



THE CONSCIENCE

Nutrition 101

By Rabbi Dr. Regina Smith, Ph. D.

What to eat was basic to our ancestors. In modern society, however, nutrition has become a quite complex and lucrative financial enterprise. The sheer number of sources that purport to have the answers to our nutritional questions and dilemma can be overwhelming. Should I eat vegan? High protein? Low carbohydrate? Paleo? And the list goes on. For every study that suggests that a particular diet has the most substantive health benefits, one can find several other studies that contradict the conclusions.*

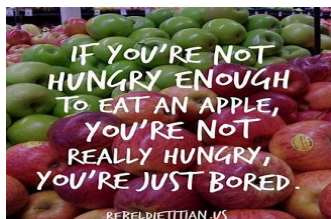
Do not become overwhelmed by the plethora and availability of nutritional advice and diet schemes. Always be sure to receive regular medical care so that nutritional deficiencies, alterations in health and special dietary needs can be discovered early. Informed, sensible eating is one of the keys to healthy living. Read nutritional articles and take nutritional advice with discerning eyes and a healthy degree of skepticism. One size diet does not fit all, therefore it may require a bit of trial and error to find the correct healthy diet for YOU. Avoid “quick fix” schemes, “miracle” diets and/or “miracle” dietary supplements. Always remember- you are in it for the long haul. “The race of life is not given to the swift but to the one who endures/prevails until the end.”



The intent of this article is to give some basic nutritional guidance that the average person can incorporate into their wellness regime.**

*The conflicting information exist in part because nutritional studies are difficult to conduct. The randomized double-blind controlled trial. Controlling the variants and having participants correctly report on their dietary intake and stick to any particular diet for an extended period of time is quite challenging and cheating and under or over reporting is easy to accomplish. For this reason, observational dietary studies are usually conducted. However, these observational studies can be limited by not taking into account all factors such as environmental factors and genetic. Many studies can be inherently biased secondary to the funding source. In general, corporate sponsors have a financial incentive directly related to the study's outcome. **This article is in no manner attempting to diagnose or treat any medical issues. It is not intended for those with specific medical conditions such as, but not limited to diabetes, hypertension and pregnancy. Every individual should seek the further advice and recommendations of their health care practitioner.

General Nutritional Guidelines



#1 Eat only when you are hungry. Do not wait until you are completely famished; rather, eat when you begin to feel hunger pangs. Avoid eating the bulk of your calories in any one meal. Eating when not hungry can lead to an overconsumption of your daily caloric allotment.



#2 Know your signs for hunger. Learn to differentiate hunger from thirst, fatigue eating, stress eating, etc. Individuals often mistake thirst for hunger. If you are not sure, try drinking an eight-ounce glass of water. Have a small snack such as a small piece of fruit, a handful of nuts, a small yogurt when feeling only slightly hungry.



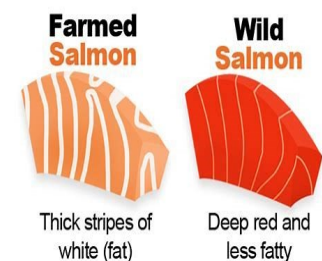
#3 At least half or more of any meal should, in most instances, be plant-based. Eating a large variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is a crucial aspect of healthy eating. According to the Centers for Disease Control, diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some cancers and diseases.

#4 Limit processed carbohydrates. Substitute brown rice for white rice, whole grain breads for white bread. Eat the fruits rather than drinking its juice. Cake, candy, pie, ice cream, etc. should be consumed on very special occasions only.

#5 Severely limit your exposure to nutritional additives. If you read the label and cannot pronounce most of the words, stay away from it. Studies have demonstrated that ingredients/preservatives that prolong the shelf life of food items may be potential carcinogens.



#6 Learn to read and understand food labels. Food labels are your friend! One of the most important aspects of the label is the suggested serving size. Americans have a distorted sense of serving size. We often eat 3-5 times the serving size and this practice leads to weight gain and obesity.



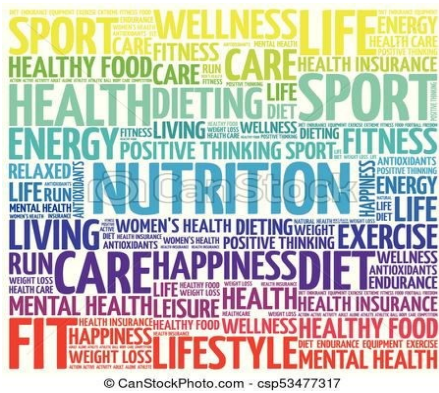
#7 Incorporate more fish into your diet. Fish should be wild caught rather than farm raised. Avoid fish that are known to contain high levels of mercury such as king mackerel, sword fish, shark, yellow fin tuna. Other good alternative sources of complete proteins are eggs, milk, cheese, soy and quinoa. If you prefer not to consume dairy products, you can pair incomplete proteins such as lentils with brown rice to make a complete protein.



#8 In a 24-hour period, eat within your suggested caloric intake range and try to avoid late-night eating. A good practice to follow is “eat for what you will be doing, not for what you have already done.”

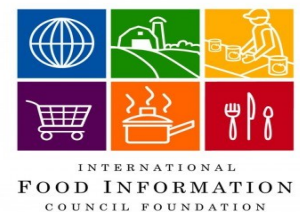
#9 Experiment with a wide variety of spices. Try thyme, oregano, basil, etc. Overconsumption of salt can lead to various disease entities and undesirable alterations in health and wellness. Retrain your food palate to enjoy foods with less sugar and less salt.

General Nutritional Guidelines Continued



#10 Enjoy life and enjoy what you eat. Eating and communal eating is an important aspect of the human experience and many cultural milieus, but as with many things in life, eat with moderation and you should not have to feel deprived. No one was born liking McDonalds, fried foods, high sugar foods, meat, etc. In general, food preferences are learned behaviors and, with time and perseverance, can be unlearned and new eating habits acquired. This requires retraining, trial and error, but you can do it!

Resources



References

<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/fish-and-omega-3-fatty-acids>

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/fruits-vegetables/2018/2018-fruit-vegetable-report-508.pdf>

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