

General Nutrition Tips

Nutritional Guide and Information

It is always best to keep in mind what your goals are for maintaining a healthy diet. If you are a baby boomer caring for a loved one, you especially need to consider caring for yourself both mentally and physically. Perhaps you want to combine sensible eating with a fitness program; they usually go hand in hand. Here are a few tips and information that can be used whatever your situation.

Fats, carbohydrates and proteins: Keep in mind it is always best to eat whole foods like fruits and vegetables, whole grains and limit your consumption of processed foods which may contain empty calories and sugar.

Carbohydrates

Carbs provide us with energy. Vegetables, fruits, whole grains such as brown rice and whole grain breads, beans and legumes are good examples. Carbs also give us a wealth of vitamins, minerals and fiber (complex carbs).

Increasing daily fiber in our diet makes meals more filling (satiety) and helps to move waste out of the body which helps prevent heart disease and improves weight loss.

1 gm of carbohydrates = 4 calories

Fats

Fats provide us with an additional energy source as well as vitamins and essential fatty-acids. Fats are composed of fatty acids (saturated and unsaturated). Eating healthy fats provides the fullness and satisfaction (or satiety) than can help prevent overeating and craving unhealthy fatty foods. We actually need fat to lose weight, but it needs to be the right kind of fat. Saturated fats should be avoided or reduced. The body manufactures this type of fat on its own, so when we eat too much of it, we add to our fat storage, increase our weight and risk disease. Unsaturated fats consist of canola oil,



safflower and olive oils. Nuts and seeds, along with certain types of fish are also good sources of unsaturated fats. Use in moderation.

Proteins

Protein is responsible for building and repairing body tissue. While it is important that we consume proteins, we only require small amounts each day. Whole grains, legumes (beans, peas) and soy products are excellent sources of protein. Deep sea fish provides us with essential (versus non-essential) fats. Eggs, nuts and dairy products are also good sources.

Choose What's Right for You

Take time to choose healthy options, eat slowly and enjoy each morsel. These are all important steps in proper digestion and weight loss. In fact eating approximately six smaller meals a day is ideal if you could manage it (see "Don't Skip Breakfast"). In the morning eat light foods such as a protein shake, it will continue to cleanse your body after an overnight fast. A late breakfast of whole grains will provide satisfaction and sustained energy. Snacks should be light. If eating sweets, do so apart from other meals since they are digested quicker than other foods and when mixed can cause food to ferment in the stomach. Eat slowly, avoid distractions and enjoy your food.

Food Groups

Fresh vegetables: raw vegetables are high in nutrients and contain fewer calories than other food groups. Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and brussel sprouts are good examples.

3 to 5 servings each day is ideal.

1 serving = ½ cup of cooked vegetables or ½ cup of raw vegetables or 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables.

Fresh fruits: fruits cleanse the body and are full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. Low calorie fruits include apples, oranges, cantaloupe, watermelon and grapefruit.

2 to 4 servings each day is ideal

1 serving = one medium size apple or ½ cup berries, fruit salad, etc.

Whole grains: whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, oats, rice etc.

6 to 12 servings each day is ideal

1 serving = 1 slice of bread or ½ cup of cereal or whole grains.

Proteins: consume high quality meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, beans or legumes or some dairy and soy products.

2 to 3 servings each day is ideal

1 serving = 1 egg, 3 oz meat or poultry or ½ cup beans, 1/3 cup of nuts.

Foods rich in Calcium and Vitamin D

They include skim milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage cheese and hard cheeses. Dark green vegetables, almonds and rice milk (fortified non-dairy).

2 to 4 servings each day of calcium rich foods is ideal

1 serving = 1 glass of milk or rice milk, ½ cup of yogurt, 1 oz of hard cheese, 1 cup of raw green leafy vegetables, ½ cup of cooked vegetables or 1/3 cup of almonds

Fats and Oils: certain quantities are healthy, but can be high in calories, so only consume small amounts. 1 tbsp = 14 calories. They include fresh nuts and seeds, avocado; oils (keep in mind the healthy oils – olive, safflower and flax)

There is no daily serving requirement here, eat sparingly – no more than 2 tbsp daily.

Calorie distribution:

1 gram of protein = 4 calories

1 gram of carbs = 4 calories

1 gram of fat = 9 calories

You know what you need to do. The more calories you consume, the more you need to burn to lose weight, if that is your goal, it's that simple. You can go to www.thecaloriecounter.com to find out exactly what nutritional value there is in just about anything you eat from cereal to fast food.

References:

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