

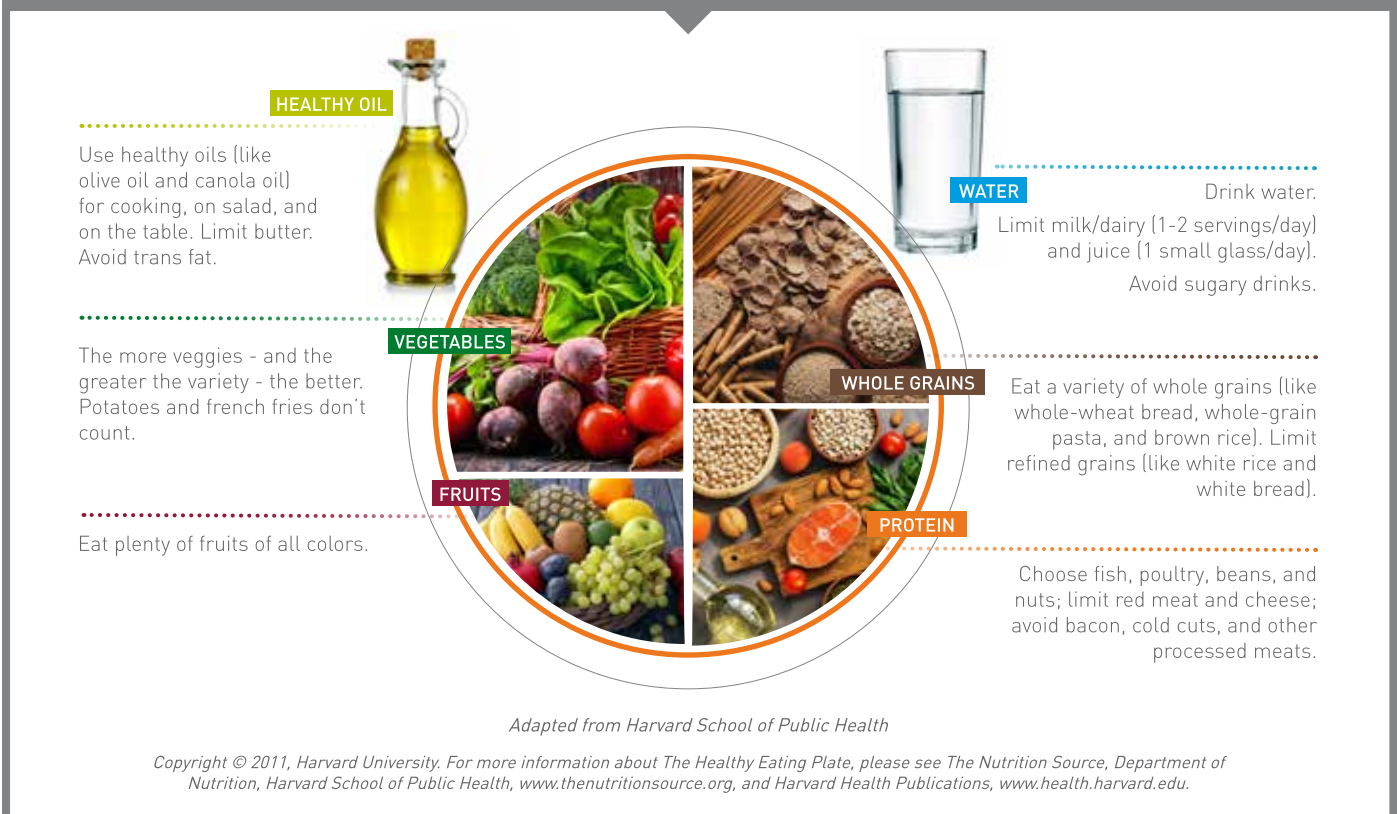
# F&V - KEY COMPONENT OF A HEALTHY DIET

## DEFINITION OF A « HEALTHY DIET »

- ▶ The World Health Organization defines healthy diets as:
  - Diverse, containing a variety of foods, including:
    - Fruit and vegetables (F&V) : >400 g/day
    - Legumes (e.g. lentils, beans), whole grains and nuts.
  - Low in food components of public health concern such as:
    - Free sugars : <10% of total energy ~50 g (-12 teaspoons)
    - For additional health benefits: <5% of total energy
    - Salt : <5 g/day ( ~1 teaspoon)
    - Fats: with preference for unsaturated fats<sup>1</sup>.
- ▶ Basic principles of what constitutes a healthy diet remain the same despite individual characteristic diversity (e.g. age, gender, lifestyle and degree of physical activity), cultural context, locally available foods and dietary customs<sup>1</sup>.
- ▶ Increased production of processed foods, rapid urbanization and changing lifestyles has led to a shift in dietary patterns. People are now consuming more foods high in energy, fats, free sugars and salt/sodium, and many people do not eat enough fruit, vegetables and other foods rich in dietary fibers such as whole grains<sup>1</sup>.



FIGURE 1: HEALTHY EATING PLATE<sup>2</sup>



## Healthy diet and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevention

- A healthy diet helps to protect against malnutrition in all its forms, as well as NCDs, such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancers<sup>1</sup>.
- NCDs have become the leading cause of death worldwide, and haven't stopped increasing. In 2016, NCDs caused 71% of all deaths in the world<sup>3</sup>.
- There's increasing evidence that the risk of NCDs begin in fetal life and continue into older age<sup>4</sup>.
- Unhealthy food consumption, including inadequate consumption of F&V, is a major risk factor for obesity and related NCDs<sup>5</sup>.

## 1. F&V consumption and NCDs prevention

- Daily consumption of F&V, one of the cornerstones of a healthy diet and key components of all healthy dietary patterns, is highly recommended across worldwide dietary guidelines<sup>6</sup>.
- For every 200 g of F&V consumed, there's 10% risk reduction of all-cause premature mortality<sup>7</sup>.
- Increasing the consumption of F&V from the earliest possible age is a key pillar of a healthy diet for preventing many NCDs<sup>8</sup>.

There is now a strong consensus that a regular consumption of F&V helps reducing the risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, numerous cancers and many other NCDs.

## 2. Low consumption of F&V: a universal health issue

- Insufficient consumption of F&V is a risk factor for NCDs and for health<sup>9</sup>.
- An estimated 3.9 million deaths worldwide were attributable to inadequate F&V consumption in 2017<sup>9</sup>.
- F&V consumption in Europe is below international (at least 400g of F&V a day – WHO) and national (at least 5 portions of F&V a day in France – PNNS) recommendations<sup>10</sup>.
- Only 12% of Europeans reach the 5 portions of F&V a day<sup>5</sup>. Almost 35% of Europeans over 15 year-olds do not consume any portion of F&V daily<sup>10</sup>.
- This low consumption of F&V is partly due to food systems which are continuing to undergo rapid transformation and affecting our food choices and consumption patterns<sup>11</sup>.

### F&V: PRACTICAL ADVICE ON MAINTAINING A HEALTHY DIET

Eating at least **400 g**, or five portions, of F&V per day **reduces the risk of NCDs** and helps to ensure an adequate daily intake of **dietary fiber**.

F&V intake can be improved by:

- always including vegetables in meals;
- eating fruit and raw vegetables as snacks;
- eating F&V that are in season;
- eating a variety of F&V<sup>1</sup>.

F&V should be consumed in all their forms: fresh, frozen, canned, cooked, raw, and also in form of compote (home-made and preferably without added sugar), soup ...<sup>12, 13</sup>



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