

Take Care of Yourself: Commit to Eating Healthily

There is no question that the food we eat affects how we feel. You don't have to follow a strict diet, but it is important to follow a healthy eating plan. A nutritious, well-balanced diet gives you energy, protects against disease, and helps you maintain a healthy weight. Here are more ways to improve:



Try to fit in 2-3 nutritious snacks throughout the day in addition to well-balanced, sensible main meals. This will give you energy throughout the day, even during an afternoon slump. You may find that eating healthy snacks—like whole-grain crackers with low-fat cheese, yogurt, hummus, almond butter, or fruit and vegetables—gives you energy throughout the day so that you don't overeat at main meals.

Drink water throughout the day. Avoid soda and sports drinks, which are often high in sugar. Limit caffeinated beverages. Sugar and caffeine may make you feel great for a little while, but when they wear off, you may feel even worse than before consuming them. Try to keep a bottle or large glass of water at your workstation and refill it during the day. Flavor it with a little lemon or lime if you don't like plain water.

Limit or avoid alcohol. Limit yourself to one small drink if you drink alcohol and make sure you are not binge-drinking (which is having 5 or more drinks for men and 4 or more drinks for women, in one setting).

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables and include some fish in your diet. Vegetables like broccoli and tomatoes are full of antioxidants that can fight cancer. Snack on apples, oranges, berries, dried fruit, carrot sticks, and other fruit and vegetables. The recommended daily intake is 7 portions of fruit and vegetables. Don't forget fish: some, like salmon, have Omega-3 acids that are great for your heart.

Slow down when you eat. It takes around 20 minutes for the brain to realize the stomach is full; so, when food is consumed too quickly, it is more likely you will overeat. Slow down and wait until you can feel your fullness.

Keep an eye on portion size. Try putting less food on the table at mealtime so that you don't take huge servings. Remember: a serving of meat should be the size of a deck of cards or smaller.

If junk food is your downfall, don't buy it. Shop with a list to avoid impulsive buys. The healthiest foods are usually around the outer perimeter of the supermarket, so steer clear of the aisles where the processed foods tend to be.

Stay away from snacks high in sugar or salt. If someone brings in donuts to share in the office, avoid going near them if you think you might be tempted. You can use the same strategy at social gatherings.

Track your intake. When you keep a food diary (whether on paper or through an app), you will think twice about eating and snacking. Make yourself accountable for all that you eat.

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