

Nourishing Your Body, From the Inside Out

Nutrition isn't meant to be hard.

New fads, diets and superfoods are popping up every day but it is important to remember the basics of healthy eating, which have remained unchanged for years.

- ◆ Eat more fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Choose mostly lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free dairy
- ◆ Drink mostly water
- ◆ Limit intake of highly processed sugary, salty or high fat foods
- ◆ Move more
- ◆ Choose foods that you enjoy, then slow down and enjoy them

Make eating well and nourishing your body a lifestyle, not a temporary change! Good nutrition is about balance and moderation. Every food has a place in a healthy diet.

Nutrition principles from the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, recommendations from the country's top health and nutrition experts:

- ◆ Follow a long-term healthy eating pattern
 - Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables
 - Choose mostly whole grains
 - Select fat-free or low-fat dairy, or fortified soy products
 - Eat a variety of proteins, including seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans/peas, soy, nuts and seeds
 - Include oils, such as those naturally present in nuts, seeds, seafood, olives and avocados, as well as bottled canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean and sunflower oils
- ◆ < 10% of daily calories from added sugar
- ◆ < 10% of daily calories from saturated fat
- ◆ < 2300mg/d sodium for adults (equivalent to 1 teaspoon per day of salt or less)
- ◆ Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week, including two muscle strengthening activities per week

It's About Balance: Carbohydrates, Protein and Fat

Our bodies need balance to function properly. Restricting or eating too much from any of these groups can adversely impact your health.

Carbohydrates

Carbs are the body's primary and most readily available energy source. The brain, muscles and all cells of the body require glucose from carbohydrate to function properly. Contrary to popular myth, carbohydrates are not "fattening" and do not in and of themselves lead to obesity. They are an essential part of a healthy diet. 45-65% of total daily calories should come from carbohydrates, which include breads/grains/pasta, fruit, dairy and starchy vegetables such as peas, corn, squash and potatoes.

Protein

Protein is a key player in tissue/muscle growth and repair and for the formation of enzymes, hormones and antibodies. Proteins also carry nutrients and other important molecules such as oxygen throughout the body. Most Americans consume adequate dietary protein, with the goal being 10-35% of total calories. Protein is found in meats, eggs, nuts, beans/legumes, dairy and soy products.

Fat

Fat plays an important role in helping our bodies absorb vitamins A, D, E and K. It also supports healthy skin and hair and helps with brain development and in reducing inflammation. The key is choosing mostly unsaturated fats such as oils, nuts, avocados and fish and to limit saturated and trans fats such as butter, high fat dairy, fatty meats and processed foods. In total, 20-35% of daily calories should come from fat, with less than 10% of total daily calories from saturated or trans fats.

Eating Smarter

Reading a Food Label

Taking the time to read a food label is one of the best ways to educate yourself about your food choices. Here's a quick "how to" guide.

Serving Size and Servings per Container

This will be listed at the top. All calorie and nutrient information listed below will be based on this quantity. Note, if you eat two servings, you will need to double all other information to determine your actual nutrient intake.

% Daily Value (DV)

This will be listed in the right-hand column and indicates % of daily requirement met for each nutrient, per serving. For example, one serving may meet 10% of your recommended intake for total fat but if you eat two servings, you will have met 20%. These percentages are based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet. If you eat more or less, your needs will vary. This also relates to the footnote at the bottom of the label, which provides recommended nutrient amounts.

Calories

Number of calories per serving

Total Fat

Number of total fat grams (g), from saturated, unsaturated and trans fat sources

Saturated and Trans Fats

Grams (g) per serving. This is more important than total fat. Goal is to limit to less than 10% of total daily calories (or less than 20 grams of saturated/trans fat for someone eating 2,000 calories per day.

Sodium

Milligrams (mg) per serving. Goal is <2300mg per day. Pay attention to this one! Surprising amounts of sodium are hiding in most packaged foods, even those labeled "low sodium."

Total Carbohydrate

Grams (g) of carbohydrate per serving. This includes naturally occurring sugars, starches, added sugar and fiber.

Dietary Fiber

Grams (g) per serving. Fiber is a nutritious form of carbohydrate found in fruits, vegetables, beans/legumes and whole grains. It promotes a healthy GI system (stomach-gut) and may help lower cholesterol levels. Goal is 25-30 grams per day.

Sugars

Grams (g) per serving. Includes naturally-occurring sugar from fruit and dairy plus any added sugars. In the future, added sugars may be listed separately. Until then, look at an ingredient list for words such as, sugar, cane sugar, brown sugar, sucrose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, molasses, nectars and syrups to spot added sugars.

Protein

Grams (g) per serving

Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron

% Daily Value for each is listed at the bottom of the food label. These are currently the only vitamins and minerals required on a label. Others are voluntary.

Have More Questions?

Schedule an Appointment with a Dietitian .

To meet one-on-one with a Schiffert Health Center dietitian, call 231-6444.