

Nutrition & Healthy Eating

- ✓ **Don't skip meals.** Starting each day with breakfast (even if its just a breakfast bar) will help jumpstart your metabolism and help burn calories throughout the day. When you skip meals, your body could potentially go into starvation mode and begin to hold onto fats.
- ✓ For some people, eating several small meals a day is better than 2-3 large meals. Giving the body smaller amounts of food to digest can help reduce the highs and lows of your blood sugar and energy level.
- ✓ **Eat all the colors of the rainbow in your diet,** especially dark-green, red, and orange vegetables. God made all of these wonderful fruits and vegetables!
- ✓ Choose a variety of protein foods in your diet, which include seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seed.
- ✓ Adding fiber to your diet is very important. There are two types of fiber: (1) insoluble fiber, which helps with movement of material through the digestive tract and can be found in foods like whole wheat, nuts and vegetables and (2) soluble fiber, which help lower cholesterol and are found mostly in oats and beans.
- ✓ **Staying hydrated and drinking water** can help you lose weight, maintain good skin health and can often help in digestion, mood and reducing fatigue. At a minimum, you should drink half your body weight in ounces daily (e.g. a 140 lbs. person should drink 70 ounces daily). Increase your consumption to 3/4 of your body weight if you are dealing with health challenges or participating in athletic activities.
- ✓ **Reduce Your Sodium Intake:** Most of the sodium that Americans eat is found in packaged foods. Eat less of highly processed foods—especially salty chips; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and luncheon meats; canned entrées, like chili and ravioli; and many soups.
- ✓ Eating more potassium can help balance out your sodium intake. High potassium foods include bananas, potatoes, coconut water (mostly fruits and vegetables). For a diet specifically low in sodium, see the “DASH” diet
- ✓ **Make half your grains whole.** Make your sandwich on 100% whole wheat or oatmeal bread or snack on whole grain crackers.
- ✓ Buy or portion out treats and snacks in small bags or packages. Be careful that you don't increase consumption because of the small size of the bag.
- ✓ Store especially tempting foods, like cookies, chips, or ice cream, out of immediate eyesight, like on a high shelf or at the back of a freezer or even better, do not buy these items at all.
- ✓ **Cook at home** more often rather than getting take-out or eating out. Make a double batch — cook for more than one meal at a time. Save the extra portion for lunch at work or school.
- ✓ When grocery shopping, plan out your meals a week in advance. This can help prevent you from grabbing last minute items at the supermarket during the week. Also, don't go grocery shopping while hungry. You will save money on unnecessary items and buy healthier options.
- ✓ In a restaurant, **opt for steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes** instead of those that are fried or sautéed.
- ✓ **Think fresh:** Check out your local farmer's market, buy fresh fruit and vegetables or start your own vegetable garden.
- ✓ Food, alone, may not give you all the nutrition you need to keep your body working at peak levels especially as you increase in age. With the consultation of your doctor, consider taking vitamins and/or nutritional supplements.

Try adding some of the following items to your weekly meals

- ✓ Sweet Potato as a side dish [*sweet potatoes have a variety of antioxidants and are able to help in regulation of blood sugars (diabetes)*]
- ✓ Dark Green vegetables – spinach, collard greens, turnip greens
- ✓ fruit for dessert, such as baked apples, pears, or a fruit salad
- ✓ Brown rice or whole-wheat pasta [*Brown Rice is rich in fiber and also has a low glycemic index, which means that the food metabolizes slower in the body and helps reduce snack and food cravings*]
- ✓ Popcorn, with little or no added salt and butter [*Popcorn is a whole grain snack*]
- ✓ Brownies with applesauce instead of oil or shortening [*Helps eliminate fat and lower cholesterol*]

Portion Control

- ✓ Try drinking a glass (8 oz) of water 20-30 minutes before your meal.
- ✓ Before going back for seconds, wait 5 or 10 minutes. You might not want seconds after all.
- ✓ The smaller your plate, the smaller your portion. Eat your meals at home on a smaller plate.
- ✓ Avoid food portions larger than your fist. A good rule of thumb is to make half of your plate meat (about the size of a deck of playing cards), one fourth of your plate whole grains (or starchy vegetable), and the other fourth of your plate, a vegetable.
- ✓ Variety, variety, variety. Having a meal with multiple sides helps with portion control. Instead of having just rice and chicken for dinner, you can add broccoli as a side and this will help you have smaller portions of each food group.

- ✓ **Get Active:** Get physically active at least 5 times a week, for 30 minutes or more. Make healthy exercise choices such as walking to pick up lunch instead of having lunch delivered; taking the stairs instead of the elevator; or getting off a stop before your schedule stop on public transportation and walk the extra distance to work/activities.
- ✓ **Moderate exercise (10-30 minutes) can also improve your mood, vigor and decrease fatigue** through the release of endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine. These brain chemicals make you 'feel good' and can help in fighting depression.

Exercise

- ✓ Each weekend day, spend an hour doing something physically active -- gardening, hiking, playing a sport, or taking a fitness class.
- ✓ **Build accountability:** Ask a friend to exercise or get fit with you
- ✓ If you experience soreness, don't give up! However, don't push yourself to the point of injury. Most exercise will get easier with daily repetition.

Sleep & Rest



- ✓ Exercising during the day can help you fall asleep easier at night
- ✓ A full stomach may make it harder for you to sleep. If you are hungry later in the evening, snack on fruits instead of junk food
- ✓ Try to eat at least an hour and a half before sleep, this will help with digestion and prevent acid reflux.
- ✓ Turning off your computer before sleeping will help in switching gears to sleep mode.

A healthy lifestyle is possible!

If you are just getting started along the process of a healthy lifestyle, try making just 1 or 2 changes at a time. Don't get overwhelmed by trying to complete a 360 degree makeover overnight. Your goal is a healthy lifestyle, instead of a temporary fad!

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These tips are not meant to constitute medical advice. You should consult with your doctor for particular guidelines or application of these suggestions.

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