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FUELLING YOUR BODY

Your body needs carbohydrates, proteins and fats in order to perform properly and get the vitamins, minerals and nutrients you require. The better the choices you make when eating, the better you'll feel.

Carbohydrates

Two types:

- Simple Carbs like sugar and fruit; and
- Complex Carbs, which are found in breads and pastas.

Good (simple) carbs are found naturally in fruit, veggies and whole grains.

Vegetables are excellent sources of fibre, vitamins and minerals while still being low in calories. Dark green veggies like spinach have a lot of nutritional value as do orange veggies like carrots.

Steaming or baking, and even stir frying your veggies are great ways to cook them while maintaining their nutrient value.

Fruits and whole grains - without added sugar or fat – are also healthy sources of carbohydrates that contain fibre, vitamins and minerals and moderately higher calories than veggies.



Bad carbs – breads, candy, sugary drinks – tend to have empty calories that spike your blood sugar with little to no nutritional value. These are the

carbs that lead to things like obesity, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Proteins

Proteins are exceptionally important for your body to build and repair tissues and muscle, as well as processes like water balancing, blood sugar stabilization and the transportation of nutrients. Your body gets good, lasting energy from protein. Some of the best choices you can make are to consume lean meats and fish, eggs, low-fat greek yogurt and low-fat dairy products.



Many protein powders are also available to help enhance other items we eat but please check labels and consult an expert to find out which ones are best for you.

Fats

Good fats are good for you. Your brain needs them to develop and maintain function and memory, to regulate hormones and your immune system and to keep your skin, nails and hair looking healthy.

Fats tend to give us good, lasting energy and can produce endorphins (feel good hormones). Our bodies also get much-needed fat-soluble Vitamins A, D, E and K from the fats in our diet.

But they have to be healthy fats. Omega 3 can be found in flax seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts and fish oils. Omega 6 is in safflower, sunflower, corn, canola and peanut oil.

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Other oils like olive, almond, avocado are also great sources of healthy fats. You can also eat natural, raw nuts and seeds and avocados – all in moderation of course.

Water

Your body needs water. Dehydration makes us tired and when we're tired and need energy we tend to make bad food choices like caffeine and sugar. Water can help make you feel full and is necessary for your body to flush itself of toxins.



There are plenty of low-calorie options to flavour your water and help make it more palatable. Try to avoid the extra empty calories in sodas and many sweetened beverages. It doesn't mean you have to stop drinking them altogether but know what you're consuming.

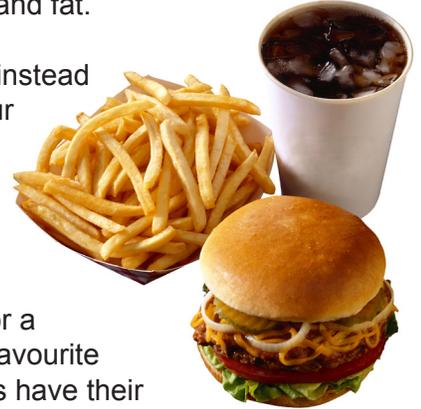
Did you know?

We often mistake thirst for hunger. Next time you feel hungry, try drinking a glass of water and then decide if you're still hungry.

Going out to eat!

We all indulge once in a while. But if you're eating out, take a good look at the menu and choose things that will help you feel full longer, give your body the nutrition it needs, and not overload you with unnecessary calories, carbs and fat.

Ask for grilled chicken instead of breaded. Ask for your salad dressing on the side. Drink water instead of soda or coffee.



Whether it's fast food or a leisurely meal at your favourite restaurant, most places have their nutritional information readily available. And many chain restaurants have theirs online.

Eating well balanced meals helps ensure your body is getting the nutrients, minerals and vitamins it needs. Healthy choices reduce your risk for obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers and other illnesses and conditions.

We can't always make perfect choices but if we have the information, we can make the best choices available.

Overall, if you eat better and maintain an active lifestyle – you'll feel better.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Health Canada - Food Guide



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