

healthy eating suggestions

clinical information for practitioners and patients

Our eating habits are as important as the food choices we make in achieving and maintaining health. An old saying 'Worry and hurry are the enemies of digestive health' is truer today than ever before. In order to truly benefit from the dietary changes we make, it is important to adopt healthy eating habits.

Top 10 tips for healthy eating habits

1. **Chew.** Digestion begins in the mouth with chewing and the secretion of enzymes. Eating quickly increases the amount of air and the size of the food swallowed. This will lead to inadequate digestion and an increase in gas production.
2. **Eat regularly.** Eat at least every 4 -5 hours. Our bodies need regular fuel to maintain blood sugar levels & metabolism but enough time to complete digestion before more food is eaten. Avoid skipping meals by having balanced snacks on hand for busy times. Hunger is a sign of low blood sugar and will lead to poor food choices & overeating if ignored.
3. **Avoid overeating.** Overeating occurs when we skip meals, eat too quickly or don't satisfy our taste buds. Overeating is a major cause of obesity and stresses the liver and digestive tract. To reduce the risk of overeating, spread your meals evenly throughout the day and don't leave the largest meal until the evening. Our digestive fire is at its peak around noon, a time that it is most efficient at converting food into energy rather than storing it as fat.
4. **Eat with awareness.** Awareness eating has been proven to cause a rise in metabolism. Ask yourself how hungry you are before and after each meal. Take 5 minutes to relax before a meal if you feel stressed. Prepare as many meals yourself as possible – touching, tasting and smelling food before you eat it will prepare the body for digestion, prevent over eating and improve your psychological relationship with food. A microwave meal is more likely to result in overeating compared to a home cooked meal. Stop eating when you are almost full, to gauge whether you need any more. It takes approximately 20 minutes for our brains to receive the signal of satisfaction during a meal.
5. **Achieve fluid balance.** Avoid drinking excessively during a meal as this can reduce enzyme activity. One glass of fluid is adequate. Drink at least 2 litres (8 glasses) of water between meals each day. This can include herbal teas as well as diluted fruit juices.
6. **Prepare.** Shop for fresh food regularly and keep your pantry stocked with good staples to make it easier to eat a healthy diet. Whenever you cook or prepare food, make double and freeze in individual containers for future meals. When preparing dinner make lunch at the same time. The best preparation is knowledge about healthy food options - a well informed choice will be the healthiest choice (see Nutrimericine New Food Pyramid sheet and overleaf).
7. **Go 50% raw.** Have half of your vegetable and fruit intake raw (eg. salads) unless otherwise advised by your healthcare practitioner. Fruit and vegetables contain enzymes which aid digestion, so aim to eat some with every meal.
8. **Exercise.** Aim for at least three or four times per week. Exercise works the diaphragm, which massages the intestines and thereby improves digestion. It also regulates appetite, blood sugar control and metabolism.
9. **90% for the body 10% for the soul.** Ensure that the majority of food consumed is within the healthy range (90%) and allow the odd treat to satisfy your mind, soul and social life (10%). (See Nutrimericine Glycaemic Index sheet)
10. **Eat positively.** Good habits can easily be established with a little effort and a positive frame of mind. A balanced healthy diet doesn't have to be boring, bland, time consuming or expensive. Take back the control of your diet and health by making your own choices and stop allowing industry to dictate what you eat. And remember, food should be prepared, and eaten, with joy!

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Breakfast

- Cooked Cereals eg porridge made with oats or rye, millet, polenta, brown rice - suitable toppings for cereal can include a combination of the following : mixed berries, stewed fruit, grated apple, cinnamon, Linseed, Sunflower and Almonds (LSA), yoghurt, soy, rice cow or goat milk.
- In summer, if cold cereal is preferred, soak them in the fridge overnight with enough liquid to cover
- Muesli – raw and natural with no sugar added. These can be home made and therefore tailored to your own personal preferences, bought in a good health food shop or found in the health food section of the supermarket. Add fresh fruit and a tablespoon of plain live yoghurt
- Smoothies – can be made with soy, cow or rice milk, yoghurt, fresh or freshly frozen fruit, raw nuts, flax seed meal (should be refrigerated) flax oil or freshly ground LSA mix and spirulina,
- Whole grain toast with avocado, lemon and smoked salmon / honey and tahini / sardines and lettuce
- Poached or boiled eggs with mushrooms, tomato, avocado

Lunch and Dinner

- Large mixed salad with green leafy vegetables and assorted raw or steamed vegetables with protein such as eggs, legumes, nuts & seeds, tempeh/tofu, fish, chicken/turkey, lean meat, goat or sheep's cheese.
- Open sandwich (1 slice of bread) on wholegrain bread with salad and protein as above
- Mixed bread burger or lentil burger with lots of fresh salad and a spicy tomato salsa
- Stir fry vegetables with nuts and seeds, marinated tofu/tempeh, chicken, beef or fish
- Fish, baked, grilled or steamed with vegetables or salad
- Steamed vegetables and chicken with a tahini, soy, olive oil dressing
- Taco shells with kidney bean chilli, salad, guacamole
- Homemade pizzas on whole meal pita breads, topped with roasted vegetables and a protein source (egg, tuna, salmon, chicken, goats cheese, tofu etc)
- Bean and vegetable casserole with brown rice or barley
- Ratatouille with polenta and poached fish with garlic
- Soup - Always include some protein either in the soup (pea and ham or chickpea and vegetable or lentil) or on the side (1 ryvita with sardines, chicken or cottage cheese)
- 1 cup of Wholemeal pasta with 2 cups of bolognaise made from lean organic mince and vegetables and a small side salad with a homemade vinaigrette dressing
- Savoury breakfast suggestions

Snacks and Drinks

- Raw vegetable sticks with a protein dip (hummus, cottage cheese, ricotta, goats cheese, tahini)
- Ryvitas, wholemeal pita bread, seaweed rice crackers or corn cakes with; avocado, hummus, tahini, ricotta cheese, nut butters, pesto, olive tapenade (always include some protein)
- Raw, unsalted nuts and seeds with sun dried fruit
- Plain, natural yoghurt with fresh fruit and 1 tbsp of LSA
- Half serve of lunch or breakfast suggestions, Smoothies as per breakfast suggestion
- Fresh fruit
- Vegetable juice – especially carrot, celery, spinach, beetroot, ginger; Fruit juices diluted 50/50 with water
- Filtered water – 2 litres per day plus herbal and green teas, dandelion coffee