



NUTRITION

Improving your nutrition can have huge benefits on your wellbeing. By simply paying more attention to what you eat, you could improve your overall health, feel more confident with how you look, feel more energised, and consequently improve your overall quality of life.

Knowing what to eat and drink to maintain good health can be confusing, therefore to simplify this here are 8 great nutritional tips.



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8 Great Nutrition Tips

1. Hydrate

Water is vital for proper cell function and it helps to process nutrients, maintain circulation, body temperature and the right balance of fluids. It cleanses the body of toxins and poisons and is therefore vital for good health.

The recommended intake is 2 litres per day. One important point to note is that water should not be consumed with food. Water dilutes the digestive juices and may prevent proper digestion from taking place. This could cause digestive issues or food sensitivities. Water is best drunk at least 20 minutes before eating, and at least 40 minutes after. This will also stop you from overeating as quite often we can feel hungry when we are actually just dehydrated.

2. Eat more Protein

The benefits to eating more protein are:

- It increases alertness - protein provides the brain with the amino acids it needs to function at an optimal level
- It makes you feel fuller for longer, and is therefore good for maintaining a healthy weight
- It helps develop and maintain lean muscles - muscles deteriorate as we get older so protein is good for maintaining a strong and healthy body
- It helps to repair muscles after exercise
- It helps with weight loss - when protein is increased, our metabolic rate increases making it easier to lose weight

The best types of protein to eat are plant based ones such as quinoa, soya or buckwheat. Lean meat and fish are also good choices. You should aim to eat your weight in kg x 1.5 for optimal health. Breakfast time is the best time to eat protein, as well as after exercise.

3. Eat more Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates have developed a bad name for themselves, however the right kind should make up the bulk of your eating plan. Between 45 and 65% of your daily calories should come from carbohydrates. There are two types of carbohydrates:

- Simple carbohydrates - refined foods such as white bread, white pasta, white rice, and foods with added sugars such as cakes and biscuits
- Complex carbohydrates - wholegrain foods such as brown rice, brown pasta, wholemeal bread, fresh fruit and vegetables, and beans.

Obviously we want more complex carbohydrates in our diet as simple carbs cause obesity and heart disease. Complex carbohydrates are more readily converted into glucose than other food sources, which is the preferred source of fuel for the body.

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4. Up your Fibre!

Most people in the West don't eat enough fibre, so it's no wonder that 20% of people suffer from regular constipation. We should be aiming for around 30g a day. There are two types of fibre:

- Soluble - this absorbs water and slows down digestion and sudden release of energy, helping maintain stable blood sugar levels. Good sources include apples, oranges, carrots, potatoes, oats, barley and beans.
- Insoluble - this passes through the digestive system and aids in bowel movements and excretion of waste and toxins. Good sources include wholegrain foods and complex carbohydrates.

Both types are essential for a healthy body and digestive system.

5. Eat Good Fat

Eating a diet that is too high in fat, causing obesity, is a major contributor to this. Fats are essential for the proper functioning of the body, but only the right kind and they should not be eaten freely. Saturated fats should be avoided as these raise blood cholesterol levels. These include animal products such as red meat, cheese, butter, full fat milk. Polyunsaturated fats, particularly those with omega 3 oils such as olive, coconut and sesame oils, and oily fish such as salmon or mackerel, are particularly good. Monounsaturated fats are the best kinds of fats to be eating in moderation. These include almonds and avocados.

6. Vitamins and Minerals

Every single second of every day your body is working to repair cells, to heal wounds, to boost the immune system, to convert food into energy, to produce skin, muscle and bone, and to sustain life. To do all of this, it requires at least 30 vitamins, minerals and dietary components that the body cannot produce alone. Unfortunately, much of the food we eat nowadays contains very little in the way of vitamins and minerals. Factors such as modern day farming methods, packaging, transportation, and cooking methods deplete food from the vitamins and minerals it could contain. To ensure that you are getting the most nutrients out of your food, try to buy locally grown fruit and vegetables, preferably organic. Steaming vegetables helps maintain the nutrients more than boiling, or eating raw if you have a strong digestive system. Make sure you're eating a good variety of fruit and vegetables - aim for all the colours of the rainbow!

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7. Avoid Sugar!

We all know that sugar is bad for us. But are we aware of just how bad it is? Too much sugar causes dental deterioration; diabetes; contributes to heart disease, mental illness, depression, senility and cancer; affects the immune system; increases fungal infections; causes chronic fatigue; contributes to PMS symptoms, causes hyperactivity in children, causes anxiety, irritability and panic attacks; and, of course, causes weight gain. You may think that adding artificial sweeteners is a good way of avoiding sugar, but actually these are really bad for your gut as the body cannot digest it. The best way to sweeten your food and drink is to use naturally occurring sugars such as local raw honey, real maple syrup, coconut sugar or dates. You should be aiming for less than 50g (for women) or 70g (for men) of sugar daily and opting for foods that have less than 5% of sugar.

8. Boost your Body with Antioxidants

Antioxidants are found in fruits, vegetables and plant based foods that contain high amounts of vitamins C and E. They are important as our bodies are under constant attack from oxidative stress which damages our cells and can cause serious illnesses. Antioxidants help to prevent this from happening, and so should be a regular part of your diet. Foods high in antioxidants include blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, goji berries, pecans, artichokes, red cabbage, kale, spinach, pecans, bean, beetroot and dark chocolate (70% or more).

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