

General Nutrition For Healthy Individuals

By Eric North MD

Keep in mind the following eating guidelines:

- 1) **Vegetables:** You should have three or more servings of vegetables every day. Half of your plate should look green at your mealtimes. Be careful of using too much butter and salt.
- 2) **Carbohydrates:** You should limit carbohydrate intake to four or less servings each day. Eliminate refined carbohydrates, such as white rice, white pasta and white bread. When you eat carbohydrates they should be whole grains, such as whole wheat pasta, brown rice and whole wheat bread. A serving size is less than you think! For example, one serving of rice is 1/3 cup, a serving size of pasta is 1/2 cup, and a serving size of bread is one slice.
- 3) **Fruits:** You should eat at least three servings of fruit each day. Eat fruit raw rather than depending on juice as the fiber helps balance. See the dirty dozen list below as a guide for when to buy organic produce.
- 4) **Meat/Beans:** Adequate protein is an important part of your diet, which can be supplied by meats and beans. Most of your meat consumption should be fish or chicken. Limit red meat to twice a week.
- 5) **Fats:** There are good and bad fats! Limit animal fat, fried foods, saturated fat in processed foods. Cook with good fats such as olive and canola oil.
- 6) **Snacks:** Try not to snack on carbohydrates, such as chips and sweets. The best snack is a handful of nuts, such as roasted almonds. The good fats in nuts will satiate your hunger. Consider roasting raw almonds with olive oil to avoid the excessive salt in packaged nuts. Vegetables and fruits are also a great snack. Try celery or apples with peanut butter. Try NOT to snack after dinner. This can be difficult to overcome. Calories that are consumed in the evening are typically not utilized and so are stored as fat in your body (this is one great reason to take an after dinner walk). Drink lots of water and your hunger pains will subside over a couple weeks as your body adapts.
- 7) **Liquids:** Avoid soda (both regular and diet), juice, sports drinks, and energy drinks. Stick with drinking only water. If water is hard to adapt to, dilute lemonade 50% with water for a week, then move to 75% water, and so on. Coffee and tea are also acceptable but should not replace your water intake. Do not regularly drink juice. It takes 4 oranges to make a cup of orange juice! This is too much sugar at once for your body. If you drink juice, try diluting it with water.
- 8) **Splurging:** Psychologically it can be helpful to reserve one meal a week where you give yourself permission to eat whatever you want. Short term diets are not effective because it is hard to maintain a really strict diet. The goal is to maintain a lifestyle of eating healthy. Allow yourself to relax with your diet once a week to celebrate!
- 9) **Portion Size:** Eat until you're not hungry...not until you're full. Avoid "all you can eat" buffets! If you get a second helping, get seconds of vegetables and not carbohydrates.
- 10) **Location:** Location, location, location. It's all about location! Avoid fast food places. Organize a list of simple healthy recipes cooked from scratch that you can fit into your lifestyle. Food choices start at the grocery store. Grocery shop after you eat and not when you're hungry (you'll make healthier choices). Don't buy food that will tempt you at home.

"Dirty Dozen" Most Contaminated with Pesticides (buy these organic): Peaches, Apples, Sweet Bell Peppers, Celery, Nectarines, Strawberries, Cherries, Pears, Grapes (Imported), Spinach, Lettuce, Potatoes

Least Contaminated: Onions, Avocado, Sweet Corn (Frozen), Pineapples, Mango, Asparagus, Sweet Peas (Frozen), Kiwi Fruit, Bananas, Cabbage, Broccoli, Papaya