

# Recommended Eating Pattern

Nutrition is an essential part of lymphedema and lipedema treatment and care. This guide is adapted from Chapter 3 of the **Lymphedema and Lipedema Nutrition Guide: foods, vitamins, minerals, and supplements** by Chuck Ehrlich, Emily Iker, MD, Karen Herbst, PhD, MD, Linda-Anne Kahn, CMT, CLT-LANA, Dorothy D. Sears, PhD, Mandy Kenyon, MS, RD, CSSD, and Elizabeth McMahon, PhD (Lymph Notes, 2016).

Eat whole foods, mostly plants, including a wide variety of rainbow-colored vegetables and fruits, as well as fermented foods. Use herbs and spices to provide your favorite flavors.

Starve lymphedema and lipedema by avoiding added sugars (especially fructose), refined grains (especially grains containing gluten), and chemically modified fats. Limit animal products and high-salt foods. Avoiding dairy (other than kefir and yogurt) appears to help with lipedema.

Whole foods are best because most prepared foods contain added sugar, salt, soy, unhealthy fats, or undesirable additives. Juicing (other than green vegetable juices) is only recommended for those who cannot eat solid food because juicing breaks down fiber, removing an important nutritional and digestive health benefit. Fruit juices should be minimized because they raise blood glucose more rapidly than whole fruit.

Modify this eating pattern if you are vegetarian, vegan, gluten intolerant, have food allergies, diabetes, or other dietary concerns.

Foods are grouped by recommended frequency:

- **Eat Primarily:** have a variety of different foods from this list every day in reasonable serving sizes. Include at least a half-cup of beans, a half-cup of whole grains (such as oats) or starchy vegetables, and one cup of fruit (preferably citrus and banana) each day.
- **Eat in Limited Quantities:** foods best enjoyed in smaller amounts and only a few times a week, including no more than 6-8 servings of animal products each week.
- **Eat Rarely or Never:** save these for special occasions, if you still want them.

## Eat Primarily

- Vegetables with bright colors and flavors such as dark green leafy vegetables, colorful beets, corn, squash, peppers, and flavorful onions, garlic, mushrooms, and herbs.
- Beans, legumes or pulses: such as adzuki beans, black beans, butter beans (gigantes), cannellini beans, chickpeas (garbanzo or ceci beans), fava beans, great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, peas, navy beans, pinto beans, etc.
- Berries (fresh or frozen): blackberries, blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.
- Citrus fruits: grapefruit, orange, etc.
- Fruits: apples, apricots, bananas, cherries, grapes, kiwi fruit, mangoes, melons, papaya, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, etc.
- Potatoes: smaller waxy potatoes such as new, red, purple, etc. Not starchy Russet or Idaho potatoes.
- Sweet potatoes or yams.
- Grains (whole grains not containing gluten): amaranth, brown rice, buckwheat, millet, oats, quinoa, sorghum, teff, and wild rice.
- Fermented foods: kefir and yogurt with active cultures, sauerkraut, dill or sour pickles (subject to salt limits), kimchi, etc.
- Soy that is minimally processed or fermented: soybeans/edamame), tofu, miso, natto, tempeh.
- Milks (unsweetened non-dairy milk drinks): almond milk, coconut milk, or hemp milk.
- Coffee, tea (black, green, herbal, red, white), unsweetened cocoa or cacao.

## Lymphedema and Lipedema Nutrition Guide

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## Eat in Limited Quantities

- Brazil nuts: limit to 1 ounce or 6 nuts purchased shelled, or 3 nuts purchased unshelled per day, OR take a selenium supplement, not both.
- Chocolate: dark chocolate with 70% or more cacao.
- Dairy (preferably organic, not recommended for lipedema): butter or ghee, cheeses (not processed cheeses or cheese spreads), goat's milk cheese (goat cheese), sheep's milk cheese, milk.
- Eggs including yolks: preferably organic, pastured or free-range
- Fish: tuna, wild salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, anchovies, and other seafood high in omega-3 unsaturated fats.
- Meats: preferably organic grass-fed beef, buffalo, lamb, pork, wild game.
- Poultry: preferably organic chicken (without skin), turkey, duck including dark meat.
- Nuts and seeds (raw and unsalted): almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts.
- Oils: extra-virgin olive, avocado, walnut, coconut, cocoa butter, flaxseed, macadamia, sesame oil.
- Salad dressing products containing healthy fats and modest amounts of sodium or sweeteners.
- Sugar and real maple syrup.
- Condiments: chili, hot sauce, or pepper sauce, horseradish, mustard, salsa, tamari soy sauce, tapenade, vinegar (white, red wine, apple cider, balsamic), Worcestershire sauce, etc.
- Dried fruits: cranberries (low sugar), currants, dates, figs, prunes, raisins.
- Wine: preferably red, no more than 3 servings (5 ounces or 150 ml)/week.

## Eat Rarely or Never

- Grain products containing gluten (wheat, barley or rye): breads, breakfast cereals, bulgur, cakes, cookies, couscous, crackers, cupcakes, kamut, noodles, pancakes, pasta, pies, pita, pizza, triticale, waffles, etc.
- Gluten-free food substitutes: breads, pasta, pizza, baked goods, etc. made with cornstarch, potato starch, rice starch, tapioca starch, etc.
- Fried foods and food products such as chips, crisps, fries, etc.
- Meat processed or preserved using nitrates, nitrites, or salt (such as hot dogs or lunch meats), cooked at high temperatures, or over a flame.
- Meat substitutes made from gluten, seitan, or highly processed soy.
- Soy-based processed foods: infant formula, soymilk, etc.
- Sugary snacks: candies, energy bars, fruit roll-ups, ice cream, sherbet, etc.
- Sugary sweeteners: agave syrup or nectar, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, and artificial sweeteners.
- Sweet condiments: chutney, jams, jellies, preserves, sauces, syrups, etc.
- Sweet drinks, sugar sweetened and diet (artificially sweetened): sodas, soft drinks, teas and tea-based beverages, coffee and coffee-based beverages, energy drinks, fruit drinks (especially 100% fruit drinks), etc.
- Unhealthy fats: hydrogenated oils (palm, palm kernel), polyunsaturated oils (corn, cottonseed, grape seed, safflower, soybean, sunflower), trans-fats, and chemically modified fats. Includes regular and vegan mayonnaise.
- Beer, liquor, mixed drinks, wine coolers, etc.

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