

# What's Your Pattern?

**WE ALL HAVE EATING PATTERNS** – favorite foods we like, snacks we go to when we're on the run, and choices that turn into habits. Is your eating pattern healthy, or could it use a nutrition upgrade? Thanks to new USDA Dietary Guidelines, it's now easier to make those upgrades, because the guidelines are based on helping you build a pattern of healthy eating to span your lifetime.

Find out how your current eating pattern stacks up by checking the degree to which you follow each practice listed below. Then take this self-inventory home to share with your family so you can help one another build a healthier eating pattern.



## My Eating Pattern

Always  
**1**

Most of the Time  
**2**

Rarely  
**3**

Never  
**4**

I eat vegetables with at least one meal a day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I fill half my plate with fruit and veggies at each meal. <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My family uses cooking methods like roasting, baking, grilling, boiling, or microwaving to prepare foods at home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I limit sweets to weekends and special occasions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I try to stay away from packaged foods containing more than 140 mg of sodium per serving. <sup>2</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not eat processed foods and try to stay away from vending machines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do not drink sodas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I drink water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pay attention to food portion sizes and try not to eat more than one serving of the food on my plate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Now figure your score:

**9-18: Congratulations!** If you have a total of more checks in the **Always** and **Most of the Time** boxes, you are doing a great job in following a healthy eating pattern!

**18-27: Room for Improvement.** If your checked-boxes total falls between **Most of the Time** and **Rarely**, looks like it's not all bad news, but there is room for improvement.

**27-36: Wake-Up Call!** If you checked mostly **Rarely** and **Never**, it's time to make some improvements in your eating patterns:

- Use the statements in the chart to plan better nutritional choices with your parents at home.
- Shift to healthier foods and beverages.
- Start small. Focus on improving one meal a day. Slowly build toward more.

**PARENTS!** Your child is participating in a special health and nutrition program presented by the American Egg Board and curriculum specialists Young Minds Inspired, designed to help students establish healthy eating patterns to span their lifetimes, as advised by the new 2015-2020 USDA Dietary Guidelines.

Review your child's answers to the self-inventory and get the family together to discuss plans for continuing or improving a healthy eating pattern. Eggs are a perfect choice to help you — they offer versatility, high-quality protein, economical value, and they are dense in nutrients. Learn more about egg nutrition, and find tons of delicious recipes, at [incredibleegg.org](http://incredibleegg.org).

<sup>1</sup>[www.choosemyplate.gov/sites/default/files/misc/dietaryguidelines/MyPlateMyWins.pdf](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/sites/default/files/misc/dietaryguidelines/MyPlateMyWins.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>[www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/Sodium\\_Dietary\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/Sodium_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf)