

## Five Steps to a Balanced Media Diet

Like with most things in life, the healthiest way to stay informed involves moderation and variety. Taking control of your media consumption habits can make you a more efficient and better-informed consumer and producer of news. (Yes, producer! Ever “shared” something online? You are a producer!)

Follow these five steps to get started, then check in with yourself periodically to see if your media diet needs an adjustment.

**Step 1: Take stock of your current diet by tracking your media consumption.** Use the chart provided on page 2 to survey the media you consume for one week. Map the results to the graph on page 3 to figure out where you can make healthy changes.

**Step 2: Identify reputable news sources.** Research sources that have a track record of factual, timely and politically middle-of-the-road reporting. Begin working these sources into the mix until the majority of your news comes from these sources.

**Step 3: Consume a balanced diet.** Try not to consume all of your information from one source but from a variety of sources, including across partisan lines. This practice helps ensure you’re getting the whole story instead of just parts of it.

**Step 4: Just as in food consumption, limit empty new calories from “junk food” sources.** This means cutting back on sources that specialize in sensational news that fills up your time and distracts you from what’s important to you.

**Step 4: Trim the fat.** Spending hours on Facebook every day? Try scheduling time to spend on social media and go without when you’re scheduled to do other things. Your notifications can wait.

**Step 5: Practice mindful media consumption.** When you’re reading news, focus exclusively on the task at hand. Multitasking means you’ll retain less information—and find yourself unsatisfied.



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# Media Diet Tracking Sheet

	EARLY MORNING 5am – 9am		MORNING 9am – noon		AFTERNOON noon – 5pm		EVENING 5pm – 10pm		LATE-NIGHT 10pm – 5am	
	SOURCE	TYPE	SOURCE	TYPE	SOURCE	TYPE	SOURCE	TYPE	SOURCE	TYPE
Sunday										
Monday										
Tuesday										
Wednesday										
Thursday										
Friday										
Saturday										

After tracking your media diet for a week, map the outlets on the grid below. What do you notice about your media diet in terms of confirmable accuracy and partisan bias? What changes could you make to diversify your media diet?

	CONFIRMABLE ACCURACY				PARTISAN BIAS		
	Hyper-partisan Liberal	Liberal Leaning	Mainstream	Conservative Leaning	Hyper-partisan Conservative		
Fact-checked Reporting							
Opinion/Analysis							
Fake News							