

THE FAMILY VAN

We are Family

NUTRITION

Why Nutrition is so Important?



You are what you eat! Good nutrition is important for everyone. Healthful diets help growth, enable to work productively and feel our best. Eating a nutritious and balanced diet is one of the best ways to protect and promote good health. Nothing is more important than healthy eating! Without healthy eating, your body's engine will cough, splutter and eventually stall. A healthy diet and lifestyle are our best weapons to fight many diseases. It's not as hard as you may think!

Healthy and balanced diet can: *Give you vitality and energy for life, Help you stay at a weight that's right for you, Boost your immune system, Improve sports performance, Delay the effects of aging, Keep you active and fit into old age, Help beat tiredness and fatigue, Protect teeth and keep gums healthy, Enhance your ability to concentrate and possibly alter mood, Ward off most of the serious illnesses mentioned above especially diseases of the heart, and it may also improve your mental health such as cognitive and memory capacity which potentially increases ability to process and retain information- in other words- your intelligence.*

Unhealthy food can lead to many important diseases and conditions such as: *Heart disease, certain Cancers, Diabetes, Stroke, Osteoporosis, Obesity, High blood pressure, Gallbladder disease, Osteoarthritis, High blood cholesterol, Complications of pregnancy, Menstrual irregularities, Increased surgical risk, Psychological issues, , Tiredness and Fatigue.*

What kind of Nutrition is recommended?

Nutritional needs change throughout the life cycle. The number of calories and the amount of specific nutrients required will vary based on age, sex, reproductive status, activity level, and overall health of a person. Good nutrition should be part of an overall healthy lifestyle, which also includes regular exercise, not smoking or drinking alcohol excessively, stress management and limiting exposure to environmental hazards. Your genes play a big part in your risk for certain health problems. **The keys to good nutrition are balance, variety and moderation.** To stay healthy, your body needs the right balance of carbohydrates, fats, and protein --the three main components of nutrition; vitamins, minerals and other substances from different foods. Next page will provide you specific recommendation. A common sense list of food is as follows:

Healthy Food: *In general*, eating a daily diet that includes adequate amounts of wheat bread, cereal, grain, rice, pasta, vegetables, fruits, low fat and low cholesterol foods, lean meat, chicken (without the skin), fish and seafood of all types, plain & natural fat-free yogurt, soy products, unsaturated oils (canola, corn, olive), condiments: pepper, mustard, herbs and spices.

Unhealthy Foods: *In general*, avoid any food with too much of (1). "fat" - saturated fats, trans fats, oils (except a few) or cholesterol, and (2). -foods with too much of "empty sugar" i.e. foods and beverages high in calories but low in nutrients (e.g. sodas, juices, cookies, potato chips, cake.

Saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol are usually found in: Meat and dairy foods (regular milk, half-n-half milk, butter, lard, cheese, mayonnaise, egg yolk, ice-cream, animal fat); most vegetable oils, hydrogenated oils; ‘junk or snack foods’ - TV-dinners, cookies, cake, sodas, potato chips, popcorn with butter; excessive salt; and commercially baked and fried ‘fast-foods’.

What are Nutritional Recommendations for Everyone?

- *Do not eat too much of calories or at least use up (burn) as many calories as you take in.*
- *Try to eat small amounts of food every few hours instead of huge lunch or dinner*
- *Never let yourself get too hungry because that’s when we tend to eat unhealthy food.*
- *Eat a variety of nutritious foods from all food groups; avoid food which are not nutritious.*
- *Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated fat.*
- *Select fat-free, 1 percent fat, and low-fat dairy products.*
- *Cut back on foods with hydrogenated vegetable oil, cholesterol or “saturated fats & oil”*
- *Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars, and cut down on Salt..*
- **REMEMBER: Regular Exercise is as important as nutritious food.**

Diet Recommendations for Health Conditions:

(This information is only for educational purposes;. For details consult your doctor)

If you have DIABETES (“sugar”):

EAT: whole grains, lentils, beans; non-starchy vegetables, green beans, dried beans, fruits, low-fat dairy products, low fat/low cholesterol foods; lean meat, chicken (without the skin), fish;

AVOID: solid (saturated) fats, high saturated fat or high cholesterol food; most carbohydrates, fruits with high carbohydrates; sweets, desserts with too much sugar, carbohydrates and calories

If you have high BLOOD PRESSURE (“Hypertension”):

EAT: “DASH” recommended food, fruits, vegetables; low-fat dairy foods; wheat bread, cereal, whole grain, rice, pasta; low fat and low cholesterol foods; lean meat, chicken (without the skin), fish; Unsaturated oils like olive oil, corn oil and peanut oil; drink at least 8 glasses of water/day

AVOID: solid (saturated, trans) fats; food and oil with high saturated fat or high cholesterol, processed foods, junk food, fried foods, anything that contains harmful preservatives and too much salt; red meat, chicken with skin, grilled or barbecued foods; smoking , caffeine, alcohol.

If you have high CHOLESTEROL:

EAT: wheat bread, oat, cereal, whole grains, rice, pasta, vegetables, fruits, low fat-low cholesterol foods, lean meat, chicken (without the skin), fish; fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods; rice, pasta; fish, fish oil with omega-3 fatty acids , unsaturated oils (olive, corn, peanut)

AVOID: solid fats, food & oil with high saturated fat or trans-fatty acids found in commercially baked goods, processed foods, animal products such as egg yolks, red meat, poultry with skin, high fat milk products, butter, lard, mayo, margarine; most vegetable oils; almost all junk food.

If you are trying to lose WEIGHT:

EAT: whole grains, lentils, oat, beans; non-starchy vegetables; fruits; non-fat dairy products, low fat and low cholesterol foods; lean meat, chicken (without the skin), fish;

AVOID: solid fats, food with high saturated fat or high cholesterol; most carbohydrates, fruits with high carbohydrates, juices, snack foods, processed foods, junk food, fried foods, sweets and desserts like cookies, cakes, ice-creams, sweets, candy bars, with high carbohydrates, juices, snack foods, processed foods, junk food, fried foods, cookies, cakes, ice-creams, sweets, candy



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Additional Resources

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200009>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/index.htm>

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