

Guidelines for Healthful Nutrition

“You are what you eat.”

- Eat three meals and one or two snacks daily. Skipping meals, especially breakfast will result in poor physical and mental performance and lead to overeating at the next meal.
- Set the example! Children learn eating habits from their parents.
- Clean house! If high calorie, low nutritional value foods such as chips, candy, soda, cookies and pastries are not kept in the home, they will be consumed less frequently.
- Avoid processed and ultra-processed foods. They are linked to a number of long-term adverse health effects.
- Limit restaurant dining as the typical menu includes high calorie foods and portions tend to be large. “Fast food” restaurants often serve foods high in calories and saturated fat.
- Avoid eating while watching television or during other sedentary times.
- Read food labels! Avoid foods high in calories and fat. Compare competing food choices and select those lower in calories, total fat, saturated and “trans” fats. Avoid sugar additives such as high fructose corn syrup and corn syrup solids.
- Eliminate drinks that contain sugar such as fruit juice, soda, fruit drinks and “sports” beverages containing sugar. Drink non-fat (skim) milk and plenty of water. For variety, low calorie flavored drinks such as *Crystal Light*, *Wylers Light* and *Propel* are good choices.
- Choose healthful snacks with low caloric density such as fresh fruit, celery, carrots, oatmeal, almonds, microwave popcorn, low fat yogurt or cottage cheese. Do not eat snacks from the original container as you will be less likely to limit portion size. Instead, place a reasonable portion into a serving bowl.
- Drink six to eight ounces of water before meals, especially if you are thirsty.
- Eat salad or soup at the beginning of the meal. They are filling and generally low in calories. Use salad dressing sparingly.
- Serving meals on salad plates instead of dinner plates encourages smaller portion sizes. When ready for “seconds,” take a drink and choose a food with low caloric density such as fresh fruit, vegetables or beans.
- Choose breakfast cereals low in calories and high in fiber. Instant oatmeal, Cheerios and Raisin Bran are excellent choices.

- Serve vegetables and fruit with most meals. Keep a container of sliced fresh fruit in the refrigerator as a readily available snack.
- Steam, boil, bake, grill or broil foods instead of frying. Fried foods have high fat content. Fat has twice the calories as the same amount of protein or carbohydrate. Saturated fats and “trans” fats should be avoided as they have an adverse effect on cholesterol levels and cardiovascular health. “Trans fats” often appear on food labels as partially hydrogenated oils.
- Use butter and margarine sparingly. Low fat and non-fat substitutes are available at most grocery stores. Substitute sucralose (*Splenda*) for sugar.
- Avoid starchy foods that are low in fiber. As a rule, this includes most white carbohydrates such as white bread, white rice, pasta and white potatoes. These foods have high glycemic load which promotes storage as body fat. Choose instead fibrous carbohydrates such as vegetables, beans, yams, bread made with whole wheat flour, farro, couscous, barley and oatmeal.
- Choose skinless chicken, turkey and fish over other meats. Avoid “deli style” sliced meats, choosing low fat sliced turkey or chicken instead. Substitute low fat ground turkey for ground beef in dishes such as meat loaf, chili, spaghetti sauce and tacos. Low fat smoked turkey sausage and kielbasa are tasty substitutes for hot dogs or pork sausage and are useful for adding flavor to soups, beans and cooked greens.
- Eat more beans as they are an inexpensive, high fiber protein source. For variety, add beans to common dishes. Garbanzo beans make an excellent addition to salads.
- Consume at least two servings of *low fat dairy* such as skim milk, yogurt, soft cheese or cottage cheese, daily. Frequent dairy consumption has been proven to aid in weight control and weight loss.
- Limit “dessert” foods to one serving per week. Many families reserve a specific “dessert night.”

Bon Appetit!
Drs. Florentina and Joe

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