

## 6 Walking & Healthy Eating

A healthy diet should include a good variety of nutritious foods. A good balance between healthy food intake and physical activity is important in maintaining a healthy body.

Here are a few simple tips for improving your diet without turning it into an ordeal.



- **Keep your balance.** Experts recommend at least 40 different nutrients for good health. Try and eat a variety of foods most days. Include fruit, vegetables, nuts, legumes (such as dried peas, beans and lentils), wholegrain cereals, lean meat, skinless chicken, fish and low fat dairy products.
- **Enjoy food.** Remember to enjoy what you are eating. It's important to be aware of what goes into each meal. Slow down and savour every bite.
- **Have a healthy breakfast.** Build a breakfast around fruit, low sugar cereals, porridge, rice, wholegrain breads, English muffins, bagels, smoothies, yoghurt and baked beans.
- **Keep it interesting.** Food doesn't have to be boring. Try foods from different cuisines to keep it interesting. For example, as an alternative to white breads, consider sourdough, multigrain, tortillas, rye, pocket bread, naan bread and fruit bread.
- **Not mad about meat?** Enjoy some of these other foods daily for a balanced diet: dried peas or beans such as chick peas, baked beans, kidney beans, lentils and tofu.
- **Go easy on supplements.** With the right variety of foods, vitamin and mineral supplements or body building powders won't be needed.
- **Be lean with meat.** Choose lean meats, fish and skinless chicken in place of sausages and processed meats.
- **Choose low fat dairy.** Make low fat milks, yoghurts and cheeses the choice every time, especially as good sources of calcium. Or consider the non-dairy alternatives such as calcium fortified soy milk or salmon with bones. Almonds, baked beans and green leafy vegetables also provide calcium, but in smaller amounts.
- **Get out of food ruts.** Avoid ordering the same foods at lunch or only eating favourite foods.
- **Think twice about takeaway.** There are heaps of healthy takeaway options to choose from such as sushi, pita wraps, falafels, steamed rice with vegetables, baked potatoes, souvlaki, kebabs, vegetable or seafood pizzas, tabouli, skinless chicken, grilled fish and steamed dim sims. Healthy desserts include fruit salad or a fruit smoothie.
- **Listen to your stomach.** Eat until you've had enough, not till you're full. Your stomach will let you know the difference.
- **Avoid comfort eating.** Notice if you're eating simply because you're bored, sad or lonely. These can lead to unhealthy eating habits later in life.

### Acknowledgement

This information has been sourced from Community Building, The Better Health Channel and Deakin University through the Go for your life website. See Fact Sheet 11 for details.

Funding for the Community Walking Grants program is made available through the Victorian Government's Community Support Fund.

- **Cut out TV dinners.** Try to reduce the number of meals eaten in front of the television or computer screen. Eat outside, on the verandah, at the park, lake, national park, river or other 'green space'.
- **Make a plan.** Decide what you're going to do and organise an achievable eating plan. Be prepared for times when there are no healthy food choices.
- **Be colourful.** When eating fruit and vegetables, look for a variety of colours at every serving.
- **Go for healthy snacks.** Snacks between meals are okay but keep them healthy. Grab a piece of fruit or a tub of low fat yoghurt, tin of tuna, nuts and dried fruit, sandwiches and low fat cheese.
- **Go for whole fruits.** It's far better to choose a piece of fruit over a fruit drink as many drinks contain sugar and other additives.
- **Double up on vegetables.** Have extra serves of veggies, especially if they're raw, steamed or baked.
- **Hydrate with H<sub>2</sub>O.** Drink water as the first option before reaching for juices, soft drinks, alcohol and energy drinks.
- **Keep a water bottle.** Keep a bottle or jug of water on the desk, or with you at all times and remember to refill it often.
- **Keep fat to a minimum.** Adult diets should be low in fat, especially saturated fat. Small amounts of polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats may have some health benefits when they are part of a healthy diet.
- **Eat less high kilojoule foods.** To reduce the energy density of a diet, eat an increased amount of plant foods. This will provide essential nutrients, reduce fat, and help you feel 'full'.
- **Eat foods rich in calcium and iron.** It's important for all Australians to eat foods which contain iron and calcium. In particular:
  - Calcium is important for infants, women and girls.
  - Iron is important for women, girls, vegetarians and athletes.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** A healthy diet can include a moderate amount of alcohol - men should drink less than two standard drinks per day and women less than one standard drink per day. Do not give alcohol to children.
- **Healthy diets for children.**
  - Infants and young children should not be placed on low fat diets without medical guidance
  - Encourage infants and children to choose water as their preferred drink
  - Children will have better nutrition and do better at school if they eat breakfast
  - Children should eat only a small amount of foods that contain sugar
- **Bigger is not better.** When meal size upgrades are offered at local take-away outlet, stick with the regular size.

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