
TNAC Dietary Guidelines Framework

Recognizing that food decisions occur within real-world circumstances, TNAC developed a practical framework to help Texans translate dietary guidance into everyday life. The framework emphasizes five factors that influence food choices.

This graphic illustrates the five ways Texans can filter the dietary guidelines based on their access, time, skills, meaning, and needs related to food.

From Guidelines to Real Life

Many pathways. One goal: helping Texans nourish themselves in ways that are feasible, meaningful, and supportive of long-term health.



TNAC encourages nutrition educators, healthcare professionals, community organizations, and policymakers to consider these factors when supporting dietary change. While science identifies dietary patterns associated with better health outcomes, there is no single eating pattern that is appropriate for every Texan. Multiple pathways can support healthy eating. TNAC also notes population-specific considerations, including evidence supporting dietary patterns that promote healthy aging and cognitive health among older adults.

TNAC also recognizes that many Texans face practical barriers to healthy eating, including food insecurity, transportation limitations, affordability challenges, time constraints, and geographic differences in food access. Improving dietary quality requires individual knowledge, skills, and supportive environments that make healthy choices feasible. Schools, healthcare systems, food assistance programs, community organizations, agricultural producers, retailers, and policymakers each play an important role in improving access to nutritious foods across Texas.

About the Guidelines Visual

The visuals developed by TNAC was informed by a review of the scientific evidence, existing national and international dietary guidance patterns, and emerging scientific literature on dietary quality, chronic disease prevention, and metabolic health.

The image is intentionally designed to represent a wide variety of foods and dietary traditions commonly enjoyed across Texas communities, including foods rooted in diverse food cultures. It is not intended to represent every food or dietary pattern, but rather to illustrate how many different whole and minimally processed foods can fit within a balanced dietary pattern.

The visual is intended to be consistent with the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) graphic, including the same food groups to avoid confusion. This visual separates protein, dairy, and healthy fat into three distinct groups: healthy proteins, dairy, and healthy fats to note the differences in the types of foods in each group. The food groups are placed in a similar location as they are placed on the DGA graphic.

Each food group emphasizes whole foods, including both animal and plant foods grown, caught, and raised in Texas. The healthy proteins group includes seafood, beans, black-eyed peas, chicken, eggs, and beef. The dairy group includes milk and plain yogurt. The healthy fats group includes pecans, peanuts, oil, and avocado. The vegetables and fruits group includes a variety of brightly colored plants including green, red/pink, white, orange/yellow, and purple/blue foods. The whole grains group includes unprocessed foods such as brown rice and oats, as well as products made from minimally produced grains such as corn tortillas and whole grain bread. Water is shown as the primary fluid source for Texans.

The Texas-shaped plate is intentionally not filled completely. This reflects the concepts of balance, moderation, and mindful eating, including observations from longevity research suggesting potential benefits associated with avoiding overconsumption and eating until comfortably satisfied rather than overly full.

TNAC recognizes that the evidence review process is ongoing and iterative. This visual illustrates core Texas dietary guidance principles and communicates healthy eating patterns in a way that feels culturally relevant, practical, flexible, and uniquely Texan.

