



Healthy Eating

If we are what we eat,
it only makes sense to put natural, fresh food into our bodies

A healthy diet is vital for good health and wellbeing healthy eating provides our bodies with the energy, protein, essential fats, vitamins and minerals to live, grow and function properly. We need a wide variety of different foods to provide the right amounts of nutrients for good health.

Healthy eating can balance and affect your mood giving all the essential nutrients needed for your brain to function well, to gain greater concentration levels and to improve sleep patterns.

How can I make healthy choices?

The best way to do this is to make **gradual changes** and give yourself time to develop new habits. Here are some simple tips:

- Make one small change each week
- Add one piece of fruit and an extra vegetable to your daily diet
- Drink 1.5 - 2 litres of water a day, it makes up 83% of the blood and acts as a transport system, delivering nutrients to the brain and eliminating toxins and keeping your brain well hydrated.
- Reduce your intake of soft drinks and energy drinks (caffeine/guarana based) they contain lots of sugar. You can end up feeling anxious, get headaches and find it hard to sleep.
- Eat something healthy for breakfast (oats, weetbix). A healthy breakfast helps young people to maintain a balanced weight, ability to think more clearly during the day and less likely to crave sugary snacks.
- Create sandwiches or wraps on whole wheat, rye or linseed bread. Add slices of avocado, tomato or cucumber. Choose sandwich fillings such as lean roast beef, light ham, turkey, or chicken, and tuna. This will fill you up and your energy levels will last longer.
- Trim the visible fat from raw meat, and grill meat rather than frying it.
- Spend a few minutes to cut and bag veggies to increase nutrients in the diet. Try some ready-to-eat favorites like red, green or yellow capsicum, broccoli or cauliflower flowerets, carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers, snap peas or whole radishes. Keep cut vegetables handy to use as mid-afternoon snacks, side dishes, lunch box additions or as a quick nibble while waiting for dinner.
- Try to cut down on processed food, and take away meals this could be a great treat to have once a week.
- Choose to eat smaller portions, you can do this by measuring the size of the palm of your hand as a protein and carbohydrate size. Eat more slowly and give your body a chance to tell you when you are full. A great tip is to put the fork down each time and wait twenty minutes before going back for second helpings.

Re Balance Your Lifestyle

Eat five small meals a day

This will help to get your metabolism working. Start with a healthy breakfast, a light snack, lunch, another light snack around 4pm and enjoy an early dinner around 6pm or 7pm. If you skip meals and limit yourself to one or two meals a day you may not get all the nutrients you need. Your body does not respond well if you deny yourself food for long periods at a time.

Eat fats and sugars in small amounts

These foods should be limited because they lack a good supply of the nutrients needed for growth, good health and energy. While small amounts of fats, oils and sugar are acceptable, larger amounts could leave you feeling low in energy and sluggish.

Eat a wide variety of foods

Vegetables, fruits, nuts, dried peas, beans, lentils, breads and cereals (preferably wholegrain). These foods provide good amounts of energy from carbohydrate, as well as protein, minerals, vitamins and dietary fibre.

Brain Food

If you give your brain the right nutrients, you will be able to think quicker, have a better memory, be better coordinated and balanced and have improved concentration. The three key brain foods to boost your brainpower and keep your brain healthy and your mental processes operating effectively are nutritious food, water and oxygen.

Protein is found in meat, fish, milk and cheese. Protein provides the building blocks for most of the body's tissues, nerves, internal organs (including brain and heart).

Carbohydrates enhance the absorption of tryptophan, which is converted into serotonin in the brain. Within about thirty minutes of eating a carbohydrate meal, you will feel more calm and relaxed. The effects will last several hours. Grains, fruits and vegetables are key sources of carbohydrates.

The brain is more than 60% fat. This is because the brain cells are covered by the myelin sheath which is composed of approximately 75% fat. Fats also play a crucial role as messengers. They regulate key aspects of the immune system, blood circulation, inflammation, memory and mood. Omega 3 fatty acids are essential to the optimum performance of your brain.

Increasing omega-3 fats in your diet can support and lower depression, increase poor memory, and promote learning disabilities. To ensure that your diet is rich in omega-3 fats, eat plenty of oily fish like salmon, sardines, trout, tuna, herring, mackerel and anchovies.

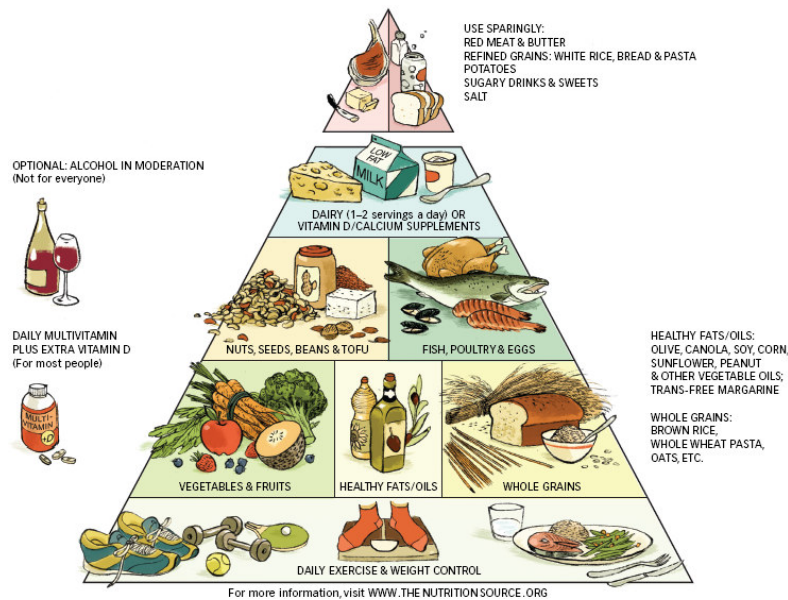
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Vitamins are essential for the growth and functioning of the brain. The 'B' complex vitamins are particularly important for the brain and play a vital role in producing energy. Vitamins A, C and E are powerful antioxidants and promote and preserve memory.

Minerals are also critical to mental functioning and performance. Magnesium and manganese are needed for brain energy. Sodium, potassium and calcium are important in the thinking process and they facilitate the transmission of messages.

Reduce alcohol intake

Misuse of alcohol can lead to nutritional deficiencies, most commonly a deficiency of thiamin (vitamin B1), resulting in loss of appetite, an upset stomach, and an inability to concentrate. The calories in alcohol contain no nutritional benefits they are known as empty calories.



Useful Links

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

www.cyh.com

www.nutritionaustralia.org.au

www.thenutritionsource.org