
Healthy Sustainable Eating Tips

Here are 8 tips to help you learn how to eat healthy while also taking care of the planet.

Learn to cook.

Develop, practice, share and enjoy your food preparation and cooking skills. Ask your dietitian if your VA has a Healthy Teaching Kitchen program or watch previously recorded classes for recipe ideas. See next page for details.

Eat seasonally.

In-season fruits and vegetables taste better than out-of-season produce. Locate farmers markets near you. Many VA facilities have farmers markets on site. Consider growing your own fresh produce if you have the space. Not only will you get fresher produce, but you can meet the farmers who grew it! See next page for details.

Eat more plant-based foods.

Try adding more plant-based foods into your diet, like nuts, beans, and legumes. Try eating at least one vegetarian meal per week. Find new plant-based recipes to try cooking with friends.

Choose responsible seafood and meat options.

If possible, buy local seafood. Eat a variety of fish. Look for wild caught fish at the grocery store. Opt for meat from local farms and farmers markets. Limit beef consumption.

Reduce food waste.

Plan your meals for the week to reduce wasted ingredients and help you prepare for the week with a shopping list. Use vegetable scraps to make soup stock. Freeze fruits and vegetables while they are fresh for use later.

Buy in bulk.

Save money and reduce waste by buying in bulk. Grains, beans, nuts, seeds, and other foods can be found in local stores in bulk. Shop at bulk retailers to stock up on dry foods you use the most. Avoid bulk buying of fresh produce as it has a limited shelf life.

Practice mindful eating.

Take time to think about and appreciate where your food came from. Slow down while eating and appreciate how your food tastes, smells and looks.

Compost the scraps.

Composting is a great way to help put food scraps to use and can help reduce methane emissions in landfills. Fruits, vegetables, coffee and tea all are good materials for compost. Some municipalities have compost bins and pick up; check with your local waste removal company or use it to nourish your garden.

Additional Resources:

If you are interested in finding out more about how you can help better the planet while improving your health, check out some of these Veteran-centered programs and resources.

- **Veteran Farmer Coalition:** The Veteran Farmer Coalition works with Veterans of all eras and branches to provide the training or funding they need to pursue a career in agriculture. For additional information: <https://farmvetco.org/>
- **Local Harvest:** LocalHarvest connects people looking for good food with the farmers who produce it. LocalHarvest provides online tools that help small farmers thrive. <https://www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/>
- **Recipes Used in our Healthy Teaching Kitchen Program:** Even if your local VA does not have a healthy teaching kitchen, you can still prepare the recipes from class. Check out our healthy teaching kitchen cookbook which is available online. <https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Recipes.asp>
- **Learn How to Make a Meal Plan:** Meal planning can save you money and prevent wasted food. Check out these helpful tips for creating a meal plan. <https://www.va.gov/files/2023-10/Weekly%20Meal%20Planner%20Grocery%20List%20and%20Recipes.pdf>