Nutrition and Weight Loss

The Importance of Healthy Eating

Chapter 2, Lesson 1

HealthAdvocate℠

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The Importance of Healthy Eating

You may have heard the phrase, "weight loss starts in the kitchen." Well, it's true! As you learned in Chapter 1, calories are very important to losing weight, and good nutrition can help you manage your calories. If you're trying to lose weight, you'll need to restructure your eating habits.

What It Takes to Lose the Weight: Nutrition

Eat Healthy for Weight Loss

This requires balanced nutrition. A well-balanced diet includes:

- Lean sources of protein such as chicken, turkey, fish, beans, soy and nuts (make a quarter of your plate at each meal protein)

- Healthy carbohydrates (while making half your grains whole)

- 5 to 7 servings of fruits and vegetables (make half your plate at each meal fruit and/or vegetables)

- Healthy fats such as those found in nuts, seeds and olive oil

Enjoy Unhealthy Foods in Moderation

Following a balanced diet doesn't require you to eliminate foods that you enjoy, but to enjoy them in moderation. By allowing yourself to eat for pleasure some of the time, it may help to prevent binge eating and feelings of guilt that may lead to more eating. Limit foods such as:

- Fatty cuts of beef, pork and high-fat dairy products

- Refined grain products such as white bread, baked goods or other sweets

- Foods that are high in saturated fats and trans fats such as those found in animal products, butter or hard margarine, and baked goods

- Limit dairy to 1 to 2 servings per day; choose options that are low in fat

Try to cook your own healthy meals as often as you can.

What It Takes to Lose the Weight: Nutrition (continued)

Eat Regularly and Don't Skip Meals

Contrary to popular belief, eating regularly can increase your chances of weight loss. After 3 to 4 hours of not eating, our bodies start storing calories for conservation, rather than burning them, which may result in weight gain

Be Smart About Beverages

Drink more water. Water provides hydration with no calories, fat or sugar. Milk, fruit juice, sweetened tea or coffee, soda and alcohol can add unnecessary calories and excess sugar to your diet. Enjoy them in moderation!

Cook at Home, Whenever Possible

Home-cooked meals can help you control what you eat and how your prepare it. While supporting your local restaurants is important, they often add extra ingredients to foods that may make them taste good, but can add calories, sodium and sugar. Try to cook your own healthy meals as often as you can, especially as you start your weight loss journey.

Focus on Fiber

High-fiber foods such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables can help curb your appetite so you feel fuller longer. You'll learn more about eating fiber in Lesson 2.

Watch Your Portions

Portion control is an important part of losing weight. You don't need to carry around a measuring cup with you at all times to figure out if your portion is correct—try these simple tips:

- Use a smaller dish for your food; studies show this helps prevent overeating

- Don't eat directly from the package or bag— divide snacks into single-serving containers

- Limit distractions during your meals. Watching TV or using your laptop while eating can distract you from knowing the amount of food you're putting into your body

Next Steps

1. Watch Lesson 2: 5 Easy Ways to Eat More Fiber

2. Read Lesson 3: Choose This, Not That!

3. Take Chapter 2 Quiz