

# The Healthy Way to Eat

*Start your new year the right way*



## The Healthy Way to Eat

We all have a vague comprehension as to what healthy eating entails but for many, it may instantly sound like a diet of deprivation and boredom. Not so. Healthy eating can still be exciting and tasty, it just means that you reduce the amount of processed and junk food that you might have previously consumed and choose those foods that actually serve to fuel your body instead of laden it down with unnecessary fat and poor nutritional content.

It probably won't be a surprise to read that eating more fruit and vegetables are vital if you wish to develop a dietary habit that promotes a healthy existence. Fruits and vegetables all contain such a vast array of vitamins and minerals but they also include vital quantities of antioxidants too.

A healthy diet means eating a wide range of fruits and vegetables and not simply sticking a token banana or apple in your lunch box each day. It's important to remember that the more variety you have, the greater the range of nutrients. Colour on your plate is important too, think of the colours of bananas, pumpkin, broccoli and apples and if you are not keen on the textures or flavours of these fruits or vegetables, you can still use them in your food quite easily and actually find that you love the textures and flavours. Use them in soups, smoothies, desserts, salads or in a sauce.

Unfortunately, people often have an all or nothing frame of mind when it comes to diet but if you want to re-evaluate the food that you eat, it's important that you don't consider specific foods as being off-limit. The human psyche is strange because the moment that you think of banning something in your life, it seems to make you want it all the more.

For those people who try to lose weight, it's important to not feel deprived of any of those considered 'bad foods' instead, think in terms of moderation. If you know that you are drawn to sweet or unhealthy snacks serve up a smaller plate or eat them much less. Eventually you will find that your cravings demise or that you will only indulge in them occasionally.

Eating smaller portions makes sense. Think about the reduction of trans-fats or saturated fats let alone calories that you will be reducing instantly. If you find it hard to have a big plate with only a small portion of food, then get a smaller plate and fill it up.

Eating healthily is about more than changing the actual food that you have on your plate, it's also about your perception of food. Unfortunately, people in general learn very bad habits when they are young. Sweet treats for good behaviour and this endorses the expectation and need for sweet treats throughout life and serves to make you feel deprived if you can't have the same luxuries on your healthy eating regime.

Healthy food should be celebrated and not rushed. Learn healthier eating habits, and listen to your body before snacking. Are you really hungry and do you honestly need those crisps or are you just bored or want to snack? Have a glass of water as you might just be thirsty instead of hungry and save the food for when you might actually need food.

Healthy eating is not about becoming unrealistically thin, about deprivation or about being strict and disciplined, rather it's about being relaxed, feeling good, having loads more energy and being ready to bound into action at any point. Healthy eating is about learning some basic nutritional points that will serve as a solid foundation for your new eating practices. Most of all, it's about adopting a fluid approach to life and learning to work with your own body and feeling the best that you can feel.

Your food is your fuel, it's what gets you started in the mornings, it aids concentration, it gets you from A to B, it helps you to have zest in your life and the energy to cope with stresses, strains and boosts a healthy immune system to combat the various bugs and virus's that you encounter en-route.

Did you know that food can help to improve your memory and help to stabilize and balance your mood? The food that you choose to eat can help you to reduce the risk of succumbing to serious health conditions such as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, so learning the essential nutrients and foods to welcome and those to avoid, is a real investment into your life.

## **Success on a Plate**

Plan your new healthy regime but think of it as small stepping stones to a healthier you rather than just as an end goal. Approach these changes gradually, (Rome wasn't built in a day after all) and think of learning and trying out new healthier and fun diets each week so that you can tantalise your taste buds.

## **Make it Simple**

Don't start measuring out portions or worry about calories, just reduce the size of your portions and try to think of your meal in terms of fresh food, variety and color.

## **Slow and Sure**

Don't go blazing into a new dietary regime, instead make the changes slowly and surely and you will be more likely to start enjoying the healthier effects. A benefit will be that you will start gradually noticing extra salt and sugar in any processed foods that you do eat. Allow some time at the weekend to experiment with new recipes but always keep a thought as to the food types that you are incorporating into your diet.

## **Saturated Fats**

In addition to increasing your fruits and vegetables, it's vital that you reduce the amount of saturated fat that you consume and this is because saturated fats are implicated with the development of heart disease.

These fats work to increase the levels of harmful cholesterol within your body whilst reducing the cholesterol that is actually beneficial to you. If you eat a lot of meat, make sure that you purchase lean cuts of meat and get rid of any visible fat. You can also cut down on saturated fats by reducing or eliminating high fat dairy products. Reducing the amount of meat that you eat is better anyway and instead of relying on meat at every meal, increase your consumption of pulses or try those vegetarian dishes that are low in fat but packed full of nutrients.

## **The Dreaded Trans-Fats**

Fast food companies use trans-fats in their fast foods and take-a-ways and these fats are chemically altered and considered to be highly harmful to your health. It's important to realise that trans-fats don't

actually exist naturally so consider the risk by eating an abundance of pre-packaged cakes or a regular supply of fast food.

### **Unsaturated Fats**

Unsaturated fats are the good guys in the fat world and it's wise to increase your consumption of these. You can find unsaturated fats in seeds, nuts, olive oil and avocados for example and these fats help to reduce the levels of harmful cholesterol in your bloodstream.

### **Increase your Fluids**

Increasing your fluids essentially means that you should drink more water and doesn't mean reaching for that extra bottle of beer-however tempting. You should be aiming for about 8 glasses of water a day and remember that about 60% of your body weight is attributed to water. Dehydration will cause fatigue and reduce your concentration levels; it can even affect your physical appearance. Water is good for your metabolic reactions.

### **Breakfast**

Not everyone feels like eating breakfast every day but it really is one of the most important meals of the day. There have been studies which state that those who eat breakfast are often slimmer than those who don't so if you are looking to lose weight, you might want to indulge in some fruit or porridge to start your day off. If these are unappealing, try rice cakes, eggs, yogurts, herbal teas, pancakes, berries etc

### **Wholegrain**

Wholegrain contain more nutrients than those refined grains due to the fact that they have bran and germ and they also contain vitamin B, vitamin E, phytonutrients and insoluble and soluble fiber. Wholegrain is considered good for healthy hearts.

### **Reduce Salt**

Too much salt can contribute to high blood pressure and this in turn can lead to blood clots. Salt can be hidden in processed foods so cut down on the number of ready-meals that you have and don't add salt to your food.

## **Fiber**

Fiber is renowned for helping to ease or prevent constipation but it can also help to protect against diverticulosis and bowel cancer. When increasing your fiber levels, do make sure you also drink plenty of water.

So you can see from this list, it's just a matter of considering what you are going to eat and trying to reduce any formerly bad ingredients for healthier options. Most people eat poorly because they are in a rush, their lives are too manic to sustain a healthier lifestyle and yet actually, a healthier lifestyle once incorporated will help them to be able to sustain this increase of pace and keep them healthy throughout. It just takes a little forethought and planning and your body will thank you for it.

## **Green Foods and Fibrous Vegetables**

Fibrous carbs are the healthiest addition to your plate if you are looking for weight loss and yet still ensure that your food is packed full of nutrients. They are low in calories and best of all; you cannot over-eat these food types.

Add an abundant helping of the following to your plate:

- Spinach
- Brussel Sprouts
- Broccoli
- Asparagus
- Peppers (Green or Red)
- Zucchini
- Kale
- Cauliflower
- Green Beans
- Onions

- Kale
- Cabbage
- Tomatoes
- Meat

Many people feel that eating meat is unhealthy but it is more about the type of meat and also any chemicals that it may have been fed that can cause any damage. It's important to stay away completely from processed meats – the fast food option or those deli-type meats for lunches.

Choose the leanest options as this will help you to avoid unhealthy fats and help you to keep the calories down.

- Chicken breast
- Turkey breast
- Salmon
- Shellfish/Seafood
- Eggs
- Fish (ensure that the fish you buy are not contaminated with mercury)
- Bison/Buffalo

### **Whole Grains and Non-Starchy Vegetables**

Due to the widely acclaimed 'low carb' diet, many people are worried about adding these food types to their diet but providing they are used wisely, they are loaded with nutrients and fiber. Just be careful as they have more calories.

- Brown Rice
- Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Black Eye Peas
- Lentils
- Chick Peas
- Peas
- Squash
- Beans
- Quinoa
- Wholegrain Bread
- Wholegrain Pasta

### **Healthy Fats**

Some fats are healthy as we have already established and yet people do tend to think that all fats are unhealthy but some especially the omega-3 fats which is found in oily fish, are among some of the healthiest foods that you can get. Healthy fats are also found in nuts, dark leafy greens and some healthy, but unprocessed oils.

- Salmon, Sardines, Trout, Mackerel
- Fish Oil Supplements
- Extra Virgin Oil
- Extra Virgin Coconut Oil
- Walnuts, Almonds etc
- Seeds
- Avocados
- Olives

### **The Fun Factor**

It's vital if you are planning to make substantial changes to your whole eating regime that you make it as fun as possible. Don't look on it as a necessary evil but instead embrace the chance to do something that is going to make you look and feel so much better. Make meal times a time with family, a get-together where you can chat about the day, it's much more satisfying than eating alone and if you can eat more slowly and

masticate your food thoroughly, not only will your brain recognise the signals that you are full-up, but your digestive processes will be much more efficient as a result.

How many times have you finished your meal and then looked longingly at a favourite dessert determining that you could easily make room for it? Then once you have started eating, you find that you are no longer really hungry and struggle to clear your plate.

This is because it takes about 20 minutes for your hypothalamus (a section of your brain) to get the clear signal that you are full. You will have probably experienced the bloating sensation which tells you that you have eaten too much and possibly too fast. Slow down, chew your food thoroughly and stay in the moment. Too often people rush their food when it's an important part of your day.

## **Additional Health Tips**

### **New Flavours**

Instead of thinking and feeling sad about all of the foods that you are reducing, instead think of all of the new foods that you are welcoming into your diet. Some of which will become firm favourites.

### **Night-time Snacks**

It's easy to take the mindless approach when sat in front of the TV and if you feel like snacking, be choosy about the food that you nibble. You can have a treat but make it a small one or snack on freshly prepared carrot sticks or a fresh fruit salad.

### **Mini Meals**

As soon as you think about food, it may well spark off the urge to eat so if this sounds like you then reduce the size of your meals and instead eat 4 or 5 mini meals throughout the day. Remember it is all about working to your own personal requirements.

### **Add a Little Spice**

Don't endure bland food instead, add a few spices and chilies (if you can cope with them) and this will stimulate your taste buds, ensuring that you feel more satisfied and eat less.

### **Seasonal Food**

If you can, try to eat food that is in season. We all feel very spoiled being able to eat the foods that we like pretty much all year round but, sometimes out of season foods do not taste as good. If you can grow your own, you will get used to the food that is available throughout the months and can plan your dietary approach accordingly.

### **Stress**

You may find that you turn to food for comfort the moment that something goes wrong in your life or you are faced with a very stressful situation but try to avoid doing this, as you will only find that you feel guilty thereafter, and this will add to your stress levels. Instead find other ways to cope with stress: relaxation techniques, meditation or a little yoga.

If these don't appeal, write down your thoughts and feelings in a journal or read a new novel that takes your mind off the here and now. Music too can be a better salve than a bar of chocolate.

### **Get Physical**

You don't have to exercise as if you are planning for the Olympics, instead start up some exercise that you enjoy. If you enjoy it, you are going to do it more and will gain the benefits as a result. Walking, swimming, cycling, yoga are all great starting points for a new healthier regime.

## **10 Top Tips on Eating Healthily**

1. Get rid of the accursed fizzy drinks. You know that they are bad for you so drink water instead. It's healthier and of course, much cheaper because you can take it from the tap. You don't need to buy bottled water, it's not necessarily cleaner than your tap water nor does it taste better.
2. Ensure you have eggs in your diet. Eggs make a good solid breakfast and eating breakfast helps your metabolism to get kick-started too. Eggs are relatively low in price, are full of protein and vitamins. Why not invest in a few chickens for your garden if you have the space? This means that you could have your own home-produced eggs fresh on the day they are laid.
3. Worried that you are not getting all of your vitamins and minerals? It's worth using a multivitamin to ensure your levels are topped up. Sadly with the amount of pesticides used in fruit and vegetables, there are two alternatives to multivitamins- grow your own fresh fruit and vegetables or buy organic.
4. Find fresh fruit and vegetables expensive to buy? Get tired of finding them rotting in your vegetable tray? Why not stock up your freezer with frozen vegetables? They take less time to prepare, always a good thing if your lifestyle is a little rushed and you don't need to worry about eating them within a certain time. Plus, bulk up for discounted prices and store.
5. Are you spending time buying branded food? Forget it. Brands cost you more money but you're not really gaining out of it. Food snobbery is pointless, it's about eating healthily. Try out some unbranded foods and learn to enjoy. Forget about labels.

6. Enjoy fish but find it is so expensive? Buy a few cans of tuna or sardines and keep them in your stock cupboard. They contain lots of protein and you can alternate your egg and tuna resources.
  
7. Consuming fish oil is important as it contains omega-3 which helps to reduce body fat, ease any inflammation and also helps to lower cholesterol levels too.
  
8. Plan your menus for a few days at a time. If you are buying fresh food then buy enough for any chosen recipes and then buy more when you need them. Eat before you go to the supermarket to get your food because then you will only buy what is on your list and not what you fancy because you are hungry.
  
9. Don't waste money on buying prepared food for work, make up your own. It may be time consuming but it will be healthier and will save you money too. Wake up a little earlier and do your food straight away and this will be one chore out of the way. Do a little research and prepare tasty healthy options so that you look forward to your lunch break.
  
10. Eat less. Everyone would like to lose a little weight and eating less or eating less junk food will certainly help you to do just that. Having the odd treat is perfectly acceptable but the emphasis has to be on smaller but healthier options. Snack away on fruit and veggies to your heart's content. Why not get a little creative with your diet and find new healthier ways to serve up old favorites?

### **Summary:**

This 'Healthy Way of Eating' report is a starting point to help you understand the importance of the food types that you consume so that

you can make conscious changes to your dietary regime and improve your overall health as a result.

Remember that learning about a healthier lifestyle takes time, and there is no harm in starting slowly and incorporating additional healthy foods into your life and becoming creative in the kitchen as a result.

There is nothing wrong in having a few treats in life but don't let 'bad' food rule your life or those indulgences be governed by any unstable moods or be stress-related. Think moderation and just embrace the healthy changes that will occur as a result, because you will feel more positive, have greater energy and feel revitalised.

*Disclaimer: The information in this report is intended for information only and is not intended to replace nutritional advice from qualified sources.*