



Strategies for Successful Health

Putting Nutrition Knowledge to Work

In the 1950s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture introduced a food grouping system for planning a varied diet. The original Basic Seven food groups turned into the Basic Four about 30 years ago. A new food guide based on five major food groups was developed in the 1990 edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The daily food guide classifies foods into groups based on their key nutrients, places emphasis on the general type of food item consumed rather than on specific nutrient content of each food item, encourages consumption of low fat, high fiber food choices, and minimizes calories from higher fat food choices.

Importance of Weight Control

Health risks are reduced when weight is appropriate for age and height. Appearance affects self esteem.

Do you need to change your weight?

Ask yourself:

1. Is my weight higher or lower than the guidelines for my age and height?
2. Does my waist-to-hip ratio put me at risk for health problems? Extra fat carried in the abdomen results in an apple shape. Research indicates that people with “apple shape” figures are at greater risk than those with “pear shape” figures for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, gall bladder disease, and hypertension.
3. Do I have a medical problem for which the doctor has advised me to lose or gain weight?

If you answered “no” to all three questions, your weight is probably healthy. If you answered “yes” to any of the questions or if you are not sure, consider talking to your doctor about how your weight might be affecting your health and what you should do.

Principles for Effective Weight Control

Focus on the foods you can eat. Eat a variety of foods. Avoid extreme approaches to weight loss. Balance caloric intake with caloric output.

You've probably thought of some good ways to put your eating and exercise plans into action. Start with the ones that are easiest or appeal to you the most. It's best to make small, steady changes and make them permanent.

Before you start an activity program, ask your doctor to help you decide which activities are best for your general physical condition. Remember, you're never too old, nor is it ever too late, to become more physically active.

Ideas for Changing Eating Habits

Keep a food and eating habit diary. Limit high-calorie, nutrient-sparse foods. Control snacking. Slow down the rate of eating. Follow an eating schedule. Eat in one room at home. Watch serving sizes. Do not sample when preparing food or clearing the table.

Eating Out, Eating Better

Eating out is routine for many of us as a result of busy lifestyles, work, and travel. Recent surveys indicate:

- Americans spend more than 40 cents of every food dollar on food eaten away from home.
- Americans eat one of every five meals at away-from-home eating establishments.
- Fast-food places serve four out of ten meals eaten away from home.

The more you eat out, the greater the effect of food choices in your total diet. If you consistently choose places with a limited selection of foods, you may be missing some nutrients, and/or adding extra fat, sodium, sugar, and calories to your diet.

Fried or salty foods and rich desserts contribute fat, sodium, and sugar. If you select these items when you eat out, pay close attention to the food choices you make at other meals.

It is your total diet that counts. Balancing food choices means eating a variety of foods with essential nutrients.

Choose menu selections which are lower in calories, fat, sodium, and sugar. Request substitutions for foods not included in your diet or order a la carte.

Restaurants are featuring more menu items that fit a nutritious and healthful eating style. However, study the food items carefully before you decide.

Special Diets

As we grow older, some of us may need to modify our diet to accommodate changes in our health or physical condition. Special diets can be designed to help reduce or control certain health problems or ensure adequate intake of nutrients when there is an eating problem.

Trendy best-seller diets make interesting reading and a friend's advice may be well-intended; but, if you require a special diet get one tailored by a professional.

Reference

Senior Series Volume 1, The Center on Rural Elderly, University of Missouri System.

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