

Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota

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Unitarian Universalist Principles

1st Principle

The inherent worth and dignity of every person;

2nd Principle

Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;

3rd Principle

Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;

4th Principle

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;

5th Principle

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;

6th Principle

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;

7th Principle

Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

8th Principle*

We covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.

**The 8th principle is being considered by UU congregations and the UUA.*

BUILDING BLOCKS

PLANTING SEEDS FOR CHANGE

EatSmart

with healthy plant-based whole foods



Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota

Green Team

environmental justice ▪ sustainable living

Seeds

The five Building Blocks in this booklet are seeds for change. Loving ourselves enough to put these steps into action can put us on a path of new adventures in food and new discoveries in wellness.

For too long we have not questioned what we are being fed, literally and figuratively, by a food system that values profits over health.

Yes, growing seeds takes commitment. It requires time, attention, patience and learning. We all deserve to plant these seeds that can dramatically improve our wellbeing.

May you be well.

Building Block 5— Buy Local



There are good economic and health reasons to buy local.

Local produce tastes better because produce can be grown for taste, not shipping.

Produce in big box groceries is trucked on average 1,500 to 1,800 miles. They are more interested in produce that looks good than produce that tastes good. Often, it is picked green so it doesn't spoil during transport. Later, it is gassed in a warehouse to artificially ripen. It looks good, but has little flavor.

Local produce is fresher, thus more nutritious.

Freshly picked produce has the most nutrients. The closer to the vine, the healthier. Also, there is less waste because fresh produce lasts longer.

Local farmers have a vested interest in the community.

Money spent with local farmers stays in the community and makes local economies stronger. Big box grocery stores funnel profits away from the region to corporate headquarters.

There is a trust factor when buying local foods.

Buying local means you can get to know who grows your produce. You can ask questions and visit the farm to find out how your food is grown.

Foreword

This **Building Blocks** booklet is given by the Unitarian Universalist Green Team to the Sarasota Community to encourage healthy eating and an improved quality of life.

The author, Ann Urick, and her partner, Ward Pallotta, were active members of the UU community until they moved to South Carolina in 2020. Ann served on Music, Website, Social Justice and Green Team committees. She led the Green Team during her last year in Sarasota. They both maintain and treasure their ties to the UU community in Sarasota.

Ann is an advocate for food justice and approaches it by exploring and sharing what constitutes healthy eating. She wrote **Building Blocks** for EatSmart, a club she started in her Sun City Carolina Lakes community. The booklet encapsulates basic tools for making healthy food choices that can improve well-being, deter and reverse disease, keep minds sharp and help people stay vibrant.

Throughout this booklet Ann credits sources for her information, so that readers can more easily explore the subjects and find takeaways that are right for them.

Ann and Ward joined their lives in 1999, and he adopted her interest in healthy eating in 2007 after reading a case for veganism. Ann and Ward now describe their lifestyle as eating mostly plant-based whole foods.

The information presented in this booklet is not intended to replace the advice of your medical doctor or your other health care professionals.

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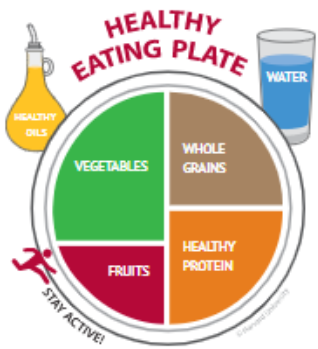
5 Building Blocks for a Healthier You

Nutrient dense fruits, vegetables, grains, and healthy proteins are the building blocks for health. Our appearance, our energy, and our health depend on nutrients we get from the foods we eat. There is no such thing as a healthy body or a healthy weight without eating foods that are healthy.

Foods are not equal. Processed foods, processed meats, and refined foods stripped of fiber and nutrients can not supply adequate nutrients. Calories from these foods are no match for the same number of calories in nutrient dense foods. While vitamins and supplements might help, they are simply no substitute for fruits, vegetables, grains, and healthy proteins.

Block 1— Food that loves you back

Building Block 1 identifies your personal food building blocks and the daily amounts needed. This is the foundation for your meals.



Daily

Vegetables (30%)
Grains (25%)
Healthy proteins (25%)
Fruits (20%)

Eight 8 oz glasses of water
Mostly whole (unprocessed) foods

*Harvard Health's
Healthy Eating Plate**

*www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-eating-plate

Building Block 4 — Buy Non-GMO

GMO means genetically modified organism. Manufacturers of GMO seed, such as Bayer/Monsanto, Dow, DuPont, and Syngenta, claim GMOs are safe. Yet, independent research clearly shows that GMOs modified for insecticide resistance are dangerous to our health and dangerous as feed for animals. A good resource to understand GMOs is nonGMOproject.org.

GMOs are now referred to as **genetically engineered**. In 2022, food packaging took a step forward. GMO foods require labeling that says **bioengineered** or **derived from bioengineering**. It is estimated that 80 percent of processed food in supermarkets and restaurants contain one or more GMO ingredient.

Labeling helps us identify and avoid genetically engineered foods. However, in restaurants the only recourse is to ask.



4 Ways to Avoid GMO Foods

- 1) Look for non-GMO labeling.
- 2) Look for **bioengineered** or **derived from bioengineering** on labeling.
- 3) Buy organic. Organic foods are not genetically modified.
- 4) In restaurants, ask if their food is non-GMO.

www.ewg.org

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) publishes annual **Dirty Dozen** and **Clean 15** lists for fruits and vegetables. EWG annually tests pesticide residue levels on produce.



Dirty Dozen ranks produce having the highest amount of chemical residue. And **Clean 15** tells which non-organic produce has the least chemical residue.

EWG Dirty Dozen (2023)

- 1) Strawberries
- 2) Spinach
- 3) Kale, collard & mustard greens
- 4) Peached
- 5) Pears
- 6) Nectarines
- 7) Apples
- 8) Grapes
- 9) Bell & hot peppers
- 10) Cherries
- 11) Blueberries
- 12) Green beans

EWG Clean Fifteen (2023)

- 1) Avocados
- 2) Sweet corn
- 3) Pineapples
- 4) Onions
- 5) Papayas
- 6) Sweet peas
- 7) Asparagus
- 8) Honeydew
- 9) Kiwi
- 10) Cabbage
- 11) Mushrooms
- 12) Mangoes
- 13) Sweet potatoes
- 14) Watermelon
- 15) Carrots

Add the **EWG's Healthy Living** app to your mobile phone to have safety ratings for more than 120,000 food and personal care products at your fingertips when you shop.

Vegetables—30% of your plate

✓ Check the vegetables you like or are willing to try.



- Artichokes
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussel sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Corn
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Lettuces
- Mushrooms
- Okra
- Olives
- Onion
- Parsnip
- Peas
- Peppers
- Potato
- Pumpkin
- Radish
- Rutabaga
- Snow Peas
- Squash
- Sweet potato or yam
- Tomatoes
- Turnips
- Zucchini

Dark leafy greens

Excellent antioxidants

- Arugula
- Bok choy
- Broccoli rab
- Collard greens
- Dandelion greens
- Kale
- Parsley
- Spinach
- Swiss chard

Legumes

Complex carbohydrates & excellent source of protein

- Black beans
- Chickpeas
- Edamame (soybeans)
- Fava beans
- Green beans
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Lima beans
- Mung beans
- Northern beans
- Peanuts

Fruits – 20% of your plate

✓ **Check the fruits you like or are willing to try.**

- Acai
- Apples
- Apricots
- Avocado
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Blackberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Dates
- Figs
- Grapes
- Grapefruit
- Honeydew
- Kiwis
- Lemons
- Limes
- Mangos
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Papaya
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Pomegranate
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Watermelon



Building Block 3 — Buy Organic

Organic fruits and vegetables are essential for a healthy diet. They protect us from harmful pesticides. For meat eaters, buying organic also means avoiding the hormones, antibiotics and ‘unnatural’ feed used in industrial animal farming.

Organic farming is sustainable. It protects our water and soil from pollution. It preserves our ecosystem including wildlife for future generations.



Many people think organics are too expensive. Are they? We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on housing to shelter us and tens of thousands on cars to safely transport us. Is protecting our health also worthwhile? Considering the health risks of chemical pesticides and potential medical costs, organics are a bargain.

Price Lookup (PLU) Codes on produce

The first digit of the sticker on produce tells you how they were grown.

1st digit	Meaning
9	Organic
3 or 4	Conventionally grown
8	Genetically engineered (GMOs)

A general guideline for fruits

If a fruit is thick skinned (like oranges, lemons and bananas) buying conventional rather than organic is okay.

However, if you plan to zest the skin of a lemon or lime for a recipe, buy organic.

Guidelines for Sweeteners

Whole foods such as fruits that are naturally sweet are healthy sources for sugar. A problem with many processed foods is the 'added sugars'. Another red flag is artificial and chemical sugars.

For many, cutting out sugar is unrealistic. A healthier alternative is whole foods like dates and monk fruit that are naturally sweet or minimally processed sugars like maple syrup and molasses that have more nutrients.

Common Sweeteners by Glycemic Index

The glycemic index rates carbohydrates according to how quickly they affect blood sugar (glucose) levels. **The lower the number, the better.**

For those watching their sugar intake, the glycemic index can help determine which sweeteners reduce blood sugar spikes. Low on the glycemic index is between 1-55. Below are healthier sweeteners in that range.

Glycemic	Type of
0	Monk fruit (<i>whole food</i>) Stevia (<i>not processed</i>)
42	Dates (<i>whole food</i>)
54	Coconut sugar Maple syrup
55	Blackstrap molasses



Whole Grains – 25% of your plate

Not all grains are equal. **Whole grains** are far healthier than refined or enriched grains which lose many nutrients and fiber from processing.

Whole grains are an excellent source of complex carbohydrates. They are also a good sources of fiber and many important nutrients such as B vitamins, folate, selenium, potassium, magnesium, and iron.

- ✓ **Check the whole grains you like or are willing to try.**
 - Barley is rich in potassium, folate, iron, and vitamin B-6 which support cardiovascular functions.
 - Farro (not pearl), is nutrient dense and high in protein and fiber.
 - Freekeh is young wheat that is low-carb and has up to four times more fiber than brown rice. It is a prebiotic
 - Quinoa is one of the few plant foods that contains all 9 essential amino acids. It is an excellent source of antioxidants.
 - Whole wheat is popular, but is controversial. It contains gluten which triggers a harmful immune response in some people.
 - Whole grain rye contains more minerals and fewer carbs than wheat and does not raise blood sugar as much.



Gluten-Free Whole Grains

✓ Check the gluten-free grains you like or are willing to try.

- Brown rice is whole grain and is high in fiber.
- Buckwheat is packed with nutrients and fiber. It is a *resistant starch* that helps decrease blood glucose levels.
- Millet is naturally gluten free and a good nutrient source. It is linked to reduced inflammation, lower blood triglycerides and decreased blood glucose levels.
- Sorghum is an excellent source of nutrients, fiber, antioxidants, and protein.
- Teff is a tiny grain, too small to process. It has 3 times the calcium as other grains.
- Whole oats are packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

Plant based foods do not contain cholesterol.
Cholesterol in foods only comes from animal products.

Guidelines for Ingredient Labels

- **Put it back on the shelf if the first few ingredients on the label are sugar, enriched white flour, and fat.**
These ingredients create addictive foods full of empty calories with little nutritional value.

- **Put it back on the shelf if it contains dangerous food additives**

These are the top additives to avoid that are used in the U.S. but are banned in many other countries.

1) Sodium nitrate (in processed meats); **2)** BHA and BHT (preservative); **3)** artificial food coloring, particularly yellow 5 and 6 and red 40, **4)** potassium bromate (in baked goods); **5)** Propyl paraben (preservative); **6)** Hydrogenated oils (trans fats)

- **Put it back on the shelf if it contains processed or artificial sweeteners**

Avoid these sugars. Many are used in the U.S. but are banned in other countries.

1) High fructose corn syrup (HFCS)

HFCS is commonly found in many processed foods and drinks, including juices. But because the public became aware of the risks, many food manufacturers hide it under a new names such as **maize syrup, tapioca syrup, glucose syrup, isoglucose syrup, fructose syrup and corn sugar.**

2) Artificial sweeteners

There are countless reports of radical health improvement when chemical sweeteners are eliminated. The sad reality is these artificial sweeteners are in thousands of products from diet sodas to cake mixes to cereals to gum.



Building Block 2 — Read Food Labels

The nutritional facts and the ingredient labels are important to make healthier selections of packaged foods at the grocery.

Jeff Novick, MS, RDN recommends:

RULE #1—NEVER believe the marketing on the package front!

RULE #2—ALWAYS read the nutrition and ingredient labels!

Guidelines for Nutritional Labels

Would you buy this product?

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

Is the **serving size** realistic?
Are the **calories** per serving realistic?

Recommended formulas:

Fat maximum is 2g of fat per 100 calories

Using the formula, the recommended maximum fat for 230 calories is 4.6g. The fat in this product is almost

Sodium maximum is a 1:1 ratio of calories to milligrams of salt

Using the formula, the recommended maximum salt for 230 calories is 230 mg of salt which is well within the

Added sugars maximum is 2g of added sugars per 100 calories

Using the formula, the recommended maximum added sugars for 230 calories is 4.6g. The added sugars in this product are over double the recommended amounts.

Healthy Plant Based Proteins — 25% of your plate

While all vegetables, fruits and grains contain protein, these are some of the richer protein sources.

✓ Check the healthy proteins you like or are willing to try.

- Black beans 8.5 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Chia seed 2 grams protein per tablespoon
- Chickpeas 7.3 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Edamame 8.5 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Hemp seed 5 grams protein per tablespoon
- Kidney beans 7.6 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Lentils 8.8 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Nutritional yeast 4 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Nuts 16.5 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Oats 5.5 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Peanuts 20.5 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Peanut butter 3.6 grams protein per tablespoon
- Pinto beans 7.7 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Quinoa 8 grams protein per 1 cup
A complete protein that contains all 9 essential amino acids
- Spirulina 4 grams protein per tablespoon
- Tempeh 15 grams protein per 1/2 cup
- Tofu 10 grams protein per 1/2 cup



What are whole foods?

Whole foods are foods that are minimally refined or not processed. They do not contain additives or artificial ingredients, which eliminates most boxed and packaged foods.

Most nationally known doctors who recommend a plant-based lifestyle advocate eating whole foods because the majority of processed foods are loaded with oils, salt, preservatives, and chemicals that can contribute to chronic disease and sickness.

Whole foods are wellness drivers. Whether you cut out or cut down on processed foods in favor of whole foods, your body will thank you for it.

What about oils?

Advocates of a plant-based whole foods lifestyle recommend whole food sources for oil, like olives and avocados. If you do use oil, sparingly use unrefined or virgin oils that are cold pressed or expeller pressed—olive oil, avocado oil, or coconut oil. But know that they all contain saturated fats.

Avoid seed oils. They are high in Omega-6 and cause inflammation.

Drink eight 8 oz glasses of water daily*

Our bodies depend on water to survive. All of our cells, tissues and organs depend on hydration to function properly. Water is about 50% to 70% of our total body weight.

*With existing conditions such as renal disease or congestive heart failure, consult with their doctor about water intake.



Benefits of proper hydration

- Water eliminates body waste
- Regulates body temperature
- Relaxes muscles
- Lubricates joints and tissues
- Promotes healthy skin



Dangers of dehydration

Without enough water our bodies cannot function normally. Because thirst signals diminish as seniors age, hydration awareness becomes even more important. Dehydration in seniors is linked to a greater risk of dementia.

Signs to watch for:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability | <input type="checkbox"/> Confusion or decreased cognition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark urine, infrequent urination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue, or feeling weak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dry mouth | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle cramps in arms or legs |

Healthy hydration

Check the ways you like to hydrate or are willing to try.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit infused water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tea | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable infused water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee | <input type="checkbox"/> Coconut water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kombucha | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant based milks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables & fruits | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit smoothie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soups | <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable smoothie |

Fruit juices also hydrate, but use caution because of their high sugar content. It's better to splash a little juice into your water or eat a whole piece of fruit.