

EXTENSION BULLETIN E-699  
HOME AND FAMILY SERIES

# YOUR DAILY FOOD CHECK-UP

BY ANITA DEAN

*Extension Specialist in Foods and Nutrition*

If you were to go on a "diet," how would you begin?  
— Try a fad diet? Skip breakfast or lunch? Give up snacks, desserts, or an entire food group such as milk or bread?

(Have you thought of the effect changes like these would have on the food budget, on family health and morale?)

Are such radical changes really needed? Chances are they're **not**, and you'll soon be back to your old habits again.

Why? Because you didn't know where to begin. You won't know **that** until you find out what and how much you are eating day by day. So, how do you find that out?

First, find out exactly what you eat each day. Then, compare this with some recommended standard. A "Daily Food Check-Up" will help do both. Try the one on page 2.

Start with the last 24 hours. What did you eat during that time — everything, from jelly on toast to dessert topping? It may be easiest to start with the last meal or snack eaten and work backwards. If you start with lunch this noon, list all foods and beverages eaten then; next, everything for breakfast this morning; then everything for dinner last night — plus everything in between such as snacks, hard and soft drinks, extra meals, etc.

List each food and size of serving (Column 1) and when and where you ate it (Column 2); then check it off in one of the Food Groups (Columns 3-7). Don't forget the **ETC.** column. That's for sweets, and fats, etc. — the sugar and spice and everything nice. Total the checks in each group and compare with recommended servings.

Don't stop with yesterday. If you seriously want, or need, to change your diet habits, keep a Daily Food Check-Up for at least a week.

Be honest and accurate and you'll be surprised what it will reveal about your daily and weekly eating patterns. Maybe you won't need to give up all snacks or desserts. Or, instead of choosing between extremes — giving up all bread or gorging yourself — your check-up may show that you can continue to enjoy bread at a rate of one serving a meal. A daily food check-up will provide information to help you in all the adjustments you may need to make if you must change your food habits.

The following "Basic Four plus ETC" food guide can help you make a Daily Food Check. The servings listed (2 and 4) supply nutrients in amounts needed for maintaining health. They also provide minimum calories — 1,100 to 1,200. Needed additional calories can come from more servings of the Basic Four or from foods in ETC.

## Daily Food Choices

BASIC FOUR FOOD GROUPS & ETC.	DAILY SERVINGS	PRINCIPAL NUTRIENTS SUPPLIED
MEAT	2 (or more)	Protein, iron, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin
MILK	2 (or more)	Calcium, protein, riboflavin, Vitamin A
BREAD — CEREAL	4 (or more)	Iron, thiamine, niacin, riboflavin, protein
VEGETABLES — FRUITS	4 (or more)	Vitamin C and Vitamin A
ETC.*	(optional)	Carbohydrates and fats (calories)

\*The ETC group contains a long list of foods. To analyze your food habits completely, you need to know how much you eat of — butter or margarine, fats and oils, cream, sour cream, whipped cream, cream cheese, mayonnaise and salad dressing, olives, bacon, fat trimmings, rich

sauces, gravy, avocado; unenriched refined breads, crackers, cereals, sweet rolls, doughnuts, cakes, pastries; unfortified snacks and chips; soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, sugar, candy, jams and jellies, frosting, syrups and sweet toppings and fillings, ETC. ETC. ETC. ETC.

