

Optimal Diet Plan

Planning a healthy diet can be confusing and extremely frustrating for all of us. Convenience choices have overcome healthy choices. Even when we try to pick healthy options, we are often surrounded by food filled with sugar, salt, or other processed chemical. It is so important to make a habit of healthy eating. It is one factor that you control in regards to how well you will feel, and what diseases you may be able to prevent or reverse. Optimal health through a good diet starts at the grocery store. Any of us will eat or snack on what is around us. If we buy junk food at the store or at work, that is what we will eat, no matter how strong our willpower. I have compiled some suggestions to develop better eating habits. None of us will eat perfectly all the time, but these key points will build healthy habits.

Healthy Do's

Try to eat 6-9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. These foods are loaded with vitamins and antioxidants, things that are needed to keep the body running well and prevent diseases like cancer.

Try to eat at least one vegetarian meal a day. You do not need to give up meat completely, but this will help limit saturated fat (the bad fat) in your diet.

Eat at least two servings of fish a week. Salmon, mackerel, halibut, trout, and anchovies are some of the healthiest kinds. This is great for the heart and cholesterol levels. The good fat in fish lowers inflammation in the body, which helps many conditions. Wild Alaskan Salmon is the best as it has the lowest levels of mercury. It is harder to find, but I hope local carriers will begin to provide it.

Try to include more organic food in your diet. More companies are marketing organic foods, making the prices more competitive. Demand will help this market grow. As we continue to pollute our water and soil, organically grown food will become increasingly more important.

Try to have 4 to 5 servings of the brassica vegetables a week. This group includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, bok choy, and cauliflower. These vegetables are major cancer fighters, and provide many nutrients vital to the body.

Cook with olive oil. It is the safest choice to use. Look for extra virgin olive oil that says first cold pressing on the bottle. Choose oil that is in a dark glass bottle, as this bottle will preserve the healthy fat in the oil the longest. Olive oil should also be used on salads or in sauces.

Include a handful of nuts in your diet (if you are not allergic). Nuts have healthy fats that benefit the heart. This does not include your standard peanut butter.

Include garlic in your diet. Garlic has several heart benefits and is a cheap dietary option for all of us. A garlic bulb is made up of many cloves. Try to eat 1-2 cloves a day. It is best eaten if it is peeled and chopped. Do not heat garlic too long as heat can destroy some of the benefits of garlic.

Add green tea as a daily beverage. Replace other caffeinated drinks with green tea. Studies have shown potential benefits from diseases ranging from asthma to heart disease. It is a relaxing drink that can be served hot or cold.



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Eat whole grain bread. When you buy bread, the words whole grain should be the first ingredient, not enriched or bleached or anything else. White bread is constipating and has been stripped of all its nutrients. Whole grain foods still contain the vitamins that are provided by the plant.

Try to get 8 glasses of water a day. Use purified water from a filter. Reverse osmosis is one of the best ways to get pure water. Spring water on a label does not guarantee purity. Very few of us, if any, drink eight glasses of water a day.

Eat a good breakfast. Information constantly points out that those who are trying to lose weight succeed better if they eat a good breakfast. Oatmeal and fruit are good ways to start a day.

Try to include free range, organic meats in your diet. This would include eggs. Wild game and buffalo meat is typically lower in the bad fats and has been given fewer antibiotics during development.

Healthy Don'ts

Avoid high fructose corn syrup. This is a substance that is hard on the liver, and can induce a type of blindness similar to diabetes without raising blood sugar. It is in EVERYTHING. Consider shopping in a health food store to find items without this.

Avoid hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils. READ LABELS! These oils are also in everything. Oils are hydrogenated to increase self-life. These oils are not healthy, and do not benefit the heart, whereas olive oil will.

Avoid refined sugars. Are bodies were not made to handle the amount of refined sugar we eat. Refined sugar is all the sweets we see everywhere. If this is all that is available at work, take multiple snacks for substitutes.

Cut down on soft drinks. The size of soft drinks available today is scary. Try to limit your intake to one small drink a day. Switch over to water and green tea. Fruit juice without high fructose corn syrup can also replace on soft drink.

Avoid eating food right before you go to bed. Eating then lying flat can produce heartburn that often needs medication for treatment. Some people tend to gain weight easier if they eat within an hour of going to bed.

Avoid fast food. Plan your food schedule out so that fast food can be decreased. This may mean taking your lunch to work. Fast food does very few of the "do's" but has many of the bad things listed in the "don'ts." When you do need a quick meal, select restaurants that offer leaner, healthy food options.