

# Nutrition Guidelines for People with Down syndrome

People with Down syndrome may have different health needs, such as a slower metabolism, low muscle tone, or higher risk for conditions like hypothyroidism, obesity, and constipation. A healthy diet can help prevent or manage these issues.



## ✓ Eat a Variety of Healthy Foods

Choose foods from all food groups every day:

- Fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, or canned in water.
- Aim for color and variety.
- Grow your own herbs, vegetables or fruits
- Whole grains: Brown rice, whole wheat bread, oatmeal.
- Lean proteins: Chicken, fish, turkey, eggs, tofu, beans.
- Dairy or dairy alternatives: Low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified soy milk.
- ● Limit: Processed snacks, fast food, sugary drinks, and foods high in fat or salt.



## ✓ Watch Portion Sizes

People with Down syndrome often have a lower calorie need, so large portions can lead to weight gain.

- Use smaller plates or bowls.
- Teach "stop when full" cues.
- ● Avoid second helpings unless still truly hungry.



## ✓ Make Water the Main Drink

Water helps with digestion, weight control, and energy.

- Aim for 6-8 cups of water a day.
- ● Limit soda, juice, and sweetened drinks



## ✓ Eat More Fiber

Constipation is common in Down syndrome.

Fiber helps keep the gut healthy.

High-fiber foods:

- Fruits (pears, apples, berries)
- Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, peas)
- Whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal)
- Beans and lentils

Also drink plenty of water to help fiber work well!



## ✓ Include Protein at Every Meal

Protein supports muscles, energy, and satiety.

Examples: Eggs, fish, chicken, beans, nuts, Greek yogurt.



## ● Limit Sugar and Sweets

Too much sugar can cause weight gain and tooth problems.

- Offer fruit instead of candy.
- Use sweets as "sometimes" treats, not daily habits.



## ✓ Be Physically Active

Nutrition works best with daily movement: walking, dancing, swimming, or group activities.

This helps with weight, mood, strength, and social skills.



## ✓ Routine Helps!

- Keep meal times and snack times consistent.
- Use visual schedules or choice boards if helpful.
- Involve the person with Down syndrome in planning, shopping, or prepping meals.



## ✓ Ask your Doctor or Dietitian About:

- Multivitamins (especially for picky eaters)
- Monitoring for low thyroid, anemia, or vitamin D deficiency
- Individualized nutrition plans

