

HEALTHY EATING & WEIGHT LOSS TIPS

Eat Breakfast

The habit of eating breakfast every day can help you lose weight and keep it off. Eating breakfast will reduce hunger, fuel your body and mind, and if chosen correctly, increase your fibre and vitamin and mineral intake. Breakfast is an opportunity to add fruit and whole grains to your daily dietary intake.

A smart breakfast should include lean protein, whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables. Ideally choose foods that are energy rich, nutrient dense – think oatmeal with fruit, nuts and low fat yogurt – and avoid foods that are energy rich, but nutrient poor – think bagels or muffins. Consider adding spinach, onions or mushrooms to eggs and substitute low fat cheese for full fat cheese.

Watch Portion Sizes

To determine if you are eating proper portion sizes, use measuring cups or scales to see how accurate your choices are. A rough guide is that half of your plate should contain vegetables, a quarter for grains and a quarter for lean meat or protein. Use small plates or bowls to help you eat less.

Avoid eating foods directly out of a bag or box. By eating this way, it can be difficult to judge a single serving. Try portioning out a single serve into a small bowl instead.

Add More Fruit and Vegetables

Your daily intake should include at least 2 cups of fruit and 2 – 3 cups of vegetables. Select fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables. If using frozen or canned, be careful to choose those without added sugar, syrup, cream sauces or other ingredients.

1 serve fruit = 1 medium apple or 1 medium banana or 1 cup of blueberries

1 serve vegetable = ½ cup carrots or 1 medium potato or 1 cup salad greens

Try adding a banana or berries to porridge and lightening your lunch by adding vegetables to sandwiches or wraps and reducing meat.

It is best to eat fruit raw. Vegetables should be prepared with simple cooking methods, such as steaming or stir-frying. Serve with low fat dressings and sauces.

Healthy Snacks

Choosing healthy snacks between meals can help to sustain energy between meals. Try to combine lean protein with healthy fats, fibre or carbohydrates. For example, whole-grain biscuits with reduced fat cheese, low fat yogurt with fruit or a small serving of nuts with an apple or banana. Remember to watch portion sizes.

Drink More Water

Water is defined as an essential nutrient because it is required in amounts that exceed the body's ability to produce it. Drinking water can control hunger and is recommended to satisfy thirst. It contains no calories and is readily available.

Increase water intake and reduce drinks containing caffeine, sugar or alcohol. It is recommended that women drink about 8 cups of water per day and men drink about 10 cups of water per day.

Be Active

In addition to a balanced diet, physical activity is an essential component of energy balance. The goal for achieving a healthy balance is to include 30 minutes of physical activity every day. To reduce your weight, additional physical activity may be required. For those who don't currently exercise, starting with 10-minute activities and increasing by 10 minutes each time is a good way to begin.

Cook at Home

Dining in restaurants or taking away pre-cooked meals is typically associated with higher caloric intakes. Learn to prepare a few new meals at home using steaming, stir-frying or other low fat cooking methods. This can also be a more cost effective way to control a balanced diet.

Keep a Food Diary

Start tracking your daily food intake by keeping a food diary. This habit is associated with eating fewer calories and maintaining weight loss. By writing down what you are eating, you increase awareness of what, and how much, you are eating. The important details to note are the time, the food, the portion size and even degree of hunger you are experiencing. Some people also note their emotional state of mind or how they have slept the night before.

Consult an Accredited Practicing Dietician (APD)

An APD has the qualifications and skills to provide expert nutrition and dietary advice. APDs are university-qualified professionals that undertake ongoing training and education programs to ensure they are your most up-to-date and credible source of nutrition information.

To find an Accredited Practicing Dietitian go to the Dietitians Association of Australia: www.daa.asn.au.